

2022 | The White Ravens

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



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Stiftung
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IMPRESSUM

The White Ravens 2022

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

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Editorial work: Jochen Weber

Translation: Martha Baker, Claudia Söffner

Copy editing: Dr. Nikola von Merveldt

Selection and texts: Theodora Arampatzi [TA]: Greek | Benas Bérantas [BB]: Lithuanian | Prof. Dr. Young Eun Chang [YC], Prof. Dr. Moonsun Choi [MC], Prof. Dr. Sojin Park [SP]: Korean | Toin Duijx [TD]: Afrikaans, Dutch, Frisian | Prof. Dr. Fang Weiping [FW] and Dr. Zhao Xia [ZX]: Chinese | Dr. Ines Galling [IG]: Danish, Finnish, German, Norwegian, Swedish | Dr. Marijana Hameršak [MH]: Croatian | Dr. Azad Hamoto [AH]: Arabic | Tilka Jamnik [TJ]: Slovenian | Zoltán Jeney [ZJ]: Hungarian | Dr. Olga Maeots [OM]: Russian | Dr. Leila (Roya) Maktabi Fard [RM]: Persian (Farsi) | Radek Malý [MA]: Czech | Reina Nakano [RN]: Japanese | Lucia Obi [LO]: Chinese, Filipino, Hokkien (Taiwanese) | Krzysztof Rybak [KR]: Polish | Ulla Saar [US]: Estonian | Juraj Šebesta [JS]: Slovak | Daniela Skoković [DS]: Serbian | Claudia Söffner [CS]: English (with the support of Michelle Bourgeois [MB], Dr. Isaac Larison [IL], Dr. Junko Yokota [JY]) and Hindi (with the support of Wafa Pathan) | Silvana Sola [SO]: Italian (with the support of Gabriele Poeschke) | Dr. Ilze Stikāne [IS]: Latvian | Valentina Stoeva [VS]: Bulgarian | Dr. Mateusz Świetlicki [MŚ]: Ukrainian | Dr. İlgin Ververi Alaca [IVA]: Turkish | Jochen Weber [JW]: Catalan, Portuguese, Spanish | Sibylle Weingart [SW]: French

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PREFACE

With great pleasure, we present to you the 2022 edition of our annual catalogue »The White Ravens«.

This year's cover was created by Mayur Vayeda and Tushar Vayeda. They are the illustrators of »The Deep«, a book that was selected for the »White Ravens 2021«. The brothers, members of the Warli indigenous community in western India, have sent us an explanation of their picture. The Warli, they write, are sure that although plants belong to the silent world, they are still great communicators and carry lots of information, traveling from continent to continent. In every Warli village, there is a place covered with huge trees where people gather once a year to thank gods, goddesses, and spirits for the harvest. In those trees, during the harvest season, one can find birds called Varatchya which are believed to carry away the people's messages. Taking the Warli culture as an inspiration, the illustrators created a flock of birds and a tree with leaves bearing symbols and letters.

We are delighted and grateful that publishers, institutions, and organisations, as well as authors and illustrators, continue supporting the International Youth Library with donation and review copies of their new publications. Thanks to their support, we are able to present the 2022 edition of the »White Ravens« catalogue, the most important annual publication of

the International Youth Library. It aims to promote quality in children's book publishing and has become an increasingly useful tool for anyone interested in looking beyond national borders. This year, the »White Ravens« contain a selection of 200 notable children's and young adult books from 53 countries published in 37 languages.

Selecting the books for the »White Ravens« list is one of the tasks of our language and children's book specialists. Throughout the year, they set aside new publications that catch their attention and strike them as being noteworthy. Some of these works are then selected for recommendation to an international audience. Books are chosen for the list based on the universal relevance of the themes they address, their literary and pictorial qualities, or their innovative approaches or design.

Our library staff have long relied on various means to acquire a well-grounded overview of the topics, trends, and people involved in current international children's and young adult literature: They read new publications in the original languages, visit important international book fairs, scout and gather information, maintain contact with publishing houses, institutions, organisations, and other experts. In addition, they also engage in conversation with the research fellows at the International Youth Library,

foreign scholars who have a profound knowledge of the literature of their home countries.

The library's in-house staff members in Munich cover many literary regions, and freelance readers and advisors are charged with monitoring and tending to further languages and countries. The »White Ravens« catalogue thus presents a unique selection of 200 books that cover a highly diverse range of voices. Its international nature results from the efforts of approximately twenty children's and young adult book experts, who are tasked with sifting through the thousands of books received annually by the International Youth Library.

As usual, we publish the »White Ravens« prior to the Frankfurt Book Fair. The International Youth Library will once again have its own booth there to present its many activities and – last but not least – this new edition of the »White Ravens«.

In addition to the printed catalogue which you can pick up in Frankfurt or order directly from us in Munich, we also offer a digital version which can be downloaded as a PDF file from our website www.ijb.de.

The reviews, bibliographical data, and book covers are also available in the »White Ravens« Database on whiteravens.ijb.de/list. In addition, we will present each

of the 200 books over the course of the coming year on our Instagram account [@thewhiteravens.books](https://www.instagram.com/thewhiteravens.books).

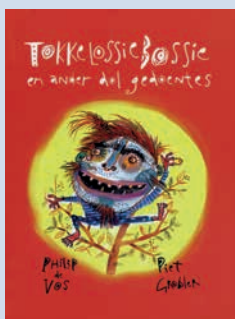
For decades now, all recommended books have been put on display in hard copy at the International Youth Library's booth at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. This tradition allows booth visitors to peruse the books at leisure, leafing through their pages and exploring their stories and illustrations. We look forward to having this opportunity again and hope to see you in Bologna in 2023.

Once again, a sincere thank you first and foremost to the countless publishers who have been supporting the work of the International Youth Library for decades through their book donations. I also extend my gratitude to all those who have contributed to this catalogue both abroad and here in Munich.

I hope the »White Ravens« fall into the hands of many curious readers, and that these readers make many new discoveries. May the selected books, along with their creators, receive the international attention they deserve. We hope that our work contributes to this goal.

Dr. Christiane Raabe
Director of the International Youth Library
September 2022

1



Vos, Philip de (text)

Grobler, Piet (illus.)

Tokkelossiebossie en ander dol gedoentes*(Tokkelossie bush and other crazy things)*

Midrand: LAPA Uitgewers, 2022. – 95 p.

ISBN 978-1-7763-5322-4

Poetry

This collection contains poems about the most wondrous creatures and events. Among the strange characters that appear are a terrible snowman, some witches, the devil himself, all sorts of small insects, including a caterpillar that dreams of becoming a butterfly, as well as many kinds of birds, each singing its own unique song. Sometimes people, such as Uncle Frans, who is afraid of e-mails and prefers to write with a quill pen, also play a role in the poems. Some poems will make readers laugh; others will make them think. Written in a playful language, Philip de Vos's poems often contain allusions to fairy tales, well-known classics, or to real events in the past or the present. Piet Grobler's imaginative, highly aesthetic illustrations include a lot of birds – as do all his books – and fit in seamlessly with the cheerful verses. This is a great book to read together in families as well as in schools. In 2021, Philip de Vos was awarded the first SA Children's Laureate Award. (Age: 5+) [TD]

2



Aḥmad, Wi'ām (Ahmed, Weaam) (text)

Zainī, 'Alī az- (El-Zeiny, Ali) (illus.)

70 Kilū*(70 kilograms)*

[Miṣr]: 'Āliya (Al Al'yaa Publ.), 2021. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-977-6624-33-7

Friendship | Distance | Visit | Journey | Arctic |
Antarctica | Post | Adventure | Picture book

No one could be further apart from each other than the two friends in this story. The ringed seal Jamal lives in the Arctic, while Mahboub, a Weddell seal, is at home in Antarctica. Wouldn't it be nice to pay Mahboub a visit, thinks Jamal. But, sadly, an airplane ticket, a train journey or a ship's passage are much too expensive. So, he decides to send in his place a seal that he has knitted himself – by post. But the package is returned to him because it was too heavy. Then, after Jamal mistakenly finds himself forwarded all around the world in another package – everywhere except to Mahboub – the friends are finally reunited. The colour illustrations are quite fitting for this humourful story. Aesthetically they are reminiscent of an animated film, while different size fonts, speech bubbles and picture sequences with several panels on a page are familiar from comic books. In a clever twist, the book is designed to be read by turning it 90 degrees, so that, when open, North is on top, and South is on the bottom. (Age: 4+) [AH]

3



Da'dūš, Māriyā (Dadoush, Maria) (text)
Āyris, Silistī (Aires, Celeste) (illus.)

Binṭālī qaṣīr 'alī

(Bintali qasser ali)

(My trousers are too short)

'Ammān: al-Salwā, 2020. – [22] p.

ISBN 978-9957-04-176-2

Growing up | Body size | Bad luck |
Picture book | Pop-up book

A young boy has grown out of his trousers. That shouldn't be a problem, but now buying him a new pair of trousers is beset with obstacles. The first shop is closed, the second has only ladies' apparel, and while driving to the third shop his absent-minded grandfather becomes hopelessly lost. Their streak of bad luck continues even when, upon arriving home, the boy is nearly arrested because the neighbour mistakes him for a burglar. Throughout this entertaining story by well-known writer Maria Dadouch, the narrative patterns repeat themselves. Each double-page spread begins with »Fortunately...«, only to be followed by »but unfortunately...«. This is also wonderfully realized in the pictures. The pages have tabs and flaps for pulling and lifting, making the switch from the happy to the unhappy moments manifest. The interactive elements are thus not mere gimmicks, but part of the concept. And thanks to Celeste Aires's striking illustrations, done in primary colours, this appealing picture book is a real eye-catcher. (Age: 4+) [AH]

4



Grigorov, Jasen (Grigorov, Yassen) (text/illus.)

Ako bjach cvjat

(Ako bjah tsvjat)

(If I were a colour)

Sofija: Izdatelstvo Točica, 2021. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-619-7172-31-7

Imagination | Dream | Existence |
Meaning of life | Picture book

The unusual format of this picture book by acclaimed artist Yassen Grigorov provokes children's imaginations by inviting them to think about the possibility of turning into a specific colour and what might happen if they were to go back to their initial state. Every colour is a »universe« and every »colourful« game starts with a phrase such as: »When I see green, I turn into green«. The illustrations offer suggestions, which often border on the nonsensical. At the same time, the book's concept encourages readers to express their desires and imagine the ultimate purpose of their life. This book is for children of all ages who are ready to spread the wings of their imagination and to dream big. Such dreams can be different each time – just as different as the style of every illustration done by Yassen Grigorov. This variety helps readers find »their colour« and dive into the deepest deep of their dreams. (Age: 5+) [VS]

ARABIC
BULGARIAN

Jordan
Bulgaria

5



Pramatarov, Veselin (text/illus.)

Na konci – 1968. Edna dejstvitelna istorija*(On strings – 1968. A true story)*

Sofija: Izdatelstvo Kibea, 2021. – 47 p.

ISBN 978-954-474-916-3

Prague Spring | Liberalisation | Totalitarianism |
History 1968 | Non-fiction | Graphic novel

This graphic novel is based on the true story of three Bulgarian students in 1968. It recreates the events in the capital city Sofia during the political liberalisation process during the »Prague Spring« and the students' courageous decisions to express their disagreement with the involvement of Bulgaria and five other communist countries in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It is a moving retelling of what it meant to openly disagree with official government policy. The fate of the three protagonists was extremely harsh and yet not common during those times. The book is the first non-fiction graphic novel in Bulgarian and its primary audience is teenagers and young adults. The art is compelling and manages to convey the dark and depressing atmosphere of the communist times. It is also a long overdue tribute to those Bulgarian students who dared to express their opinions publicly and ended up imprisoned. Veselin Pramatarov succeeds not only in showing the terrors of life in a communist regime, but also in persuading the reader how important it is to stand up for freedom. (Age: 14+) [VS]

6



Castellanos, Pol (text)

L' assassina de Venècia*(The Venice assassin)*

Barcelona: Estrella Polar, 2021. – 319 p.

ISBN 978-84-1389-029-6

Venice | History 1914 | Clairvoyance | Journey |
Adventure

The plot of this second novel by Pol Castellanos, which in 2021 won the »Premi Ramon Muntaner de literatura juvenil«, is set in Venice in the year 1914. When the nearly fourteen-year-old Carla realizes that she has the power to predict misfortunes, her influential and strict father feels compelled to accuse her of witchcraft. He commits her to a reformatory, from which she and two of her friends are soon able to escape. In order to discover an explanation for Carla's supernatural abilities, the three set off on a danger-filled journey, which takes them through several countries. Meanwhile Carla is being sought by the police, who suspect her of having committed a murder in Venice. »L'assassina de Venècia« is a gripping adventure story that skilfully blends realistic and fantasy elements against the historical background. The characterisation of the story's figures – the three teenagers, their relationship to one another, and also the minor figures – is believable and quite vivid. (Age: 12+) [JW]



7

López-Pampló, Gonçal (text)
Parreño, Fran (illus.)

On va aquesta gent?

(Where are these people going?)

Alzira: Bromera, 2021. – [28] p. + 1 foldout
ISBN 978-84-1358-048-7

Tyranny | Injustice | Indifference | Solidarity |
Picture book

Two texts are cited in the foreword to this book: the first by German pastor Martin Niemöller who, after the Nazi tyranny, lamented that those who do not show solidarity when their fellows experience injustice, will in the end have no one to stand up for them. And the English poet John Donne's poem »No man is an island [...]; every man is [...] a part of the main.« That is the subject of this mostly wordless book: people disappear, while the protagonist looks on in silence. On the first pages this is not yet visible. Only the foldout sheet at the end shows us the interior of the apartment house in which the man lives. One after one, the neighbours are taken into custody by soldiers, until it is finally his turn. Indifference and an ever-widening emptiness are tangibly present in the illustrations. The fading colours of a world in which winter has arrived are symbolic of the process. This impressive book compels the reader to think about courage and the question of how much responsibility each individual bears for his or her fellow beings. (Age: 9+) [JW]



8

Molist, Pep (text)
Varela, Alicia (illus.)

Rastellera de colors

(Colour range)

Barcelona: Babulinka Books, 2021. – [140] p.
(Series: Minimini. Mini Joies per a Primers Lectors)
ISBN 978-84-1208085-8
(Spanish parallel ed.: Hilera de colores.
Babulinka Books, 2021)

Colour | Poetry

Even though the cover of this book is rather unassuming, the decorative row of colour pencils lends it an appealing first impression. Pep Molist has written 44 poems, each one dedicated to a different colour tone, and arranged them similarly to a colour wheel: from white, to ivory and cream, through to lilac and dark purple. In between we discover both melodious and strange sounding names such as cornflower blue, mustard, bottle green or the common Catalan term »merda de ganso« (goose shit). The light-footed, associative poems often try, with only a few words and verses, to capture nature and the effects of individual colours as if in a snapshot: a blue bruise on the hand, the beige wool of a sheep grazing among poppies, a silvery beam of sunlight on water. Other poems explain the origins of names, such as fuchsia red or magenta. The colour pencil drawings by Alicia Varela are perfectly suited to these texts. Their delicate lines are suggestive and leave the reader enough space for their own thoughts and images. (Age: 8+) [JW]

9



Vallès, Tina (text)
Galí, Mercè (illus.)

Mira

Barcelona: Anmallibres, 2021. – 161 p.
(Series: L'arca; 8)
ISBN 978-84-18592-23-2

Shyness | Self-confidence | Self-assurance |
Self-discovery

»Mira« portrays a ten-year-old girl who is extremely shy and holes up at home, preferring to spend her time alone and draw. To help her overcome her reticence and anxiousness, her worried parents decide to send her to dance school. Tina Vallès doesn't fall into the trap of taking this constellation to develop a story that has already been told in many variations: the child blossoms and in the end overcomes all his or her supposed shortcomings. No, real life is not so simple and straightforward. Instead, this children's book offers a differentiated picture of a protagonist who does not experience a sudden metamorphosis that is foreign to her nature, but rather cautiously feels her way forward. Readers follow the heroine along her path of development that is marked by difficulties and doubts. In the end, Mira is able to overcome her mistrust and her extreme concern about the expectations that others may have of her. Thanks to her growing self-confidence, she remains true to herself and follows her own path. (Age: 8+) [JW]

10



Lam, Kinchoi (Lin, Jiancai) (text/illus.)

Yi min qu na li?

(Where are the migrants going?)

Shatin (Hong Kong): Mu mian shu chu ban she (Cotton Tree Publ.), 2021. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-988-79458-5-7

Earth | Danger | Migration | Mars | Home |
Memories | Picture book

Laika, the first dog to orbit Earth, was sent to her certain death by humans. From a dog's point of view, that means Earth is too dangerous, and so Kaka and turtle An decide to leave on their own terms. Aboard their spaceship, surrounded by Hong Kong movie posters and street signs, they revel in memories. Even the star constellations outside remind them of their old home. When the spacecraft is hit by meteorites, they must abandon most of their treasured memorabilia, but with less ballast they land safely on Mars, their new home. Here the wind is better for kite flying and their children can jump higher. Still, they sometimes gaze fondly upon the distant blue planet Earth. When Lam Kinchoi, winner of several awards for his picture books and prints, returned to Hong Kong in 2020 from the Cambridge School of Art's Master's Program, he reworked the first draft of his adventure story »Journey to Mars« into a story of contemporary Hong Kong, the title of which could also be translated as: »Where should we emigrate to?« (Age: 6+) [LO]



11

Chen, Yingting (text)

Huaqing (i. e. Wang Huaqing) (illus.)

Yi ke lian zi de sheng ming lü cheng

(The life of a lotus seed)

Beijing: Beijing lian he chu ban gong si

(Beijing United Publ.), 2021. – [34] p.

(Series: Lang hua duo duo)

ISBN 978-7-5596-4989-8

Lotus | Nature | Cycle of life | Non-fiction |
Picture book

A lotus seed falls into the mud and lies dormant until it begins to sprout the next spring. Readers can follow how it grows into a full plant, blooms, and withers away, replaced by a pod with new seeds inside. These will fall into the mud eventually, and the never-ending cycle of life will start again. Huaqing's illustrations in the style of traditional Chinese ink paintings perfectly match the topic of this exquisite book, the life cycle of a lotus and of life itself. Emerging from the mud but forever appearing clean and elegant, the lotus has long been a spiritual symbol of life in traditional Chinese art and literature. After graduating from the Institute of Botany at the Chinese Academy of Science, Chen Yingting has devoted herself for years to popularising science. Huaqing is pursuing her doctoral degree at the School of Fine Arts within the Chinese National Academy of Arts. »The life of a lotus seed« is an excellent example of the rising number of non-fiction picture books for children in China. (Age: 4+) [FW, ZX]



12

Liu, Haiqi (text)

Yang, Bo (illus.)

You yong

(Swimming)

Qingdao: Qingdao chu ban she

(Qingdao Publ. Group), 2022. – 274 p.

(Series: Xiao tong shu)

ISBN 978-7-5736-0039-4

Jinan City | History 1950s-1960s | Poverty |
Growing up | Playing | Creativity

This novel is about a childhood in Jinan City about half a century ago. It was an era when children were neither given many toys nor able to spend much time with adults. However, nothing could stop their passion for playing and roaming their surroundings to learn all about everything they could. From the perspective of the first-person narrator, a young boy, readers find out how skilled children were in creating something from nothing. Liu Haiqi, one of the pre-eminent Chinese novelists for children today and recognizable by his colloquial style, is a master in capturing the aesthetic dimensions of a child's voice and perspective. He is the author of »You ge zi de xia tian« (The summer of pigeons), »Wu wei xiao shu li xian ji« (Adventures of a tailless mouse), »Ba ba shu« (The father tree), and »Dou zi di li de tong hua« (Fairy tales from the bean field). Liu has won the Chinese National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature and other prizes. He is also a children's book publisher and former CBBY deputy chairman. (Age: 8+) [FW, ZX]

13



Tie, Ning (text) / Yu, Rong (illus.)

Mian bao sui yue*(The time of bread)*

Hangzhou: Zhe jiang shao nian er tong chu ban she
(Zhejiang Juvenile and Children's Publishing House),
2021. – 138 p. (Series: Dang dai ming
jia shao nian xuan ben – Tie Ning zuo pin)
ISBN 978-7-5597-1531-9

Family | Childhood memories | Short story |
Anthology

This book contains a selection of stories by the renowned novelist Tie Ning. Most are based on memories of her early years – when a little girl first tasted the bitterness of being deceived by an adult, when a father developed a strange enthusiasm for baking during the hardest years of his family's life, when a cat came to the house unexpectedly and was cast out after four years. Those old days are brought back to life in nostalgic flashbacks so that readers get a sense of the smells and flavours, as well as the sentiments and wisdom that grew over time. Tie Ning is the author of »Mei gui men« (The rose door), »Da yu nü« (The large bathers), »O, Xiang xue« (Oh, Xiangxue) and many other prose works. Her books have won, among others, the prestigious Luxun Literature Prize and the Chinese National Award for Outstanding Short-Length Novels, and have been adapted for films and TV series. Tie Ning is the current chairwoman of the China Writers Association and the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. (Age: 10+) [FW, ZX]

14



Wu, Yanan (text)

Liu, Longsha (illus.)

Bu yi yang de 1*(Different »1«s)*

Jinan: Ming tian chu ban she
(Tomorrow Publ. House), 2021. – 32 p.
(Series: Xin yi tu hua shu jiang xi lie)
ISBN 978-7-5708-1121-2

Animals | School | Handwriting | Creativity |
Education | Diversity | Picture book

Mr. Brown Bear is teaching his students how to write the number »1«. Everybody is trying very hard. Crab walks sideways and writes a »1« that seems to be sleeping. Ant writes a very small »1« that you must look hard to find. Chicken can't hold the pen steadily and writes out a dancing »1«. Mole has bad eyesight and writes »1« like »7«. Bird finds a stick-like »1«. Dog draws a bone as »1«. Turtle writes its »1« so slowly that you need to wait patiently for it to appear. Though everyone writes »1« in different ways, Mr. Brown Bear always finds a way to understand and appreciate each student's effort. The short and joyful story reminds readers of the time when they had just started to attend school, while Mr. Brown Bear plays the role of an ideal teacher, treasuring children's early passion for learning. Wu Yanan is a young children's book writer from Chengdu (Sichuan Province). Her text received the 8th Hsin Yi Picture Book Award and the 2021 Laureate Award for Children's Books hosted by »China Publishing Today«. (Age: 3+) [FW, ZX]



15

Xue, Tao (text)

Wang, Xiaoxiao (illus.)

Xiao shan yang zou guo tian ye

(*Little Goat walks over the field*)

Hefei: Anhui shao nian er tong chu ban she (Anhui Juvenile and Children's Publ. House), 2021. – 116 p.

ISBN 978-7-5707-1225-0

Boy | Goat | Nature | Friendship

A boy and a little goat meet and never separate again. They build a house and live together in what seems to be a very small world. However, it grows bigger as one follows the boy's story, told in first-person narration: How many goats are there on earth? They are all here in my house when I have my little goat with me. How many names does a little goat have? As many as the numerous places it has been in my imagination. Time slows down as readers begin to see this world in a new way: the tender green of grass in early spring, so fresh for one to discover; a rainbow in the sunset, so beautiful it makes one cry. Xue Tao wrote this book in memory of the goat he had in his childhood. He is renowned for his children's novels and fairy tales, including »Jiu yue de bing he« (The ice river of September), »Xiao cheng chi« (The small castle), »Da fu wen« (The wealthy men), and »Shan hai jing xin chuan shuo« (The new classic of mountains and seas). Among others, he won the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature. (Age: 6+) [FW, ZX]



16

Lin, Xiaobei (text/illus.)

Zai jian de lian xi

(*Practicing goodbye*)

Taipei: Shi lu gu shi you xian gong si (SiLoo Story), 2021. – [148] p.

ISBN 978-626-953-470-8

Dog | Humans | Animals | Death | Coping with grief | Graphic novel

Bibi, a dog, has disappeared suddenly. While her owner, a young illustrator, hoards memorabilia in her cramped apartment and dwells on her grieving and worrying, the narrative moves over to the stray dog's universe. It is full of happiness, timelessness, and freedom. When Bibi eventually returns home, tired and weak, the woman realizes that the dog has just come back to give her a chance to say goodbye, and that she must accept the inescapable reality of his imminent death. Lin Xiaobei uses space, smudging and partial erasure of pencil strokes, light and colour, to create the artist's and the dog's different spheres. When sadness fades and the woman ventures out to discover the world anew, colours from the dog's world trickle into the black-and-white portrayal of the woman's confined life. Lin Xiaobei, who is published internationally under the pen name Bei Lynn, is an award-winning illustrator of picture books. This graphic novel in the style of a personal notebook is her first work for an older audience. (Age: 12+) [LO]

17



Xu, Zhiwei (text/illus.)

Si ji

(Four seasons)

Taipei: Qing lin guo ji chu ban gu fen you xian gong si
(Children's Publ. Co., Ltd.), 2022. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-986-274-568-7

Neighbourhood | Seasons | Cycle of life |
Transience | Impermanence | Picture book

At first glance, the cover and each double spread of this nearly wordless picture book seem to be identical depictions of an alley with its typical homes of the Taiwanese post-war generation. Subtle differences in the pictures create the main story, while other sub-story lines are hidden in this almost static theatrical backdrop. The picture is anchored by the big tree on the left, a silent witness to the course of the seasons and a boy's growing up. When he leaves home, his aging parents stay behind, neighbours move away, houses are demolished, and skyscrapers begin to loom in the background. Itinerant traders, puppet theatre performances and Tai chi exercises disappear, the alley becomes deserted. Only upon the death of his father does the protagonist return, accompanied by his own family. Remembering his roots and spending time with his loved ones is his way to cope with his regrets. Life is impermanent, but spring has come again. Xu Zhiwei has won, among others, the Xinyi Children's Literature Award. (Age: 6+) [LO]

18



Obad, Vanja (text)

Gradski, Željka (illus.)

Jogurt i gospođa Freiman

(Yogurt and Ms Freiman)

Zagreb: Hrvatsko društvo književnika
za djecu i mlade, 2021. – 101 p.

(Series: Biblioteka Mala. Klub prvih pisaca)

ISBN 978-953-8350-14-6

Family | Father | Son | Empowerment |
Neighbour

After his parents' separation, an eight-year-old boy with tiny stature and a curious mind called Jogurt (or Yogurt in English), moves with his father to a new apartment in an ordinary building at the edge of town. Their arrival brings an end to the dull everyday life of the building's residents. The boy soon stays home alone and his late-night visits to Ms Freiman's apartment lead to a series of events that end the status quo by initiating mutual exchanges and even bringing empowerment to many residents. The narrative consistently follows the boy's perspective, both in content and style, giving the novel an atmosphere of magical realism. In contrast, the illustrations by Željka Gradski (b. 1975) present the boy and his deeds from an outside perspective. As such, Vanja Obad's (b. 1981) debut in children's literature appeals to readers through this fusion of perspectives, as well as its straightforward and thoughtful nature. (Age: 7+) [MH]

19



Savičević Ivančević, Olja (text)

Mrzljak, Lucija (illus.)

Moj prijatelj Mačkodlak

(*My friend Cathair*)

Zagreb: Sandorf, 2021. – [29] p.

ISBN 978-953-351-374-4

Rural life | Boredom | Friendship | Animals |
Picture book

Olja Savičević Ivančević (b. 1974), a renowned and award-winning Croatian writer, published two children's books in 2021: a collection of poems printed in an interesting leporello format, and this picture book »Moj prijatelj Mačkodlak«. It deserves special attention for its original way of combining genres and using key motifs of children's literature, as well as for the surrealist illustrations by Lucija Mrzljak (b. 1990). The story deals with a girl named Jela (»Fir« in English), who temporarily moves in with her aunt in a dull place called Selendra (»Hicksville«). Jela, of course, finds it terribly boring and is in desperate need of fun and friends. When she falls asleep in the nearby woods, she finds both after meeting Mačkodlak, or »Cathair«, a creature she was warned about. Contrary to the conventions of fantasy literature, Mačkodlak does not disappear when Jela wakes up, nor does he hurt her, as is customary in cautionary tales. On the contrary, they become friends, and the story ends with a song. (Age: 4+) [MH]

20



Míková, Marka (text)

Miklínová, Galina (illus.)

Kabát a kabelka

(*Coat and Handbag*)

Praha: Argo, 2021. – 78 p.

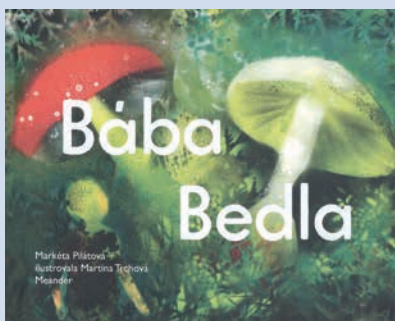
ISBN 978-80-257-3523-7

Coat | Handbag | Adventure | Lockdown

Some children's books have very strange protagonists. And so it could just happen that one winter morning, on a bus, a coat encounters a lady's pink handbag. Neither of them has the slightest idea of the adventure that is awaiting them. But immediately there is a spark of attraction and from there the plot takes off, the imagination working at top speed. This story by writer, musician, and actor Marka Míková is set in Prague, during the lockdown phase of the Covid pandemic. The city's empty streets are the background for this tender, lyrical, humourful story, to which the illustrations by Galina Miklínová lend a very personal note. Thanks to the malleable language, the sense of drama, and the wealth of clever ideas, »Kabát a kabelka« is an ideal book to be read and shared with the entire family. (Age: 9+) [MA]

CROATIAN
CZECH

Croatia
Czech Republic



21

Pilátová, Markéta (text)
Trchová, Martina (illus.)
Bába Bedla
(Granny Mushroom)
Praha: Meander, 2021. – 71 p.
(Series: Modrý slon; 173. svazek)
ISBN 978-80-7558-162-4

World War II | Emergency | Help | Magic

Children can get into trouble at any time or any place. But there exist certain creatures who help them get out of it again. One of these is Granny Mushroom. Half woman, half mushroom, she makes her appearance when children are in danger. In this story, set at the end of the Second World War in the High Ash Mountains of Moravia, Granny helps two German girls, a Czech boy, and a young Russian soldier. Thanks to her, the children learn to recognize the difference between edible and poisonous mushrooms. And they learn that the best way to defend themselves from evil, is to stand by one another. Markéta Pilátová tells a mystery story that deals with a serious topic, embedding it in a magical reality. In daring, imaginative, and synergetic harmony with the dream-like illustrations by Martina Trchová, »Bába Bedla« gives reason to hope that goodness will always prevail over evil. (Age: 9+) [MA]



22

Říčanová, Tereza (text/illus.)
Kráva Říčanová
(Říčanová the Cow)
Praha: Baobab, 2021. – [60] p.
ISBN 978-80-7515-129-2

Cow | Animal husbandry | Picture book

»Kráva Říčanová« is a picture book that celebrates a seemingly ordinary animal: the cow. The lavishly rendered artwork and the short, humourful, lyrical, but also harsh texts introduce the reader to everything that cattle farming involves. One is amazed to learn from the artist's illustrated diary all the things that we do not think about when buying our milk products at the grocery store. Activities such as churning butter or processing cheese are presented in a playful, even somewhat loony manner. Living alongside an animal, noting down daily observations, and performing manual labour have sensitised the author to the true meaning of things, creating an inner order, and sharpening her imagination. Tereza Říčanová views the cow as a symbol of that life which involves providing support for other beings. In the final scene, the author has begun to look like a cow herself. Málina the Cow and her human friend now enrich each another. (Age: 7+) [MA]



23

Stehlíková, Olga (text)
Logosová, Nikola (illus.)

Já, člověk

(I, a human)

Praha: Albatros, 2021. – 100 p.

ISBN 978-80-00-06188-7

Humans | Diversity | Respect |
Encyclopaedia | Non-fiction

The writer Olga Stehlíková has created a special kind of encyclopaedia about human beings with the catchy title »I, a human«. Each of the figures included here tells about what they believe to be most important about themselves – whether it is a profession, a characteristic, a physical feature, an opinion, or the circumstances they happen to be in. In this way, the reader encounters a clown, a mother, a person suffering from drug addiction, an autistic person, a childless woman, a person with albinism, a scientist, or a »normal« individual. Each of them is different, and all have one thing in common. They are human beings. In their diversity these round about 60 short, innovative portraits make a plea in a natural and varied way for mutual respect and understanding. The illustrator Nikola Logosová's colourful images ensure that this unusual encyclopaedia is also highly aesthetically pleasing, creating an appealing work that can be read again and again. (Age: 10+) [MA]



24

Bloch, Per (text)
Thau-Jensen, Cato (illus.)

Halvfar

(Half-dad)

[Aarhus]: Forlaget Albert, 2021. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-87-93752-51-1

Family | Stepfather | Picture book

»I don't like mum's new boyfriend. I don't know why exactly, but I just can't stand him. He's so weird ... So different.« The new partner draws ladybirds on boiled eggs and always wears two different-looking socks. Eh? He himself must be aware that something isn't quite right. The emotions that the first-person narrator of this picture book goes through will be familiar to many children whose parents have new partners. At the beginning, a lot of things, if not everything, simply seems to be out of kilter and wrong. However, people can get used to each other; as do this girl and her mother's partner, when they find out that they have a similar sense of humour. Thus, the »new boyfriend« slowly turns into »Halvfar« – a half-dad. Well, isn't that something! Cato Thau-Jensen's pictures aptly reflect the child's experiential space and offer a wealth of pop-cultural details for young and old readers alike to discover. (Age: 4+) [IG]

CZECH
DANISH

Czech Republic
Denmark

25



Eken, Cecilie (text)

Natblomst*(Night flower)*

København: Gutkind Forlag, 2022. – 207 p.

ISBN 978-87-434-0201-5

Nature | Garden | Destruction | Loss | Guilt

In »Natblomst«, Danish author Cecilie Eken, who has won several awards in her home country, tells a suspenseful and sensual story about the relationship between people and nature, but also about loss and secrets. After her parents split up, Mia, her mother, and her brother now live with her mother's new boyfriend. Everything there is stupid, and Mia often feels misunderstood. Close to her new home is an overgrown garden with a huge tree growing in it; yet the garden caretaker wants to cut the tree down. In exchange for a few coins and a new mobile phone, Mia helps him drill holes into the trunk and drip poison into it. All of a sudden, »Sølvblomst«, a plant girl, appears. The garden is her home and she cannot let it be destroyed. Plagued by guilt, Mia realises that nature should not be sold out lightly. Joining forces, Mia and her new friends manage to save the garden – and the tree spreads its seeds one last time so that new trees can grow. (Age: 10+) [IG]

26



Lång, Line-Maria / Bruun, Karen Vad (text)

Thau-Jensen, Cato (illus.)

Frank mig her*(My Frank)*

[Vordingborg]: Vild Maskine, 2022. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-87-7227-179-8

Family | Father | Son | Homosexuality | Jealousy | Picture book

The little boy who tells this story lives with his dad – and things are just »perfect«. The father is fond of everything »frank«-ish – e.g. »frankere« (adding a stamp to) a letter, or even Frankenstein. He is simply »frank-ophile«. So it's no wonder that one day a human »Frank« crosses his path and he falls in love with him. Unfortunately, his son is not amused – Frank is annoying, Frank disturbs them, Frank has to go away! But instead, this Frank person is very much omnipresent. »Frank mig her« tells a classic story of jealousy – how one person suddenly feels invisible and doesn't know what to do with their frustration. Yet Dad and Frank don't give up, and at some point the child's helplessness and childish power games turn into acceptance. The trio of Line-Maria Lång, Karen Vad Bruun, and Cato Thau-Jensen add a new twist to this drama of jealousy and offer many possibilities for identification through the cast of characters, witty wordplay, and funny images full of details. (Age: 3+) [IG]



27

Vedsø, Mette (text)

Happy Happy

[København]: Høst og Søn, 2022. – 154 p.

ISBN 978-87-02-31656-8

Poverty | Wealth | Social status |
Golf <sport> | Lying | Father | Son

Thirteen-year-old Urban, called Ubbe, and his father live in a house with a tiny yard in front of which 44 bus lines intersect. Not exactly a premium location. At school, Ubbe learns that he belongs to »Class 5«, the lower class. He dreams of upgrading to »Class 1«. His father, however – a refuse collector – despises »de rige svin« (the rich swines), as he calls them. Yet one day, an almost magical coincidence happens: Ubbe is given a golf set, and it soon becomes apparent that he is a talented player. Since his father would never allow him to play golf and see Ubbe's »changing of sides« as a betrayal, Ubbe spins a mesh of lies. »Happy Happy« is both a father-and-son story and one about class differences in modern society. In this novel, author Mette Vedsø plays with stereotypes and clichés, but she does this to subsequently subvert them. (Age: 12+) [IG]



28

Dieltiens, Kristien (text)

Van den Berghe, Seppe (illus.)

De wolkeneters. 20 verhalen over reuzen

(The cloud eaters. 20 stories about giants)

Eke: De Eenhoorn, [2021]. – 148 p.

ISBN 978-94-6291-605-0

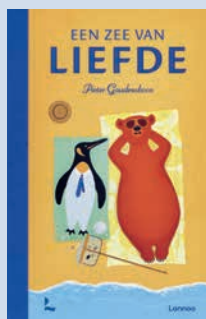
Giant | Short story | Anthology

Giants appear not only in the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, but also in various folklore stories from many other cultures. For this book, Kristien Dieltiens collected twenty stories about giants from all over the world. In the foreword, she explains what functions giants had in different settings and then brings them to life in a compelling literary style. For instance, one giant plays a part in a creation story, while in another tale, a giant teaches a lesson to a stingy man who is only devoted to counting his money. Its enormous diversity makes this collection extra special. These stories – some, but not all ending with a moral – are well-structured and suspenseful, thus readily lending themselves to being read aloud, though they can also be read by children themselves. The atmospheric, artistic illustrations by Seppe Van den Berghe sometimes cover two-page spreads and are a perfect match for the fairy tale-like atmosphere. This collection of short stories is also very suitable for use in educational settings. (Age: 10+) [TD]

DANISH
DUTCH

Denmark
Belgium

29



Gaudesaboos, Pieter (text/illus.)

Een zee van liefde

(A sea of love)

Tielt: Lannoo, 2021. – [72] p.

ISBN 978-94-014-7726-0

Bear | Penguin | Difference | Friendship | Love |
Picture book

Penguin is in love with Bear and travels across the sea to be with him. But Bear doesn't react quite the way Penguin expected. He starts laughing out loud. »In love? With me? That's impossible! Look at yourself, we are completely different.« According to Penguin, love doesn't care about that. Thus follows a wonderful time together all summer long. When Bear and Penguin share their dreams and deepest thoughts, they usually don't need many words to understand each other, as is made evident in Pieter Gaudesaboos's text and images. In this brilliant and quite humorous picture book he manages to say a lot with few words, while in his atmospheric illustrations, the faces of Bear and Penguin clearly show what they feel and think, giving the short episodes an added dimension. Friendship and falling in love determine the progress of the cleverly structured story. All in all, this picture book is an ode to love, even when it may seem impossible for all sorts of reasons. (Age: 5+) [TD]

30



Ghijsen, Goedeke (text)

Vluchtweg

(Escape route)

Antwerpen: Davidsfonds Infodok, [2021]. – 141 p.

ISBN 978-90-02-27369-8

School | Refugee | Trauma | Bullying | Friendship

Following his traumatic journey as a refugee, without his family, Nadesh enters a new class, which he calls »the start of my second life«. It is also the first day at school for Miro. He and Nadesh sit next to each other and soon become friends. In this classroom, the pupils fight a lot with each other, and Miro is especially often picked upon by Jana. Since she uses all kinds of bullying techniques, Miro sometimes reacts violently. As tensions in the class steadily grow, it is clear something is going to cause the situation to explode. In this novel, Goedeke Ghijsen gives a realistic description of pupils interacting with each other. The three main characters (Nadesh, Miro, and Jana) tell the story with such lively language that readers get to know them well, especially Nadesh, who stands up for fellow pupils. Furthermore, the author poignantly shows the link between Nadesh's new and past experiences he made in wartime and as a refugee: »Sometimes the bomb explodes. [...] Then you have to become a new person.« This novel is also very suitable for classroom discussion. (Age: 11+) [TD]

31



Koens, Enne (text)
Kuiper, Maartje (illus.)

Vanaf hier kun je de hele wereld zien

(You can see the whole world from here)

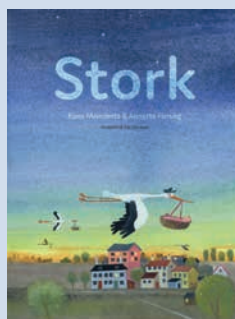
Amsterdam: Luitingh-Sijthoff, [2021]. – 209 p.

ISBN 978-90-245-9383-5

[Letter](#) | [Search](#) | [Absence](#) | [Family](#) | [Secret](#)

While nine-year-old Deetje is out shopping with her mother, they drop some envelopes in a mailbox that the postman is about to empty. After he has gone, Deetje notices a letter on the ground that is marked »Return to sender« and takes it home. When she opens the envelope, she learns that the letter writer misses the intended recipient of the letter, who apparently wants to break off all contact. Deetje is so moved by the letter that she wants to know more about the two people. In a sensitive way, Enne Koens's novel describes Deetjes's search, during which she meets several special people, each with their own story. When Deetje finds out that the letter was written by her unknown father and the addressee was her mother, she learns some surprising things about her family. This gentle novel about an absent family member is written in a flowing, sensitive language, and is full of beautiful observations about the complexity of family relationships. (Age: 10+) [TD]

32



Meinderts, Koos (text)
Fienieg, Annette (illus.)

Stork

(Stork)

[Hoorn]: Hoogland & Van Klaveren, [2021]. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-90-8967-349-7

[Stork](#) | [Family addition](#) | [Picture book](#)

Nine months after the »Great Disaster«, during which everyone had to stay indoors (a reference to the lockdown period of the coronavirus pandemic), the stork agency has a lot of work to do. Though retired, Stork has been asked to help deliver some of the many babies ordered. After he has been en route for some time, he forgets to whom he is supposed to deliver this baby – »apparently his memory has also retired.« Determined to bring the baby to the right family, he knocks on random house doors. Unfortunately, Mrs. De Hondt wants a cat, whereas the king, who already has three princesses, is waiting for a male heir. The large rabbit family wants to skip a year, and Bas and Jaap are planning to pick up their adopted child by plane after the pandemic. Good that Bram and Saar really are expecting the arrival of their baby. This charming story, ideal for reading aloud, is accompanied by humorous, atmospheric, and often moving watercolour illustrations. Many witty details add further dimensions to this picture book story. (Age: 5+) [TD]

DUTCH

Netherlands

33



Remmerts de Vries, Daan (adapt.)

Janssen, Mark (illus.)

Sneeuwwit*(Snow White)*

Amsterdam: Volt, 2022. – 112 p.

ISBN 978-90-214-3584-8

Snow White | Coming of age | Fairy tale | Adaptation

Snow White lives in the castle of her father, King Alfred. After her mother's death, he had married Zilla Tarantel, an evil witch who now is out to kill her stepdaughter. Snow White flees into the forest and ends up at the house of seven dwarves, where she experiences all kinds of adventures. This beautifully illustrated and freely adapted version of the Brothers Grimm tale stands out for its humour and lively language. A master of sparkling dialogue, Daan Remmerts de Vries introduces new, original elements. For instance, he transforms the talking mirror into a central character of the tale, thus giving its dialogues with the evil queen extra depth. While the descriptions of the natural world are also very striking, the story focuses on Snow White's coming of age: at first rather naïve, she grows into a strong woman able to determine her own fate. The prince who kisses her will have to accept that. Daan Remmerts de Vries received the renowned Theo Thijssen Prize in 2021 for his life's oeuvre. (Age: 7+) [TD]

34



Sassen, Erna (text)

Linden, Martijn van der (illus.)

Zonder titel*(Untitled)*

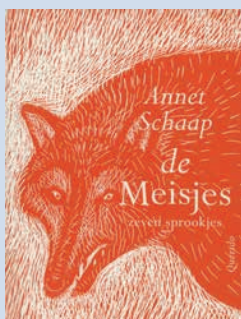
Amsterdam: Leopold, 2021. – 253 p.

ISBN 978-90-258-8095-8

Friendship | Forced marriage | Divorce | Loss | Drawing

Despite having passed his school exams »cum laude«, fifteen-year-old Joshua has always been insecure and often takes refuge in his sketchbook. His dearest friend is Zivan, who has fled her native country but is about to be sent back there by her family to get married. She goes into hiding, and Joshua tries to find her. Joshua also has problems with the toughest boys in his class, but eventually, they learn to appreciate each other. As a result of Joshua's parents' divorce and his grief over losing Zivan, Joshua's world is shaken up, but his new friends help him in an unexpected way. This book, which received the Nienke van Hichtum Award 2021, has a well-structured plot and is written in a literary style with a lot of dialogue. While the protagonist's feelings are touchingly portrayed, the descriptions of tumultuous school days are extremely funny. »Zonder titel« is both a sketchbook and a novel. Because the writer and illustrator act as equal partners, taking turns in telling the story, it offers an unusual reading experience. (Age: 15+) [TD]

35



Schaap, Annet (text)

De meisjes. Zeven sprookjes*(The girls. Seven fairy tales)*

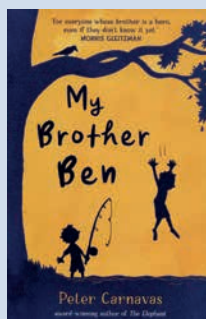
Amsterdam: Querido, 2021. – 247 p.

ISBN 978-90-451-2669-2

Fairy tale | Adaptation | Female protagonist

This book presents seven fairy tales, which are not faithful adaptations, but rather modern stories with allusions to well-known fairy tales. Girls are the main characters in all of them. The author-adaptor Annet Schaap shows how strong and resourceful girls can be. Take for instance the girl whose mother has no time for her and sends her to stay with her grandmother. Readers will immediately recall the tale of Little Red Riding Hood. But now the story is written in the present tense and a contemporary setting, allowing the girl to use her mobile phone to find her way to grandma's house. The realistic stories are composed in a beautiful literary style that cleverly employs striking twists of humour. Within a story, there may be frequent changes of perspective, as when elements from »Little Red Riding Hood« are alternately told by the girl and the wolf. In turn romantic and matter-of-fact, Annet Schaap reconciles these extremes effortlessly in this outstanding modern fairy-tale collection. (Age: 12+) [TD]

36



Carnavas, Peter (text/illus.)

My brother Ben

St Lucia, Qld.: UQP, 2021. – 180 p.

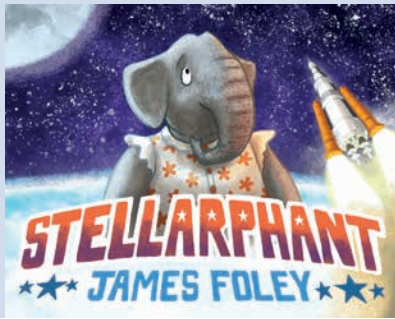
ISBN 978-0-7022-6333-0

Siblings | Summer holidays | Father | Absence | Growing up

»My Brother Ben« is the second middle grade novel by Peter Carnavas, acclaimed author and illustrator of several picture books. Set in a semi-rural Brisbane neighbourhood and told from ten-year-old Luke's perspective, this story about brothers, birds, and the beauty of nature evokes an almost timeless atmosphere of lazy summer days spent at the nearby creek. Quiet Luke and his daring older brother Ben hang out at the banks together, they swim, watch birds, and dream of having their own boat to go exploring. A local competition puts their dream within reach: they only need the perfect project. Yet when school starts, Ben, now in high school, seems to drift apart from Luke as he spends more time with a new girl, moves out of their shared bedroom, and goes on secret outings at night. Luke feels abandoned by his adored brother as well as his absent father. Beautifully written, this sensitive novel portrays a tight-knit and caring relationship between two brothers and the changes they face as they grow up. (Age: 8+) [CS]

DUTCH
ENGLISHNetherlands
Australia

37



Foley, James (text/illus.)

Stellarphant

Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Press, 2021. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-76099073-2

Space travel | Astronaut | Ambition |
Discrimination | Feminism | Determination |
Picture book

Stella dreams of becoming an astronaut. Yet when she arrives at Space Command to hand in her application, the man at the reception desk has reservations about approving it. No matter what ambitious Stella does to get closer to her dream – including designing her own space suit, training with experts, building her own shuttle – the receptionist comes up with reason after silly reason why this is simply impossible. The whole Space Command team – all very white, very male, and very conservative – just can't seem to get their head around a female elephant astronaut. James Foley's hilarious new picture book tackles inter-species (and gender) discrimination in a highly enjoyable way. Readers will cheer loudly for Stella and her varied crew of creatures whose determination and resilience pop off the page. The colourful, comical illustrations perfectly catch witty details, such as the anthropomorphic animals' facial expressions, and underline the absurdity of discrimination. An (inter-)stellar read! (Age: 4+) [CS]

38



Lonesborough, Gary (text)

The boy from the Mish

Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin Children's Books, 2021. – 288 p.
ISBN 978-1-76052-588-0

Aboriginal community | Rural life | Homosexuality |
Homophobia | Falling in love | Storytelling

It's the summer holidays and Jackson enjoys hanging out with his mates and steering clear of some racist boys from school. Just like every year, his Aunty Pam and little cousins arrive from the city to spend Christmas with them in their small coastal town. Yet this time, they have brought Tomas, a teen who is just out of prison. At first, Jackson is not amused that he has to share his bedroom with this mysterious stranger, but soon a tentative friendship evolves. When Jackson helps Tomas with drawings for his superhero origin graphic novel project, the boys start exploring their own stories, culture, and background – and also their sexuality. Debut author Gary Lonesborough skilfully describes his protagonist's hesitation and fears about coming out as gay in his rural town and the homophobic discrimination he faces. However, he also stresses the healing power of storytelling and the tight intergenerational bonds and values of the Indigenous community, which provide a safe haven for both teens. (Age: 14+) [CS]

39



Magerl, Caroline (text/illus.)

Piano fingers

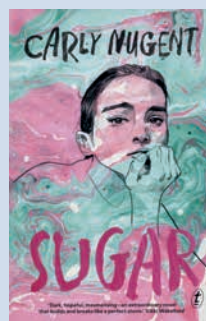
Newtown, NSW: Walker Books Australia,
2022. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-1-760652-61-6

Family | Siblings | Music | Imagination |
Happiness | Picture book

Being the youngest in a big family can sometimes be daunting – especially if every single family member is a talented musician, playing the most outlandish instruments, but your own music hasn't even started yet. Little Bea feels a great longing when she listens to her big sister Isla coaxing beautiful notes from her »honey fog machine« (aka violin). The boring triangle just doesn't do it for her – she is destined for something big. When she hops onto the bench in front of the dusty old piano and touches the keys, her music and imagination take flight, aided by Maestro Gus, the cat conductor. Caroline Magerl delivers a short, tongue-in-cheek lyrical text and visually translates it into vibrant, comical illustrations of different sizes. Created with watercolours, pencils, and ink, the images whirl around the page and blur the line between reality and dream. This enchanting picture book celebrates the magic of music, imagination, and the bond between two sisters. (Age: 4+) [CS]

40



Nugent, Carly (text)

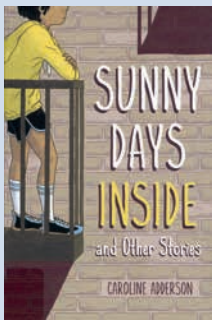
Sugar

Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2022. – 350 p.

ISBN 978-1-922-33074-1

Father | Daughter | Death | Guilt | Grief |
Diabetes

Last year, everything was ok, but now, Persephone's life is a string of numbers: From 15.9 to 2.7, from 3.8 to 22.4 – her blood glucose level is on a rollercoaster ride, and she has to be alert to always monitor it, calculate, and inject the right amount of insulin. Her diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes means: »A constant stream of digits and decimal points. An impossible equation.« The sixteen-year-old teen is furious – with her grieving mother, her classmates and former friends, with the world in general; but most of all with herself for deserving such a shitty illness by causing her father's death. Carly Nugent's first book for teens tackles several challenging issues including grief and domestic violence. The headstrong protagonist and the wonderful cast of idiosyncratic supporting characters come alive through the author's raw and moving first-person-narrative. Readers will feel Persephone's grief and guilt, her fury and fear, as well as her obsession with discovering meaning in this chaotic world. (Age: 14+) [CS]



41

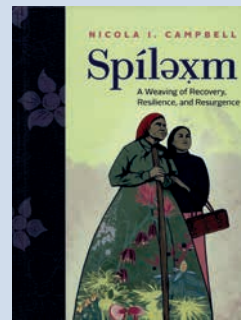
Adderson, Caroline (text)

Sunny days inside and other stories

Toronto [et al.]: Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2021. – 167 p.
ISBN 978-1-77306-572-4

COVID-19 | Lockdown | Imagination |
Short story

COVID-19 has severely affected the lives of millions of people around the world. In this empathetic montage of interconnected short stories, renowned author Caroline Adderson stars several children living in the same large inner city building. When the »grown-up virus« starts, all the families are forced to shelter inside their apartments. Yet instead of succumbing to their boredom and fear, the kids deal with the restrictions in witty and creative ways: Mimi and Danila decorate the living room, put on their »resort wear«, and have a pretend holiday at an imaginary Mexican beach resort; twins Ivan and Alek start a research project about cave men, which includes creating a cave language that increasingly shapes this chapter's narrative. The stories – some outright funny, some quiet, some sad but permeated by the kids' zest for life – shed light on the protagonists' lives during the pandemic and their ingenious ways of dealing with this frightening situation and of supporting their families and each other. (Age: 8+) [CS]



42

Campbell, Nicola I. (text)

Spiləxm. A weaving of recovery, resilience, and resurgence

Winnipeg, Manitoba: Highwater Press, [2021]. – 326 p.
ISBN 978-1-55379-935-1

British Columbia | First Nations |
Childhood memories | Storytelling |
Tradition | Trauma | Healing

“Spiləxm” (pronounced ShpEE-luh-khm) is a word from the Nl̓eʔkepmxcín language that translates as »remembered stories«, »moccasin telegraph« or »news«. In this young-adult memoir, acclaimed author Nicola I. Campbell, a Nl̓eʔkepmx, Syilx, and Métis woman from British Columbia, has crafted stories in prose and free-verse from her childhood in the 1970s to the present day. As the subtitle reveals, the stories touch upon difficult and traumatizing topics, including discrimination, Indian residential schools, colonialism, and grief. Divided into ten larger sections with headings such as »Prairie Letters«, »Métis«, »Nl̓eʔkepmxcín Lullaby« or »sorrow«, the book talks about everyday life as well as difficult moments, e.g. the day the author's father passed away: [...] »Daddy brought the children to shore / but he did not bring himself. / the river would not set him free. [...]«. This collection provides heart-wrenching insights into the author's journey towards healing and strength. (Age: 13+) [CS]

43



Flett, Julie (text/illus.)

We all play = Kimêtaŵânaw

Vancouver: Greystone Kids, [2021]. – [38] p.

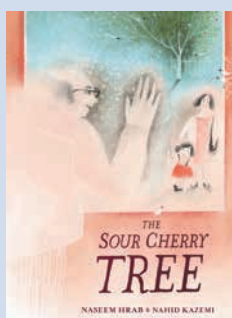
ISBN 978-1-77164-607-9

(Includes some text in Cree)

Animals | Playing | Nature | Picture book |
Bilingual book

»We All Play – Kimêtaŵânaw« offers an engaging romp for very young readers, providing a window into the lives of animals and children at play. The playful illustrations, rendered in rich watercolours on white backgrounds, show expressive action and represent a diverse array of movements, concepts, and feelings: bears who »wiggle and wobble« and bats that »rustle and roost«. After each sequence of action verbs and animal images, Julie Flett's sparsely worded text introduces readers to the phrase: »Kimêtaŵânaw Mina« – »We play too«. Children will want to chime in with the rhythmic and repetitive text that also invites movement. This bilingual book, written in English and Cree, includes a Cree pronunciation guide in the back of the book. (Age: 4+) [IL]

44



Hrab, Naseem (text)

Kazemi, Nahid (illus.)

The sour cherry tree

Toronto: Owlkids Books, [2021]. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-77147-414-6

Death | Grandfather | Death | Remembering |
Picture book

»The Sour Cherry Tree« is told from the perspective of a little girl visiting her grandfather's home after his death and mirrors the author's own experiences growing up in a bilingual, bicultural family. The child recounts the special times she has shared with her grandfather ... playing hide-n-seek, trying on her grandfather's slippers, sharing his favourite tea, and eating fig cookies (even though she didn't really like them). Nahid Kazemi's impressionistic style give the drawing a dreamlike quality. The images also serve as a study in culture. A samovar stands majestically on the dining table – an object not seen in the homes of most children. Love, memory, and loss are central themes in the story. We see the wonderful connection grandparents have with their grandchildren illustrated adeptly in Kazemi's artwork. Despite not being able to speak Farsi, the young girl shared a unique bond with her grandfather that will be understood by readers from all cultures. (Age: 4+) [IL]

45



Àbíké-Íyímídé, Faridah (text)

Ace of spades

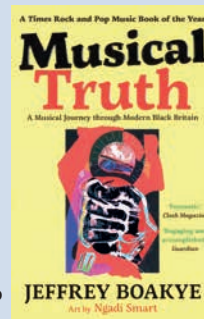
London: Usborne Publ., 2022. – 480 p.

ISBN 978-1-80370-635-1

School | Wealth | Racism | Bullying |
Homophobia | Suicide

This suspenseful young-adult thriller is told from two different viewpoints in alternating chapters. Confident and calculating overachiever Chiamaka Adebayo and quiet music whizz Devon Richards don't seem to have anything in common beyond the colour of their skin. During their last year at white prestigious Niveus Private Academy, the two newly pronounced senior prefects are suddenly harassed by anonymous messages. Mysterious »Ace« reveals some very personal and uncomfortable secrets to the whole school, threatening to not only thwart both teens' plans for their future, but to utterly destroy them. Reluctantly, they team up to catch the culprit – but are soon faced with something much bigger than they expected. Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé has packed several heavy topics into her debut novel, such as institutional racism, homophobia, poverty, and crime. Despite this, she has woven a fast-paced story that skillfully feeds readers various red herrings and keeps them on the edge of their seats until the final page. (Age: 14+) [CS]

46



Boakye, Jeffrey (text)

Smart, Ngadi (illus.)

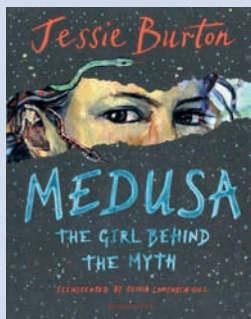
Musical truth. A musical journey through modern Black Britain

London: Faber, 2022. – 210 p.

ISBN 978-0-571-36649-1

Great Britain | Black people | Music | History |
Racism | Politics | Song | Non-fiction

This engaging non-fiction volume consists of twenty-eight songs arranged chronologically. The short chapters are accompanied by black-and-white portraits of all the performers presented. Despite its title, the book is much more than just an account of Black British music from the 1940s to the present day. True, journalist, broadcaster, and music enthusiast Jeffrey Boakye does chronicle the development of music written and performed (mostly) by Black bands and singers and covers a range of genres including calypso, reggae, soul, UK garage, and Afrobeats. Yet in addition, he also contextualises the songs through historical and contemporary events connected to slavery, racism, poverty, police brutality, colonialism, etc. By combining music, culture, politics, and personal anecdotes, he introduces young readers to the lives of Black people in Britain. A YouTube playlist makes all the songs come alive and offers a unique and insightful listening experience. (Age: 12+) [CS]



47

Burton, Jessie (text)
Lomenech Gill, Olivia (illus.)

Medusa. The girl behind the myth

London [et al.]: Bloomsbury, 2021. – 206 p.
ISBN 978-1-4088-8693-9

Medusa | Monster | Myth | Island | Banishment |
Falling in love | Rape | Punishment | Feminism |
Empowerment

In ancient Greek myths as well as in later versions, Medusa was often portrayed as an ugly, malevolent monster and relegated to a minor role in male hero Perseus's tale. This powerful retelling for YA readers employs a feminist lense to place Medusa centre stage and explore a different side of the protagonist. Addressing readers directly, the first-person narration pictures a lonely girl full of rage, self-loathing, and fear. After being raped by sea god Poseidon and subsequently punished with a head of venomous snakes by enraged goddess Athena, Medusa is exiled to an isolated rocky island with her two immortal, winged sisters. The teen is desperate for a friend and strikes up secret conversations with shipwrecked Perseus, in which her story slowly unfolds. Jessie Burton's riveting tale, rife with dialogue and inner musings, and Olivia Lomenech Gill's striking illustrations provide an empowering ending for the age-old story that enables Medusa to develop into a strong heroine who owns her power. (Age: 14+) [CS]



48

Butler, George (text/illus.)

Drawn across borders.

True stories of migration

London: Walker Studio, [2021]. – 52 p.
ISBN 978-1-4063-9216-6

War | Refugee | Migration | Travelling | Drawing |
Non-fiction

George Butler is a young »artist and illustrator who specializes in travel and current affairs«. In moving pictures created with pen, ink, and watercolours, he captures scenes in various conflict areas around the world. The slow and contemplative method of drawing in situ allows him to really meet the people he portrays and listen to their stories. In this thought-provoking non-fiction book, divided into twelve chapters, the artist has gathered images and tales from a number of places such as Syria, Myanmar, Kenya, and Palestine from his travels between 2012 and 2018. The spare, sketch-like pictures reveal snippets from the everyday reality of refugees, displaced people, and migrants. The texts provide a frame of background information about Butler's journeys and contextualise the tales of people like Abdullo, a young Tajik man who has been travelling to Russia as a migrant worker for years. A powerful book that makes readers see the suffering of people through the artist's eyes. (Age: 12+) [CS]

49



Chen, Ming / Chen, Wah (text)
Vela, Carmen (illus.)

Escape. One day we had to run

London: Lantana Publ., 2021. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-911373-81-0

Escape | Refugee | Political persecution |
Climate change | Non-fiction

In this non-fiction book, Ming and Wah Chen have gathered the stories of twelve courageous individuals (and groups) who fled adverse conditions in their home countries to find shelter elsewhere. The work features escapees from around the world, including former slave Harriet Tubman from the USA and climate change refugee Ioane Teitiotia from the island of Kiribati, and spans almost three hundred years. Inspired by the story of their own grandmother, who swam from mainland China to Hongkong, the authors decided to assign one action verb – from »cling«, to »pedal«, »sprint«, and »tunnel« – to each tale to showcase many different methods of escaping. The moving stories are told as concise half-page texts placed on a double-spread each headed by the verb and a lyrical three-sentence subtitle. Spanish artist Carmen Vela's graphic digital illustrations in matt colours play with textures, sizes, light and darkness, and partial views highlighting central elements of each journey. An insightful read. (Age: 6+) [CS]

50



Cockcroft, Jason (text/illus.)

We were wolves

London: Andersen Press, 2021. – 206 p.

ISBN 978-1-83913-200-1

Father | Son | Forest | Crime | Death | Grief |
Post-traumatic stress disorder

Renowned illustrator Jason Cockcroft's latest book for young readers is a multi-layered, mysterious, and intense novel about love and loss, the power of nature, violence, society, truth, and more. Told from a quiet boy's point of view, the story revolves around the relationship between this young teen (whose name is never revealed) and John, his estranged father, who are living together in a small caravan in the woods, at the fringe of society. With John imprisoned for burglary, the boy is told to keep himself hidden and away from trouble. Yet this is easier said than done when one of his Dad's criminal acquaintances starts closing in. Jumping back and forth between past events and the present, the gripping first-person narrative creates a haunting atmosphere intensified by the stunning black-and-white illustrations. They immediately draw readers into this mix of realistic thriller and mythic contemplation that touches upon life's essential questions and ends in an edge-of-your-seat finale. (Age: 12+) [CS]

51



Gauld, Tom (text/illus.)

The little wooden robot and the log princess

London: Templar Publ., 2021. – [40] p.

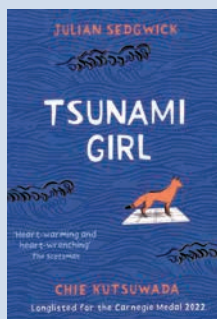
ISBN 978-1-78741917-9

(Parallel ed.: New York: Neal Porter Books /
Holiday House, 2021)

Siblings | Robot | Princess | Family | Fairy tale

In an idyllic kingdom, a king and queen long to have a child. The king consults an inventor who builds a robot, while the queen visits a witch who creates a princess who turns into a log upon falling asleep. All are happy until a mishap causes the princess to be lost while in log form. The robot, distraught at what has occurred, travels across the sea in search of his sister. When he finally finds her, they are both far from home. On the long journey home, the siblings take turns saving each other and have many adventures along the way. In »The Little Wooden Robot and the Log Princess«, Gauld has created a modern fairy tale that feels at once both fresh and timeless. The text and illustrations work seamlessly together – no unnecessary words are used, and the clean, comic-like illustrations enhance and propel the story while also enriching it with enchanting details. This memorable tale is the author's first book for children, but like many classic fairy tales, is enjoyable for all ages. (Age: 3+) [MB]

52



Sedgwick, Julian (text)

Kutsuwada, Chie (illus.)

Tsunami girl

Oxford: Guppy Books, 2021. – 375 p.

ISBN 978-1-913101-46-6

Japan | History 2011 | Earthquake |
Tsunami | Grandfather | Death | Grief |
Coping with trauma | Manga

British-Japanese teen Yūki Hara Jones travels to Japan to visit her maternal grandfather. Yet the day after the girl arrives at his house, the disastrous March 2011 earthquake and Tsunami destroy the world around her. Miraculously, Yūki survives, but her beloved grandpa is lost. This heart-wrenching story by renowned author (and Shiatsu therapist) Julian Sedgwick follows a young girl's struggle as she needs to face her trauma and grief in the aftermath of this unfathomable disaster. Part teen novel, part manga, the unusual work offers a gripping tale through text that is closely intertwined with short illustrated sections by British-based Manga artist Chie Kutsuwada. The visual narrative adds a fantastical layer to the harsh realistic story as imaginary super-hero Half Wave and Yūki's real-life new friend Tara help Yūki to start building a new life for herself. A fascinating coming-of-age story that tackles challenging issues and provides glimpses into Japanese life, culture, and mythology. (Age: 12+) [CS]

53



Sediva, Tereza (text/illus.)

Mole in a black & white hole

London: Thames & Hudson, 2021. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-0-500-65205-3

Home | Curiosity | Fear | Courage | Happiness |
Picture book

For years, the story about a shy and timid mole who doesn't dare venture out of his dark and damp hole had been sitting in Tereza Sediva's desk drawer, until finally British publisher Thames & Hudson discovered it. The quirky picture book, which opens up horizontally, divides the world into two separate places: the silky small mammal's underground lair on the bottom pages is depicted in mostly black and white, whereas the universe above ground on the top pages glows with radiant and bright colours and shapes. Mole's only friend, a »bright pink chandelier« (read: radish) tries to persuade him of the world's beauty, but only when the pink bulb disappears and warm rays of sunshine sparkle through the hole, does Mole gather all his courage. The Czech illustrator's joyous linocut illustrations with overlapping layers bring this fable about curiosity, courage, and the importance of colour to life for readers of all ages. (Age: 4+) [CS]

54



Traoré, Efu (text)

Children of the quicksands

Frome: Chicken House, 2021. – 276 p.

ISBN 978-1-913322-36-6

Nigeria | City life | Rural life | Mythology |
Superstition | Grandmother | Family | Goddess |
Magic

When thirteen-year-old Simi learns that she will have to spend the entire summer holidays at her estranged grandmother's house in a village without internet or phone connection, the teenager is not amused. Yet soon, the city girl makes new friends and becomes fascinated with the sinister atmosphere in the jungle, her Iyanla's talk about beliefs and superstitions, and most of all, the forbidden lake. Then a child disappears, and Simi feels compelled to find out what is happening – and get closer to the reason behind her own family's secret. Nigerian-German author Efu Traoré has crafted a thrilling contemporary mystery that seamlessly mingles Nigeria's modern city life and the traditional way of life in a remote rural community. This debut novel, interspersed with Yoruba legends and myths, won the 2019 Times/Chicken House Children's Fiction Competition. It stands out for its rich language, relatable characters, and magical setting. (Age: 10+) [CS]



55

Grimm, Jacob / Grimm, Wilhelm (text)
Wolf, Gita / Vijayakumar, Divya (retelling)
Maguma (illus.)

Lucky / Happy Hans

Chennai: Tara Books, [2021]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-93-90037-04-9

Bad luck | Happiness | Consumerism | Folk tale |
Picture book | Leporello

The Grimm Brothers' folk tale »Hans in Luck« recounts the (bad) luck of a young man who makes a series of very unprofitable exchanges that eventually leave him without any material possessions, but inexplicably happy. In this multi-level retelling, Spanish artist Maguma envisions two versions of Hans's journey: one set in the past, the other one in a dystopian videogame-like environment. Designed as a double-sided accordion book, each version depicts the protagonist's path and the other characters' fortunes on eight double spreads that fold out into two continuous images. The text – short exclamations and suggestive questions for the more traditional tale, versus choose-your-own-adventure type instructions and twitter-like messages for the modern version – invite readers to ponder Hans's decisions and motives. Gita Wolf's two short introductory essays provide background information and point out the complexity as well as the myriad of possible interpretations for both original tale and retellings. Fascinating! (Age: 12+) [CS]



56

McGann, Erika (text)
Cullen, Phillip (illus.)

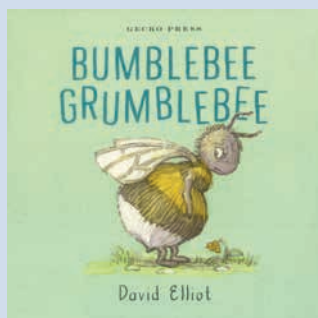
Tabitha Plimtock and the edge of the world

Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2021. – 270 p.
ISBN 978-1-78849-249-2

Family | Mistreatment | Monster |
Environmental protection

Since the success of the magical »The Demon Notebook« (The O'Brien Press, 2021) and its three sequels, Erika McGann has become one of Ireland's most well-known writers for children. Her most recent middle grade book is set at the very edge of the world and features brave Tabitha, who is mistreated by her evil-tempered, cake-munching Granny Bertha and mean cousins Gower, Gristle, and Wilbur. Day in day out, the girl is forced to climb down the steep cliff to run errands – a perilous task she nevertheless enjoys because she loves the cliff's peculiar inhabitants. When she learns that sinister monsters are rumoured to rise up from the dark depths to feast upon the wall-dwellers, she does her utmost to defeat the threat and save her friends. Peopled with nonsensically exaggerated foes (and friends) reminiscent of Roald Dahl characters, this witty story, which addresses readers directly, is an entertaining read imbued with an underlying message about the importance of caring for our environment. (Age: 6+) [CS]

57



Elliot, David (text/illus.)

Bumblebee grumblebee

[Wellington, N.Z.]: Gecko Press, 2021. – [20] p.

ISBN 978-1-776574-02-5

Animals | Wordplay | Picture book

58



Maritz, Nicolaas (text/illus.)

Rainbeast. A rain mythology in four languages = Isilosemvula = |Apil|aeb |gurun = Reëndier

Cape Town: David Philip, 2021. – 63 p.

ISBN 978-1-4856-3027-2

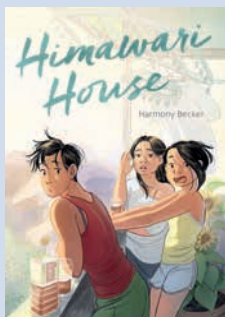
Text in English, IsiXhosa, Hai||om and Afrikaans

Drought | Rainy season | Joy | Celebration |
Picture book | Multilingual book

Board books for the very young can sometimes feel a bit dull to adults. But not when David Elliot puts his hand to creating one. With his trademark sense of humour, the award-winning New Zealand author-illustrator gathers a bunch of animal names, pairs them with a slightly distorted rhyming version of themselves, and works his magic in the illustrations. Each of the irresistible creatures gets a double-page spread and is depicted twice there. So the »Rhino-ceros« happily munching an ice cream on the left turns into a »Crynoceros« when its ice cream cone drops to the floor on the right-hand side. Grumblebee, Hippopotamus, Balletphant and their friends will entertain toddlers and their (grand)parents again and again. The small witty watercolour images placed against a white background introduce the other nonsensical animals, one at a time, before they all congregate on the last spread for the grand finale. (Age: 2+) [CS]

Nicolaas Maritz's large-format »Multilingual ABC« (David Philip, 2020) was awarded the 2022 Bologna Ragazzi Award in the Non Fiction category. The South African multimedia artist's latest work »Rainbeast« is another ambitious project, written in verse in Afrikaans and then translated into English, IsiXhosa and Hai||om (a sister language of Nama) in collaboration with other renowned authors, such as Sindiwe Magoma. The joyful text consists of 22 verses, each of which closes with the line »on the day the rain came«, giving this modern »rain mythology« an oral, song-like vibe. »Guineafowl step-danced / like speckled turkeys; / kissing the earth with grateful pecks, [...]«. Both the text and the magnificent full-page and double-page illustrations in bright splashes of colour, aptly depict the relief and exhilaration that the local people and the various animals feel when the long drought at Riemvasmaak (close to the Namibian border) is finally over. The book is the winner of the Pendoring 2021 Silver Award. (Age: 4+) [CS]

59



Becker, Harmony (text/illus.)

Himawari House

New York: First Second, 2021. – 384 p.

ISBN 978-1-250-23557-2

(Includes some Japanese text)

Japan | Identity | Language learning |
Multilingualism | Friendship

Himawari House is a shared house in Tokyo that serves as home to five students learning either Japanese or English. Conversations about friendships, love, and family are a part of everyday life in the house. The students' interactions, self-reflections, and confrontations address questions of assimilation, accent stigma, mixed heritage, and more. These young adults are from varied backgrounds and speak different languages, and their mixing of English, Japanese, Singaporean Singlish is expressed naturally through speech bubbles, onomatopoeic text embedded in illustration, and through text embedded in illustration signage. Text and visuals are used authentically to express insider/outsider/in-between feelings – feelings mostly understandable to readers, though perhaps at times linguistically unclear to single language speakers. This graphic novel is an amazing accomplishment of multinationalism/multilingualism that makes the most of the format, naturally expressing the story through features of manga conventions. (Age: 14+) [JY]

60



Caprara, Rebecca (text)

Worst-case Collin

Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2021. – 378 p.

ISBN 978-1-62354-145-3

Death | Coping with grief | Family |
Mental illness | Anxiety | Verse novel

When Collin's mother dies in a tragic accident, he and his father are left on their own. Collin's dad is brilliant at math, but has always been disorganised and saves more than most would find useful. After his wife's death, his collections of »treasures« grow, until they take over the whole house. Collin, also grieving, turns to swimming, his friends, and a disaster-preparedness handbook. He hopes this book might guide him through future calamities, though nothing could have prepared him for losing his mom. Collin tries to hide his home life, but as his dad's compulsive hoarding worsens, the situation becomes untenable. Rebecca Caprara's fast-paced verse novel draws the reader in, while her skilful writing compassionately explores themes of grief, anxiety, bullying, and mental health in a way that feels realistic and appropriate for a middle grade audience. Resources for mental health and children of compulsive hoarders are included after the acknowledgments. (Age: 10+) [MB]

61



Forna, Namina (text)

The gilded ones

New York: Delacorte Press, 2021. – 432 p.

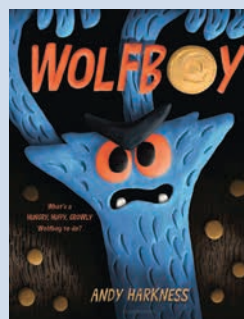
(Series: Deathless / Forna, Namina; 1)

ISBN 978-1-984848-69-7

Kingdom | Outsider | Discrimination | Warrior |
Feminism | Deception | Fantasy fiction

The past five years have seen a welcome upsurge in YA fantasy novels with strong black characters. Following the success of writers like Tomi Adeyemi and Nnedi Okorafor, many of these books draw on myths, elements, and figures from different African cultures to add a twist to well-loved fantasy tropes. In screenwriter Namina Forna's debut novel, a group of girls who have been ostracised from their communities because of their golden blood and uncanny strength are gathered by a mysterious woman. Her aim is to turn them into a special army for the king. The female warriors will have to fight ferocious monsters who keep attacking the kingdom of Otara. In a riveting narrative, the author lays bare the fates and struggles of sixteen-year-old Deka and her fellow Alaki as they overcome trauma, forge strong friendships, and slowly uncover secrets. The first in a planned trilogy, the novel is a shout out for girls who kick ass and fight against oppression in their abusive patriarchal society. (Age: 14+) [CS]

62



Harkness, Andy (text/illus.)

Wolfboy

New York: Bloomsbury Children's Books,

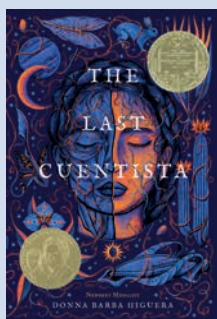
2021. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-1-5476-0442-5

Wolf | Hunger | Search | Rabbit | Picture book

Award-winning art director Andy Harkness has worked on lots of animated films. His impeccable sense for dramatic visual storytelling is clearly palpable in his second picture book »Wolfboy«, inspired by his own two sons, who »turn into monsters« when they are hungry. On a moon-lit night, the angular, blue character, who resembles a small monster rather than a ferocious wolf, stomps through the forest in search of food. »He was HUNGRY and HUFFY and DROOLY and GROWLY.« However, the rabbits he is desperately looking for seem to have disappeared. Or maybe not? The three-dimensional illustrations, which have a distinct theatrical feel to them, are first sketched in pencil, then sculpted in clay, photographed, and coloured and refined digitally. Alternating between long shots, close-ups, and sequential pictures, they reveal that the sneaky little rodents are never far away. The playfully repetitive text and the action-filled images create a lot of suspense, which is resolved in an unexpected and humorous ending. (Age: 4+) [CS]

63



Higuera, Donna Barba (text)

The last cuentista

Montclair: Levine Querido, [2021]. – 320 p.

ISBN 978-1-64614-089-3

Earth | Destruction | Spaceship | Escape |
Family | Memories | Storytelling | Dystopia |
Science fiction

With the destruction of Earth just days away, Petra Peña, her little brother, and their scientist parents are among the lucky few who escape onboard a luxury spaceship. The 380-year journey is supposed to take them to distant planet Sagan, so that they can start a new human settlement. Yet when the twelve-year-old is awakened from her preservation pod, a community of genetically modified creatures calling themselves »The Collective« have taken control and erased every last memory of Earth from the survivors' brains – except Petra's. Drawing strength from her beloved grandma's »cuentos«, Petra sets out to rescue herself and her fellow child passengers. This science fiction novel presents a spellbinding futuristic migration story interspersed with tales from Mexican folklore. It touches upon questions of colonisation, abuse of power, and individuality, and affirms the importance of storytelling in shaping people's lives. This Newbery-Medal- and Pura-Belpré-Award-winner is a thought-provoking read! (Age: 11+) [CS]

64



Johnson, Varian (text)

Playing the cards you're dealt

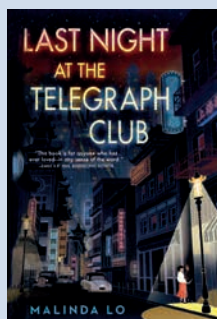
New York: Scholastic Press, 2021. – 320 p.

ISBN 978-1-338-34853-8

Addiction | Family | Card game

Ten-year-old »Ant« (short for Anthony) faces challenges from his peers – teasing and name calling for his short stature – and struggles to figure out his own identity. However, he believes what matters most about turning ten is living up to his father's expectations and playing in the Spades tournament to carry on the family tradition of excelling at cards. He learns the game, learns to strategize, and learns to face what's ultimately the most important challenge of his life – dealing with his relationship to his alcoholic and gambling father whose addictions and toxic masculinity leave Ant to make weighty decisions questioning his loyalty to his father and ultimately to his family. The omniscient narrator is convincing and earnest, guiding readers through the emotionally resonant story, through relationships that are at once heart-warming as well as heart-wrenching. (Age: 8+) [JY]

65



Lo, Malinda (text)

Last night at the Telegraph Club

New York: Dutton Books, [2021]. – 409 p.

ISBN 978-0-525-55525-4

San Francisco | History 1950s | Chinese American |
Sexuality | LGBTQ+ | Falling in love | Racism |
Gender role | Historical fiction

Acclaimed author Malinda Lo's latest offering is a sensitive queer young adult novel set in the Chinese-American community in San Francisco in the 1950s. Seventeen-year-old Lily Hu has always been the dutiful daughter and diligent student her parents expected her to be. Yet lately, she has started wondering about her friendships, her future life, and her place in the world beyond her Chinatown neighbourhood. When she befriends Kath, a white classmate, Lily finally dares to question society's conservative notions about same-sex love and hesitantly explores her own sexuality. However, with homophobic micro-aggressions, open racism, and the looming threat of her father's deportation due to the so-called »red scare«, living their budding love is risky for the two young women. The author brilliantly chronicles her protagonist's tentative coming-out and also provides a wealth of background matter in the Hu-family flashbacks and in her afterword, painting a vibrant picture of the American post-war society. (Age: 14+) [CS]

66



Magoon, Kekla (text)

Revolution in our time. The Black Panther Party's promise to the people

Somerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 2021. –

IX p. + 390 p.

ISBN 978-1-5362-1418-5

USA | History 1966-1982 | Black Panther Party |
African Americans | Civil rights | Injustice |
Non-fiction

This is the story of the Black Panther Party, which existed in the USA from 1966 to 1982 and worked to defend Black people who were treated with violence and injustice in their own country. The story is still relevant in the United States today, because it is through reading history that we come to understand our present and are enabled to make decisions about our future. This is also a story relevant world-wide, because injustice happens throughout the world. Reading about the spirit, the determination, and methods of the Black Panther Party offers insights into how those who continue the work for justice can move forward. This thoroughly researched, well documented, and engagingly told narrative is accompanied by numerous archival photographs, reproduced documents, timelines, and more. Source notes and bibliographic notations are extensive and offer further research materials. (Age: 14+) [JY]

67



Reynolds, Jason (text)

Griffin, Jason (illus.)

Ain't burned all the bright

New York [et al.]: Atheneum, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publ. Division, [2022]. – 384 p.

(A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book)

ISBN 978-1-53-443946-7

Black people | Injustice | Racism | Violence

The dedication page prepares readers for what they are about to experience: »For everyone we lost / and everything we learned / in the strangest year of our lives – 2020 / – R & G«. With poetic text by Jason Reynolds and mixed-media art by Jason Griffin, the impact of the collaborative creation is exponentially greater than the strong, individual parts. The spare text is rhythmically paced so there are only a few words per image, inviting the reader/viewer to pause, feel, and reflect on what is presented with each page turn. The first section, »Breath One« considers the systemic, overwhelming violence against Black people. The book continues to »Breath Two« in which the narrator's very sick father watches the violence on the news, and culminates with »Breath Three« in which it is evident that the violence shown on television isn't changing – yet ends with a question »has anyone seen the remote?« Grounded in the events of 2020, the theme is timeless. (Age: 12+) [JY]

68



Tabor, Corey R. (text/illus.)

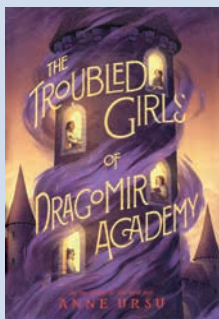
Mel fell

New York, NY: Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, [2021]. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-0-06-287801-4

Bird | Flying | Courage | Self-confidence |
Picture book

Courageous little Mel is fed up with sitting around in the family nest high up in the tree waiting for her mother to return, so she decides that it is »time to learn to fly.« Despite her siblings admonitions (and her own fear), she simply vaults from the branch and plunges towards the ground – oh no! The distressed neighbours – squirrels, bees, ants, and even a snail – hurry to catch the little kingfisher, but to no avail. Mel simply »...fell and fell.« To watch the bird's rapid descent downwards, readers have to open the book from the bottom and flip the pages up horizontally – only to turn the book 180 degrees and flip downwards once Mel zooms back up again. The matt illustrations, created in colour pencils, acrylics, and digitally, capture a myriad of comical details. They feature a plucky protagonist and an amiable cast of supporting characters. Corey R. Tabor's laugh-out-loud story of self-confidence, with its witty and sparse text, is a masterpiece in both content and form. (Age: 4+) [CS]

69



Ursu, Anne (text)

The troubled girls of Dragomir Academy

New York, NY: Walden Pond Press, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, [2021]. – 423 p.
ISBN 978-0-06-227512-7

Wizard | Magic | Feminism | Siblings

In the fantasy kingdom of Ilyria, twelve-year-old Marya Lupu's life is the opposite of her brother's: girls are considered insignificant while boys can rise to greatness as sorcerers to protect the kingdom from the Dread. A mistake destines her to be reformed at Dragomir Academy, a school for »troubled« girls who do not conform to expected roles. Marya had learned to read from Madame Bandu, to question what she reads, to ask who is telling stories and who they serve; she had also learned to seek coded stories and hidden truths in tapestries. Life at Dragomir is regimented, but when the girls begin to see the inconsistencies of the stories they are told, they begin to seek ways to forge their own destinies and determine their own worth. This feminist tale shows what smart, action-oriented girls can do to change their destiny within an oppressive patriarchal society. This fantasy world will sustain readers' attention with its relevance to our own world. (Age: 9+) [JY]

70



Wilder, Derick (text)

Chien, Cátia (illus.)

The longest letsgoboy

San Francisco: Chronicle Books, [2021]. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-1-4521-7716-8

Dog | Friendship | Death | Grief | Happiness |
Picture book

This past year has seen several books that tackle the death of a beloved pet (dog); »The Longest Letsgoboy« is by far the most unusual and uplifting one of them, narrated from an old dog's viewpoint. Debut author Derick Wilder's quiet, poetic text consists of short sentences interspersed with imaginative, unusual word-creations: As the tired canine takes one last walk with his little girl through the forest, he revisits happy memories of »runjumping and tailchasing, yipyapping constantly at branchjumpers, leglifting endlessly on tallsticks.« When they return home, he is ready to say goodbye. Award-winning illustrator Cátia Chien's atmospheric mixed-media illustrations are rendered in soft, warm colours with bright accents. She magically transforms the words into lyrical images that express joyfulness, pain, and love and reassure young readers that both dog and child (and her new »awwwpuppy«) can be happy again. A wonderfully gentle book to help children overcome their grief. (Age: 5+) [CS]

71



Kaldmaa, Kätlin (text)
Rõõmus, Jaan (illus.)

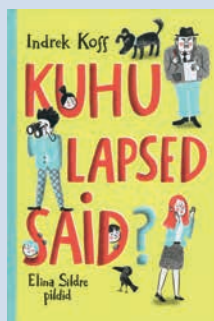
Lydia

[Tallinn]: Hunt, 2021. – 42 p.
ISBN 978-9949-7319-8-5

Koidula, Lydia (1843-1886) | Biography |
Feminism | Non-fiction

This book tells the story of Lydia Koidula (1843-1886), an icon and larger-than-life Estonian. Every child in the country learns about her in school. To them, she is a sculpture in the hallway or just a name behind the lyrics of the national anthem. Yet, there is a lot more to her than that. Lydia Koidula was a poetess, a translator, a journalist, a teacher, and a multi-talented feminist who did things her own way. Kätlin Kaldmaa has successfully brought her back to life (so to speak). The book is built around small scenes from Lydia's life, characteristic situations of her time, and moments of decisive importance, some of them even life-changing events. This was by no means an easy task for the writer, yet Kaldmaa has skilfully stitched poems and stories into the biography in a way that makes Koidula's life both an elevating and enjoyable story to read. The book is beautifully illustrated by Jaan Rõõmus, bringing playfulness, joy, and skilful nods to the era of the story, thereby enriching it immensely, despite the use of only two colours. (Age 8+) [US]

72



Koff, Indrek (text)
Sildre, Elina (illus.)

Kuhu lapsed said?

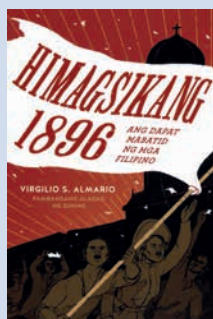
(Where'd the kids go?)

Tallinn: Härra Tee & prova Kohvi, 2021. – 69 p.
ISBN 978-9916-9649-2-7

Children's rights | Rebellion | Freedom |
Verse novel

Too many parental rules and regulations make some kids decide to flee from their hometown. The grown-ups notice the sudden lack of joy and mischief in their lives and try to get the kids to come back. They test different tactics of persuasion, but none seem to work. Indrek Koff has written this story in verse, which is a demanding format, yet he has managed to make it playful and, at times, hilarious. The kids won't listen to the sweet-talking adults or be taken in by their promises, and they can't be bribed either. They are incredibly consistent in their decision to stay away till they have reason to return, a moment that arises not through tactical planning but rather through enjoyment and fun. In depicting this, the author underlines the necessity of playfulness and creativity, no matter the age. Elina Sildre's carefully selected colour scheme, skilfully mastered characters, and attention to detail raise the story to another level, making the book look both vintage and modern at the same time. (Age: 6+) [US]

73



Almario, Virgilio S. (text)
Martinez, Nina (illus.)
Montenejo, Asa (illus./design)
Himagsikang 1896. Ang dapat mabatid ng mag Filipino
(1896 Revolution. What Filipinos should know)
Quezon City: Adarna House, 2021. – 108 p.
ISBN 978-971-508-846-6

Philippines | History 1896 | Colonialism |
Revolution | Independence | Non-fiction

National Artist of the Philippines, Virgilio S. Almario looks back upon the 1896 Philippine Revolution against Spanish colonial rule, led by Andrés Bonifacio, and paints a fresh picture of the events. From the pre-colonial Philippines to the fall of the Spanish Empire and the revolution initiated by members of the arising Philippine middle class in the European diaspora, he presents history in bite-sized stories for young readers. Based on new research, he shows how the rule of the upper class, following the assassination of Bonifacio, led to the persistence, through to the present day, of a hierarchical society, a corrupt elite, and a divided lower class. The names and visionary goals of important revolutionaries were eclipsed by those of the more affluent and educated class who installed themselves in positions of power. The text is accompanied by the stunning artwork of Nina Martinez, recipient of the PBBY Wordless Book Prize 2019, and the book design of Asa Montenejo, president of Adarna House publishing. (Age: 12+) [LO]

74



Virta, Juha (text)
Maijala, Marika (illus.)
Väriverstas
(Paint shop)
Helsinki: Etana Editions, [2021]. – [28] p.
(Series: Filippa & Kumppanit)
ISBN 978-952-7105-36-8

Colour | City | Painting | Poetry | Picture book

In Finland, there are already four books that feature Filippa, an energetic girl with a black pageboy hairstyle. In the latest volume, entitled »Väriverstas«, Filippa and her two friends, Antero the donkey and Nokonen the cat, brandish their paintbrushes and repaint the whole town. Initially, their plan had merely been to revarnish their boat. Yet after they are finished, they simply keep going. The three friends paint the lighthouse, coat a bronze equestrian statue in a bright shade of sky-blue, and that's not all. In between, they fill their stomachs with a »poetic dish« at the restaurant. By the way, talking about poetry: Juha Virta's texts for this book are a bunch of short poems, with and without rhymes. Combined with Marika Maijala's charming, colourful pictures – the title of the book says it all! – they offer readers a lot of fun. (Age: 3+) [IG]



75

Brière-Haquet, Alice (text)

Csil (illus.)

Un vrai temps de chien

(Truly beastly weather)

Bruxelles: A pas de loups, [2021]. – [36] p.

(Series: Pense-bête)

ISBN 978-2-930787-74-9

Dog | Weather | Storm | Picture book

On the horizon, where heaven and earth meet, there is a tiny yellow house that is completely defenceless against any sort of extreme weather conditions, especially those truly »beastly« ones: storm, hail, torrential rain, fog, biting frost, and blizzards. This picture book story unfolds in phases spanning two double-page spreads. First the weather is briefly described, then its effect on the owner of the house is shown: a small dog, who endures stoically – but not necessarily with equanimity, whatever natural elements have been unleashed. One sees, for example, a dark storm cloud that resembles a juicy sausage floating in the sky. Suddenly it bursts, leaving the house owner literally flat on the ground in a puddle. The tragicomical portrayal of the weather's whims is based on the rhymed text by Alice Brière-Haquet, which the illustrator Csil renders with much imagination and humorous repetition – suggesting a happy end. (Age: 4+) [SW]



76

Flamant, Ludovic (text)

Gréselle, Sara (illus.)

Bastien ours de la nuit

(Bastien, bear of the night)

Bruxelles: Versant Sud, [2021]. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-2-930938-27-1

City | Winter | Night | Homelessness | Bear | Imagination | Picture book

Sébastien, a homeless man, is preparing himself to spend another icy cold winter night on the streets. He spreads out the cardboard, which he has collected during the day. As soon as he falls asleep and the warmth of his body begins to seep away, Bastien the Bear makes his appearance. Is this his totem? The bear detaches itself from the site where the vulnerable sleeper lies and begins its night-time prowling through the nearly deserted city, in search of something edible. Along the way, he encounters two other outsiders: a homeless woman and a street musician. Tired at last, the bear returns to Sébastien. Is this a dream, part of one last inner journey of the homeless man, who is about to die in the cold? The creator of this moving story leaves us with an open ending. Ludovic Flamant's dense text is linked to Sara Gréselle's vignettes by a series of succinct subtitles. The meticulous, expressive drawings demonstrate how a picture book can draw upon the stylistic devices of magical realism to tell a story about poverty and homelessness. (Age: 5+) [SW]

77



Juncker, Nicolas (text)

Boucq, François (illus.)

Un général, des généraux*(One general, several generals)*

Bruxelles: Le Lombard, 2022. – 144 p.

ISBN 978-2-8082-0122-3

France | Algeria | History 1958 | Coup d'état |
Political power | Gaulle, Charles de (1890-
1970) | Graphic novel

Algeria, May 1958: Thousands of fighters hoping to preserve »French Algeria« storm the Governor's Palace. Vain generals eager for a coup d'état, colonial nostalgists, and overwhelmed parliamentarians add to the chaotic situation. The political situation in all of France is teetering. All of France? Well, not entirely. In one small village in the east of France a retired general is preparing his return to power: Charles de Gaulle. In this graphic novel François Boucq and Nicolas Juncker pull off the feat of portraying those days as an ominous political farce, even while sticking to the historical facts. At its core, the narrative explores the question to which extent de Gaulle's return to power was the result of a wily intrigue. Magnificently told in text and image, this tale resembles a parable of the ambivalent relationship of the French (and of men) to power. The portraits of the main actors are evocative of caricatures by Honoré Daumier. A brilliant postscript by the historian Tramor Quemeneur concludes the book. (Age: 16+) [SW]

78



Bacon, Joséphine / Morali, Laure (ed.)

Mestokosho-Paradis, Lydia (illus.)

Nin auass – Moi l'enfant.**Poèmes de la jeunesse innue***(Nin auass – I, a child. Poems by young Innu)*

Montréal: Mémoire d'encrier, [2021]. – 353 p.

Text Innu-aimun and French

ISBN 978-2-89712-691-9

Canada | Innu <people> | Poetry |
Young author | First Nations | Bilingual book

Joséphine Bacon, grande dame of first-nation literature in Quebec, writes both in her native tongue Innu-aimun and in French. For over 40 years she has been working to strengthen her people's awareness of their culture – especially among children and young people, but also among adults – by showing them in a playful manner how to express themselves through language. For this anthology Bacon and her co-editor, Laure Morali, travelled through Innu territory for four years, meeting with hundreds of school classes and holding poetry workshops for more than 1000 children and teenagers. In cooperation with Institut Tshakapesh, a cultural education institute in Quebec, the engaged publishing house Mémoire d'encrier has documented the resulting poems in this beautifully designed book. The young poets describe their desires, their daily lives, their village communities, and their special relationship with nature. In many poems it is possible to detect their obvious pleasure at finding their own voice. (Age: 8+) [SW]



79

Jean, Michel (ed.)
Various authors (text)
Wapke. Nouvelles

(Tomorrow. Stories)

Montréal (Québec): Stanké, [2021]. – 209 p.

ISBN 978-2-7604-1279-8

Canada | First Nations | Future | Science fiction |
Short story | Anthology

»Wapke« means »tomorrow« in the Atikamekw language and is the title of this unusual anthology of 14 stories about the future. Edited by Michel Jean, a well-known Innu writer and journalist, it is the first collection of texts by First-Nation writers living in Quebec. By projecting themselves into the future, they give expression to their hopes and fears about what lays ahead. Some are utopian, some dystopian, and others fantasy, but all deal with the consequences of environmental destruction, colonialism, paternalism, climate change, and pandemics, while also addressing racism, social divisiveness, or the decline of democracy. In many cases the indigenous teenagers or young adults in these stories must try to re-invent their lives in the aftermath of an ecological and/or political catastrophe. Often, they are aided by their knowledge of the myths and values of their ancestors, thus helping them to survive and follow a new course. Contributors include renowned, experienced writers as well as younger, lesser-known authors. (Age: 14+) [SW]



80

Roberge, Julie (text)

MC, Aless (illus.)

Monstres sacrés. Voyage au cœur des volcans

(Holy monsters. Travels to the inside of volcanoes)

Montréal (Québec): La Pastèque, [2021]. – 85 p.

ISBN 978-2-89777-107-2

Volcano | Geology | History | Mythology |
Non-fiction

A volcanic eruption is an impressive natural spectacle. When one of the over 1500 active volcanoes of our world erupts, it becomes evident once again how little research has been devoted to the great forces residing deep under Earth's surface. Each one unique, their unpredictability and powers of destruction have grave consequences for the country and the continent they are in, and sometimes even – thanks to their effects on global climate – for the entire world. With the support of illustrator Aless MC, Quebec volcanologist Julie Roberge, who conducts her research in Mexico, presents some of the secrets associated with these »fire mountains«. She not only presents the most dangerous and well-known volcanoes, but also details of numerous unexplored volcanoes, such as those in Antarctica, on the ocean floor, and in the outer reaches of our solar system. Awarded the Bologna Ragazzi Award 2022, this outstanding non-fiction book combines scientific knowledge with examples from history and mythology. (Age: 10+) [SW]

81



Alemagna, Beatrice (text/illus.)

Même pas en rêve!

(Not even in a dream!)

Paris: L'École des loisirs, [2021]. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-2-211-31190-8

Bat | Parents | Daughter | Role swapping |
School | Picture book

I refuse! The little girl bat Pascaline is just three years old, but she is quite adamant about one thing: she will never-ever go to preschool with all those obedient, but sad-looking (animal) children she observes from afar. In her rebellion, Pascaline pulls out all the stops and is so thoroughly successful that her cries of protest reduce her worried parents down to midget-size bats; they, in turn, continuously pester Pascaline with their fearful whining. Whom did they learn that from? Now it is Pascaline who decides that her mini-parents will come along on her first day of school. But no one must notice them! Once there, however, her querulous parents outdo even themselves, and Pascaline – now suddenly the personification of reason itself – must use all her talents to survive her first hours at school. This hilarious picture book, which was inspired by the school boycott of Beatrice Alemagna's own little daughter, masterfully takes the idea of role swapping to its extremes. (Age: 4+) [SW]

82



Brabant, Justine (text) / Kamgang, Annick (illus.)

Lucha. Chronique d'une révolution sans armes au Congo (LUCHA. Chronicle of a non-violent revolution in the Congo)

Saint-Avertin: La Boîte à bulles, [2021]. – 95 p.

(Series: Contre-cœur)

ISBN 978-2-84953-398-7

Democratic Republic of the Congo | Democracy |
Civil rights movement | Resistance |
Graphic novel | Non-fiction

Franco-Cameroonian comic artist Annick Kamgang and French journalist Justine Brabant document the decisive contributions that young people in Africa are able to make when they form social movements to effect change. In this case it involves more than »mere« justice. LUCHA was founded by young people from Goma, a provincial capital in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and quickly grew into an effective civil rights movement. The activists dealt first with daily problems, such as access to safe drinking water or free public education. Finding solutions also meant drawing attention to structural problems such as corruption, lawlessness, or the lack of democratic process. After exchanging ideas with other successful movements in Senegal and Burkina Faso – where ruling autocrats had been toppled – the leaders of LUCHA spent 18 months in detention and were released only as the result of international pressure. The publication of this informative and gripping narrative was supported by Amnesty International. (Age: 15+) [SW]



83

Guibert Brussel, Cécile (text)
Marchand Richard, Marion (text)
Bergier, Vincent (illus.)
L'extraordinaire machine du climat
(*The marvellous climate machine*)
Arles: Actes Sud junior, [2021]. – 61 p.
ISBN 978-2-330-15058-7

Climate | Climate change | Environmental
protection | Non-fiction

The natural world appears to have lost its balance. Sea levels are rising, weather conditions are becoming extremer, and we see an increasing number of natural catastrophes, such as droughts, flooding, forest fires, and hurricanes. What is the explanation for the growing frequency of these phenomena? Are they new, can they be reversed, are they man-made? How does the complex system of climate work? This non-fiction book is very successful in explaining how the core »wheels« (sun, air, water, earth) of the »climate machine« interconnect, complement and reinforce each other. The climate is portrayed, for example, as a centuries-old »miracle machine« that produced heat, water, and clouds, and restored balance even after »disruptions«. Why does this no longer occur, and what can be done about it? All around the world, young people join the driving forces in the battle against climate change. This well-organised and easy-to-understand introduction to climate issues is directed to both young and adult readers. (Age: 11+) [SW]



84

Kadi, Marion (text/illus.)
Les reflets d'Harriett
(*Harriet's reflection*)
Paris: L'Agrume, [2021]. – [43] p.
ISBN 978-2-490975-13-6

School | Self-confidence | Courage |
Lion | Picture book

A lion dies, but its reflection remains behind. While looking for a suitable match to connect itself to, it encounters the small, reticent Harriett. With a lion as her new mirror-image, Harriett is endowed with unimagined powers. At last, she can speak up freely in class and romp fearlessly around the schoolyard. But this sudden transformation leads to considerable chaos at her (previously detested) school. Now all the other children want to follow Harriett's example and act lionly. After a period of enthusiastic experimenting, Harriett learns to tame her »inner lion«. This powerful first picture book by author-illustrator Marion Kadi – who was awarded the 2022 Bologna Ragazzi Award in the category Opera Prima – embeds the questions of »who am I and who do I want to be?« within an intense but jovial story. In particular, the paradoxical manner by which Harriett manages, with her newly won self-confidence, to gain some distance from her much too dominant lion side is presented in a satisfying way. (Age: 6+) [SW]

85



Lecœuvre, Claire (text)

Tételin, Arnaud (illus.)

Les pieds dans la terre.**Cinq histoires de paysans**

(Feet firmly in the ground. Five stories about family-run farms)

Paris: Les Éditions des éléphants, [2022]. – 76 p.

ISBN 978-2-37273-103-4

France | Agriculture | Farmer | Family business | Sustainability | Non-fiction

The French journalist Claire Lecœuvre grew up in the countryside. Accompanied by the illustrator Arnaud Tételin, she travelled throughout France to create this outstanding non-fiction book. It presents five unusual family farms whose respective business models focus on vegetable farming, animal husbandry, viniculture and orcharding, and which are situated in different regions: Brittany, Île-de-France, Languedoc-Roussillon, Aquitaine und Savoy. At each farm, the family members talk about the enormous changes that their profession has experienced over the past centuries. Common to each family farm is that the youngest generation has been successful in introducing innovative, ecological farming methods. An optimistic book, these testimonials from self-assured and resourceful men and women provide a convincing plea for sustainable agriculture, which protects animals, the environment, and the climate. Simultaneously the book lovingly expresses the beauty and indispensability of the farm profession. (Age: 11+) [SW]

86



Pénélope (text/illus.)

La nature au bout des doigts

(Nature at your fingertips)

Paris: Des Grandes Personnes, [2021]. – [16] p.

(Series: Les Grandes Personnes)

ISBN 978-2-36193-623-5

Nature | Plants | Animals | Picture book

The illustrator Pénélope has created a beautiful touch-and-feel book created with paper embossing and kept entirely in white. The relief images offer gentle outlines of leaves or animals' bodies, and of delicate objects such as flowers or feathers, thereby inviting the reader to explore and reflect by touch. What differences can your fingers detect between the filigree leaf of an ash tree, a ginkgo or an oak tree? What does the body of a spider and the structure of its web feel like? Can you recognize the structure of an icicle or a snowflake with your fingertips? After her studies at a school of arts and crafts and a job with an advertising agency, Pénélope turned to book illustration. In the meantime, she has published a dozen books and held numerous exhibitions. Since 2012, in cooperation with INS, France's national institution for young deaf people in Paris, the artist has developed books designed for both deaf and hearing people. (Age: 4+) [SW]



87

Petitmangin, Laurent (text)

Ce qu'il faut de nuit. Roman

(*What you need at night. Novel*)

Paris: La Manufacture de livres, [2020]. – 187 p.

ISBN 978-2-35887-679-7

Right-wing radicalism | Father | Son |
Family conflict

Has he failed as a father? And how could he have prevented the tragedy? These questions weigh upon the mind of a committed social-democratic railway worker from Lorraine. After the death of his wife, he tried with difficulty to raise his two sons alone. Helplessly he watches as his elder son becomes radicalised by a right-wing circle of friends. While hanging up posters for the »Front National« party during the presidential campaign of 2017, his son is seriously injured; later he commits a murder and is sent to prison. This highly topical debut novel, winner of the 2021 Fémina des Lycéens prize, deals primarily with the father-son conflict, but sheds light at the same time on the circumstances behind it. These include the dangerous political changes in France and their causes, i.e., the consequences of de-industrialisation, the decline of entire regions, and the lack of opportunities for the people living there. The story impressively relates how young people, in particular, can fall under the influence of right-wing extremism. (Age: 15+) [SW]



88

Wisniewski, Gaya (text/illus.)

Ours à New York

(*Bear in New York*)

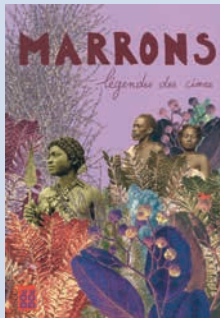
[Nantes]: Éditions MeMo, [2020]. – [35] p.

ISBN 978-2-35289-477-3

New York City | City | Life | Meaning of life |
Self-realisation | Picture book

Is this really the life that Aleksander had dreamed of as a child? A beautiful apartment in a trendy part of town, daily trips on the subway to a well-paid job – looking quite serious in his suit and carrying a briefcase? Yet what many might consider »success« comes at a high price: loneliness, an increasingly boring job, and the hectic life of New York City, that glittering juggernaut. When he becomes caught up in growing self-doubt, Aleksander's two long-missed childhood companions – a giant bear and a tiny fox – kindly but firmly draw his attention to the contradictions in his life. At first Aleksander tries to block out their advice. How his wise friends help him achieve a happier life is the subject of this expressive picture book drawn entirely in black-and-white by Belgian artist Gaya Wisniewski. With her large-size city scenes depicting streets, bridges, parks, and skyscrapers in a wintry New York, she composes a gorgeous modern fairy tale about the meaning of life. (Age: 6+) [SW]

89



Various authors (text)
Mary-des-Ailes (illus.)

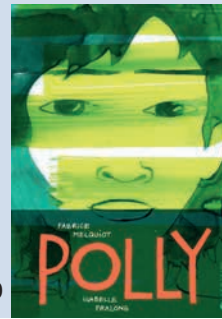
Marrons. Légendes des cimes

(*Maroons. Legends from the mountain tops*)
[Antananarivo]: Éditions Dodo vole, [2021]. – [24] p.
(Series: Doc doc)
ISBN 979-10-90103-69-6

Réunion | Slavery | Escape | Freedom | Anthology

On the island of La Réunion there was, from the beginning, an active resistance to slavery and the plantation system based upon it. Many slaves fled from exploitation and bondage to the least accessible parts of the island and founded communities that ensured their survival. Thus began the legendary »Royaume de l'intérieur« (The Inner Kingdom). Despite brutal persecution, these free Black people – who were mistakenly labelled »Maroons« by the white settlers – maintained their own complex form of society until slavery was abolished in 1848. This anthology includes texts from 1844 until today. Illustrated with collages by the contemporary artist Mary-des-Ailes, it pays tribute to those famous Maroons, the brave men and woman who even today shape the collective memory and the typography of the island. Mountain peaks, valley basins, caves or ravines that were once the homes or the observations posts of runaway slaves still bear their names. A map included in the book shows where some of these places can be found. (Age: 14+) [SW]

90



Melquiot, Fabrice (text)
Pralong, Isabelle (illus.)

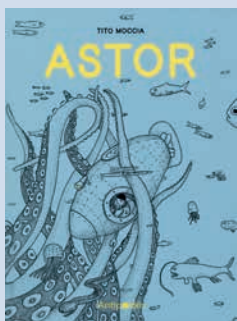
Polly

Genève: Joie de lire, [2021]. – [148] p.
ISBN 978-2-88908-560-6

Intersexuality | Sexuality | Gender role | Identity |
Graphic novel

A child is born. The midwife cannot tell the parents with certainty whether it is a girl or a boy. Ultimately, the male sex is chosen, and the baby is given the name Polly. Their doctor pressures the parents into agreeing to an operation that will remedy the »anatomical ambiguity« of their child (»for its own benefit«). And so, from his/her seventh year onwards, Polly is subjected to highly consequential, so-called »genital corrective surgery«. But these medical interventions do nothing to change Polly's identity which – as he/she must painfully discover – does not adhere to the binary logic of »either man or woman«. Only much later does Polly realize that he/she is intersexual and is finally able to find the strength and composure to live with and in accord with a multiple identity. Winner of numerous prizes, this graphic novel about gender affiliation and identity follows Polly's path of self-discovery in succinct, kaleidoscopic scenes. (Age: 13+) [SW]

91



Moccia, Tito (text/illus.)

Astor

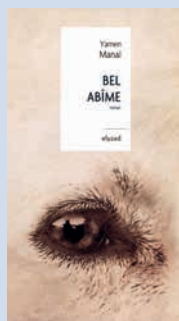
Lausanne: Antipodes, [2021]. – 59 p.

ISBN 978-2-88901-213-8

Sea | Marine animals | Scientist | Submarine |
Journey | Picture book

While in harbour, the sailor Astor acquires a mysterious conch shell. Holding it to his ear, he hears a sound and knows he must follow it. Boarding a small, fish-shaped submarine, he embarks on an expedition that takes him from the Arctic to Antarctica, traversing all the seas between and even descending to the depths of the oceans. He encounters many types of marine life, and just barely escapes from dangerous deep-sea monsters. In a hidden part of the Mediterranean Sea, he meets a mermaid who offers him a tiny box. Does it hold what he has been searching for? Or does the meaning of his long journey lie in the traveling itself? Even as a child, author-illustrator Tito Moccia was fascinated by the sea. Later he trained as a marine biologist and works today as a journalist and artist. »Astor« is his first picture book and includes his own pen and ink drawings in the ornamental style of the 1970s. It was shortlisted for the 2022 Prix Suisse du livre jeunesse. (Age: 5+) [SW]

92



Manai, Yamen (text)

Bel abîme. Roman*(Beautiful abyss. A novel)*

[Tunis]: Elyzad, [2021]. – 110 p.

ISBN 978-2-492-27044-4

Family conflict | Social conflict | Love of animals |
Violence | Revenge

The fifteen-year-old protagonist of this novel lives in Tunis. He is a shy loner who repeatedly experiences violent assaults at school, in his neighbourhood, and even in the family. After finding an abandoned puppy on a construction site, he begins to care and feel responsible for it, thereby growing bolder and more assertive himself. His parents, and especially his perfidious, authoritarian father, disapprove of the boy's growing independence. They decide to put an end to the close relationship between the boy and his dog, Bella. When they lure him into a trap, the consequences are dramatic, and not only for the family. This fourth, multiple award-winning novel by young Tunisian author Yamen Manai depicts the disappointed hopes, lack of opportunity, and day-to-day life of many young Tunisians following the failed revolution of 2010/2011. He impressively shows that in a society deformed by violence, corruption, and materialism, victims can readily become perpetrators, and perpetrators victims. (Age: 15+) [SW]

93



Bloem, I. E. (text)

It neidiel fan 'e twivel*(The benefit of the doubt)*

Ljouwert: Afûk, [2021]. – 176 p.

ISBN 978-94-93159-71-6

Love | Guilt | Bullying | Father | Son |
Alcoholism | Coming of age

Bas is supposed to go a school in Italy for three months as an exchange student. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, he has to return home after a short time. In this novel, the story about the days before Bas's father died is interspersed with the story of the short romance Bas has with Julia while he is in Rome. The main characters are superbly brought to life, as when, for instance, the author convincingly fleshes out Julia's mental health problems and skilfully depicts the intense, sometimes painful inner development that Bas undergoes. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Bas has guilt feelings toward his alcoholic father even though he had abused his wife and children. All of Bas's trials and tribulations help him steadily gain more self-awareness. The novel's quality is also evident in the fact that many aspects are not explicitly explained, leaving room for the reader's own interpretation. »It neidiel fan 'e twivel« was awarded the triennial Simke Kloosterman Prize in 2022. I. E. Bloem is the pen name of an author whose identity is unknown. (Age: 12+) [TD]

94



Mohl, Nils (text)

Kehn, Regina (illus.)

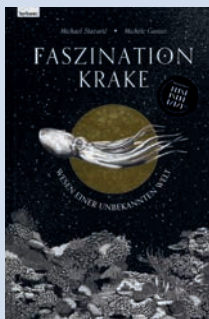
An die, die wir nicht werden wollen.**Eine Teenager-Symphonie***(To those we don't want to become.**A teenage symphony)*

Innsbruck [et al.]: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2021. – 165 p.

ISBN 978-3-7022-3956-5

Coming of age | Poetry

In recent years, the Austrian publisher Tyrolia has evolved into an excellent home for unconventional and experimental children's and youth literature, literature beyond the mainstream. Therefore, it doesn't come as a surprise that Nils Mohl's »Teenager-Symphonie« is published there. The book defies the familiar youth book categories, it can't be pigeon-holed and, in typical Mohl-manner, it amazes readers as much as it confuses them. »An die, die wir nicht werden wollen« combines teenage hubris with teenage depression and a teenage know-it-all-attitude, in short everything that characterises this day and age. Nils Mohl's book is not a coming-of-age novel, but rather an associative montage of poems, chats, miniatures, snippets, scraps, and fragments. Like a symphony, it is polyphonic and yet in perfect harmony. Regina Kehn's illustrations in red and black, inspired by individual details and motifs from the texts, also contribute to this harmony. (Age: 14+) [IG]



95

Stavarič, Michael (text)

Ganser, Michèle (illus.)

Faszination Krake. Wesen einer unbekannten Welt

(Fascination Octopus. Creature from an unknown world)

Graz: Leykam, 2021. – 141 p.

ISBN 978-3-7011-8202-2

[Octopus](#) | [Marine animals](#) | [Non-fiction](#) | [Picture book](#)

»Faszination Krake« is a non-fiction hybrid in a class of its own! Michèle Ganser's black-and-white pictures are full of delicate details that look as if they have been engraved with a fine needle. The illustrations alone, reminiscent of those in old natural history books, astonish readers. One can hardly get enough of the front and end papers: Different octopuses are floating through the darkness, some small and bulbous, others long and slender, some have stripes, and all have suction cups. The texts vary in tone and genre, some of them addressing the readers directly; small poems, jokes, and children's comments are woven into the mix, and of course there are also informative sections, for example about the octopuses' »superpowers« or their reproduction. In addition, the numerous myths and horror stories surrounding the enigmatic sea dwellers are also tackled. In short: this is an octopus smorgasbord that readers will want to come back to again and again. (Age: 6+) [IG]



96

Boie, Kirsten (text)

Heul doch nicht, du lebst ja noch

(Stop bawling, you're still alive)

Hamburg: Oetinger, 2022. – 176 p.

ISBN 978-3-7512-0163-6

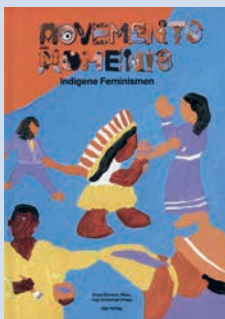
[Hamburg](#) | [World War II](#) | [Post-war era](#) | [Coming of age](#) | [Past](#)

Kirsten Boie's new novel is set in Hamburg in the summer of 1945, shortly after the end of the Second World War. The past is dark, the future uncertain. The city is in ruins and people are struggling to make ends meet, including the three young people around whom the story revolves: Jakob, who, as a Jew, had to hide and has not yet realized that the war has been over for more than a month; Hermann, whose father has returned from the war without legs and full of bitterness and fury; and Traute, whose home has become cramped after another family moved in. Each of the three teens has a different story and each has more than just one cross to bear. They are all confused and traumatised. Multi-award-winning author Kirsten Boie writes a haunting narrative, without pathos, about a destroyed city and damaged, multi-layered characters who cross paths with each other and who try to somehow cope and move on. Why? Because there's nothing for it... (Age: 14+) [IG]

GERMAN

Austria
Germany

97



Eismann, Sonja / Maya / Schöningh, Ingo (ed.)
 Various authors (text)
 Various artists (illus.)
 Müller, Sabine (transl.)
Movement and Moments. Indigene Feminismen
 (Movement and moments. Indigenous feminism)
 Berlin: Jaja Verlag, 2022. – 312 p.
 ISBN 978-3-948904-28-9

Africa | Asia | Latin America |
 Indigenous people | Feminism | Comic

In ten short comics, this book introduces feminist activists, projects, and initiatives from the Global South. The book is the result of a collaboration between the Goethe Institute and the feminist magazine »Missy Magazin«, initiated in 2018. All the comics were penned by artists and artist collectives from the Global South and are true revelations. The stories deal with the abuse of power and intersectional discrimination, yet they also highlight how activists rise up and struggle against these structures. The activists provide education, enlightenment, and empowerment; they use their own language; and they live (and revitalise) their traditional culture and stand up against the exploitation of nature or against heteronormative sexuality. The book shows that it is worth fighting and that it is possible to achieve something even on a small scale. Nevertheless, it becomes just as clear that systemic and structural injustice are ultimately strong opponents of change. (Age: 14+) [IG]

98



Hensgen, Andrea (text)
 Zaeri, Mehrdad (illus.)
Ein Käfig ging einen Vogel suchen
 (A cage went in search of a bird)
 München: Knesebeck, 2022. – [40] p.
 ISBN 978-3-95728-438-9

Freedom | Bird | Fable | Parable | Picture book

A cage needs to house a bird. The cage knows that and calls out searching for an inhabitant. The birds laugh at him, because why would anyone voluntarily exchange their life of freedom for one behind bars? The cat, on the other hand, is rubbing its paws with glee; naturally, a bird in a cage will be a much easier prey. When Kostja lands, everyone holds their breath. What is going to happen? Well, Kostja hops into the cage, but things don't turn out exactly as expected: Both the cat and the other birds are left flabbergasted, because Kostja simply flies away WITH the cage. Ha! Inspired by a well-known Franz Kafka aphorism, after which this book is named, Andrea Hensgen tells a story full of surprises, volition, and freedom. Mehrdad Zaeri's pictures truly assert their importance, too. The illustrator has them extend across double spreads; he employs clear contours and structuralising lines, playing with contrasting proportions and coloured planes. (Age: 5+) [IG]



Horst, Alea (text/photos)

Zaeri, Mehrdad (illus.)

Manchmal male ich ein Haus für uns.

Europas vergessene Kinder

(Sometimes I draw a house for us.

Europe's forgotten children)

Leipzig: Klett Kinderbuch, [2022]. – [72] p.

ISBN 978-3-95470-263-3

Lesbos | Refugee camp | Refugee |
Migration | Photo book

»Here we are in the second camp on Lesbos. Very close to the sea. In the background, you can see the tents where the people live. Currently there are about 7,000 people here, almost 3,000 of them children. I am one of these children.« This is what Jawad, one of many children in Kara Tepe camp, says. Alea Horst met some of them, asked them about their lives and dreams, and now she gives them a face and a voice. The conditions under which the children are growing up are »adverse« – and that's a euphemism because they are cold, sitting on muddy ground, cannot go to school, and are stuck in the camp. Their life on the Greek island is determined by arbitrariness, ignorance, indifference, and a lack of perspective. It is shocking and shameful, not least because the children still try to get by somehow. Well, what choice do they have! Photographer Alea Horst has often been to Lesbos as a volunteer emergency worker and founded the charity Alea e.V. in 2021 to help. (Age: 6+) [IG]



Hub, Ulrich (text)

Mühle, Jörg (illus.)

Lahme Ente, blindes Huhn

(Lame duck, blind chicken)

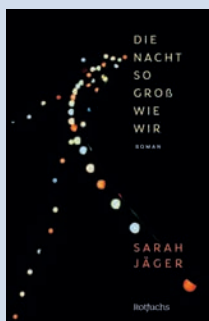
Hamburg: Carlsen, [2021]. – 82 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-55810-7

Duck | Chicken | Imaginary trip | Courage

Whoever goes travelling, has many a story to tell; this is particularly true when two different temperaments set off together: i.e. a lame and timid duck and a blind and daredevil chicken. One day, the hen ambles into the backyard where the duck lives. Duck had occasionally contemplated travelling around the world, but never really gotten off the ground. How fortunate that the world, aka Chicken, now visits the waterfowl! As a chicken of action, she talks the duck into her plan, and off they go on a journey to a place where the »most secret wish will come true«. On their way, the two birds brave the most outrageous dangers and butt heads with each other more than once. »Lahme Ente, blindes Huhn« is a great story about dreams and courage, about overcoming differences, persevering, and crossing borders together. The story of this mismatched couple is full of allusions, poignant, funny, with a deeper meaning, and – last but not least – visualised in Jörg Mühle's trademark style with bold and dynamic lines! (Age: 6+) [IG]

101



Jäger, Sarah (text)

Die Nacht so groß wie wir. Roman*(The night as big as us. Novel)*

Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag,

2021. – 187 p.

(Series: rowohlt rotfuchs)

ISBN 978-3-499-00574-9

School | Graduation | New beginning | Future |
Past | Coming of age

»From now on, nothing is certain anymore.« Suse, Pavlow, Maja, Tolga, and Bo have been close friends forever, but now it's here, the very last day of school. A turning point. Memories are mixed with expectations. Everything seems possible, even the impossible, the unthinkable, the unwanted. A night of rare intensity, interspersed with secrets, longings, and injuries awaits the teens. In this novel, all five of them tell their stories, with the tone alternating between wordly-wise, merciless, exuberant, and laconic. The multi-perspective narration gives shape to each individual and, at the same time, illuminates the network of relationships among them. The readers, too, become part of the friends' scheme, as they are drawn into the whirlpool of thoughts and feelings – whether they want to or not. Sarah Jäger follows up her amazing literary debut »Nach vorn, nach Süden« (Forward, to the south), with a second book of equal quality: »Die Nacht so groß wie wir« is a magnificent coming-of-age novel. (Age: 14+) [IG]

102



Johansson, Juri (text)

Jeschke, Stefanie (illus.)

Von Schildflöten, Herdmännchen und Großmaulnashörnern*(About flutoises, stovicates, and bragnoceroses)*

Berlin: Kraus Verlag, 2022. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-3-9823493-0-5

Animals | Imagination | Wordplay

Have you ever heard of a paint-mole or seen a cheetah slug? No? Well, then it's high time you acquired this book, which introduces these extremely rare creatures – just as they are, with all their peculiarities. Other favourites of this fantasy fauna will undoubtedly be the three weaselly guys: the whysel, the whatsel, and the howsel. In their trinity they are reminiscent of Donald Duck's nephews Huey, Dewey, and Louie; yet unlike them, the inquisitive rodents do not own a copy of the ducks' »Junior Woodchucks' Guidebook«. Instead, they actually feed on questions. Would you believe it! The texts' paratactic sentence structure imitates an apodictic style typical for encyclopaedias; but at the same, the author clearly had a ball playing with sounds and twisting words around. This imbues the content with its very own nonsense logic, which is taken up in the illustrations and will make both children and adults laugh. (Age: 4+) [IG]

103



Kiefer, Sebastian / Tienti, Benjamin (text)

Pricken, Stephan (illus.)

Auf dem Gipfel wachsen Chinanudeln*(On the mountain peak grow Chinese noodles)*

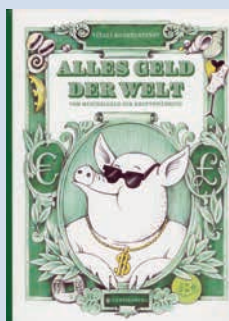
Hamburg: Dressler Verlag, 2022. – 237 p.

ISBN 978-3-7513-0005-6

Berlin | City | Detective | Computer game |
Dog | Detective novel

For his new work, popular children's book author Benjamin Tienti has teamed up with his punk-band colleague Sebastian Kiefer. The story takes off like a true punk song! Elmo, who lives in Berlin with his mother and sister, is a detective. He has not just one, but two cases to solve. The whole matter is quite complicated, and the fact that it involves a broken traffic light plus Elmo's dead brother does not make things any easier. Yet the boy not only makes friends with greedy dog Idefix, he also gets to know a lot of people. And then there's the Chinese noodles issue... The authors have written a witty, slightly zany, wild, and warm-hearted story, which, in addition to its swift dialogue, radiates the typical atmosphere of a sometimes slightly rough Berlin neighbourhood and introduces an endearing, stubborn, and quirky cast of characters. At times, the book is reminiscent of other German Berlin-based children's classics, such as Erich Kästner's »Emil and the Detectives« and Andreas Steinhöfel's »Rico and Oskar« series. (Age: 10+) [IG]

104



Konstantinov, Vitali (text/illus.)

Alles Geld der Welt. Vom Muschelgeld zur Kryptowährung*(All the world's money. From shell money to cryptocurrency)*

Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2022. – 78 p.

ISBN 978-3-8369-6082-3

Money | History | Function | Non-fiction

People don't talk about money? They certainly do! And even more so, when it is presented in such a spellbinding way. Vitali Konstantinov's new book is very informative, very entertaining and, thanks to being a comic book, also a feast for the eyes. Peppered with surprising anecdotes, it tells myriads of facts about the history and function of money. Three chapters – »Giving, Exchanging, Buying«, »The Rise of Money« and »Post-money Money« – teach readers about means of payment (e.g. shells, coins, Bitcoins), about currencies and financial systems, about abstract attributions of value and the belief in money, about political ideologies, and about power and greed, inequality and wars. »Would a world without money work?« the author wonders in his epilogue, and leaves it up to the readers to answer this question. After all, people do talk about money! (Age: 12+) [IG]

105



Leith, Leonora (text/illus.)

Kaiserschmarrn. Mein grandioser Sommer mit Ziege

(Kaiserschmarrn. My magnificent summer with Goat)

Mannheim: Kunstanstifter, 2022. – 204 p.

ISBN 978-3-948743-08-6

Forest | Friendship | Billy goat | Metamorphosis | Hubris

The forest is a place where you might experience weird things – as Arthur finds out one day: All of a sudden, a wild-looking forest man stands face to face with him. Well okay, the man soon turns out to be a shaman and the father of Fanny and Freddy. They also own Seppi, the billy goat – who, after having drunk some shamanic herbs, morphs into »Caesar Napoleon Alexander the Greater« – Excuse me??? The imperial billy goat can speak, of course, and keeps Arthur, Fanny, and Freddy busy. He demands fancy food, an appropriate ambience, cultivated entertainment, and finally, a state visit including a red carpet, lots of hustle and bustle and acts of admiration and homage. Well, okay... This novel is a magnificent piece of children's literature, following in the footsteps of renowned Austrian writer Christine Nöstlinger's inimitable »Cucumber King«. Leith's book is casual, linguistically creative, funny, and, on top of all that, superbly illustrated. Full marks! (Age: 8+) [IG]

106



Mühle, Jörg (text/illus.)

Als Papas Haare Ferien machten

(When Daddy's hair went on holiday)

Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Verlag, 2022. – 67 p.

(Ein Moritz Kinderbuch)

ISBN 978-3-89565-427-5

Hair loss | Journey

Even hair wants to have some adventures occasionally, instead of being stuck to people's heads all the time. So one morning, all of Dad's hairs decide: Let's abandon the head and venture out into the world – let's go on holiday! Dad, suddenly completely bald, is horrified; and it goes without saying that he is as eager as a beaver to recapture his hair – with artifice, guile, a dip net, and utmost physical effort. Jörg Mühle is known as the creator of the congenial »Hasenkind« (Little Rabbit) board books, loved by children and celebrated by critics. In his narrative debut for slightly older readers, he again shows the full extent of his writing skills. The book features a totally whacky idea executed with the author's knack for great situational comedy and witty phrases. The varied page layout and image design are just as brilliant: vibrant, subtly cunning, and comical! »Als Papas Haare Ferien machten« is a smashing hit among the books for first readers. (Age: 6+) [IG]

107



Teckentrup, Britta (text/illus.)

Von Raben und Krähen*(About ravens and crows)*

Berlin: Jacoby & Stuart, [2021]. – 163 p.

ISBN 978-3-96428-089-3

Raven | Crow | Cultural history

Will crows and ravens become the new dinosaurs of the nursery? These fascinating birds do certainly have the potential. There are 129 different types of corvids, e.g. the rook, the hooded crow, the jackdaw, or the common raven; the latter is also dubbed »king of the corvids«, because it is the largest songbird on earth. Besides solid facts and results of zoological-empirical research (for example on social behaviour and intelligence), Britta Teckentrup has also included fairy tales and myths about these birds in her multifaceted book. Her pictures are also multilayered: On the one hand, they capture details in a naturalistic style; on the other hand, her high-contrast illustrations, such as those of flocks of black birds against a yellow sky, evoke a magical and poetic atmosphere of their own. This is a book that invites readers to flip through the pages again and again, it is well researched and to the point, and it lets ravens and crows be the stars. So, truly the new dinos of the nursery?! (Age: 8+) [IG]

108



Travnicek, Cornelia (text)

Szyzka, Michael (illus.)

Harte Schale, Weichtierkern*(Tough shell, mollusk core)*

Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, [2022]. – 123 p.

ISBN 978-3-407-75645-9

Asperger's syndrome | Autism | Fictional diary

This fictional diary captivates readers with its visual design of full-page pictures and small scribbles, with its variety of text forms, and through the narrator and her use of language. Fabienne is almost seventeen when she is diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. No wonder that she is fascinated by octopuses, because, just like her, they are also slightly alien-like. Mostly, Fabienne has accepted herself and her character traits. Yet it bothers her when those around her consider her a little »weird«. Still, if she is honest with herself, she knows, of course, that she can be somewhat idiosyncratic at times... In a self-ironic and clever way, the protagonist explores how she deals with both her own questions about her existence and the demands of others. This also includes reflections on whether a diagnosis is always necessary and to what extent a label increases the danger of being stigmatised by others. (Age: 12+) [IG]

109



Wegmann, Ute (text)

Müller, Thomas (illus.)

Manchmal bist du überall.**Geschichten & Gedichte***(Sometimes you are everywhere. Stories & poems)*

München: dtv, 2022. – 156 p.

(Series: Reihe Hanser)

ISBN 978-3-423-64091-6

Poetry | Short story

Ute Wegmann, a children's book whiz with fingers in a lot of pies, invites friends to a summer party every year and asks them to bring her some words as a gift. Inspired by these, she then writes a story or poem each day. Some of her works are gathered in this book, where young and old readers alike will encounter texts from and about children's everyday lives to read aloud, read together, or quietly read by themselves. There are surprising, funny, light-hearted, rhythmic, in-love-with-words, profound, sensual, moving, or dreamy texts. They feature »small animals and big ones«, »ice cream and delicacies«, »outdoor swimming pools and the whole world« or »football and flip-flops«. Ute Wegmann's literary miniatures are dancing between these important coordinates of the children's universe. They are illustrated by Thomas Müller, who makes details shine with daring strokes and repeatedly creates additional »aha«-moments with his witty ideas. Simply great! (Age: 5+) [IG]

110



Zipfel, Dita (text)

Davies, Bea (illus.)

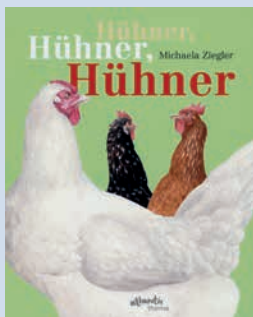
Brummps. Sie nannten ihn Ameise*(Brummps. They called him Ant)*

München: Hanser, 2022. – 129 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-27255-2

Ant | Dung beetle | Identity | Individuality | Emancipation

Everyone who grows up in an anthill must be an ant, so Jonny the dung beetle thinks. Being the main character in this brilliant children's novel, the scarabaeian nevertheless wonders why he is so un-ant-like. All the ants, except for his chatty and freaky friend Butz, who always wears an acorn helmet for safety, are annoyed by him, since Jonny is neither diligent, nor particularly good at ant jobs like building or carrying. Outwardly, Jonny has come to terms with his life, but deep down he feels a nagging doubt; and he keeps wondering who he is and whether he really belongs there. Dita Zipfel's unconventional and linguistically creative way of telling this story about identity, individuality, and belonging is a true joy. The text's verve is also visible in Bea Davies's wild, mostly blue and red images. »Brummps« was named one of the twenty-five most beautiful German-language books of the year by the German foundation Stiftung Buchkunst, and it has the makings of a nursery-and-classroom favourite. (Age: 6+) [IG]



111

Ziegler, Michaela (text/illus.)

Hühner, Hühner, Hühner.

Verhalten, Herkunft und Haltung

(Chickens, chickens, chickens.

Behaviour, origin, and keeping)

Zürich: Atlantis, 2022. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-7152-0839-8

Chicken | Non-fiction | Picture book

What is the best way to impress your nursery school pals (along with everyone else)? By saying that chickens are descended from dinosaurs! No one is going to believe it, but it's true. If you were to describe the lineage in fast motion, it would go something like this: from dinosaur to Bankiva fowl (aka red jungle fowl) to domestic chicken. »Hühner, Hühner, Hühner« not only uncovers these origins and relationships. With splendidly detailed and naturalistic illustrations – three cheers for them! – it also introduces different breeds, explains how chicks come into existence and reports on customs on the chicken farm: from the proverbial pecking order to feather care. The book is as educational as it is entertaining, because it is full of chicken knowledge and chicken surprises (not only egg-shaped ones!) and shows that these animals, which are so close to humans, are more than just suppliers of breakfast eggs. (Age: 4+) [IG]



112

Baskes Chatzēlyra, Penelope

(Vasquez-Hadjilyra, Penelope) (text)

Charalampus, Chrysō

(Charalambous, Chryso) (illus.)

Ἡ Karolina τρώει τῆς εποχές

(Karolina eats the seasons)

[Limassol]: Astaman, 2021. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-9963-2882-2-9

Market | Seasons | Nutrition | Fruit | Vegetables |
Mother | Daughter | Picture book

Every Saturday young Karolina goes to the market with her mother to buy fruit and vegetables. Everything there is merry, bright and most of all delicious. Fascinated by the variety that keeps changing, she never tires of all the different nuts and fruits that are offered at different times of the year. With each new season Karolina also grows a little taller. Penelope Vasquez-Hadjilyra presents topics such as healthy foods and preserving nature's balance in short, simple and appealingly rhymed texts, while Chrysos Charalambous's vivid illustrations complement them with clear lines and contrasting colours. The pictures show the bustling market from a bird's eye view, while small details emphasize diversity and the peaceful interactions of the market visitors. Four double-page spreads depict the seasonal changes in nature. A further nod to the concern for ecology is the use of 100% recycled paper by Astaman, a small independent publisher. (Age: 3+) [TA]

GERMAN
GREEK

Switzerland
Cyprus

113



Angelidu, Maria (Angelidou, Maria) (text)
 Bokotopulu, Eirēnē (Vokotopoulou, Irini) (text)
 Chalkiopulos, Phoibos (Chalkiopoulos, Fivos) (illus.)
1821. Erōtēseis mono!
 (1821. Only questions!)
 Athēna: Ikaros, 2021. – 95 p.
 ISBN 978-960-572-414-6

Greece | Revolution | History 1821 | Non-fiction

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Greek Revolution, this non-fiction book takes a broad retrospective look at events of that era. In ten thematic chapters concepts such as homeland, language, enemy, diplomacy, East vs. West, or money are explained by historian Maria Angelidou and sociologist Irini Vokotopoulou in a scholarly but easily understandable manner. In the chapters, which are subdivided into sections of »a little history«, »a story«, and »their voice«, the authors describe the historical framework, offer pertinent anecdotes, and provide original background stories, as well as quotes and statements from fighters, scholars, and pro-Hellenists, thus helping to highlight intercultural aspects and parallel events of world history. Clever questions, which are presented as side notes on the page margins, encourage readers to continue their exploration. Along with the highly detailed pen-and-ink drawings by Fivos Chalkiopoulos, an extensive list of sources and a chronology round out this book. (Age: 12+) [TA]

114



Kabbalu, Stergia (Kavvalou, Stergia) (text)
 Polenakē, Zaklin (Polenaki, Zaklin) (illus.)
F ntulapa
 (The clothing wardrobe)
 Athēna: Potamos, 2021. – 29 p.
 ISBN 978-960-545-171-4

Gender role | Identity | Stereotype |
 Emancipation | Picture book

Anastasis is a boy – so it is only logical that his room is filled with dinosaurs, cars, robots, and monsters. And naturally everything in his room is blue, even the wardrobe. But it is in this very boyishly blue wardrobe that Anastasis hides at night to play with his sister's toys. Her princess dolls accompany his knight figures, while he rocks a doll to sleep, plays with the doll-size tea set, and acts out a whole variety of roles. One day he falls asleep inside the wardrobe and is discovered there by his mother. To his surprise, he doesn't feel exposed, but instead is shown complete understanding. Finally, he is allowed to have any kind of toy he wants – regardless of whether they are »for boys« or »for girls«. With great sensitivity and in no way preachy, Stergia Kavvalou shows how important it is for a child's development to be lovingly accepted for just who she/he is. Outdated clichés are also unmasked by the symbolically changing colour palette found in Zaklin Pole-nakis' illustrations. (Age: 4+) [TA]

115



Panagiotakēs, Giōrgos (Panagiotakis, Giorgos) (text)

Tinkre. Me ta cheria gymna

(Tigre. With bare hands)

Athēna: Patakēs (Patakis), 2021. – 211 p.

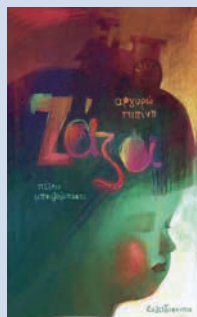
(Series: Syllogē kyknoi; 100)

ISBN 978-960-16-9352-1

Brazil | Favela | Poverty | Dignity | Solidarity | Football

Twelve-year old Paulino lives with his grandmother in a favela named Esperança. Nicknamed »Tigre« (Tiger), he is goalkeeper for the football team to which his secret love Fabiana also belongs. The children play on a barren piece of earth while dreaming of a green sports field like the one that drug dealer Imortal has, the man who decides in Esperança not only the fate of sport talents, but also over life and death. One day Moacyr – an old, broken man who was Brazil's goalkeeper when they were defeated in the final match of the 1950 world championship – discovers the children playing and helps train them. But when they discover that he is still considered a jinx throughout the country, they turn their backs on him. Yet in the end, Moacyr helps the team to victory and frees them from the clutches of Imortal. Like Tigre's favourite book, »Great Expectations«, and with film-like elements, Giorgos Panagiotakis's gripping novel depicts how children growing up in very difficult circumstances maintain their dignity and keep their hope inside communities of solidarity. (Age: 12+) [TA]

116



Pipinē, Argyrō (Pipini, Argyro) (text)

Mpulumpasēs, Petros (Bouloubasis, Petros) (illus.)

Zaza

Athēna: Kaleidoskopio (Kaleidoscope Publ.), [2021]. – [29] p.

ISBN 978-960-471-231-1

World War II (1939-1945) | Persecution of the Jews | Deportation | Holocaust | Holocaust survivor | Toy | Memories | Picture book

During the Holocaust, innumerable children were deported and murdered. Who can speak for them? Perhaps the children's toys that witnessed it all. Estrea, a Holocaust survivor, discovers her old doll, Zaza, many years later in a museum showcase. Now the time has come for Zaza to talk about the events of those long-gone years. The words nearly tumble out of her, banging, like the knocks on the door back then, wheezing like the train that carried them away, or softly like the whispers in their hiding places. Now and then, her tale is interrupted by a »la la«, from the song »Violets and roses, gardenia, jasmin« that Estrea had sung as she tried to keep a piece of her garden with her on that journey into the unknown. In this moving story, Argyro Pipini has found a brilliant way to make the inconceivable palpable by using a tangible doll, and thus awaken the reader's sympathy. Petros Bouloubasis's illustrations seem at times like dream sequences, shadowy and fleeting like the puffs of smoke from those old steam engines. (Age: 8+) [TA]

117

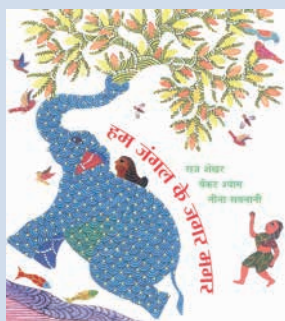


Stamatopulu, Anastasia
(Stamatopoulou, Anastasia) (text)
Kutsogiannēs, Basilēs (Koutsogiannis, Vassilis) (illus.)
Ta poulia. Karchata
(*The birds. Crow children*)
Athēna: Kastaniōtēs (Kastaniotis), 2021. – 38 p.
ISBN 978-960-03-6862-8

Nature | Loneliness | Parents | Mistreatment

A ten-year old boy is growing up in near isolation along the river Neva. Neglected and mistreated by his parents, his only happy moments are spent in the woods near the birds. He is fascinated by the way they flock together and lead a life in freedom. His greatest wish is to learn their language. His father maintains that he must first kill three ravens – and the boy obeys him. When his mother serves up the birds as a feast on his birthday, the boy feels that the final bit of trust he still held has been betrayed – even in the birds and toward himself. Inspired by a Ukrainian folksong, Anastasia Stamatopoulou's debut work employs the motif of an old legend to demonstrate the abiding abuses of patriarchy, of physical and mental cruelty. By replacing the auctorial style of a traditional fairy tale with a first-person narrative, she places the child in the foreground. Vassilis Koutsogiannis stages the impressive, bleak story in a shadowy landscape in which the only figure with a recognizably human face is the protagonist. (Age: 13+) [TA]

118



Śekhar, Rāj (Shekhar, Raj) (text)
Śyām, Vēṅkat (Shyam, Venkat Raman Singh) (illus.)
Sabanānī, Nīnā (Sabnani, Nina) (design)
Ham jaṅgal kē jagar magar
(*Hum jaṅgal ke jagar magar*)
(*We are the dancing forest*)
Chennai: Tulika Publ., 2022. – [24] p.
ISBN 978-93-90834-72-3

India | Adivasi <people> | Nature | Forest | Celebration | Song | Picture book

Originally written as song lyrics for the 2013 film »Oonga«, the rhythmic and lyrical text of this picture book celebrates the close connection between the Adivasi people and the natural world around them. The joyful song by award-winning lyricist Raj Shekhar is brimming with onomatopoeic words, repetition, and rhymes that contain a multitude of cultural references and invite children to sing along. It is an ode to Mother Earth, her rivers, forests, flowers, and native animals, as well as to the indigenous people of the Indian subcontinent. Internationally successful Gond artist Venkat Shyam is known for his powerful murals and paintings inspired by mythology, stories of tribal gods and goddesses, and life in his community. Executed mostly in acrylics, his intricate illustrations are rife with folk style elements. Digitally arranged by designer Nina Sabnani, they perfectly complement the text and make this book a feast for the eyes. (Age: 3+) [CS]



Chu, Yu-Ling (Chu, Yuling) (text) / Chu, Chia-Hui (Chu, Jiahui) (illus.) / Lü, Meiqin (transl.)
**Juáh-thinn ê sî-tsūn. Lóo lóo ê hā-thinn –
 Re tian de shi zhen. Lu lu de xia tian**
(Hot, hot summer days) – Xin bei shi: Lian jing chu
 ban shi ye gu fen you xian gong si (Linking Publ.), 2021.
 – 36 p. – ISBN 978-957-08-5860-0
 Text Hokkien (Taiwanese) and Chinese

Summer | Heat | Rain | Playing | Childhood
 memories | Bilingual book | Picture book

There is always something to look forward to on a hot summer day. Yellow mangoes sway on tree branches like little suns, and after a sudden tropical downpour the whole yard is filled with water. Two boys and their dog become ferrymen, rowing in a bucket. They shake the trees to let water droplets splash all over their bodies and let their clothes dry by the whispering wind. Rain is a gift, wind is a luxury, the canopy of the mango trees seems like the top of the world. Tomorrow they will play again. In this simple story, Chu Yu-Ling recreates the smells and sounds of summer in lyrical phrases and the rich, beautiful tones of the Hokkien (Taiwanese) language. For her, a picture book is a song with an overall rhythm, a song composed of pictures and text. The calm texture and few simple colours of Chu Chia-Hui's rubbed engravings almost make the reader hear this song about the quiet feeling of pure joy on a magical day. The childhood memories conjured up in this book are shared by generations of Taiwanese. (Age: 3+) [LO]



Dániel, András (text/illus.)
Nincs itt semmi látnivaló!
(Nothing to see here!)
 [Budapest]: Pagony Publ., 2020. – [56] p.
 ISBN 978-963-410-611-1

Night | Darkness | Falling asleep

András Dániel is one of the most prominent contemporary Hungarian children's book authors. Both an engaging storyteller and a gifted illustrator, his books have had remarkable success. The world he creates is home to the oddest little creatures, and the tales, which at first glance may seem familiar, are full of twists and surprises, not to mention moments of poignant humour and penetrating insight. In his new book, Dániel considers the problem of what happens when we turn off the light and suddenly find ourselves alone in a dark room. From the perspective of a young child, the room comes alive, and the protagonist is surrounded by things both interesting but at times also frightening. These mysterious images, the outlines of which often only appear against a sombre backdrop, seem black only at first. At times, they resemble something created by artists such as Miró or Warhol. The story also offers the readers plenty of witty puns and humorous wordplay. (Age: 5+) [ZJ]

121



Tóth, Gyula Gábor (text)

Nagy, Norbert (illus.)

**Mese a mindenről, a semmiről
és más furcsa mesék**

*(A story about everything and nothing,
and other unusual stories)*

Budapest: Csimota, 2021. – 39 p.

ISBN 978-615-5649-86-8

Nothing | Everything | Meaning | Short story

How can one tell a tale about nothing or the impossible? Perhaps by having gifted author Gyula Gábor Tóth and illustrator Norbert Nagy join forces to create a book of masterfully composed words and images. The short texts throw out questions which may seem a bit odd at first, but readers will quickly realize that they are among the most pressing questions people face in this world. After all, how often do we hear talk of the world's shortest story or of terms like »everything,« »nothing,« or the »eternal«? Gyula Gábor Tóth rethinks the implications of these words in an engaging way by raising questions which invite children to take part in the game. He prompts them to reflect on the many meanings words can have and the unusual features in the seemingly familiar world around them. Norbert Nagy, one of the most prominent contemporary graphic artists in Hungary, has created the visual world for these stories by taking dramatic moments from the stories and crafting images that provide a rich visual backdrop often peppered with humorous elements. (Age: 4+) [ZJ]

122



Castiglioni, Elisa (text)

La ragazza con lo zaino verde

(The girl with the green backpack)

Milano: Il castoro, [2021]. – 193 p.

ISBN 978-88-6966-777-0

Italy | History 1930s | Fascism | Persecution |
Persecution of Jews | Courage | Resistance

This novel, which is based on a true story, depicts the complex inner developments of young people who grew up during Italy's Fascist years. Alida is a member of Mussolini's youth organisation »Piccole Italiane« and happily wears its uniform. She is proud of her membership and of her country, which in her eyes projects power and strength. But little by little cracks become evident in the certainties she held to be unchangeable. Changes occur in her long-time friendships, as well as in her emotions and responses toward the new truths that threaten to upset all the old ones. This important novel, set in Italy in the 1930s, deals with how a person becomes conscious of change and learns to deal with the difficulties that come with it. Elisa Castiglioni tells impressively about the consequences of the Fascist race laws, and the rise in violence and intolerance, but also courage and resistance – both individual and collective – against the regime, in the name of freedom disregarded. (Age: 12+) [SO]

123



Lodi, Mario (text)

Scaramuzzino, Giorgio (ed.)

Rizzato, Francesca (illus.)

Cipi e Bandiera in scena!**Sceneggiature originali***(Cipi and Bandiera on stage! Original theatre scripts)*

San Dorligo della Valle (Trieste): Einaudi Ragazzi, [2021]. – 88 p.

ISBN 978-88-6656-687-8

Fairy tale | Playing

Over fifty years ago school children in the Italian town of Piadena were inspired to invent stories. Their teacher, Mario Lodi (1922-2014), a brilliant educator and children's book author, then put these down on paper. Giorgio Scaramuzzino – an actor, director, and consummate storyteller – has now created exquisite stage adaptations of two of Lodi's texts, which young people even today still find captivating. These plays also give children the opportunity to express themselves in a wide variety of ways while on the stage. The stories, which revolve around the well-known fictional characters of Cipi and Bandiera, deal with matters of life and death, with nature, and also with interpersonal relationships. The stories arose through the interactions of the great educator Lodi and his pupils. In Italy, Lodi is a role model for all teachers who see in their profession a calling and pursue it with a passion. (Age: 7+) [SO]

124



Marconi, Carlo (text)

Viola, Serena (illus.)

Poesie del camminare*(Poems about walking)*

Roma: Lapis Edizioni, [2022]. – [58] p.

ISBN 978-88-7874-880-4

Childhood | Everyday life | Poetry

When you look up »to walk« in an Italian dictionary you will find this definition: »to move one foot forward first and then the other; moving from one point to another on foot«. The poems in this book invite readers to take a journey, to leave whatever place they may be in and discover that which is beyond and outside of us; in other words, to seize the moments that make everyday life special. Children are the intended audience for these poems, but also adults who take pleasure in lyrical language. The protagonists are children, who feel free to explore and overcome limitations, to make new discoveries, courageous children who know that someone will help them to surmount obstacles, and who are eager to encounter new things and take pleasure in experimentation. Some of the verses »go« slowly, others faster, as they describe children's feelings, using magical sounds, playing with language, stopping and waiting for the ones left behind, and wishing everyone a happy future. (Age: 6+) [SO]

125



Risari, Guia (text)

Baladan, Alicia (illus.)

Non siamo angeli*(We are no angels)*

Cagli: Settenove, [2021]. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-88-9894774-4

Diversity | Difference | Picture book

This outstanding picture book begins with a dedication by the author, who wishes to emphasize the extraordinary importance of diversity: »To every girl and every boy who pursues their inclinations, their curiosity, their own little idiosyncrasies. They are the very ones who make the world colourful.« Children are no angels, and not homogenous, but rather wonderfully un-similar in their very beings. They have different names and parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, friends. They behave in delightfully surprising and unpredictable ways. They can be cunning, set traps and be devious, they are funny and astonishing, tender and passionate, cruel and exhausting. There are so many adjectives one can use to describe their uniqueness and underscore their indispensability, to avoid stereotyping and to see children as they are. This book is entertaining for children and useful for adults. You should take the time to look at the world of children without bias and become aware of the differences between each of them. (Age: 5+) [SO]

126



Tortolini, Luca (text)

Semykina, Victoria (illus.)

La città nascosta*(The hidden city)*

[Perugia]: Edizioni Corsare, [2021]. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-88-99136-67-3

City | Familiarity | Strangeness | Picture book

There is a city that we know, in which we go happily about our ways, have many friends, and feel at home. But sometimes it takes no more than going around the wrong corner and everything that we once knew suddenly seems strange. So begins the journey to a part of town that little by little reveals buildings, squares and streets that have never been seen before and are populated by unknown people: a different city waiting to be discovered, where one can easily get lost. This picture book takes readers by the hand and guides them through a hidden city, which only gradually begins to resemble again the city we know. The beautiful illustrations by Victoria Semykina, a Russian artist living in Bologna, celebrate life and the atmosphere of a city, welcoming the return of all who have found their way back home after discovering a new kind of co-existence. As orientation the book includes a city map on which one can find the »Street of Fulfilled Wishes«, the »Alley of Smiles«, and »Magicians' Square«. (Age: 5+) [SO]

127



Turconi, Marcello (text)

Agliardi, Allegra (illus.)

C come cervello. Neuroscienze per lettori curiosi

(B for brain. Neuroscience for curious readers)

Busto Arsizio: Nomos Bambini, [2021]. – [28] p.

ISBN 979-12-5958-009-2

Brain | Neuroscience | Non-fiction

Marcello Turconi is a neuroscientist and a competent mediator of complex subjects in a simple and absorbing language accessible to children. Allegra Agliardi, in turn, is a talented illustrator who can adapt her style to serve a wide array of topics. Together they have created a book about the brain, that organ in our body, which is so decisive for the quality of our lives. It monitors our emotions, is indispensable for our sensory perceptions and for acquiring knowledge, and so much more. The manner in which precise scientific information is transmitted, as in a fascinating dialogue, by striking images and graphic design is quite remarkable. Curious readers will find themselves in an oddly vivacious and unpredictable »city« in which they must search for essential pieces of information, in order to understand how it works. They experience a journey through the brain during which they discover unknown territory and experience adventures, which underscore the importance of scientific knowledge. (Age: 7+) [SO]

128



Vivarelli, Anna (text)

La fisica degli abbracci

(The physics of hugging)

Crema: Uovonero, 2021. – 153 p.

(Series: I geodi; 40)

ISBN 979-1-280-10409-0

Gifted person | Outsider | Loneliness | Escape | Affective development

Guglielmo Malvasi, called Will, knows first-hand how difficult it is to be a genius. His extremely high IQ leads him to a university career at an early age, after the gates of Cambridge open to him already at the age of nine. He speaks many languages, converses with adults on complex subjects, and bends his mind around elaborate theories. Yet he feels terribly lonely, leading a life that bears no resemblance to a childhood. Hence at the age of fifteen Will decides to take fate into his own hands by staging his apparent death. But the start of his new life turns out to be difficult since there is more complexity in ordinary everyday life than in being gifted. Then an unexpected encounter with someone quite removed from his world helps Will understand the importance of human relationships, of community, and of the acceptance of differences. Anna Vivarelli's novel offers a captivating narrative told in a nuanced language that will have a strong emotional impact on the reader. (Age: 11+) [SO]

129



Vogrig, Debora (text)

Valentinis, Pia (illus.)

Il bianco e il nero

(White and black)

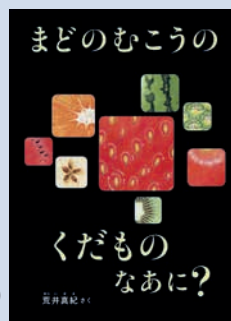
Roma: Orecchio acerbo, [2022]. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-88-320-7084-2

Opposites | Co-existence | Black |
White | Picture book

Readers both young and old will be fascinated by the coordinated illustrations and succinct text of this picture book, which tells the story of a dark night that gives way to a shining dawn. The transition from night to day is marked by changing colours. A predominantly white page is preceded by one on which the colour black had captured the viewer's gaze. Readers will find themselves torn between shapes, cut-outs, tearings, and other creative surprises. In the end, the confrontation between black and white will turn into a pleasing alternation of presence and absence, a co-existence between them. Their togetherness, which is underscored by the text, is visible in the interplay between the shining white of an ice floe and the elegant penguin which lives on it, in the keys of a piano, or the passionately played game of chess. Both the strong contrasts and the gentle encounters found in this book are a feast for the eyes and a metaphor for the idea that differences are the foundation for living respectfully side-by-side. (Age: 5+) [SO]

130



Arai, Maki (text/illus.)

Mado no mukō no kudamono nāni

(What kind of fruit is behind the window?)

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2020. – 34 p.

(Series: Kodomo no tomo ehon)

ISBN 978-4-8340-8568-6

Fruit | Non-fiction | Picture book | Wordless book

Maki Arai (b. 1965), the 2017 winner of the Golden Apple Award at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava, is internationally acclaimed for her careful and precise watercolour illustrations of plants. »Mado no mukō no kudamono nāni« is outstanding among her works for its sophisticated book design. A square cut-out »window« on a black page shows part of a piece of fruit, the contrast highlighting its vivid colour. When the reader turns the page, the previously unrecognisable beauty of the whole fruit surprises them; and on the next page, the fruit appears in cross section. Based on her own close observations, Arai's illustrations capture the unique aspects of various kinds of fruit, ranging from the texture of their surface to the juicy flesh, from the geometric pattern of the pineapple to the sparkling jewel-like arillus of the pomegranate, from a strawberry's fuzzy leaves to the connection of its vascular bundle to the seeds. The book can also be read back-to-front so that readers see the inside of a fruit first and guess what it is. (Age: 4+) [RN]

131



Deguchi, Kazumi (text/illus.)

Urōboe ikka no okaimono

(The family with short memories goes shopping)

Tōkyō: Rironsha, 2021. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-4-652-20418-4

Duck | Memory | Mistake | Shopping |
Picture book

»Urōboe ikka no okaimono« is a hilarious story about members of a duck family whose memories are most unreliable. One day they go shopping to get something angular, heavy, cool, and glowing. Although it is something they definitely need, none of them remembers what it is. Due to their foggy memories and misguided advice from the animals they meet in town, they acquire tofu, a stone, a cardboard box, some ice cream, and lanterns, but often tilt their heads in doubt and confusion. The illustration on the back cover suggests that they probably succeed in getting the mysterious thing at last. The child-like illustrations – such as the playful depiction of a storefront or the parody of a brand of ice cream actually sold in Japan – are delightfully elaborate. The overreactions of the ducks are so humorous that they will easily make readers laugh out loud. This picture book has a sequel, »Urōboe ikka no pāti« (The family with short memories has a party). (Age: 5+) [RN]

132



Kikuchi, Chiki (text/illus.)

Iro-iro kaeru

(Colour-ful frogs)

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2021. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-4-03-232670-3

Colour | Frog | Family | Picture book

Chiki Kikuchi (b. 1975) is the winner of the Golden Apple (2013) and a Plaque (2019) at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava. His internationally acclaimed illustrations are bold and dynamic – as free and unconstrained as children are. He has broken new ground with »Iro-iro kaeru«, a picture book with rhythmical language written in a satisfyingly economical and precise manner. Just as the title suggests – »iro« means »colour« and »iro-iro« means »various« – the theme of this book is colour. Each frog in the story has a different colour and its own favourite activity. On the first page the green frog, who likes to eat, catches a fly; then a yellow frog jumps in and, one after another, new frogs appear on the pages in a kaleidoscope of colours. Chiki Kikuchi drew the original illustrations all in black ink, employing colour separation. His painstaking work and the use of spot colour printing make this book a true treasure, which will long remain appealing to very young children. (Age: 2+) [RN]



133

Kondō, Kumiko (text/illus.)

Kanashimi no bōken*(An adventure in grief)*

Tōkyō: Popurasha (Poplar-sha), 2021. – [34] p.

(Series: Popurasha no ehon; 75)

ISBN 978-4-591-16943-8

Dog | Death | Grief | Journey | Picture book

This picture book begins with the words »Today, Candy died« and an illustration of a child riding a tricycle on a path paved with stones in a shrine-like place. Following the lead of a small black dog, the child passes through a forest near the pond, where strange-looking creatures are hiding. Along the way, a gigantic upside-down dog keeps watch over the child. After the child stops in front of the black dog at the foot of a huge tree in the middle of a field, the illustrations become colourful. The story continues without text; there are only words for the sound of pedalling and squealing, until the final sentence, »Today, Candy died«. The closing illustration shows the child meeting another child on a tricycle. Throughout the entire journey, up to the last scene, the child rides with her head down, while the background scenery expressively conveys its confusion and deep grief. By telling the story through illustrations, this innovative picture book depicts a child's resilience and the cycle of life. (Age: 5+) [RN]



134

Nakajima, Kyōko (text)

Yasashii neko*(The tender-hearted cat)*

Tōkyō: Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2021. – 415 p.

ISBN 978-4-12-005455-6

Immigrant | Human rights | Family

Based on the author's careful research, »Yasashii neko« addresses both political and social problems of foreigners who outstay their visa in Japan, as well as the country's extremely low number of recognized refugees. The protagonist, teenaged Maya, and her widowed mother Miyuki, get to know a man from Sri Lanka, Kuma-san. As their affection grows, Miyuki and Kuma-san decide to get married, but then, because he has overstayed his visa, Kuma-san is sent to an immigration detention centre. Maya and Miyuki appeal to the court for his release. A Kurdish boy, whose parents have applied for recognition as refugees, supports Maya. This novel was awarded the 56th Yoshikawa Eiji Literary Prize and is published for adults, but as it is told from the point of view of a teenager, it can also be read and discussed by young adults. Even though the book clearly depicts the legal and social difficulties that foreigners who want to stay in Japan must face (as well as their Japanese supporters), its ending is a hopeful one. (Age: 15+) [RN]



135

Satō, Madoka (text)

Sunēku dansu*(Snake dance)*

Tōkyō: Shōgakukan, 2022. – 252 p.

ISBN 978-4-09-289316-0

City | Townscape | Architecture | Graffiti |
Rome | Tokyo

Thirteen-year-old Japanese boy Keito likes sketching the ancient ruins of his hometown, Rome (Italy). After his father is killed in a hit-and-run accident by an unknown driver, Keito must start a new life in the old section of Tokyo, where he gets to know Ayumu. In defiance of her father, a lawyer who was working for the construction company that is re-developing and modernizing that historic area, the independent and rebellious girl sprays graffiti at the building site. Like her, Keito feels helpless in the face of a harsh reality, because he is frustrated that the circumstances surrounding his father's death are still unknown. With Ayumu he shares an interest in art and in long-lasting buildings, as reflected in his dream. The unique point of view of author Madoka Satō (b. 1964), who has been living in Italy for more than 30 years, beautifully depicts youthful resilience as well as the urgent problem of urban development and building preservation in Japan. (Age: 13+) [RN]



136

Tajima, Yukihiro (text/illus.)

Nakimushi seitoku. Okinawasen ni makikomareta shōnen no monogatari*(Seitoku, the crybaby. The boy who was drawn into the Battle of Okinawa)*

Tōkyō: Dōshinsha, 2022. – [50] p.

ISBN 978-4-494-01248-0

Japan | History 1945 | World War II | Okinawa |
Picture book

Yukihiro Tajima (b. 1940) has visited Okinawa for more than 40 years and published several picture books set on the island. With tremendous exertion, he produced »Nakimushi Seitoku« a story set in 1945 at the time of the Battle of Okinawa. The protagonist, Seitoku, an anxious young boy, cries when his older brother, a student, is called up to join the army. The boy comes under heavy bombardment and is driven from a cave shelter by Japanese soldiers. After his mother dies, he is almost killed by a tank. This book, addressing an event of World War II that is inscribed in Okinawans' collective memory, includes facts such as that Japanese soldiers killed many local inhabitants and that 70% of the US military bases in Japan are still in Okinawa. In an appendix, a map and a chronological record add further information. While the abstract illustrations with stencil dyeing and brush strokes carefully avoid showing the excessive horrors of war, the contrast between the beautiful scenery with flowers and the sombre-coloured battlefield underscores a longing for peace. (Age: 9+) [RN]

137



Tomiyasu, Yōko (text)

Hakubutsukan no shōjo.**Kaii kenkyū kotohajime***(Museum girl. The mysterious research begins)*

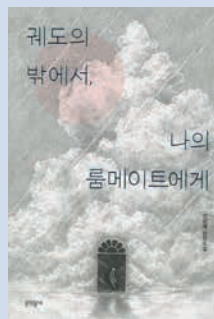
Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2021. – 342 p.

ISBN 978-4-03-814510-0

Japan | History 1868-1883 | Museum | Mystery |
Supernatural phenomenon | Historical fiction

The Tokyo National Museum, Japan's oldest museum, was founded in the Meiji period (1868-1912), when Western culture was rapidly spreading in Japan. Based on meticulous research, this book offers a lively account of those turbulent years through characters like the protagonist, Ikaru, who has an eye for antiques. After her parents' deaths, Ikaru comes to Tokyo alone and gets to know Toyo, the daughter of the painter Kyosai Kawanabe (1831-1889). She starts working at the museum's storehouse full of exotic things. When an artefact – a mysterious box, which supposedly holds powers of immortality and is said to have been brought from the island of »Hidden Christians« – is stolen from the collection, Ikaru discovers the truth about the incident and about a death at a nearby cathedral. Ikaru's energy-filled native dialect and the text's literary style make this masterly told novel a truly entertaining read. The unexpected ending encourages thought about questions of life and death as well as matters that are beyond human understanding. (Age: 13+) [RN]

138



Jeon, Sam-hye (text)

Gwedo ui bak eseo, na ui rummeiteu ege*(To my roommate, from outside Earth's orbit)*

Paju: Munhak Dongne (Munhakdongne Publ.), 2021.

– 205 p.

(Series: Munhak dongne cheongsongyeon; 053)

ISBN 978-89-546-7952-7

Earth | Asteroid collision | Apocalypse | Survival |
Love | Friendship | Science fiction

This science-fiction story about an apocalypse is also a kind of miracle story. On Earth, Genesis Space Engineering recruits a number of talented children to try to change the orbit of an approaching asteroid. In each of the novel's episodes, one of the Genesis-youth records how they face the end of the world. Lia engraves her story on the moon's surface; Jerome is glad that one person, Yuria, will survive; Liu mourns the loss of a friend; Dan falsifies data to keep the collision secret; Luca would have had a chance to live as Caroline; Se-eun makes a vow to save the planet. In the epilogue, six months after the collision, Yuria is alive on the Moon and receives a letter from Earth – a miracle made possible because one person did not let go of love until the end. Jeon Sam-hye is renowned for her serene and lyrical style. In her work she focuses on the reality of young persons who have been »pushed out of orbit« by social norms, who are neither bound to gender norms, nor restricted by their disabilities. (Age: 12+) [YC, MC, SP]

139



Kim, Jun-hyeon (text)

Song, Sunok (illus.)

Tomato gijun*(How to choose good tomatoes)*

Paju: Munhak dongne (Munhakdongne Publ.), 2021. –

111 p.

(Series: Munhak dongne dongsijip; 84)

ISBN 978-89-546-8500-9

Tomato | Wordplay | Pun | Poetry

Kim Jun-hyeon, who has received several awards for his poetry since his debut in 2013, is known for continually experimenting with poetical language and form. In particular, his use of wordplay in visual forms is unique, since in Korean children's poems a pun is usually based on auditory elements. Quite a few poems in this collection are more concerned with the placement of words, the size of letters, and with punctuation than with the mere meaning of the text. These typographic features are not only »visible«, but also intended to stimulate all the senses. Take for instance the verses: »I wanted to replace some words with the smell of a well-baked baguette. I wanted to change some words into children's clothes hanging on the veranda«. Attached to the texts are reviews by young readers who attest that the poems »connect to their heart« and »make their heart flutter«. Song Sunok's matching illustrations not only enrich the atmosphere of the poems, they seamlessly flow with the written text, enhancing the effect of concrete poetry. (Age: 8+) [YC, MC, SP]

140



Kim, Yeong-jin (text/illus.)

Eomma ui isanghan chulgeungil*(Mommy's strange way to work)*

Seoul: Chaek ingneun gom (Bear Books),

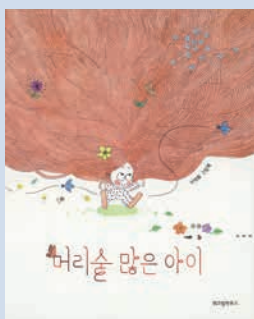
2021. – [34] p.

(Series: Geurim chaegi cham joa; 076)

ISBN 979-11-5836-227-0

Mother | Son | Magic | Love | Guardian angel |
Picture book

Yong's mother can't even read him a bedtime story because she needs to work all night on an important presentation. Yong secretly puts his clay doll into his mom's pocket with orders to help her do her job well. The doll unfolds its magic the next morning. On her way to work, Yong's mother experiences a lot of strange luck. There are seats available for her on the bus and subway, the traffic light turns green just in time, and she gets on the elevator just before the door closes. When she is about to give her presentation and her mind goes blank, the magic unfolds again: in her imagination, she hears Yong cheering for her. After the successful presentation, she finds the »guardian angel« in her pocket. In this story for young children about the necessity of showing one's love and support to other persons, author-illustrator Kim Yeong-jin uses humour and imagination to capture the everyday life and psychology of children, as he has done in his numerous other picture books. (Age: 3+) [YC, MC, SP]



141

Lee, Deok Hwa (text/illus.)

Meori sut maneun ai

(A child with lots of hair)

Seoul: Wijedeom hauseu (Wisdom House Publ.), 2022. – [50] p.

(Series: Seukolla changjak geurimchaek; 33)

ISBN 978-89-6247-371-1

Hair | Prejudice | Diversity | Acceptance | Respect | Picture book

Jandi is born with lots of hair. No matter how many times her mother cuts it, it grows back quickly and becomes uncontrollable. Although her odd-looking hair makes her stand out, Jandi starts loving it. It feels good to have it fluttering in the wind, and it is a delight to have a bird visiting on it. She responds confidently to insults: Aren't all living things different because they are unique? She arouses the curiosity of other children and makes friends. This is a beautiful story about a child with conspicuous features who learns to enjoy her uniqueness. If she wants to be accepted for who she is, she has to be brave enough to accept herself. The story lets readers reflect on their own prejudices, on the reluctance to acknowledge individuality in others, and on the error of hiding one's true self for fear of being left out. Lee Deok Hwa, who studied animation at Hongik University, was selected as the »Illustrator of the Year« at the 2010 Bologna Children's Book Fair for the picture book »Portua«. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]



142

Na, Hyunjung (text/illus.)

Neo ui jeongwon

(Your garden)

Seoul: Geulloyeon (Gloyeon Publ.), 2021. – [58] p.

(Series: Geulloyeon geurimchaek; 22)

ISBN 978-89-92704-84-7

Garden | Cat | Painter | Memories | Picture book

A cat, sitting on a high wall, looks down at a beautiful garden while thinking, »What is that person doing alone every day? Does that person know I am here?« That person, an artist, approaches the cat and, after tending its wounded leg, they become close to one another and enjoy the beautiful garden together. When the cat eventually leaves in search of a feline mate, the artist is left behind in sorrow. She starts painting the garden, the place where their friendship had blossomed, the space where her memories bloom like flowers, as a dreamscape where she can be reunited with the cat. This story celebrates the beauty of relationships. Even though the time spent together may be short and may bring sadness, people can stay connected to the others who shared their »gardens« for as long as they hold on to their memories. Na Hyunjung majored in Korean literature. Fascinated by illustrations in which text and images complement one another, she took up painting. This is her first picture book. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

143



Paklone, Inese (text)
Muzikante, Gundega (illus.)

Zvēru barošana

(Animal feeding)

[Rīga]: Pētergailis, 2022. – 61 p.

ISBN 978-9984-33-546-9

[Zoo](#) | [Animals](#) | [Father](#) | [Son](#) | [Poetry](#)

This book of 52 poems tells the story of a stroll taken of a boy and his father at the zoo during the animals' lunch time. They discover what and how the animals eat: lemurs, anacondas, seals, pandas, elks, camels, lynx, tigers, lions, etc. The father and son talk about each animal's life and habits, dream up unreal animals, and have a lot of fun. The father asks witty questions, such as »Why does a flamingo stand on one foot?« The answer: »If he raised the other, he would fall.« The free verse poems are short, clear, and easy to understand. They charm with sonorous fluency of the language, unexpected rhymes, and neatly reveal not only the animals' physical appearance but also their character, behaviour, tricks, and whims. The texts go together wonderfully with Gundega Muzikante's illustrations, which employ paper cutting art. This allows spotting the most characteristic features in the animals' appearances, and vividly reveals their various moods with heartfelt humour. (Age: 5+) [IS]

144



Pastore, Luīze (text)

Pintāne, Evija (illus.)

Laimes bērni. Pēc patiesiem notikumiem izdomāts stāsts

(The Laime children. A fictional story based on true events)

[Rīga]: Liels un mazs, [2021]. – 170 p.

ISBN 978-9934-574-65-8

[Venezuela](#) | [Tropical forest](#) | [Exploration](#) | [Laime, Aleksandrs](#) | [Freedom](#) | [Gold fever](#)

Ilze and her little brother, together with native Pemón children and an adult reporter, follow the trail of their father into the Venezuelan jungle, hoping to discover his secrets. Learning to survive in nature, they arrive at Angel Falls and reach the top of Devil Mountain, while often experiencing miraculous surprises. For this novel, author Luīze Pastore drew inspiration from the life story of the famous Latvian-born explorer Aleksandrs Laime (1911-1994), who lived in Venezuela and was the first recorded person to reach Angel Falls, the world's tallest waterfall, by foot. In this exciting adventure story, the reader is encouraged to reflect upon serious things – the value of life, the price of freedom, the evil of greed. Could it be better to keep a sensational discovery secret, so that people do not destroy it? The illustrations by Evija Pintāne, inspired by real travel notes, and the drawings of different objects, animals, and landscapes intensify the excitement of the search. (Age: 8+) [IS]

145



Vaitkutė, Neringa (text)

Jeronimas Dryžius ir Įsivaizduojamų draugų departamentas

(Jerome Stripe and the Department of Imaginary Friends)

Vilnius: Niekio rimto, 2021. – 182 p.

ISBN 978-609-441-698-9

Friendship | Imaginary friend | Fantasy | Detective novel

Jerome Stripe, the most prominent and skilful secret agent of the whole Kingdom of Daydream, is almost insulted to be assigned to a new mission by the – in his eyes – silly Department of Imaginary Friends. He has to go to Earth to find three missing imaginary friends and solve the case of a lost town. And to do that he needs to pretend to be an imaginary friend of River, a rude, bitter, and seemingly unimaginative girl. Yet River shows no interest in making friends, so Jerome must demonstrate all of his talents if he wishes to succeed. Neringa Vaitkutė (b. 1974), an author of nine other books for middle grade readers, and previously awarded best book of the year by the Lithuanian IBBY section, masterfully weaves the plot of this captivating detective novel around unexpected turns of events. It features exceptionally rich language while dealing with the importance of friendship and honesty, as well as the miracle of helping others. (Age: 9+) [BB]

146



Vilė, Jurga (text)

Sasnauskaitė, Lina (illus.)

Chameleono sapnai

(Chameleon's dreams)

[Vilnius]: Tikra Knyga, 2021. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-609-814-262-4

Dream | Freedom | Home | Humans | Wildlife | Picture book

Chameleon Leon is taken from its home at the seaside to a terrarium in a strange smelling apartment merely for a family's entertainment. During the days, the sad captive creature remains only black, not changing colour as expected. But each night it dreams the most colourful dreams. Time goes by and Leon seems to completely lose hope, until it is freed by the family's youngest member, who understands how the animal feels. Colours play an important role in this book, as the illustrator Lina Sasnauskaitė creatively alternates between black-and-white and colourful spreads. Inspired by the encounters with chameleons when author Jurga Vilė (b. 1977) lived in Andalusia (Spain), this sensitive picture book questions how humans treat living creatures and invites readers to see the bigger picture about home, freedom, and inner resilience. The book also has a factual page about chameleons for young curious readers, including an explanation about what their colours mean. (Age: 5+) [BB]

147



Aalbu, Ragnar (text/illus.)

Georg er borte

(*Georg is gone*)

Bergen: Ena Forlag / Vigmostad & Bjørke, 2021. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-82-419-5551-8

Cat | Loss | Death | Picture book

Georg the tomcat is missing; it's been several days already since he disappeared. By now, the young first-person narrator is getting nervous. He asks the neighbours, looks behind the house, and searches by the little lake. Nothing. No cat. Nowhere. Therefore, the boy and his father go into the forest to have a look there, and on their way, they suddenly notice a red stain on the road. Is that blood? Georg's blood? Is he injured? Or even dead? The book »Georg er borte« starts off gently and gradually grows more and more dramatic, as it includes reflections on very moving, existential questions. Although everything turns out all right in the end and Georg returns alive and kicking, the boy is in an exceptional emotional situation for a while – he feels both furious and terribly sad. His father tries to comfort him with empathy and sensitivity, and without sugar-coating matters. Ragnar Aalbu's texts are straight to the point, while in his pictures, he plays with colours and perspectives to express different moods. (Age: 4+) [IG]

148



Di Fiore, Mariangela / Lie, Cathrine Trønnes (text)

Søstre. Min historie etter Utøya

(*Sisters. My story after Utøya*)

Bergen: Vigmostad Bjørke, 2021. – 150 p.

ISBN 978-82-419-5436-8

Norway | Right-wing terrorism | Assassination | Death | History 2011 | Coping with trauma | Coping with grief

Cathrine and Elisabeth are sisters. They are close to each other, are good friends. In the summer of 2011, Cathrine persuades her sister to spend the holidays at a camp run by the youth organisation of the Norwegian Labour Party on the island of Utøya. Everything there is fantastic, they have lots of fun. Shockingly, on 22 July, the world is suddenly divided into »before« and »after«: A terrorist murders 69 young people, including Elisabeth. Cathrine is seriously injured by two gunshots. Mariangela Di Fiore wrote this book in collaboration with the young woman after many in-depth conversations. The volume describes the horror and disbelief – »Hæ? Hva var dette? En slags lek?« (Wait? What was that? A game?) – the feeling of fear, pain, grief, anger, guilt, and the strength it takes to go on. »Søstre« is a slim, and very personal book devoid of cheap showmanship, which is exactly why it is very intense. In Norway, the book was awarded the prestigious Bragepris in 2021. (Age: 12+) [IG]

149



Krag, Alexander Kielland (text)

Litt redd, bare. Roman*(Just a little scared. Novel)*

Oslo: Gyldendal, 2021. – 215 p.

ISBN 978-82-05-55255-5

Mental illness | Fear | Anxiety disorder | Shame

»I can't find a place to hide. Panicking, I open the front door and a cold wall hits me. I drag myself and my nausea outside. It weighs many kilos, I am sure.« The nausea that assails Cornelius returns again and again. As there isn't any physical cause for it, it indicates some vague anxiety. Cornelius has no idea what is wrong with him and although he quickly receives professional help, he feels terrible. He is overwhelmed by shame; he doesn't want to look like a freak in front of his friends. Thanks to Alexander Kielland Krag's narrative craft, readers are very close to the boy and his struggle with his depression and fear, which he wants to bottle up and push away; eventually however, he simply has to face it. Nevertheless, the book provides some hope, because after the winter, spring approaches and everything feels lighter. Cornelius has beaten his fear. (Age: 12+) [IG]

150



Loe, Erlend (text)

Hiorthøy, Kim (illus.)

Hvem rumpet brunosten? Et kriminalmysterium fra virkeligheten*(Who has been arsing around with the brown cheese? A fake real-life crime mystery)*

Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2021. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-82-02-68244-6

Crime | Detective story | Parody | Picture book

In their burlesque crime parody »Hvem rumpet brunosten?«, Erlend Loe and Kim Hiorthøy not only invent the new verb »å rumpe« (to »arse«), but also relish playing with conventions of genre, character, and image. Lise von Kvantum makes the best brown cheese in the world. The king is crazy about this delicacy, which is why the cheesemaker is supposed to take a select piece of it to the palace. Thus, Lise gets on the train with the cheese, but despite highest security precautions, someone manages to sit on the cheese unnoticed and leave a really fat butt print on it! Who was the culprit? To solve the case, master detective Mr Fluffenberg steps onto the scene. Although he asks the most absurd questions during his interrogation, he seems to be a pro at solving the mystery. Readers will either keep wondering what this butt-cheese story is all about; or they will plunge enthusiastically into Loe and Hiorthøy's humorous universe – and chances are that kids will do the latter, thanks to » rumpe« and co. (Age: 6+) [IG]

151



Nedrejord, Kathrine (text)

Det finnes ingen sannhet*(There is no truth)*

Oslo: Aschehoug, [2021]. – 164 p.

ISBN 978-82-03-36552-2

Death | Memory | Truth

What happened the night that Vilma's best friend Linnea disappeared? Linnea is found dead. Was Vilma's brother Kristoffer involved somehow? Their parents put pressure on the family: They have to stick together. That which must not, can not be. When the police summon Vilma for questioning, she keeps quiet about the fact that her brother's bed was empty that night. Still, Kristoffer is imprisoned. The family moves away, intending to start over, and when Kristoffer is released for lack of evidence, things seem to be looking up. Vilma, however, behaves more and more strangely. She no longer knows what to believe. Eventually, something she tried to suppress comes to light. Kathrine Nedrejord has written a suspenseful, cleverly constructed psychological thriller with an unreliable narrator. Although readers initially believe her, they become increasingly suspicious. What has really happened? Is Vilma telling the truth? Was Linnea indeed Vilma's best friend? Or was there something amiss? (Age: 12+) [IG]

152



Stai, Kari (text/illus.)

Passe happy*(Passably happy)*

Oslo: Samlaget, 2021. – 176 p.

ISBN 978-82-340-0259-5

Coming of age | Friendship | LGBTQ+

In 2021, Kari Stai was awarded the »Kulturdepartementets illustrasjonspris« (Illustration Prize of the Norwegian Ministry of Culture) for »Passe Happy« – and rightly so: The black-and-white drawings play with page layout and perspective in a magnificent way and stage the text, which is utterly convincing on a linguistic level, in very surprising ways. The story revolves around Juri and Evy, who have been friends for ages and are now slowly outgrowing their childhood. One example for this is Juri's new perception of the reflective jackets that are ubiquitous in Norway and that every child wears in winter: »Juri stopped and watched Evy shrink into a small full moon. [...] He didn't want to walk around like a giant lemon.« Juri is growing up, he is overwhelmed by many new and confusing feelings, and most of all he is fed up with being treated like a toddler and therefore rebels against wearing a kiddy outfit. (Age: 10+) [IG]

153



Hānīyān, Ġamšīd (Khanian, Djamshid) (text)
**Dar yek zuhr-i dāg-i tābistān duhtarī ā
 az Bašra āmad**

(Dar yek zohre daghe Tabestan dokhtari
 az Basrah amad)
 (On a hot summer noon, came a girl from Basrah)
 Tīhrān: Ufuq (Ofoq), [2021] (= 1400 h.sh.). – 115 p.
 (Series: Rumān-i Nawġawān; 237)
 ISBN 978-600-353-933-4

Adolescence | Love | Friendship | Loyalty

In his new novel, Djamshid Khanian masterly engages readers with a story about three boys, a girl, and her father. When the boys see her for the first time, they are each captivated by her: a breathtakingly beautiful girl with golden hair. However, rumour has it she is sick and has come to town from Basra in Iraq for medical treatment. From this beginning evolves a tale of love, trust, friendship, betrayal, and heartbreak. Through the eyes of one of the boys, the readers are taken back in time to share the protagonist's sensations and experiences: his heart beating faster; hopes rising higher; friendships shattering; and a new lesson being learnt – that adolescent love is a mysterious feeling, yet sweet, full of expectations and thus able to give life a new meaning. In an accessible and profound way, Djamshid Khanian depicts a universal dilemma: to choose love or to stay loyal to friends. The renowned Iranian author has been nominated for and awarded many international and national children's and young adult book prizes. (Age: 14+) [RM]

154



Hānlarī, Zahrāy-i (Khanlari, Zahra) (text)
 Markazī, 'Aṭīya (Markazi, Atiyeh) (illus.)

Haft-hān-i Rostam

(Haft-khane Rostam)
 (Rostam's seven labours)
 Tīhrān: Mirmāh (Mirmah), [2021] (= 1400 h. sh.). – 56 p.
 ISBN 978-600-333-359-8

Ferdowsi / Shahnameh <The Book of Kings> |
 Adaptation | Hero

Ferdowsi's epic poem »Shahnameh«, dating from the 10th century, has been an eternal source of inspiration for later works of Persian literature. The stories and legends have been retold many times with different narratives and perspectives. Sometimes they are tragic, sometimes romantic, sometimes terrifying, but always exciting. »Haft Khwan-e Rostam« (Rostam's Seven Labours) is one of the »Shahnameh« tales, which reveals a different aspect of the life of the legendary hero Rostam. On the way to conquer Mazandaran, Kai-Kavus, the selfish and conceited king of Iran, is captured by the demons of that land and loses his sight. In order to help free Kai-Kavus and his army, Rostam has to complete seven dangerous tasks. Zahra Khanlari (née Zahra Kia; 1912-1991), an outstanding expert of Persian literature, rewrote this story for teenage readers in a beautiful literary and nuanced language. The outstanding pictures of Atiyeh Markazi, who has illustrated other tales of the »Shahnameh« before, embellish and strengthen the epic and its atmosphere of adventure. (Age: 12+) [RM]

155



Hidāyatī, Mahsā (Hedayati, Mahsa) (illus.)

Ġādūy-i ḥāb

(Djadouye khaab)

(A magical sleep)

Tihrān: Tūṭi Kitābi Kūdak wa Nawġawan-i Fāṭimī

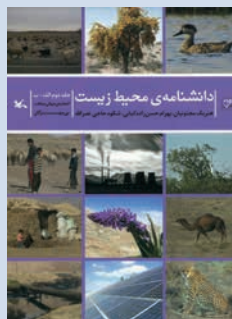
(Fatemi, Touti), [2021] (=1400 h.sh.). – [30] p.

ISBN 978-622-6630-73-3

Sleep | Imagination | Wordless book |
Picture book

Like any other human act, sleeping may involve different customs in different cultures. Thus, it might be interesting for children living in Western and Northern countries to learn about the Middle to the Far East where people traditionally used to sleep on mattresses on the floor. Although in Iran this tradition has faded nowadays, one still can find people keeping their mattresses, pillows, and sheets in a corner during the day. Illustrator Mahsa Hedayati has made this custom the basis of her wordless book in which children play with bedding material during the day. This turns into a fantastic game full of joy, imagination, colour, and adventure – a magical world in which everything is possible: One moment, the children find themselves in a beautiful garden, the next moment they dive into a leaf full of water, so that forest animals have to come to their aid, until, in the end, they fall asleep again. Mahsa Hedayati has received many awards and her works have been recognized at Iranian and international festivals. (Age: 3+) [RM]

156



Maġnūnīyān, Hinrik (Madjounian, Henrik) /

Ḥasan-zādah Kīyābī, Bahrām

(Hasan-zadeh Kyabi, Bahram) / Ḥāġi-Naṣrullāh, Šukūh

(Hadji Nasrollah, Shokouh) (text)

Dānišnamah-i Muḥīṭi-zīst. Ġildi duwum.

Alif-B (*Daneshnameye Mohite Zist. Djelde 2 Alef va B*) (*Encyclopedia of environment. Vol. 2. A-B*)

Tihrān: Kanoon, [2021] (=1400 h.sh.). – 217 p.

ISBN 978-600-01-0872-4

Iran | Environment | Encyclopaedia | Non-fiction

The environmental crisis has been one of the most challenging issues in recent decades and has raised major global concern. Iran is considered one of the hotspots of environmental problems, such as desertification, which has been worsening due to droughts and water shortages. Providing information about these problems is necessary to help raise awareness. This encyclopaedia for adolescents, written in a clear, simple language, has been compiled exactly for this purpose. It will consist of four volumes in total. A large number of Iranian environmental experts and activists were invited to collaborate in the project. Not only did they provide the necessary resources and fundamental content to the authors, but they also verified and revised the entries in the final editing process. To ensure the comprehensibility of the text, a number of young people also read and commented on the articles. The entries are arranged alphabetically and accompanied by colour photographs. An index facilitates easy access and general orientation. (Age: 15+) [RM]

157



Qarah-bāgī, Mas'ūd (Ghara-baghi, Mas'oud)
(text/illus.)

Sitārih-bāz

(Setareh-baz)

(The star lover)

Tihṙān: Madrasah, [2021] (=1400 h.sh.). – 30 p.

ISBN 978-964-0820-27-8

Fox | Star | Light | Night | Firefly | Picture book

In Persian literature, there are many stories about a leopard who falls in love with the moon and goes to the top of a mountain every night to stare into the skies. In this picture book, it is a fox who is so much in love with the stars that he dreams of them every night. Thinking that the stars are as bright as the sun and as soft and tender as flowers, he wants to touch them. So he climbs up the highest hill he knows, but even there he can't reach them. When, instead, he sees countless bright spots on the plain at the foot of the hill, he thinks if he can't have the stars from the sky, maybe he can find a beautiful one, just for himself, among those on the ground. Getting closer to the points of light, he discovers an endless number of fireflies. The realistic and at the same time artistically composed pictures make this book a remarkable work. Mas'oud Gharah-baghi depicts urban spaces very well. At the same time, he presents a fascinating image of nature and wildlife in the dark of the night and shows the various effects light has in these spaces. (Age: 6+) [RM]

158



Bednarek, Justyna (text)

Oklejak, Marianna (illus.)

Maryjki. Opowieści o Matce Boskiej

(Maries. Tales of the Mother of God)

Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 2021. – 107 p. + 5 p.

ISBN 978-83-10-13453-0

Mary <Nazareth, biblical person> | Folk tale | Folk culture | Folklore | Religion | Tradition

In her introduction to »Maryjki«, Justyna Bednarek notes that in the past folk stories linking Mother Mary to nature were as popular as Marvel comics and films are nowadays. That thought seems to have inspired her to write this book. Bednarek and illustrator Marianna Oklejak give a contemporary twist to Polish folklore in superbly written and illustrated short stories derived from traditional folk tales. In these tales, Mary becomes both an advocate of ecojustice and a protector of ordinary people in need, changing the world with her simple gestures and kindness. Religious aspects appear only marginally, and Mary is depicted as rather less saintly – an original and praiseworthy decision, especially in Poland, a country of strong Catholic traditions. The book brings contemporary readers closer to something distant, difficult to comprehend and gives a physical form to metaphysical beliefs. In addition, »Maryjki« is striking for its fabulously detailed graphic design. (Age: 6+) [KR]



159

Jędrzejewska-Wróbel, Roksana (text)

Stan splątania

(*State of confusion*)

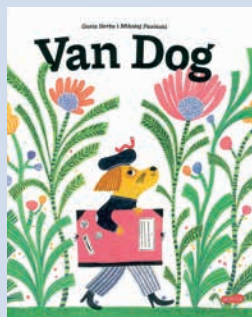
Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2021.

– 395 p. + [4] p.

ISBN 978-83-08-07435-0

Intergenerational relationship | Old age | School

Despite being fellow classmates and next-door neighbours, Maria, Lena, and Miłosz were mere acquaintances until they started volunteering at a senior citizen's home as part of their extracurricular activities. There they get to know one another better and meet a trio of extraordinary seniors: Elodia, Jarmina, and Bertram. Through their visits to the home, the young protagonists gain deeper insight into themselves while helping the seniors feel important and needed. The polyphonic narrative becomes a tool to render a complex representation of contemporary reality: a rather brutal yet not untypical story that draws upon events of everyday life and the search for identity in face of societal pressures experienced by both the young and the elderly. The foremost quality of the novel lies in its language. Roksana Jędrzejewska-Wróbel offers sombre, beautifully written reflections upon difficult issues that will undoubtedly move young adult readers. (Age: 14+) [KR]



160

Pasiński, Mikołaj (text)

Herba, Gosia (illus.)

Van Dog

Warszawa: HarperKids, 2021. – [46] p.

ISBN 978-83-276-6252-1

Art | Artist | Animals | Activities book | Intertextuality | Picture book

The protagonist, an anthropomorphized dog, who is a painter, goes into a meadow with a painter's kit to work on his next piece of art. With every new page, a seemingly peaceful, idyllic landscape becomes thickly populated not only with plants, people, and animals but also with aliens and even Godzilla. This, nearly wordless, image-driven picture book, allows readers to fully focus on its colourful, intriguing, and joyful illustrations. Indeed, Gosia Herba and Mikołaj Pasiński are clearly paying homage to art and artists. From the protagonist's name – a tribute to Vincent Van Gogh – to the endpapers filled with familiar but reconfigured artworks, from the albums of Claude Monet and William Turner in Van Dog's studio to visual references to Henri Matisse, the intertextuality testifies to the authors' creativity as well as their belief in the value of bringing children into contact with art. Readers are invited to become artists themselves, as the last spread features a blank picture frame for them to draw in. (Age: 3+) [KR]

161



Pietruszczak, Barbara (text) / Rudak, Anna (illus.)
Twoje ciałopozytywne dojrzewanie.
Przewodnik po zmianach w ciele,
pierwszej miesiączce i ciałopozytywności
(Your body-positive puberty. A guide to changes in the body, first menstruation, and body positivity)
 Warszawa: Moonka, 2021. – 196 p. + [12] p.
 ISBN 978-83-959865-0-5

Body | Gender | Girl | Puberty | Sexuality |
 Sex education | Non-fiction

This fundraised book on puberty for girls – written by Barbara Pietruszczak, a journalist specializing in body-related topics – fills a gap in the Polish children's book market, as schools in this country do not include sex education in their curricula. The author covers a wide spectrum of topics – from changes in the body to emotions and relationships – which are presented in a thorough but not overwhelming manner. Sharing her expert knowledge on female puberty, the author is both insightful and respectful of her readers. The book itself is also appropriately subtle, both textually and visually. The pastel-coloured illustrations, in particular, perfectly express the idea of body positivity and directly address issues some would consider taboo. Another valuable aspect of this book is its inclusivity, manifested through different skin tones, various body types, and references to menstruating people, even if they do not identify as women, including trans men and non-binary persons. (Age: 8+) [KR]

162



Lacerda, Nilma (text)
 Guazzelli, Eloar (illus.)
Estrela de rabo e outras histórias
(Comet and other stories)
 Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira,
 [2021]. – 111 p.
 ISBN 978-65-56401-63-8

Short story | Anthology

Three of the five short stories in this volume were already published under the same title in 2005. This new edition, with two additional stories, provides an opportunity to draw attention once again to the quality of Nilma Lacerda's literary work. In a language that is rich in registers, the author takes an unvarnished look at children and youth who do not stand on the sunny side of life, but instead experience rejection and marginalisation. The stories, which are harsh, but not without hope, depict real-life situations in Brazil that are marked by social opposites, and delve into topics such as poverty and the still powerful effects of slavery on social relationships. In her texts, Nilma Lacerda establishes links to well-known literary texts, such as »Hansel and Gretel«, »Romeo and Juliet«, or Perrault's folk tale »Peau d'âne« (Donkey-skin). The latter is the source of the title of Lacerda's first story, in which a young girl frees herself from her tyrannical, overly possessive father. (Age: 13+) [JW]

163



Moriconi, Renato (text/illus.)

Uma planta muito faminta*(A very hungry plant)*

São Paulo: Companhia das Letrinhas, 2021. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-85-7406-936-4

Carnivorous plant | Hunger | Insatiability |
Picture book

At the beginning a tiny plant peeks out of the earth. It feeds on sunlight. But that is not enough. It is a carnivore! Insatiably it devours one creature after the other. The larger the prey, the greater the appetite: »The plant grew, its hunger, too.« A caterpillar, a butterfly, a spider, a lizard, a hare, a gymnast, a circus bear, a parachuting cow, an airplane, even a dragon and a choir of angels disappear into its maw. Where will this all end? The answer is given on the last page by a herbivorous dinosaur. This picture book is enormous fun. Thanks to the plot's magnificent exaggerations and the simple, repetitive style, it clearly begs to be read over and over again. In a style highly suited to this somewhat wild and raw story, Renato Moriconi has employed zestful brushstrokes to bring his pictures and texts to paper. One of his sources of inspiration was Eric Carle's very hungry caterpillar which, however, was allowed to metamorphose into a butterfly. (Age: 3+) [JW]

164



Reis, Fabíola (text)

Various artists (illus.)

Alcateia*(Wolf pack)*

São Paulo: Ôzé, 2021. – 79 p.

ISBN 978-65-990107-7-4

Wolf pack | Fairy tale | Parody | Storytelling |
Short story

Fabíola Reis's children's book debut is a collection of highly successful miniatures. Never more than three pages long, each one tells a tale about one of our most famous fairy-tale characters – the wolf. The author has chosen the already innumerable often retold classic tales of »Little Red Riding Hood« and »The Three Little Pigs« as her sources of inspiration and devised adaptations of individual scenes to produce new, witty stories from familiar material. Here is proof once again of the inexhaustible possibilities that classic works offer modern authors to go against the grain and to produce new variations. The reader encounters, for instance, a young, strictly vegetarian wolf; a wolf that must appear before court on charges of masquerading under false identity; the friendly, exquisitely polite wolf Horácio; and a young Red Riding Hood who drives the wolf nuts with her questions and talks him into the ground. The illustrations are equally varied because the fifteen stories were each illustrated by a different artist. (Age: 12+) [JW]

165



Brunini, Nani (illus.)

Discórdia

(Discord)

Lisboa: Pato Lógico, 2021. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-989-54738-2-3

Quarrel | Discord | Conflict resolution |
Picture book | Wordless book

This book describes, without any words, how an apparently insignificant disagreement can escalate. What the quarrellers say is depicted in red and purple cloud-like formations above their heads. The more people who get involved and the more heated the situation gets, the more threatening the growing number of blots and scribbles appears. Suddenly a large eye appears within the converging clouds, which metamorphose into a giant monster that casts darkness over the world. Only through a joint effort, using all their creativity, do the people succeed in escaping this oppressive setting and float away, literally, into a new and once again colourful world. The Brazilian illustrator Nani Brunini has found catchy visual metaphors for destructive discord. Although the story is easily understandable, it does not divulge all its secrets, leaving instead much room for interpretation. The considerable appeal of the images lies in the strong contrast between the delicately drawn figures and the vigour of the two colours, which seem to intermingle, but do not blend. (Age: 5+) [JW]

166



Saramago, José (text)

Fonseca, Armando (illus.)

Uma luz inesperada

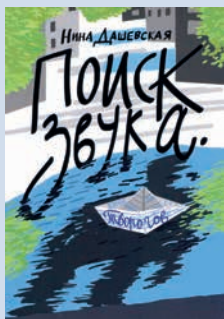
(An unexpected light)

Lisboa: Porto Editora, 2022. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-972-0-03519-6

Nature | Childhood memories | Picture book

In a book titled »The Traveller's Baggage«, Nobel Prize winner José Saramago (1922-2010) published a collection of short prose in 1973. Included among those memories, experiences and observations was the story which appears here for the first time as a picture book. It tells of a twelve-year-old boy – presumably the author himself – who accompanies his uncle to the market to sell piglets. The boy describes his experiences along their walking journey over several days, including his overwhelming experiences of the natural world: an unforgettable moonlit night, or a terrible storm which miraculously does not harm the two travellers. These impressions let the boy perceive the grandeur and majesty of the universe. The Mexican illustrator Armando Fonseca has furnished the text with spacious, almost entirely black and grey-toned images. The illustrations are captivating in their symbolism and dream-like atmosphere, in which reality, imagination, and memory flow into one another. (Age: 8+) [JW]



167

Daševskaja, Nina (Dashevskaya, Nina) (text)

Poisk zvuka. Tvorogov

(The true sound. Tvorogov)

Moskva: Samokat, [2021]. – 141 p.

(Series: Vstrečnoe dvizhenie)

ISBN 978-5-00167-277-7

Coming of age | Social activism

»I just want to be an observer«, says fifteen-year-old Vanya Tvorogov, who characterises himself as an outsider, lazybones, and an underachiever. But this is merely his way of protesting against the adult world. Vanya is seeking »the true sound«, his own voice, and that requires a lot of reflection. »You can be not just an observer, but a witness«, suggests his teacher. The new novel by renowned author Nina Dashevskaya presents the intense life of young people who are caught up in current events. »I'm afraid to join the army«, argues Vanya with his friends, »I just do not want to go. Man is not made for this«. Gradually Vanya understands that adults also strive to express »their own voice« and do not accept the status quo. After seeing his father in a street protest, Vanya overcomes his embarrassment and stands nearby in support. The story is constructed as a dialogue between Vanya and the author. The adult voice not only introduces important arguments but is also a listener for Vanya, who has become a witness. (Age: 14+) [OM]



168

Gromova, Ol'ga (text)

Val'chen

(Young Valya)

Moskva: KompasGid, 2021. – 422 p.

ISBN 978-5-00083-740-5

World War II (1939-1945) | Forced labour | Love | Humanity | Historical fiction

Her joyful summer holiday, full of dreams about the future, is ruined for Valya, when German troops invade the Soviet Union in June 1941. As in Olga Gromova's oft-translated first novel, »Sugar Child«, about a young victim of Stalin's repressions, the heroine of her new novel lives through a similar tragedy. Like many other Russians, the thirteen-year-old is sent to Germany as a labourer and has to endure hard work, injustice and deprivation. Valya is saved by a German family that takes a serious risk by accepting her not as a slave, but as a family member. Valya realizes that some people are forced to participate in a war against their will. She experiences her first love but must sacrifice it to return home to Russia. For many years, the forced labourers' fate was almost unknown in Russia. This novel not only sparks historical memory and reminds readers of war's devastating effects and any victory's bitter taste, but also shows that people can remain humane even in inhumane circumstances. (Age: 12+) [OM]

169



Marković, Goran (text)

Krstić, Igor (illus.)

Boje drugarstva*(The colours of friendship)*

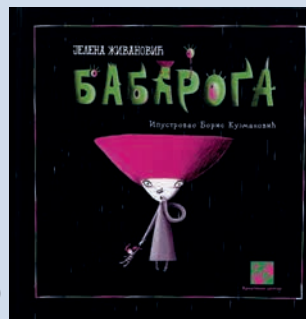
Čačak: Pčelica, 2021. – 122 p.

ISBN 978-86-6088-014-9

Difference | Identity | Gender | Bullying |
Prejudice | Friendship | Empathy

Viktor likes modern dance, reads a lot, and has some difficulties getting along with the other boys from his class. Some of them are bothered by the way he behaves, speaks, and walks. One day, after Viktor buys a purple backpack, a barrage of misunderstandings and prejudices is unleashed, resulting in verbal, psychological, and even physical violence. »Boje drugarstva« is a fascinating novel that focusses on prejudice and peer pressure, but also love and the strength of friendship. It describes how Viktor manages to cope with a social environment that rejects his individuality while finding others who help him along his way. Its literary quality and beauty lie in the nuanced portrayal of colours and shades. Author Goran Marković (b. 1967) shows that it's not colours that define personality – neither skin tone, clothing, nor the colour in a person's voice. The novel deals with the questions of who we are as individuals and how much knowledge, love, goodness, and understanding can be found in every person. (Age: 10+) [DS]

170



Živanović, Jelena (text)

Kuzmanović, Boris (illus.)

Babaroga*(The bogey woman)*

Beograd: Kreativni centar, [2021]. – 39 p.

ISBN 978-86-529-0937-7

Monster | Night | Fear | Friendship | Emotion |
Picture book

Jelena Živanović's literary debut is a blend of playfulness and imagination. It shows how imagination can turn a scary creature into a friend and protector, cause colours to change, and even invent all sorts of things. One just needs to open his or her heart and let imagination take over, in order to make one's world a better place. »Babaroga« tells the story of a little girl drawing a bogey woman who is not terrifying at all. She is fluorescent green, has beautiful eyes and eyelashes, and smiles all the time. She loves to read and play at night, to fix toys and eat chocolates. But more than anything else in the world, she loves the little girl who has drawn her. This picture book is special in many ways, and Boris Kuzmanović's illustrations give it a perfect touch of quirkiness. It defies the traditional picture book style found on the rather conservative Serbian children's book market, representing instead a new atmosphere and sensitivity, a modern touch to picture books created for coming generations. (Age: 3+) [DS]



171

Mocpajchel, Roman (text)

Hříbal, František (illus.)

Bitky a bojiská. Stručné dejiny slovenska pre mladých čitateľov

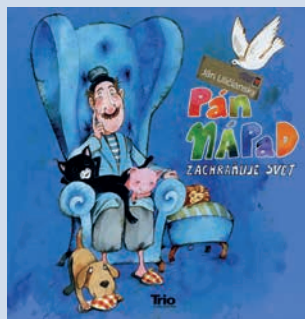
(Battles and battlefields. A brief history of Slovakia for young readers)

Bratislava: Slovart, 2021. – 175 p.

ISBN 978-80-556-4999-3

[Slovakia](#) | [Battle](#) | [War](#) | [History](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

This non-fiction book is engaging in both its substance and design. It describes the major armed conflicts that marked Slovak history – most of them taking place on Slovak territory – from Roman times, through Mongolian and Osman attacks and occupation, religious wars between Catholics and Protestants, the Napoleonic campaigns, up to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. With a style of writing that is concise, easy to understand, and fresh, it is well-suited for teenagers. Supported by comic-like illustrations, the book is rich in information about each period's specific features: details of the rival troops; their armament, battle tactics and strategies; descriptions of battlefields; and, not unimportantly, the historic circumstances and background. The clear structure helps young readers navigate easily through the pages and learn a lot about twenty battles that affected not only the course of Slovak and Central European history, but also that of Europe and the rest of the world as well. (Age: 12+) [JS]



172

Uličiansky, Ján (text)

Martiška, Juraj (illus.)

Pán Nápad zachraňuje svet

(Mr Idea saves the world)

Bratislava: Trio Publishing, 2021. – 86 p.

ISBN 978-80-8170-093-4

[Imagination](#) | [Humanity](#) | [Short story](#)

Nobody would think that there is something special about quiet Pán Nápad (Mr Idea). But there is! His house is only one room, containing only one armchair. Everything, even the walls and the floor, is blue. But it has a special »Ideas Door«. When you open it, it slams into your backside and sends you off to whatever place you have imagined. In this way, Mr Idea visits a beach on the Mediterranean Sea, full of plastic waste, where he adopts a lost doggie; then a Brazilian jungle being mercilessly cleared out, where he saves a small monkey. As he saves a blue rabbit, an owl with a broken wing or a goat in love, his animal family grows. But in the last episode a carrier pigeon returns to Mr Idea after thirty years without the hoped-for answer from his beloved. This book includes witty, entertaining stories with strong humanist messages, combining prose and poems. The charming text by prominent children's book author Ján Uličiansky is accompanied by the joyful illustrations of well-known illustrator and graphic designer Juraj Martiška. (Age: 8+) [JS]

173



Androjna, Irena (text)

Modri Otok

(Blue Island)

Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2021. – 387 p.

(Series: Knjižnica Sinjega galeba; 350)

ISBN 978-961-01-5773-1

Island | Summer camp | Research | Mystery |
Friendship | Fantasy fiction

This complex fantasy and adventure novel also combines elements of a crime story and a love story, in addition to offering a critique of the modern world. A group of thirteen-year-old friends is at a summer research camp on the Blue Island. While waiting for their mentor to arrive, they decide to undertake some ethnographic research on their own. This leads them to make some unusual discoveries: they meet Marisa, a green-eyed girl-bird, and lighthouse keeper Stibor, who introduces them to the portal of the Kingdom of Infinite Dawn. As inexplicable changes begin to occur, some locals who are well familiar with the stories and the history of the island interfere with the group's explorations. It turns out that in the mysterious, mythological days of long ago, people were much more connected with each other, to nature, and even to the supernatural. In the modern world, all of this is revealed to the group of unburdened young people who are connected by friendship, by their concern for environmental issues, and who believe in positive solutions. (Age: 10+) [TJ]

174



Kos, Gaja (text)

Vukotič, Jaka (illus.)

Ne pozabi na naslov!

(Don't forget the title)

Dob pri Domžalah: Miš, 2022. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-961-272-508-2

Book | Creativity | Storytelling | Activities book |
Picture book

This original, playful, and amusing picture book fuels the imagination of young readers and encourages reading by engaging their imaginations and teaching them how a picture book is produced. A mouse finds itself in a book without a story. It even seems that someone forgot to make up a title for it! Eventually though, cheese, a backpack and another mouse appear, so that a story slowly unfolds, not least with the help of the reader. The action (i.e., the making of a picture book) is driven by colourful sticky notes containing short reminders. Almost incidentally, readers learn about who is involved in the creative process: the author, the illustrator, the editor, the designer, etc. The pages teem with word games and other witty ideas concerning illustration and design. For example, the holes in the cheese must be drawn by the reader because – as both mice agree – cheese without holes is even more pathetic than a book without a story. (Age: 4+) [TJ]



175

Levín, Federico (text)

Lassalle, Nico (illus.)

Una niña con un lápiz

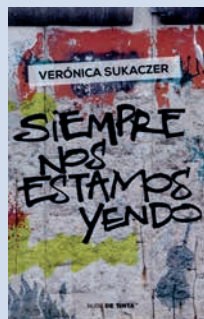
(A girl with a pencil)

Buenos Aires: Limonero, [2021]. – [46] p.

ISBN 978-987-47940-0-0

Poverty | Homelessness | Children's rights |
Imagination | Picture book

The text and the sentences of this story could hardly be shorter, the language hardly more brittle, the tone hardly more laconic. Even the pictures, especially on the first pages, could hardly be more reduced. We see a young girl, a girl with a pencil. She is tired and has no home to go to. She draws a house, but it has no bed. She draws a bed in friendly surroundings, but she cannot go to sleep. She draws a book but cannot read it. In the end, she draws a sister who reads to her, and finally she falls asleep, thanks to the soothing power of her imagination. But neither the story's comforting conclusion – also for the reader – nor the almost sweet portrayal of the child in the black-and-white, minimally coloured illustrations can distract the reader from seeing that this book is about poverty, homelessness, loneliness – and, moreover, the question of why a society allows it to be. It is magnificent how Federico Levín and Nico Lassalle succeed in presenting this story so forcefully, yet undramatically, without any explications, in just a few words.
(Age: 5+) [JW]



176

Sukaczer, Verónica (text)

Siempre nos estamos yendo

(Always on the move)

Buenos Aires: Nube de tinta, [2021] – 239 p.

ISBN 978-987-1997-50-3

Escape | Displacement | Homelessness

Sixteen-year-old Zinnia is on the road with her younger sister Jaz. Travelling alone, displaced from their home and without a clear destination, they take refuge in an apparently deserted house. Inside they encounter an old woman, and later the thirteen-year-old Isa joins them. In this provisional, fragile, and endangered place, Zinnia talks about her childhood, which came to an abrupt end when a wall suddenly stood between the larger world and her own, immediate world. People became separated from one another, forced again and again to pick up and leave a place, to find a new one, only to be forced to move on again. Written in the first-person perspective, this novel impactfully describes – without referencing specific places or historical events – what it means to be without a home, and the figures' feelings of powerlessness, their inability to surmount the wall, and never to finally arrive. This is a bitter, timeless book, with believable characters, which deals with ubiquitous humanitarian disasters. (Age: 13+) [JW]

177



Antinori, Andrea (illus.)

La montaña

(Mountains)

[Santiago, Chile]: Liebre, 2022. – [22] p.

ISBN 978-956-0915-45-0

Mountain | Volcano | Mountain range |
Picture book | Wimmelbook | Leporello |
Wordless book | Cardboard book

This large-size wimmel-boardbook in leporello format can be opened to a length of nearly three-and-a-half metres. And one really ought to do so! Stand it upright on the floor, lay down in front of it, and take delight (preferably with others) in exploring it. On the one side you will find a panorama of mountain ranges that extend across borders and continents. Craggy mountains, snow-covered volcanoes, rivers, lakes, meadows, and terraced fields, inhabited by llamas, bears, penguins and marmots, by mountain climbers, shepherds, hermits, and alpine horn players. The reverse side holds amazing views of the insides of these mountains. Caves and grottos, underground lakes, magma chambers, volcanic pipes, mines and cave paintings, mushrooms, bats, and all sorts of fantastic creatures. In brilliant colours, Andrea Antinori has painted a cornucopia of exuberant imagery, full of imagination and wit. The joy of detail and storytelling is in evidence everywhere. An immense source of pleasure and a feast for the eyes! (Age: 4+) [JW]

178



González, Gracia (text/illus.)

Siento el viento

(I feel the wind)

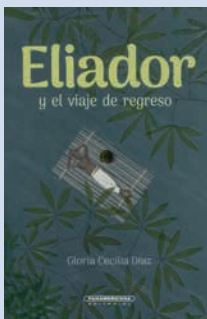
Santiago: Amanuta, 2022. – [18] p.

(Series: Colección Sin Límites)

ISBN 978-956-364-267-4

Wind | Colour | Blue | Poetry | Picture book |
Cardboard book | Pop-up book

»Siento el viento« and »Rayo de luz« (Light ray) are two remarkable cardboard books created by the graphic arts student Gracia González during her studies. Their appeal lies in the simplicity and clarity of the design, in the high-quality production, as well as in the way the books approach their themes – the wind, the sun – and convey them visually, haptically, and textually. The stable pages of »Siento el viento« are done up in white and various tones of blue. The colour areas are monochromatic, the shapes simple, the design minimalistic. Some of the flaps open to form a larger billow of clouds; one element that can be removed might be a paper kite or a leaf dancing in the wind. Cut-out holes of different sizes invite the reader to take a peep or give a puff, sparking the imagination due to the absence of instructions. It is unusual for a cardboard book for the very young to contain rhymed texts. In just a few verses, a lyrical first-person speaker talks about hearing the wind and sensing how it blows or gusts or gently caresses. (Age: 3+) [JW]



179

Díaz, Gloria Cecilia (text)

Díaz, Carlos Manuel (illus.)

Eliador y el viaje de regreso

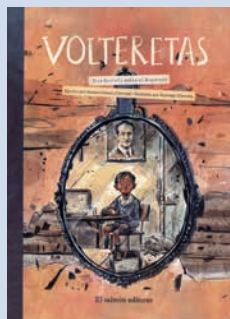
(*Eliador and the journey home*)

Bogotá: Panamericana Editorial, 2021. – 125 p.

ISBN 978-958-30-6307-7

River | Old age | Farewell | Death | Nature

Mateo has lived almost all his life along the river Eliador. He has the power to communicate with Eliador in the same way he can with his tomcat Aristóbulo. When Mateo's powers slowly begin to fade away, Eliador – which, together with all of nature, the forest, the animals, and everything on its banks, means everything to the old man – takes him on a final journey. Traveling on a float down the river to the ocean is at the same time a journey back to Mateo's childhood and youth. Along the route, memories of experiences and encounters alternate with the depiction of the journey of the three protagonists – Mateo, Aristóbulo and Eliador. In her own uniquely rich, melodious, and poetic language, the multiple award-winning author Gloria Cecilia Díaz writes about living and dying, as well as about the fragility of an endangered natural world, which is being exploited and destroyed by man. A calm, serene melancholy overlies the narrative. Because death and leave-taking are part of the cycle of life, they also signify a new beginning. (Age: 10+) [JW]



180

Gómez Carvajal, Natalia (text)

Guevara, Santiago (illus.)

Volteretas

(*Sommersaults*)

Bogotá: El Salmón Editores, 2021. – 128 p.

(Series: Colección Pez Globo)

ISBN 978-958-52441-6-0

Colombia | History 1948 | Revolt | Violence | Childhood memories

The so-called »Bogotazo« is deeply anchored in Colombia's historical memory and still has an effect today. After the liberal politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was assassinated on April 9, 1948, the street riots that immediately broke out were violently suppressed. There were hundreds of deaths and injuries, and parts of the capital city, Bogotá, were heavily damaged. »Volteretas« picks up two months earlier and tells the story of ten-year-old Ciro, his parents, and his best friend Esteban, by depicting everyday life within their families, their neighbourhood, and at school. Both the text and the very accomplished colour illustrations and the black-and-white drawings and vignettes offer a vivid portrait of the figures' lives, which are abruptly upended and changed dramatically. After April 9, Ciro's father disappears forever, and Esteban's family must rush to get themselves to safety by leaving the country. This book demonstrates how complex political events can be successfully presented in stories and images suitable for young readers. (Age: 10+) [JW]

181



Buitrago, Jairo (text)

Ruiz Johnson, Mariana (illus.)

Formas de hacer amigos*(Ways to make friends)*

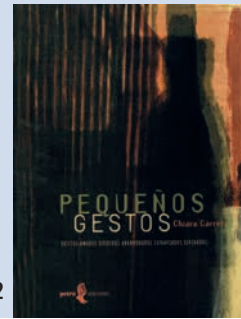
Ciudad de México: Letra, [2021]. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-607-8689-15-6

Friendship | Animals | Picture book

In a highly entertaining manner, this picture book describes the many ways there are to make friends. Even if some of the suggestions cannot be taken entirely seriously, they are all quite original and worth a try in any case! For the protagonist, a young frog, the narrator recommends, for example, simply waiting under a tree until someone comes along who wants to be its friend. Somewhat faster and more promising might be to free a bird from a cage or a bee from a water fountain. Or to give a stranger a piece of self-made handiwork. Or to keep greeting that grumpy bat, until it finally greets you in return. Friendliness, generosity, empathy, and openness are undoubtedly outstanding characteristics – as well as the prerequisite for making friends with oneself. María Ruiz Johnson has illustrated Jairo Buitrago's humorous, tongue-in-cheek guidebook with cheery pictures. They present a colourful and diverse world of different animals (and plants), which could all become friends – if they would only try. (Age: 4+) [JW]

182



Carrer, Chiara (text/illus.)

Pequeños gestos. Objetos amados queridos abandonados extraviados olvidados*(Small gestures. Beloved desirable abandoned lost forgotten objects)*

Zapopan: Petra Ediciones, 2022. – [126] p.

ISBN 978-607-7646-83-9

Collecting | Memories | Cultural memory

»I collect so as not to forget the momentariness and the beauty of fragments.« In a kind of notebook or album in which she preserves thoughts, memories and images, Chiara Carrer addresses the reasons and the structure of collecting things. Using photos, collages, sketches, drawings, and colour paintings, which are labelled with commentaries and aphoristic thoughts, she reflects upon the desire to hold on to that which has been experienced and acquired by saving, sorting, and cataloguing it. The pictures and texts deal with transience and permanence. Posing the question whether collecting is a passion or an obsession, Carrer makes clear that it is both an individual and a social activity through which collective memory is shaped and preserved. This profound and unusual book offers sensual, stimulating insights into an entire universe. The diversity of the seemingly fleeting images makes evident the processual, fragmentary character of the book and its creation. (Age: 12+) [JW]

183



Ycaza, Roger (illus.)

Clic

(Click)

Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica,
2021. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-607-16-7052-6

Bedtime | Daughter | Father | Imaginary trip |
Wordless book | Picture book

»Click« is the signal word for off to bed and lights out: Click. But this little girl is quite lucky to have a dad who will take her on an exciting expedition beforehand. Just a few steps away from bed, the two are suddenly standing in the thicket of a forest full of plants and animals. All around them are sprawling vines and blossoms, creatures that fly, flutter or creep. Then soon a boat whisks them out onto the ocean, where glittering waves, innumerable fish, and a giant sea monster are waiting. From there they head out into outer space, where they float weightlessly among the stars and planets before finally returning home. Roger Ycaza's picture book is a genuine firework. With indubitable joy and delight in fabrication, the Ecuadorian illustrator depicts an imaginary journey in illustrations that overflow in colours, lines, dots, and blobs he has brought to paper with much vigour and verve. This wordless book is perfectly suited to be looked through again and again, together, until at last it is time to say: good night! Click. (Age: 3+) [JW]

184



Albo, Pablo (text)

Rea, Simone (illus.)

Va la vaca

(The cow goes)

[Barcelona]: A buen paso, [2021]. – [60] p.

ISBN 978-84-17555-56-6

Language | Sound | Creativity | Animals |
Picture book

»Ji ji ji!« (Hi hi hi!), giggles the giraffe in this book. Many readers will undoubtedly imitate her, for »Va la vaca« is a splendid book for children (and adults) who take pleasure in playing creatively with language, sounds, syllables, and words. Starting point is the names of animals, and first up is the book's title »Va la vaca« – or »The cow goes«. Va? Vaca? Oh, like that! What is behind all the other animals' names, such as zorro (fox), jabalí (wild boar), hormiga (ant) or burro (donkey)? That's right: they go »zo?« and »ja!« and »ohhh!« and »buuuuh« – sounds of happiness, sadness or displeasure. Surely there are innumerable additional animal names in Spanish (and other languages, too) containing syllables that carry a meaning of their own. Discovering them is what this book demonstrates in a way that is as simple as it is inventive. Simone Rea has illustrated Pablo Albo's text with beautiful, anthropomorphized animal portraits that perfectly match the book's typography. (Age: 3+) [JW]

SPANISH

Mexico
Spain

185



Campoy, Ana (text)
Ábalos, Eugenia (illus.)

Pepa Guindilla

(*Pepa Chilli Pepper*)

Madrid: Nórdica Libros, [2021]. – 202 p.

(Nórdica infantil)

ISBN 978-84-18451-56-0

Family | Friendship

On the cover she appears quite confident of herself. The girl with the red hair is Pepa Guindilla, a ten-year-old whirlwind, a powerhouse, no longer a child and not yet a teenager, but someone with a clear view of the world around her. With wit, tempo, and forthrightness, never mincing her words, she talks about herself, her everyday life, her best friend Bárbara and, above all, about her family. As she explains right at the start, it is a pretty crazy one, large and chaotic. Not the traditional father-mother-child stuff, but instead – in keeping with the times – a wildly diverse lot. In Pepa's world there are mothers, fathers, stepfathers, stepmothers, an adopted grandmother, and half-siblings Standing up for yourself is not possible without some trouble and conflicts, but Pepa wouldn't be Pepa if she could not handle all that in her own unique style. With ease and humour, in natural and pithy language, this novel depicts a perfectly ordinary and at the same time inimitable young protagonist. (Age: 9+) [JW]

186



Duthie, Ellen (text)

Studio Patten (i. e. Aida Novoa and

Carlos Egan) (illus.)

¿Hay alguien ahí? Preguntario interplanetario para terrícolas inteligentes

(*Is anyone there? An interplanetary questionnaire for intelligent Earthlings*)

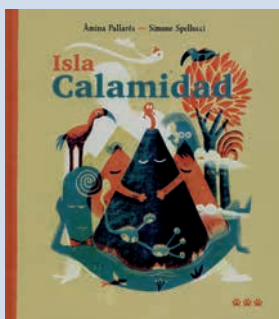
[Madrid]: Wonder Ponder, 2022. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-84-948709-6-5

Humans | Human nature | Question | Non-fiction

This is a copy of a book, which was found in a donut-shaped spaceship on the beach near the Spanish city of Cádiz. It contains only the questions which the residents of the planet »Bipodia« wanted to ask Earth's inhabitants, whose activities they have apparently been observing for some time. Did everything happen just as the foreword claims? Be that as it may. In any case, the questionnaire is brilliant and will surely cause the brain of every reader to sizzle. Is making mistakes part of human nature? Are you glad to be a human? Why? Can a man be female? Would it be good to know everything? Are there things for which there are no human words? Innumerable clever, witty, surprising, and tricky questions of the widest variety, organised in categories such as being human, knowledge, society, or art, can be found in this book. No answers are given, simply a lot of material to help the reader, alone or with others, to discuss and to think about oneself and the strange human race and come up with one's own answers. (Age: 9+) [JW]

187



Pallarés, Ámina (text)
Spellucci, Simone (illus./idea)

Isla Calamidad

(Calamity Island)

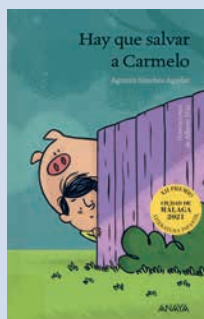
Sevilla [et al.]: Tres Tigres Tristes, 2021. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-84-121126-0-3

Island | Nature | Force of nature | Volcano |
Hurricane | Picture book

The island of Dominica inspired the Italian illustrator Simone Spellucci to create this picture book. At times the narrative resembles a mythical tale from long ago, even while it is also quite modern when alluding indirectly to current themes, such as man-made climate change. Dominica, an island in the Lesser Antilles, is of volcanic origin and blessed with rich, lush vegetation. But it is highly exposed to the forces of nature – wind, ocean, and hurricanes – which bear the names Vanté, Lanmé and Hura in the Creole language spoken there. The book depicts the destructive, but equally creative forces that constantly allow nature to bring forth something new. Spellucci composed powerful illustrations with coloured pencils and felt pens, which she then re-worked on a computer. As in silk screen printing, she employs only a few colours, which partially overlap each other. This striking graphic style fits well with the exuberant nature she is portraying and radiates considerable freshness and liveliness. (Age: 7+) [JW]

188



Sánchez Aguilar, Agustín (text)

Díaz, Alberto (illus.)

Hay que salvar a Carmelo

(We must rescue Carmelo)

Madrid: Anaya, 2021. – 133 p.

ISBN 978-84-698-8888-9

Pig | Present | Letter

Epistolary novels are an exotic format in children's literature. »Hay que salvar a Carmelo« is a superb example of this rare genre. In this novel, there is one letter-writer, a boy named Valentín, and three addressees: the Three Wise Men, who, in Spain, traditionally deliver presents to children on 6 January. Valentín has wished for a toy, a stuffed pig, but instead he has received a real pig. It weighs 100 kilograms, is called Carmelo, and soon turns the life of the boy and his mother topsy-turvy. Valentín is stumped and stressed, so in his desperation he writes letters to the Three Wise Men, asking them to come and retrieve the pig. One letter after the other. All in vain. Not a word from the wise gentlemen. Valentín must solve the problem alone and, in the end, even save Carmelo from the butcher. Agustín Sánchez Aguilar succeeds magnificently in telling this story from the protagonist's perspective, with its childlike perception and logic. The book has considerable drive, comedy, and a wealth of witty punchlines. (Age: 8+) [JW]

189



Serrano, Pilar (text)
Camp, Joaquín (illus.)

El selfi

(*The selfie*)

Barcelona: Takatuka, 2021. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-84-18821-12-7

Animals | Mobile telephone | Selfie |
Picture book

Selfies are taken all over the place, as one can see in this delightful picture book. One sunny day, Beaver sets off on an outing in the countryside. What a gorgeous view! How peaceful! Nothing but birds' twittering. A perfect spot for a selfie, thinks Beaver – if it weren't for all the other animals, magnetically drawn toward his camera. The friendly beaver is patient. All of them are allowed to get into the shot: a rabbit and its very large family, a racoon, some nutrias, a stag, a bear, a wild boar... Gradually it gets a bit cramped, the animals are climbing all over each other. It's getting dark, the battery is nearly empty. »Everyone look this way – cheese!« Exhausted, but happy Beaver returns home. The photo is so-so, but the day was fantastic. Pilar Serrano and Joaquín Camp lampoon the human (and evidently also animal) obsession with selfies in a most humorous and congenial manner. The ever growing, merry confusion is hilarious, and a guarantee that one will pick up this book over and over again. (Age: 4+) [JW]

190



Córdova, Adolfo (text)
Segovia, Carmen (illus.)

La noche de la huida

(*The night of the escape*)

Caracas [et al.]: Ediciones Ekaré, 2021. – [38] p.
ISBN 978-84-123728-2-3

Snow White | Adaptation | Escape | Fear |
Forest | Night | Picture book

In »El dragón blanco« (The white dragon; 2016), Adolfo Córdova brilliantly transposed and developed secondary characters of children's classics into imaginative new stories. Similarly, in »La noche de la huida« he extracts a short episode from the fairy tale »Snow White«, in which the heroine wanders about the forest before reaching the home of the seven dwarves, and turns it into a gripping tale. The narrator is apparently not the author himself, but a young girl who is shown on the last page of the book holding an edition of »Snow White« in her hands. In expressive, colourful words, the text describes all the fears that Snow White has while on the run: of darkness, rain, thorns, animals, and noises from unknown sources. Carmen Segovia stages the night-time forest as a secretive and ominous blue-black space, against which only the white dress of the protagonist and several red details shine out. This is a magnificent book that also demonstrates the freedom of storytelling and the boundlessness of the imagination. (Age: 5+) [JW]

191



Holmer, Anders (illus.)

Farväl

(Farewell)

Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, [2021]. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-91-27-17055-1

Death | Mourning | Imaginary trip |
Wordless book | Picture book

After several successful picture books, such as the haiku anthology »Regn« (Rain), Anders Holmer's latest work tells a story entirely without words. In a combination of realistic and surreal images, the books tackles the topic of farewells and new beginnings. Readers see a woman sitting in an armchair – pale and without hair, hooked up to an IV drip. A girl runs out of the door crying. A picture on the wall shows both of them: the woman twirling the girl around in circles, her long hair fluttering in the wind. To come to terms with the loss and pain, the girl travels a long way. The illustrations show her inner turmoil. They often depict several scenes on the same page that merge into a single picture. In many images, the proportions are also out of scale, for example when small figures sit on large petals. With the colour green dominating the images, hope and liveliness shine through despite the gravity of the story. (Age: 4+) [IG]

192



Jonsson, Amanda (text/illus.)

Disco

(Disco)

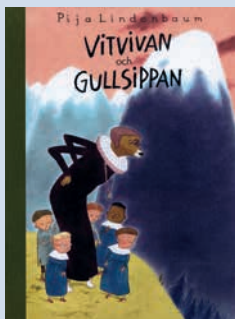
Bromma: Opal, [2021]. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-91-7226-451-9

Playing | Expectation | Disappointment |
Improvisation | Picture book

Yeahhh! It's disco day today! Two sisters, one of whom tells this story, want to celebrate. They write an invitation to their friend Eskil and drop it in his letterbox; and immediately, life becomes stressful, because there is still so much to do! They need pretty outfits, great music, of course, and space for dancing. Yet then, Dad calls and offers them cinnamon buns and, well, it's beyond cosy on the sofa. When Eskil suddenly appears at their door in his fanciest let's-go-dancing outfit, NOTHING is ready! The big sister and head host is so shocked that she hides under the bed in shame; because what kind of disco is this?! It's sooo embarrassing. Oh, come on! Eskil and the little sister are flexible and improvise. Sometimes that's the best anyway! With a lot of empathy, Amanda Jonsson describes children's (or rather human beings'!) experiences of frustration, their high expectations and great disappointments, which may be turned into something positive in the end. (Age: 4+) [IG]

193



Lindenbaum, Pija (text/illus.)

Vitvivan och Gullsippan

(*Vitvivan and Gullsippan*)

Stockholm: Lilla Piratförlaget, [2021]. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-91-7813-306-2

Inequality | Justice | Power | Revolt |
Picture book

There are four houses nestled between high mountains, with a white line around them that must not be crossed. »Schäfen« (The Boss) makes sure of that. She wears a soutane-like robe with a white pastor's ruff and a whistle around her neck. She supervises the Vitvivan – recognisable by their striped stockings – and the Gullsippan, who wear grey smocks, because they have to do all the work, while the Vitvivan are allowed to play. How unfair! Yet the children subversively turn this two-class society on its head by swapping their clothes; and that's only the beginning of the revolt: the children's sense of justice and desire for freedom vs. the grown-ups' power, control, and arbitrariness. Pija Lindenbaum creates both a dystopia packed with criticism of society and the church, and a childhood utopia. While Schäfen is rigid and ossified in the way she interprets her position and carries out her duty, the children are clever, empathetic, and mischievous. (Age: 4+) [IG]

194



Lindström, Eva (text/illus.)

Ingenting är omöjligt för oss

(*Nothing is impossible for us*)

Stockholm: Alfabeta, [2021]. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-91-501-2177-3

Moving house | Imaginary trip | Courage |
Picture book

Sometimes you feel like an alien who has landed somewhere with their spaceship but doesn't know where, why, and how. This is what life feels like for the two children moving house in the picture book »Ingenting är omöjligt för oss«. The title (Nothing is impossible for us) sounds fearless and megalomaniac, but it is also a mantra for toughening-up: Because when you feel utterly foreign and homeless, you have to give yourself a pep talk. In her latest work, Eva Lindström, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) winner of 2022, remains true to herself. As in all her picture books, she again links images and text in a multi-faceted way. Both complement each other, while showing the occasional contrast. At the same time, she leaves enough gaps and room in the dialogue between text and image, so that the protagonists' motivations, thoughts, or feelings are not spelled out completely. This allows readers plenty of leeway for their own interpretations and reflections; which is fantastic! (Age: 4+) [IG]

195



Nilsson Thore, Maria (text/illus.)

Gränsen

(The border)

Stockholm: Bonnier Carlsen, 2021. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-91-7975-466-2

Border | Prohibition | Risk-taking | Courage |
Autonomy | Picture book

A thick red line runs across this book's cover: the border. Crossing it is strictly forbidden! Yet cheeky little girl Nono is on the cover, too, and readers immediately feel that she might not be deterred by the red line. No surprise then, that one of the double spreads features not only one but four scenes in which Nono tests different ways of passing the line without actually having to step over it, e.g. with the help of a stick. Since no one is looking, Nono finally summons all her courage – and suddenly she is on the other side. Oh, how beautiful it is! There are so many fabulous, colourful pebbles! Yet then, the (almost) inevitable happens: Nono gets lost. In her book, Maria Nilsson Thore deals with risk-taking, anti-authoritarianism, and the desire for autonomy, and shows that these can at times be somewhat dangerous. Even though the story may be a tad pedagogical at this point, it still reflects the world of children's experiences, and their fundamental need to test their limits and widen their horizon. (Age: 4+) [IG]

196



Stridsberg, Sara (text)

Alemagna, Beatrice (illus.)

Vi går till parken

(We're going to the park)

[Stockholm]: Mirando, 2021. – 72 p.

ISBN 978-91-985470-7-8

Park | Longing | Belonging | Nature | Cosmos |
Transcendence | Picture book

What a picture book! This result of a collaboration between multi-award-winning Swedish author Sara Stridsberg and Italian illustrator Beatrice Alemagna, who has been living in France for a long time, is as square as a record sleeve, as thick as a brick, and sports a solid cardboard cover. And it tells an existentially touching story about belonging, loneliness, and a feeling of yearning; a story that creates a relation between earthly and transcendent matters. Linking childlike play with the universe, »Vi går till parken« talks of trees growing into the sky, of stars, and of stardust. Beatrice Alemagna's pictures reveal wide-open spaces, as does Sara Stridsberg's text, which is as concise as it is dense, and which pays tribute to modernist poetry, e.g. by Edith Södergran (1892-1923). At the same time, both text and pictures capture a child's perception by visualising and verbalising sensations, impressions, and thoughts that aren't always easy to articulate. (Age: 6+) [IG]

197



Gökçeer, Gökçe (text)

Altun, Uğur (illus.)

Ahtapot ile sessiz balina

(The octopus and the silent whale)

İstanbul: Redhouse Kidz, 2022. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-625-7782-69-2

Whale | Hearing | Disability | Loneliness |
Friendship | Empathy | Picture book

What does it mean to hear? Is it just an involuntary physiological act or is it something more? Inspired by a newspaper article about the 52-hertz whale, whose song's unique frequency could not be heard by other whales, author Gökçe Gökçeer pens a story about the lonely wanderer of the Pacific Ocean. The book explores the concept of loneliness with underlying themes of being different or perhaps just differently endowed. The meaning of friendship and silence, of listening and hearing with the heart, surface in the unusual bonds formed between the whale and an octopus who unexpectedly can hear strains of the 52-hertz song. Illustrated by award-winning artist Uğur Altun, the double-page spreads present abstract underwater gardens with ocean fauna in bold patterns and bright pinks, yellows, blues and greens, interspersed with gray tones. At the end of the book, a QR code links to an audio recording of the 52-hertz whale himself, an addition that allows the readers to hear and connect with the whale. (Age: 3+) [IVA]

198



Ünsal, Burcu (text)

Keleş, Ezgi (illus.)

Biri şu sayıları toplaşın!

(Someone, add up these numbers)

İstanbul: Can Çocuk, 2022. – 90 p.

ISBN 978-975-07-5561-3

School | Mathematics | Creativity | Imagination |
Playing

Çınar struggles to concentrate during math lessons. He often doodles throughout class, drawing anything that comes to mind, even his teacher, Bünyamin. When Çınar mistakenly turns in his sketchbook instead of the math homework for grading, his teacher asks him to remain after class to review math problems with some other students. Bünyamin has tailor-made a creative and fun approach to reviewing the coursework. Using math problems that the students can only solve in collaboration, their solutions will lead them from one location to the next, thus taking them, much like a scavenger hunt, on a tour of the whole building. As Çınar and his friends solve these problems, they discover how abstract equations have practical implications in daily life, but more importantly that numbers are everywhere, and math can even be fun. Ezgi Keleş's comic-like illustrations in blue, black, and red, set within dynamic page layouts, facilitate a smoothly flowing reading experience reminiscent of graphic novels. (Age: 7+) [IVA]

199



Matijaš, Dzvinka (Matiyash, Dzvinka) (text)
Mykytiuk, Marjany (Mykytiuk, Mariana) (illus.)

Mene zvaty Varvara

(My name is Barbara)

Lviv: Vyd. Staroho Leva, 2021 – 132 p.

ISBN 978-966-679-976-3

Name | Family | Intergenerational relationship |
Collaboration | City | Nature

Dzvinka Matiyash's beautifully-written philosophical novel deals with intergenerational (and transgenerational) collaboration and the importance of keeping family memories and traditions alive. When a teacher at an elementary school in Kyiv asks her students about the meaning of their names, Varvara (Barbara) has to admit that she does not know why her parents gave her the name they did. After hearing the extraordinary stories of other children, she decides to check the significance of her name online. First, she finds detailed information about the tragic life of Saint Barbara, which leaves her puzzled. Then, she reads about other women named Varvara, but realizes that the only way to find out the truth is to talk with her parents. To Varvara's great surprise, it turns out that her father has long been waiting to share the story of her name with his beloved daughter. Unexpectedly, the teacher's question about Varvara's name brings the entire family closer. Mariana Mykytiuk's illustrations aptly emphasize the protagonist's curious spirit. (Age: 9+) [MS]

200



Žukov, Serhij (Zhukov, Serhiy) (text)

Tachtaulova, Marija (Takhtaulova, Mariia) (text)

Myronjuk, Ženja (Myroniuk, Zhenya) (illus.)

Ukraiina. Vid pervisnykh časiv do s'ohodennja

(Ukraine. From ancient times to the present)

Charkiv (Kharkiv): Ranok, 2021 – 96 p.

(Series: Ukraïnoznavci)

ISBN 978-617-09-6986-6

Ukraine | History | Culture | Identity | Non-fiction

Ukraine is one of the biggest and most diverse countries in Europe. Published thirty years after Ukraine formally proclaimed its independence, this non-fiction book demonstrates and celebrates the richness of Ukrainian history and culture. Written by historians Serhij Zhukov and Mariia Takhtaulova, it is divided into nearly fifty sections devoted to particular epochs and showcases the country's cultural and social diversity. Notably, the authors skilfully intertwine numerous fun facts, fascinating information about outstanding Ukrainian individuals, and also challenging topics, such as the Holodomor (Great Famine) of 1932-1933 and the Holocaust. The text is accompanied by Zhenya Myroniuk's colourful illustrations, making the book's content very absorbing and the complex topics it discusses easily comprehensible. Moreover, due to its large format, »Ukraiina. Vid pervisnykh časiv do s'ohodennja« is a perfect book for families to read together, even with younger children. (Age: 5+) [MS]

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