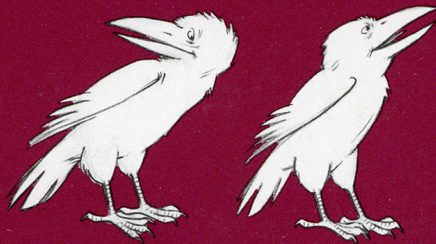


The White Ravens 2009

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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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

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Bayerisches Staatsministerium für
Unterricht und Kultus



The White Ravens 2009

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

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Editor: Dr. Christiane Raabe

Editorial work: Jochen Weber

Translation: Frances Bottenberg

Copy editing: Nikola von Merveldt

Selection and texts:

East-Asian Languages

Fang Weiping and Zhao Xia (Chinese)

Fumiko Ganzenmüller (Japanese)

Gumja Stiegler-Lee (Korean)

English

Claudia Söffner

German

Ines Galling

Romance Languages

Doris Amberg (Romanian)

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Antonio Leoni (Italian),

with the support of Gabriele Poeschke

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(Greenlandic, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish)

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Werner Küffner (Croatian, Czech, Latvian,

Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Slovak), with the

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Other Languages

Doris Amberg (Hungarian)

Toin Duijx (Dutch, Frisian)

Eva Kaliskami and Vassiliki Nika, IBBY Greece (Greek)

Lili Sadjadi-Grübel (Arabic, Persian, Turkish)

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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.

»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 2009

East Asian Languages

Japan (Japanese)

1

Abe, Hiroshi (text/illus.)

Ezo ōkami monogatari

(The story of the Hokkaidō wolves)

Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2008. – [34] p.

(Kōdansha no sōsaku ehon)

ISBN 978-4-06-132386-5

Hokkaido – Wolf – Extinction – Ecosystem

The wolf's gaze in the cover picture betrays his great pride. He asserts himself, yet is at the same time in distress. Hiroshi Abe, currently the best-known illustrator of animal stories in Japan, lets an owl describe the fate of the wolves who died out on the island of Hokkaidō a century ago. The Hokkaidō wolves lived once in harmony with the aboriginal peoples, the Ainu, until they were systematically exterminated by the new settlers from Honshū. Since then, the deer multiply without resistance, which now is causing a new problem. The expressive pictures of the wild animals, as well as of the mountains and forests in the bracing cold of winter and the lush green of summer through which the wolves dart like white shadows, make clear to the reader the necessity of a balanced ecosystem. (6+)

2

Hasegawa, Setsuko (text)

Itō, Hideo (illus.)

Hanasakaji

(The old man that lets a bare tree blossom)

Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 2008. – [36] p.

(Te no hira mukashibanashi)

ISBN 978-4-00-116384-1

Old age – Thankfulness – Riches – Greed – Fairytale

The series »Folktales in the palm of your hand«, started in 2004 and already 15 titles strong, is developing into a bibliophilic collection, thanks to its excellent conception. The volumes are in small format (ca. 14x18 cm) and carefully designed. Each cover is framed with Japan paper in different traditional patterns, and the endpapers are decorated in various basic tones with matching pictures. For the tales themselves, well-known illustrators, such as Ryōji Arai and Masako Nagasawa, or, for this volume, Hideo Itō, vividly present human beings living with animals, deities, ghosts, and demons, as well as in healthy relation to nature. Despite varying drawing styles and techniques, the peculiarity and atmosphere of the world

of Japanese folktales always shine through. The expressive pictorial compositions create an intense looking and reading experience. The author, Setsuko Hasegawa, also tries to stay true to the orally transmitted narrative style, despite the shortened version of the folktales. (5+) ★ ◆

3

Hasegawa, Yoshifumi (text/illus.)

Tengoku no otōchan

(To Dad in heaven)

Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2008. – [33] p.

(Kōdansha no sōsaku ehon)

ISBN 978-4-06-132387-2

Son – Father – Death – Memory – Compassion

»Dear honoured papa, how are things in heaven?« This is how the nine-year-old boy begins his very polite silent letter to his deceased father. He reports that his mother, sister, and he are doing well, even though they now are only three. Then he remembers the good experiences he had with his father and regrets, in his childlike way, that he did not play his father's favourite ball game with him more often. While Yoshifumi Hasegawa primarily treats the loss and pain brought on by a death, he humorously shows compassion for the dead from the viewpoint of a child on the one hand and for those loved ones left behind on the other. The expressive pictures are full of emotion and convey the loss of life, but also the confidence in life in a realistic manner. (5+)

4

Hirose, Hisako (text)

Sasameya, Yuki (illus.)

Bokura wa »Kōmori ana« o nukete

(Through the cave of the bats)

Tōkyō: Akane Shobō, 2007. – 129 p.

(Akane shin yomimono shirizu; 24)

ISBN 978-4-251-04154-8

Mother – Death – Mourning – River – Afterlife

After the death of his mother, Tsubasa is taken into the family of his cousin Ayumu, who is one year older than he. There he makes new school friends and also plays in the soccer club. Out of sympathy, nine-year-old Ayumu, from whose perspective the story is told, treats him carefully, but wonders about his calm. One day, he shows Tsubasa his secret hiding place, the bat cave. There they discover a crack between the rocks into the open, via which they reach a river. When they cross the river, they experience a wondrous encounter with Tsubasa's mother. Ayumu increasingly understands how much Tsubasa misses his

mother. His innermost wish is to continue everyday life with his mother present. The grief of the child is rendered very insightfully by the narrator. (9+) (55th Sankei Award for Children's Books & Publications; 2008)

5

Honda, Akira

Sachiko no niwa

(Sachiko's garden)

Tōkyō: Komine Shoten, 2007. – 250 p.

(Y. A. Books)

ISBN 978-4-338-14420-9

Family – Generation – Garden – Gardener – Vitality – Culture

Sachiko's great-grandfather once carefully planted the garden. Now the visit of her great-grandmother is announced – probably the last one due to her old age – and this is why the garden, which Sachiko's parents have not taken care of, must be fixed up again. The restoration of the overgrown garden by two young gardeners transforms the people, too. Sachiko, who refuses to go to school, becomes lively and active again. Her mother, too, finds new optimism. In this way, a meeting of four generations takes place. Lively and competently, the author describes the fascinating working method of the gardeners, so that the reader, sharing the wonder and excitement, can bear witness to Japanese garden culture. The description of the craftsman spirit and of a gardener's personal cultivation is a sustaining element of the story. (12+) ♦ (Sankei Shimbun Award; 2008. 48th Japanese Association of Writers for Children Prize for new Authors; 2008)

6

Imae, Yoshitomo (text)

Tashima, Seizō (illus.)

Hige ga arōga nakarōga

(Whether with or without a beard)

Ōsaka: Kaihō Shuppansha, 2008. – 639 p.

ISBN 978-4-7592-5031-2

Minority – Discrimination – Survival – Resistance – Growing up – Japan/History

Deep in the mountains, hidden beyond a castle village, young Take lives with his father. He learns to hunt and swim from him. Sometimes his mother visits, and foreigners also appear who possess knowledge and abilities that enable them to stay with the two for a while. Where do they come from and where are they going? Why must Take and his father change their hiding place? Who is looking for them? The masterfully told story about the

young hero's growing up is dramatic and filled with riddles. The author vividly describes the status and the life of underprivileged populations in the feudalistic Edo period. The earlier published prequel, out of print since 1971, is reprinted in the book. The annexed commentary on the discrimination of minority groups is also very worth reading. (14+) ♦

7

Iwai, Toshio (text/illus.)

100-kaidate no ie

(The 100-storey house)

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2008. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-4-03-331540-9

High-rise – Animals – Lifeworld

The media artist Toshio Iwai has created an original, amusing picture book in portrait format about a 100-storey house, where every ten storeys are populated by ten different animal species respectively. A boy, who received an invitation to visit from someone who lives in the top storey, enters the unfamiliar house in the forest and climbs the stairs. With every page turn, the observer passes through ten storeys and is surprised by the funny, imaginative scenes of the animals and their quirks, which the artist playfully portrays in highly detailed cross-section views. In the end, the boy reaches the top floor, the observatory, where the spider prince receives him cordially. With a highly engineered lift that mimics a spider's style, he makes it back down and from there goes back home. (4+)

8

Iwase, Jōko

Sono nukumori wa kienai

(The warmth that does not diminish)

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2007. – 285 p.

ISBN 978-4-03-643040-6

Friendship – Self-assertion – Old age – Time travel

Because Nami does not know how to express her feelings and thoughts properly, she cannot assert herself with her prudent mother and at school. One day, while in the house of an old lady, she encounters the strange boy Asao, whom only she sees. Soon it turns out that he comes from another time and now appears to her as a child. Thus the two childhoods of two people of different times cross paths. They like each other, and through the friendship Nami becomes increasingly independent, confident and happy. Jōko Iwase tells a multi-layered story, in which the realistic and the fantastical are ingeniously woven together in different themes, such as aging, care for the aging, the

mother-child relationship over three generations, and the almost therapeutic love of a dog. (12+) (48th Japanese Association of Writers for Children Prize; 2008)

9

Kubota, Kaori (text)

Iino, Kazuyoshi (illus.)

Kōriishi

(The ice stone)

Tōkyō: Kumon Shuppan, 2008. – 299 p.

ISBN 978-4-7743-1363-4

Japan/737 – Survival – Love – Talisman

In excavations in the old imperial city of Nara, archaeologists were amazed to find numerous inscribed strips of wood from the eighth century, used at that time in lieu of paper as writing material. This gripping historical novel was inspired by this find. After the death of his mother, fourteen-year-old Chihiro is neglected. He hates his father, who went to China and for years has sent no word. When an epidemic rages in Nara, the boy even becomes a swindler in order to survive. Only after encountering a monk and the orphan girl Sukuna does he change. Then, with Sukuna's help, he sells strips of wood with his calligraphy as talismans. Interacting with honest people, Chihiro gradually finds himself and enjoys prospects of a better future with Sukuna. (12+) ♦

10

Matsui, Susan (text)

Suzuki, Kōji (illus.)

Tabinezumi

(The traveling vole)

Tōkyō: Kin no hoshisha, 2007. – 108 p.

ISBN 978-4-323-07093-3

Self-discovery – Life experience – Sense of security

The American children's book author who writes her stories in Japanese and advocates for the individuality of the child, this time takes on both the kind of self-challenging that enriches life and the feeling of security that gives the child grounding. A boy vole is quite distraught because the plants that grow in spring have utterly torn up his wonderfully winter-tight housing. But eventually the power of nature opens even his eyes and lets him recognize his own self-sufficiency. He then wants to experience something new and sets out on a wandering. The world is open to him, yet still much will happen before he finally finds his true home. This timeless story is illustrated in a lively and exciting way in green and black drawings by Kōji Suzuki. (9+)

11

Miura, Tarō (text/illus.)

Watashi no

(Mine)

Tōkyō: Kogumasha, 2007. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-4-7721-0189-9

Toddler – Everyday object – Property – Self-awareness

Three chairs, three rice bowls, three tooth brushes, three pairs of shoes, fruit... which of these belong to the little girl? Of course, she knows exactly which is papa's, mama's or hers, and she is happy and proud of her things. Every family, and already perhaps the toddlers who interact with this little picture book, are familiar with such experiences. In everyday life, it is fun for children to confirm what belongs to them, just as they also know how to differentiate objects and arrangements. This is all part of developing self-awareness. Following on his successful picture book for babies, »Kuttsuita« (You and I, skin to skin!), Tarō Miura here just as aptly shows a child in another stage of development. The addressees of the book clearly in view, he accomplishes this using few words and pictorial elements. (2+)

12

Nakai, Toshimi

Nagai Takashi. Heiwa o inori ai ni ikita ishi

(Takashi Nagai. The doctor who prayed for peace and lived altruistically)

Tōkyō: Dōshinsha, 2007. – 175 p.

ISBN 978-4-494-02238-0

Nagai, Takashi – Japan/History – Doctor – Atomic bomb drop – Altruism – Peace

The life of Dr. Takashi Nagai from Nagasaki (1908-1951) was founded on Christian and humane ideals. He contracted leukaemia from his work as a radiologist and later the atomic bomb drop of 1945. Despite this, he worked selflessly for suffering people, peace, and the life of his children. In the last stage of his illness, he could only write. In five years, he wrote seventeen books warning of atomic weapons and war; the best known is »The Bells of Nagasaki«. From the royalties, he supported the reconstruction of the city and opened a children's library. Respected at home and abroad, he received many readers' letters as well as a visit from Helen Keller and a special envoy of the Pope. In this biography, which includes numerous photos from Nagai's youth, Toshimi Nakai conveys a convincing portrait of this unusual man. (11+) ♦

13

Takadono, Hōko (text)
Hirasawa, Tomoko (illus.)

Midori no moyōga

(The green picture)

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2007. – 378 p.

(Fukuinkan sōsaku dōwa shirūzu)

ISBN 978-4-8340-2289-6

Friendship – Secret – Life – Time

Since Mayuko, Teto, and Mai met each other at boarding school, they spend their free time together. One day, they meet a young man and other people similar to him, who puzzle them. An unfamiliar older gentleman, shadows in the house with the tower, and an old rumour circulating at the boarding school also cause excitement. The heart-warming friendship of the girls is finely interwoven with the mysterious events and the pasts of other people. The favourite book of the three girls, Frances H. Burnett's »A little princess«, resonates throughout the novel and, in spite of one person's tragic fate, happily connects all the novel's characters with each other. This special book for girls is full of character, very lively, and told on a sophisticated literary level. (12+)

14

Tsuchiya, Fujio (text/illus.)

Sore ike! Omocha daisakusen

(Chase the toy dragon!)

Tōkyō: Tokuma Shoten, 2008. – [32] p.

(BFC)

ISBN 978-4-19-862493-4

Toy – Search – Adventure – Fantasy

Shōchan is very excited about the puzzle. His picture is almost finished. There is only one piece missing. While he searches in his room, he finds a lot of forgotten toys under his bed. A robot informs him that the missing puzzle piece was pilfered by the stuffed dragon. With the help of jumbo jets and other helpers, the search begins. Every toy is delighted to be in contact with the boy again. The dynamic pictures and fast-paced text perfectly convey how energetically every toy puts itself into action for the adventure-filled search, which goes far out into the world. The changing perspectives and the pictorial compositions that spread across and beyond the pages speak directly to the readers and lead them into the realm of childhood fantasy. (5+)

15

Yumoto, Kazumi (text)

Sakai, Komako (illus.)

Kuma to yamaneko

(The bear and the lynx)

Tōkyō: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2008. – [50] p.

ISBN 978-4-309-27004-4

Death – Loss – Time – Friendship – Life – Confidence
The bear has lost his friend the bird through death.

Depressed by this event, he turns away from the forest animals and holes himself up in his dwelling. He needs a lot of time before he finds himself again. Outside in the fresh idyll, he meets a lynx who is a travelling musician, and the bear starts a new life accompanying him. Fairy-tale-like and gently, Kazumi Yumoto writes about loss and recovery, as well as about the healing power of time. Komako Sakai interprets the story very poetically with intense black-and-white pictures. Only when the bear recalls the happy times spent with the bird and when his confidence in his future sprouts, do the pictures symbolically light up in subtle colouring. An appealing picture book for adult readers, too. (5+)

Peoples's Republic of China (Chinese)

16

Ge, Bing

Bingwan xiaodian

(The iced-bowl store)

Beijing: China Juvenile and Children's Books

Publishing House, 2007. – 239 p.

ISBN 978-7-5007-8714-3

Chinese kung fu – Imaginary world

Ge Bing's first short-length kung-fu novels for children appeared in several Chinese children's magazines in the 1990s and stirred controversy among parents and educators about their suitability for children, since kung-fu novels were usually regarded as an exclusive adult literary genre. But children loved them. And the author has been focusing on this special genre writing since then. This book is a collection of thirty-seven short-length kung-fu novels. Each of them combines traditional Chinese kung fu culture with delicate suspense and humour. Ge's writing is well-known for its fluency and its unique linguistic features. It is quite enjoyable to read these novels and to see how the writer spins every suspenseful story in just a few pages, and how he has successfully adopted and developed kung fu into children's fiction. (10+)

17

Lü, Lina

Liulangou he tade wupo pengyou

(The vagrant dog and his witch friend)

Fuzhou: Fujian Children's Publishing House, 2008. – 237 p.

ISBN 978-7-5395-3205-9

Animal – Magic

This collection features twenty-three short stories for little kids, including fairy tales, animal stories, and fantasies.

The author of this book is one of the best contemporary storywriters for children. Many of her stories are short, but have delicately elaborated structures and a kind of tender warmth. Despite the absence of any intentional propounding of moral doctrines, these little stories themselves could be the best »textbook« on love, beauty, and, sometimes, childhood philosophy. They capture inner rhythms that are recognizable at once. Every one of them reads like a poem – and to a certain extent, their lightness and delicacy make them poetry. (4+)

18

Yang, Hongying

Zhentan xiaozu zai xingdong

(Little detectives in action)

Guang Xi: Jieli Publishing House, 2008. – 178 p.

(Taoqibao Ma Xiaotiao)

ISBN 978-7-5448-0289-5

Detective – Society – Childhood

The naughty boy Ma Xiaotiao phoned his three friends for an emergency meeting as soon as he got the news from a classmate that one of their classmate's father suffered a bad hit-and-run traffic accident. The four boys set up a detective team at the meeting to find an eyewitness of the accident so that they might trace the criminal driver. During the investigation, a strange but »kind-hearted« man joins their team and seems to help a lot. When the detective team finally finds the criminal driver, however, everyone is astonished and confused. As another instalment of Yang's Ma Xiaotiao the Naughty Boy Series, enjoyed by so many Chinese kids, but also under some critical controversy for their literariness, this novel again portrays a comic adventure within an everyday-life environment, showing the power of childhood as well as its difficulty confronting the adult world. (8+)

19

Zhang, Xiaoling (text)

Pan, Jian (illus.)

Duomaomao dawang

(The best hider)

Jinan: Tomorrow Publishing House, 2008. – 48 p.

ISBN 978-7-5332-5815-3

Game – Countryside – Memory – Mental disability

The mentally disabled boy Xiao Yong lives with his grandfather in a little village. He likes to play hide-and-seek with his little friends in the village, although he is always the first one who got found and caught by the other seekers. There's only one time Xiao Yong becomes the best hider, with the help of a girl his age, who is also the narrator of the story. Yet this happy time ends when all the other little girls and boys begin to go to school, while Xiao Yong is left behind at grandpa's house. When grandpa dies, Xiao Yong's father goes to the village to bring him back home. But Xiao Yong, who is unwilling to leave all his friends, hides again. No one can find him this time until the whole team of seekers cries out »Xiao Yong is the Best Hider, Please Come Out«, which is the best farewell phrase the little boy could want. This is a story about the warmth, happiness, and the tender sadness of a childhood memory. The simple-styled illustrations fit the mood of the story, evoking a remote yet timeless childhood nostalgia. (5+)

20

Zheng, Chunhua (text)

Yao, Hong (illus.)

Ma Mingjia chengle xiaoxuesheng

(Ma Mingjia's school days)

Shanghai: Juvenial and Children's Publishing House, 2007. – 90 p.

(Feichang Xiaozhi Ma Mingjia)

ISBN 978-7-5324-7233-8

School – Growing-up – Urban child – Love

In this new instalment of the »Feichang Xiaozhi Ma Mingjia« children's novel series, little boy Ma Mingjia becomes a student at the elementary school, where he continues to share all kinds of growing-up experiences with the readers. His careless mistake in writing down his Chinese name creates a dramatic comedy at the school's celebration; his pulling pranks with a female classmate's braid actually is an expression of his affection toward the girl, which he doesn't realize until she has transferred to another school. His seven schoolbags of different colours are proof of his boyish light heartedness as well as his

mum's quiet love. This novel brings us laughter, and interests us in a contemporary urban Chinese boy's everyday life. Always happy, energetic, and behaving humorously, Ma is one of the central figures in contemporary Chinese children's literature. (7+)

Republic of Korea (Korean)

21

Cho, Kyŏ-Hŭi (text)

Kwon, Mun-Hŭi (illus.)

Chang sŭngŏp kwa yŏt kŭrim ikki

(Chang, a well-known Korean painter)

Seoul: Ungin Ssingkŭpik, 2007. – 51 p.

(Iyagika issnŭnjakŭn Misulkan tach'ae; 16)

ISBN 978-89-01-06225-9

Korea/19th century – Painter – Art – Travel – Countryside

The Korean painter Chang lived in the time of the Joseon Dynasty in the 19th century. In his travels through Korea, he captured his impressions in sketches and later produced his renowned paintings based on these templates. For a long time, his pictures were definitive for Korean book illustrators. This beautiful, informative, high-quality print book presents the opportunity to step into both Chang's life and work and life in Korea 200 years ago. It contains numerous naturalistic representations of mountain chains, little streams, and delicately blossoming trees interspersed with comical if enigmatically humorous scenes from everyday life. Descriptions of Chang's working method inspire the reader to draw. (6+)

22

Hŏ, Ŭn-mi (text)

Yi, Jong-mi (illus.)

Kaemihŏli

(The ants)

P'aju: Kugmin Sŏkwan, 2007. – [36] p.

(Yŏnal yetchŏk e; 6)

ISBN 978-89-11-02711-8

Ant – Social behaviour – Industry – Self-sufficiency

This fable-like animal story takes place long ago. The ants do not yet live on the ground, but rather reside contentedly in the fur of a rabbit and feed on its blood. One day, the bunny angrily decides to get rid of the free-loaders. With the help of a yummy little ball of rice, it cunningly coaxes them out of its fur. While the ants wait

vainly for its return, their hunger becomes intolerable and they start to look for food themselves. In this way, they gradually become self-sufficient and realize how important living and working in a community is.

The author has chosen unusual characters, since ants are unknown in the Korean narrative tradition. Text and image join together in telling the story with wit and energy. The illustrations, painted with watercolours in warm hues, spark the imagination. The different moods of the characters, such as their friskiness and anxiety, come through particularly vividly. (4+) ★

23

Sin, Chi-Yun (text)

Yun, Mi-Suk (illus.)

Uri appajom ch'atajuseyo

(I am looking for my father)

Seoul: Yŏwŏnidio, 2008. – [36] p.

(Tt'ant't'suhwakdonghwa 1 tankye)

ISBN 978-89-5570-640-6

Father – Child – Search for identity – Sense of security

Because the blue penguin believes that the bear cannot be his father, he goes in search of his »real father«. On the arduous journey, he encounters many happy animal families and realizes how important parental devotion to their young is. But because no one pays him any heed, he continues his search each time – sad, but determined. When the little penguin is already weakened by hunger, »father« bear suddenly appears and clasps him in his arms. Contentedly, the penguin piggybacks back home. The author tells this tender story about the fears and dreams of a child and the search for security in a manner easily understood by young children. Just like the text, the lively double-page coloured illustrations transmit trenchant insight into the thoughts of the little penguin. (3+)

24

Sin, Tong-jun (text/illus.)

Mulgogiwa paramkwa p'iano

(The fish, the wind, and the piano)

Seoul: Ch'obang Ch'aekpang, 2008. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-89-90614-24-7

Sea – Fish – Music – Sensory impression

This unusual, ambitious picture book is primarily aimed at older children and adult readers. The cryptic text reports in very terse sentences about a fish in the sea that lives in harmony with nature. Its sensory impressions are precisely described. Its touch and hearing are almost

one and the same. Thick rain drops, the strong wind, and the wash of waves on its back seem to it like music and fill its innermost being with the most beautiful sounds and let it ascend all the way to heaven. Fitting with the text, Sin Tong-jun has made quite abstract and fascinating paper collages, which can be grasped only through the imaginative work of the reader. The artist bravely leaves large empty white areas on the spread. The aesthetic pictures are dynamic and yet at the same time exude a great peace. (10+)

25

Yü, Ün-sil (text)

Chöng, Söng-hwa (illus.)

Mangukki sonyön. Yü Ün-sil tonghwajip

(The parade of flags)

Paju: Changbi, 2007. – [177] p.

(Changbi adong mungo; 232)

ISBN 978-89-364-4232-3

Multiculturalism – Social behaviour

This volume contains nine short stories that portray how ideas for a peaceful human community are generated in dialogues between children and adults. In many different ways, it imaginatively treats the things in a child's everyday life, alongside human relations within a larger, global context. The title story, for instance, tells of a successful project day at a school where every student, encouraged by the teacher, presents his or her vision of peace. In this way, the children gain self-confidence, feel personally addressed, and learn to listen to others. For example, by hanging up different national flags, a boy transforms the classroom into a sports arena, where children of all nations can peacefully encounter one another. (7+) ♦

Africa

Ghana

26

Asare, Meshack (text/illus.)

The cross drums

Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2008. – 105 p.

ISBN 978-9988-647-06-3

Neighbour – Animosity – Hate – Friendship

For as long as anybody can remember, the people from the neighbouring villages of Akugu and Abugu have been enemies. Yet when Meliga falls into a deep pit and Billa saves his life, the two boys quickly become friends and start questioning their families' behaviour. With the help of the mesmerizing sound of two drums that a mysterious hermit builds for the friends, the boys eventually manage to make their tribes overcome their hostility and be reconciled. Renowned Ghanaian author and illustrator Meshack Asare has created a moving, folktale-like story about the importance of friendship, even if the narration's sudden changes between present tense and past tense may sometimes be confusing. The slightly hazy, soft charcoal drawings aptly convey the tale's atmosphere. (8+)

Asia and Oceania

Australia

27

Fensham, Elizabeth

Goodbye Jamie Boyd

St Lucia, Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 2008. – 88 p.

ISBN 978-0-7022-3671-6

Schizophrenia – Self-mutilation – Siblings

Many children have imaginary friends at some point in their lives but they usually vanish sooner or later. Yet Jamie Boyd feels so real to his sister Ann that he will not be killed off so easily. Despite the fact that he died even before his sister was born, he has been her constant companion and best friend ever since Ann can remember. The older she gets the more demanding and possessive Jamie becomes, dictating her every move. Her pain and despair eventually make her confide in a doctor who diagnoses schizophrenia. In this poetic verse-novel written in short chapters, the author slowly reveals the moving story about a teenage girl who cannot tell reality from imagination – until she finds the strength to confront her demon. (16+)

28

Harris, Christine (text)
James, Ann (illus.)

Audrey of the outback

Surry Hills, N.S.W.: Little Hare Books, 2008. – 163 p.
ISBN 978-1-921272-18-9

Australia – Outback – Family – Everyday life – Imagination

Living on a remote camel farm in the Australian Outback in the 1930s, miles from the next settlement, Audrey sometimes wishes for more interesting company than her little brother Dougie and twelve-year-old Price, who feels too grown-up for his sister's silly games. Luckily enough, the inquisitive girl's best friend Stumpy hardly ever leaves her side, whether she decides to become a swaggie (i.e. tramp), a teacher, a pirate, or a grown-up man. Short chapters describe how Audrey philosophizes about the world and lights up her days (and those of her family) with her wild imagination. The amusing narrative interspersed with lively dialogue makes a (geographically and) historically distant world come alive for young readers. (6+) ●

29

Hilton, Nette (text)
Whatley, Bruce (illus.)

The smallest bilby and the Easter games

Kingswood, S. Aust.: Working Title Press, 2008. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-876288-77-8

Australia – Easter bunny – Refusal to work – Competition – Successor

After centuries of delivering Easter eggs to children, Australia's Easter rabbits need a rest. Yet, since Easter without Easter eggs is simply unthinkable, somebody else will have to take over. Emu, Echidna, Wallaby, Kookaburra, and Koala are only some of the eager volunteers who immediately queue up in front of the biggest rabbit. This calls for a competition to find out the fluffiest, fastest, quietest, smallest, ... Easter animal. In the second book starring amiable little Billy Bilby and his friends, Nette Hilton's easy-going and humorous text relates the jocular story, while Bruce Whatley's soft watercolour pictures in different sizes aptly visualize the various animals' moods and emotions. (3+)

30

King, Stephen Michael
Leaf

Lindfield, NSW: Scholastic Press, 2008. – [64] p.
ISBN 978-1-74169-116-0

Boy – Dog – Imagination – Seed – Growth

This hilarious textless story follows a small boy and his dog who love playing outside in the garden. One day, a bird drops a seed on the boy's head and a little leaf starts to grow in his unruly hair. Boy and dog eagerly strive to protect the small seedling from sun and heat and other dangers, invent new contraptions to water it, and feel devastated when the boy's mother relentlessly snips off all his hair (including the tiny plant). Yet, carefully placed into a hole in the garden, the small twig grows into a strong tree over the years – shading the grown-up boy's own family and their dog. The vibrant watercolour drawings with squiggly black lines ingeniously portray the two protagonists' bouncing energy and their nonsensical ideas and make this small-format book a treasure to revisit again and again. (5+)

31

Marchetta, Melina

Finnikin of the rock

Camberwell, Vic. [et al.]: Viking, 2008. – 398 p.
ISBN 978-0-670-07281-1

Kingdom – Invasion – Impostor – Curse – Exile

Ten years before, during the »five days of the unspeakable«, an impostor king invaded their kingdom, slaughtered the royal family, and as a result, a curse was put on the whole country. Since then, Finnikin of the Rock and his guardian Sir Topher have roamed the neighbouring kingdoms searching for camps of exiled survivors. However, when they meet a mysterious young novice with special powers who insists they return to Lumatere, free it from the curse, and fight the evil powers there, nineteen-year-old Finnikin and Sir Topher decide to face up to this dangerous and unpredictable mission. Award-winning author Melina Marchetta's first excursion into the fantasy genre has resulted in a powerful and spellbinding epic fantasy with a cast of fascinating characters. (14+)

32

Marsden, John (text)

Ottley, Matt (illus.)

Home and away

Melbourne: Hachette Livre, 2008. – [32] p.

(Lothian Children's Books)

ISBN 978-0-7344-1056-6

Family – War – Refugee – Death – Survival – Hopelessness

When this book opens, the first-person-narrator lives a happy and ordinary life with her family in some unnamed country – until one day war breaks out. Documenting the shocking events on small scraps of paper in the form of a miniature diary, the fifteen-year-old girl relates how they almost starve before they eventually manage to buy a passage on a refugee boat. Yet their hope for a new beginning in some far-away country is shattered when only the siblings and their mother survive the boat trip and are put into a prison-like refugee camp for an indefinite time. The touching text makes readers feel the refugees' hopelessness without offering a soothing solution at the end. The mixed-media pictures aptly visualize the mood of the story, ranging from simple child-like colour-pencil drawings to bleak desert scenes and harrowing portrayals of the haggard refugees and the foreign officials' violence. This heart-wrenching picture book provides a perfect incentive to discuss the topic of refugees with older children and teenagers. (12+) ★ ◆

33

Montgomery, Beth

Murderer's thumb

Melbourne: Text Publishing Company, 2008. – 299 p.

ISBN 978-1-921351-48-8

Family – Separation – Stalking – Murder – Mystery

For sixteen-year-old Adam and his mother, the small house on Falcon Ridge farm is the latest hideout on the run from Adam's violent and controlling father. Yet, he would never have guessed that this boring country town harbours a dark secret. When he witnesses the discovery of the remains of a teenage girl murdered six years earlier, his investigative instincts are awakened. Together with a new friend, he follows the cryptic notes that lead him to the hidden diary of a vanished eye-witness. As he cleverly pieces together the clues from this diary, the boy slowly gets closer to the core of the mystery and tumbles into life-threatening situations. In this teenage novel, Beth Montgomery cleverly intertwines two stories to create a suspenseful murder mystery with a surprising twist at the end. (14+)

34

Randall, Bob (text)

Hogan, Melanie (photogr.)

Nyuntu ninti. (What you should know)

Sydney: ABC Books, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-7333-2049-1

Australia – Aborigines – Culture – Traditional society – Nature

Based on an award-winning documentary entitled Kanyini, this picture book was created to help develop a better understanding between Australia's Indigenous people and modern civilisations all over the world. Blending current colour photographs and old black-and-white pictures, the book shows how Aborigines have lived for thousands of years in close relationship with nature and Mother Earth. According to their world view, human beings exist »to be part of all that there is« and to protect the earth and all living creatures. In a short and touching narrative, Bob Randall from the Anangu, who live near Uluru (aka Ayers Rock), proudly talks about his tribe's culture, traditions, and beliefs. Respecting these values could help us all grow more aware of the essential things in life. (5+) ◆

New Zealand

35

Cowley, Joy (text)

Elliot, David (illus.)

Chicken feathers

North Shore: Puffin Books, 2008. – 141 p.

ISBN 978-0-14-330390-9

Chicken farm – Everyday life – Friendship – Fox – Danger

Josh loves his talking pet chicken, Semolina. The smart cranky old hen, who has acquired a taste for Grandma's home-brewed beer, keeps him company while he completes his chores on his parents' chicken farm. She entertains him with stories about her fellow hens and about Tarkah, the chicken goddess. More and more often, she also warns him about the dangerous fox that sneaks about the chicken houses, threatening the hens, and stealing their eggs; yet unfortunately, no-one heeds her warnings because no-one believes Josh that Semolina can actually talk – and so the hen (almost) ends up as fox-food. The casual banter between Josh and his chicken friend make for a truly hilarious read. The endearing tale about a loving family's ups and downs living on a farm is accom-

panied by small black-and-white drawings. Both text and illustrations nicely capture the nostalgic setting, the worried young boy, and especially the feisty feathery protagonist. (8+) ★

36

De Goldi, Kate

The 10 pm question. A novel

Dunedin, N.Z.: Longacre Press, 2008. – 251 p.

ISBN 978-1-877460-20-3

Family – Loss – Fear – Mental problems – Friendship

Twelve-year-old Frankie Parson suffers from thousands of anxieties and constantly worries about major and minor threats in his life. The only way to calm the »rodent voice« in his head and fight his panic about contagious diseases or flat smoke-alarm batteries is to talk to his Mum at night (10 o'clock sharp) and be soothed by her affirmative answers. Yet his unruly emotions wreck havoc when he befriends inquisitive Sydney, whose never-ending questions threaten to force Frankie to face the most frightening problem ever. The witty, meandering narrative of this thought-provoking novel chronicles only a few months in Frankie's life but, through constant flashbacks, it slowly unravels the reasons for the boy's growing panic. (11+)

37

Wright, Danielle (ed.)

Moriuchi, Mique (illus.)

Rosen, Michael (introd.)

My village. Rhymes from around the world

Wellington, N.Z.: Gecko Press, 2008. – 53 p.

ISBN 978-1-877467-10-3

Nursery rhyme

Nursery rhymes have been a favourite with children for centuries. Every country has them and every child learns them, be it at home from their parents or siblings, at the playground, or at kindergarden. However, these small rhymed poems are usually specific to the country or language they originate in and are rarely translated. Thus this collection of rhymes from all over the world is all the more valuable, as it introduces English speaking children to cultural gems from diverse countries such as Norway, Zimbabwe, Switzerland, China, or Brazil. The rhymes are given in their original language (and script) and in an English translation and are accompanied by colourful, simple collage illustrations that portray the joyful mood of the poems. (3+) ◆

Europe**Great Britain**

38

Amnesty International (ed.)

Various illustrators (illus.)

We are all born free. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in pictures

London [et al]: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2008.

– [68] p.

ISBN 978-1-84507-650-4

Human Rights

Celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this colourful book confirms that human rights do not only matter in the abstract world of adult politics. On the contrary: Human rights play an important role in every person's life – be they big or small. To make the declaration more accessible to younger readers, Franklin Watts publishers in association with Amnesty International chose a simplified version of the text and assigned each of the thirty articles to well-known illustrators from the UK and other parts of the world. While some of the artists offered a visual interpretation that was close to the text, others provided more abstract illustrations. Together, all of these stunning pictures make this book a visual feast for readers of any age. (4+) ◆

39

Browne, Anthony (text/illus.)

Little beauty

London [et al.]: Walker, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-4063-0866-2

Gorilla – Loneliness – Friendship – Cat

In his latest picture book, renowned British illustrator Anthony Browne offers a touching and witty tale about an unusual friendship. The colourful large-format pictures, rendered in his trademark pseudo-realistic style mixed with funny surrealist elements, portray an amiable and obviously intelligent gorilla protagonist who communicates with his zoo keepers in sign language and enjoys every comfort imaginable – from plush armchair to TV set. Nevertheless, he feels utterly lonely and longs for a true friend. For lack of another gorilla, his keepers finally offer him a minute kitten – and despite them being so unlike, the two creatures immediately hit it off. When an incident of involuntary violence threatens their precious friendship, the little kitten proves that she too has gorilla-powers. (4+)

40

Diamond, Emily

Reavers' ransom

Frome: Chicken House, 2008. – 383 p.

ISBN 978-1-906427-06-1

Pirate – Ambition – Betrayal – Poverty – Technophobia

It's the year 2216, and the British Isles have suffered major flooding. In »The Last Ten Counties« in the very south of England, people are scraping by on fishing and farming their barren lands, as the use of any modern devices and technology has been banned for years. When the reavers – plundering pirate families from the East coast – kidnap the Prime Minister's daughter, young fisher girl Lilly sets off with a precious talking jewel as ransom to break her free; yet she immediately sails straight into trouble. Told in alternating chapters from Lilly's point of view and the perspective of young Zeph, the reaver boss's son, this gripping futuristic adventure story tackles topics such as friendship, betrayal, ambition, and techno-phobia while it races along at breathtaking speed. (10+)

41

King, Daren (text)

Roberts, David (illus.)

Sensible Hare and the case of carrots

London: Faber and Faber, 2007. – 105 p.

ISBN 978-0-571-23175-1

Detective – Case – Carrot – Search

Sensible Hare may be a hare (with long ears to prove it and feet as fast as kung-fu) but sensible he is not, and nor is he particularly brainy or sharp-witted. Thus when beautiful Mazy Rabbit entrusts him with the case of the missing suitcase of carrots, the odds of him actually finding it would probably be less than zero – if it weren't for his clever companion. Ottoman the otter outwits the town's evil villains, stuns the mean landlord Mr. Ratchett, and surprises even the police in order to retrieve the stolen object. The nonsensical text and the witty black-and-white illustrations, slightly reminiscent of Edward Gorey, make this ridiculous tale a hilarious read for children and their parents alike. (6+)

42

Lucas, David (text/illus.)

The lying carpet

London: Andersen Press, 2008. – 77 p.

ISBN 978-1-84270-441-7

Imagination – Storytelling – Truth – Lie

This magical modern fairy tale about truth and the power of imagination will enchant readers of all ages. One sunny afternoon, after centuries of sitting immobilised on a plinth holding an open (stone) book, the little statue Faith thinks her first conscious thought. Even if she can neither blink nor get up, she can whisper – and is answered by an old tiger carpet spread across the floor. He launches into tales about his wondrous adventures, and although he warns Faith not to trust a lying (rather than a flying) carpet, the girl's longing for a life beyond her statue-state grows. The black-and-white drawings depict a curtain, the small girl statue, the tiger rug, and an old armchair on each page, framing the page like a theatre stage, while various amusing drawings in the middle elaborate on the tiger's tall tales. (5+)

43

Matthews, John (text)

Tatarnikov, Pavel (illus.)

Arthur of Albion

Bath: Barefoot, 2008. – 94 p.

ISBN 978-1-84686-048-5

King Arthur – Knights of the Round Table

In this lavishly illustrated and carefully designed large-format volume, John Matthews – an expert on Celtic and Arthurian legends and myths – brings one of the greatest heroes of English history and folklore alive for young readers: King Arthur. Each of the short chapters starts off with a double page of facts or background information on a certain Arthurian topic, such as »Camelot and the Round Table«, »The Grail«, or »Ladies of the Court«, which is followed by a retelling of one particularly intriguing tale, e.g. »How King Arthur first came by the sword Excalibur« or »The story of Merlin and Avenable«. The watercolour illustrations on enamel paper by Belorussian artist Pavel Tatarnikov depict heroic fights, mysterious encounters, and magical creatures. Rendered in warm tones mixed with rich gold and silver hues, they perfectly capture the mythical atmosphere of the tales. A poster-sized map outlining the realm of Albion with a key to important places and some suggestions for further reading invite readers to delve deeper into Arthur's kingdom. (10+) ★

44

Nicholls, Sally

Ways to live forever

London: Marion Lloyd Books, 2008. – 201 p.

ISBN 978-1-407105-15-4

Leukaemia – Death – Coping with fear

Sam likes to gather facts; facts about airships, himself, life, death, coffins, and his illness leukaemia. When his home-schooling teacher suggests he write a book, he eagerly grabs the chance of recording some of his life's peculiarities. By combining memories of the eleven-year-old protagonist's life, the miscellaneous facts Sam collects, funny stories about his friend Felix (who suffers from a different type of cancer), lists of things to do, and questions nobody ever answers, the author has created an authentic and very moving novel that manages to tackle a difficult and sad topic without turning into »a weepy book full of poems and pictures of rainbows«. With sensitivity and a gentle dose of humour, it makes readers witness how a boy and his family struggle to deal with the illness and impending death. (10+)

45

Owen, Joanne (text)

Ink, Mutt (illus.)

Puppet master

London: Orion Children's Books, 2008. – 214 p.

ISBN 978-1-84255-584-2

Prague – Puppeteer – Striving for power – Hypnosis – Magic – Legends

An obsessed puppet master, who step by step perfects the dark art of hypnosis, is attempting to re-write Bohemian history and install himself as Prague's legitimate ruler. Yet to perform this trick, he needs the help of various people, among them his menacing twin apprentices who draw some strings in his ominous (puppet) play. Interspersed with retellings of ancient Bohemian legends, this impressive debut reads like a Gothic novel. The frightfully sinister tale follows the fate of young orphan Milena, who – as a descendant of legendary Bohemian ruler Libuse – seems to be the key to the evil master's success. However, with the assistance of her healer aunts and some true friends, Milena finds her long-lost mother and the two of them eventually manage to triumph over the impostor. (12+)

46

Rayner, Catherine (text/illus.)

Harris finds his feet

London: Little Tiger, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-84506-590-4

Hare – Feet – Purpose – Growing up – Grandfather – Grandson

Little Harris is slightly puzzled about why his feet are so absolutely enormous. Yet Grandad assures him that big feet are important for all hares – and then he takes his small grandson on a journey so that Harris may discover the purpose of his big feet (and to find his own independence). Harris learns to hop to the top of the world, use the feet as sun-shades, and run as fast as the wind to escape danger. The powerful, vibrant watercolour-and-ink illustrations focus on the two hares from near and far, from above, behind, and below, and as they bounce and zap through the landscape. The quick change of perspectives and the apt use of wide spaces mirror the hares' adventures and easily direct the readers' eyes toward the most important aspects of the story. (4+)

47

Sayer, Viv (ed.)

Poems of love and longing

Llandysul: Pont Books, 2008. – X p. + 70 p.

ISBN 978-1-84323-815-7

Love – Poetry

In this small, delicate anthology, Viv Sayer has gathered a varied selection of poems about love in all its different forms. Written by ten mostly well-known Welsh poets, these short texts allow teenage readers to venture into a realm of complex and puzzling, happy and sad human emotions. While »First Flush« by Susan Richardson expresses her bliss and exaltation at discovering the radiant northern scenery at midsummer on the Lofoten Islands in Norway, Jenny Sullivan makes readers see the livid colours and sample the bitter taste of rejected love in »Rejection«. The poems' topics range from romantic and physical love, to a mother's affection for her newborn baby, the admiration for a pet dog, the fond memories of one's own childhood, and the longing for one's home country. (14+)

48

Valentine, Jenny

Broken soup

London: HarperCollins, 2008. – 248 p.

ISBN 978-0-00-722965-9

Fatal accident – Family – Grief – Friendship – Mystery

With her deeply depressed mother seeking refuge in pills and alcohol and her father hardly ever at home, fifteen-year-old Rowan is the only one to take care of her six-year-old sister, and the pressure is not easy to cope with. Yet then, two new people enter her life and change everything. Rowan knows that the photographic negative the strange boy hands her does not belong to her. So how can it turn out to be a mysterious connection to her elder brother Jack, who drowned two years before and left the family devastated? Written in an authentic teenage voice with plenty of dialogue, Jenny Valentine's second teenage novel cleverly intertwines sad and happy moments. It is a coming-of-age story with a mystery-element that explores a family's overwhelming grief and slow healing. (14+)

Ireland

49

Kiernan, Celine

The poison throne

Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2008. – 468 p.

(The Moorehawke Trilogy; 1)

ISBN 978-1-84717-110-8

Kingdom – Intrigue – Heir – Treason – Love – Duty – Friendship – Loyalty

When Protector Lady Wynter Moorehawke and her father return after four years of business in the cold North, they find the formerly liberal-minded and progressive kingdom of King Jonathon shockingly altered. Superstition, intrigue, violence, and racial hatred reign, as the king forces his elder, illegitimate son Razi to take the place of crown-prince Alberon, who was accused of treason and disappeared. The court is in uproar – their loyalty divided between the king and Alberon. Fifteen-year-old Wynter is determined to flee Jonathon's control and secretly help her childhood friend Razi find innocent Alberon and re-establish peace and stability; yet how can she leave her fatally ill father behind? The first volume of this suspenseful trilogy encompasses both romance and political adventure. Set in a medieval Europe with some fantasy elements, it races the reader along at breath-taking speed and doesn't release its grip until the very last page. (14+) ★

North America

Canada

50

Asch, Frank (text)

Asch, Devin (illus.)

Mrs. Marlowe's mice

Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-55453-022-9

Cat – Mouse – Hiding – Police – Rescue

At first glance, this attractive picture book looks like a suspenseful but simple adventure-action story for pre-schoolers. Sweet-natured cat-librarian Mrs. Marlowe tenderly (and obviously illegally) cares for her »lodgers« – an extended mouse family – clad in tiny clothes reminiscent of those worn by Disney's Cinderella's mice friends. The courageous lady protects them from suspicion-harbours neighbours and tricks the harsh cat-police investigators. Yet the enthralling tale and the almost photo-realistic computer-generated illustrations, created by the team of the successful »Mr. Maxwell's Mouse«, also work on a deeper level as allusion to the brave people in Europe who hid Jewish families during World War II; this parallel will definitely serve as incentive for further discussion. (4+)

51

Fagan, Cary (text)

Debon, Nicholas (illus.)

Thing-Thing

Toronto: Tundra Books, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-88776-839-2

Stuffed animal – Rejection – Fall – Love

True, Thing-Thing might not be as cute as other stuffed animals; in fact, it's hard to tell what kind of animal it is supposed to resemble: Not quite a bunny rabbit, nor a dog, bear, or cat; Nevertheless, it certainly does not deserve to be treated thus cruelly by spoiled little brat Archibald Crimp, who simply throws his birthday present out of the hotel room window. Now Thing-Thing tumbles down six floors, catching glimpses of various things and people as it speeds past other hotel rooms towards the ground. The wondrous tale and the colourful vibrant double-page pictures portray the stuffed animal's tumbling fall and the scenes he witnesses from unusual angles until, luckily enough, he bounces into the pram of a little baby boy and finds a new home. (4+)

52

Juby, Susan

Getting the girl. A guide to private investigation, surveillance, and cookery

Toronto: HarperTrophy Canada, 2008. – 341 p.

ISBN 978-0-00-200709-2

School – Bullying – Investigation

Like any other high school, Harewood Tech has different sets of people, ranging from the highly popular Trophy Wives at the top to the bottom of society: the »Defiled«. Girls that are marked out as defiled (for no apparent reason) are subsequently shunned by everyone, often collapse under the pressure, and struggle about how to go on. Worrying that a friend of his might be the next defiler-victim, Sherman Mack, ninth-grader and someone who cares about »ladies« of any age, decides to unmask the mysterious force behind this scheme. In this light-hearted, fast-paced novel, the whacky and witty fourteen-year-old pseudo-detective portrays himself and the people around him in a highly amusing narrative that will delight its readers despite the serious topic with which the book deals. (14+)

53

Kamara, Mariatu / McClelland, Susan

The bite of the mango

[Toronto]: Annick Press, 2008. – 216 p.

ISBN 978-1-55451-158-7

Sierra Leone – Civil war – Mutilation – Canada – Immigration

Little Mariatu grows up in a small village in Sierra Leone, leading a simple but happy life until her village is attacked by young rebel soldiers who kill many people, burn down houses, and brutally hack off the twelve-year-old girl's hands. She barely survives but manages to reach a hospital where her wounds are treated. Yet a long and painful journey awaits her before she finds a place where she can brave a new life. Today, at age 21, Mariatu is a college student in Toronto and, as UNICEF Special Representative, she talks about her devastating experiences. With the help of journalist Susan McClelland, the remarkable young woman has recorded her own life story in this powerful and shocking narrative the cruel reality of which will sometimes be difficult to bear for its readers. (14+)

54

McKay, Sharon

War brothers

Toronto: Puffin Canada, 2008. – 241 p.

ISBN 978-0-670-06784-8

Uganda – Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – Abduction – War – Poverty

Formed in 1987, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is a guerilla army of young rebel soldiers fighting against the government in Uganda. The leaders of this terrorist-like army have been accused of violating human rights by acts such as murder, abduction, slavery, and mutilation. In this thought-provoking novel, the author relates the story of four boys from a Catholic school who are attacked and forced to join the LRA. Treated as slaves, suffering starvation and violent beatings while in constant fear of being murdered, they vow to stick together as »brothers« – until they can finally make a lucky escape. The gripping tale gives readers an insight into life in Uganda at different social levels but also makes them witness the brutal fate that changes the protagonists' lives forever. (14+)

55

Tamaki, Mariko (text)

Tamaki, Jillian (illus.)

Skim

Toronto [et al.]: Groundwood Books, 2008. – 141 p.

ISBN 978-0-88899-753-1

School – Outsider – Suicide – Homosexuality

As a fairly chubby Asian goth (and aspiring Wicca), Kimberly Keiko Cameron – nicknamed Skim by some witty »friends« – feels like a weird outsider in her private all girls' school; even more so when the whole school goes into a frenzy of mourning and a club is founded devoted to actively fighting grief after the suicide of the ex-boyfriend of one of her class-mates. When Skim falls in love with her beautiful (female) English teacher and is ultimately rejected, the girl slowly slides into a downward spiral of desolation. Cousins Jillian and Mariko Tamaki's collaboration has resulted in a truly impressive graphic novel. The sparse and poetic text written in diary form and the powerful, evocative black-and-white illustrations reveal a typical teenage world of cruelty, love, peer pressure, suicide, and depression, and allow readers glimpses into a lonely girl's painful search for her true identity. (14+) ★

USA

56

Asher, Jay

Thirteen reasons why. A novel

New York: Razorbill, 2007. – 288 p.

ISBN 978-1-59514-171-2

High school – Suicide – Friendship – Grief

One day, out of the blue, Clay receives a shoebox in the mail with seven cassette tapes. When he starts listening to the first one, he is shocked and confused to hear the voice of Hannah Baker, a classmate on whom he had a crush and who committed suicide two weeks before. Increasingly sick, appalled, and terrified by what he hears, the teenage boy wanders through the night playing the tapes to learn of the thirteen reasons why Hannah decided to take her life and of the amount of his guilt. It is a night that changes him forever. The author of this gripping detective-story-cum-problem-novel seamlessly interweaves the two narrative voices of Hannah and Clay to slowly unravel how apparently »harmless« incidents, such as teasing, mobbing, and thoughtlessness eventually lead to a young girl's death. (14+)

57

Becker, Bonny (text)

Denton, Kady MacDonald (illus.)

A visitor for Bear

Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2008. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-0-7636-2807-9

Bear – Loneliness – Mouse – Surprise – Friendship

Bear never has any visitors and to prevent anyone from daring to invade his peaceful solitude, the old crank has put up a huge sign that no one could possibly mistake: »NO visitors allowed«. Yet, one day, a »small and gray and bright-eyed« mouse shows up on his doorstep and – no matter how often and how forcibly he gets thrown out of the bear's dwelling – will not be dissuaded. Eventually Mouse has the old grumbler worn out, who, to his very surprise, realises that SOME visitors might actually melt his frozen heart. The short, comical text and the vivid illustrations in soft watercolours, ink, and gouache that ingeniously depict the bear's growing despair and the unfazed visitor's cheeky re-appearances make for a hilarious read – not only for small children. (3+)

58

Berger, Carin (text/illus.)

The little yellow leaf

[New York, N.Y.]: Greenwillow Books, 2008. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-0-06-145223-9; 978-0-06-145224-6

Autumn – Foliage – Fear – Friendship – Courage

In this quiet picture book in narrow portrait format, reluctance and fear of the unknown are the central topic. Unlike its fellow leaves, which boldly embark on the journey of sailing through the autumn air, Little Yellow Leaf anxiously tightens its grip on its oak tree. It simply feels not ready yet. Days turn into weeks, snow starts falling, and still the lonely leaf clings to its branch until it suddenly glimpses another lonely little red leaf high up on the opposite side. Together the two summon up enough courage to embrace adventure and soar into the cold winter air. The stunning collage illustrations in matt colours, which show the little leaf from several perspectives and follow its floating flight, perfectly complement the poetic text as the tale slowly approaches a satisfying climax. (4+)

59

Caletti, Deb

The fortunes of Indigo Skye

New York [et al.]: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2008. – 298 p.

ISBN 978-1-4169-1007-7

Waitress – Tip – Wealth – Change – Search for identity

What would you do if you were suddenly to become rich? Eighteen-year-old Indigo waitresses in a small café before school every morning and considers this job her true vocation. She likes her regular customers, enjoys their gossip, and cares for them. When suddenly a new, slightly mysterious guest leaves her a 2.5 million dollar tip, she is both dumbfounded and over the moon; yet never would she have believed that money could change a person so much. It takes some trouble and a lot of adjusting until she eventually finds her true self again. Deb Caletti's insightful novel is peopled with a bunch of intriguing, amiable, funny, and well-rounded characters. The riveting plot plunges Indigo into an unfamiliar world and will make readers ponder over how they would cope with such an unexpected blessing (or curse?). (14+)

60

Cheng, Andrea (text/illus.)

Where the steps were

Honesdale, Pa.: Wordsong, 2008. – 143 p.

ISBN 978-1-932425-88-8

Elementary school – Afro-Americans – Teacher – Pupils – Friendship – Self-esteem

Although the inner-city elementary school Pleasant Hill has been standing for decades, it won't be there much longer. Before it is being demolished, however, sympathetic Miss D. has resolved to teach her African-American class about the American Civil War, and introduce them to heroes like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, and Harriet Tubman. In this insightful verse novel, Andrea Cheng describes home and school struggles through the eyes of five different third-graders. Accompanied by atmospheric small wood-cuts, the poetic texts, each in its peculiar voice, describe the students' growing bond among themselves, their friendships and jealousy, their worries and fears, and their love for their wonderful teacher who instils in them a sense of self-esteem and provides a feeling of security in difficult times. (6+) ♦

61

Gaiman, Neil (text)

McKean, Dave (illus.)

The graveyard book

New York: HarperCollins, 2008. – 312 S.

ISBN 978-0-06-053092-1

Orphan – Graveyard – Ghost – Education – Protection

Ever since Nobody Owens miraculously escaped the mysterious assassin Jack, who slaughtered his parents and older sister when Nobody was only a little toddler, the boy has been living in the vast graveyard on the hill. Adopted, raised, protected, and educated by the ancient cemetery's ghostly inhabitants, Nobody (affectionately called Bod) is an expert on the ways of the dead; yet as he becomes older, the lad grows more and more curious of the outside world, untroubled by the lethal dangers that await him beyond the protection of the graveyard walls. The quirky and suggestive black-and-white illustrations with slightly distorted proportions add a sinister element to the suspenseful narrative, which undeniably owes some of its inspiration to Kipling's famous classic »The Jungle Book«. (10+)

62

Johnston, Tony

Bone by bone by bone

New York, NY : Roaring Brook Press, 2007. – 184 p.

(A Deborah Brodie book)

ISBN 978-1-596-43113-3

United States/1950s – Racism – Friendship – Father – Son

Set in the early 1950s in a small town in Tennessee, this powerful novel tells the story of the friendship between two boys – one white, one black. From their first meeting at the age of nine, David and Malcolm are thick as thieves. Nothing can separate them; neither the hissed threats against Malcolm from Ku-Klux-Klan members, nor the »Nigger Rule« that David's racist father has set down. Together, the two boys roam the neighbouring woods, explore caves, do chores for an elderly lady, and play baseball. And all the while David imagines he will one day be able to change his father's mind about black people. Yet when Malcolm comes begging for protection one night and David's enraged father aims the shotgun at him, David knows he has no choice but to leave. Inspired by memories from the author's own childhood, the engaging first-person-narrative depicts a set of complex characters including a sensitive boy who braves the fierce racism around him. (12+) ♦

63

Lane, Kimberly

Asian art

Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2008. – 32 p.

(Come look with me) (World of art)

ISBN 978-1-890674-19-9

Asia/11th century-2004 – Art

Each volume in this popular series of art for children provides a selection of twelve different artworks either from a specific country, region, or culture (e.g. American Indian Art) or about a certain epoch or topic (Exploring Modern Art; Animals in Art). The latest addition to »Come Look with Me« introduces young readers to art from Asia, ranging from India and Pakistan to Japan, China, Tibet, and Korea and spanning several centuries from the eleventh century right up to 2004. Every artwork is presented on a full page, with simple questions that encourage children to take a closer look at the painting or sculpture, and with background information about the artist and the style on the opposite page. This attractive book will spark an interest in Asian art both with individual children or small groups. (6+)

64

Orlean, Susan (text)
Karas, G. Brian (illus.)

Lazy little loafers

New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-8109-7027-4

Siblings – Baby – Everyday life – Laziness – Complaint

Isn't it just outrageous that none of the million babies around the world has ever made the slightest attempt at doing something useful, let alone finding proper work? The protagonist of this amusing picture book, a young girl trudging towards school with her bulky bag, simply cannot understand how these lazy, slubbering, stumbling, snobby miniature kids manage to enchant adults and make them their willing slaves; yet, she is determined to find out – and whom better to analyze than her own baby brother. The witty double-page collage illustrations add various new elements and their own punch lines to the story and perfectly complement the ingeniously dry text. Irritated elder siblings of new-born babies and toddlers will agree whole-heartedly with the protagonist's unexpected conclusion. (4+)

65

Shulevitz, Uri (text/illus.)

How I learned geography

New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-374-33499-4

Refugee – Poverty – Map – Imagination – Travel

This impressive square picture book is based on the artist's memories of his childhood during World War II. When Shulevitz was about five, his family fled from Poland to Turkestan in Central Asia (now Kazakhstan). With nothing left and hardly any food to survive, the little boy's only pleasure is sitting in front of a large world map his father had traded. Looking at the map, tracing the details, he dreams himself into foreign countries, visits exotic places, encounters strange sights and smells – and thus manages to forget about his gnawing hunger and misery. The large-format watercolour illustrations depict the little boy in amazing, colourful dream-scapes and thus easily confirm the magical and soothing power that a vivid imagination can have. (4+)

66

Spiegelman, Art (text/illus.)

Jack and the box

New York: Raw Junior, 2008. – 32 p.

(Toon Book)

ISBN 978-0-9799238-3-8

Toy – Fear – Fun

In spring 2008, experienced editor Françoise Mouly and her husband Art Spiegelman, award-winning comic book author, launched a colourful new series of simple comic books for beginning readers to great acclaim. The titles in the new Toon Book imprint are geared towards youngsters who might still be intimidated by big chunks of text but love funny and action-filled stories in the tradition of Dr. Seuss's classic »The Cat in the Hat«. In this volume, Jack's parents present him with a new toy, and the little rabbit-boy is thrilled at first. However, the »Zack«-in-the-box does not only play hide-and-seek with Jack; more often than not, he enjoys giving the boy a fright. It takes some getting used to the toy's peculiar sense of humour until Jack can finally laugh about its silly pranks. (5+)

67

Weston, Robert Paul (text)

Villa, Víctor Rivas (illus.)

Zorgamazoo

New York: Razorbill, 2008. – 281 p.

ISBN 978-1-59514-199-6

Governess – Threat – Escape – Parallel world – Creature – Quest

Katrina Katrell is an overly imaginative girl who keeps seeing weird creatures hiding in dark places; Mortimer Yorgle is a rumpled-looking reporter and reluctant hero in the underground land of the Zorgles. Their paths cross when terrified Katrina flees from her evil guardian, Mrs. Kremelda Krabone, and the »nutty neurosurgeon« Dr. LeFang's plans of performing a lobotomy on her, and the two go on an adventurous and thrilling quest to find out whereto the missing Zorgles of Zorgamazoo have disappeared. This hilariously silly and entertaining debut novel is a cross between Dr. Seuss, Roald Dahl, and Edward Gorey and written completely in rhyme. The enchanting style, the absurd characters, the nonsense-adventures, and the quirky illustrations make this a perfect read-aloud for young and old alike. (8+)

German Language

Austria

68

Frey, Jana

Fridolin XXL

<proper name>

Wien: Ueberreuter, 2008. – 142 p.

ISBN 978-3-8000-5343-8

Obesity – Teasing – Diet

His mother and grandmother think of him as »big-boned«, but Fridolin is not just a little plump, he is fat. Naturally he is teased; three boys think of mean new nicknames every day. In the stairwell, Fridolin meets Tiffany, who lives with her father Sam in the house at the back of the courtyard. Since Tiffany's mother abandoned both of them, Sam wallows in self-pity and does not work anymore. The apartment has gone to rack and ruin, and money is also scarce. Fridolin and Tiffany become friends, and not only Tiffany's home front is then whipped into shape. Fridolin's pounds also begin to fall away, with the new slogan: »fit not fat«! Entertainingly packaged, »Fridolin XXL« is a courage-engendering book for those who pack a few extra pounds and a reflection-encouraging book for those who love to make fun of them. (8+)

69

Schirneck, Hubert

Die grüne Nudelsuppe spielt Geige. Die sonderbaren Erlebnisse des Langen und seiner Freunde

(The green noodle soup plays the violin. The peculiar experiences of the tall one and his friends)

Wien [et al.]: Jungbrunnen, 2008. – 88 p.

ISBN 978-3-7026-5795-6

Friendship – Language – Identity

Four friends – one tall, one short, one wide, and one thin – stick together. The tall one unexpectedly always gets himself into strange situations. Once during a storm, a little ball lightning makes a beeline for him, and everyone is frightened by him when he goes for walks with the little one. Then one morning, while inventing a few words for fun, he forgets »proper« language, and no one can understand him anymore. And when the tall friend reads in the paper about a woman with no memory, he promptly loses his, too. He suddenly no longer knows who he is. Playful and with a penchant for nonsense, yet written in clear and simple diction, this book explores existential questions concerning identity, the power of language, and not least of all the power of friendship. (8+)

70

Verein Ute Bock (ed.)

Stolarski, Annett (illus.)

Passage ins Paradies. Grenzenlose Geschichten

(Passage into paradise. Boundless tales)

St. Pölten [et al.]: Residenz, 2008. – 208 p.

ISBN 978-3-7017-2043-9

Tolerance – Multiculturalism – Differentness

This anthology is published by the Ute Bock Association, an Austria-based global refugee service agency, and it showcases a series of well-known Austrian and German writers. They narrate short, extremely varied stories about people who, out of fear of emotional injury, build walls around themselves, but also about people who wish to tear down those walls. Fables deal with animals who behave like rulers and exclude others, but in the end find community. The basic tenor of the book – achieved without pointing a moralizing finger – is characterized by the wish for understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of the (seemingly) foreign and other. (8+) ♦

Germany

71

Auer, Martin (text)

Oltén, Manuela (illus.)

Das ganz, ganz kleine Schwein mit dem ganz, ganz großen Hunger

(The very, very little pig with the very, very big appetite)

Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-407-79367-6

Eating – Narrating

The facial expression of little Tim looking into the pot foretells something unpleasant – spinach is bubbling in there! No wonder that Tim does not want to eat, but would rather tell a story: the one about the very, very little pig with the very, very big appetite. It is so big that the piggy simply eats everything. Slowly but surely, the little one becomes a giant pig that swallows entire cities until there is nothing left to eat. Tim, on the other hand, is still sitting in front of his spinach. His hunger is luckily very, very small though, for after all, things end badly when one is too hoggyish! Expressive, expansive illustrations and texts that play with alliteration characterize this story, which is told with a wink. (3+)

72

Benecke, Mark (text)

Fuss, Lisa (illus.)

Wo bleibt die Maus? Vom Kreislauf des Lebens

(Where is the mouse? On the circle of life)

Düsseldorf: Sauerländer, 2008. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-3-7941-5174-5

Mouse – Death – Decay – Circle of life

What does one do, when one finds a dead mouse? One can bury it under a rock or simply let it lie, to wait and watch what happens. First the flies come, and then, out of the eggs they lay on the mouse, maggots hatch. They in turn eat up the mouse, until only the skeleton is left. Instead of the mouse there are now many new flies, for they develop from the maggots that feasted on the mouse. In contrast to theologically motivated books, this non-fiction picture book truly takes on the facts and the purely material side of death and decay as foundations for future life. The circle of life is represented in few words, in simple language, and in matter of fact pictures, which in their simplicity are sometimes disconcerting. (5+)

73

Böhmer, Wolfgang

Hesmat's Flucht. Eine wahre Geschichte aus Afghanistan

(Hesmat's escape. A true story from Afghanistan)

München: cbt, 2008. – 283 p.

(cbt; 30549)

ISBN 978-3-570-30549-2

Afghanistan – War – Escape – Violence – Loneliness

After his mother died and his father was killed, eleven-year-old Hesmat decides to flee Afghanistan for London, with the help of smugglers. On his way, which in the end leads him to Vienna, Hesmat is exploited and beaten. He becomes ill, lands in jail, suffers from hunger and thirst. His best friend dies, jammed into a tiny, overheated corner on the train to Moscow; the body is thrown carelessly into the Kazakhstanese desert. Now totally alone, Hesmat forbids himself to cry. The hope and the unconditional wish to reach London are Hesmat's emotional armour; only they let him endure all exertions and tortures. This is a true story depicting the loss of childhood in the face of war, escape, and violence, as it befalls thousands of children – authentic, sensitively written in a clear style and without pathos, but for this very reason very moving. (12+) ♦

74

Bonnke, Jens (text/illus.)

Schräger Vogel, krummer Hund.

Tierische Redewendungen

(Odd duck, top dog. Animal idioms)

Rostock: Hinstorff, 2008. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-3-356-01237-8

Proverb – Wordplay – Riddle

The German language = the difficult language? Not at all! In this book, German shows its witty side, revealing an almost unimagined capacity for nonsense. Here the stars of the show are its many animal idioms and proverbs, where we can find elks smooching (knutschende Elche), dogs howling (heulende Hunde), and a rooster in a basket (Hahn im Korb). While the short texts succinctly unlock and clarify the meaning of the figurative expressions, the linoleum-cut-like, spacious illustrations take the expressions literally. This results not only in riveting text-picture combinations. Indeed, the pictures are on first glance as funny as they are on second glance subtle. They enrich the lines of text by inviting further discovery and play with the stories told independently of the text. (4+) ●

75

Fried, Amelie (text)

Schuhhaus Pallas. Wie meine Familie sich gegen die Nazis wehrte

(The Pallas shoe store. How my family stood up to the Nazis)

München [et. al.]: Hanser, 2008. – 183 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-20983-1

Family – Memory – Persecution of the Jews – Germany/1933-1945

The name »Max Fried« is listed in a Holocaust memorial book. Amelie Fried does not know this name. She does some research, thereby breaking the veil of silence that hangs over her family's history. She learns that after 1933 many members of the Fried family were murdered in concentration camps or faced death in other ways because of the Nazi regime. One of the few who survived, as if by miracle, is Franz Fried, Amelie's grandfather, who owned the Pallas shoe store in Ulm. The well-known author and journalist tells the story of her family, which is illustrative of the fate of many thousands of other families, in a sober, yet still sensitive tone, which cannot disguise her own concern. (12+) ♦

76

Groszer, Franziska (text)

Capek, Jara (illus.)

Anton und das unheimliche Haus

(Anton and the spooky house)

München: Terzio, 2008. – 107 p.

(Edition quinto)

ISBN 978-3-89835-872-9

Haunting – Fear – Superstition – Magic – Wish

Anton and Bella's parents are really annoying. Tessa is more concerned with her manicure than her children, and Bolle just loves to laugh at other people's misfortunes. But it is not only unbearable at home; Anton's way to school is full of danger. The worst is the haunted house that he must pass every day. But then it turns out that Anton's beloved Rose lives there, and all the spookiness vanishes. When Tessa and Bolle disappear thanks to the ominous Mr. L. Uziifer, Anton and Bella are finally rid of all their troubles. This is a story about finding courage, that takes childhood fears seriously yet has a lot of fun in the process, spiked with fantastical and (word)playful elements and told in a light and easy tone that sets up comical moments. (8+)

77

Grundmann, Harriet (text)

Krejschi, Tobias (illus.)

Das fünfte Schaf

(The fifth sheep)

Wuppertal: Hammer, 2008. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-3-7795-0201-2

Going to sleep – Fear – Identity

Lina counts sheep before falling asleep. However, the fifth sheep is not a sheep, but a wolf! Once Lina has spotted the wolf, the other sheep get scared and nervous, even though the wolf has been among them a good while already. The wolf assures them that he is not a bad wolf, and would rather be a peaceful sheep. But because Lina needs someone who can scare away the monsters in her room, the wolf must howl, so that the monsters flee and Lina can sleep. The idiom of a wolf in sheep's clothing forms the point of departure for this equally cleverly illustrated and narrated fable, which is not only about a crafty victory over the fear of falling asleep, but also about reflecting on appearance and reality, on the one hand, and needs and wants, on the other. (4+)

78

Hoppe, Felicitas

Iwein Löwenritter. Nach einem Roman von Hartmann von Aue

(Yvain, Knight of the Lion. After a romance by Hartmann von Aue)

Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2008. – 249 p.

(Die Bücher mit dem blauen Band)

ISBN 978-3-596-85259-8

Middle Ages – Knight – Love – Honour – Guilt – Loneliness – Atonement

Iwein, the top knight at King Arthur's court, wins the heart of the beautiful and proud Laudine from the land Nebenan (Nextdoor). But after the wedding, the great wide world still tempts Iwein. Left alone too long, Laudine renounces him. Full of sadness, Iwein loses his mind. After his recovery, Iwein perseveres in a dragon fight, wins a lion's friendship, and helps many people with his fearless acts. For this reason he can return to Laudine. The conflicts that Iwein must face with himself and with others are timeless: love, honour, guilt, and atonement. The adaptation of Hartmann von Aue's romance imitates the medieval narrative tone, breaks with it ironically, and transposes it into today's world by means of contemporary colloquialisms, while the four coloured plates bring out its aspect as fairy tale. (10+)

79

Jacoby, Edmund (text)

Kirchlechner, Daniela (illus.)

Die Abenteuer des Ritters Gawain

(The adventures of Gawain the knight)

Berlin: Jacoby & Stuart, 2008. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-3-941087-07-1

Arthurian legend – Knight – Honour – Temptation

What is special about this book is its visual staging. Compressed to its essence – Gawain must resist the seductions of the evil Morgan, in order not to break his oath – the Arthurian tale becomes a »photographic novel«: carved figures – knights, damsels, and horses – are placed against the backdrop of castles and hills. When the digital montage transcends the true size relationships, the photographs call to mind medieval pictorial representations that privilege the symbolic over a centralized perspective. Through this heterogeneity, internal tensions, which stand in interesting contrast to the static of the statues, form in the picture. Thanks to the skewed proportions, the sense of constructedness outweighs that of realism. (5+)

80

Janisch, Heinz (text)

Teich, Karsten (illus.)

Sieben schreckliche Seepiraten.

Ein Bilderbuch in S

(Seven scary sea pirates. A picture book in S)

Köln: Boje, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-414-82089-1

Piracy at sea – Wordplay

The title gives it away – this book is all about the letter S. The inside cover pages are already crawling with Ss of every colour. It goes on like this: every word in this book starts with the letter S, resulting in a witty story, which, to be precise, is about the »seven scary sea pirates«, who capture ships in the South Seas under the command of Susi Schwarzsäbel. If the crew stops belting out »seldom spine-tingling seamen songs,« it is the end of Susi and her men. Amazing what one can do with one letter! A seaman's yarn spun into a strange story indeed – real fun! Much credit for this is due to the colourful, detail-oriented illustrations, in which there is much more to discover besides seven scary sea pirates. (4+)

81

Karau, Martin (text)

Wehner, Katja (illus.)

Der Panther im Paradies

(The panther in paradise)

Berlin: Aufbau, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-351-04091-8

Paradise – Panther – Hunting – Food

Paradise is a boring place, the panther thinks. One is not permitted to smoke or to drink – and the worst is that instead of juicy pieces of meat there is only tofu-antelope. To devour each other is also not permitted. Despite this, the squirrel suddenly goes missing. Then the rabbit, the zebra, the giraffe, and the elephant. Oddly enough, the panther suddenly grows a squirrel tail, long floppy ears, zebra stripes, and a giraffe's neck. Even though the panther swears to have not broken any law, the other animals become distrustful once and for all when he starts trumpeting loudly. After he has eaten up even the director of paradise, the panther spits out everything and everyone and bids them adieu – he's off to go (real!) antelope hunting. Much wit in word and image makes this book a real pleasure to read! (5+)

82

Korn, Wolfgang (text)

Jansen, Birgit (illus.)

Die Weltreise einer Fleeceweste. Eine kleine Geschichte über die große Globalisierung

(The world travels of a fleece vest. A little story about big globalisation)

Berlin: Berlin-Verl., 2008. –168 p.

(Bloomsbury Kinderbücher & Jugendbücher)

ISBN 978-3-8270-5292-6

Globalization – Developing countries

It is by means of a red fleece vest, and the human beings that produce, sell, or wear it, that this book explores globalization. Fleece is produced in Bangladesh with oil from Dubai, out of which seamstresses make clothing that is shipped to Germany and sold there – for example to Wolfgang Korn, who puts his red vest into the donation bin after a few years. And then the red vest appears on television – on a boat refugee from Africa. By linking each stage of the fleece vest with people, the abstract concept of globalization is given a face. Although no explicit criticism is stated, this well-conceived non-fiction book makes the dark sides of global commerce evident, even when it is clear that a life without it is no longer imaginable today. (10+) ♦

83

Laibl, Melanie (text)

Schwab, Dorothee (illus.)

Ein Waldwicht fliegt in den Oman.

Eine Reise in Reimen

(A forest sprite flies to Oman. A journey in rhymes)

Idstein: Kookbooks, 2008. – 32 p.

(Kinderbuch; 4)

ISBN 978-3-937445-31-1

Travel – World – Dream

A little forest sprite has wanderlust. Yearningly he watches the birds: how he would also love to just get up and fly away. But without wings? As fall with its falling leaves arrive, the sprite catches one and lets himself be taken away – to endless ice and to jungle. In the end, he misses home and soon lands back on his favourite branch. This large-format book captivates readers with its playful rhyming texts as well as its well-designed typography and multi-media whole-page illustrations. The palette spans ball-point pen drawings to crayon pictures and is enhanced by photo cut-outs of flowers, leaves, and butterflies. There is a lot to discover. (4+)

84

Lembcke, Marjaleena (text)

Ellermann, Heike (illus.)

Der Gänsegeneral. Eine Geschichte

(The goose general. A story)

Rostock: Hinstorff, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-3-356-01239-2

War – Peace – Illness – New beginning

The general is successful at leading war – until he has a stroke. After that, nothing is as it used to be; the general decries war as nonsensical and releases doves of peace. Everyone thinks he is crazy. But because after a while the general misses military music and parades, his wife buys him a few geese. They march to the music, and the general becomes the goose general. Aside from the war and peace theme, the existential question concerning what constitutes a meaningful life is broached. The pictorial composition, which embodies the inner turmoil of the main character, corresponds to the complexity of content. Different materials and forms of expression are used, which are mounted inside one another, digitally altered and collage-like. In this way, an almost plastic multi-layered effect with its own poetic power is created. (7+)

85

Linker, Christian

Blitzlichtgewitter

(Flashlight storm)

München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl., 2008. – 218 p.

(dtv; 78224: pocket)

ISBN 978-3-423-78224-1

Puberty – Cell phone – Internet – Loss of control

A topic of pressing actuality – the misuse of digital images – is realistically discussed here, along with a definite plea. Drunk, Fabian takes cell phone photos of his ex-girlfriend Becca after having scribbled »slut« on her naked breast. When he sends the photos to his pals, an avalanche ensues. Not only has everyone seen the photos the next day; Fabian is also suspected of having distributed other humiliating videos. Because he has nothing to do with these videos, he tries on his own to find the author of the »happy slapping« films. He discovers him to be a classmate and instigates a showdown that could be straight from a movie. Even if that helps to clear Fabian's name, he remains feeling hollow because he knows that he has made himself guilty. (13+)

86

Ludwig, Sabine (text)

Kreitz, Isabel (illus.)

Der 7. Sonntag im August

(The seventh Sunday of August)

Hamburg: Dressler, 2008. – 217 p.

ISBN 978-3-7915-1236-5

Time – Repetition

Trapped in a time loop, the narrator Freddy continually lives through the same Sunday. Unfortunately, only she realizes that her life is set on »repeat mode«. But even though Freddy continues to wake up on the 19th of August, the days are only in part identical. For Freddy acts differently every day and starts to consciously manipulate the course of her Sunday. As her actions have no far-reaching consequences, she becomes more self-aware – she tells her friend what's what and cuts her hair very short. It's just too bad that the uncanny repetition ends suddenly and Freddy has to go to school with a shaved head... A successful mix of everyday reality and fantasy are offered here, in a way that is quick-paced and has a great feel for situation comedy. (9+)

87

Maar, Paul (text)

Opel-Götz, Susann (illus.)

Drei miese, fiese Kerle

(Three mean and nasty blokes)

Hamburg: Oetinger, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-7891-6871-0

Ghost – Courage

Paul Maar's newest book is spooked: Konrad and his parents live in an area, in which day and night the »three nasties« are up to no good. At some point Konrad has had enough of the ghostly terror and makes his way to the black castle in order to strike fear into the ghosts. Armed with anti-ghost bullets, a lot of courage and chutzpah and with the help of the chequered cat, Konrad succeeds in scaring off the three ghosts – who are not the brightest. Now the chequered cat is starting to be spooky though... Trenchantly exaggerated illustrations flank the pithy, funny text, so that one cannot help chuckling while shivering with goose bumps. »Three mean and nasty blokes« is a courage-engendering book with that certain special something. (4+)

88

Meschenmoser, Sebastian (text/illus.)

3 Wünsche für Mopsmann

(Three wishes for Mopsmann)

Esslingen: Esslinger, 2008. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-3-480-22504-0

Depression – Loneliness – Wish – Contentment

Overslept, no breakfast, and a damp newspaper – the day is not off to a good start, and this is why Mopsmann also looks pretty grim. When a fairy suddenly appears and offers Mopsmann three wishes, he wisely knows that he needs neither a pool nor a pony, but simply a coffee and some muesli. It's the little things that count. When the fairy transforms herself into a cute pig princess and becomes Mopsmann's consort, the catastrophic day moults into the perfect day. Analogously, surprising breaks in perspective structure the sketch-like lead and coloured pencil drawings, whose colour composition corresponds to the short texts. Just as the grey of the illustrations first mirrors Mopsmann's depressive state, so the bubbly fairy brings life into the house and colour into the picture. (5+)

89

Münch, Peter

Der Duft des Lindenbaums. Ein Tagebuch aus Sarajevo)

(The scent of the linden tree. A diary from Sarajevo)

Ravensburg: Ravensburger Buchverl., 2008. – 192 p.

ISBN 978-3-473-35283-8

Bosnia/1992-1995 – Civil war – Death – Memory – Diary

In the summer of 2005, Elvis, a Munich student with Bosnian roots, travels to Sarajevo. There he sees a memorial on a street corner that reminds him of Nina, his friend in Kindergarden. She was killed in the summer of 1995 – in the last days of the war – by a grenade. Elvis goes on the search for traces and meets Nina's mother, who gives him the diary of her daughter. It tells of a life that moves between deceptive normalcy and mortal danger. It shows Nina's unconditional resolve to live, but also her yearning for freedom, for a totally normal everyday life, which is impossible during the war. All diary entries are true to the original. In its authenticity, the book is a compelling document that expresses Nina's fate and the inhumanity of the war in an oppressive and moving, yet never melodramatic way. (11+) ♦

90

Osteroth, Reinhard

Erfinderwelten. Eine kurze Geschichte der Technik

(Inventors' worlds. A short history of technology)

Berlin: Rowohlt, 2008. – 221 p.

ISBN 978-3-87134-605-7

Technology – Invention – History

Clever inventions with profound effects on everyday life are introduced here alongside pondering, meticulous minds, to whom the spark of an idea comes only after years of trying and often quite by chance. The spectrum of inventor and invention portraits goes from Leonardo da Vinci to Johannes Gutenberg to Konrad Zuse, the inventor of the computer. While inventors at earlier times were often reclusive, solitary people – sometimes denounced as cranks – today systematic research is conducted in think tanks, in order to use new inventions to get a handle on the effects of industrialization and globalization. Neither dry nor boring, in fact very vividly and enjoyably presented, this non-fiction book will even speak to non-techno-savvy readers. (10+)

91

Reifenberg, Frank M.

Landeplatz der Engel

(Landing site of the angels)

Stuttgart [et al.]: Thienemann, 2008. – 253 p.

ISBN 978-3-522-17860-0

Tourette syndrome – Friendship – Limit experience – Acceptance

After a night of dancing, Mirco beats up Fabian because he thinks Fabian was making a move at his girlfriend with his tongue-clicking– yet Fabian has Tourette syndrome. After the beating, Fabian has a falling-out with his father. He leaves home and meets up with Mirco again. They join forces. First they hide out under an arbour, then they cruise around in a stolen car. Mirco soon realizes that Fabian is not a »spaz«, and Fabian sees that behind Mirco's tough-guy façade lies a sensitive dreamer. The rapprochement of the two boys is told from the perspective of the protagonists, which creates a sense of immediacy, as the narrative style involves reproducing the obsessive chains of thought brought about by Fabian's illness, as well as Mirco's vulgar slang. (13+)

92

Rosenboom, Hilke (text)

Schöffmann-Davidov, Eva (illus.)

Wayne und die Nacht der echten Cowboys

(Wayne and the night of real cowboys)

Köln: Boje, 2008. – 59 p.

ISBN 978-3-414-82091-4

Frontier <Wild West> – Cowboy – Small town – Friendship

In contrast to his family, Wayne does not like cowboys, and his excitement about an upcoming trip to a cowboy town is limited. He would rather be left to draw in peace. But when Wayne is there, he finds being in the cowboy town unexpectedly exciting. For even if many things are staged, it is thrilling to roam around with the talking prairie dog Jonny. The two come upon the »Feather of Silver Lake« and the bankrupt vultures Goldi and Hermine. With its odd protagonists, witty wordplay, and allusions, this episodically narrated, out of the ordinary Western adventure story is a lot of fun. The illustrations add to it by capturing the crude life of the cowboy town in earthy, dusty hues. (6+)

93

Rotfuß, Veronika

Mücke im März

(Mücke in March)

Hamburg: Carlsen, 2008. – 189 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-58195-2

Alzheimer's disease – Mother – Daughter

Mücke's mother is sick – at forty-seven she has Alzheimer's – and her father is often out of town. Usually Mücke manages quite well, but sometimes not. Then she wishes that she could live in a totally normal family, with a mother who isn't wasting away and whom she can ask for advice, for instance concerning Yurik. Mücke and he are dating, and that is nice, but also complicated. Yet there is still her best friend Nora, with whom she sits on the roof – at such times, life seems perfect. The story is told from the perspective of fifteen-year-old Mücke. Although the illness of her mother is burdensome, the book is not asking the reader to sympathize with all of Mücke's problems. Rather it shows how the girl tries to deal with the situation, without forgetting normal life. (13+)

94

Schneider, Maggie (text)

Gleich, Jacky (illus.)

Opa Meume und ich

(Grandpa Meume and I)

Berlin: Tulipan, 2008. – 66 p.

ISBN 978-3-939944-16-4

Grandfather – Granddaughter – Old age – Loneliness – Death

Emma visits Grandma and Grandpa Meume every day. Grandma Meume prepares food and Grandpa Meume helps her with her homework. When Grandma Meume dies, Grandpa Meume increasingly shuts down. Despite parental scepticism, Emma figures out a Grandpa rescue plan that actually does gradually revive him. Nonetheless he becomes sick and dies shortly after Emma returns home from summer vacation. The story of a generation-spanning friendship is here told from the child-like, unselfconscious perspective of Emma. The text and the pictures are both wistful and witty. The illustrations, restricted to brown tones, recall old, yellowed photographs and transmit a melancholic mood, which is broken, however, by the expressive, often mischievous facial expressions of the characters. (8+)

95

Schulze, Ingo (text)

Penndorf, Julia (illus.)

Der Herr Augustin

(Mr. Augustin)

Berlin: Berlin-Verl., 2008. – [33] p.

(Bloomsbury Kinderbücher und Jugendbücher)

ISBN 978-3-8270-5329-9

Confusion – Anger – Violence – Friendship

Mr. Augustin is well-raised, but sometimes he is a bit confused. When the children on the street laugh at him, Mr. Augustin throws first a rock and then a dead crow at them. He is so upset by his loss of countenance that he runs in shock in front of the mail delivery car. Yet only good comes of this. First he befriends one of the children, then the two save an abandoned dog together. Augustin now only throws little sticks for his new friend. The precise language harmonizes with clear, bright, and spacious illustrations, which are made using a collage technique. They enhance the text and create moments of surprise and unusual perspectives, which make the composition and the interaction of text and picture thoroughly successful. (5+)

96

Steinhöfel, Andreas (text)

Schössow, Peter (illus.)

Rico, Oskar und die Tieferschatten

(Rico, Oskar and the Deep Shadows)

Hamburg: Carlsen, 2008. – 220 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-55551-9

Friendship – Outsider – Child abduction

Rico calls himself »specially talented«, because he cannot think too quickly and his thoughts sometimes whiz wildly back and forth in his head like pin balls. Oskar is pretty clever, of tiny build, and always wears a blue crash helmet. Rico and Oskar live in Berlin, where Mister 2000 has been up to no good for a while, abducting children in order to blackmail 2,000 Euros from their parents. Suddenly Oskar, too, disappears. Courageously and with a detective's instincts, Rico starts his search, rescues him, and exposes Mister 2000. In finest Erich Kästner vein and with a lot of naïve wordplay and pitch-dark humour, Andreas Steinhöfel tells a gripping story about two outsiders, who in their hunt for the wrong-doer grow beyond themselves and become best friends. (10+)

97

Vinke, Hermann

Die DDR. Eine Dokumentation mit zahlreichen Biografien und Abbildungen

(The GDR. Documentation with numerous biographies and images)

Ravensburg: Ravensburger Buchverl., 2008. – 255 p.

ISBN 978-3-473-55116-3

German Democratic Republic <GDR>/History

Journalist and well-known non-fiction writer Hermann Vinke documents the fourty-year history of the German Democratic Republic in this book. Its coverage spans the ideological masterminds of socialism, the beginnings of the »worker and farmer state« in the forties, and the civil uprising of 1953, to the hardening fronts of East and West in the Cold War, the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the politics of reconciliation of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, and the Peaceful Revolution of 1989. A multitude of images enhance the concise, informative texts. The political dictatorship is described in all of its facets, power structures, and impacts on everyday life. In addition, personalities – ideologues and state-loyal politicians, as well as dissidents – are introduced, who give a face to the no longer existent state. (11+)

98

Wegenast, Bettina (text)

Meyer, Kerstin (illus.)

Hannah und ich

(Hannah and I)

Düsseldorf: Sauerländer, 2008. – 28 p.

ISBN 978-3-7941-5196-7

Death – Loss – Grief – Friendship

Before Hannah is run over by a truck, she and the narrator are best friends. They trade stickers and often »play funeral.« Then Hannah is suddenly dead. At school there is a farewell celebration, but to grasp that one's best friend is no longer living – no, that's too much. The grief is tremendous and hurts. Hannah's friend does not go to her grave at first; one day she does go and can finally cry. She goes home, gathers a few grave furnishings that Hannah would have liked to have, and says good-bye. At the same time, she knows that she will always miss Hannah. The simple, childlike style and unreflective expression of feelings make the book feel authentic – a feeling underscored by the hand-written insertions and doodles. (7+)

99

Werner, Brigitte (text)

Müller, Birte (illus.)

Kotzmotz der Zauberer

(Kotzmotz the sorcerer)

Stuttgart: Freies Geistesleben, 2008. – 107 p.

ISBN 978-3-7725-2070-9

Sorcerer – Rabbit – Friendship – Zest for life

The sorcerer's shouting makes the walls of his hut shake. When he storms out into the woods, all of the animals except the little rabbit have made themselves scarce. The rabbit is scared, but he hops into the hut, which astonishes the sorcerer so much that he is at a loss for words. The rabbit, too, becomes queasy in the spooky house and easily understands that one would become ill-tempered in such a place. The rabbit unhesitatingly tears open all the windows and shows the sorcerer the colourful world. While at first the sorcerer bristles against so much joie de vivre, he soon cannot resist it. Before he knows it, the old grouch has become friends with the happy-go-lucky rabbit. The basic emotions are here described with much charm and many witty and poetic neologisms, and are enhanced by magical illustrations. (5+)

100

Werner-Lobo, Klaus

Uns gehört die Welt! Macht und Machenschaften der Multis

(The world belongs to us! Power and manipulation in multinational corporations)

München: Hanser, 2008. – 277 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-23100-9

Globalization – Capitalism – Exploitation

»This book will make you mad«, Klaus Werner-Lobo predicts in his preface. And he is right. His well-founded research indeed lays bare the complexities of the globalization »phenomenon« and shows how the rich industrial nations found their life of excess on exploitation, violence, and illegal manipulations. While the greed for profit of the global players is what leads to African children being sold as slaves for 25 Euros, the profit seeking is only spurned on by our own behaviour. For it is we that continuously demand »more« and »cheaper«. Werner-Lobo knows the effect of the facts that he presents. Dramatic and shocking, they cause disgust, outrage, but also feelings of guilt, and they wake up the drive to do something oneself. For this reason it is only sensible that aside from the informative texts the readers are given Internet links for further information and concrete everyday tips that can help to make the world a little more just. (13+) ★

Switzerland

101

Andres, Kristina (text/illus.)

Ich bin ein Wolf

(I am a wolf)

Zürich: NordSüd, 2008. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-3-314-01570-0

Wolf – Prejudice – Dream – Surprise

Every child knows that a wolf is big, scary, ravenous, and dangerous. Really? Here a wolf who is amiable, small, and friendly introduces himself. He always is in a good mood, even in the winter! Instead of howling dissonantly, the wolf sings beautifully. Sometimes, though, he wants to be a real mean wolf, who bares his teeth and scares animals. But that only happens in his dreams. This picture book captivates with its clear-cut composition, in which every sentence is flanked by a picture. Its nuanced game with contrasts and oppositions – prejudice versus reality versus dreams – and the cryptic, ironic erasings (priceless: the wolf as Red Riding Hood) is as strange as it is thought-provoking. (5+)

102

Böge, Dieter (text)

Mölk-Tassel, Bernd (illus.)

Was tun!?

(What to do!?)

Zürich: Bajazzo, 2008. – [33] p.

ISBN 978-3-905871-01-2

Career – Work – Leisure

What do people actually do the whole day? An interesting question, for after all everyone in the world is always doing something. Either one works for oneself or others – bakers bake bread early in the morning, carpenters build houses, firemen help people and animals in need, office workers organize and coordinate –, or one simply does nothing for a while, and that loafing is just as important as all the work. In addition to large-scale illustrations, which play with skewed perspectives and speech bubbles, the text is interspersed with little pictures. The whole-page illustrations are more than mere supplements to the »encyclopedia entries«; they captivate with witty, unexpected details that invite readers to marvel and to let their imagination roam free. (5+)

103

Kahl, Ernst (text)

Muggenthaler, Eva (illus.)

Papa, ich will einen Hund!

(Papa, I want a dog!)

Zürich: Kein & Aber, 2008. – [87] p.

ISBN 978-3-03-695251-2

Child – Dog – Pet

What child does not want a dog? Exactly! But when Papa starts counting how many different dogs there are, namely 310, then the girl's head soon starts to spin: big, little, friendly, aloof, fat, lazy, and nervous ones – how is one to decide? Better an ornamental fish, though there, too, one faces the torture of deciding. Only one option remains: one must pick a hamster – like Papa wanted from the start. Verses and language games, along with lively illustrations drawn with a dynamic line, wild collage, and much love of detail, make the book bubble with fun. The cherry on top is the inclusion of a whimsical flick book, in which the dog is eaten by the fish and the fish is eaten by the hamster. (4+)

104

Lindemuth, Thomas (text)

Lenz, Patrick (illus.)

Karl und Kumpel und viele Würste.

Eine Geschichte

(Karl and Kumpel and many sausages. A story)

Zürich: Atlantis, 2008. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-3-7152-0554-0

Vacation – Crowd – Escape – Moon – Surprise

Karl and his dog Kumpel look forward to their vacation. Unfortunately, first they whoosh right into traffic, and then people are lying like sardines on the beach. Because it is far too crowded everywhere, Karl plans to go to the moon next year. He makes a rocket, and up we go. On the moon, there is no one – until suddenly an armada of rockets spits out hordes of people. Time to scram! But the petrol for the space ship has run out. Karl and Kumpel sit tight; they have no money for more juice. Then Karl has an idea: they sell hotdogs – and because suddenly they're having so much fun, they stay on the moon. Part comic book and part activity book, the story presented here describes the happiness that one can find when things don't turn out as planned. (4+)

105

Stamm, Peter (adapt.)

Binder, Hannes (illus.)

Heidi. Nach Johanna Spyri

(Heidi. Following Johanna Spyri)

[Zürich] : Nagel & Kimche, 2008. – 41 p.

ISBN 978-3-312-00982-4

Nature – Mountains – Freedom – City – Compulsion

Who doesn't know her? Refreshing, sympathetic Heidi, who makes the grumpy Alm-Uncle laugh, who herds little goats and then has to move to the grey metropolis and almost dies of sorrow. As one of the internationally best-known children's book heroines ever, Heidi has nearly achieved the status of a national hero in her Swiss homeland. Now Peter Stamm and Hannes Binder have taken up the classic story of their fellow countrywoman. Stamm has very competently condensed Spyri's epically sweeping narrative. Worth noting are Binder's elaborate illustrations, as they refreshingly avoid typical Heidi clichés. The erasings, done in different formats with strong colour contrasts and connecting different perspectives, develop a dynamism and liveliness in spite of the abstraction caused by the stylization. (5+)

106

Zeller, Lydia (text)

Maslowska, Monika (illus.)

Suche Arbeit für Papa

(Looking for work for Daddy)

Zürich: Bajazzo, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-907588-90-1

Father – Son – Unemployment – Job hunting

Since Daddy lost his job, he only hangs around the house and bugs everyone. It can't go on like this, Oskar decides. And he also knows just what to do. Back when the cat disappeared, they posted notices, and then someone brought back the cat. So Oskar now pins up a sign reading: »Looking for work for Daddy« in the courtyard. Promptly, a neighbour phones and would like for Daddy to look at his broken car. And Daddy, who just got mad at Oskar, goes, repairs the car, and comes back whistling cheerfully. A quotidian, yet difficult and important topic is vividly presented here with cheerful pictures hinting at an optimistic happy end, which will have young and old smile. (4+)

Romance Languages

Africa

Benin (French)

107

Akligo, Joseph [et al.]

Mon livre. Huit histoires pour grandir

(My book. Eight stories for growing up)

Cotonou: Star Ed., 2008. – 130 p.

ISBN 978-999-1966-20-5

Africa – Girl – Sex education – Children's rights

Eight topics about which many girls in Africa have thought and must think about over the course of their lives are translated here by eight authors into stories. The goals of this collection of illustrated narratives, which came about in collaboration with a Belgian author and illustrator and a commission from the government of the Belgian region of Wallonia, are to broach urgent questions, as well as to free important, indeed vitally important, issues from taboos and to convey them in a manner suitable for children. How the body changes in puberty, how twins are made, how important it is for girls and women to educate themselves, or how one can defend oneself from harassment, are topics all dealt with alongside issues such as forced marriage and genital circumcision. The story about children's rights, supplemented by excerpts from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is also meant to be disabusing. In straightforward language, which does not shy away from concrete statements and knows no false shame, the book supplies answers that can help young girls in their coming of age. (8+) ★ ◆

Burkina Faso (French)

108

Kombasséré, François (text)

Zongo, Jean-Paul (illus.)

La petite fille aux oiseaux

(The little bird girl)

Ouagadougou: Éd. Découvertes du Burkina, 2008. – 15 p.

ISBN 978-2-915991-23-9

Marriage – Groom – Search – Bird

Timpoko, the prettiest and nicest girl in the city, feels especially drawn to birds. When it comes time for her to marry, a few men introduce themselves to her. But neither the upright farmer, nor the very handsome man, nor the young, very rich and well-dressed prince can conquer Timpoko's heart. While the other girls of the village

marry, she remains at home with her parents, who begin to get worried. But then the young woman meets a man who is neither rich nor handsome. But hundreds of birds circle above him... This picture book presents a simple story that seeks to show how feelings are not only influenced by external circumstances, but also by a crucial shared vision of a harmonious life together. (4+)

Côte d'Ivoire (French)

109

Grah, Serge (text)

Assemian, Annick (illus.)

Kolou le chasseur

(Koulou the hunter)

Abidjan: Anness Éd. [et al.], 2007. – 31 p.

ISBN 978-2-916781-03-7

Prejudice – Ingratitude – Betrayal – Jealousy

When the hunter Koulou returns from his hunt one day, he meets a snake, a rat, and a human who need his help in order to get out of a hole. The snake promises him immortality and immunity, the rat riches, while the human invokes brotherly love. In his goodness, Koulou helps all three. Shortly thereafter, he becomes the richest man in the kingdom. But the human, whom he rescued from the hole, is jealous of him, and there are consequences to this. The African narrative, which is accompanied by cheerful, warm-hued pictures, plays with symbols and reminds the reader to approach without prejudices: the »false« snake and the »mean« rat keep their promises, while the human »brother« betrays. (6+)

La Réunion (France) (French)

110

Ecormier, Joëlle (text)

Madoré, Modeste (illus.)

Complètement zébré

(Completely striped)

Saint-André (La Réunion): Océan-Éd., 2008. – [36] p.

(Océan Jeunesse)

ISBN 978-2-916-53351-3

Zebra – Herd – Fashion – Herd instinct

Raoul loves to be a zebra. He loves to graze with his herd and to be exactly like the other zebras. The »zebra outfit« fits perfectly, it lengthens the silhouette, hides the problem areas, and makes an elegant, athletic figure. But Raoul is a

dreamer and misses that his »colleagues« have in the mean time switched style. Instead of the black and white stripes, the zebras now suddenly sport a brown snail pattern. By the time Raoul has changed his look, however, the brown snail pattern is already »old hat«. Will Raoul become a fashion victim? The topics of fashion and being »with it« are broached in an animal fable in this picture book. In this way, they are approached from different points of view and – certainly in part due to the colourful and energetic pictures – wittily satirized. (4+)

Europe

Belgium (French)

111

Andriat, Frank (text/illus.)

Aurore barbare

(Barbaric dawn)

Namur: Mijade, 2008. – 189 p.

ISBN 978-2-87423-018-9

Latin America – Village – Massacre – Survival

Somewhere in Latin America, soldiers exterminate an entire village. »Leave no trace behind«, the leader commands, as he has the maltreated corpses thrown into a pit and the village burned to the ground. The children Eusebia, Tonio, Paco, and Pepito survive and gather ten years later to honour the dead and to act against the instigators of the massacre. What is unusual about this young adult novel is that even the dead have a word. In a constant change of perspective, the dead and the living speak respectively in the first-person voice, so that the reader is thrown into the midst of the horrendous events. The connections and the atrocities thus gradually close in on each other, so that the tension is preserved until the end and the emotional impact remains strong. (12+)

112

Herbauts, Anne (text/illus.)

Les moindres petites choses

(The littlest things)

[Bruxelles et al.]: Casterman, 2008. – [26] p.

(Les Albums Casterman)

ISBN 978-2-203-00963-9

Garden – Moment – Time

Madame Avril (Mrs. April) lives alone in her house in the midst of plants and animals – that is the whole story. This picture book comes to life not through an action-packed

story content; it comes to life through »les moindres petites choses« (the littlest things). It is day and it becomes night; clouds draw, and it rains. Madame Avril is sometimes sad, sometimes happy; she waits, reflects, sits with her rabbit in her lap in the garden, looks out and thus comes to know the world. Lingering in the moment can be cognitively grasped by means of the brief poetic-metaphorical text, visually by means of the loving detail of the warm-hued illustrations, and tactily by means of carefully opening the triptychs. It is a big book about the seemingly little things in life, which every reader might experience differently in his or her reading. (5+)

113

Ramos, Mario (text/illus.)

Le roi, sa femme et le petit prince

(The king, his wife, and the little prince)

Bruxelles, Paris: École des Loisirs, 2008. – [32] p.

(Pastel)

ISBN 978-2-211-09093-3

King – Queen – Prince – Visitor – Companion – Repetition – Children's song

The French children's song »Lundi matin« (Monday morning) teaches kids about the days of the week. Mario Ramos makes the modernity, impertinence, and absurdity of the well-known text obvious in his humorous picture book. The king, his wife, and the little prince wish to pay someone a visit on Monday morning. But as that person is not at home, they come back later... and then again later – each day returning with a new companion. The simple, black and red pictorial language draws out spontaneous laughter with its unexpected comedy: be it the forceful queen who towers over the king, or the prince who always gets on his mother's nerves with his playing and singing. As the number of companions rises, so does the suspense, which culminates in an astounding finale. (3+) ♦

114

Tasset, Éric

Dardéa <proper name>

Bruxelles: Alice Éd., 2008. – 314 p.

(Thomas Passe-Mondes; 1)

ISBN 978-2-87426-078-0

Parallel world – Grandmother – Grandson

Naturally Thomas gets upset when the Brutoni brothers bug him and his friend Pierric again. But aside from that, the fourteen-year-old, who lives with his grandmother since the death of his parents twelve years prior, leads a contented life. Everything changes, though, when he

discovers that he has the ability to walk through walls and reach a meadow in a parallel world. In the mysterious world *Anacalis*, he meets strange creatures, gets to know the »Animaville« *Dardéa*, a gyroscope-shaped »live city« that floats in the air, and meets the brave *Ela*. In the first part of the series *Thomas Passe-Mondes*, we become acquainted with an exciting fantasy world along with the protagonist, in an accessible and gripping style. (12+)

France (French)

115

Besnier, Michel (text)

Galeron, Henri (illus.)

Mon Kdi® n'est pas un Kdo

(My shopping trolley is not a toy)

Urville-Nacquerville: Møtus, 2008. – 69 p.

(Pommes pirates papillons)

ISBN 978-2-907354-91-2

Supermarket – Shopping

A can containing »Mon Kdi® n'est pas un Kdo« (»My shopping trolley is not a toy«) and labelled with a sticker depicting a man pushing an overflowing shopping trolley – the cover-image of this book hints cleverly at its content: thirty poems and illustrations that »spin« the mundane supermarket experience in a humorous and artistic way. »The supermarket can offer surprises and magic to make grocery shopping less irritating,« the author states. And so out of banal processes and circumstances – like the path to the check-out, or the gigantic assortment of cosmetic products that promise fantastic results – aphoristic, punning and onomatopoeic verses are made, which are interpreted by surreal, black and white illustrations. (6+)

116

Bordage, Pierre

Ceux qui sauront

(Those who will know)

Paris: Flammarion, 2008. – 344 p.

(Ukronie) (Roman Jeunesse)

ISBN 978-2-0812-1169-8

Two-class society – Reading – Education – Power

What would have happened had Jules Ferry not introduced obligatory schooling in France in 1882? »Ukronie«, a new series that takes its cue from the young adult novel »Ceux qui sauront«, is based on the idea of imagining a world where some event or another of the past never occurred. In this case, the population would remain ignorant

without schooling. Knowledge and power are reserved for the king's court in Versailles. Jean, a boy of the people, and Clara, whose family is in the king's circle, belong to the few who dare to fight against this state of affairs. This excitingly told story leads young readers to see the necessity and the immense significance of education. (12+)

117

Bouché, Pascale (text)

Pommaux, Yvan (illus.)

Véro en mai

(Véro in May)

Paris: École des Loisirs, 2008. – 44 p.

ISBN 978-2-211-09171-8

France/1968 – Student protests – Strike – Revolts

The civil unrest, triggered by student protests in May of 1968, led to a week-long general strike in Paris that crippled the entire country. This book succeeds in making these revolts, which brought about long-term cultural, political, and economic reforms in France, relevant to today's children by mixing non-fiction with the fictional, quintessential family story of little Véro. The events of 1968 are situated within the time frame of 1944, the end of the war in France, up to 1969, when Neil Armstrong became the first man on the moon. What results is an informative and at the same time entertaining history lesson for children. (7+)

118

Brami, Élisabeth (text)

Lopparelli, Philippe (photogr.)

Amoureux grave

(Deeply in love)

Paris: Magnier, 2008. – 136 p.

(Photroman)

ISBN 978-2-84420-630-5

Photo – Correspondence – Puzzle – Identity

A series of photographs reach an author who uses them as sources of inspiration and connects them with the life of his hero. That is the idea behind the series »Photroman« (Photo Novel). Techno-parties and the rave atmosphere are linked to the story of Paul, a high school senior who experiences spiritual upset when he receives a photograph in an email from an unknown sender. When Paul answers with a poem, a fascinating exchange of image and text ensues, which throws him into an identity crisis. Just as for the protagonist space and time seem to come undone, the reader, too, is caught in the mysterious correspondence whose puzzle is ultimately not solved. (14+)

119

Causse, Rolande (text)

Rapaport, Gilles (illus.)

Ita-Rose <proper name>

[Paris]: Circonflexe, 2008. – [44] p.

(Aux couleurs du monde)

ISBN 978-2-87833-463-0

France – World War II – Persecution of the Jews – Concentration camp – Barbie, Klaus – Criminal trial

Shortly after the invasion of Paris by German troops in 1940, the Polish emigrant Ita-Rose and her husband Jacob have their fifth child. Then begins the Jewish family's path of suffering, which after persecution, escape and arrest temporarily ends in Villeurbanne. There, however, Jacob and three of the children become victims of the now infamous SS leader Klaus Barbie, known as the »butcher of Lyon«. The easy to understand, soberly composed text of this documentary picture book and the dark, sketch-like illustrations that look like stamps and are made using a mixture of photographs, black brush strokes, as well as colour splashes and prints, work to ensure that the life story of this Jewish woman, who fights at last for Barbie's verdict at age sixty-nine, touches the reader especially deeply. (8+)

120

Chapoutot, Johann [et al.] (text)

Badel, Ronan (illus.)

Europe. Mémoires profondes – Récits fondateurs des 27 États membres de l'Union européenne aux XXe et XXIe siècles

(Europe. Profound insights – Founding reports from the 27 member nations of the European Union in the 20th and 21st centuries]

Paris: Éd. Autrement, 2008. – 284 p.

(Autrement Jeunesse)

ISBN 978-2-7467-1170-9

Europe – European Union/History

Europe is often grasped only as an abstract and vague idea. This very informative non-fiction book comes to the rescue. In the first part of the book, facts and dates are represented based on nine historical events, which led to the composition of the EU as it is today; the appendix offers entries on the »founding fathers« and a detailed chronology. The main part presents the current 27 member nations by means of two characteristics. These could be historical and national particularities, for instance the Portuguese Revolution of the Carnations of 1974 and the Spanish tourism boom, or leading personalities like Charles de

Gaulle and Imre Kertész. Nine excursus, which explain European relations, as well as photos and attractive illustrations round out this recommendable book. (12+)

121

Chiche, Alain (text/illus.)

J'ai le droit

(I have the right)

Paris: Éd. du Sorbier, 2008. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-2-7320-3901-5

Children's rights

»I have the right«, is the first title of the series »C'est ma planète« (This is my planet), in which the author and illustrator fuses picture book and non-fiction book in order to begin to interest young readers in important social issues and sensitize them to current problems. He illustrates the text using a mixture of drawing, painting, and photography, thereby creating straightforwardly accessible, cheery and colourful pictures. Presented in the first-person voice, children's rights are pronounced that are globally recognized since the coming into effect of Convention on the Rights of Children in 1990 but unfortunately still often ignored. The abstract wordings are brought home in this way and invite young readers to enter into the discussion about their rights. (4+) ♦

122

Darwiche, Jihad (text)

Shafiey, Farshid (illus.)

Poupée de sucre. Contes de Perse

(Sweetie pie. Fairytales from Persia)

[Aubais]: Lirabelle, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-2-914216-84-5

Man-eater – Young woman – Ruse –

Sweetie pie – Love – Fairytale

A man-eater absolutely loves eating marriageable young women. To accomplish this he transforms himself into a good-looking young man and takes the chosen one to his place. None of them ever returns, until a young woman, with the help of a ruse, not only succeeds in surviving, but also in winning the heart of the man-eater, whom she has grown fond of. The touching Persian fairytale about the humanizing of a monster draws on material found in innumerable narrative traditions from the Middle East. In the »Story of Gilgamesh« and in »One Thousand and One Nights«, too, can be found initiations into humanity through the strength and love of a beautiful woman. Black-and-white as well as vibrant earth-tone illustrations skilfully invoke the atmosphere and emotion of the East. (5+)

123

Dautremer, Rébecca (text)

Leboeuf, Arthur (illus.)

Le loup de la 135e

(The wolf from 135th Street)

Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 2008. – 35 p.

ISBN 978-2-02-096919-2

New York – City – Grandfather – Grandson – Friendship – Little Red Riding Hood/Adaptation

What would be had Little Red Riding Hood lived in 1950s New York City? Perhaps the allusion to the fairy-tale is not apparent on first reading. With his old friend Chili Vince, the narrator recalls how they met: wearing his red clothes, he went to bring his grandfather, who lived at the other end of the urban jungle, a package and ran into the cool older gang leader Chili Vince, named the »Wolf«. Vince weaseled the grandfather's address out of the boy and got there before him... This book presents the story of a friendship with nostalgia and humour, alongside magical realistic pictures of Manhattan, Harlem, and Brooklyn, which the reader roams through as on a stroll. (5+)

124

Doray, Malika (text/illus.)

Non

(No)

[Nantes]: Éd. MeMo, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-2-35289-032-4

Self-awareness – Saying no

It's a question-and-answer game: The red pullover? No, the green dress. Carry? No, walk. A book? No, my book... This book for toddlers copes with the little conflicts that often form the greatest worries and distresses in the everyday life of very young children. Half pages, inserted in between two sturdy pages, connect the question with the answer. While the black contoured, vividly coloured illustrations reach horizontally across the double page, the short texts are vertically arranged and sometimes upside-down. In this way, the picture book becomes a toy that can be turned and rotated, read from front to back and from top to bottom. Recognizing oneself and the delight of saying no especially make up the charm of this book. (2+)

125

Guéraud, Guillaume (text)

Alemagna, Beatrice (illus.)

Oméga et l'ourse

(Omega and the she-bear)

Paris: Panama, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-2-7557-0293-4

Girl – Bear – Fear – Prey – Affection

Inspired by Edvard Munch's lithograph »Omega and the Bear«, Beatrice Alemagna and Guillaume Guéraud work through the opposed feelings of fear and love in an aesthetically powerful, large-format picture book. A giant she-bear that has her home in the mountain forests causes the people and the animals in the valley much fear and dismay. Not, however, the girl Omega. She observes the she-bear and dreamily thinks of her. One day, Omega throws herself into the soft arms of the wild animal, in order to explore the world with her and encounter the spirits of the forest. Striking pictures in oil, acrylic and pastel, embedded in collages, mirror the story arc of the text, which juggles the contrasts of near and far, rough and soft, big and small, dream and reality, and especially fear and unconditional love. The multiple layers at which the text and pictures operate will draw in young children and older ones, as well as adults. (5+) ★

126

Hammer, Béatrice

Kivousavé

(You know who)

Rodez: Éd. du Rouergue, 2008. – 285 p.

(Do a do)

ISBN 978-2-8415-6915-1

Family – Daughter – Mother – Self-discovery

A mother who abandoned her when she was two; a grandmother, cold and hate-filled, who harshly pursues this uncaring mother; a father who in the absence of this grandmother walks taller and approaches his daughter in ambiguous ways – that is the family life of the protagonist, who begins to write to her unknown mother at age eleven. Over the course of seven years, she describes her search for her past, her professional and private upheavals, and her first experiences with love. Even though she distances herself from her father and her grandmother, she realizes that for her own life it is necessary to understand the structures of her genetic family of origin. The story of the protagonist constitutes an intense psychological close-up view of the development of a young woman. (15+)

127

Jacques, Benoît (text/illus.)

La nuit du visiteur

(The night of the visitor)

Montigny-sur-Loing: Benoît Jacques, 2008. – 108 p.

ISBN 978-2-916683-09-6

Little Red Riding Hood <parody> –

Grandmother – Night – Visitor – Wolf – Identity

Exhausted, grandmother waits on tardy Little Red Riding Hood. Someone knocks at the door. »Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up«, grandmother calls out – or so it goes in Charles Perrault's well-loved fable. Here, however, she seems to be hard of hearing. Neither creativity and deceptive skill nor an increasingly loud, false voice – which, inventively rhymed, the typography makes nearly audible – can help the wolf. Dark black-and-white two-page spreads, which show the nocturnal visitor outside the door, alternate with brighter red, white and black two-page spreads that depict the grandmother. The illustrations, made using linoleum cut and ink, are reduced and at the same time powerful. The sumptuous composition of the book lends the reader a tactile delight in addition. (4+)

128

Rimbaud, Arthur (text)

Causse, Rolande (ed.)

Lemoine, Georges (illus.)

Les poings dans mes poches crevées.

Choix de poèmes

(My hands in my torn coat pockets. Anthology of poems) [Paris] : Gallimard Jeunesse, 2008. – 127 p.

(Collection Folio junior; 1483)

ISBN 978-2-07-061503-2

Rimbaud, Arthur – Life – Poetry

»I went off with my hands in my torn coat pockets.« An anthology in five parts introduces young readers to the French poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891). In »Chansons« (Songs), short, rhythmic philosophical poems are presented; »Poésies« (Poetry) radiates the magic of tremendous childhood visions. While in »Une saison en enfer« (A season in hell) and »Illuminations« (Illuminations), excerpts from Rimbaud's two known works can be found, in the final chapter, »Une vie comme un roman« (A life like a novel), the life and work of the poète maudit (ostracized poet) are described. The metaphorical, dream-like drawings made with ink, watercolour, and pastel engage with lines of Rimbaud's poetry and prose or take up motifs from his life, thus perfectly rounding out the poetry volume. (9+)

129

Serres, Alain (text)

Heitz, Bruno (illus.)

Comment apprendre à ses parents à aimer les livres pour enfants

(How to teach one's parents to like children's books)

[Voisins-le-Bretonneux]: Rue du Monde, 2008. – [32] p. (Kouak!)

ISBN 978-2-35504-043-6

Parents – Child – Children's book – Reading

The first picture book from the series »Kouak!« turns the tables: those normally teaching become the taught. Here kids tell their parents how great reading children's books can be, by dissolving the possible reservations and pre-suppositions of the adults. They explain to them that even their teacher gets shiny eyes when reading aloud. And a picture that shows an animal with a turd on its head is certainly less harmful than the fact that in real life a homeless person has to sleep next to a garbage bin. In the end, parents can also profit from children's books, because even they can understand a poem accompanied by a pretty illustration! The humorous texts as well as the inventive illustrations make a plea for reading appreciatively to young and old. (5+)

130

Turquin, Magali

Innocent

(Innocent)

Clichy: Éd. du Jasmin, 2008. – 63 p.

(Collection Roman Jeunesse; 9)

ISBN 978-2-912080-96-7

Rwanda – Hutu – Tutsi – Genocide – Survival

»Running. I am running away from the past that pursues me. I am running since 1994. I was a child then. Tutsi. In Rwanda everyone was running.« With straightforward, concrete language the protagonist describes the brutal events that he was forced to experience as a thirteen-year-old boy during the Rwandan genocide. The fast, breathless narrative rhythm mirrors his persecution and desperation: the fleeing of his family from the Hutus to a forested hill near his home city Nyamata; the murder of his family, and his chance survival. The story, embedded in a well-researched historical context, also pitilessly considers the liability of the church and the international community. In this way, the book inspires young readers to ponder large questions. (12+) ♦

Italy (Italian)

131

Calì, Davide (text)

Folì, Luca (illus.)

L' orso con la spada

(The bear with the sword)

Reggio Emilia: Zoolibri, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-88-88254-43-2

Environmental awareness –**Sense of responsibility – Bear**

In this picture book, original both in text and in illustration, the big brown bear, who thinks himself powerful and unconquerable, builds a beautiful fort in order to protect himself from his enemies, assuming there are such. Strong and wanton as he is, he derives pleasure in chopping down an entire forest just to prove his strength. A little while later, the high waters of the river flood his outpost, and he angrily starts to search for the guilty party amongst the little inhabitants of the forest, until he unavoidably discovers that he himself caused the catastrophe with his imprudence. (6+)

132

Franceschini, Paola (text/photogr.)

Con gli occhi di Miró

(Through Miró's eyes)

Bazzano (Bologna): Ed. Artebambini, 2008. – [64] p.

ISBN 978-88-89705-24-7

Miró, Joan – Art

This non-fiction picture book is dedicated to the Spanish artist Joan Miró. In it, one practically breathes the atmosphere of the works of the Barcelona-born artist – poetically abstract, pervaded with fantastical visions and a dreamlike flavour. It is a compelling travel chronicle about the cities that the artist visited in search of sources of inspiration for his very personal language, in which reality melds with dream, poetry with painting, and colours with music. The vibrantly coloured illustrations with their three-dimensional effect seem to flow in parallel with the imaginary world of Miró and fill the eyes and spirit of the viewer with wonder. (8+)

133

Giarratana, Sabrina (text)

Papini, Arianna (illus.)

Amica terra

(Friend Earth)

Firenze: Fatatrac, 2008. – 44 p.

ISBN 978-88-82221-62-1

Ecology

This picture book contains twenty-one little odes (to the air, the water, the clouds, the tree, the rocks, the snow, the sun, the rain, ...), which praise the wonders of the world entrusted to us. The poems are meant to convince children who are to preserve the world for future generations to protect and to increase the valuable bounty of nature. The poetic, delicate, atmospheric book is best suited to be read by children and adults together, in order to talk about the natural phenomena and to learn to understand them, in the hopes of still being able to reverse certain developments in time. The illustrations are kept to various opaque colour schemes and underline the importance of the topic. (5+)

134

Lavatelli, Anna (text)

Pintor, David (illus.)

La nonna in cielo

(Grandmother in heaven)

Roma: Ed. Lapis, 2008. – [28] p.

(I Lapislazzuli)

ISBN 978-88-7874-093-8

Fear – Death – Grandmother

Little Emma takes her parents' statement that »grandmother is in heaven« literally. And in her naiveté, she really goes out with her toy rabbit, full of confidence, in order to look into the spring clouds and spot grandma. And indeed – there she is in the heavens, happy and composed, vigorous and busy like she is when pursuing her favourite hobbies. So begins a lovely afternoon full of games and laughter. This wonderful story will surely not bring back children's grandparents who »have gone to heaven«, but it nonetheless allows them to know with a little imagination that those they love are happy and close by. David Pintor has furnished this imaginary being-together with peppy and lively pictures. (6+)

135

Masini, Beatrice (text)
Guicciardini, Desideria (illus.)

Amici per sempre

(Friends forever)

San Dorligo della Valle (Trieste): Einaudi Ragazzi,
2008. – 88 p.

(Lo scaffale d'oro)

ISBN 978-88-7926-721-2

Friendship – Respect – Multiculturalism

This volume contains eleven stories dedicated to friendship. It reveals the strong conviction of the author that it is necessary to support feelings of friendship always and under all circumstances, because friendship possesses the capacity to overcome distances and barriers, differences and misunderstandings. This occurs for example in the story »Le treccine« (The little braids), in which two coloured girls become friends by wearing the same hairstyle and draw in their other classmates, or in the story »Hugo«, in which two parents who are against pets are dumbstruck when they realize that their little daughter Irene has become fast friends with an imaginary dog out of protest. (7+)

136

Nanetti, Angela

Mistral <proper name>

Firenze [et al.] : Giunti, 2008. – 189 p.

ISBN 978-88-09-06157-6

Sea – Island – Love – Coming-of-age

This coming-of-age novel tells about the fate of Mistral. The passionate, wild boy is like the wind whose name he shares, and like the sea, which encircles the island on which he lives. It is a little and poor island, but for Mistral it represents a kingdom, indeed, the entire world. However, one day, Cloe arrives, the daughter of rich musicians who visit the island with their boat every summer. Through Cloe, who is so different from himself, Mistral begins to see the island with other eyes, as he now knows that something else exists on the other side of the sea that encloses him. And thus he begins to know life and love and to explore both. (13+)

137

Scuderi, Lucia (text/illus.)

Buonanotte Isabella! Una storia

(Good night Isabella! A story)

[Trieste]: Bohem Press, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-88-95818-02-3

(German parallel ed.: Gute Nacht Isabella!

Zürich: Bohem Press)

Fantasy – Dream – Fear – Falling asleep

Little Isabella is waiting to fall asleep. Half-asleep, she imagines grabbing onto the thread that she thinks is hanging from the ceiling. The thread becomes ever longer, it multiplies and tangles and then begins to take on human forms. In this way, a playmate is created who moves with her and is a lot of fun. Sometimes he forms a teeter-totter, sometimes a hula hoop, or he lets her balance, until Isabella, finally tired, is overcome by sleep. This is a fine, profound picture book that inspires the imagination of young children – the imagination that they need to master difficult moments over the course of their days. (4+)

138

Tessaro, Gek (text/illus.)

Il circo delle nuvole

(The cloud circus)

Roma: Fanucci, 2007. – [56] p.

(Kids)

ISBN 978-88-347-1356-3

Circus – Desire – Tolerance – Solidarity – Poetry

Giuliano, a very rich man, wants to buy everything, even the sky. In the Sky Circus, the clouds take on the appearance of fantastical persons, personified archetypes of human existence with their weaknesses and mistakes, but also their positive values. One can, for instance, discover acrobats who save one another by reaching out their hands over the abyss, or a strong man who not only lifts weights, but also the moods of forlorn feeling people. It is a wonderful circus full of dreams and hopes, which can not only belong to Giuliano however. Indeed, a sudden rain begins to muddle and destroy all the appearances. The text of this book is rhymed throughout. The poems are accompanied by colourful, humorous illustrations. (6+)

139

Tognolini, Bruno (text)
 Abbatiello, Antonella (illus.)

Tiriterè

(Twitter)

Modena: Panini, 2008. – [32] p.

(03 Zero tre)

ISBN 978-88-248-0375-5

Hearing – Self-awareness – Nursery rhyme

This cardboard book contains nursery rhymes that accompany the growing infant, encourage growing awareness of the people and little things in its immediate surroundings, and eventually, lead to the perception of its own body and further surroundings. This title is part of a new series initiated by the publishing house, which aims to systematically get parents to read to their children from a very young age on. Looking, turning pages, touching, playing with books, listening to words and sounds: these are indeed indelible emotional moments and necessary assumptions for the growth and the development of the intellect. In a very special way, this endearing and colourful illustrated book attempts to revive the dying tradition of passing on folk verse, here in the form of nursery rhymes. (2+) ★

140

Tomatis, Marco (text)
 Ghigliano, Cinzia (illus.)

Il formaggio. Una storia vera, anzi due

(The cheese. A story, in fact two)

Bra (Cn): Slow Food Ed., 2008. – 71 p.

(Per mangiare meglio)

ISBN 978-88-8499-171-3

Food production – Cheese manufacture

The true story of a family of livestock farmers and cheese producers in the Italian province Pistoia is the point of departure to talk about cheese. This important high-quality food, so richly represented in Italian gastronomy, features an impressive range of forms, places of origin, and taste profiles. This book lays out the production of cheese from its start to its finish as a food product. In this way, it is a valuable, informative tool for children today, who often no longer know the origin of many foods, as they are only familiar with the packaged goods on the shelves of groceries. Beyond merely transmitting knowledge, the book also gives suggestions and instructions for a true gustatory education. (8+)

141

Tomaz, Lucio (text)
 Cavandoli, Osvaldo (illus.)

Linea bestiale

(Animal line)

Roma: Gallucci, 2008. – [24] p. + 1 DVD

ISBN 978-88-6145-069-1

Animals – Line – Mood – Feeling

This volume pays homage to one of the greatest and most brilliant inventors of Italian cartoons, Osvaldo Cavandoli, who passed away recently, and celebrates his most famous character, »La Linea« (»The Line«). The picture book, which comes with a DVD that contains the original films, ironically and delicately shows graphic art inspired by the encounter between the »Line« and various animals: from a kangaroo to cows, from a brown bear that chases The Line, to a puppy that always licks it. The basic patterns of human existence as shown here will fascinate readers big and small. The whole palette of feelings, which can change from one moment to the next, are on display here. The Line is grumpy and angry, rapt and smiling, jeering, at times spunky, and always in danger of getting into a jam. (5+)

142

Vaselli, Ferdinando (text)
 Casavola, Valentina Gaia (ed.)
 Dido (illus.)

Sopra il cielo di San Basilio

(Over the sky of San Basilio)

Roma: Sinno Ed., 2008. – 78 p.

(Segni) (Zona franca)

ISBN 978-88-7609-132-2

City – Multiculturalism – Diversity – Integration – Friendship

This story, written in an unadorned, neorealist style, offers a witty, colourful and very direct cross-section view of problems in the Roman suburb San Basilio arising from the close proximity of countless nationalities to one another. The story centres on a school class, Grade III A, which is a microcosm of the suburb's very diverse nationalities and cultures: Albanian, Croatian, Philippino, Chinese, Roma, and naturally, Italian. Living together is not easy, it is full of rough spots and contrasts, and at the same time it is permeated with spontaneity and mutual understanding. The willingness to really accept another person, demonstrated better with concrete actions than with words, is illustrated by a soccer game, for instance. What is essential is the willingness of every single person to help another, so that the team is successful. (10+) ◆

Portugal (Portuguese)

143

Ondjaki (text)

Caiano, Rachel (illus.)

O leão e o coelho saltitão

(The lion and the jumping rabbit)

Lisboa: Ed. Caminho, 2008. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-972-21-2011-1

Pride – Trickery

The Angolan author Ondjaki adapts a text by his countryman David Yava Mwau for this picture book. The animal fable from the oral tradition of the Bantu people of the Luvale explains why the lion and the rabbit are not the best of friends. A long time ago, this was different, namely when the clever rabbit helped the hungry lion to a sumptuous dinner of meat by means of a sly trick. As the prideful lion did not thank him, however, the rabbit treated him to a lesson that he would not forget. Rachel Caiano's double-page illustrations give the picture book a special appeal. The line drawings, cast sketch-like onto the paper, make the images seem nervous and fleeting. At the same time, the broad brush strokes and bright areas in earth tones of the savannah make them seem powerful and dynamic. (6+)

144

Silva, Luís (text/illus.)

O livro da avó

(Grandmother's book)

Porto: Ed. Afrontamento, 2007. – [32] p.

(Tretas e letras; 52)

ISBN 978-972-36-0925-7

Grandmother – Grandson – Childhood memory

The adult first-person narrator constructs his inner picture of his deceased grandmother out of small remembered segments: her house, visits and goodbyes, family gatherings, anecdotes about the loving, but sometimes also stern old lady who lived in Africa for a time as a child. The seemingly spot-lit retrospections, which each fill only one double page, possess a lightly melancholic tenor, in which thankfulness for the shared experiences and sadness over the loss of the grandmother sound. The brief text is accompanied by large-format illustrations in a sprawling landscape format. The dominating brown tones suit the memories of a distant past well. The pictures are made lively through the changing perspectives, which aptly capture the child's view. (4+)

Romania (Romanian)

145

Docan, Crenguța H. B. (text/illus.)

Lupino sau minunata legendă a lupilor călători

(Lupino or the wondrous legend of the wandering wolves)

Iași: Institutul European, 2007. – 169 p. + 1 CD

ISBN 978-973-611-488-5

Wolf – Liberty – Domestication – Nature – Civilization

This exciting animal story takes us to a time when human beings began to domesticate wolves. Lupino, only a few days old, is separated from his parents and finds a wolf pack that adopts him. He moves on with them, always in search for adventures and his family. In a world in which there is no more room for wolves to roam freely and hardly a refuge from human threats, Lupino becomes the hero of his pack. He finds his blind father and also his mother, who lives in captivity protecting a human baby. She puts the enmity between freely living wolves and »house dogs« into perspective and becomes a symbol of hope for a peaceful living together of humans and wild animals. The included CD is an audio recording of the story. (7+)

146

Mihalache, Carmen (text)

Pascu, Anna [et al.] (illus.)

Îngeri, zmei și joimărițe. Mitologie populară pe înțelesul copiilor

(Angels, dragons, and scary ghosts. A folk mythology for children)

București: Ed. Humanitas, 2008. – 128 p.

ISBN 978-973-50-1944-0

Rural life – Angel – Dragon – Ghost

Even today in Romania, people in the country live in close connection with Mother Nature and have a peculiar grasp of space and time. Their world is filled with beings of a parallel world with whom they can take up contact, insofar as they believe in them. At any time, these beings with superhuman capabilities can helpfully or destructively interfere in human life and therefore demand special heed and respectful treatment. Carmen Mihalache delivers many portraits of such fabled, legendary creatures in this well-researched and appealing book. The accompanying illustrations were created by children in the »creativity workshop« of the Romanian folk museum and make the explanatory texts more accessible. (6+)

Spain (Spanish)

147

Ajubel (illus.)

Robinson Crusoe. Según la obra de Daniel Defoe

(Robinson Crusoe. Following Daniel Defoe's novel)

Valencia: Media Vaca, 2008. – [174] p.

(Libros para niños; 15)

ISBN 978-84-935982-0-4

Wordless book

Shipwreck – Island – Survival

There is scarcely a literary work that is so often re-edited, reworked, and parodied as Daniel Defoe's »Robinson Crusoe«. Nonetheless, the Cuban-born artist Ajubel, now living in Spain, succeeds in uncovering new facets of the classic. The textless version he has created is an exciting masterpiece. In the roughly eighty double-page illustrations, we see Robinson as if on the spectacular stage of wild, untamed nature, which itself becomes an agent and the second protagonist. The turbulent, deadly sea, the glowing beach, the lush, impenetrable jungle – all inspire feelings of loneliness, despair, fear, and anger. The dynamic pictures create tension, drama, and intensity through powerful, dynamic lines, shining colours, extreme angles and sudden shifts of perspective. For the viewer, the two sides of the place become practically tangible: an »uncivilized« rawness, paired with the overwhelming sensual beauty of tropical nature. (8+) ★

148

Aliaga, Roberto

Cactus del desierto

(Desert cactus)

Madrid: Ed. Siruela, 2007. – 100 p.

(Las tres edades; 146)

978-84-9841-034-1

Loneliness – Outsider – Differentness – Friendship

This story distantly but distinctly echoes the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale of the Bremen Town Musicians. Here, however, we have to do with an even more colourful bunch. A desert cactus, tired of the solitary life in a remote corner of the world, goes in search of the happiness that he expects to find at the sea but in the end unexpectedly encounters it there where he started from. On the way, he is joined by a variety of companions: a canary bird, a kite, a seal, and an old man. As different as these are in appearance and personality, they resemble one another in their yearning for friendship and security. With finetuned

humour and a sense for subtle overtones, this imaginative novel portrays the meaning of a life defined by affection and mutual respect. (7+)

149

Cortázar, Julio (text)

Urberuaga, Emilio (illus.)

Discurso del oso

(Reflections of the bear)

Barcelona: Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2008. – [24] p.

(Libros del cordel)

ISBN 978-84-96509-80-1

Bear – Night – House

The great Argentinean story-teller Julio Cortázar published »Historias de cronopios y famas« (Cronopios and Famas) in 1962. These stories offer glimpses into mundane, seemingly insignificant things and events, thereby transcending the barriers into the magical and the absurd. One of these stories, »Discurso del oso«, is here published for the first time as a picture book for children. A bear describes how he crawls up and down the water pipes of a house at night and explores the world of human beings with curiosity, amazement, and also impudence. Emilio Urberuaga has framed the short text within strikingly beautiful double-page illustrations. The intensely shining colours – the red of the bear's fur, the green and blue of the night sky, the yellow of the walls – and the unexpected picture cut-outs create a magical-poetic atmosphere. (5+) ●

150

Gómez Cerdá, Alfredo (text)

López Domínguez, Xan (illus.)

Barro de Medellín

(Clay from Medellín)

Zaragoza: Edelvives, 2008. – 146 p.

(Ala delta. Serie verde; 68)

ISBN 978-84-263-6825-6

Family – Violence – Criminality – Friendship

Andrés and Camillo live in a poor city district of Medellín, Columbia's second-largest metropolis. The ten-year-old boys spend the days wandering the streets. In a world that is filled with domestic violence, neglect, criminality, and hopelessness, their close friendship and love for their neighbourhood are the sole beams of light. When they steal and sell books from the public library in order to finance the alcohol consumption of Camillo's father, they come to a crossroads in their lives. The open ending allows for two options: hope for change or the

Romance Languages

possibility of failure. The story comes alive with the animated dialogue of the boys, who see and interpret the world through their own eyes. This persuasive portrayal of a difficult childhood is pleasingly unsentimental, while maintaining an optimistic tone. (10+)

Spain (Catalan)

151

Carrasco Inglés, Aitana (text/illus.)

Gran recull de mentides il·lustrades

(Big book of illustrated lies)

València: Tàndem Ed., 2007. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-84-8131-749-7

Lie – Upbringing – Discipline

This book presents a wild smorgasbord of lies. It rehearses untrue statements that adults use to intimidate and discipline children to make them obedient. »Chewing gum is elephant snot«, is one of the more harmless examples. But things get really nasty when parents and other adults make false promises, play things down, or threaten children with absurd consequences: »I will definitely not let go of you ...«, during a swimming lesson; »The needle doesn't hurt«, at the doctor's; or »If you aren't good, the bogeyman will come and get you.« The illustrations thwart the texts and uncover the deceit and hypocrisy of the liars. This is a funny and at the same time mischievous book guaranteed to provoke pleasant page-turning, discussion, and reflection in both children and adults. (6+)

152

Cela, Jaume (text)

Andrada, Javier (illus.)

El temps que ens toca viure

(The time that is for us to live)

Barcelona: Cruïlla, 2007. – 143 p.

(El vaixell de vapor. Sèrie vermella; 140)

ISBN 978-84-661-1768-5

Spain/1936-1939 – Civil war – Peace – Freedom

Realistic, sensitive, and with a feel for meaning between the lines, this novel describes the life of a family during the Spanish Civil War. While the father joins the troupes of the threatened republic, the rest of the family remains in Barcelona. Through the eyes of twelve-year-old Pep, the reader follows the horror of the war and the effort of the family to master an everyday filled with destruction, fear, hunger, and cold. By means of a sophisticated portrayal of the characters – whether it is the almost naive

attitude of the still unknowing child, the fragility of the mother, the gumption of the grandmother, who holds the family together, the scruples of the brave father, who stands before the dilemma of being forced to use violence in order to defend freedom –, Jaume Cela succeeds in creating an authentic picture of one of the darkest chapters of Spanish history. (12+)

153

Hernàndez Sonali, Lluís

Certificat C99+

(Certificate C99+)

Barcelona: La Galera, 2008. – 158 p.

ISBN 978-84-246-2946-5

Lifespan – Human being – Science –

Faith in technology – Self-determination

This science-fiction novel broaches a topic that is highly relevant against the backdrop of current scientific developments – particularly in the domain of the life sciences. The plot unfolds in a not too distant future in which it is not only possible, but altogether obligatory to pre-calculate the lifespan of every human being in order to guarantee a frictionless functioning of society. In short chapters that present the topic from the point of view of very different characters, the question concerning the limits of technological progress is very clearly raised. What is possible, and what is reasonable? At what point does the priority of the technologically possible lead to a loss of humanity and of the free self-determination of the individual? A gripping book, which invites its readers to reflect and embark on lively discussions. (13+) (Premi Josep M. Folch i Torres; 2007)

Spain (Galician)

154

Aleixandre, Marilar

A cabeza de Medusa

(The Medusa's head)

Vigo: Xerais, 2008. – 211 p.

ISBN 978-84-9782-900-7

Rape – Shame – Friendship – Self-confidence – Courage

Young adult novels about »difficult« topics often seem like big exclamation points between two covers. »A cabeza de Medusa« is also an issue-focused book, but here the tightrope walk between telling a compelling story and delivering a message is successfully accomplished.

Realistically, direct, and without shying away from taboos, Marilar Aleixandre tells the story of two friends who are close to graduating from high school and out of the blue one night are raped by two university students. The novel concentrates less on the crime itself and more on the consequences, such as their feelings of humiliation, shame, and impotence and the partly helpless or non-supportive reactions of their families and school. Even though this book does seem to make a plea at certain spots, it is convincing and deserves many female as well as male readers. (14+)

155

Fortes, Antón (text)
Concejo, Joanna (illus.)

Fume

(Smoke)

Pontevedra: OQO, 2008. – [36] p.

(Qontextos)

ISBN 978-84-9871-058-8

**World War II – Persecution of the Jews –
Holocaust – Extermination camp**

This excellent book for young and adult readers describes the Holocaust using powerful words and images. Without commentary and conveyed from the point of view of a child narrator, it depicts the transport in packed train cars, the short life in the camp defined by cold, hunger, illness, fear, and sadness, and finally the way to the gas chamber. Antón Fortes finds simple, appropriate words for the experiences and feelings of the unprotected and inapprehensive child. Joanna Concejo, born in Poland, has translated the text into gloomy pictures. The delicate, in part sketch-like drawings in grey and black with sparingly used faded blue, green and red hues seem fleeting and shadowy, like the smoke in the title. Besides using realistic pictures, she confronts the viewer with surreal phantasmagoria: disturbing images – like silent screams – for the actually/essentially non-representable horror. (9+)

156

Neira Cruz, Xosé Antonio (text)
Chao, Rodrigo (illus.)

O prodixio dos zapatos de cristal

(The miracle of the glass slippers)

Vigo: Galaxia, 2008. – [44] p.

(Árbore Musicontos)

ISBN 978-84-9865-141-6

Cinderella – Self-realization

The series »Árbore Musicontos« links in an attractive way the world of fairytale with the world of music. This volume presents the fairytale of Cinderella in a modified version. It is skilfully framed by a separate plot that takes place today and is about a girl whose greatest wish is to become a singer. Here, the glass slippers represent the wish and the possibility to realize one's potential in life. One can listen to the story on a CD included with the book. The words are underscored by excerpts from Rossini's opera »La Cenerentola«, performed by the Galician Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The double-page illustrations suit both the text and the music very well. Using expressive, almost grotesquely exaggerated mimicry and gesture, the characters act as if on a dramatically lit stage. (7+)

Switzerland (French)

157

Delaunay, Jacqueline (text/illus.)

Reine

(Queen)

Genève: Joie de Lire, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-2-88258-444-1

**Mountains – Cattle herding to highland pastures –
Cow – Rank**

The tradition of naming the winner of the annual cow contest »queen«, in conjunction with the herding of cattle to highland pastures, is still today kept alive in the Swiss Eringer Valley. The unique Eringer cows are a peaceful race, yet they vie aggressively for rank. For five years already, Lionne has been queen. But now the young shepherd Pierre wishes that his cow Saphir win. She was the favourite cow of his deceased mother, yet his father wishes only to sell her to the butcher. Animals, people, and landscapes are represented very elaborately and with naturalistic precision in this large-format picture book. In particular, the »close-ups« of human beings and cows are marked by a loving melancholy. (5+)

Latin America

Argentina (Spanish)

158

Aguirre, Sergio

El hormiguero

(The ant nest)

Buenos Aires: Grupo Ed. Norma, 2008. – 102 p.

(Torre de Papel: Amarilla)

ISBN 978-987-545-481-1

Ant – Nature – Horror – Persecution complex

This story, which begins like a harmless vacation tale, is not for the weak of heart. Omar drives alone to his aunt Poli, who lives in a comfortable house somewhere in the country. The aunt is affable and chummy; only her obviously very close connection to nature sometimes seems odd. Insecurity and fright silently invade this summer idyll in the form of ants. The animals – present yet not catchable – cause Omar's emotions to escalate from diffuse discomfort to utter dismay. In this unusual piece of children's literature, which stands in the tradition of Latin American authors such as Horacio Quiroga or Julio Cortázar, sparingly used fantastical and surreal elements create unsettling fissures on the surface of the real world. (11+)

159

Grau, Didi (text)

Montenegro, Christian (illus.) / Varsky, Laura (design)

Peleonas, mentirosas y haraganas

(Feisty, fibby, and lazy)

Buenos Aires: Ed. Del Eclipse, 2007. – [24] p.

(Libros álbum del eclipse)

ISBN 978-987-9011-89-8

Pugnacity – Misanthropy – Bridal quest

A trio of sisters like no other! The three dressed up misses Fulana, Zutana, and Mengana (Anyhow, Anytown, and You-know-who) are uptight, pretentious, and anything but lovable, until three men of the same name begin to court them and – all's well that end's well – end up tying the knot. The appeal of this travesty of the fairytale genre lies in the illustrations and the eye-catching design of the book's pages. The figures, stencil-like characters made out of geometrical forms and lines, recall two-dimensional paper dolls, which capture exceedingly well the character of the protagonists with their mannerisms. The typography, which makes use of the most varying font sizes and types, is just as playful. Its delightful interplay with the illustrations makes this picture book a true attention grabber. (6+)

160

Gusti (text)

Decis, Anne (illus.)

Mi papá estuvo en la selva

(My father was in the jungle)

Buenos Aires: Pequeño Editor, 2008. – 33 p.

(Incluso los grandes)

ISBN 978-987-1374-06-9

Jungle – Amazonia

The first-person narrator reports on his father's trip to »the mother of all jungles«, the Amazons. The father's experiences – encounters with snakes, spiders, birds and, of course, with people and their lifestyles – are described in simple words and linked to the personal world of the child. So, for instance, the boy, curious, unafraid, and without reservation, tries out the larvae-eating custom of the inhabitants of the Amazons, using earthworms found in his own garden. The simple colour illustrations on a lined background aptly play on the idea of an essay or diary entry written by a child. The author and illustrator offer an interesting mixture of non-fiction and fiction with this entertaining, respectful book. (5+) ♦

161

Wolf, Ema (text)

Tabaré (illus.)

La galleta marinera

(The hardtack)

Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2008. – 61 p.

(Pan flauta; 78) (Primera Sudamericana)

ISBN 978-950-07-2927-7

Sea – Seatravel

In the eight stories contained in this volume, Ema Wolf yet again demonstrates her special talent for absurd ideas, crooked characters, and imaginative nonsense. On a few pages each, she spins literary miniatures that should delight both young and old readers. She confidently helps herself to the most various of elements, among others history, the Bible, and ancient folklore. Thus we read in a passage from Noah's diary that he feels slightly overwhelmed by the capricious animal passengers on the ark and is plagued by the incompetent veterinarian Dr. Münzenmayer. Or we witness how a shrewd trade representative gets on board Christopher Columbus's ship – shortly before landing in America! – and peddles useful items such as a potato peeler and a set for preparing maté-tea. A great fun to read! (11+) ●

Brazil (Portuguese)

162

Colasanti, Marina (text)

Furnari, Claudia (illus.)

Poesia em 4 tempos

(Poetry in four times)

São Paulo: Global, 2008. – 43 p.

ISBN 978-85-260-1255-4

Poetry

The outstanding Brazilian author of modern fairytales, Marina Colasanti, is also a gifted poet. Here, too, she succeeds in transforming the everyday and the inconspicuous into lyrical linguistic images. She travels through memories and everyday themes: from World War II to shopping centres, from cooking and gardening to love and nature. The poems are deep and suitable for both young and adult readers, like the poem entitled »Under the hoofs«: Today / Sunday nights / in this quiet room / of this quiet house / on this quiet hill / time / once more / pretends to be still / while silent hours / pass / in a galloping run. The illustrations, in which Claudia Furnari avoids depicting the content simplistically and transparently, add a delicate touch to the poems. (9+)

163

Hetzel, Bia (text)

Massarani, Mariana (illus.)

Berimbau mandou te chamar. Sobre cantigas populares de rodas de Capoeira

(The berimbau is calling you. About Capoeira folksongs)

Rio de Janeiro: Manati, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-85-86218-42-2

Capoeira – Dance – Afro-Brazilian culture

This book introduces the famous Capoeira – an Afro-Brazilian art form that combines ritual fight, dance, and music – through a selection of traditional songs and colourful illustrations. In the past, it was used as a defence by slaves in the Brazilian state of Bahia. Forbidden for a long time, today it has become a sport practiced by children, adolescents and adults. The simple, stylised illustrations, which employ ornamental patterns that bring to mind the African influences on Brazilian culture, describe precisely the movements of the players/dancers as well as the characteristic Capoeira musical instruments: berimbau, mouth harp, African drum, and tambourine. (6+) ♦

164

Lacerda, Rodrigo (text)

Gallinari, Adrienne (illus.)

O fazedor de velhos

(He who makes old people)

São Paulo, SP: Cosac Naify, 2008. – 131 p.

ISBN 978-85-7503-664-8

Literature – Writing – Reading – Self-discovery

This novel relates the story of Peter, an adolescent in search of himself, who meets Nabuco, an ex-teacher who urges him onto a tortuous path. The boy starts with a new reading of Shakespeare's and other authors' works, until, in the middle of the labyrinth that Nabuco has planned, his vocation to be a writer is revealed. Rodrigo Lacerda writes brilliantly about the fascination of literature. His own career as a reader and his creative mastery of the language appear between the lines. Peter, the protagonist, gives a vigorous testimony in favour of literature and reading that certainly will attract young readers. »Fazedor de velhos« conveys the vitality of literature and will encourage young readers to discover the magic of the written art, to find themselves, and to understand others and the world. (12+)

165

Machado, Ana Maria (text)

Machado, Igor (illus.)

O pescador e a mãe-d'água

(The fisherman and the sea goddess)

São Paulo: Moderna, 2008. – 32 p.

(Série 7 mares)

ISBN 978-85-16-06037-4

Sea – Folktale – Legend

Hans Christian Andersen Award-winner Ana Maria Machado, besides her enormous work on books for young people, has dedicated herself to the re-telling of folktales and legends, especially from the Brazilian oral tradition. In this beautiful book, she proves once more her extraordinary skills to adapt those stories in a way that will appeal to today's young readers. This title is part of the series »Sete mares« (Seven Seas), which presents books with marine themes from several places and times, bringing together naiads, sirens, mermaids, and Indian and Afro-Brazilian goddesses. With strong colours and strokes, Igor Machado has created magnificent, atmospheric illustrations that accompany the poignant story about mystery, fidelity, and sea wonders. (8+) ♦

166

Moreyra, Carolina (text)

Moraes, Odilon (illus.)

O guarda-chuva do vovô

(Grandfather's umbrella)

São Paulo: DCL, 2008. – 36 p.

ISBN 978-85-368-0246-6

Grandfather – Granddaughter – Death

This beautiful picture book tells a sensitive story about the loss of a loved one. As a young girl, the first-person narrator and protagonist often visits her grandparents in the company of her father. The girl loves those visits, the delicious cakes made by her grandmother, and playing with her grandfather's umbrella. But the old man is always ill, and when he dies she receives his umbrella as a gift to remember him and the days at her grandparents' house. The text, consisting of short and easily understood phrases, takes on significance and emotion through the beautiful full-page illustrations. The cover design stands as evidence for the well-produced edition. (5+)

167

Rosa, João Guimarães (text)

Machado, Luiz Raul (selection)

Mello, Roger (illus.)

Zoo

(Zoo)

Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-85-209-1922-4

Zoological garden

The acclaimed Brazilian author João Guimarães Rosa (1908-1967) had a true love for animals. This interest is registered in the notes he made, throughout his life, in trips around the world and visits to zoos in different countries. From these texts, the specialist in literature and writer Luiz Raul Machado has selected some of the most unique passages, small phrases, and great thoughts, such as »The octopus has many hearts« or »The flight of sparrows writes words and laughter.« There is a lot of humour and poetry in almost all of the prose in this book, which is very attractive to children of all ages. »Zoo« is a toy-book with illustrations that defy the reader's eye. Roger Mello's markings and colours move in an imaginative way, highlighting what is typical in each species. The artist also did the graphic design, creating a book with pages that unfold in a large map to enhance the poetic tour through maestro Rosa's zoo. (6+)

Chile (Spanish)

168

Pelayos (text/illus.)

Trino de colores

(Bird song)

Santiago de Chile: Aguilar Chilena de Ed., 2008. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-956-239-545-8

(Alfaguara Infantil: desde 4 años)

Neighbour – Conflict – Peace – Cooperation – Colour

The Pelayos – Pepe the father and Alex the son – tell the story of three kings, who get along very well and nonetheless start a senseless fight. United by the wish of waking up to bird song, the red, the yellow, and the blue king together plant a tree at the shared border of their barely kerchief-size countries. But soon each wants the tree for himself, and it withers under the conflict. With unified forces the three rueful monarchs bring the tree back to flourishing, and from then on it delights the world with magnificent colours and twittering birds. The special appeal of this book resides in the clever illustrations. With their loving, whimsical details, they show what wonderful fruits can grow when human beings work together peacefully. (4+)

Colombia (Spanish)

169

Cajiao Nieto, Javier (text/illus.)

Planeta tierra planeta vida. Pasado, presente y futuro de la vida sobre la tierra

(Planet Earth Planet Life. Past, present, and future of life on earth)

Bogotá: Ed. B, 2008. – 96 p.

ISBN 978-958-8294-35-3

Environmental protection – Ecological equilibrium – Earth history

It is well known that our planet is in critical condition. But exactly what is happening? This attractively designed non-fiction book vividly depicts the consequences of life on earth being shaken out of its delicate equilibrium. It begins with basic facts and ends with everyday things. Earth history, the essential foundations for life on earth, food chains, the role of the human being, the exploitation of resources, pollution, global warming, species extinction, recycling – the author paints an unadorned yet not hopeless picture in the seven chapters, which he has illus-

trated with many simple drawings. The book makes clear that the human responsibility to do something to protect the blue planet rests both on the individual and on the group. (10+)

Martinique (France) (French)

170

Bardol, Christian / Bellemare, Huguette / Emmanuel-Émile, Marlène

Aimé Césaire, Plume ébène. L'œuvre de Césaire à la portée de tous

(Aimé Césaire, ebony feather. Césaire's works for everyone)

Case-Pilote, Martinique: Éd. Lafontaine, 2008. – 128 p. ISBN 978-2-912006-88-2

Césaire, Aimé – Blackness

Aimé Césaire – influential pioneer of African self-awareness, founder of the concept of »Négritude« (blackness), poet and politician from Martinique – is the focus of this book. Reconstructing the major stages of his long life (1913-2008), it brings his work and thought closer to a young audience. In addition, Césaire's example – illustrated, for instance, by excerpts from his poetic opus, plays, and speeches – is meant to inspire self-development. The portrait of this important historical personality is rounded out by a glossary, photographs, a quiz, an extensive bibliography, and teacher resources. (12+) ♦

Mexico (Spanish)

171

Luján, Jorge (text)
Grobler, Piet (illus.)

¡Oh, los colores!

(Oh, the colours!)

México, D.F.: Ed. SM, 2007. – [20] p.

ISBN 978-970-688-775-7

(English/Spanish ed.: Colors! – ¡Colores! Toronto:

Groundwood Books, 2008)

Colour – Nature – Poetry

Jorge Luján dedicates each of the four-line poems in this book to a colour. Relying on associative thought, he creates miniature, dab-like glimpses of nature. The softly flowing verses, about the blue expanse of the sky, the black dress of night, or the fruits of the orange tree shining like little suns, seem light and fragile. Just as delicate,

and yet containing great suggestive power, are Piet Grobler's watercolour spreads. Set off against the organically flowing background colours painted with broad brush strokes, one finds filigreed animals, plants etc.: little birds, gazelles, a tiny grasshopper, a snail, blossoms or a paddle boat almost seem to float across the pages. Poems and pictures together form a harmonious whole and create much room for looking and dreaming. (6+)

172

Zepeda, Monique (text/illus.)

Kassunguilà <proper name>

México, D.F.: FCE, 2008. – [42] p.

(Los especiales de A la orilla del viento)

ISBN 978-968-16-8620-8

Fish – Protection – Safety – Loss – Uprooting – Home

In taking hold of this book, it immediately becomes clear that something is askew. One must turn the book 90° in order to be able to read it and to look at its fascinating pictures. Monique Zepeda mounted the story in wood boxes that operate like three-dimensional stages and then photographed them. In few words, she tells how the peaceful existence of the fish Kassunguilà was disrupted from one day to the next. Uprooted, he makes his way to find his true self again and to arrange his life anew. The story is simple; the pictures, however, whose colours mirror the moods and spiritual states of the protagonist, are intriguing and rich with detail. Nails, paper umbrellas, stones, and parts of plants are purposefully arranged and possess symbolic meanings, the decoding of which one should allow some time for. (6+)

173

Zepeda, Monique (text)

Cicero, Julián (illus.)

Tigre callado escribe poesía

(Quiet tiger writes poems)

México, D.F.: Ed. El Naranjo, 2007. – [62] p.

(Luciernagas)

ISBN 978-968-5389-50-1

Meaning of life – Finding oneself – Identity

As a child, it is not always easy to understand the world and to find answers for the questions that whirr around in one's head. The protagonist and first-person narrator of this picture book is a boy who watches the world through a tiger mask. With his own words, which are like poetic verses, he tries to figure out the world and his place in it. Where do I come from? Am I really me? How would my

life be if I were different? How do we find each other after death? What if the chair were called »table«? These associatively connected thoughts inspire the readers to generate their own questions. The imaginative illustrations in warm, intense colours skilfully translate the content of this philosophical picture book. (7+)

Venezuela (Spanish)

174

Bermúdez, Beatriz (text)

Sorg, Walter (illus.)

Un mosquito enamorado

(A mosquito in love)

Maracay: Playco Ed., 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-980-6437-83-8

Warao <people> – Mosquito – Metamorphosis – Love

The Warao Indians are one of the largest indigenous peoples of Venezuela. Residing in the Orinoco Delta, their life, as well as their oral narrative tradition, are strongly influenced by the omnipresent water. This picture book describes a creation myth that explains the mass expansion of mosquitoes and other insects along the Orinoco. According to the story, it all goes back to one mosquito that, a long time ago, falls in love with the Warao girl Mayito. He takes human form and marries her; at night, however, he changes back and each time sucks a little more of his wife's life out of her. When Mayito's sister discovers the secret and throws the mosquito into the fire, clouds of insects swarm out of the ashes. Among the double-page colour illustrations that accompany the text, the ones that show the mysterious double nature of the amorous mosquito are especially noteworthy. (6+)

North America

Canada (French)

175

Delaunoy, Angèle (text)

Delezenne, Christine (illus.)

La clé

(The key)

Montréal: Éditions de l'Isatis, 2008. – [32] p.

(Tourne-pierre) ISBN 978-2923234-37-3

War – Forced displacement – Refugee – Death

Before being forced from the homeland, there was grandparents' house, the sun, olive and orange trees, and grandmother's laughter. But the war first took the men and then the homeland away. Escape, refugee camps, and the new home at the other end of the world, where the fight against cold and loneliness continues, make the women sad and hardened. The key to the house in the homeland is kept as a symbol for the hope of return. The rhythmic text of this prose poem describes in simple yet gripping words the fate of a displaced girl, and ends with a conciliatory visit to the old homeland. With great artistic and technical creative richness, the illustrations express childish light-heartedness, the horror of the war, and the desolation of fleeing. This picture book is dedicated to women and girls who have had to leave their homelands, key in hand, and courageously begin again in another place. (6+) ★ ◆

176

Quattara, Vincent

La vie en rouge

(Life in red)

Saint-Lambert (Québec): Soulières, 2008. – 156 p.

(Collection Graffiti; 46)

ISBN 978-2-89607-083-1

Burkina Faso – Woman – Repression – Gender role

Yéli divides the life of a woman into four »bleedings«: circumcision, first period, defloration, and childbirth. For Yéli, there could be no way out of the traditional fate of a woman born in a village in Burkina Faso: circumcision, forced marriage, and submission to the husband. Now in her old age, she wants her suffering, her voice, and her sexuality to be heard. The author, who advocates for the liberation of women from false religious and moral traditions in the preface, describes not only the injustices of a society dominated by men, but also tells of a romantic love and the life story of a courageous woman, which invites hope for change. (15+)

177

Ouimet, Josée

La fille du bourreau

(The daughter of the executioner)

[Montréal]: Hurtubise HMH, 2008. – 186 p.

(Collection Atout; 125)

ISBN 978-2-89647-103-4

New France/1695 – Society – Exclusion – First love
New France in the year 1695. Charlotte, the youngest daughter of the executioner of Québec City, suffers from the ostracism that her family experiences because of her father's profession. At the same time, she is ashamed of her mother who has been convicted for trading in stolen goods and her sister who drinks and prostitutes herself. She dreams of an honourable life with a respected man by her side. She then finds it difficult to reveal her true identity to Daniel, who has just arrived from France and does not seem to know anything of her family. The portrait of the young courageous woman is convincingly embedded in the historical context. The well-researched novel is based on a true story and accurately presents historical figures and events, such as the Governor of New France and the conflict with the Iroquois. (12+)

178

Pasquet, Jacques (text)

Pratt, Pierre (illus.)

L'étoile de Sarajevo

(The star of Sarajevo)

Saint-Lambert (Québec): Dominique et Compagnie, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-2-89512-572-3

Bosnia-Herzegovina/1992-1995 – Civil war – Destruction – Peace

»Earlier, Amina was a magician. She pressed on a button and the light went on, she called to her parents and they appeared immediately.« Now everything is different in her home town of Sarajevo: Amina sits in the basement, there is war, and Papa is gone. She does not want to sleep. She wants to leave. But outside, monsters have done their misdeeds: broken houses, uprooted trees. Even the library, the »Palace of 1001 books« is destroyed. This large-format picture book sensitively tells about the fears of a child who escapes into memories in order to cope with the gruesome present. Dark illustrations, which express the horrors of the war without depicting them concretely, alternate with bright pictures that portray the recollected scenes and the hope for peace. (3+)

Denmark (Danish)

179

Algren, Johanne

Louis <proper name>

København: Phabel, 2008. – 189 p.

ISBN 978-87-7055-247-9

Puberty – Transgressing limits – Criminality

Louise – called Louise – comes from a Danish middle-class family, against whose conventions she is constantly rebelling. She hates her »dictator father« and her absent mother. Instead of going to school, she smokes pot, does cocaine, and drinks. She steals and sleeps with random guys. When she falls in love with the petty criminal Isak, she wants to participate in a planned robbery with him – just for the rush. The raid ends badly, Louise ends up in youth prison, and how it continues is left open. The directness of the first-person-narrative and absence of authorial comments compel readers to take a position. They are forced to come to grips with Louise's behaviour, which is amoral and egoistic, but in the end must be taken as a plea for recognition. (14+)

180

Herzog, Annette (text)

Wichmann, Kamilla (illus.)

Mor græder

(Mother is crying)

[Risskov]: Klematis, 2008. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-87-641-0289-5

Family – Divorce – Grief – Consolation

Because Papa is leaving her, Mama begins to cry. She cries and cries – so much that the meatballs in the pan are swimming in water and she can't read a bedtime story because her eyes are »as red as strawberries«. Signe and her little brother – the narrator – think that things cannot go on in this way and decide to do something: they help out with the household, make jewellery, and Signe knits a micro miniskirt. Coerced into putting on this hand-knitted »belt«, Mama's mood improves – in part because on the street good-looking men now check her out. Thanks also in part to the illustrations, this picture book presents an increasingly common issue humorously, but not in the least bit flippantly, by taking children's strategic solutions seriously. (5+)

181

K., Oscar (= Ole Dalgaard) (text)
Karrebæk, Dorte (illus.)

Børnenes bedemand

(The children's mortician)

[København]: Gyldendal, 2008. – [58] p.

ISBN 978-87-02-06498-8

Death – Compassion

Oskar K. certainly has a penchant for the macabre in his unusual books. He has been in creative partnership with Dorte Karrebæk for some time now. With this story, too, one can prepare oneself for something bizarre. But as strange as the profession of Mr. Jørgensen may seem in the context of a children's book, the story takes on humanity. One day, the mortician has to prepare a girl who had frozen to death, and his friend helps him. A dog runs up, recognizes the girl, and leads Mr. Jørgensen and his friend to three homeless boys, who follow the mortician to his home. The farewell song, which all sing at the end for the girl, sounds as pure as angels' voices. Karrebæk shares Dalgaard's weakness, or better strength, for the macabre. Her illustrations are invariably surprising. As caricaturing as they are, they touchingly accompany the story, which ends with five »silent« pictures that non-verbally show the burial. (8+) ★

182

Pedersen, Anne (text/illus.)

Find ostetyven, Snus!

(Find the cheese thief, Snus!)

[Risskov]: Klematis, 2008. – 30 p.

ISBN 978-87-641-0302-1

Dog – Police – Criminal chase

The story starts with sirens – duty calls policeman Kurt and his dog Snus to speed to Ole's cheese shop, cleaned out by a cheese thief. Ole mandates Snus to nose about and start the search. The trail leads out of the shop onto the street, onto the sidewalk, into the sewer, and then out again. Snus sniffs ahead and Kurt runs after him – but what is this? Suddenly, they are back in the cheese shop, and there, in a mouse hole, three fat and full mice are crouched over some cheese rests and are rubbing their tummies. Snus succeeded in finding the cheese thieves and Ole is satisfied. With few words and large-scale comic-like illustrations, Anne Pedersen succeeds with this quick-paced, exciting and funny story. (3+)

183

Pedersen, Irene

Asfalten brænder

(The asphalt burns)

København: Høst & Søn, 2008. – 146 p.

ISBN 978-87-638-1026-5

Violence – Group pressure

That not only dictatorial states rule over people and that inhumane uses of power can occur anywhere on a small-scale, is persuasively demonstrated by the author in her novel. A youth centre in Copenhagen is closed down and scheduled for demolition. Many so-called autonomous youths demonstrate against this, their tactics becoming increasingly aggressive. The police close off the quarter. Lan, who lives in the closed-off area, hides Naja from the police, and falls in love with her. She is however the girlfriend of the leader of the »autonomous youths«, Micha, who is also staying at Lan's with his core group. Drawn into the ways of the »autonomous youths«, Lan participates in their actions, throws rocks, lights cars on fire, until he recognizes that he has put himself under the rule of a dictatorial leader. (14+) ♦

184

Winding, Thomas (text/illus.)

Mester mellem himmel og jord

(Master between heaven and earth)

København: Høst & Søn, 2008. – 78 p.

ISBN 978-87-638-0993-1

Old age – Life – Death

Thomas Winding's fifth book »for and about his little dog« is also his last, for the author passed away in summer 2008. Mester the dog has grown old – like his master, who admits that he «is not the youngest anymore» and sleeps more than before. Winding proves here once more his mastery of dry humour. In the conversations between master and dog and in the interspersed stories, different human characters are portrayed and thoughts about life and death, heaven and earth find their proper, not too ponderous weight. Still, the book moves the reader, especially as one becomes aware that Winding is actually concerned with questions of fate not only for Mester's but also for his own sake, and answers them in a consoling manner. The book is illustrated once more with Winding's own drawings in sparse, unerring pencil lines. (10+)

Finland (Finnish)

185

Katajaviuri, Riina (text)

Savolainen, Salla (illus.)

Pentti miesten Lapin-reissulla

(Pentti goes to Lapland with the men)

Helsinki: Tammi, 2008. – 31 p.

ISBN 978-951-31-4119-6

Growing up – Lapland – Encounter with nature

Kalle Pentti goes on a »male bonding trip« with his grandpa and his nine-year-old uncle. After an exciting train ride, the three arrive in wintry Lapland, where Opa's friends are waiting for them at a campsite. For Pentti, a new time full of new experiences is beginning. He must survive without a television, a computer, or an electric light – instead there's a pit latrine. Pentti nonetheless enjoys the experience, for the men go to the sauna, ski, and sled. They eat fire-baked pancakes and visit a herd of caribou. When Pentti goes back home, he therefore has much to tell his parents. The text and the very true-to-life details of the drawings present in an amusing way part of the Finnish philosophy of life. Connectedness to nature and the wish to »go back to the roots« are portrayed very enjoyably in this book. (6+)

Greenland (Greenlandic [Kalaallisut])

186

Hardenberg, Julie Edel (ed.)

Various artists (text/illus.)

ABCT

(ABC)

[Nuussuaq]: Milik, 2007. – [60] p.

ISBN 978-87-91359-37-8

(includes Danish translation)

Alphabet

Eight artists from Greenland have created this alphabet book using collage partly combined with drawings, and have composed short accompanying mnemonic verses. The pictures, in the usual manner, bring together things and terms for each letter that begin with it. They are formed out of parts of photographs, arranged and photographed toys, pattern sheets and similar things, sometimes painted in watercolour or decorated with cartoonish figures. The somewhat chaotic seeming jumble also captures the general effect of the pictures, which nonetheless project something of Greenlandic atmosphere. (6+)

Norway (Norwegian)

187

Andersson, Rune Johan (text/illus.)

Far alene

(Father alone)

[Oslo]: Cappelen, 2008. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-82-02-28646-0

Father – Loneliness – Family – Memory

The angle of this little picture book with muted colours is unusual. It tells about a father who must make do alone, after his children and their mother are out of the house. He peers out of his little house onto the street, observes the school children and waits to see if anyone is coming for a visit. He thinks often about how it used to be, and searches for all kinds of distractions, but nothing really sticks. Out of the blue, his grown-up children come to visit, want to eat fish balls like old times, are noisy, and then are suddenly gone again. The old father is relieved when quiet is restored. The author has drawn the man exaggeratedly small, while the grey-brown of the pictures and the autumnal atmosphere represent the melancholic tone of this book and are meant as an appeal. (5+)

188

Heivoll, Gaute (text)

Lauvdahl, Øyvind (illus.)

Himmelen bak huset

(Heaven behind the house)

Oslo: Damm, 2008. – 100 p.

ISBN 978-82-04-13881-1

Falling asleep – Mother – Son – Death – Mourning

A little boy soothes himself before falling asleep by imagining his deceased mother coming to kiss him good-night. When that no longer helps, his father ties a long red thread to his toes, on which his child can pull when he awakes. In his dream, however, the thread does not lead to his father, but out into the woods to a hut, where he sees his parents cheerful like in old times and where he can talk with his mother. In the morning, the boy is happy and convinced that he has had a glimpse of heaven. This pictured story is told with the sparse monochromaticity and stereotypical idealization of faces used in classic comics. The red thread introduces a single additional colour. Through this pictorial reticence, the story gains in intensity and can enthrall the reader. (8+)

189

Henmo, Sverre

Natt på Frognerbadet

(Night at Frogner baths)

[Oslo]: Gyldendal, 2008. – 209 p.

ISBN 978-82-05-38442-2

Puberty – Love – Friendship – Trust –

Loyalty – Differentness

As hinted in the names of the two protagonists – Simon and Petra – this book is about trust, loyalty, and betrayal. Simon has many inferiority complexes. But in his male clique, he feels comfortable, even if he does not always agree with what the others say. These latent problems emerge into conflict when Simon falls in love with Petra. His friends find her freakish because she does not fit the popular ideal. Simon betrays her again and again – until she draws the line. Now he realizes how much she means to him, wins her back and stands by her. The personal voice makes Simon's moral dilemma comprehensible, while at the same time the striking symbolic language illustrates and comments on his development. (13+) ◆

190

Lindell, Unni (text)

Skavlan, Fredrik (illus.)

Nifse Nella og nattskolen

(Nifse Nella and the night school)

Oslo: Piratforlaget, 2008. – 145 p.

ISBN 978-82-8143-152-2

Ghost – Family – Everyday life

Family life, the everyday, and childlike curiosity are transposed into a ghost community that dwells in a fibre factory. The ghosts are of course only active at night, they go to night school and horse around, especially Nifse Nella. The author constructs whimsical episodes from the ghosts' conflicts with mundane human beings, especially with the members of the factory owner's family. The adventures are amusing and easy to read and culminate in the fact that the ghost girl Nifse seduces the shy factory owner's son to a secret trip to Paris. Boldly coloured caricatures loosen up the carefully designed and produced volume, which originates from a still young publishing house. (10+) ●

191

Midré, Markus (text)

Hartberg, Flu (illus.)

Muren

(The wall)

Oslo: Damm, 2008. – 174 p.

ISBN 978-82-04-14273-3

Politics – Isolation – Borderlines

An alien planet is divided by a high wall into two equal parts, which are both extensively urbanized. A young man begins to reflect on the cause and purpose of the wall. He is aware that in so doing, he is committing a political taboo, but he joins up with several like-minded individuals who want to breach the wall. In the last moment, he prevents the assault, in which people would be killed. One doesn't find out who lives behind the wall – presumably similar people as on the young man's side. The presentation of the wall as existing for its own sake enables this comic-like illustrated book to serve as an indictment against all radical borders that still exist today, be it in the form of real walls like in Korea, Palestine, or between the United States and Mexico, or in the form of virtual religious walls. (12+) ◆

Sweden (Swedish)

192

Norlin, Arne (text)

Andersson, Jens (illus.)

Ansats till övertramp. Allt om friidrott

(Running up to step over. All about track athletics)

Stockholm: LL-förl., 2008. – 109 p.

(Lätt läst: Fakta)

ISBN 978-91-7053-212-2

Track athletics – Lexicon

In this lexicon for beginner readers, Arne Norlin collects sports from the realm of track athletics – from the ultimate sport of the 100-meter sprint to the high jump and discus throw to the marathon run. In an entertaining way, Norlin portrays the origin and development of the various sports and explains, supported by the drawings of Jens Andersson, their motion sequences. Also presented are famous track athletes and their achievements, though mention is made of the fact that in some cases doping may have been involved. Norlin succeeds in describing even complicated things straightforwardly. Through his direct address, his readers quickly get the urge to try even hammer throwing or hurdle running themselves. (6+) ◆

193

Pohl, Peter

Anton, jag gillar dig!

(Anton, I like you!)

Stockholm: Alfabet, 2008. – 142 p.

ISBN 978-91-501-0961-0

Friendship – Neglect

Jojo adores Anton. Anton, soccer hotshot and generous gift-giver at school, keeps his friend in the dark about his family relations. His presents and possessions give rise to the suspicion that he is a skilled thief. During a visit with Jojo's family, he proves himself to be a brilliant magician who makes things disappear. This scene is one of the literary high points of the book. The suspicion against Anton, brought up carefully by Jojo's understanding father, is strengthened by Jojo's visit to the neglected apartment where Anton lives with his uncle. A short time later, Anton disappears, presumably to a correction school. Peter Pohl has this time put his exceptional authorial skill to the service of younger readers. Instead of treating problematic social relations unilaterally, he opts for a nuanced and complex literary rendering. In the end, the reader discovers that he has been fooled: Jojo's full name is Josephine, i.e. she is a girl! (10+) ★

194

Sjögren, Kristina

Hitta Felix

(Finding Felix)

Stockholm: Eriksson & Lindgren, 2008. – 137 p.

ISBN 978-91-7377-012-5

Siblings – Disappearing – Search

On his eighteenth birthday, Felix disappears without a trace. His mother and his sister Flipp are very concerned. When they find out that Felix went willingly, Flipp does not understand why he did it. Of course there were frequent fights, but does that mean one should pack one's bags and vanish without a word? Precisely because she and Felix always got along well, she becomes obsessed with the idea of finding her brother. For weeks, she skips school and wanders around in Malmö, until she ends up in the hospital after a life-endangering act. Flipp understands that she must learn to make sense of Felix's decision. Told in the first person and much like a novel written in diary form, Flipp's fears, as well as her growing to accept the loss of her brother, are believably portrayed. (13+)

195

Spolander, Jörn (text/illus.)

Cykla, panta och rädda an isbjörn

(Cycling, collecting deposits, and rescuing a polar bear)

Stockholm: Alfabet, 2008. – 63 p.

ISBN 978-91-501-0921-4

Environmental awareness – Guidebook

This little guide presents practical tips that literally every child can use in order to live more sustainably. Against the backdrop of the threat of climate collapse, often surprising suggestions for small, everyday behavioural changes are made. Divided into the categories of »Hemma« (at home), »Mat« (Food), »Åka och resa« (driving and travelling), »I skolan« (at school), »Lov, sport och fridtid« (vacation, sports and leisure), the tips are enhanced by pictogram-like drawings that complement the concise style. Playing with aha-moments instead of wagging a finger, one is called on to not shirk responsibility so easily. It becomes clear that everyone can do something, without suddenly having to turn one's whole life inside out. (7+)

196

Wirsén, Carin (text)

Wirsén, Stina (illus.)

Rut & Knut jobbar

(Rut and Knut are working)

Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2008. – [26] p.

(Rut och Knut tittar ut)

ISBN 978-91-29-66847-6

Profession

Picture books greatly influence the development of good artistic taste in children. Illustrators in Scandinavian countries, notably Sweden, have set high standards to avoid the typical all too cute, all too round style, especially in picture books for infants and toddlers (called »pekböcker« – »pointing books«, because they are often »read« by young children and parents by way of finger-pointing). Stina Wirsén's depictions of jobs are of the affable sort, with her spirited pen stroke and tender caricature using a gentle palette. Careers less familiar for this age, such as gym teacher, meteorologist, animal photographer, cook, and gardener, are introduced. The protagonists who are healed, driven, led, spoiled with delicious dishes, or photographed are toy animals of the most wondrous nature: little hippopotamuses, giraffes and others. (4+)

Slavic and Baltic Languages

Azerbaijan (Russian)

197

Kafarov, Rza Ragimovič

Verbljud, Krokodil i Pjatinica

(The camel, the crocodile, and Friday)

Baku: Dom Skazki, 2007. – 59 p.

no ISBN

**Everyday life – Interpersonal relations –
Differentness**

Even in Azerbaijani cities, camels are no longer a common sight. For this reason, the author of this simple, imaginative story has a city invite a camel from the zoo for a visit. The strongly anthropomorphized animal experiences everyday life in the unfamiliar environment. Later, a crocodile and a little bird named Friday join him. Gradually, relationships develop between the good-natured camel, the proud crocodile, and the little bird, as well as between the animals and the people of the city. Where such different characters meet, some mundane conflicts are of course unavoidable. (4+)

Croatia (Croatian)

198

Huseinović, Kašmir (text)

Petrlik Huseinović, Andrea (illus.)

Hektor i Leopoldina

(Hektor and Leopoldina)

Zagreb: Kašmir Promet, 2008. – [28] p.

(Biblioteka Iskrica)

ISBN 978-953-6613-99-9

**Industrial society – Loneliness – Escape from
the city – Philosophy of life – Wholeness**

This picture book closely looks at industrial society and modern civilization through the eyes of the mouse Hektor, who lives in a mouse city and works in a cheese factory. He suffers from the strict separation of professional and private life as well as from the social isolation of urban existence. One day, Hektor can no longer take the hectic life with all its pressures. He moves into the country and there finds both a small cheese shop to work at and also personal happiness. The tempera illustrations that accompany the story in bright colours have a cheery, naive touch. They create for the young reader an optimistic tone throughout, despite the unsatisfactory living conditions in the city. (3+)

199

Lovrenčić, Sanja (text)

Vončina, Pika (illus.)

Mjesec u prosincu. Dvanaest malih priča za sanjarenje

(The moon in December. Twelve little stories to dream by)

Zagreb: Autorska kuća, 2008. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-953-7199-41-8

Night – Moon

In these twelve imaginative December-themed stories, the author writes about children and their interest in the moon, about the man in the rainbow who delivers secret messages and gifts, about cows and pigs who accidentally end up on the moon, about the winter festival of the owls, about the mouse who is a painter and who uses the moon as a model for a giant cheese, about winter spirits and balloonists, about fairies, owls, dogs and cats and their experiences under full and new moons. This collection of gentle, partly realistic, partly fantastic bedtime stories will especially appeal to younger children. The watercolour illustrations show cheerful figures set off against a variously shaded night sky. (3+)

Czech Republic (Czech)

200

Hrnčář, Pavel (text)

Kukuvičová, Michaela (illus.)

Komínek & Budiček. Jak si padli do oči a další příběhy

(Chimney & Alarm Clock. How they noticed
each other and other events)

Praha: Labyrint, 2007. – 86 p.

(Raketa) ISBN 978-80-86803-11-1

Everyday life – Everyday object

These funny nonsensical stories are about the everyday life of two friends, Chimney and Alarm clock. The two anthropomorphized characters do not go on an adventure, they rather lead a totally normal – one almost wants to say boring – life. They behave like children who in play imitate adults. They meet each other, decide very formally to be friends, lead serious discussions, drive to the city with an American road cruiser, share secrets and sometimes are at odds with one another. The story thus touches on human relationships and demonstrates how they can be cultivated, and which mistakes can be made in doing so. The original graphics and collages emphasize the quirky character of the book. (5+)

201

Míková, Marka (text)
Čančíková, Darja (illus.)

Knihafoss

(Bookfoss)

Praha: Baobab, 2007. – 116 p. + 1 CD

ISBN 978-80-903276-0-3

Iceland – Imaginary trip – Enchantment

In this half-realistic, half-fantastical book with poetic dashes, seven-year-old Hredka flies into a foreign land on her skateboard. Temporarily transformed into a radish, she travels from place to place, peers into the houses of children, goes to a fish market, to the pool, and to the supermarket, and in this way gets to know the way of life in that country, which in the end turns out to be Iceland. The text invites readers to keep turning the pages thanks to its informational content as well as its skilled narrative style. The simple watercolour illustrations in often vibrant colours enhance the information about Iceland's natural and cultural landscapes, and lend the book, together with the well-planned composition of its text, its special appeal. We only learn towards the end of the book that the Icelandic word »foss« means »waterfall«. (6+)

202

Pe Trni Kl (= Petr Nikl) (text/illus.)

Zá hádky (= Záhádky)

(Riddles)

Praha: Meander, 2007. – [70] p.

ISBN 978-80-86283-57-9

Animals – Nonsense – Wordplay

»Riddles« continues the theme that painter, musician, illustrator, screen-play author, and performance artist Petr Nikl first took up in his »Linguistic fairytales« (2006). It is a complex work of art, which leads young and old readers into a world of playful fantasy. In the tradition of Christian Morgenstern and the Dadaists, Nikl tells amusing nonsensical stories in verse about real and imaginary animals. A part of the book works as a metamorphosis book that permits already strange-looking animals to be recombined into new fantastical creatures. Here, too, he is not satisfied with brief accompanying texts, but rather tells stories, in which he consciously plays on double entendre and ambiguities. (8+) (Magnesia Litera Book Prize; 2008)

Estonia (Estonian)

203

Jakobson, August (text)

Mildeberg, Jüri (illus.)

Eesti muinasjutud

(Estonian fairytales)

[Tallinn]: Tänapäev, 2007. – 151 p.

ISBN 978-9985-62-562-0

Social critique – Fairytale

The Estonian writer and Soviet politician August Jakobson (1904-1963) was a representative of socialist realism and is best known for his socially critical, strongly realist novels and plays. Especially after the Second World War, however, he dedicated himself more intensely to children's literature. In the present volume of fairytales, Jakobson reaches back to oral traditions and old myths and describes natural events and forces. He tells of human beings, dwarves, and ghosts, and their relations to one another. Many of the fairytales concern social injustice, just as his novels do. The especially beautifully designed and decorated volume is illustrated with surreal erasings, which convey a melancholic mood. (8+)

Latvia (Latvian)

204

Bankovskis, Pauls (text)

Neiburga, Katrīna (illus.)

Mazgalviši spēlē mājās

(The Pinheads play at home)

Rīga: Liels un mazs, 2007. – 100 p. + XVI p.

ISBN 978-99848-820-01-9

Parallel world – Differentness

A volume of short stories for children by Pauls Bankovskis (b. 1973) is already available in German translation. The present book is reminiscent of a notebook in which mysterious happenings are recorded. Six-year-old Anna discovers that not only human beings live in Riga, but also – somewhere between the levels of the Latvian capital – so-called Pinheads, who are not so different from human beings. The only thing they are missing is a face. But with Anna's help, this defect is soon corrected. In an insert in the middle of the volume, which recalls a very old book, the reader learns more about the history of the Pinheads. This entertaining book is illustrated with witty collages, which are put together from photographs of objects and wooden finds. (5+)

205

Beļševica, Vizma (text)

Pētersons, Reinis (illus.)

Patiess stāsts par Čingo Babu, Lielo Gliemezi und Jūras Karaļa bēdām

(The true story of Čingo Baba, the big snail, and the woe of the ruler of the seas)

Rīga: Liels un mazs, 2007. – 48 p.

ISBN 978-9984-9846-7-4

Crying – Sea – Adventure

Čingo Baba, the protagonist of this picture book that is meant to be read aloud with distributed roles, is a cry-baby, who cries about every little thing. He ends up getting into truly big trouble when the sea monster wants to force him to cry, so that it can use his tears as gurgling solution since his throat was damaged in gulping down fishing boats. As the son of a fisherman, however, Čingo Baba refuses this request. He gathers all his courage, even associates with the lord of the sharks, and survives this and many further adventures with the help of various residents of the sea. The whole-page illustrations offer sensational pictures of the world above and below the sea. (5+)

Lithuania (Lithuanian)

206

Jakimavičius, Liudvikas (text)

Lilis, Mantas (illus.)

Lapė ir kaliošai. Pasaka

(The fox and the galoshes. Fairytales)

Vilnius: Dominicus Lituanius, 2008. – 104 p.

ISBN 978-9955-811-03-9

Fairytales

»The fox and the galoshes« is the second book of Liudvikas Jakimavičius. The protagonists, highly anthropomorphized animals, regularly rely on trickery to achieve their goals or to get out of awkward situations. Their adventures in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius during the Christmas rush notably make evident the capitalist critique implicit in the stories. This appealing and original little book is illustrated with fun ink drawings. The chapter headings, which are embellished with cryptic pictographs that are explained at the end of the book, present a particular challenge to the reader. (6+)

207

Saja, Kazys

... kurio nieks nemylėjo. Romanas jaunam skaitytojui

(... the one whom no one loved)

Vilnius: Alma littera, 2008. – 125 p.

ISBN 978-9955-38-119-8

City – Fringe group – Orphanage – Country life – Family – Father – Son

The Lithuanian author Kazys Saja (b. 1932) wrote socially critical youth literature already in Soviet times. In this novel, he dedicates himself to the negative spin-offs of capitalistic civilization in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. While his mother works abroad, eight-year-old Sigitas is put onto the street to beg by his step-father. When the boy's mother is shot, he is sent to an orphanage. After his biological father is released from prison, the father, son, and the son's guardian encounter one another. Together the three drive into the country to the farm of Sigitas's grandparents, of which only the foundations remain. Nevertheless, the timidly forming family decides to start a new life there, whereby Saja gives his realistic story the possibility of a happy ending. (12+)

Poland (Polish)

208

Bardjewska, Liliana (text)

Krygowska-Butlewska, Elżbieta (illus.)

Bajka o kapciuszku czyli jak to z wdzięcznością było

(The fairytale of the little slipper or on the matter of gratitude)

Poznań: Mila, [2008]. – 43 p.

ISBN 978-83-926565-4-8

Cinderella <theme> – Slipper – Journey – Search – Fairytale

In straightforward, graceful language Liliana Bardjewska describes the wonderful story of the little slipper. As in the Cinderella fairytale, which in Polish differs only by one letter from this tale's title, the concern here is also a princess with only one shoe. But in this case, the main character is a little slipper knit out of wool that, with the help of a ball of yarn, goes in search of its brother. On the way, it serves as a bird's nest, a sack for a hamster's winter stores, and helps a tardy heron over winter. But all of these animals disappear without thanking. Every single page of this small-format book is lovingly designed. With

her spacious coloured drawings, the illustrator connects the Polish illustration style of the 1960s with innovative ideas and constructions. She brings threads, balls of yarn, and stitches to life and lets the different imaginative characters emerge out of them. (4+) ★

209

Tuwim, Julian (text)
Various artists (illus.)

Wiersze dla dzieci

(Poems for children)

Warszawa: Wytwórnia, 2007. – [138] p.

ISBN 978-83-923486-4-1

Poetry

The poet Julian Tuwim is celebrated as a national poet in his country. His children's poems, illustrated in the 1950s by Jan Lenica, Olga Siemaszko, and Jan Marcin Szancer, for example, are counted among the classics of Polish children's literature. Encouraged by two women publishers, seven young female Polish graphic artists and illustrators have translated selected poems of Tuwim anew into pictorial form. The resulting avant-garde art picture book bears witness to a brave, artistically ambitious illustration scene in Poland. The poem »Locomotive«, for instance, is pictured like a technical instruction manual, »Bird radio« is told with expressive watercolour drawings, and »The little turnip« is illustrated with dynamic, ephemeral drawings. In the tradition of the famous Polish poster art, a harmonious play develops between text and image, taking up the rhythm of the poems and carrying the reader through the book. (6+)

210

Wechterowicz, Przemysław (text)

Ignerska, Marta (illus.)

Wielkie marzenia

(Big dreams)

Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2008. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-83-240-0924-4

Dream – Wish

A sun that wishes for a pair of sunglasses, the wind that would love to swim once in his life, a dayfly that wants to live for two days, a well that longs for the ocean, or an eel that wishes to conquer Mount Everest – these are big dreams that can only find room in a big picture book. Under the heading »dreams«, Przemysław Wechterowicz has gathered little yearnings for the impossible and has invited the young illustrator Marta Ignerska to illustrate them. The picture book is as unusual as the texts: a large-

format book, filled with wild, nervous drawings and expressive watercolours. One senses the author-illustrator team's passion for the experiment. Together, they tear down many limits of the conventional picture book, which is something that only those who still have the courage to dream big can do. (6+)

Russia (Russian)

211

Machotin, Sergej A. (text)

Arsenjuk, Jurij [et al.] (illus.)

Progulki po lesu

(Walks in the woods)

Moskva: Belyj gorod [et al.], 2007. – 142 p.

(Moja pervaja kniga)

ISBN 978-5-7793-1373-5; 978-5-4895-00128-5

Forest – Animals – Plants

In the Soviet-era tradition of narrative non-fiction books, this volume contains legends, stories, fairytales, poems as well as factual information about the forest. Besides large and small mammals, from the bear and elk to the hedgehog and mole, birds, frogs, other amphibians, and snakes as well as insects and arachnids are featured. The author describes the various forest trees, mushrooms, and healing herbs, and beyond that offers information about protecting the environment and advice on proper behaviour in the woods. The very beautifully designed book contains illustrations by different Russian artists, the style spanning Romantic to Impressionist to photo-realist, and naturally there is no shortage of scientific depictions of animals and plants. (5+)

212

Silina, Ekaterina A. (text/illus.)

Zavodnaja kuročka. Zolotaja truba

(The wind-up chicken. The golden trumpet)

Moskva: Apriori-Press, 2008. – [48] p.

ISBN-978-591-3370-11-2

Fantasy world – Art fable

While searching for the lost key to her mother's wind-up chicken, Varja and Maks enter through a mysterious door into a fantasy world and travel from one fairytale land to another, from one adventure to the next. Just in time, they succeed in escaping back home, where the lost key also is found. In the second story, Varja and Maks attempt to steal back the lost tones of the golden trumpet from »tone stealers« and so save the world's music. Both stories seem

like short takes on romantic fairytales with hints of »Alice in Wonderland,« and are enlivened by the idiosyncratic mixed media illustrations, which underline the fantastical character of the stories. Ekaterina Silina has already illustrated books by Jonathan Swift, R.R. Tolkien, Otfried Preussler, Maurice Maeterlinck, André Maurois, and Grigorij Oster, among others. This is her first book with her own texts. (4+)

Slovakia (Slovak)

213

Liptáková, Slavka (text)

Lipták, Fero (illus.)

Chlapec bez mena

(The boy without a name)

[Bratislava]: Vyd. Slavka Liptáková, 2007. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-80-969794-7-9

Orphan – Name – Identity – Loneliness – Everyday life – Quest

In this fairytale-like story about a melancholy outsider who in spite of all life's pitfalls is happy, an orphan boy looks for his name. After the death of his grandmother with whom he lived alone, he first goes in search of his grandfather. When his grandfather drowns, he decides to enter the world and to establish his name. In this sophisticated picture book about the simple life of a solitary person in the country, the reader is guided towards the philosophical insight that there are never any truly satisfying answers to our questions; what is important is rather asking the right questions. Composed in bold colours and strong brushstrokes, the expressive, whole-page illustrations are inspired by folk art. (8+)

214

Palacková, Betka

Priatelía aragonitu

(The aragonite friends)

Bratislava: Sloart, 2007. – 222 p.

ISBN 978-80-8085-432-4

Friendship – the Supernatural – Flying – Phaeton <Planetoid>

With this story about two boys who, with the help of the rare mineral aragonite, wish to realize the human dream of flying, the young author offers a novel that need not shy from comparisons to internationally known works of fantasy literature. The two fifteen-year-old protagonists discover they possess abilities that »normal« people lack. Together, they set off on the tracks of their ancestors, who came to earth from the extinct planet Phaeton. Betka Palacková convincingly portrays her protagonists and their feelings and reactions. She succeeds in presenting well-worn themes in her own way, understated yet at the same time exciting, appealing and without any trace of excessive theatricality. (12+)

Other Languages

Belgium (Dutch)

215

Franck, Ed (adapt.)

Cneut, Carll (illus.)

Te veel verdriet voor één hart

(Too much grief for just one heart)

Leuven: Davidsfonds/Literair, 2008. – 334 p.

ISBN 978-90-6306-574-4

Shakespeare, William – Tragedy

This is a prose adaptation of the four most important tragedies of William Shakespeare («Macbeth», «King Lear», «Othello», and «Hamlet»), in which themes of life, death, love, and hate play important roles. Furthermore, we encounter motives like revenge, disloyalty, and striving for power. Ed Franck has succeeded in transposing the famous plays into modern prose that is very readable and stays true to Shakespeare's characteristic use of language. Just like in the original works, the stories have a compelling dramatic structure. At the beginning of every story, the characters are introduced by means of beautiful and expressive full-page illustrations. Since the tragedies are not easily accessible in their original version, this prose adaptation could help young people as well as adults to (re)-discover these timeless classics. This book is extremely well designed. (15+)

216

Moors, Silvie / Gouwy, Lieven (adapt./music)

Vervaeke, Geert (illus.)

Pinokkio. Een muzikaal verhaal

(Pinocchio. A musical tale)

Tielt: Lannoo, 2008. – [34] p. + 1 CD

ISBN 978-90-209-7989-3

Puppet – Disobedience – Odyssey

This is a wonderful interpretation of Carlo Collodi's famous work. The basic elements – characters, setting, and plot – of the classic story, first published in 1883, are taken into account. The rest is clearly new, but draws its inspiration from Collodi's text. An accompanying CD features twenty-four songs, which complement the text very nicely and offer much listening pleasure. Since only part of the story is included in the book, it only really comes to life when it is read while listening to the songs, which tell the whole story. Special illustrations, made using a stamp technique, round off the reading and listening experience. The authors have done a great job with this very special (audio-)book, which offers hours of fun to readers and listeners. (7+)

217

Tilstra, Harm

Onderwereld

(Underworld)

Hasselt: Clavis, 2008. – 128 p.

(Levensecht)

ISBN 978-90-448-0934-3

Friendship – Otherness – Individuality – Death

Warinder, crying with grief, winds up on a desolate peninsula and becomes friends with Yureck, the son of a gravedigger and the keeper of the graveyard. Together, they build a hut, while humming Bach, Mozart, and Schubert. Every time the clock strikes, they go inside and see a strange funeral procession led by a man with wolf eyes. One night, after Yureck's father has told them about the dead, Warinder sneaks to the graveyard, where he meets with dead people and listens to their stories. This atmospheric and philosophical story is written in precise poetic language. It is full of symbolism, deeper layers of meaning and peculiar, archetypal characters. Written for more experienced readers, this novel undertakes a quest for the essence of existence. (14+)

218

Verhelst, Peter (adapt.)

Cneutt, Carll (illus.)

Het geheim van de keel van de nachtegaal.

Naar »De nachtegaal« van H. C. Andersen

(The secret of the nightingale's throat. After H. C.

Andersen's »The nightingale«)

Wielsbeeke: De Eenhoorn, 2008. – 64 p.

ISBN 978-90-5838-507-9

Music – Freedom – Fairytale

A Chinese emperor has a dream of a new imperial garden to top all gardens. A simple gardener succeeds in making this dream reality. When the emperor hears a nightingale, he decides that music also has to be part of his garden. The bird is willing to sing, but he is also wilful. His music is unique, but untameable, and it remains unclear if the emperor will succeed in having the nightingale obey his wishes. This beautiful picture book is based on H. C. Andersen's well-known fairy tale. Peter Verhelst interprets Andersen's story in elegant, lyrical sentences and vivid images. His prose creates an enchanting rhythm and explores the magic of the repeated epithet. Carll Cneut catches the marvellous story in poetic illustrations (such as the one depicting the wealth of Chinese decorative art), ranging from festive exuberant colours to mysterious night black and dark blue. (6+) ★

The Netherlands (Dutch)

219

Beerten, Els

Allemaal willen we de hemel

(All we want is a piece of heaven)

Amsterdam: Querido, 2008. – 498 p.

ISBN 978-90-451-0619-9

World War II – Flanders – Rural life – Friendship

In 1943, Ward, like many young men in occupied Belgium, is stirred up to fight on the Eastern Front. While on leave with some friends, he witnesses an attack on resistance members, during which someone gets killed. Ward is accused of the murder by his former friend Jef. Jef becomes the hero, but when Ward finally returns to his village in 1947, the facts are misconstrued in the court trial against him. In this voluminous young-adult novel, the lives of a couple of young people in a Flemish village in (post-)war times are described in an engrossing way. They are confronted with guilt and betrayal and repeatedly face difficult decisions. The atmosphere of the times is well captured in the story and the characters are psychologically extremely well developed. The brilliant story, told from ever-changing perspectives, will completely absorb the reader, who will not put down the book until having turned the very last page. (14+) ★

220

Brogt, Janine (text)

Posthuma, Sieb (illus.)

Coppelia

<proper name>

Amsterdam: Querido, 2008. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-90-451-0586-4

Ballet – Plastic surgery – Marriage – Lovesickness

Everyone is looking forward to the marriage of Zwaantje and Frans, but on the evening before the big day, Frans falls in love with beautiful Coppelia from the new beauty salon. When Zwaantje infiltrates the salon, she discovers the evil plans of doctor Copelius; his female assistants and Coppelia turn out to be puppets, which he wants to make human by giving them a real heart, for example the heart of Frans! This is an extraordinary picture book of royal grandeur, based on a ballet performance of the Dutch National Ballet, for which the illustrator designed the sets. Over the lively coloured illustrations, spread across both pages, characters are drawn with black ink against a softly coloured background, like for a set design. (6+)

221

Dam, Arend van (text)

Wolf, Alex de (illus.)

In een land hier ver vandaan ... De hele wereld in vijftig voorleesverhalen

(In a country far away from here... the whole world in fifty stories for reading aloud)

Houten: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 2008. – 141 p.

+ 1 poster

ISBN 978-90-475-0592-1

History

In fifty stories, this book tells about special events, places and people from all over the world: the Egyptian pyramids and the buildings of Gaudí, for example, the terracotta army of the first emperor of China and the life of Calamity Jane, the origin of Mickey Mouse's or the discovery of the great barrier reef. Four to thirteen fairy-tale-like stories with dialogs are included per continent. Expressive, mostly full-page watercolours accompany the text. The stories offer an intriguing view of the world's history. An enclosed world map, on which the place of every event is displayed, makes this a very useful and interesting non-fiction book. (10+)

222

Haeringen, Annemarie van (text/illus.)

De jongen die zijn brood knipte

(The boy who cuts his bread)

Amsterdam: Leopold, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-90-258-5245-0

Imagination – Friendship

A boy always cuts the crusts off his sandwiches, and one day he cuts up his play area – the floor carpet – to meet his own wishes. In his imagination, he even changes the outside world: first come dogs and a cat, next come a hedge and uniformly looking cars; ultimately, he cuts out a girlfriend and a pink cloud. They all get a unique identity by means of his scissors. In this special picture book, the illustrations are made using various techniques. The magnificent design and the subtle use of patterns and colours keep giving the young reader an opportunity to discover something new. Text and illustrations fit each other very well in this fairy-tale-like book in which a young boy changes the world into his own with his pair of scissors. (4+)

223

Jonge, Harm de (text)

Venius, Fiel [i.e. Fiel van der Veen] (illus.)

Tjibbe Tjabbes' wereldreis

(Tjibbe Tjabbes's journey around the world)

Houten: Van Goor, 2008. – 134 p.

ISBN 978-90-475-0412-2

Expedition/18th century – Imaginary animal

In a made-up »Journael« (an eighteenth-century Dutch word for newspaper), a diary is the centre of attention, in which Professor Tjibbe Tjabbes from Leiden reports about his journey around the world between 1774 and 1777.

He is in search of unusual animals for two merchants who think to have gotten a message from God to build a second ark. Tjabbes is amazed by the animals he discovers and describes them in »Het Handtboek Uijtsonderlijke Beesten van het Aertrijck« (»Handbook of the world's most unusual animals«). This results in beautiful descriptions of fantasy animals, which are portrayed in great drawings and paintings. The old maps and photos of gadgets from the story make this an intriguing and colourful publication, which will draw readers in, just as if all had been reality. (9+)

224

Meinderts, Koos (text)

Fienieg, Annette (illus.)

Lucas in de sneeuw

(Lucas in the snow)

Rotterdam: Lemniscaat, 2008. – 89 p.

ISBN 978-90-477-0024-1

Father – Son – Death – Mourning – Winter

The father of ten-year-old Lucas has passed away, and on December 31st, Lucas sneaks out of the house early to have a walk in the snow. He thinks about the year in which so much has happened. When a friend asks how he is, he answers: »Snow has fallen«, which means life has become a bit nicer again and has brought something new to him. Lucas remembers the time he saw his father embracing the neighbour warmly, and how he heard that his little sister was unplanned. In this tremendously well-written story, a difficult theme is taken up in a way that is comprehensible and tangible to young readers. The colours red and white play an important role: white for snow and for new life, and red for blood and for the lips of the neighbour. The illustrations are paintings in soft colours that amplify the atmosphere of the story. (10+)

225

Schutten, Jan Paul (text)

Teng, Paul (illus.)

Kinderen van Nederland

(Children in the Netherlands)

Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2008. – 157 p.

ISBN 978-90-468-0419-3

The Netherlands/History – Childhood

This book tells the history of the Netherlands through stories about children from ancient times through World War II. It starts off with Yde, a girl who lived in the region of Drenthe approximately 2,000 years ago and who had to live by nature's laws. Sometimes the stories are about fairly unknown children, like the cabin-boys of Bontekoe, but there are also famous children, like Willem van Oranje (William of Orange). In every story, a child is the starting point for a story, which offers a lively retelling of a part of history. The clear, detailed pencil drawings in black and white give a good illustration of life at the different times. At the end of the book, there is an index, in which the most important names and happenings from the stories can be found. This book perfectly demonstrates that non-fiction books do not have to be boring. (9+)

226

Valckx, Catharina (text/illus.)

Otto spaart schelpen

(Otto collects shells)

Amsterdam: De Harmonie, 2008. – [33] p.

ISBN 978-90-6169-879-1

Animals – Collecting

Otto the duck collects shells. He is the only one who keeps finding the same kind of freshwater shells. His friends Dinie (a little bird) and Binkie (a mouse) think his collection is rather boring. Thus, Otto intensely searches for a different kind of shell, finds a snail-shell, and gets to know a snail family that uses freshwater shells as beds. Since they do not have enough of these shells, Otto finds a solution to their problem. This pleasant picture book features pencil drawings that have been coloured with soft watercolours. The illustrations succeed very well in showing the emotions of the various characters and perfectly complement the text. The text on its own is simple but vivid thanks to the use of many dialogues. (4+)

Other Languages

227

Veldkamp, Tjibbe (text)

Smit, Noëlle (illus.)

Hotze de botskabouter

(Hotze the bumping pixy)

Haarlem: Gottmer, 2008. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-90-257-4430-4

Vehicle – Pixy

Hotze is a careful pixy (he carries a helmet and a pixy belt in his car), but one day, he hits a plant by accident. After this, he keeps on hitting things and being careless until the whole pixy village is involved. The text of this picture book, filled with colourful illustrations, lends itself to be read together with a child, because it invites interactive reading. The various fonts of the clear and short text support this. Many details of the pixy world are depicted in the illustrations, including things like pixy garbage and old crockery. This is a picture book that both young children and adults will have much fun with. (4+)

The Netherlands (Frisian)

228

Wyttsma, Baukje (text)

Heijde, Carla van der (illus.)

Koesboek

(Bedtime book)

Ljouwert: Afûk, 2008. – [35] p.

ISBN 978-90-6273-772-7

Bilingual text: Frisian/Dutch

Cuddle toys – Going to sleep – Sense of security – Nursery rhyme

This bilingual picture book (Frisian-Dutch) for young children is about cuddle toys that help children fall asleep at night. All the toys – including thirteen animals, including a monkey, a zebra, and a duck, two puppets, and a hugging hanky – are each introduced with a short poem. Mostly, the perspective is that of the child, but sometimes the toys themselves speak. The beautiful poems give a description of the looks of the various toys, sometimes along with an explanation of the special sense of security that these »sleep helpers« give. The full-page illustrations perfectly complement the feelings of the different poems. (2+)

Hungary (Hungarian)

229

Békés, Pál (text)

Szabó, Levente (illus.)

Lomtalanítás a Fehérlófia utcában

(Bulk rubbish day on Son-of-the-White-Horse Street)

Budapest: Csodaceruza K., 2007. – [32] p.

(Csodaceruza könyvek)

ISBN 978-963-06-2608-8

Bulk rubbish – Collecting – Recycling

Like everywhere in Hungary, the date for bulk rubbish collection marks a big event for the inhabitants of Son-of-the-White-Horse Street. Everyone drags things that have become useless out of basements, attics, and apartments and puts them in front of the house. A giant mountain of broken, used, faded, and dented objects soon amasses on the sidewalk. But as soon as it is dark, everyone comes back onto the street in order to sift through the rubbish piles. One man's trash is another man's treasure. Everyone finds something useful, or at least an object of which one can say: »This ought to be good for something.« After a short time, nothing is left for the rubbish collection the next morning. Large-scale, sparingly coloured illustrations aptly capture the humorous tone of this whimsically exaggerated everyday story. (7+)

Greece (Greek)

230

Autzēs, Merkourios

Ostrako sta malliā

(Shell in her hair)

Athēna: Psychogios, 2008. – 295 p.

(Neanikē logotechnia)

ISBN 978-960-453-340-4

Greece/History – Everyday life

A seashell serves as the link between four girls and mark their lives in different ways: symbol of communication and strength for the inhabitants of the prehistoric hamlet of New Nikomideia, the shell later becomes source of inspiration for the creation of Macedonian King Philip the Second's helmet and the headdress of the women of Roumlouki, and finally ends up as a rare museum artefact. Filinna, Verino, Chrisavgi, and her great-great-granddaughter Avgi, come to know, each in their own time, what destiny has in store for them. The Greek region of Roumlouki is their playground and the setting for them

to experience battle, war, hate, love, and romance. In this fluid four-part novel, the readers come to know the everyday lives and times of four unforgettable female characters embracing life, love, as well as to understand their struggle for survival, prosperity, and progress. (12+)

231

Barella, Angelikē (text)

Baburē, Eliza (illus.)

Mia paraxenē mera

(A strange day)

Athēna: Metaichmio, 2008. – 45 p.

(Diabazō istories: 7+)

ISBN 978-960-455-426-3

Nature – Environmental awareness

»Nobody will ever forget that day. No one could describe what had happened. Young and old stood in the shopping mall and could not believe the evidence of their own eyes. It was really unbelievable!« What would happen if Nature decided to express itself in a different way and to make fun of people in order to rouse them to thinking and action? This novel is about what would happen if Nature got angry because of people abusing it and thus, on the 5th of June – when celebrating World Environment Day – decided to »play« with them in a non-injurious way. The animals are the ones who first take action to make those people think who, still being indifferent, go on torturing Nature through their behaviour. Elisa Baburē's illustrations complement the text in a lively way. (7+)

232

Benierēs, Manos (text)

Gusēs, Spyros (illus.)

Super gatoi, supā skuloi

(Super cats, useless dogs)

Athēna: Minōas, 2007. – 205 p.

(Synchronē logotechnia gia paidia)

ISBN 978-960-699-642-9

Animals – Human behaviour

What might happen when a house cat falls in love with a stray cat? How many times can a dog detective be disguised within half a minute? Can your parrot arrest two bank-robbers? In this novel, full of adventure, emotion, and action, the animal protagonists, struggling for their survival, show all kinds of human behaviour. The book, which can be read by readers of all ages, is a journey into the world of dreams and shows a satirical panorama of our times, relaying a number of social messages. (Greek Women's Literature Company Award; 2007) (10+)

233

Denezakē, Liana (text/illus.)

Papabenetiu, Errika (text)

Phraules, batomura kai treis stagones meli

(Strawberries, raspberries, and three drops of honey)

Athēna: Libanēs, 2008. – 59 p.

(Paidikē bibliothēkē)

ISBN 978-960-14-1833-9

Healthy food – Fairytale

Everything goes well in the Land of Rosy Pleasure, whose inhabitants live care-free, laughing, singing, and celebrating all the time. As long as the pyramid, which the first Fairy Queen offered to the Rosy Blood King centuries ago is kept safe, nobody has to be afraid of anything. However, the Triglyceride Witch, using her magic filters and getting help from the evil Fat Guy, manages to destroy the general bliss. The sky darkens, the gurgling waters of the rivers do not flow anymore, the inhabitants of the kingdom sleep all day and night, the houses are covered with cobwebs, and children are not happy anymore. The Chickpea Prince and his beloved friend Rosy find a way to save their land. This tender literary fairytale for children indicates in a funny way the value of healthy food. (7+)

234

Mpogdanē-Sugiul, Despoina (text)

Chadulu, Katerina (illus.)

Musikat – ena teras angiōtiko apo ta alla

(Musical – a monster unlike the others)

Athēna: Minōas, 2008. – 30 p.

(Mikroi anagnōstes: 7+)

ISBN 978-960-699-678-8

Music – School

Timoleon – although thought to be fearless – is scared to even think of the new music teacher at school. He imagines her as a monster wearing a pointed black hat where a wild black cat dwells. The rumour has it that Musical – the music teacher and the heroine of this story – is a strange and strict teacher, but things seem to be different as soon as the children get to know her. Musical, as well as the magic of music, finally give the children occasion to feel love and happiness. The author, a music teacher herself, has written a particularly tender story so as to help children to overcome their fear of music. Katerina Chadulu's expressive illustrations liven up the story and add an extra dimension. (7+)

235

Papatheodoru, Basilēs (text)

Mpulumpasēs, Petros (illus.)

To megalo taxidi tēs kinezikēs papias

(The great journey of the Chinese duck)

Athēna: Kastaniōtes, 2008 – 150 p.

(Neanikē bibliothēkē; 244)

ISBN 978-960-03-4692-3

Sea – Journey – Mystery – Ecology – War

This book, full of adventure, mystery, suspense, humanity, and ecological worries, is based on a real event. In 1992, the cargo of a trade ship – 28,000 yellow rubber duckies – was dispersed in the rough seas of China. Fifteen years later, the ducks – faded in colour by the sun and having travelled all around the world drifted by the sea currents, make their appearance somewhere near the English coast. During all those years, a number of scientists, exploring the secrets of the sea currents, had been observing them. In this book, the readers discover the secrets of an imaginary duck that accompanies the plastic ducks. In a lively and elegant way, the author makes the readers companions on this strange journey. The protagonists – although imaginary – seem just as »real« as the facts within the framework of this unpredictable story. (10+)

236

Petrobits-Andrutsopulu, Lotē

Ē prophēteia tu kokkinu krasiu

(The red wine prophecy)

Athēna: Patakēs, 2008. – 295 p.

(Synchronē logotechnia gia neus)

ISBN 978-960-16-3028-1

History – Peace – Love – Romance

Seventeen-year-old Olga, hurt because of her boyfriend's indifference, follows her father on an excursion to the legendary Byzantine city of Meleniko that today belongs to Bulgaria and is named Melnik. There, her acquaintance with Pavlos, a young university student, initiates an exciting journey to her ancestors' lives from the beginning of the nineteenth century up to the Balkan Wars, when thousands of Greeks left as refugees. This excursion also signals the beginning of a new love. The two levels of narration complete each other, linking the past to the present. The alteration of narrators makes the recital of historic events extremely interesting, while it also offers a variety of tone. The language is fluid: simple when narrating historic events, but lively and colourful in dialogues; poetical in descriptions, but succinct when voicing indirect

judgements. The author conveys the historic events in a unique way, while her novel is also inspired by contemporary intercultural thinking. (12+) ♦

237

Remundos, Giannēs (text)

Dēmos, Chrēstos (illus.)

Pente meres pu synklonisan to spiti mas

(Five days that rocked our house)

Athēna: Psychogios, 2008. – 174 p.

(Xinomēlo; 36)

ISBN 978-960-453-348-0

Family – Animals

Stavros' teacher asks each pupil to write an essay about an animal. Unsuspecting of the consequences of his decision, Stavros chooses to write about mice! But how could he write a whole essay about an animal that he has never in his life seen or closely observed? Fortunately or not, it is during these days that a real mouse appears in the flat of the Stavros family. Mum is shocked, Dad keeps cool, while Stavros seizes the opportunity to write an exciting essay. In this way, the Papadogona family experiences five shocking days chasing the four-legged visitor. In this crazy family adventure, written in an extraordinarily humorous way, both the protagonists – two parents, three children, two cats, and a big mouse – as well as the extras who participate in the plot, guarantee the readers will laugh their heads off. (11+)

238

Various authors (text)

Various illustrators (illus.)

Mila mē phobasai.

3 istories gia tē bia sto scholeio

(Don't be afraid!)

Cholargos [Athēna]: EPSYPE, 2008. – 67 p.

ISBN 978-960-87296-5-0

Bullying – School

Elina torments Isidora on the school bus. Nikos takes away Giorgos' glasses because he supports a different football team. A »bad guy« who is jealous of his sister intimidates everybody at school in an effort to make his parents pay attention to him. A conspiracy of silence deters everybody from sharing their problems and asking for help. How can they be convinced to talk? In this book, authors, illustrators, educators, and scientists offer three stories, accompanied by illustrations and activities, through which children can discover themselves and understand situations they have experienced at school or at

home. Children will enjoy the book, and it can also become a tool in educators' and parents' hands, contributing to preventing violence and bullying. (8+)

239

Zarampuka, Sofia (text/illus.)

Physika s'agapo

(Of course I love you)

Athēna: Kedros, 2008. – [58] p.

ISBN 978-960-04-3759-1

Friendship – Environment – Love

Through simple sketches as well as a tender text, the author and illustrator of this book addresses herself directly to the heart of young readers about issues that will surely stir their interest in the future, such as environmental issues, topics about nature as well as the feeling of love cultivated by ecological awareness. All this happens in an amusing way, keeping the readers alert every single moment because of the adventures that the two protagonists of the story go through. The story concludes when a clumsy, unskilled, and eager boy who has never been kissed tries... to kiss! In this way, he will make friends and everything will change. (6+)

Turkey (Turkish)

240

Aksoy, Seza Kutlar (text)

Ceylan, Saadet (illus.)

Noktacık <proper name>

İzmir: Tudem, 2008. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-9944-69-207-6

Family – Divorce – Love – Loneliness

Noktacık is actually a happy girl. Life could be nice if only she were not so sad about her parents' divorce. She believes she is the reason that the family no longer lives together. She tells a squirrel of her sorrows and becomes its friend. The bubbly animal cheers her up and convinces her that being at home at two places could also be nice. She should enjoy the good things and moments with both parents, music with her father, for instance, and painting with her mother. So Noktacık gradually learns to cope with her situation and to overcome her sadness. This picture book fills an important void. It gently and humorously approaches a topic that has until now received little notice in Turkish children's literature. (5+)

241

Erdoğan, Fatih

Sihirli Gözlük

(The magic glasses)

İstanbul: Mavibulut, 2007. – 160 p.

(Sihirli dizi; 6)

ISBN 978-975-310-071-7

Glasses – Magic

Glasses wearers don't always have it easy. Not only do they look bad; glasses are annoying and sometimes encourage teasing. Emre, too, must wear glasses at school as well as at home. Even with his new glasses, he has a mishap. While playing with a valuable ring of his mother's, a stone falls out of it and is lost. After that, he gets a supposedly even better pair of glasses – and they turn out to possess real magic powers! When a pine cone falls on his head, Emre can suddenly see hidden things, and so he finds the lost precious stone again. Fatih Erdoğan's entertaining everyday life story, tinged with fantastical elements, is also a cheer-up story for young boys and girls with glasses. (8+)

242

Kocagöz, Halil

Ötleğen kuşu

(The singing bird)

İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 2007. – 160 p.

ISBN 975-23-0167-3

(Boyut temel kitaplar dizisi)

ISBN 978-975-23-0167-2

Turkey/1940s – Country life –

Childhood memory

In this book, the first-person narrator describes episodes from his childhood and youth in the Turkish countryside from his adult perspective. The thirteen short stories compile a happy picture of an intact, whole world around the year 1940, which today no longer exists. The stories are entertaining and tinged with a light nostalgic, wistful tone; they portray the past in a positive light, without glorifying it. Halil Kocagöz describes mundane events: the secret infatuation with a girl from a neighbouring village, the first drive with his father to the nearby city, or lovingly raising a bird that fell out of a nest, are examples of these lively childhood memories. (8+)

243

Kutlu, Mustafa (text)

Hemmatirad, Reza (illus.)

Yıldız tozu

(A star for Kenan)

İstanbul: Erdem Yayınları, 2007. – 62 p.

(Güntümüz çocuk edebiyatı dizisi; 1) (Erdem Yayınları; 437)

ISBN 978-975-501-415-9

Siblings – Accident – Hope – Soccer

The two stories in this volume portray the experiences and feelings of two boys in a simple, comprehensible way. Kenan is fascinated by stars and observes the sky every night. One night, after his little brother has had a bike accident and Kenan is very worried about him, he sees a star fall from the sky. At the last second, he catches it. The star tells him that he is the star of his brother, whose life now has also been saved. When he throws the star back into the sky, Kenan already senses that his brother will become healthy again. The second story is more cheerful in tone. It is about a boy who loves to play soccer and is willing to give all he's got to be the best player on his team. (8+)

244

Neydim, Necdet (text)

Aral, Suzan (illus.)

Sen ıslık çalmayı bilir misin? Şiirler

(Can you whistle? Poems)

İstanbul: Güneşli Kitaplığı, 2008. – 85 p.

(Çocuk Şiir; 1)

ISBN 978-975-6227-95-4

Everyday life – Family – School – Poetry

The nearly fifty poems in this volume throw little spot lights on to the life of Turkish children. The poems brush close to everyday reality and thus produce a multi-faceted picture of childhood in Turkey today. The concern is primarily with interpersonal relationships: life in the family, which is not always without problems, being together at school, friendship, and social differences. In also taking on serious notes, the poems take children with their feelings, questions and worries seriously and build bridges that permit them to recognize themselves in the verses. The poems, which are kept to a clear, straight-forward, child-appropriate language, consider the perspective of young readers and in this way gain an authentic tone. (6+)

Lebanon (Arabic)

245

Şaraf-ad-Dīn, Fātima (text)

Farrān, Haba (illus.)

Nūrā wa qışqathā

(Nura and her stories)

Bairūt: Rişāla, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-9953-488-57-8

**Solidarity – Helpfulness – Egoism –
Disappointment – Loneliness**

Ants are generally considered creatures utterly committed to communal being. The little helpful ant Nura, too, loves to go on the search for food with the other ants of her lair. All is well until, one day, the exits of the lair are blocked by fallen earth. In the face of diminishing supplies, interaction becomes rough. More and more ruthlessly, each ant becomes most concerned with their own advantage. In this crisis situation, Nura realizes for the first time that in the end she is alone in life and dependent on herself. This picture book, endowed with very lively, original coloured illustrations, and also captivating with its artistic calligraphic writing, vividly portrays the individual's search for a place between closeness and distance, altruism and self-interest. (5+)

246

Tūmā, Nadīm R. L. (text)

Ḥalwānī, Ġasān (illus.)

Qalb al-madīna

(The heart of the city)

Bairūt: Dar Qanbar, 2008. – [44] p.

ISBN 9953-465-08-8

Heart – Love – Humanity

The heart of a kite seller flees from the din of the city up into the sky. With a kite in hand, the seller follows his heart. The kite's string shines golden in the sun; the air is filled with warmth and love that is looking for a new heart to fill. On a hill, the man meets a child and follows him to a nearby house. There, the child's family keeps watch at the bed of his mother, whose pulse only beats every five minutes. The kite seller gives her his flying heart. This touching book blurs the border between fantasy and reality. The text is poetical and modern at the same time, anchored in the here and now. The exquisite, surrealistic illustrations perfectly complement the unusual story. (12+) ★

Iran (Persian)

247

Fuzūnī, Farhād (text)

Madanī, Āzādīh (illus.)

Prištānūm wa bačihā

(Ms. Cat and her children)

Tihṛān: Šabāwiz, 2007 (= 1386 h.š.). – [20] p.

ISBN 978-964-505-249-0

Emigration – Outsider – Communication – Integration

When an epidemic breaks out in the cat city, a mother cat flees with her four young into the city of cows. Even though they could live contentedly there, they do not really feel at home, mainly because the cows gossip a lot about the newcomers behind their backs. It takes an accident to bring both sides together. When the kittens fall into the cow neighbour's washing machine while playing, she frees them from their unfortunate situation. The cats and cows start talking with each other and become friends. This picture book shows how misunderstandings and mistrust develop out of ignorance and exclusion and can only be overcome with communication. Double-page pictures in brown tones, which open up unusual perspectives through their two-dimensionality, illustrate this fable-like animal tale. (5+)

248

Nağafī, 'Abd-al-Mağīd

35 Dāstān barāy-i nuğawānān

(Thirty-five stories for adolescents)

Tihṛān: Mu'assasa-i Intiṣārati Qadyānī,

2008 (= 1387 h.š.). – 224 p.

ISBN 978-964-536-296-4

Everyday life – Family – Society – School – Violence

This volume contains thirty-five short stories about the life of adolescents from different social strata in Iran. The topics are broadly distributed. One focus is family life, such as the relation to parents and siblings and especially living together with older generations. Experiences at school are also described. Socially relevant topics such as violence and criminality are given consideration as well, for instance in a story that deals with a protection money bribery affair in a large market hall. The author lets most of his male protagonists in his stories speak for themselves. They narrate their experiences, problems, and thoughts from the first-person perspective. As girls only appear marginally, this book, while well worth reading, will primarily interest male readers. (10+)

249

Rağabī, Mahdī (text)

Ṭabāṭabāī, Marīam (illus.)

Mu'amā-i dīwāna-i kala ābī

(The riddle of the crazy man with the blue head)

[Tihṛān]: Intiṣārāt-i 'Ilmī wa Farhangī,

2007 (= 1386 h.š.). – 28 p.

ISBN 978-964-445-873-6

Greed – Ignorance – Superstition

This literary fairytale demonstrates in text and picture what grave consequences greed and ignorance can have. An old man – the others call him »the crazy one with the blue head« – asks himself why there are so many stones lying around in his village. But no one is interested in his reflections. One day, a five-legged horse strays to him. It is supposed to bring luck to the people in the village, but instead, it causes greed and avarice. Because the villagers lack the capacity for self-knowledge, they kill the horse, for they see it as a sign of disaster. Thereupon giant rocks fall from the sky and destroy the village. Text and illustrations form a unity, which persuasively conveys the philosophical point of the story. (10+)

250

Šahābādī, Ḥamīd Riḍā

Lālāt barāy-i duhtar-i murda

(Cradle song for a dead girl)

Tihṛān: Našr-i Ufuq, 2008 (= 1387 h.š.). – 155 p.

(Rumān-i Nuğawān; 47)

ISBN 978-964-369-505-7

Iran/1900 – Girl – Poverty – Human trafficking

A girl appears to Zohreh, the protagonist of this novel, in a kind of dream or vision. She tells Zohreh her sad story, which occurred 100 years ago in the past. Back then, her impoverished parents sold her to a white slaver in order to pay their taxes. The abused, wandering girl implores Zohreh to help her find the soul of her grandmother with whom she hopes to find refuge. When Zohreh secretly disappears from home to pursue her mission, she has to face great difficulties. The police pick her up and her brothers, who feel their honour has been insulted by Zohreh's self-initiated action, wish to punish her harshly. A writer and family friend supports Zohreh and finds documents that prove that young slave women commonly fell victim to prostitution. Realistically and with great sensitivity, the author introduces young readers to a difficult topic in his impressive novel. (12+)

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