

The White Ravens 2005



A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

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Internationale Jugendbibliothek
München

Impressum

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Children's and Youth Literature

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Layout: Edda Greif

Cover photo: International Youth Library

Typesetting: Thomas Pleiner

Printed by: Danuvia Druckhaus Neuburg

This publication is available from:

Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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Germany

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The publication of this catalogue was supported
by the German Federal Ministry for Youth Affairs,
the Bavarian State Ministry for Education, and the
City of Munich.

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*The »White Ravens« catalogue has become a solid tradition over the years. Throughout each year, the language specialists (Lektoren) at the International Youth Library (IYL) select **recently published books** that they consider especially noteworthy. This »premium label« is given to books of international interest that deserve a wider reception on account of their universal theme and/or their exceptional and often innovative artistic and literary style and design. This year's collection contains **250 titles in 31 languages from 48 countries.***

*The titles are drawn from the books we received in 2004. The selection makes no claim to being exhaustive. Because the collections of the International Youth Library consist exclusively of books we receive from publishers, institutions, organisations, and other friends of the IYL around the world, **only review and donation copies** qualify for the selection of the »White Ravens«. To offer a broad range of publications, we attempt to present titles from as many different publishing houses as possible. Unfortunately, not all publishing houses that consistently*

*and generously supply the IYL with their books can be featured here every year. **We cordially thank each and every one of them for their shipments of books!***

*The »White Ravens« catalogue appears each year just prior to the **Bologna Children's Book Fair** and is presented at that international gathering of subject specialists along with the books themselves. The response of many »bookpeople« has been showing us that the »White Ravens« **are used in many countries in many different ways:** as recommendation list, as impulse for translations, as purchase list for public libraries and school libraries, as order form for book stores with foreign-language books, or as general indicator for the children's and youth literature production of a country.*

*In 1996, the White Ravens catalogue made its first appearance on the **Internet**. Today, with the presentation of the 10th volume on the IYL homepage, you can find a pool of 2,500 »White Ravens« books at **www.ijb.de** including the complete bibliographical data and the descriptive annotations.*

*In this catalogue, some books are given additional labels. First of all, there are »**Special Mentions**« to which the library's Lektoren wish to draw particular attention. The **symbol** ♦ marks those books whose content is found to contribute to an **international understanding among cultures and people**. In this way we remind ourselves and our readers of the working maxim under which Jella Lepman founded the International Youth Library and which, in these times, is still of utmost concern. The **symbol** ☼ is assigned to books whose text is judged to be easily understandable, i.e. **easy-to-read texts**, and yet dealing with topics of interest to older readers. Hence these books are **well-suited to foreign-language readers** and for inclusion in foreign language collections of public and school libraries.*

*The International Youth Library is worldwide unique. Since its foundation in 1949, the collection of international children's and youth literature has grown to a number of **more than 540,000 books**. Our mission is to maintain this supply as a mirror of children's book production, but at the*

same time to promote children's and youth literature around the world.

We can assure our donors that their books will be catalogued, indexed by subject and included in our depository collection. In this way, they are permanently available for use by the international clientele of specialists who visit our study library, make use of our reference services from afar, or consult our catalogues on the Internet. Over the years, many books also find their way into thematic travelling exhibitions, topical bibliographies and lists, activity programs for children, etc.

*Last but not least, we renew our request to all publishers: **Please continue to send us your new titles!** We, for our part, will endeavour to fulfil the expectation that the International Youth Library in Munich is the home of the most comprehensive collection of international literature for children and young people in the world.*

*Dr. Barbara Scharioth
March 2005*

East Asian Languages

Japan

(Romanization according to the international Hepburn norms)

1

Aman, Kimiko (text)

Yamanaka, Fuyuji (illus.)

Fūta no kazematsuri

(Fūta's wind festival)

Tokyo : Akane Shobo, 2003. – 77 p.

(Shin Akane yōnen dōwa ; 20)

ISBN 4-251-00740-9

Fox – Girl – Metamorphosis – Friendship – Season – Autumn

In Japanese popular belief, the fox is traditionally admired as a god, in folk tales he features as a versatile character who plays all kinds of tricks on people. In modern Japanese children's literature, however, he is presented as an amiable playfellow – just as in this 4-volume series starring the little fox Fūta. In the last volume, he meets a girl in the forest near a ginkgo tree. He quickly transforms himself into a boy and helps her collect autumn leaves for her grandmother. In the simple tales, which are connected to the four seasons of the year, the author manages to convey values such as compassion, willingness to help, and friendship to first readers. The pictures created by Fuyuji Yamanaka lovingly confirm this message. (5+)

2

Andersen, Hans Christian (text)

Kadono, Eiko (adapt.)

Sasameya, Yuki (illus.)

Suzu no heitaisan

(The steadfast tin soldier)

Tokyo : Shogakukan, 2004. – [34] p.

(Anderusen no ehon)

ISBN 4-09-764102-6

Outsider – Steadfastness – Love

To celebrate the 200th birthday of Hans Christian Andersen, a 10-volume edition of his fairy tales interpreted by different illustrators has been published in Japan. This volume was designed by Yuki Sasameya who is considered one of the most original Japanese artists since the 1990s. The refined naivety of expression and the fascinating choice of colours are characteristic for his expressive style. He sets simple, plane elements against

an empty background and thus condenses the story to its very essence. Moreover, he focuses on the soldier's love for the pretty dancer that finds fulfilment in the flames – an end of complete salvation. This highly emotional interpretation of the text is bound to deeply touch the readers. (6+)

3

Awa, Naoko (text)

Kitami, Yōko (illus.)

Nakushiteshimatta mahō no jikan

(The lost hours of magic)

Tokyo : Kaiseisha, 2004. – 337 p.

(Awa Naoko Korekushon ; 1)

ISBN 4-03-540910-3

Meeting – Separation – Other world – Happiness – Loss – Literary fairy tale

When Naoko Awa died in 1993 at the age of 55, she left a huge legacy of literary fairy tales that have a lot of similarities with European ones and are of unique beauty. The book presented here is the first of a 7-volume bibliophile edition of Awa's collected works containing 71 important tales and more than 40 essays. A characteristic feature of the author's fairy tale world is that it often focuses on the fate of human beings, animals, and fantastic creatures and the painful meetings between their different worlds. All the protagonists, both real and imaginary, act like humans and in a very realistic way that creates a slightly melancholy mood. Awa's art of story-telling is characterised by a clear and simple, very poetic language familiar to children. (12+) ☼

4

Furuta, Taruhi / Yoneda, Sayoko /

Yoneda, Sayoko (ed.)

Hisanaga, Tsuyoshi / Saitō, Hiroyuki (illus.)

Watashitachi no Ajia Taiheiyō sensō 1 - 3

(Our Asian-Pacific War, vol. 1-3)

Tokyo : Doshinsha, 2004. – 325, 293, 299 p.

ISBN 4-494-01816-3 / 01817-1 / 01818-X

Japan/1931-2003 – Asia – Pacific – World War II – Militarism – Peace

The Asian-Pacific War, which ended 60 years ago, is one of the bitter aspects of Japanese history that modern teenagers have to face. In this excellent publication, two children's literature experts and one specialist for women's issues are setting out to

reappraise the war and its consequences. The first-hand reports gathered here are given both by war victims from various Asian countries as well as from Japan and by Japanese war offenders. The numerous efforts for reconciliation and peace that are undertaken even today among the younger generations prove what a lasting impression war experiences have on people's lives. All the stories are complemented by comments that illuminate the connection between the individual experiences and historical facts. (13+) ◆

5

Harada, Takehide (text/illus.)

Marumero : Kono hoshi no dokoka mori no hazure de

(Marmelo : at the edge of the forest, somewhere on our planet)

Tokyo : Iwanami Shoten, 2004. – [40] p.

ISBN 4-00-110880-1

World – Harmony – Peace – Nature

Snow falls on the ground. Tiny Pacheral, master of philosophy and dreaming, is aroused from his deep slumber by a traveller. Marmelo, the ladybird, tells Pacheral about what he has seen on his journey: wars that destroy men, animals, and nature. The master and the ladybird remember a time when man and nature lived together in perfect harmony. The Earth was beautiful, full of life, love, joy, and music. The poetic little book emanates a quiet sense of hope. Through the dialogue of the two fairy tale-like protagonists and through finely-shaded, rainbow-coloured pictures rendered in water-colour pencils, the artist creates his ideal image of the world. A truly contemplative book. (10+)

6

Kashiwaba, Sachiko (text)

Fujiwara, Yōkō (illus.)

Burēmen basu : Kashiwaba Sachiko tanpenshū
(The Bremen-bus : Sachiko Kashiwaba's short stories)

Tokyo : Kodansha, 2003. – 205 p.

ISBN 4-06-211759-2

Everyday life – Mystery – Life – Reality – Literary fairy tale – Short story

For her mysterious and bizarre short stories about human relationships, the author sought inspiration

in motifs from European and Japanese fairy tales: There is suddenly a baby in some plastic bag; a stranger visits a lonely girl and tells her about the »Pied Piper of Hamelin«; a monster shares the flat with a woman after it has finally managed to frighten her; a long distance bus heading to Bremen (Germany) is boarded by three women and a girl who are looking for a new life together. These strange and wondrous events, and many more, quietly intrude upon the protagonists' daily lives and powerfully influence their unhappiness. The fantasy elements make readers see the reality all the more clearly. (14+)

7

Miyakawa, Hiro (text)

Komine, Yura (illus.)

Sakurako no tanjobi

(Sakurako's birthday)

Tokyo : Doshinsha, 2004. – [36] p.

(Ehon kodomo no hiroba)

ISBN 4-494-00948-2

Adoption – Identity – Love – Parents

One day, while standing at her aunt's grave, Sakurako realises that she was born on the same day that her aunt died. She suspects that she may be an adopted child, but at first she doesn't dare confront her parents with this suspicion. The only thing she knows for sure is that she was named after a cherry tree. In the end, her longing to find out the truth wins. She asks her mother to drive her to that particular cherry tree that grows out of a chestnut's trunk. There, she finally learns everything she needs to know. This story describes the sensitive girl's ambiguous feelings as well as the love of the foster parents and of the natural father in a very memorable way. It is complemented by impressive pictures in delicate pastel colours. (8+)

😊 Special Mention

8

Nasuda, Jun

Pētā to iu na no ōkami

(The wolf called Peter)

Tokyo : Komine Shoten, 2003. – 365 p.

(Y. A. Books)

ISBN 4-338-14411-4

Youth – Wolf – Rescue – Family conflict –

Germany/1945-2003 – Coping with life

A slightly mysterious cover picture by the German illustrator Michael Sowa introduces readers to this innovative and thrilling novel. 14-year-old Ryō, who lives in Berlin, runs away from home in protest. Suddenly, he finds his new friend Akira and himself in the midst of a campaign to catch a pack of wolves trying to escape to the Bohemian Forest. A young wolf loses its way and ends up as pet ›dog‹ with caretaker Max. Yet, when the three of them learn about its origin, they decide to take it back to its pack. This leads to a race between them, the police, and the hunters, at the end of which the wolves are liberated. But this is not the only problem unravelled: The boys' family conflicts and Max's personal problems caused by the partition of Germany are also resolved. This multi-layered story, with streaks of contemporary German history cleverly woven into it, is told partly in road movie style, partly in diary form. Every single element keeps its own distinct shape. (14+) (51st Sankei Cultural Prize for Children's Books & Publications ; 2003) (20th Tsubota Joōji Literary Award)

9

Niimi, Nankichi (text)

Shinozaki, Saburō (illus.)

Ojisan no ranpu

(Grandfather's oil lamp)

Tokyo : Komine Shoten, 2004. – 155 p.

(Niimi Nankichi dōwa kessakusen)

ISBN 4-338-20006-5

Village – Way of life – Short story

During his short life, Nankichi Niimi (1913-1943) wrote innumerable stories. 34 of them are now gathered in a seven-volume collection, arranged according to different topics. Set in the countryside, his tales of children and village people, folk

tale-like stories, and poetic animal tales all analyse the multi-faceted character of human beings in a humorous or melancholy way. The volume reviewed here is devoted to the keyword ›path‹. Accordingly, the action develops along country roads and the protagonists are trying to find a purpose to their journey through life. Each volume is illustrated by a different artist in an absolutely ideal manner. The selected edition, superbly designed by Hanmo Sugimura, is considered to be a perfect example of how to revive children's classics. (10+)

10

Okazaki, Hidetaka (text)

Takada, Isao (illus.)

Ten to chi o hakatta otoko : Inō Tadataka

(The man who measured heaven and earth :

Inō Tadataka)

Tokyo : Kumon Shuppan, 2003. – 247 p.

ISBN 4-7743-0690-8

Japan/1745-1821 – Land surveyor – Self-realisation – Cartography – Astronomy – Biography

Inō Tadataka (1745-1818) was the head of a renowned family. At the age of 50, when he was finally free from his social and family duties, he set off to fulfil his life-long dream of surveying Japan's territory with precise instruments. After completing a degree in astronomy, he started to actually walk all the distances he wanted to measure, about 44,000 km in total. Thus, he created maps of Japan that, until 1924, constituted the basis of all cartography there. Set during the Tokugawa era, this well-researched biography both relates the feudal system and particular zeitgeist of that time and paints a vivid picture of Inō's journey through life determined by his humane and conscientious character, his determination and perseverance. The illustrations aptly depict the scientific knowledge of those times and Inō's surveying method. (11+) ☆

11

Otani, Miwako (text)

Uchida, Mari (illus.)

Wagaya

(My house)

Tokyo : Kumon Shuppan, 2003. – 213 p.

(Kumon no jidō bungaku)

ISBN 4-7743-0730-0

Father – Suicide – Daughter – Guilt – Grief

For the past two years, Mamiko has been feeling guilty because her father committed suicide. She cannot even cope with the behaviour of her caring yet overly busy mother anymore. When she accepts a holiday job at her aunt's and uncle's place in the countryside, her emotional state slowly begins to improve. Talking to her relatives and meeting other people, who all love Mamiko and respect her personality, makes the girl ponder about life and death. The relationship with all these people is very important for her and provides her with a new sense of hope that helps her overcome her deep grief. This encouraging narrative, intended for those who are left behind after a close friend or relative's death, fights the all-too common prejudice against suicide. (13+)

12

Sakai, Komako (text/illus.)

Kinyōbi no satōchan

(The girl called Friday-Sugar)

Tokyo : Kaiseisha, 2003. – 61 p.

(Luna park books)

ISBN 4-03-965240-1

Child – Imagination

On a warm afternoon, a girl nick-named »Friday-Sugar« sleeps soundly in the garden. Birds and insects gather around her to watch the lovely creature, while her most fervent admirer, a praying mantis, tries to shoo away the other animals that threaten to disturb the girl. A sad boy discovers the »Organ of the Meadow«, which stands silently in the middle of a bare spot of earth, and starts playing it. »Between the nights«, a little girl awakes, dresses in her mother's clothes, and disappears forever. The fragmentary dream-like texts of this slightly surrealistic book are translated into emotional pictures with black as their predominant colour that immediately capture the readers' attention. (15+)

13

Shingū, Susumu (text/illus.)

Cary, Ann B. (transl.)

Kaze no hoshi = Wind planet

Tokyo : Fukuinkan Shoten, 2004. – [44] p.

(Nihon kessaku ehoh shirizu)

ISBN 4-8340-0615-8

Japanese and English text

Wind – Earth

Susumu Shingu has earned worldwide recognition for his moveable objects of art that revolve around wind and water. To complete his various projects, he has travelled to the most remote parts of our planet. This expressive picture book, which looks at the Earth in a colourful and original way from the perspective of the winds, is a result of these travels. Depending on the force and type of wind, the clouds, oceans, deserts, oasis, steppe, etc. show different faces. Birds, jumping dolphins, singing trees, people on horseback or in sailing boats can also feel the invisible winds. In the end, the readers sail on the winds right into space where they realise that both the wind and themselves are part of our beautiful Earth. The pictures are accompanied by texts in Japanese and English. (6+)

14

Suzuki, Yukie

Natsu no hanatachi : Hiroshima no kensuisha

Une Toshie monogatari

(The summer flowers : the story of Toshie

Une from Hiroshima, who offers water to the souls of the dead)

Maisaka : Hikumano Shuppan, 2004. – 169 p.

ISBN 4-89317-324-3

Japan/1945-2004 – World War II – Hiroshima – Atom bomb – Dead person – Soul – Offering – Water

In the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, young Miki meets 85-year-old Toshie Une who survived the drop of the atom bomb on August 6, 1945. Thousands of victims of this disaster pleaded for water while they were dying. For the past 50 years, the old woman has attended to the souls of these victims by carrying water from the purest springs in Japan to the many memorials in and outside Hiroshima as a special offering. Since 1974, her act is part of the annual peace memorial

service. Because of Toshie Une's advanced age, a younger person has stepped into her shoes as a representative of the new generation in 2004. By mingling real events with the fictitious tale of Miki and her family, the author makes it easier for young readers to understand this powerful story. (11+) ✧

15

Takadono, Hōko (text)

Dekune, Iku (illus.)

Ruchiasan

(Mrs. Ruchia)

Tokyo : Froebel-kan, 2003. – 162 p.

ISBN 4-577-02636-8

Longing

»A place that sparkles promisingly somewhere far away« – this is a symbol for the longing that fills people's souls. Little sisters Sū and Rūrū dream of this place whenever they look at the glimmering light-blue stone they received as a gift from their ever-travelling father. They are utterly surprised that their new maid Ruchia glows exactly like their precious stone. Years later, when successful Sū learns about Ruchia's secret, she suddenly remembers the stone. Her sister Rūrū has long since gone off to search the world for the mysterious and promising place. The beguiling prose and the Grand Prix BIB laureate's black-and-white illustrations, which emanate a dense atmosphere, create a convincing imaginary world of longing. (13+)

16

Tanaka, Yukako (text/illus.)

Konta no otsukai

(Konta goes on an errand)

Tokyo : Tokuma Shoten, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 4-19-861855-0

Child – Disobedience – Supernatural creature

Little fox Konta goes shopping. When he arrives at a fork in the road, he wonders which path he should take and, despite his mother's warnings, decides to walk along the unknown one for a change. That's it. Immediately, a horned demon, a flying mountain troll, and lots of other frightening creatures appear in the forest. Nevertheless, Konta reaches the shop safely. On his way back, he chooses the familiar path at the end of which his mother is waiting for him. Yukako Tanaka

successfully balances the fears that supernatural creatures can arouse in children against Konta's cheerful expression, an ambience of safety, and a witty text. This amusing picture book will delight its readers with surprising effects and graphic ›quotations‹ of traditional Japanese demons. (3+)

17

Ueda, Maniko (text)

Kajiya, Toshio (illus.)

Obakesan tonō yakusoku

(Manako's secret promise to a ghost)

Tokyo : Fukuinkan Shoten, 2004. – 96 p.

(Fukuinkan kessaku dōwa shirizu)

ISBN 4-8340-0594-1

Child – Fear – Joy – Family – Happiness

As the daughter of a Buddhist priest, Maniko Ueda, a renowned translator of German children's literature, spent her childhood in the famous temple town of Kōyasan. In 1994, she published her autobiography. Some of the episodes described there are now re-written with a gentle sense of humour and are adapted for children. Little Manako is afraid to go to the toilet because she suspects that ghosts are hiding in it. In the cedar forest close to the mausoleum, there is a well that she finds spooky but is nevertheless drawn towards. Thanks to the characteristic and utterly Japanese illustrations by Toshio Kajiya, the child's fears as well as the happy moments inside a family living in unusual surroundings can easily be shared by the readers. (5+)

Republic of Korea

(Romanization according to
the McCune-Reischauer norms)

18

Cho, Ho-sang (text)

Kim Tong-sŏng (illus.)

Oniri

(My name is Today)

Seoul : Ungjin Tat'ŏm, 2003. – [40] p.

(Horong-pul yet iyagi ; 14)

ISBN: 89-01-04014-X

*Girl – Wise woman – Search for parents – Stamina –
Courage – Discovery – Literary fairy tale*

This literary fairy tale focuses on a little orphan girl called Today, who starts searching for her parents. She meets a wise old woman who sends her on a long and adventurous journey during which she encounters many different creatures (man, tree, snake, fairy). Although they themselves are in need of some help, they readily help the girl. Little Today promises to return their favours on her way back. With an astonishing determination, the girl braves any barriers (such as river and mountain), the frightening guardian of the gate, and finally finds her parents. When she returns, she keeps her promise to her helpers. The illustrations are full of depth and form a link between the traditional Korean art of painting and modern ink- and water-colour drawings. (6+)

☺ Special Mention

19

Cho, Ho-sang (text)

Yun, Mi-suk (illus.)

P'at'chuk halmŏn kwa horangi

(Soybeans, Grandmother, and Tiger)

Seoul : Ungjin Tat'ŏm, 2003. – [32] p.

(Horong-pul yet iyagi ; 26)

ISBN 89-01-04026-3

*Grandmother – Tiger – Modesty – Generosity –
Poverty – Rescue – Fairy tale*

An old woman lives in her little house together with a couple of animals and animate objects whom she loves and cares for and, since this is a fairy tale, even feeds them her soybean-soup. By and by, the egg, the nail, the turtle, and all the

others develop their own distinct ›personality‹. Yet, what is even more important is that all the little creatures are about to play an important role one day – and that is the day a tiger comes round to eat the old woman. Luckily enough, she can persuade the tiger to wait until harvest time and when it returns in autumn, the tiny house-creatures help her get rid of the enemy. Large, earth-coloured pictures with comic-book-like characters vividly portray the threatening situation and inspire readers to re-enact the scenes on stage. The varied composition of the pictures and the use of textured papers in different colours as background lend a particular energy to the illustrations. (4+)

20

Ra Hyŏn Sŏen (text)

Che, So Ra (illus.)

To san sŏ wŏn

(The Tosan Temple)

Seoul : Chŏpang Chakpang, 2004. – [40] p.

ISBN 89-90614-11-2

Temple – Meditation – Quietness – Function

This beautiful, unpretentious book for children and adults presents the life in a Korean monastery that was built in the 16th century by the well-known scholar Li Hǎng. Entering the village of monks with its low roofs through the entrance gate, the readers are led from room to room by a detailed description. The precise drawing technique makes it easy to recognise the rooms for prayers, study, meditation, and worship. In addition, the book explains how heating and ventilation used to work and demonstrates the perfect play of light and shadow resulting from the traditional Korean art of building. This book introduces interested readers to a fairly quiet, ›un-hip‹, spiritual world. Full-page colour illustrations perfectly complement the text and imitate the East-Asian style and techniques. (8+) ✧✧

Africa

Botswana

21

Spitta, Molly / Ille, Stefan (text)

Spitta, Sunhild (illus.)

The croc! : an Okavango adventure

Gaborone : Pyramid Publ., 2004. – [36] p.

(Kalahari Adventure Series)

ISBN 99912-555-0-8

Crocodile – Boredom – Longing – Adventure – Magic – Transformation

This entertaining little picture book is part of the Kalahari Adventure Series, a collection of »delightful stories about life in Botswana«. Accompanied by bright watercolour illustrations of various sizes and a couple of small two-colour ink vignettes, the text relates the story of Croc, a tiny crocodile living in the Okavango river. Utterly bored by the monotonous life he is leading and appalled by an equally boring future ahead of him, the little fellow enlists the help of a powerful wizard. And help he receives: Even though a magical transformation into a talking hand puppet is not exactly what Croc had in mind, he is finally heading towards a truly promising adventure together with some newly-found human friends. (4+)

South Africa

22

Hendriks, Maria (text)

Grobler, Piet (illus.)

Makwelane and the crocodile

Cape Town [et al.] : Human & Rousseau, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 0-7981-4462-9

(Afrikaans edition: »Makwelane en die krokodil«)

Girl – Grandmother – Love – Visit – Crocodile – Danger – Trick

This picture book follows the life of little Makwelane who loves singing and playing her musical instrument, a makwelane. One day, she proudly sets off alone along the river to visit her beloved grandmother Gogo. Although the cheerful little black girl is so thrilled about the visit that she

almost forgets her parents' warnings about the sly old crocodile, she cleverly manages to save Gogo and herself from being devoured by the predator just in time, thanks to her instrument. The atmosphere of this short folk tale-like story is beautifully expressed in the bright illustrations by award-winning artist Piet Grobler. He employs rich colours and adds several collage elements to create lively pictures brimming with witty details. (4+)

Asia and Oceania

Australia

23

Fourmile, Trevor (text)

Fourmile, Lillian (illus.)

How the cassowary got its helmet

Thuringowa, Queensland : Black Ink Press, 2004.

– 31 p.

ISBN 1-86334-008-4

Animals – Differentness – Outsider –

Self-confidence – Courage – Acceptance

The style of both the text and the illustrations of this modern fable about the poor cassowary who is teased by all the other animals for not being able to fly is clearly reminiscent of traditional aboriginal stories. Set in a small region in Northern Queensland, the tale recalls how the shy little bird slowly gains self-confidence and eventually even comes to his distressed neighbours' rescue, so that they award him the title of »protector of the rainforest«. The short text is accompanied by strong square pictures and some additional smaller drawings in darkish colours (predominantly black and brown) with bold white outlines depicting an array of energetic bush animals. The illustrations easily evoke the vibrant atmosphere of the story. (4+) (Black Ink Writing and Illustrating Award)

24

Golds, Cassandra

Clair-de-Lune

(Moonlight <proper name>)

Camberwell, Victoria [et al.] : Puffin Books, 2004. – 198 p.

ISBN 0-14-330000-8

Mother – Death – Daughter – Silence – Mouse – Ballet – Friendship

This fairy tale-like children's novel plunges its readers right into a wondrous and sad story set in a distant time and place. Its Cinderella-meets-Despereaux-like plot with a touch of mystery novel reveals the tale of pale Claire-de-Lune who hasn't uttered a single word since her mother, a famous ballet dancer, died onstage when the daughter was still a baby. Striving to please her heart-broken grandmother, the obedient little girl attends ballet classes and goes on errands, leading a dull, joyless life until she meets tiny Bonaventure. The talking mouse, who is an ambitious dancer, introduces her to a secret world with a mysterious monastery where Claire-de-Lune finally finds a friend and true happiness. (8+)

25

Jaunn, Adele (text/illus.)

Caruso's song to the moon

South Melbourne, Victoria : Lothian, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 0-7344-0624-X

Cat – Song – Neighbour – Anger – Escape – Family – Rescue

Caruso the cat simply loves music. One night, he decides to sing an aria to the moon, but unfortunately his brilliant performance is constantly interrupted by furious neighbours who are anything but pleased to be disturbed in their sleep. Unhampered by his narrow escape and convinced of his great talent, the unrecognised star prepares himself for a grand finale – and ›accidentally‹ becomes a hero. The short text of this amusing tale with its dynamic layout in varying sizes is carefully arranged on the pictures. Both the text and the vibrant acrylic pictures showing slightly distorted shapes in strong shades of mainly brown, blue, and green contain witty allusions to music and to the notes the cat is singing. (3+)

☺ Special Mention

26

Jonsberg, Barry

The whole business with Kiffo and the Pitbull
Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin, 2004. – 257 p.
(Fiction)

ISBN 1-74114-112-5

School – Outsider – Friendship – Death – Family conflict – Drug addiction – Divorce

Calma Harrison, an »exceptionally talented student of English« with a sharp tongue and huge boobs, and Jaryd Kiffing, part-time criminal »of limited academic ability and concentration span, with behavioural problems and freckles«, are an unlikely pair of friends. Yet, friends they are. However, when a new English teacher, the Pitbull, appears on the scene and starts terrorising the class, life suddenly becomes difficult. Kiffo, obsessed with revenge, goes on the war-path, and his friendship with Calma is being severely tested. This hilarious debut novel, written in a highly entertaining ironic first-person narrative, is a stunning mixture of witty teenage school story, exciting detective novel, and moving problem tale. The author cleverly inserts different types of text (such as letters, school reports, fictional horoscopes, etc.) to create a perfect balance of funny and serious elements. With its strong cast of protagonists, this book is bound to have readers hooked from the very first page. (14+)

27

Laguna, Sofie (text)

McLean, Andrew (illus.)

On our way to the beach

Norwood, SA : Omnibus Books, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 1-86291-520-2

Family – Holidays – Journey – Beach – Imagination

It's the summer holidays and a family are on their way to the beach in a cosy green travelling van. Although the journey takes several days, there is simply so much to see and do that time flies. Every night in bed, the little girl conjures up colourful images of what the beach might look like, e.g. a blue-pink-purple forest of huge strawberry plants divided by a dark blue river with sparkling stars swimming in it. Soft watercolour pictures in various sizes depict the joyful family trip leading

closer and closer to their final destination. The ›real journey‹ is interspersed with slightly surreal double-page spreads full of imaginative details that present different versions of the ›beach‹ as the girl imagines it to be. A magical holiday indeed! (4+)

28

Lomer, Kathryn

The spare room

St. Lucia, Queensland : University of Queensland Press, 2004. – 165 p.

ISBN 0-7022-3477-X

Australia – Japan – Host family – Secret – Grief – Cultural difference – Intercultural relationship

Even though Akira is anything but thrilled when his strict father decides to send him to Australia for a few months to learn English, he soon comes to realise that this might be his chance to find out what he really wants in life. In the beginning, problems seem almost overwhelming but the young man embraces his new situation with admirable openness and courage. Designed as a long letter written almost a year later, when Akira has long returned to Japan, this warm, sensitive teenage novel tackles problems such as cultural difference, friendship, understanding, and shared grief, while it makes readers share the buzz of emotions the nineteen-year-old Japanese feels during his development from strange outsider to beloved friend. (14+) ◇

India

29

Ravishankar, Anushka / Rao, Sirish (text)

Bai, Durga (illus.)

One, two, tree!

[Chennai] : Tara Publ., 2003. – [46] p.

ISBN 81-86211-80-2

Counting – Animals – Tree – Nonsense poetry

This amusing nonsense poem starts with »one dizzy ant [that] totters up the tree«. In the blink of an eye, the insect is followed by 2 dreamy lizards, 3 snooply rats, 4 goofy rabbits, ...and 10 hefty elephants, until the majestic tree is groaning under the weight of a motley crew of animals. The entertaining short repetitive verses inspire children to start counting by introducing them to the numbers

from 1 to 10, presented both in words and in figures. The beautiful, bright, tricoloured line-drawings always depict each group of animals twice: first, on their own, set against a whitish background, then, once more as they clamber up the light-grey tree, struggling to find some room. (3+)

30

Sen Gupta, Subhadra (text)

Guha, Tapas (illus.)

12 o'clock ghost stories : spooky, scary & plain mysterious!

Gurgaon [et al.] : Scholastic India, 2004. – 131 p.
ISBN 81-7655-359-X

Ghost – Short story

In this thin booklet, Subhadra Sen Gupta offers readers a colourful collection of short stories in which the real world and the supernatural world of ghosts are seamlessly intertwined. However, the protagonists of the various tales do not encounter some scary chain-rattling monsters in the middle of the night, as the book's title might suggest. Instead, they usually happen to bump into beings from the world beyond in completely ordinary situations, such as while flying a kite, relaxing in a tree, or chopping onions in the kitchen. The funny tales are tinged with the occasional element of suspense that will make them an attractive read for young children. (8+)

New Zealand

31

Bishop, Gavin (text/illus.)

Taming the sun : four Māori myths

Glenfield, Auckland : Random House New Zealand, 2004. – 48 p.

ISBN 1-86941-612-0

Māori – Legend

In his latest book, award-winning New Zealand artist Gavin Bishop, who himself is of Māori descent, offers a retelling of four Māori myths. Accompanied by powerful, fiery watercolour pictures, which slightly differ in style for each of the stories, the short tales relate how Maui tricks the sun into travelling across the sky more slowly, how Maui's foolish older brothers do not thank

Tangaroa for their catch and thus accidentally create Aotearoa, how Kahurangi manages to kill the terrible taniwha, and how lazy Rona is eternally punished for offending the moon. The concise text and the impressive illustrations create a splendid first introduction to the Maori culture for very young children. (3+) ✧

32

Bunn, Alan / Norcliffe, James (ed.)

Re-Draft 3 : a collection of teenage writing
Christchurch, New Zealand : Clerestory Press
[et al.], 2003. – 96 p.
ISSN 1176-1806

Short story – Teenage writing – Anthology

In this small booklet, the editors have assembled an impressive, colourful collection of short stories and poems written by New Zealand teenagers. The 47 works included are the winners of an annual writing competition that is offered by the School for Young Writers in Christchurch. With surprising acuteness and complexity, the young writers present their particular vision of the world in texts full of vigour, humour, irony, sadness, or pain. Whether they dwell on more mundane matters such as school routine, part-time jobs, and reality television or offer captivating lyrical and philosophical observations about life in general, these texts take readers on a thought-provoking literary journey. (14+)

☺ Special Mention

33

Hill, David

Coming back
Wellington, New Zealand : Mallinson Rendel,
2004. – 160 p.
ISBN 0-908783-86-8

Teenager – Car accident – Coma – Guilt – Rehabilitation – Friendship – Responsibility – Forgiveness

One rainy evening, Ryan is driving home, his attention diverted by his friend Vince's fooling around next to him. Suddenly, a teenage girl stumbles out onto the street – and the car hits her badly. Driven by his feeling of guilt and the fervent wish to atone for his mistake, Ryan takes on an active role in Tara's rehabilitation program. Yet,

the path from waking up from a coma to (almost?) full recovery is anything but smooth for everyone involved. In this touching and at times even shocking novel, told alternatively from Ryan's and Tara's points of view, the award-winning author makes readers share the two protagonists' thoughts as they both try to come to terms with the dreadful events. Even though it may be said that everything wraps up a bit too neatly in the end, David Hill perfectly manages to show how deeply one second of inattention can affect the lives of two ordinary teenagers, their friends, and their families. (14+)

Europe

Great Britain

34

Allen-Gray, Alison

Unique
Oxford [et al.] : Oxford Univ. Press, 2004. – 244 p.
ISBN 0-19-275335-5

Teenager – Secret – Brother – Death – Cloning – Hiding

One afternoon, in his grandfather's attic, Dominic stumbles across some old photographs, and suddenly his life is turned upside down. Full of suspicion, the 15-year-old teenager sets out to search for the whole truth and unravels a terrible secret. Through the gripping first-person narrative told in flashback, the readers are immediately drawn into the story and accompany Dominic on his search for his own identity. They directly witness his shock and desperation when he discovers that he is not a 'normal' teenager but was secretly cloned from his older brother who died in a tragic accident at the age of 19. Set in England in the not-too-distant future, this breath-taking novel openly discusses the topical issue of human cloning and its various practical and ethical consequences. (14+)

35

Blacker, Terence

Boy 2 girl

London [et al.] : Macmillan Children's Books, 2004. – 275 p.

ISBN 0-330-42121-2

Boy – Girl – Cross-dressing – Mother – Death – Foster family – School

When Matt's mother announces that his aunt died and his weird American cousin is going to live with them, the boy senses infinite trouble coming his way. Yet who could have guessed that the absurd test that Matt and his gang set for Sam would get completely out of hand and that Samuel-turned-Samantha would actually enjoy his role play and become Miss Popularity? Told from a multitude of perspectives (male and female, child and adult), this amusing novel describes how in just a few weeks the life of a normal teenager and his friends is turned upside down. The various first-person narratives all add their own view to a story about school and home-life, muddled-up relationships, an almost kidnapping, etc. (12+)

36

Dickins, Rosie

The Usborne introduction to modern art

London : Usborne, 2004. – 96 p.

(Internet-linked)

ISBN 0-7460-6204-4

Modern art – History – Development – Internet research

With the increasing popularity of the Internet, Usborne Publishing has created something completely new: Internet-linked books. Via their own Quicklinks Website, the publisher offers links to »recommended websites that complement and enhance the information in the book«. This »Introduction to Modern Art«, a particularly attractive example of the more than 200 Internet-linked Usborne titles so far, consists of bite-sized text passages and plenty of pictures and photographs tracing the development of the visual arts from the 1850s to the present. Complete with glossary and index, the eye-catching book invites children to satisfy their curiosity with additional up-to-date information provided by the selected Internet links. (10+) ☼

37

Dunbar, Polly (text/illus.)

Dog Blue

London : Walker, 2004. – [36] p.

ISBN 0-7445-5781-X

Child – Favourite colour – Pet dog

Little Bertie's favourite colour is blue. He has a blue jumper, blue shoes, and even a blue dog collar, but the perfect canine to wear this collar is still missing from his life. So, until such a friend comes into being, resourceful Bertie has to make do with a game of pretence. And, hey presto, a tiny black-and-white spotty dog soon yaps its way into the boy's life – that's the beginning of a wonderful friendship. The witty pastel-coloured drawings set against light monochrome backgrounds wonderfully depict the cheerful and inventive protagonist and his little playfellow in all kinds of typical situations. Accompanied by the repetitive, simple text, the tender and lively illustrations will enchant little readers and their parents. (3+)

☺ Special Mention

38

Paver, Michelle (text)

Fordham, John (illus.)

Wolf brother

London : Orion Children's Books, 2004. – 236 p.

(Chronicles of ancient darkness ; 1)

ISBN 1-84255-170-1

Ancient past – Outsider – Demon – Good/Evil – Magic – Boy – Wolf – Friendship

Michelle Paver's gripping debut novel is the first volume in the »Chronicles of Ancient Darkness« series that follows the dangerous adventures of young Torak as he goes on a quest to fight the evil forces threatening his people. When his father is killed by a ferocious bear-demon, the boy sets off into the forest to fulfil his promise to his father and find the mountain of the World Spirit. He befriends an orphaned wolf cub, is captured by the suspicious Raven Clan people but manages to escape them, only to run into Renn again, a Raven Clan girl, who surprisingly enough joins him on his quest. Paver's fascinating story about hunters, clan-life, forests, and superstition is told in an urgent narrative voice, with some smaller sections described from the wolf's perspective. Right from

the beginning, it plunges the readers deep into a mysterious ancient world of myth and magic from which they don't surface again until the last page, eagerly awaiting the next part of the series. (14+)

39

Rosen, Michael (text)

Tullet, Hervé (illus.)

Alphabet poem

London : Milet, 2004. – [36] p.

ISBN 1-84059-393-8

English – Alphabet – Children's poetry

In this entertaining short poem, renowned British poet Michael Rosen invites his readers to accompany him on a dream-journey through the alphabet realm. The imaginative alliterative verses, one for each letter of the alphabet, conjure up a world where »fish find fans«, »kittens kick ketchup«, and »owls open ovens«. They are ingeniously translated into powerful mixed-media illustrations by Hervé Tullet. His wild, sketchy pictures in bright colours with strong black outlines are often reminiscent of children's drawings and easily evoke the nonsensical chaotic world described in the text. With its air of spontaneity, this amusing picture book will certainly inspire children to add their own alphabet verses to this poem. (4+)

40

Rosoff, Meg

How I live now

London : Penguin Books, 2004. – 186 p.

ISBN 0-141-38075-6

Friendship – First love – War – Survival

When 15-year-old anorexic Daisy from New York arrives at her cousins' home in rural England, she takes some time to settle into the family. While Aunt Penn is on a business trip in Oslo, the five children enjoy an adult- and carefree summer holiday, and Daisy falls in love with her cousin Edmond until suddenly terrorists invade the country, war breaks out, soldiers occupy their farm, and the children are separated. In a desperate attempt to rejoin the others, little Piper and Daisy embark on a dangerous and exhausting journey. Told in retrospect in a touching, quiet first-person narrative, Meg Rosoff's riveting debut novel, set sometime in the 21st century, focuses on Daisy's fate and her emotional growth during another potential world war. (14+)

41

Ross, Tony (text/illus.)

Is it because?

London : Andersen Press, 2004. – [26] p.

ISBN 1-84270-296-3

Bullying

The new picture book by renowned illustrator Tony Ross tackles a delicate topic. Delivered in the artist's characteristic style, the witty water colour illustrations offer an amusing interpretation of the simple, short verses. As the young readers witness how the spindly little boy and his pet dog wonder why on earth big Peregrine Ffrog always bullies the boy, they slowly discover that every story has two different sides. Without providing an easy solution to the increasingly problematic issue of bullying (or any solution at all for that matter), Tony Ross skilfully manages to arouse the readers' sympathy not only for the victim but also for the bully. This thought-provoking picture book will certainly help initiate fruitful discussions. (4+) ☼

42

Weatherly, Lee

Missing Abby

Oxford [et al.] : Fickling, 2004. – 198 p.

ISBN 0-385-60534-X

Outsider – Disappearance – Friendship – Courage – Role-playing game

Last Saturday, Abby went missing, and Emma is the last one to have spoken to her. What on earth has happened to her ex-best friend whom she hadn't seen for over a year? Yet, why should Emma care? After all, she basically hated this gothic weirdo and her ridiculous fascination with fantasy games, didn't she? Nevertheless, with the help of some of Abby's friends, the girl goes on a search for her. Step by step, Lee Weatherly's second novel unravels the tangle of carefully kept secrets that threaten to destroy the teenage girl's peace at her new school. In a convincing and suspenseful first-person narrative with detective novel elements, the author makes her protagonist realise that, no matter how hard you try, you can't run from your own fears. (12+)

43

Willis, Jeanne (text)

Slater, Nicola (illus.)

Dumb creatures

London [et al.] : Macmillan Children's Books, 2004. – 86 p.

ISBN 0-405-02067-9

Boy – Dumbness – Loneliness – Friendship – Animals – Fighting for rights

Tom is an intelligent and curious boy with an extraordinary ability to acutely observe the world around him. Since he can't speak, however, most people mistake him for a simpleton. To escape his loneliness, the 11-year-old often visits the zoo animals, detecting a lot of parallels between their situation and his own, and starts to befriend Zanzi, a female gorilla who can use sign language. In a captivating, quiet first-person narrative, the protagonist of this beautiful story shows that many misunderstandings only arise because people are not prepared to take time and listen properly to their fellow creatures. When he conceives a clever yet dangerous-looking plan to fight for his new friend's baby, Tom eventually manages to open people's eyes and ears. (10+)

Ireland

☺ Special Mention

44

Cashman, Seamus (ed.)

Askin, Corrina / Clarke, Alan (illus.)

Something beginning with P : new poems from Irish poets

Dublin : O'Brien Press, 2004. – 160 p.

ISBN 0-86278-868-4

Children's poetry – Anthology

This wonderful poetry collection features over 100 new poems by the crème de la crème of Irish poets such as Desmond Egan, Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Seamus Heaney, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, and Gabriel Rosenstock, to name but a few. Written exclusively for this anthology, this colourful bunch of works offers a unique opportunity for children and adults alike to dive into the fascinating world of language. If the words alone make for a captivating read, the illustrations by Corrina Askin and Alan Clarke,

some bold and bright, some soft and sensitive, turn this into a treasure of Ireland's rich poetry that no one would want to miss. The appendix provides some useful English translations of the poems written in Irish, an alphabetical index of the poems (both first lines and titles), authors, and illustrators, as well as short biographical notes of all the artists who contributed to this splendid book. (5+) ✨

North America

Canada

☺ Special Mention

45

Aldana, Patricia (ed.)

Paterson, Katherine (foreword)

Dragland, Stan (transl.)

Under the spell of the moon : art for children from the world's great illustrators

Toronto [et al.] : Douglas & McIntyre, 2004. – 80 p.

(A Groundwood book)

ISBN 0-88899-559-8

Illustration – Children's poetry – Multiculturalism – Anthology

The idea behind this gorgeous anthology was to offer children a colourful selection of works by the best children's book illustrators from all over the world and thus celebrate high quality international writing and illustration for children. Ranging from Mitsumasa Anno, Quentin Blake, Marie-Louise Gay, and Dušan Kállay to Peter Sis and Lisbeth Zwerger, each of the award-winning artists featuring in this collection chose a short text, poem, children's verse, riddle, counting-out rhyme, etc. and illustrated this text on a double page. Texts are printed in the original language of the culture they come from and in an English translation. Part of the proceeds from this book will be donated to the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), the organisation that – founded by Jella Lepman more than 50 years ago – is striving to fulfil its founder's greatest dream of creating peace and understanding between people of different cultures through the best of children's books. (4+) ✨

46

Carroll, Lewis (text)

Jorisch, Stéphane (illus.)

Jabberwocky

Toronto, ON [et al.] : Kids Can Press, 2004. –

[40] p.

(Visions in poetry) (KCP poetry)

ISBN 1-55337-079-1

Father – Son – Monster – Threat – Hunt – Killing – Nonsense poetry

Lewis Carroll's (1832-1898) classical nonsense poem about the mysterious Jabberwocky is one of the most well-known English language poems ever. Its enigmatic verses naturally lend themselves to innumerable interpretations. In this beautifully designed little volume, published in the new series »Visions in Poetry«, the Victorian poem is transported right into the 21st century in which public opinion is manipulated by mass media. Here, a war-crazed old man sends his son on a mission to slay the allegedly dangerous monster. The slightly surrealistic, bizarre watercolour, pencil, and ink illustrations by award-winning Stéphane Jorisch perfectly match the scary atmosphere of the text while they leave ample room for the readers' imagination and interpretations. (10+)

47

Joe, Donna (text)

Jeffries, Jamie / La Fave Kim (illus.)

Ch'askin : a legend of the Sechelt people

Roberts Creek, BC : Nightwood Ed., 2003. – [24] p.

ISBN 0-88971-180-1

Canada / First Nations – Legend – Bird

This thin square booklet is the latest volume in the »Legend of the Sechelt People« series. Written in a simple style reminiscent of traditional oral storytelling, the picture book relates the tale of Ch'askin, the mystical thunderbird, and its relationship with the Sechelt people, a First Nations tribe from Canada. When they first settle on the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia, the huge powerful bird helps them build their villages and gather enough food until they are self-sufficient. The short tale is complemented by a number of soft atmospheric black-and-white drawings that slightly resemble cave paintings. They are contrasted with clear, sharp, totem-pole-like depictions of the thunderbird. (4+) ✧

48

Juby, Susan

Miss Smithers

Toronto : HarperTrophyCanada, 2004. – 274 p.

ISBN 0-00-639265-2

Outsider – School – Beauty contest – Everyday life

Ladies and Gentlemen, please raise the curtain again for the inimitable Alice McLeod, formerly home-schooled weirdo, now on the rocky road to turning into a practically »normal« person. In this hilarious sequel to the bestselling »Alice, I think«, the ambitious journalist-to-be jumps at the chance of becoming (rich and) famous by entering the Miss Smithers beauty pageant. The witty diary relates one disastrous event piling upon the next as the inventive teenage girl, who certainly lacks some basic social skills, braves the wide world of her home town. Female readers devouring this first-person narrative with its catching dry humour will undoubtedly suffer from severe stomach-ache caused by excessive laughter. (14+)

49

Lee, Dennis (text)

Kovalski, Maryann (illus.)

So cool

Toronto : Key Porter Books, 2004. – 70 p.

(Poetry)

ISBN 1-55263-613-5

Poetry

Whether it is the humour of »To My Friend the Total Loser«, the funny anxiety of »French Kissing With Gum in Your Mouth«, the deep sadness of »The House of Alone«, or the peaceful reflection of »High Summer«, this collection of poems perfectly captures the whole range of feelings that young people know only too well and often struggle with. Renowned poet Dennis Lee's touching verses and rippling rhythms are ingeniously translated into energetic, semi-abstract, black-and-white pictures rendered in various techniques by well-known illustrator Maryann Kovalski. This attractive square volume with its trendy title and matching design will speak to teenage and adult readers alike. (10+)

50

Mac, Carrie

The Beckoners

Victoria, BC : Orca Book Publ., 2004. – 217 p.

(Teen fiction)

ISBN 1-55143-309-5

Bullying – Violence – Outsider – Friendship

It's more or less by accident that Zoe ends up with Beck and her gang on the first day at her new school. She is utterly shocked to see that the five girls don't have any scruples about using outright violence to terrorise the school community. Yet, once Zoe is initiated to the Beckoners, giving them the cold shoulder turns out to be dangerous; succumbing to the gang's rules may be easier than competing with her classmate April, called »Dog«, for the place of top victim. In a gripping, fast-paced third-person narrative, the author introduces her readers to a brutal scenario of teenage bullying and peer pressure in which even the teachers prefer to turn a blind eye rather than to get involved. Thus it takes all of Zoe's courage and the help of her new friends for her to join the »right side«. (14+)

51

Oppel, Kenneth (text)

Reid, Barbara (illus.)

Peg and the Yeti

Toronto : HarperCollins, 2004. – [34] p.

ISBN 0-00-200538-7

Girl – Exploration – Adventure – Mount Everest – Yeti – Friendship

Little Peg, born on her parents' fishing boat, has always been adventurous. Now that she has set her mind on seeing the top of the world, she packs her fishing rod and travels to Mount Everest. Without any climbing gear but with a lot of determination, the resourceful girl braves the icy slopes, befriends the scary hairy mountain monster, and finally returns to her parents, already pondering her next adventure. Kenneth Oppel's endearing and funny story about a feisty little heroine is translated into astonishingly vibrant plasticine pictures by renowned artist Barbara Reid. The illustrations, of varying surface texture and brimming with funny details, depict the scenes from unusual angles, while the artist's trademark style lends them a three-dimensional feel. (4+)

USA

☺ Special Mention

52

Carryl, Charles Edward (text)

Santore, Charles (illus.)

The camel's lament : a poem

New York : Random House, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 0-375-81426-4

Animals – Comparison – Nonsense poetry

The crabby camel considers it a gross insult that all the other animals are favoured with delicious food, cosy homes, and a pleasing physique, whereas the world obviously couldn't care less about the poor camel's needs: »Anything does for me!« In this hilarious 19th century nonsense poem, published in picture book form for the first time, the complaints of the badly-treated desert denizen are uttered in a uniquely affected and sulky voice that immediately assures the readers' compassion. Charles Santore's large, bright animal portraits in warm colours set against a white background offer witty snapshots of the comfortable lives of various species. These homely scenes are contrasted with plain double spreads rendered in yellow-cream-brown shades showing the camel's hard lot. With the odd tinge of exaggerated facial expression, the otherwise naturalistic pictures perfectly capture the verses' ironic tone. (5+) ☼

53

Coman, Carolyn (text)

Shepperson, Rob (illus.)

The big house

Asheville, NC : Front Street, 2004. – 220 p.

ISBN 1-932425-09-8

Parents – Prison – Siblings – Foster family – Revenge

It's not the first time that Ivy and Ray's parents are sent »up the river«. But never before have they been sentenced to 25 years in prison – and both of them. Yet stubborn Ivy and her younger brother are not inclined to quietly wait out their days in the big house under the custody of evil old Marietta, the very person who accused her father of embezzlement. Determined to get the better of their »kidnappers«, the resourceful siblings secretly collect evidence against Marietta and her husband. This comical short novel depicts the children's ingenious abil-

ity to think up various plans and uncover mysterious secrets. The fresh tone of the text and the amusing black-and-white illustrations make this a delightful read for young would-be-detectives. (10+)

54

Creech, Sharon

Heartbeat

New York : HarperCollins, 2004. – 180 p.

(Joanna Cotler books)

ISBN 0-06-054022-2

Girl – Youth – Running – Everyday life – Grandfather – Friendship – Baby brother

In the past few years, verse novels for the young seem to have jumped up the popularity scale a fair bit – even to the extent that some readers are becoming fed up with that form of writing. Be that as it may, it would be a shame to miss out on Newbery Medal winner Sharon Creech's new contribution to this genre. Told in a unique poetic voice interspersed with witty side comments and footnotes, »Heartbeat« allows readers a glimpse into the life of 12-year-old Annie just when everything is about to change. With her mother pregnant, her beloved grandfather slowly falling apart, and her best friend Max growing distant and moody, running barefoot and listening to her heartbeat's comforting »thump-thump« is one thing the amiable and optimistic heroine can still rely on. (10+) ☼

55

Dale, Anna

Whispering to witches

New York : Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2004. – 296 p.

ISBN 1-58234-890-1

Boy – Christmas holidays – Friendship – Witch

Joe isn't very pleased when he learns that he will have to spend his Christmas holidays with his mother, stepfather, and stepsister Esmé in boring old Canterbury. Little does he suspect that he will be thrown headfirst into a thrilling adventure. Together with his new friend Twiggy, a young witch-in-training, he sneaks out at night and rides around on a broomstick trying to locate the missing page from an ancient book of spells before evil witch Logan Dritch gets her hands on it. Set in a modern England where a coven of witches secretly exists next-door to non-magic people, this fast-paced

debut novel makes for an entertaining read and will certainly catch young would-be-witches' and -wizards' attention. (9+)

56

Farmer, Nancy

A sea of trolls

New York [et al.] : Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004. – 459 p.

ISBN 0-689-86744-1

Boy – Bard's apprentice – Magic – Viking – Troll

In her new book, popular author Nancy Farmer takes her readers deep into a sinister realm of frightening Viking »berserkers«, dangerous trolls, and various mysterious monsters in 8th century Northern Europe. 11-year-old Jack has hardly started his apprenticeship with the village bard when a herd of Northmen attacks the peaceful Saxon settlement and takes Jack and his little sister Lucy hostage. To increase his magic powers and save Lucy from evil Queen Frith's revenge, Jack has to go on a dangerous journey to Jotunheim, the icy home of the trolls. Fantasy fans will devour this fast-paced quest in which Norse mythology and medieval history blend well with humorous elements to create a gripping read. (12+)

57

Grimes, Nikki (text)

Young, Ed (illus.)

Tai chi morning : snapshots of China

Chicago : Cricket Books, 2004. – XI, 51 p.

ISBN 0-8126-2707-5

China – Tourist trip – Everyday life

More than 15 years ago, well-known American author and poet Nikki Grimes travelled to China with a group of actors. She recorded her personal impressions of this vast country in several atmospheric poems, each of them preceded by a short narrative paragraph relating the situation in which the respective poem was created. Ed Young's sketchy pen and ink illustrations stem from his own journey to his native country during roughly the same time. Printed in a warm brownish shade and set against a soft background of smooth, cream-coloured textured paper, the quiet texts, the few photographs, and the calm pictures offer a fascinating glimpse into the country's politics, old and modern culture, and everyday life. (12+) ✧

58

Henkes, Kevin (text/illus.)

Kitten's first full moon

[New York] : Greenwillow Books, 2004. – [32] p.
ISBN 0-06-058828-4

*Cat – Hunger – Milk – Determination –
Disappointment – Reward*

A naïve little kitten mistakes the huge full moon shining in the sky for a yummy bowl of milk. She craves for it and comes up with several creative plans for securing her ›prey‹. Yet, however hard she tries, whether she jumps from the top step of the porch, climbs the tall tree in the garden, or leaps right into the pond, the delicious treat stays just out of reach – and the poor feline remains hungry, until...

Kevin Henkes's humorous and suspenseful story is written in a simple repetitive style full of rhythm. The silly misfortunes of the irresistible heroine out on a night prowl are captured in smooth, cartoon-like drawings in black-and-cream shades with bold outlines. (3+) (Caldecott Medal; 2005)

59

Lieberg, Carolyn

West with Hopeless

New York : Dutton Children's Books, 2004. – 180 p.
ISBN 0-525-47194-4

Siblings – Journey – Argument – Reconciliation

In this portrait of two different but utterly likeable personalities, the straightforward first-person narrative relates the ups and downs of an adventurous five-day car ride during which two sisters meet a motley crew of eccentric yet kind strangers and get to know each other better. Usually, 13-year-old Carin boards a plane every summer and travels to Reno to spend the holidays at her father's place. When her mother tells her that this year she will cover the 1,763 miles by car, riding with her older half-sister Hope, the slightly naïve and anxious teenage girl is convinced this trip will turn out to be a disaster. And as if to prove her right, the two don't get off to a particular good start...but in the end Carin has to admit to herself that Hope isn't quite so ›hopeless‹ after all. (12+)

60

Sis, Peter (text/illus.)

Train of states

New York : Greenwillow Books, 2004. – [66] p.
ISBN 0-06-057838-6

USA – Federal States

With his latest picture book, Czech-born illustrator Peter Sis indulged in his love for circus wagons and for his adopted country and created a graphic firework about US history. He invites children aboard a magnificent train consisting of 50 carriages, one for each of the States of the USA. Presented in chronological order from Delaware and Pennsylvania to Alaska and Hawaii (with the US capital Washington D.C. as the caboose), the carriages, which closely resemble ancient circus wagons, give the origin of the state name, the capital, flower, tree, and bird for all of the states, plus some further tidbits. This entertaining mixture will certainly spark off children's eagerness to find out more about the various states. (4+)

61

Stewart, Sarah (text)

Small, David (illus.)

The friend

New York : Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004. – [44] p.
ISBN 0-374-32463-8

Girl – Housekeeper – Friendship – USA/1940s

Well-known husband-and-wife-team Sarah Stewart and David Small have created yet another endearing picture book. The smooth rhymed verses and the moving water colour illustrations, sometimes energetic, sometimes radiating with calmness, follow the daily life of wealthy Annabelle Bernadette Clementine Dodd and her only friend Beatrice Smith, housekeeper and nanny. Since her busy parents are hardly ever at home, Belle and Bea spend all their days together. Bea completes the household chores with energetic and creative little Belle at her side ›helping‹ her, and afterwards, the two of them walk down to the sea and stroll along the beach. This book offers a portrait of a lonely yet happy childhood in the 1940s and of an unusual friendship. (4+)

Austria

62

Andersen, Hans Christian (text)

Wolfsgruber, Linda (illus.)

Däumelinchen

(Thumbelina)

Weitra : Publ. P No. 1, Bibliothek der Provinz,
2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-85252-567-5

*Longing for a child – Height – Prince – Marriage –
Literary fairy tale*

Quite unexpectedly, a childless woman is granted her dearest wish and given a little girl who lives in a closed tulip-blossom. Unfortunately, the pretty child is kidnapped and has to survive several unwanted, dangerous adventures with various animals – toad, cockchafer, mouse, mole, until, at the end of her journey, she takes the king of the flower-elves for her husband. In this picture book, Andersen's popular fairy tale is accompanied by tender illustrations that (almost) make the readers feel how light and delicate the little creature is. Pencil drawings and coloured etchings present small and larger parts of the plot. (6+)

63

Bansch, Helga (text/illus.)

Frau Bund und Hund

(Mrs. Fogg and Dog)

Wien : Jungbrunnen, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-7026-5754-1

Dog – Tidiness – Love – Chaos – Happiness

Ultra-tidy Mrs. Fogg has an ultra-well-behaved dog who is fairly happy without running around on the grass or playing with other dogs and with only being taken out, on the leash, to do his business three times a day. One day, however, a wild, unruly, red-haired »bitch« (as Mrs. Fogg calls her) kidnaps the »good boy«. He temporarily disappears without a trace. Mrs. Bund and her neighbour Mr. Cheerful start searching for him and get along very well. Eventually, Dog returns together with the »bitch« and – so what – they both decide to stay with Mrs. Bund. And so does Mr. Cheerful. A picture story about tidiness and love. Text and pictures perfectly complement each other with their characteristic subtle details. (4+) ✧

64

Dahimène, Adelheid (text)

Stöllinger, Heide (illus.)

Schnell, Rudi, schnell!

(Quick, Rudi, quick!)

Wien : Picus, 2004. – [36] p.

ISBN 3-85452-875-2

Boy – Food – Task – Shopping – Delay – Help

Mother asks Rudi to run quickly and buy some butter. Yet, immediately, neighbours and other passers-by shower him with additional jobs and instructions. In the end, he completes the last job first, and this more or less automatically helps him accomplish the next one and so forth: Rudi returns an iron (which had tumbled down from a window), is given a glass of warm water to rescue Max's tongue from the frozen lamp-post, discovers the neighbour's budgie, finally buys the butter for his lunch, and is rewarded for his efforts by his mother who has prepared his favourite dish. A lively story told in pictures with numerous scenes that go beyond the short text – ideal for telling and reading aloud to small children. (5+)

65

Janisch, Heinz (text)

Wiemers, Sabine (illus.)

Ein ganz gewöhnlicher Montag

(Just an ordinary Monday)

Wien [et al.] : Betz, 2004. – [20] p.

ISBN 3-219-11122-X

*Child – Mother – Imagination – Perception –
Everyday life*

As soon as Alfred gets up on Monday morning, he hovers in the air. »Clowning around,« his mother calls it and hurries to school with him, just like on any other day. Along the way, a lot of little miracles happen – but only Alfred notices the huge white steamer, two Red Indians, a minute space ship, and other unusual things. And in his classroom, too, it's the children who understand how extraordinary the events are. The teacher is only interested in the routine of an ordinary school day. »But on a Monday,« Alfred concludes »miracles happen.« The pictures of this entertaining »search-and-tell« picture book reveal even more unbelievable things than the text. (6+)

66

Kirchhof, Beate (adapt.)

Bandlow, Katja (illus.)

Leonce und Lena : eine wundersame Geschichte;
für Kinder frei erzählt nach einem Theaterstück
von Georg Büchner

(Leonce and Lena)

Wien : Picus, 2004. – [49] p.

ISBN 3-85452-873-6

*Büchner, Georg/Leonce und Lena – Love –
Coincidence*

A wondrous tale for children, based on the play by Georg Büchner (1813-1837) – that's the subtitle of this adaptation of a German classic. There is a prince who neither wants to marry nor become king. A princess, the intended bride for this prince, runs away from home because she is afraid of this unknown groom she is to marry. On their way, the two of them meet accidentally, fall in love, and – marry. Immediately, everything in the kingdom becomes better and nicer and... they lived happily ever after. Stage-like earth-coloured pictures with an ironic touch depict the good luck that fate bestows on the royal children in this fairy-tale-like yet satirical story. (6+)

67

Lembcke, Marjaleena (text)

Hein, Sybille (illus.)

Ein Märchen ist ein Märchen ist ein Märchen

(A fairy tale is a fairy tale is a fairy tale)

St. Pölten [et al.] : NP, 2004. – 124 p.

ISBN 3-85326-285-6

Fairy tale character – Author – Reality – Fiction

In this book, the readers are offered an imaginative play with different levels of storytelling: An author suffering from writer's block has stopped writing, and the protagonists of his fairy tale are left behind feeling confused. They set off to look for their irresponsible creator and soon come across several similarly neglected characters from earlier equally unfinished texts. Together, they manage to get the process of story-telling going again so that the fairy tale figures can re-discover their own tales – which then end happily ever after. In a very humorous manner, the (real) author makes both the fictitious writer and his creations come alive and provides them with the power to act. The numerous illustrations complete the enjoyable read. (8+)

68

Wellinger, Alice (text/illus.)

Ich hab ein Zimmer frei

(I have a room to rent)

St. Pölten [et al.] : NP, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-85326-279-1

Girl – Wish

Anna really longs to have the (unfortunately very expensive) red boots she's spotted in a mail order catalogue. But where to get the money for them? Well, she could let a room of her large house. Yet, all her tenants (a goose, a carnival princess, a giraffe, etc.) are anything but well-heeled so that she actually spends more money on them than she earns. Anna is almost resigned to give up her heart's desire, when one day all her dodgy but grateful tenants offer her a present: the beloved boots. They are gorgeous – but a bit too small by now! This can only mean that Anna is growing up. Large, surrealistic colour-pencil drawings hover between dream-world and reality. (6+) ☼

Germany

69

Baltscheit, Martin (text)

K., Ulf (illus.)

Der kleine Herr Paul

(Little Mr. Paul)

Frankfurt am Main : Altberliner, 2004. – 74 p.

ISBN 3-8339-6505-3

Reading – Height – Outsider – Short story

If it comes to reading books and talking about them, little Mr. Paul is >genetically conditioned<: The whole family used to read in any situation imaginable and book-trees were growing in their garden. As an adult, little Mr. Paul carries on the family tradition. One day, however, something very peculiar happens: There is one book that seems to offer each reader a different ending. At first, people argue and worry a lot; yet, in the end, they all agree that this is only natural because everybody reads and interprets a book in his or her own characteristic way. The protagonist of this book relates this remarkable episode as well as other, similar ones. Naïve, comic-book-like full-page pictures in two colours add new meanings to the slightly unusual stories. (6+)

70

Bardeli, Marlies (text)

Godon, Ingrid (illus.)

Philines Zirkusreise : eine Geschichte von Ende und Anfang

(Philine's journey with the circus : a tale about beginning and end)

Düsseldorf : Sauerländer, 2004. – 100 p.

ISBN 3-7941-6034-7

Circus – Clown – Bankruptcy – Farewell

Right from the beginning of her life, little Philine, the daughter of clowns Luisa and Giovanni, cuts a fine figure at Circus Bertologi. She quickly learns everything a circus child needs to know and is received enthusiastically by the audience. Nevertheless, they all feel that the popularity of circuses is dwindling – less and less people come to watch animals and artists perform. Therefore, the director and his wife decide to move to an old artists' home in Italy while the other circus employees need to look for a new job. Even though this is a sad homage to the once glamorous world of the circus, the angular, reflective pictures and the text of this book radiate with joyfulness and a zest for life. (6+)

71

Boie, Kirsten (text)

Waechter, Philip (illus.)

Was war zuerst da?

(What came first?)

Hamburg : Oetinger, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-7891- 6346-5

Hen – Cock – Egg – Chicken – Existence

A little hen is troubled by the ancient, still unsolved mystery about the origin of all hens. To answer this question, she sets off on a journey. When she meets a young cock who is willing to help and their little offspring hatches soon after, they both acknowledge that neither hen nor egg could have been there first, but rather cock *and* hen together. Yet, as soon as the chick has grown a little, she asks her parents: »Where *did* hen and cock come from? Did they not hatch from an egg after all?« This philosophising picture book does not discuss matters gravely or solemnly; instead, it uses the amiable protagonists to point out the limits of human reasoning in an amusing manner that is underlined by Philip Waechter's naïve-style drawings rendered in clear colours. (6+)

72

Fühmann, Franz (text)

Gleich, Jacky / Gleich, Nora (illus.)

Doris Zauberbein

(Doris Magic-Leg)

Rostock : Hinstorff, 2004. – 41 p.

ISBN 3-356-01046-8

Girl – Stork – Magic – Assistance – Justice

Seven-year-old Doris wants to learn how to do magic: She is longing for brighter colours and for people to treat each other friendlier and more attentively. One method to achieve this – as she has learned from a family of storks – is to stand completely still on one leg for as long as possible. This makes you see very far and enables you to speak to faraway places and send magic there. The police are not willing to accept the magic actions but they simply cannot discover their reason. Thus, Doris is successful. Franz Fühmann, who died in 1984 and therefore did not witness the unification of East and West Germany, carefully weaves his social criticism of the former GDR into this fairy tale written in 1982. Jacky Gleich's ironic pictures with their angular shapes perfectly convey the tone of the story. (7+)

73

Gerlach, Harald

»Man liebt nur, was einen in Freyheit setzt« :

die Lebensgeschichte des Friedrich Schiller

(»You only love what sets you free« : the life of Friedrich Schiller)

Weinheim [et al.] : Beltz & Gelberg, 2004. – 190 p.

ISBN 3-407-80877-1

Schiller; Friedrich von – Biography – Germany/ 1759-1805 – Literature – Sturm und Drang

This biography is unconventional in its structure and its presentation. It looks at the psychological background and specific situations in the life of the famous writer Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), and then draws conclusions about his personal motivation for his actions. Schiller's life was deeply influenced by the political situation in Germany at the time, i.e. the particularism and the despotism of the rulers. The resulting human and social difficulties – in most parts of Germany he was more or less regarded as an exile from Württemberg – are expressed most vividly in his early plays. All his life, Schiller remained a faithful and fervent supporter

of the values and ideals of Humanism. An essay about the impact and success of Schiller's works, plus extensive biographical data perfectly complement this informative book. (12+)

74

Glück, Gerhard (text/illus.)

Der Pizzakönig von Pisa

(The Pizza King of Pisa)

Oldenburg: Lappan, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-8303-1085-4

Pizzeria – Baker – Abuse of power – Punishment

Once upon a time in Pisa, there lived the baker Ignazio who was such a skilled baker that he was officially appointed »the Pizza King of Pisa«. Henceforth, he was the only one in town allowed to bake pizza. By and by, he became unbearably proud and conceited, until, one morning, he woke up with a crooked body. Immediately, everybody in Pisa, men and animals alike, were forced to walk around lopsidedly or be severely punished. Meanwhile, Ignazio had erected the Leaning Tower of Pisa as memorial to himself. Luckily enough, the neighbouring towns came to the people's rescue with their armies. The baker disappeared from Pisa and the Tower is the only reminder of him today. Large pictures in pasty colours, painted in a naïve style, give an authentic impression of the life in medieval Pisa. (6+)

75

Herfurtner, Rudolf (text)

Schulmeyer, Heribert (illus.)

Das Geheimnis von Burg Wolfenstein

(The secret of Wolfenstein Castle)

München : Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004. – 109 p.

(dtv ; 62199 : Reihe Hanser)

ISBN 3-423-62199-0

School trip – Bullying – Group identity – Outsider – Friendship – Self-confidence

A school trip to the countryside can be a treat – but not if your classmates start teasing you because of your »un-cool« clothes. Julia tries to become invisible, to get away from the group, at least in her mind. However, loneliness may have many different causes. Although Annabelle's parents (unlike Julia's mother) are not too poor to afford things, they still isolate their daughter by giving her heaps

of expensive presents that make other children feel jealous. After Julia has demonstrated under fairly adventurous circumstances how brave and creative she is, she is accepted by the group, and the two girls might eventually become friends. The author convincingly describes typical conflicts within groups of children and clearly, yet not ideologically presents the social reasons behind them. (8+)

☺ **Special Mention**

76

Hipfel, Ute (text/illus.)

Herr Pander und Dolly Hase

(Mr. Pander and Dolly Rabbit)

Frankfurt am Main [et al.] : Altberliner, 2004. – 108 p.

ISBN 3-8339-6525-8

Girl – Transformation – Rabbit – Variety Show – Humour

One morning, Dolores wakes up as a huge white rabbit. Her father, Mr. Pander, takes her with him to perform onstage at a variety show (after all, Dolly can speak, play the piano, and the likes) – it's a matter of survival. The audience believe that Mr. Pander is a ventriloquist. One question remains however: Why was the child transformed? Be that as it may, as a rabbit, Dolly can now understand the language of the animals (dogs, piglets, snakes, ...) and it is only at the end of the school holidays that she eventually resumes her human form – yet, with a small rabbit's ear (which becomes the new fashion in her class). By the way, the whole story is nothing but the truth – as the heroine emphatically points out to the author. Detailed, naïve-subversive pictures, situational humour, always hinting at a more universal meaning, plus ironical side comments on the adult world and their narrow-mindedness make this novel a very entertaining read. (8+)

✧ books whose content is found to contribute to an international understanding among cultures and peoples

✧ books with easy-to-read texts but nonetheless complex and high-interest topics

77

Jung, Barbara (text)

Hübner, Klaus (illus.)

Anders ist auch schön

(Different is nice, too)

Hamburg : Carlsen, 2004. – [40] p.

ISBN 3-551-51611-1

*King – Boredom – Game – Profession –
Change of roles*

Boredom can either be paralysing or it can generate new ideas: The little king invents a kind of lottery in which all his subjects have to draw lots for a certain profession and are then allowed to perform it. The hairdresser watches the sheep (and creates a new »fur«-do for them), the post-woman sends off the soldiers one by one as parcels, while the general trims (and trains) the garden trees etc. The little king enjoys the game as much as the other participants, and in the end, they all celebrate their newly acquired skills and knowledge at a huge party. Full-page pictures in a comic-book-like style show both how unlikely such a role-swapping seems and how much fun the participants have. (4+)

78

Lewin, Waldtraut

Marek und Maria : Roman

(Marek and Maria)

Weinheim [et al.] : Beltz & Gelberg, 2004. – 228 p.

ISBN 3-407-80922-0

*Germany – World War II – Girl – Forced labour –
Love – Hiding place – Death – Memory*

During the Second World War, Maria, a young German, falls in love with Marek from Poland who works as forced labourer in the market-garden from which Maria's family is allowed to take a few vegetables once in a while. When he escapes, Maria finds a hiding place for him with a friend of hers, an academic, but both men are discovered and deported to an internment camp. The girl never hears of them again. Many years later, she returns to the market-garden and relives her memories. In this powerful story, the author sensitively and compellingly describes one of many thousand similar human tragedies of those times. (12+)

79

Löns, Hermann (text)

Glasauer, Willi (illus.)

Mümmelmann

(Mr. Hare)

Berlin : Aufbau, 2004. – 22 p.

ISBN 3-351-04051-2

Hare – Hunter – Revenge – Saving one's life

This lavishly illustrated picture book tells the classic story of hare and hunter, first published by the well-known German poet Hermann Löns (1866-1914) in 1909 as part of an anthology of animal tales: After many years of escaping the hunters and fighting for his life, the old hare has only three legs left, yet he still darts from side to side so quickly that one hunter accidentally wounds his comrade instead of killing a hare. As a consequence, the hunt is already over by lunchtime and the herd of hares honour the old veteran by dancing a dignified, mystic round-dance that makes even Reynard the fox shiver with fear. The illustrator clearly sides with the majestic hares rather than with the sinister, murderous hunters. (5+)

80

Mebs, Gudrun (text)

Pin, Isabel (illus.)

Sie hat mich einfach mitgenommen

(She just took me with her)

Düsseldorf : Sauerländer, 2004. – 135 p.

ISBN 3-7941-6030-4

*Woman – Baby – Cot death/SIDS – Kidnapping –
Pupil – Rescue*

Juli and her friends made a bet: She has to approach that stranger with the sunglasses who waits in front of their school every day and ask her for an autograph. Undoubtedly, she must be a popular film star. Suddenly, however, the girl is in the midst of an awful adventure. The weird woman, who is mentally confused ever since her small baby suddenly died, kidnaps her. Locked up and treated like a toddler, the young first-person narrator undergoes a muddle of emotions – ranging from fear and anger to a slowly evolving understanding and even empathy for her kidnapper. The girl tries not to hurt the sad woman. This episode lasts but a day and ends happily for the child. The author manages to take her readers on an intensive emotional ride. (10+)

81

Michaelis, Antonia (text)

Brandt, Birgit (illus.)

Das Adoptivzimmer

(The adoptive room)

Bindlach : Loewe, 2004. – 206 p.

ISBN 3-7855-4977-6

*Orphan – Adoption – Brother – Magician –
Courage – Imprisonment – Rescue*

One day, Achim's dearest wish comes true and he is adopted by a couple. Yet, soon, the boy is faced with mysterious events and secrets. His new parents once had a boy who died in a car crash. This child appears before the new brother in one room of the house, the »adoptive room«, that exists for nobody but Achim. The boy has to defeat the evil spirit of the other world who keeps dead souls in his power. These souls, whom others grieve for too much, are locked up as birds in an almost impregnable fortress. The key to this problem can be found in the real world: It is the ability to let go. With its complementary illustrations (which are close to the text) and its exciting action, this fantasy novel easily captures the readers' attention. (8+)

82

Moers, Walter (text/illus.)

Die Stadt der träumenden Bücher : ein Roman aus
Zamonien von Hildegunst von Mythenmetz

(The city of dreaming books)

München : Piper, 2004. – 455 p.

ISBN 3-492-04549-9

Literature – Book – Bibliophile

Walter Moers's first three novels about the continent of Zamonien were immensely successful. In his latest work, the popular author focuses on young lindworm Hildegunst von Mythenmetz's development into Zamonien's greatest poet. Starting off as the search for the author of a perfect manuscript, his journey soon turns into an odyssey through the maze of catacombs in Buchhaim. In this book-city, the budding poet does not only meet some truly bizarre life-forms, he also comes across the master of poetry. This extremely witty fantasy novel is a satire on book-lovers set in a city where everything revolves around books, writers, publishers, and first- and second-hand bookshops. Young readers with an interest in literature will certainly recognise plenty of allusions to real-life authors. (16+)

83

Papan (text/illus.)

Wilma Superstar

(Wilma Superstar <proper name>)

Hildesheim : Gerstenberg, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-8067-5067-X

*Piglet – Ambition – Horse race – Show business –
Near-natural environment for animals*

Wilma the piglet has ambitious plans. While her siblings sleep cosily, she frolics around and is even allowed to watch TV together with her farmer. Horse races are becoming her obsession and she intends to enter the same »line of business«. Soon, she runs her first race, but, unfortunately, she trips and comes last. Yet, it's not such a bad luck after all – or so it seems: Some manager engages the stumbling pig to perform in a show at the most famous theatres of the country. Wilma is ecstatic. At least for a while. Before long, she gets homesick, longing for the wonderful mud at home. She leaves. And tells her siblings a few fibs about the fantastic life of a superstar. Both the witty pictures and the unbiased and naive view of life in the »big world« have the creative touch of a child-like imagination. (6+)

84

Richter, Jutta

Hechtsommer

(The summer of the pike)

München [et al.] : Hanser, 2004. – 123 p.

3-446-20518-7

Siblings – Mother – Cancer – Death

In the summer their mother falls ill with cancer, the brothers Lukas and Daniel aim at catching a pike. They believe that, if they are successful, her mother will be able to fight the disease. Their friend Anna sceptically watches their attempts – until, in the end, the mother dies and the beautiful pike has lost its life, too. Jutta Richter's quiet story perfectly captures a child's hopes and fears in an existential borderline situation. Both content and style of the story convey the children's grief without resorting to spectacular razzle-dazzle and in a way that readers can empathise with the young protagonists. Children (and adults) who are in a similar situation might find their own emotions mirrored here. (8+) (Katholischer Kinderbuchpreis; 2005)

85

Schneider, Antonie (text)

Pin, Isabel (illus.)

Kleiner König, wer bist du?

(Little King, who are you?)

Berlin : Aufbau, 2004. – 28 p.

ISBN: 3-351-04060-1

Book – Fictitious journey – Imagination

A little boy is sitting at a table, obviously waiting for something. A book is lying on the table. He opens it ... and the imaginary journey begins, across the country and the sea, visiting animals and people. Delicate, quiet pictures of the protagonists, empty spaces like voids that have to be filled with the readers' imagination, and the possibility for role play are the characteristic features of this wonderful book that encourages children to feel like a ›little king‹. The contrast between the real world and the day-dream in the world inside the book is underlined by the graphic design: For each stop of the journey, readers are offered pseudo ›book-pages‹ on the margins that look as if they could be leafed through. In the end, the journey is bound to lead back into the book, yet it may be repeated any time. (5+)

86

Schöke, Hubert (text/photogr.)

Koppe, Susanne (text)

Sommerzeit in Hosenfeld : Georg erzählt von seinen Ferien

(Summertime in Hosenfeld : Georg tells about his holidays)

Frankfurt am Main : Moritz, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-89565-153-2

Siblings – Village – Holidays – Summer – Germany/1970s

A village in Germany in the 1970s – the ideal place for a summer holiday with small children. The authors describe the ordinary but memorable events of the protagonists' holidays in the countryside. The children received a simple and warm welcome from the village people and curiously set out to explore the landscape and the animals around them. Today, the simple holidays of those times have been turned into well-organised tourist trips offered by the tourist agencies – still, the memories of those summer holidays in Hosenfeld live on in the old photographs reprinted (with added bits of colour) in this book. (6+)

87

Schulz, Hermann (text)

Gehrmann, Katja (illus.)

Schluss mit lustig!

(That's enough now!)

Hamburg : Carlsen, 2004. – 130 p.

(Lesezauber)

ISBN 3-551-55327-0

Girl – Village – Dog – Farm – Blackmail – Love

One day, Leonie visits her grandparents in Little Backwater and immediately notices some weird changes in the village life. The new guard dog has introduced a system of rules among the animals that everybody has to obey or suffer severe punishment. Yet, when Leonie herself almost seems to fall victim to this system, she explores the matter thoroughly and re-establishes a balance between order and chaos – something that all the parties involved accept with relief and great benefit. In a very witty and (despite the fable-like content) absolutely realistic narration, the author tells of small and bigger (human) weaknesses and errors of the village animals and their owners. (6+)

88

Thiele, Jens (text/illus.)

Jo im roten Kleid

(Jo in the red dress)

Wuppertal : Hammer, 2004 – [30] p.

ISBN 3- 87294-949-7

Boy – Appearance – Gender role – Courage

Without explicitly saying so, this book takes up the cudgels for emotional and mental freedom. An adult tells a young child what he dared to do as a boy: When everybody had left the house, he fetched a dress from his mother's wardrobe and imagined himself as a character in a film. This film hero has enemies in abundance who – because of the dress – dislike him, follow him, and beat him up. Yet suddenly, everything seems alright again as a hand draws him onto a brightly lit dance floor; and then he awakes from his day-dreams, still dressed in his mother's red dress, and steps out into the street. Jens Thiele uses bold illustrations in collage- and silhouette-style to move this story about the search for one's identity on a higher, non-naturalistic level. (8+) (Oldenburger Kinder- und Jugendbuchpreis; 2004)

89

Traxler, Hans (text/illus.)

Komm, Emil, wir gehn heim!

(Come on, Emil, we're going home!)

München [et al.] : Hanser, 2004. – [40] p.

ISBN 3-446-20434-2

Old age – Poverty – Pet – Rescue –

Village community – Assistance

Old Martha and Emil, the piglet, live together in a mountain hut – it's a tough life, far from human company, poor, hard-working, but wonderful nevertheless. One autumn, when they walk down into the valley, apparently without any particular reason, at least in Emil's opinion, he becomes suspicious – and rightly so. He witnesses how pigs enter a huge house alive on one side. On the opposite side, strange men carry out pig halves. Martha watches them for a while, thinking hard, then the two of them turn around and walk home again. Luckily enough, there is still no lack of help when the old woman suffers from illness and cold: The village people take care of her as she becomes weaker and weaker. And Emil, the fat piglet, is certainly the one who is most relieved about this. The artist tells this unusual tale with a lot of warmth in caricature-like pictures. (4+) ☼

90

Wendt, Albert (text)

Roeder, Annette (illus.)

Prinzessin Wachtelei mit dem goldenen Herzen

(Princess Quail-Egg with the golden heart)

Leipzig : LeiV, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-89603-198-8

Princess – Growing up – Possession – Love

In her big golden heart – depicted as a real object in this story – the little princess collects things and creatures with which she communicates. Her favourite friend among them is a tiny animal that she lavishes care and attention on. Unfortunately, the beloved creature doesn't stay small. Eventually, the girl has to let it go. But that's not the only good-bye for her. She also has to leave her father, the king, because she has fallen in love with a boy who is waiting for her. This tale about growing up is written in long passages with refrain-like parts in verse. Through language, it offers children a feeling of comfort and security despite all the changes happening in the world around them. (6+)

Switzerland

91

Baltscheit, Martin (text/illus.)

Schwarz, Christine (illus.)

Gold für den Pinguin

(Gold for the penguin)

Zürich : Bajazzo, 2004. – [36] p.

ISBN 3-907588-50-9

Animals – Olympic games – Magnanimity

Any person's high performance in sports pales in comparison to that of animals. While humans have to train very hard, animals would (and in this picture book do) win Olympic medals without even preparing for them: penguins for swimming, bears for the shot put, emus for long distance running, etc. In the end, all the medals are awarded to the animals while the humans are left with absolutely nothing. However, the winners are deeply touched by their competitors' desperation and magnanimously offer their medals to them. Having been part of the Games was the most important aspect anyway and all they wanted was the chance to put things into perspective again. The illustrations present animal and human plasticine figures that get along quite well thanks to the animals' generosity. (6+) ☼

92

Hächler, Bruno (text)

Ratto, Cinzia (illus.)

Tim Töpel (Tim Bumpkin <proper name>)

Gossau : Neugebauer, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-85195-323-1

Outsider – Theatre – Dancing – Public opinion

Clumsy Tim has blue feet and an unrestrainable desire to dance. Every night, Tim's performance is met with thunderous applause until the audience is finally bored with it. Suddenly, they call him the »blue-footed bumpkin.« Tim decides to wear socks during his dance, but it doesn't make any difference. For his final performance, he expects the theatre to be entirely deserted – but, what a surprise: The hall is packed with people wearing blue shoes, which have become the new fashion overnight, and thus Tim is granted a come-back. This tongue-in-cheek yet soothing story shows how easily the audience change their mind and how influential public opinion can be. Clear, slightly ironic pictures underline this message. (6+)

93

Lins, Bernhard (text)

Sottler, Alenka (illus.)

Willi wünscht sich einen Bruder : eine Geschichte

(Willi wants to have a brother : a story)

Zürich : Bohem Press, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-85581-407-4

Siblings – Family addition

A strong, big brother – that's what Willi really wants.

Instead, he gets a little sister who is allowed to do everything that Willi is said to be too big for now: She makes a mess – Mama cleans up after her. She doesn't want to go to bed – Granny tells her one bedtime-story after the other, etc. Unfortunately, the sister grows up ever so slowly, but one day the boy realises that he himself is now the strong big brother and he comes to enjoy his new position. He builds a tepee with Lisa, they climb the apple tree together, and paddle around in their rubber boat. Without concealing the boy's initial frustration, both the text and the large pictures, painted in strong colours in a pointillist style, describe how the difficult family situation ends happily. (4+) ☼

☺ Special Mention

94

Luchsinger, Sandra (text/illus.)

Paolos Glück : eine Geschichte zum Weinen

(Paolo's happiness : a tale full of tears)

Zürich : Atlantis, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-7152-0487-7

Loneliness – Happiness – Crying – Publicity

There is a man who is satisfied with the quiet life he shares with his cat, his books, and his radio. Even though other people consider his life lonely and boring, he is happy. Maybe it's because he enjoys crying while listening to sad or to cheerful music, while reading a melancholy story, or a happy one etc. When his tears touch the ground, huge red flowers start to sprout, and so his fellow humans suddenly take notice of him. They all beg Paolo to let flowers grow for them, too. That's the end of his peaceful life. Eventually, he decides to secretly leave and find a new home. Nevertheless, since the people around him have learned how to cry – from now on they can let their own flowers grow. The short text and the protagonists, who somehow act in a comic-book-like manner, stand out

against the pictures' broad, flat areas of plain colour.

This contrast creates a powerful tension that corresponds to the story's cheerfully-sad content. (6+)

95

Olten, Manuela (text/illus.)

Echte Kerle : ein Buch

(Tough guys : a book)

Zürich : Bajazzo, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-907588-51-7

Boy – Girl – Sexual difference – Gender role

Sure! Boys are tough guys. Especially when they are together, they feel strong and they love to voice their opinion about these totally boring cowardly girls who do nothing but comb their dolls' hair, dress them, and undress them, dress them, undress them... and who are afraid of ghosts! They are so chicken, they wet themselves! Oops... Suddenly the bragging boys' courage vanishes into thin air. Do ghosts exist after all? Maybe even here? Quietly and discretely, the boys make themselves scarce. Large, powerful, humorous pictures accompany this never-ending story about the differences between the stronger (?) and the weaker (?) sex. (6+) ☼

96

Petz, Moritz (text)

Jackowski, Amélie (illus.)

Der Dachs hat heute schlechte Laune!

(Badger's in a bad mood today)

Gossau, Zürich : Nord-Süd, 2004. – [28] p.

(Ein Nord-Süd-Bilderbuch)

ISBN 3-31401140-7

Bad mood – Cure

Badger is in such a bad mood that he manages to offend everyone around him. In the evening, he himself feels better, but all the other animals hide in their homes and avoid his company. Now Badger feels lonely. Then Blackbird – whom he had not met during the day (which is why she is still very cheerful) – happens to pass by. Together, the two of them come up with a great plan: They organise a competition about the worst mood. Starting ahead grumpily, hissing dangerously, or simply being unfriendly – it's hilarious. Strangely enough, everybody is cheered up at once, even Badger. This parable about the influence of a single being on his surroundings and vice versa is presented in plain, earthy pictures. (5+)

97

Schärer, Kathrin (text/illus.)

Wenn Fuchs und Hase sich Gute Nacht sagen
(When fox and hare wish each other »good night«)

Zürich : Atlantis, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-7152-0490-7

Fox – Hare – Threat to life – Trick – Rescue

No sooner does Little Hare realise that he is lost than Fox appears to gobble him up. Yet, hares are truly clever animals and so the little chap successfully prevents Fox's bad deed: by tricking him into tucking him in, reading him a bedtime story, and singing a lullaby – until the fox grows tired and falls asleep. Help is at hand. Father and Mother Hare are coming home. They don't even beat up the sleeping intruder, but instead take him outside on the grass and wish him a good night's rest. This book illustrates how you might save your life in a dangerous situation by resorting to tricks. The slightly caricaturesque pictures show a clever mite and an overly greedy giant who grossly underestimates the potential victim's intelligence. (3+) ☼

98

Wachter, Friedrich Karl (text/illus.)

Der Affe des Strandfotografen
(The beach photographer's ape)

Zürich : Diogenes, 2004. – 52 p.

ISBN 3-257-02079-1

Ape – Humans – Cruelty to animals

This fable alludes to human cruelty, to the animals' dependency and sufferings, and to their revenge. As an assistant to a beach photographer, a funny young chimpanzee is forced to make people laugh. Cheerful pictures sell well, that's why, one day, the owner starts feeding the animal drugs and alcohol – until the ape gets back at the human and serves him his own drugs, thus killing him. Now, the educated ape takes over the photographer's job and people hardly spot any difference to the former master. Inspired by an authentic report about a drug addicted chimpanzee, F. K. Wachter intensifies the animal's misery in his pictures. They show – and at the same time parody – the common thoughtlessness and ignorance of human beings. (12+)

Africa

Ivory Coast (French)

99

Sobhy, Samir (text/illus.)

Le baobab, le perroquet et le jeune homme
(The baobab, the parrot, and the young man)
Abidjan : CEDA, 2003. – 29 p.

(Histoires merveilleuses)

ISBN 2-86394-369-3

Love – Kindness – Courage

Sada, the young hero of this story, has a special gift: He knows the language of birds and trees. One day, he is faced with a problem. Modou, the son of a rich merchant, asks for the hand in marriage of his beloved Nafi, the daughter of the village chief. The two young rivals have to pass a test that is to decide their fate. This instructive story, published in the series of »Histoires Merveilleuses« (Wonderous Tales), shows that honesty and courage are more important than money, and that generosity, helpfulness, and respect will eventually prevail over haughtiness and malice. The illustrations in warm shades of reddish brown symbolise the power humans have if they respect the close bonds between mankind, animals, and nature. (8+)

Rwanda (French)

100

Various (text/illus.)

Tambours pour la paix : recueil de poèmes tirés du concours »Poésie - Enfance 2003« organisé par l'Ambassade du Royaume de Belgique au Rwanda

(Drumming for peace: A collection of poems from the competition »Poetry – Childhood 2003« organised by the Belgian embassy in Rwanda)
Kigali : Ed. Bakame, 2003. – 32 p.

no ISBN

Drumming – War – Peace

In former times, people used to call upon each other to prepare for war by beating their drums. In this case, children beat their drums to call for peace. »Drumming for peace« was the title of an event at the 2003 world day of poetry at which children

were asked to write poems for peace. Supported by the Belgian embassy, the Rwandese publisher Bekame now presents peace-poems and -illustrations created by children from Belgium, Burundi, Congo, and particularly from Rwanda. Even though most of these children do not personally remember the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the shocking consequences of this massacre make children cry out against violence, weapons, killings, aggression, and poverty with their texts and pictures. (7+) ◇

Europe

Belgium (French)

101

Herbauts, Anne (text/illus.)

Lundi

(Monday)

[Bruxelles et al.] : Casterman, 2004. – [36] p.

(Les albums Duculot)

ISBN 2-203-55202-6

Time – Season – Transience

Lundi (Monday) is the name of the bird-creature that has a wonderful time with its friends Théière (Tea Pot) and Deux-Mains (Two Hands). Spring, summer, and autumn pass, but in winter, Lundi vanishes more and more. The topic of time and transience discussed in the text is perfectly complemented by surprising changes in the artistic and technical aspects of the book's design. It is not only the colours and techniques of illustration that aptly reflect the ever-changing atmosphere of the year's seasons; even the thickness of the pages is reduced as Lundi slowly disappears behind the snow-flakes embossed onto the pages. The high quality of the text corresponds extremely well with the visual and haptic pleasures the book offers. (5+)

102

Merveille, Christian (text)

Mæs, Dominique (illus.)

L'Hoir, Bernhard (music)

Silence Premier : Roi de Brouhaha

(Silence the First : King of Brouhaha)

Bruxelles : Alice Jeunesse [et al.], 2004. – [44] p.

+ 1 CD ; 1 p. in braille

(Histoires comme ça)

ISBN 2-87426-000-2

King – Sound – Noise – Silence – Music

When the old king dies, everybody wonders who will succeed him to the throne. The »Book of Rules« demands that people choose the candidate who is able to produce a sound so loud that it will be heard all over the country. Simple, comic-book-like figures dominate the colourful illustrations of this picture book, which confronts young readers with the topic of »noise and silence.« Still, the sense of hearing is not the only aspect dealt with here. Written in large letters and recorded on CD, this story is also accessible for visually impaired and blind children. To make children who have good vision understand that even blind children can read, a short part of the story was printed on an extra sheet in Braille and enclosed with the book. (5+)

France

103

Alemagna, Beatrice (text/illus.)

Histoire courte d'une goutte

(Short tale of a drop of water)

Paris : Éd. Autrement Jeunesse, 2004. – [34] p.

ISBN 2-7467-0546

Water drop – Life – Disappearance

A drop of water is not merely a drop of water. It is full of life. Before quickly evaporating on the pavement, it goes on a colourful and adventurous journey. »How many things exist that disappear again before anyone has had the time to see them properly?« – This is how the quiet, sensitive tale ends. Its text – sometimes poetic and melodious, sometimes energetic, or brief and succinct – accompanies the drop on its way. The large illustrations enable readers to dive into a fantastic imaginative world. The artist's impressive and creative use of various techniques, materials, and colours

results in numerous interesting details well worth to be discovered. As an additional treat, a beautiful print by Beatrice Alemagna is enclosed with each book. (4+) ✨

104

Bondoux, Anne-Laure

La vie comme elle vient

(Life, just as it comes)

Paris : École des Loisirs, 2004. – 251 p.

(Médium) – ISBN 2-211-07252-6

Death – Grief – Siblings – Adolescence – Birth

»Life, just as it comes« suddenly shows its worst side to 15-year-old Mado when her parents die in a car crash. Her 20-year-old sister Patty becomes her legal guardian even though in reality, she is the one who would be lost without her clever, responsible little sister. Patty is expecting a child from Luigi, a man she doesn't love anymore, and is seriously considering an abortion. Together with the first-person narrator, readers are swept along, as if in a torrential current, from high to low, from tears to laughter. In the end, all these nerve-wrecking experiences as well as her first love make Mado develop into a strong young woman. (13+)

105

Brami, Élisabeth (text)

Lemoine, Georges (illus.)

Des espérances

(Hopes)

Paris : Seuil, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 2-02-057216-8

Woman – Girl – Loneliness – Optimism

A little girl knocks on a door. A woman lets her in and is suddenly roused from her depressed, suicidal mood. This picture book's metaphorical, poetical verses full of hope conclude by telling the readers that this is the child hiding deep within each and everyone of us, only waiting to be invited to enter. The delicate pastel drawings are every bit as tender, sensitive, and metaphorical as the text. Large illustrations, spreading almost across the entire double-page at the beginning and the end of the book are surrounded by small pictures that perfectly translate the message of how universal loneliness is. They offer an ingenious and touching play with light and shadow, with the effect of space, and with graphic symbols. (8+)

106

Deshors, Sylvie (text)

Sicaud, Natacha (illus.)

Des jours blancs

(White days)

Rodez : Éd. du Rouergue, 2004. – 73 p.

(Zig Zag)

ISBN 2-84156-587-4

Mother – Depression – Daughter – Independence

»You are the most beautiful butterfly,« Lalou writes to her mother because she is often distant and unreachable for the girl. Lalou's mother suffers from severe depression. She »flies« from one mood into the next and thus the girl witnesses »red days«, when the mother is hyperactive, »black days«, when she sleeps all day long, and »white days«, when she goes into hospital. Very bravely, the girl manages the odd day alone and is warmly received by a neighbouring couple. The first-person narrator's simple language is particularly moving because of the daughter's tender words to her mother. The minimalist black-and-white drawings further add to the touching tone of the little book. (10+) ✨

107

Desnoëttes, Caroline

Au royaume du Nil

(In the kingdom of the Nile)

Paris : Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2004. – 43 p.

ISBN 2-7118-4818-3

Egypt – Nile – Ancient times – Gods

The intention of this publisher is to provide children with an entertaining introduction to art by reproducing selected artefacts from various museums. This intention has been successfully fulfilled in this non-fiction picture book presenting 25 masterly objects from the Musée du Louvre. Young »explorers« embark on a trip to the Nile where Egyptian civilisation had its origins about 5,000 years ago. While on the right-hand page, exhibition objects, paintings, sculptures, reliefs, and even tools are displayed, on the respective left-hand »page within a page«, readers can take a closer look at selected details and find historical background information. Thus, they do not only learn something about extant Egyptian works of art, but also about the life and beliefs in Ancient Egypt. (10+) ✨

108

Douzou, Olivier (text/illus.)

Mik <proper name>

[Nantes] : Éd. MeMo, 2004. – [28] p.

(Collection tout-petits MeMômes)

ISBN 2-910391-61-2

Hedgehog – Present – Balloon – Cactus

Mik, the little hedgehog, has a problem: He is definitely not happy with his birthday presents. A game called spillikins, a soft toy, and a comb are no replacements for what he wants most: a soft round balloon. Mik sulks – and is finally granted his wish. Yet, when a spiky hedgehog plays with a balloon, it isn't long before the inevitable happens ... The short and easy text and the compact illustrations try to get to the bottom of why children are always attracted to exactly those things that their parents consider silly or dangerous. The high-quality book-design lends additional expressive power to the soft red-orange-brown shades of colour inside the illustrations set against a yellow background. (3+) ✨

☺ Special Mention

109

Fdida, Jean-Jacques (text)

Lejonc, Régis (illus.)

Machado, Jean-Marie (music)

L'oiseau de vérité : un conte musical

(The bird of truth : a musical tale)

Paris : Didier Jeunesse, 2004. – [44] p. + 1 CD

ISBN 2-278-05484-8

Prince – Princess – Kidnapping – Identity – Truth – Fairy tale

This book, based on the folk tale »The Three Golden Sons«, tells the story of three princes who are snatched from their mother immediately after their birth. As adolescents, they go on a quest for their own identity. This dangerous journey of initiation follows the rule of »Never look back!« The text never reveals too much and lends a certain gravity to the story that is mirrored in the dark yet soft earth-coloured illustrations. The combination of text and pictures, some of which seem to be cut off, the playful use of light and darkness, and the ambiguity of people and places depicted create a sinister and mysterious atmosphere that leaves ample room for the reader's imagination. The enclosed

audio-CD, which offers a reading and a musical interpretation of the text, complements this picture book perfectly. (8+)

110

Guillaud, Véronique

J'ai vécu les camps de concentration : la Shoah
(I've lived through the concentration camps : the Shoah)

Paris : Bayard éditions, 2004. – 95 p.

(Les dossiers Okapi) (Le Mémorial de Caen)

ISBN 2-747-01441-x

World War II – Nazi regime – Prosecution of the Jews – Concentration camp

»My true revenge is to never stop talking even though the Nazis did their best to silence me.« What these three Jewish eye-witnesses tell about their sufferings during the cruel Nazi regime is stirring and touching. They were between 11 and 15 years old when the prosecution of the Jews started to spread through Europe. Luckily enough, they survived the Warsaw Ghetto, Neuengamme, and Auschwitz respectively. Today, they still carry memories in their hearts of those friends and relatives who were killed there. The new series »J'ai vécu« (I have lived through ...) wants to make the most moving events of the 20th century come alive for teenagers not only by stating mere facts and dates but also through personal reports, photos, and documents. An extensive dossier at the end provides the required background knowledge. (12+) ✧

111

Hoestlandt, Maud (text)

Hubesch, Nicolas (illus.)

La Justice à petits pas

(Law and Justice in small steps)

Arles : Actes Sud Junior, 2004. – 62 p.

(À petits pas)

ISBN 2-7427-4812-1

Law – Justice – International Law

The non-fiction series called »À petits pas« (In small steps) strives to explain to children various matters of interest from the world around them. This volume tackles the complex issue of law and justice, which is often difficult to grasp, in a high-quality text that is nevertheless accessible to children. It moves from the apparently simple question »Justice – what's that?« to »How does the adminis-

tration of justice work?» and then to the field of international law. The helpful order of the chapters, the humorous and witty drawings, the quiz, and the little glossary at the end of the book explain technical terms and provide useful information about the history, structure, and organisation of law and justice in a very entertaining way. (10+)

112

Le Craver, Jean-Louis (text)

Saillard, Rémi (illus.)

Le chat-tigre : conte yao de Chine

(The tiger-cat : a Yao tale from China)

[Paris] : Syros Jeunesse, 2004. – 124 p.

(Paroles de conteurs)

ISBN 2-7485-0263-9

Siblings – Tiger-Cat – Envy – Jealousy – Fairy tale

Jean-Louis Le Craver tells a story of sibling rivalry loosely based on a folk tale from the Yaos, an ethnic minority in Southern China and Northern Laos. It focuses on two brothers: The older one has the remarkable gift to always influence his fate in a favourable way, while the younger one is so obsessed with envy, that he acts clumsily and unsuccessfully and eventually runs away. When the older brother marries the youngest daughter of the dragon king, her eldest sister is suddenly filled to the brim with jealousy about their happiness – a mistake that leads to a sad end for her. The comprehensible text clearly keeps to the motto of this series called »Paroles des conteurs« (The storyteller's words), i.e. »tales as they are told rather than written down«. The exotic, fairy tale-like atmosphere is confirmed by striking black-and-red lino-cuts. (6+)

113

Louis, Catherine (illus.)

Shi, Bo (calligraphies)

Mon imagier chinois

(My Chinese picture-dictionary)

Arles : Picquier, 2004. – [ca. 206] p.

(Picquier Jeunesse)

ISBN 2-87730-733-6

Chinese character – Ideogram

The China-Year in France (2003/2004) has also left some marks on French children's literature. In this picture-dictionary, even the youngest children are given an introduction to Chinese characters and their origin. On the left-hand pages, calligraphies

of the old and the modern characters, as well as their meaning and pronunciation are displayed. On the corresponding right-hand pages, the ideograms are interpreted through lino-cuts on coloured paper that have a striking resemblance to the real character. Readers will be fascinated as they follow the path of the original object from its early character to the present one. The fact that Chinese characters do not represent sounds but refer to concrete concepts will certainly arouse the readers' curiosity about Chinese writing and culture. (5+) ✧ ✧

114

Molla, Jean

Que justice soit faite : roman

(May justice be done)

Paris : Grasset-Jeunesse, 2004. – 199 p.

(Lampe de poche ; 76)

ISBN 2-246-66361-X

Book – Threat – Murder – Suicide – Past

A school librarian addresses Inspector Campin and reports that more and more books turn up in his library from which certain words are missing. At first, the cut-out words combined seem nothing but incomprehensible hints and threats to Campin. When the librarian is found dead, however, the inspector has to take the case seriously. At the same time, Julie, an ardent fan of detective novels, also follows the clues and puts herself in danger. The solution to this case lies in an old mystery that involves not only the dead librarian but also other staff members from school. This captivating detective novel is never boring, thanks to the frequent unexpected turns of events; it ends when things that were long left unsaid are finally laid open. (12+)

115

Mourlevat, Jean-Claude (text)

Alemagna, Beatrice (illus.)

La troisième vengeance de Robert Poutifard

(Robert Poutifard's third act of revenge)

[Paris] : Gallimard Jeunesse, 2004. – 168 p.

(Hors-piste ; 21)

ISBN 2-07-056989-6

Teacher – Pupil – Nasty trick – Revenge

As a child, Robert Poutifard was always teased by his classmates for being tall and fat. So when he later decided to become a teacher, it was hardly due to his love for children but out of feelings of re-

venge. Now, 37 years later, he has just retired and has but one thing on his mind: vengeance. He randomly picks out three pupils who remind him of those who played nasty tricks on him and humiliated him. The first two acts of revenge are a great success for him – and their preparation has finally given his life new meaning. But then he starts on the third one and slowly comes to realise that forgiveness can make you happy, too. This biting satire with a conciliatory ending stands apart for its humour deriving from the reversal of roles and for its vivid and often burlesque style. (9+)

116

Ollivier, Mikaël / Clarinard, Raymond

E-den <name of a drug>

Paris : Thierry Magnier, 2004. – 205 p.

ISBN 2-84420-306-X

Future – Father – Son – Drug addiction – Coma
15-year-old Goran and his father Serge, an internationally renowned drug expert, live in Paris a few years in the future. The high-tech-age with ultra-modern security, communication, and transport systems dominates everyday life. Together with the two protagonists, who alternate in telling the story from their respective points of view, the readers dive into the world of the cyber-drug »Eden«. When the father starts working on a new case, Goran is fascinated and curious. Both realistic and utopian elements are mixed successfully in this believable science-fiction novel. It soon becomes obvious how terrible our world would be if paradise (Eden) were merely a virtual reality and people were not safely embedded in a social and humane environment. (12+)

117

Osterwalder, Hans Ulrich

Bertrand, Pierre (transl./research)

Les os de mon squelette : l'histoire d'une fracture
(The bones of my skeleton : the story of a fracture)

Paris : École des Loisirs, 2004. – 45 p.

ISBN 2-211-07198-8

Bones – Fracture – X-ray – Skeleton

A young boy argues with his friend, falls down the stairs, and breaks his shin bone. At the hospital, the leg is X-rayed and put in plaster. This frame story accompanies the non-fiction picture book about

bones and fractures. With the utmost attention to didactics, the book leads from general observations to particular details, from the human skeleton and its bones to the bone structure and growth, before it eventually returns to the frame story. The human protagonists are depicted as mere shadows or schemes, whereas the bones and their structure are presented in highly detailed colour plates. At the end of this carefully-researched book, an appendix offers further explanations and definitions of technical terms. (7+)

118

Riff, Hélène

Papa se met en quatre

(Daddy gives it everything)

Paris : Albin Michel Jeunesse, 2004 – [48] p.

ISBN 2-226-15296-2

Mother – Father – Children – Housework – Spot
»Lucie and Victor got married and had many children.« That's the well-known fairy tale ending this picture book starts with. Yet, it isn't a fairy tale but a nice everyday episode about a large family. One morning, when the mother is called away for two days, she leaves the seven children in the care of the father, who longs to prove that he has everything under control. He decides that the kitchen needs a thorough cleaning – so they wipe and sweep and polish ... but what's that?! There is a black spot on the floor and they all claim: »It wasn't me!« The light-hearted, lyrical text, mostly in rhymes, is scattered among the sketchy drawings. Particularly impressive are the contrasts of black and white, the various vague sketches, and the colourful details that will immediately catch the readers' eyes. (5+)

119

Serres, Alain (text)

Jarrie, Martin (illus.)

Une cuisine grande comme un jardin : 60 recettes pour découvrir les fruits et les légumes du monde
(A kitchen the size of a garden)

Voisins-le-Bretonneux : Rue du Monde, 2004. – 68 p.

ISBN 2-915569-13-4

Vegetables – Fruit – Recipe – Cooking

In 2001, the publisher-cum-author Alain Serres travelled the world with his book »Une cuisine grande comme le monde« (A kitchen the size of

the world). Now, he explores the world of fruit and vegetables through 60 recipes arranged according to starter, main course, and dessert. They are complemented by historical and modern comments on nutrition as well as international sayings and puns about fruit. However, this is much more than just an appealing cook book for children. Large-format, full-page pictures of ripe fruits and vegetables, placed against a coarsely-textured, colourful, almost tangible background, are sitting before the readers' eyes. Through a play with light and shadows, the fruits are turned into ›stars‹ who are proud to be in the limelight. (7+)

120

Wiéner, Magali

À la rencontre des chevaliers

(Discovering the world of knights)

[Paris] : Père Castor Flammarion, 2004. – 127 p.

(Castor Doc)

ISBN 2-08-162536-9

Knight – Knighthood – Middle Ages – Honour

Although they lived in the Middle Ages, they still continue to fascinate people today as symbols of ideal virtue, as brave fighters, or as popular heroes like Lancelot, Arthur, or Parsifal. This non-fiction title for children, which combines the historical and the literary view on knighthood, attempts to answer the following questions: Who were these knights? What was their life like? Which values were important for them? What role did hunting, war, and competitions play? Detailed insertions, explanations of terms, excerpts from literary texts, and illustrative pictures turn this non-fiction book into an informative and exciting read. (10+)

✧ books whose content is found to contribute to an international understanding among cultures and peoples

⊗ books with easy-to-read texts but nonetheless complex and high-interest topics

Italy

121

Capatti, Bérénice (text)

Monaco, Octavia (illus.)

Vi presento Klimt

(May I present Mr. Klimt)

Milano : Ed. Arka, 2004. – [36] p.

(Collana di Perle d'arte)

ISBN 88-8072-141-0

Klimt, Gustav – Art – Painting – Cat

This picture book introduces children to art in a fairly entertaining and original way. The imaginative Viennese painter Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) is presented by his cat! Intrigued by this ingenious trick, children will readily explore the story of his complex life devoted to the arts and discover the secrets of his trademark pictures, rich in decorations and brimming with ornaments painted in gold. Readers follow the painter into his studio, accompany him as he is visiting museums or on his travels, and watch how he copes with his admirers and critics. The text is set against a warm, colourful background on which dynamic figures are acting. Octavia Monaco's paint brush magically recreates Klimt's world and characteristic style. As an additional treat, the last pages show reproductions of some of his most famous paintings. (8+)

122

Carrer, Chiara (text/illus.)

Aktaş, Sevim (transl.)

Fhame, Shoukri (transcription)

Giufà <proper name>

Roma : Sinnos Ed., 2004. – [48] p.

(Fiabalandia ; 34 : Intercultura)

ISBN 88-7609-000-2

Fool – Mediterranean – Intercultural relationship

Giufà is probably one of the most famous literary figures linking the Mediterranean countries where he is known by many different names, such as ›the Fool‹. He is an indefinable and multi-faceted character: Sometimes, he seems to be a naïve simpleton, at other times, he acts like a sly rogue capable of cunning tricks. The text for each of these six short stories is provided in the three languages that Giufà knows best: Arabic, Turkish, and Sicilian. For her illustrations, Chiara Carrer uses an unusual style. The main character acts in an environment strongly

reminiscent of a shadow theatre, in which the prevailing colours are black, white, and orange. This excellent book stands out for the peculiar choice of style and for the quality of the graphics. Moreover, it introduces an unparalleled example of a multicultural character. (6+) ♦

123

Cerri, Mara (text/illus.)

A una stella cadente = Upon a falling star =

À une étoile filante

Roma : Orecchio Acerbo, 2004. – [20] p.

ISBN 88-89025-11-5

Girl – Search for identity – Wish

People say that when you see a falling star you should make a wish. That is the starting point for this beautifully-designed small book, an original collection of wishes, hopes, and fears intended for teenage girls. The texts are reduced to one sentence per page printed in Italian, English, and French. They present something like a top ten list of authentic desires of young people not influenced by consumerism, such as »I want to know whether everybody feels clumsy and heavy sometimes« or »I want to discover what is inside all the things that cannot speak.« The female protagonists, roughly sketched, take on fantastic forms like sirens or pear-shaped women; they change shape and hover above a delicate, soft background, while the sentences seem to follow the shapes. (10+)

☺ Special Mention

124

De Mari, Silvana (text)

De Conno, Gianni (illus.)

L'ultimo elfo

(The last elf)

Milano : Salani, 2004. – 317 p.

(Gl' istrici ; 200)

ISBN 88-8451-401-0

Adventure – Fantasy – Friendship –

Quest for meaning – Elf

In this passionate story set in gloomy medieval times somewhere between the real world and a fantasy realm, the protagonists have to face contradictions and fears that are clearly familiar to readers today. The readers meet three fugitives: a man, a woman, and a small elf. Wandering across a grey

land, the elf feels cold, miserable, and hungry and longs for shelter and something to eat. His own world is disappearing, but when he meets the two very generous human beings, he feels safe again. Little by little, they come to know each other, realise – and accept – that they are different, and build up solidarity and friendship. After a long journey, the little elf arrives at a dragon's den where his transformation takes place: Having been the last member of his own species, he is now turned into the first member of a new one. This novel, which offers a variety of possible interpretations, combines fantasy and fairy tale elements with the deepest and most serious themes of today's world. (10+)

125

Garlando, Luigi

Per questo mi chiamo Giovanni

(That's why my name is Giovanni)

Milano : Fabbri, 2004. – 140 p.

(Storie Vere)

ISBN 88-451-0303-x

Father – Son – Courage – Mafia – Violence

This book describes the fight that Sicilian magistrate Giovanni Falcone fought against the Mafia until he was killed in 1992. On the day of this tragic attack, a shopkeeper's son was born and his father decided to stop paying protection money to the local Mafia. Ten years later, the father tries to explain to his son what the Mafia is and why he chose to name him Giovanni. In the dialogue between father and son, the story of Falcone – the private man and the judge – and the description of everyday-life in Palermo are closely intermingled. In this troubled city, the Mafia – like a faceless monster – can grow through the people's conspiracy of silence, acquiescence, and lack of self-confidence. The book offers readers a message of hope and helps them understand today's world by keeping the memory of Giovanni alive. (10+)

126

Jankovic, Elisabetta (text)

Scassa, Pedro (illus.)

Un regalo per Goumba

(A present for Goumba)

Roma : Ed. Lapis, 2004. – [28] p.

(I Lapislazzuli) – ISBN 88-87546-78-9

Christmas – Friendship – Intercultural relationship – Identity

Goumba has just arrived from Africa. He still dreams about the colours there and vividly remembers the relation with nature and things. As Christmas is approaching, Goumba's classmate Betty explains to him that at Christmas people celebrate the birth of Jesus and that, above all, Santa Claus brings presents. When Betty encourages the boy to write a letter and ask for a present, he wishes for footprints, just like the ones he used to leave in the sand in his own country. Betty, too, asks Santa for a present for her new friend. On Christmas morning, their wishes come true, almost magically, and Goumba becomes aware of his own identity. On pages full of rich and bright colours, this picture book tells of the encounter between different cultures in a simple way. (6+) ✧

127

Lossani, Chiara

Stregata da un pitone : se ti ama non ti stritola!
(Charmed by a python)

Firenze : Giunti Junior, 2004. – 182 p.

(Graffi) – ISBN 88-09-02891-0

Journey – Adventure – Teenager – Humour

This original and amusing book pleasantly combines all the required ingredients suitable for a story for contemporary teenagers based on the rhythm and reality of everyday life. The main protagonist, Sara, is an amiable girl who is sent to England by her parents – against her will – to study English. She becomes involved in an amazing adventure at the end of which, with the decisive help of the python Aberdeen and an Indian boy, she discovers and exposes a devious trade with young scullery boys. Told from a first-person point of view, the narration is clear and swift, while the plot is a succession of exciting incidents that are well-linked to each other and with a mystery to be solved. Moreover, the book also contains a pinch of humour and irony and discusses some intercultural issues. (12+)

128

Moretti, Dario (text/illus.)

Storia di tre

(A story of three)

Modena : Panini, 2004. – [40] p.

(Ragazzi)

ISBN 88-8290-676-0

Colour – Diversity – Search for identity – Animals

Dario Moretti has created a wonderful visual story in which the three main characters are somehow ›wrong‹: The pink penguin, the purple crocodile, and the bright-green cat were born in countries as far away as the South Pole, Central Africa, and a Northern city, respectively. They all decide to set off and explore the world and, eventually, end up in the same city where they start a company together before they continue on their separate journeys. Each animal treasures the memory of both its place of origin and its own identity, and has also learned to recognise and accept the identity of its friends. This picture book stimulates children's curiosity and imagination. The story is ideal for reading aloud and can also be adapted for the stage. (4+) ✧

129

Papini, Arianna (text/illus.)

Odore di bombe, profumo di pioggia

(The stench of bombs, the scent of rain)

Firenze : Fatatrac, 2004. – [24] p.

ISBN 88-8222-122-9

Child – War – Hope – Water

This picture book features ten very short stories about children of different ethnic groups and cultures. Readers travel from the Middle East, where children suffer under the bombings, to freezing caves in Kurdistan, from the camps of the itinerants on the rubbish-mountains of big cities to the parched Sicilian countryside, from the United States to the large Indian rivers. The stories are dramatic and poignant, echoing with war and injustice, describing expectations and fears, loneliness and longings, all with the same *leitmotif*: water as a vital and necessary element – wasted water, water wrenched from arid regions, stolen, denied, or dreamt of. The passionate and concise texts are accompanied by evocative, melancholy, and highly refined double-page pictures on a black background. (8+) ✧ (Special International Prize »City of Schwanenstadt« ; 2004)

130

Piumini, Roberto (text)

Bussolati, Emanuela (illus.)

Diario di La

(La's diary)

San Dorligo della Valle (Trieste) : Ed. EL, 2004.

– 122 p.

(Lettere e diari ; 2)

ISBN 88-477-1373-0

Diary – Everyday life – Friendship –

Intercultural relationship

This passionate fictitious diary is written by a vivacious and sensitive 9-year-old girl. La, a nickname for Laura, loves writing into her diary which she calls »Di« for short. She tells Di a lot of things she would not dare tell a friend and some she might otherwise not even admit to herself. The story is set in a context of immigration in an urban environment. In a lively manner, Laura chats about her everyday life and in particular about her friendship with Am, i.e. Ahmed, and his granddad. The old man feels utterly lonely and isolates himself through his stubborn silence. The two children want to help him get back his string instrument and try to revive his taste for storytelling. This enjoyable story quite naturally promotes the understanding between people from different cultures. (9+) ✧

131

Pontremoli, Giuseppe (text)

Monaco, Octavia (illus.)

Ballata per tutto l'anno e altri canti

(A ballad for the whole year and other songs)

Roma : Nuove Ed. Romane, 2004. – 65 p.

(Canzoni, poesie e filastrocche ; 13)

ISBN 88-7457-021-x

Poetry – Month – Love – Game

The author, who died at a very early age, has given us this short, passionate ballad describing the twelve months of the year. The text emphasises the power of love and friendship that can be celebrated in many ways, e.g. by »chasing the fairies«, »counting the stars«, or »beating any fear«. Each double page spread presents the text in verse, masterfully illustrated by Octavia Monaco who is able to transfer emotions and feelings directly onto the page with paintbrush and paints. She creates imaginative pictures depicting dreams in which the world of living creatures meets that of inanimate objects. The

book also contains short poems that can easily be understood by smaller children, expressing the love for life, for games, and for everyday matters. (10+)

132

Zoboli, Giovanna (text)

Bazzurro, Francesca (illus.)

Mondo cane

(A dog's world)

Milano : Topipittori, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 88-89210-02-8

Animals – Diversity – Prejudice – Search for identity

This lovely picture book in which words and pictures blend perfectly is presented by a new small publisher particularly concerned with high-quality products. The main character is a cream-coloured mongrel puppy who tells his story in the first person. Lillo lives in the city and is quite happy to be in this world until one day, he makes a shocking discovery: Dogs are not all born equal, and for little mongrels life can be quite hard at times. Through various experiences, Lillo gets acquainted with the joys and disappointments of the »real world« and slowly finds out about his own identity. It is a dog-size story of growing up, illustrated with original pictures, the colours ranging from sand and mustard to grey and black – a truly stimulating way to help children discover social rules. (5+)

Portugal

☺ Special Mention

133

Vieira, Alice

O casamento da minha mãe

(My mother's wedding)

Lisboa : Caminho, 2005. – 143 p.

ISBN 972-21-1678-9

Mother – Profession – Success – Daughter – Foster parents

Not many authors are capable of presenting the depths of family life in as masterful a way as Alice Vieira. In her most recent novel, the award-winning author describes the tense relationship between Vera and her mother who is a successful model. The girl only meets this 'stranger' on occasional frustrating visits because she was handed

over to some distant relatives soon after she was born. Told from the protagonist's point of view, the story conveys a convincing picture of the miscommunication between the egocentric mother and the daughter who tries to find her place in life despite her Cinderella-like role. Thanks to her excellent sense of details and subtle irony, Vieira easily makes readers see all the child's feelings, from her loneliness, despair, and unfulfilled longing for love to her pretended indifference that she uses to protect herself from disappointments. This is an exceptional book, both profound and touching, yet surprisingly light-hearted. (11+)

Romania

134

Dărmăuș, Nicolae Romulus (text/illus.)

Ursul, distinsa fiară

(The bear, the noble beast of prey)

București : Ed. Alfa, 2003. – 39 p.

ISBN 973-8457-26-2

Bear – Nature – Protection of animals

The animals of the Earth definitely deserve a better human species – that's the motto of this story about a bear's life. The amiable almost human-like female bear is described within its natural environment, virtually unspoiled nature. However, some humans have managed to invade this area, too, and the bear pays with its life when a hunter crosses its path. Still, there is some hope that, one day, humans will have learned to treat animals with respect. Even though the book is designed in a simple way that may not be particularly attractive, the text itself is definitely worth reading. (8+)

135

Pachia Tatomișescu, Ion (text)

Gramă, Emil (illus.)

Povestea celor trei mustăți de fier

(The story of the three iron-moustaches)

Timișoara : Ed. Aethicus, 2003. – 146 p.

(Colecția Cosânzeana)

ISBN 973-85261-2-4

Romania – Fantasy world – Dictatorship – Irony – Literary fairy tale

This volume is a collection of 12 literary fairy tales written in a poetic yet easily understandable language. Each tale contains a basic element of truth with motifs from Romanian folk tales wound around it. Through this mixture, a lyrical fantasy world is created. The tales examine the political situation at that time in a very ironical way. It is easy to notice, for example, that they make fun of the Ceaușescu regime. As a consequence, the complete version of these texts was only published thirty years after they had been written. This volume also contains the original censorship remarks from the time of the Ceaușescu-dictatorship. Black-and-white drawings, photographs, and collages underline the text's fantastic atmosphere. (8+)

136

Pop, Doru (text)

Anton, Răzvan (illus.)

Poveștile bunicuței Nana : poveștile copiilor, cu, pentru și despre ei

(Grandmother Nana's tales : children's tales – with them, for them, and about them)

Cluj-Napoca : Ed. Aqua Forte, 2003. – 36 p.

ISBN 973-86167-6-X

Child – Parents – Inner voice – Environment

In contrast to the child-hostile reality in which having no children is the rule, orphanages are horrible, and a lot of children live on the streets, Doru Pop creates a magical universe of children's souls. The 15 short stories with their unexpected, poetical metaphors take readers into the lost realm of childhood where the mere existence of a person is enough to explain the meaning of life. Only children can see with their hearts and explain the world without the help of words – that's the message of this small book. (6+)

Spain

☺ Special Mention

137

Arenal, Sandra (interviews/text)

Chiesa, Mariana (illus.)

No hay tiempo para jugar : relatos de niños trabajadores

(There is no time for playing : working children talk about their lives)

Valencia : Media Vaca, 2004. – 115 p.

(Últimas lecturas ; 4)

ISBN 84-932004-6-8

Child labour – Children's rights

All over the world, the work capacity of innumerable children is being exploited. For many years, Sandra Arenal from Mexico (1936-2000) desperately fought for the rights of working children. One of the numerous results of her commitment is this collection of texts based on interviews with underage workers. These children between the age of 6 and 16, who live in Monterrey in Northern Mexico, talk about their work, their lives, their dreams, and their disappointments in an open, laconic way – some are full of illusions while others have completely lost theirs. Twelve years after its first publication in Mexico, these authentic reports are just as important and topical as they were then. The black-and-white-and-red wood cuts that the Argentinean artist Mariana Chiesa has created especially for this new edition are equally impressive. Full of strength and expressiveness, they are the perfect addition to these powerful texts. (13+) ↵

138

Gómez Cerdá, Alfredo (text)

Segovia, Carmen (illus.)

El tigre que tenía miedo a las gallinas

(The tiger that was afraid of chickens)

Madrid : Anaya, 2004. – 138 p.

(Sopa de libros ; 99) – ISBN 84-667-3988-2

Children's home – Youth detention centre –

Outsider – Friendship – Freedom

Even though he is an outsider, Antonio considers life in the detention centre to be primarily safe and dependable. His new room mate Pedro, however, disturbs this stability because he doesn't want to be a »tiger that is even afraid of chicken«.

Soon enough, his longing for freedom also 'infects' Antonio. The two boys decide to escape from the home and although they don't get far, this step marks an important moment in Antonio's personal development. Alfredo Gómez Cerdá describes the fears and wishes of the two adolescents in a realistic and convincing tone. Both the various characters and life in a detention centre are exceedingly well portrayed. (12+)

139

Martín Garzo, Gustavo (text)

Gabán, Jesús (illus.)

Tres cuentos de hadas

(Three fairy tales)

Madrid : Ed. Siruela, 2003. – 131 p.

(Las tres edades ; 106) – ISBN 84-7844-733-4

Literary fairy tale

In Gustavo Martín Garzo's novels, the readers frequently come across magical elements that are described with great casualness and naturalness. The same natural combination of real and supernatural motifs is evident in this book's three literary fairy tales, which are of high linguistic quality and will appeal to child and adult readers alike. One characteristic example is the tale about a forest fairy that takes possession of the soul of a dead girl. Without growing any older, the fairy remains in her own body but leads the girl's life until the soul finally deserts her when the dead child's mother dies. Jesús Gabán's dream-like colour illustrations wonderfully capture the melancholic and nostalgic tone that runs through all three tales. (10+) (Premio Nacional; 2004)

140

Neira Cruz, Xosé Antonio

El armiño duerme

(The stoat is sleeping)

Madrid : Ed. SM, 2003. – 158 p.

(Gran angular ; 245)

ISBN 84-348-9609-5

Italy/16th century – Florence – Medici, Bianca di –

Love – Fictional diary

In historical documents, there is hardly any information about Bianca di Medici, Duke Cosimo I.'s illegitimate daughter who was brought to her father's court in Florence as a child. The author has taken the few indisputable facts available as his

starting point for this novel. Through her diary, which was allegedly found in her coffin, Bianca directly addresses the readers, telling them about her life in the golden cage and her unhappiness in love. In this exceptional book, the fictional elements and the carefully researched and vividly described historical context are interwoven in a superb way. Another outstanding quality of this novel is its rich multi-faceted language. (12+)

141

Schimel, Lawrence (text)

Rojo, Sara (illus.)

No hay nada como el original

(There is nothing like the original)

Barcelona : Destino, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 84-08-05261-6

Single child – Loneliness – Boredom – Cloning – Identity

Creativity knows no bounds. When a boy is left alone in his mother's office, he spontaneously produces a bunch of copies of himself. Suddenly he has a wonderful supply of look-alikes who are going to play with him and take over all the tasks he himself doesn't feel like completing, such as doing his homework, visiting the dentist, cleaning his room, etc. Yet, what if the lovely homunculi decide to start a rebellion? What if Mum cannot tell the original from the copies anymore? In a witty and refreshingly non-didactical way, the text and illustrations of this very original picture book play with wishes and fears that are familiar to many children of our time. (5+)

142

Ventura, Antonio (text)

Novoa, Teresa (illus.)

Dos lobos blancos

(Two white wolves)

Zaragoza : Edelvives, 2004. – [36] p.

ISBN 84-263-5268-5

Winter – Wolf – Help

A starry winter night; snow-covered woods and mountains; two wolves following the call of a wounded female companion. With few words and cleverly selected voids that leave ample room for the readers' and listeners' imagination, Antonio Ventura creates a simple story that radiates with an almost archaic atmosphere reminiscent of ancient myths. The poetic power of the text also emanates from Teresa

Novoa's breath-taking pictures that stand out for their vastness and their fascinating perspectives. Readers can actually feel the impenetrable depth of the black-green night sky, the pale-grey coldness of the dawn, and the quiet loneliness of the forest in this exquisite picture book. (5+) ✧

Spain (Catalan)

143

Gisbert, Montse (text/illus.)

Vergés, Elisenda (transl.)

Salvador Dalí, pinta'm un somni

(Salvador Dalí, paint a dream for me)

Barcelona : Serres, 2003. – [44] p.

ISBN 84-8488-128-8

(Spanish ed.: Salvador Dalí, pintame und sueño)

Dalí, Salvador – Art – Surrealism

To celebrate Salvador Dalí's 100th birthday in 2004, various children's books were published in Spain that introduce young readers to the life and work of the Catalan artist and famous representative of surrealism. One of the most original examples of these is this witty non-fiction book designed – quite appropriately – in collage technique. Montse Gisbert combines reproductions of Dalí's works with old and new photographs and fixes all of them onto her own double-page colour illustrations. The vitality of the pictures is also mirrored in the informative text that is presented as a biography told by Dalí himself. (8+)

144

Hernández, Pau Joan

El mussol i la forca

(The owl and the gallows)

Barcelona : Edebé, 2004. – 253 p.

(Periscopi ; 69)

ISBN 84-236-6955-6

Terrorism – Disabled person

A journalist and a police officer form a powerful team for solving a mysterious criminal case. When several people go missing and the graffito of an owl appears in the very places where these people were last seen, the two of them start their investigation and end up in the sewers below the metropolis of Barcelona. In there, they uncover the preparations for a terrible attack. The novel's char-

Romance Languages /Spain (Catalan)

acters and places as well as the social and political setting for the plot are cleverly developed. Written in an easy-going style that contains plenty of dialogues and is ideal for young adults, this gripping, fast-paced detective novel quickly grabs the readers' attention. (14+)

145

Pradas, Núria (text)

Mallo, Diego (illus.)

Una nit de Reis boja

(A crazy Epiphany's night)

Barcelona : La Galera, 2004. – 56 p.

(LaGalera grumets ; 170 : A partir de 7 anys)

ISBN 84-246-9580-1

The Three Kings – Christmas tradition

The Spanish tradition, unlike that of many other countries, claims that it's the Three Kings who deliver the Christmas presents for the children on January 6. Tales about this ancient custom can be found in numerous children's book, such as this funny narrative by the well-known Catalan author. Since the kings' pages are extremely busy, they have to hire additional helpers who, unfortunately, are not quite up to the task at hand sometimes. Under such great pressure, it's no wonder that a few things go wrong. This fast-paced, ironical version of a familiar tale is a great read, already suitable for beginning readers. (7+)

Spain (Galician)

146

Docampo, Xabier P. (text)

Cobas, Xosé (illus.)

Bolboretas

(Butterflies)

A Coruña : Everest Galicia, 2004. – [48] p.

(Colección Rañaceos)

ISBN 84-403-0513-3

First love – Friendship

The 12-year-old protagonist of this book has a peculiar habit: He catches butterflies and carefully puts them in his mouth to feel the fluttering and tickling of their wings in his blown-up cheeks before he finally releases them again. One day, when he tells a girl with whom he is secretly in love about his ›hobby‹, she is eager to share this

experience with him. When they ›hand over‹ the butterfly, this turns into their first kiss. Xabier Docampo recounts this weightless story in a condensed, highly poetical language. The text is accompanied by equally lyrical pictures in warm colours and delicate shapes. (10+)

147

Marcos, Xesús Manuel

O Brindo de ouro : a chamada do Brindo

(The golden Brindo)

Vigo : Xerais, 2004. – 233 p.

(O Brindo de ouro ; 1) (Fóra de xogo ; 80)

ISBN 84-9782-206-4

Adventure – Secret – Imagination

The peaceful life of young Selmo, a member of the Arxinas tribe, ends abruptly when his village is attacked and burned down by the Broncedos people. Accompanied by the albino wolf Combán, which protects him from any danger, Selmo flees. Along the way, he meets two warriors, Toimil and Oulego, who help him solve the mystery of the ›Brindo de Ouro‹ – a magic horn that provides them with the courage and strength they need to become invincible. This gripping adventure novel combines epic and fantastic elements and leads the readers into a distant mystical past when magic was of vital importance for people. (13+) (Premio Merlín; 2004)

148

Silva, Kiko da (text/illus.)

¿Que contan as ovellas para durmir?

(What do sheep count to fall asleep?)

Vigo : Galaxia, 2004. – 24 p.

(Árbore) – ISBN 84-8288-723-8

Animals – Sheep – Sleeplessness – Search

Bee, a quick-witted sheep, wonders what her fellow sheep count at night if they can't get to sleep. Sheep? Not likely! Since no one in her flock comes up with a satisfying answer, Bee sets out to ask some other animals; yet, their comments are not particularly helpful either. However, the very moment that Bee is far too tired and exhausted to go on enquiring further about this big question, the secret is suddenly unravelled. Told in the form of a chain fairy tale, this humorous story for young readers keeps building up tension until the very end. The imaginative illustrations were created in a very original montage technique. (5+)

Romance Languages

Switzerland (French)

149

Bille, S. Corinna (text)

Heezen, Janis (illus.)

Le masque géant

(The giant mask)

Genève : Joie de Lire, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 2-88258-289-7

Wallis – Custom – Mask – Fear

The author S. Corinna Bille (1919-1979) was inspired to write a story by an old custom from the Upper Wallis in Switzerland. This picture book now offers a new interpretation of that text. During carnival time, people dressed in sheep-skin garments and wearing a belt of cowbells and a wooden mask walk around scaring the people in the streets. Children in particular are utterly fond of this frightening spectacle. One day, however, a masked giant enters the village. While the adults are suspicious and keep their distance, the children eagerly seek the intruder's company. Fear and courage, appearance and reality, these are the book's main topics expressed in predominantly greyish-brown illustrations through contrasts such as big and small, light and dark, etc. (5+)

Latin America

Argentina (Spanish)

150

Bianki (illus.)

Restorán

(Restaurant)

Buenos Aires : Pequeño Editor, 2003. – [24] p.

(Colección Fuelle)

ISBN 987-20847-3-4

Eating – Being eaten – Food chain

Eating and being eaten, this natural law does not only apply to the wilderness but also to a modern dinner table – as this story with its comic-book-like illustrations clearly proves. A frog that suddenly leaps from a plate of soup to catch a few delicious flies turns from hunter into prey. Who would have thought that in the soup's mysterious depths, a voracious crocodile was lying in wait...? The almost text-less picture story, which is only accompanied

by a few onomatopoeic words, is a witty example of the small square picture books published by Pequeño Editor (Small Publisher). With titles by well-known illustrators and cartoonists, the publishing house adds a new facet to Argentinean children's literature. (5+)

151

Bodoc, Liliana (text)

Trillo, Matías (illus.)

Sucedió en colores

(It happened in colour)

Buenos Aires : Grupo Ed. Norma, 2004. – 94 p.

(Torre de papel : Azul)

ISBN 987-545-138-x

Literary fairy tale

Following her gripping fantasy trilogy »La saga de los confines« (The legend of the end of the world), Liliana Bodoc now proves her remarkable skill in the short literary genre. Inspired by folk tales and myths whose narrative tone she perfectly captures, she presents five different texts, each one dedicated to one particular colour. Each colour appears in characters and objects of the respective tale but, beyond that, it has also a symbolic meaning representing human feelings and moods. It is remarkable how the Argentinean author manages to surprise her readers with unusual pictures and unexpected turns of events. (9+)

152

González, Fernando (text/illus.)

Circo

(Circus)

Buenos Aires : Ed. del Eclipse, 2004. – 28 p.

(Libros-álbum del Eclipse)

ISBN 987-9011-61-9

Circus

Within the past few years, several new small Argentinean publishers have leapt unto the market, attracting attention because of their fresh, courageous, and innovative ideas. In 2004, Ediciones del Eclipse made their debut with eight picture books, each of them with its own very distinctive format, illustrative style, and layout that demonstrate the huge range of the Argentinean art of illustration. Animals, acrobats, and clowns are romping about in Fernando Gonzalez's book. The short nonsense texts are set against bright mono-

chrome backgrounds and illustrated by sketchy line drawings. This imaginative mixture perfectly matches the crazy and colourful circus life. (6+)

☺ Special Mention

153

Pescetti, Luis María (text)

O'Kif (illus.)

Nadie te creería

(No-one would believe you)

Buenos Aires : Alfaguara, 2004. – 175 p.

(Próxima parada : Desde 10 años)

ISBN 950-511-925-9

Child – Everyday life – Short story – Nonsense literature

Luis María Pescetti, who is one of the most famous authors of Argentinean children's literature, presents a splendid collection of 45 texts that hint at the author's other passions: acting and making music. Many of the short stories, dialogues, and poems start off with an ordinary everyday situation that quite suddenly (or fairly slowly) takes an unexpected and absurd turn. In the first tale, for example, a mother speaks to her child's teacher and spontaneously decides to swap her son for one of his classmates, as if this were nothing out of the ordinary. And the book continues with equally crazy twists, story after story. In a brilliant way, Pescetti does not only make his readers laugh out loud; he also manages to disturb them and make them think. Not even the language itself – words, sounds, or meanings – are safe from the explosive power of his imagination. This magnificent book also perfectly lends itself to reading aloud. (10+)

Brazil (Portuguese)

154

Brito, Ronaldo Correia de / Lima, Assis (text)

Sandoval, Andrés (illus.)

O pavão misterioso

(The mysterious peacock)

São Paulo : Cosac Naify, 2004. – 67 p.

ISBN 85-7503-360-3

Girl – Captivity – Rescue – Love

The so-called »literatura de cordel« (string literature), which is very popular in Brazil, is usually created by well-known artists, singers, and woodcarvers in limited editions and sold on the markets dangling from strings – hence its unusual name. This adaptation of one of the most famous books of this genre tells the story of beautiful Creusa who is rescued from her father's home, where she was kept »prisoner«, with the help of a mysterious peacock. The particular attraction of this book stems from the combination of the text characterised by traditional Iberian and Arabian elements and the bold modern illustrations rendered in shades of red and green. (10+)

155

Lima, Douglas Silva (text)

Lago, Ângela (illus.)

Rap rua

(Street rap)

Belo Horizonte : RHJ Ed., 2004. – 23 p.

ISBN 85-7153-179-x

Street kid – Poverty – Human dignity

Ângela Lago's impressive picture book »Cena de rua« (Street scene), first published in 1994, attracted worldwide attention. The sequence of pictures without words follows a child who is trapped in the vicious circle of poverty and scrapes a living by working as a street vendor. Lately, a writing competition that focused on this book was held for Brazilian teenagers. The 16-year-old author – who made it to the competition final – expresses a child's thoughts that revolve around dreams for the future and the issue of human dignity. For the design, Ângela Lago used the colours and a few details from her original drawings. The rhythmic verses read like a rap recitative and thus perfectly match the protagonist's harsh reality. (9+) ✧

156

Machado, Ana Maria (text)

Teixeira, Elisabeth (illus.)

Abrindo caminho

(Paving the way)

São Paulo : Ed. Ática, 2003. – [40] p.

ISBN 85-08-08672-5

Artist – Explorer – Longing – Search

This book by the Hans-Christian-Andersen-Award winner of 2000 pays homage to famous writers, artists, and explorers of the past. They all shared the desire to overcome obstacles and walk along new, untrodden paths and made great efforts to achieve this. Among them are Tom Jobim and Carlos Drummond de Andrade from Brazil as well as the Italians Dante Alighieri and Marco Polo. The brief poetic text (partly written in verse) is accompanied by large-format colour illustrations. Depicting wide landscapes that reach all the way to the horizon, the pictures symbolise the transgression of totally different kinds of horizons by the people featured in this book. (6+)

157

Mello, Roger (adapt./illus.)

Nau Catarineta

(The ship called Catarineta)

Rio de Janeiro : Manati, 2004. – [40] p.

ISBN 85-86218-16-2

Ship – Shipwreck – Sea

The story of the ship called Catarineta, handed down from one generation to the next through oral storytelling, is well-known in the Portuguese-speaking world. The Brazilian author and illustrator has carefully studied numerous versions of this tale. The result is this vivid text, written for the stage, that makes young readers live through the disastrous shipwreck and the eerie calm, and share the protagonists' hunger, loneliness, longing, and desperation. Roger Mello's widely-praised artistic style can easily be recognised in this book's imaginative double-page illustrations and small vignettes. The wild, energetic, playful pictures rendered in bright colours capture the story's intensive atmosphere in a unique way. (10+)

158

Munduruku, Daniel (text)

Borges, Rogério (illus.)

Você lembra, pai?

(Do you remember, Daddy?)

São Paulo : Global, 2003. – [24] p.

(Coleção temática indígena)

ISBN 85-260-7777-5

Brazil – Munduruku People – Childhood memories

In this autobiographical book for child (and adult) readers, the author – who is a member of the Munduruku people living in Northern Brazil – recalls memories from his childhood and youth. The topics range from initiation rites and social relationships to encounters with the ›white‹ culture. The poetic and literary text, written in a melodious language and free from any bitterness or accusations, is also a declaration of love to the author's father, a Munduruku mage. Beautiful, four-colour mixed-media illustrations show the life and customs of the Munduruku people. (7+) ✧ (O Melhor Livro para a Criança – Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil; 2004)

159

Prandi, Reginaldo (text)

Rafael, Pedro (illus.)

Xangô, o Trovão : outras histórias dos deuses africanos que vieram para o Brasil com os escravos

(Xangô, the thunder : other stories about African gods who came to Brazil with the slaves)

São Paulo : Companhia das Letrinhas, 2003. – 63 p.

ISBN 85-7406-158-1

Afro-Brazilian – Myth – Folk tale – Gods

In the last years, numerous Brazilian children's books have focused on the roots of this country, in which the traditions of the European and African immigrants join those of the indigenous people to form a multi-faceted culture. This title featuring nine tales brought to the Portuguese colony of Brazil by slaves abducted from Africa is an excellent example of this tendency. The retellings of these traditional oral tales about various gods called ›orixás‹ are written in a clear, beautiful language. Accompanied by colourful mixed-media illustrations that are slightly reminiscent of African art, the stories offer a fascinating introduction to the universe of a diverse and rich culture. (9+) ✧

Colombia (Spanish)

160

Burgos, Andrés

Manual de pelea

(Manual of quarrelling)

Bogotá : Grupo Ed. Norma, 2004. – 252 p.

(Colección La otra orilla)

ISBN 958-04-7818-x

Family – School – Peer group – Hierarchy

In his debut novel, the author deals with the life of middle class teenagers in the city of Medellín. The triangle of family, school, and friends forms the determining coordinates for 14-year-old Santiago. Hovering between a cocky macho attitude and the adolescent feeling of insecurity, the protagonist makes readers share his daily life, concerns, and conflicts, as well as his first experiences with the opposite sex. The meticulous description of the hierarchy among teenagers is quite disturbing: Without compassion, everyone who is neither a natural winner nor regarded as mainstream person is branded as an outsider. This powerful realistic youth novel is a far cry from the illusory image of the ›happy youth‹. (13+)

161

Reyes, Yolanda (text)

Coll, Ivar da (illus.)

Una cama para tres

(A bed for three)

Bogotá : Alfaguara, 2003. – [36] p.

ISBN 958-704-055-4

Child – Going to bed – Night – Fear – Warmth

Yolanda Reyes relates the common evening squabbles over going to bed in a very humorous way but still takes children's fears and their longing for comfort and security seriously. Very realistically, she describes how the child suddenly needs to finish some utterly important matters or how it asks its irritated mother hundreds of urgent questions. The adults always know better, they want to decide everything, yet they don't have a convincing answer to why children are not allowed to crawl into their parents' bed when they are afraid. Ivar da Coll's imaginative, cartoon-like pictures perfectly illustrate the cheerful and thoughtful everyday episode of an ordinary family like you and me. (5+)

Haiti (French)

162

Étienne, Marlène (text)

Nazaire, Réginald (illus.)

La légende de Catherine

(The legend of Cathérine)

[Petion-Ville] : Hachette-Deschamps, 2004. – 93 p.

(Caïmite) – ISBN 99935-31-45-6

Haiti/History – Slavery – War of independence

Cathérine Flon, that's the woman who is rumoured to have sewn together the first national flag of Haiti using her hair as thread on in May 1803 in Arcahaie. This entertaining children's book aims at placing the legendary heroine of Haiti into a social context, without claiming to be historically accurate, and thus makes her come alive for children. Catherine grows up as a slave, braves the hard work on the fields, and suffers the humiliations and beatings until she is employed in the ›large house‹. There, she can finally pursue her secret passion of sewing. When a piece of lace disappears, she has to flee. Historically, there is no definite proof of Catherine's existence. Yet, thanks to the legend and this picture book, she will remain a vivid example. (8+)

Mexico (Spanish)

163

Isol (text/illus.)

Secreto de familia (Family secret)

México, D.F. : Fondo de Cultura Económica,

2003. – [48] p.

(Los primerismos) – ISBN 968-16-7046-9

Morning – Hairstyle – Mess

One morning, a little girl makes a shocking discovery: Her mother is actually a porcupine. That's the only plausible explanation for why her hair is poking in all directions when she gets up. To soothe her nerves, the child spends a night at her friend Elisa's house. But there, it's even worse: The next morning she is surrounded by a sleepy family of bears with wild shaggy fur. In this picture book, the Argentinian illustrator once again perfectly proves her characteristic skill of discovering weird and magical elements beneath the surface of everyday events. The dynamic, witty illustrations perfectly mirror the humorous and screwy tone of the story. (5+) ✨

Romance Languages

Venezuela (Spanish)

164

Polo, Eduardo (text)

Ballester, Arnal (illus.)

Chamario : libro de rimas para niños

(Chamario : book of verses for children)

Caracas : Ed. Ekaré, 2004. – 47 p.

(Colección rimas y adivinanzas)

ISBN 980-257-278-0

Children's poetry – Pun

This square little book stands out for its attractive design and the exquisite combination of text and pictures. A dancing hippo, a clumsy rider, or a scorpion playing piano – these are just a few of the many characters featuring in the 20 poems, whose real protagonist is language itself and the pleasure of playing with it. By swapping and pushing around syllables and words, surprising new combinations come into existence. They illustrate the never-ending possibilities of language and invite readers the join the game while the highly graphical, playful illustrations underline the poems' absurd tone. This book fits in well with Ediciones Ekaré's general intention of providing attractive volumes of poetry, rhymes, and songs for children. (6+)

North America

Canada (French)

165

Boisvert, Jocelyn

Un livre sans histoire

(A book without [hi]story)

Saint-Lambert (Québec) : Soulières Éd., 2004. – 132 p.

(Collection Graffiti ; 23)

ISBN 2-89607-004-4

Book – Novel – Reader – Content

The »book without [hi]story« is really the history and the story of a book. This book tells its readers – »yes, that's you, the person holding me in their hands right now« – its fate of the past 20 years. Most of it is narrated in flashback in a linear way, yet with some insertions and remarks about future events. After the book was bought at a bookshop

because of »the author's beautiful eyes,« it travelled from one hand to the next, was carelessly thrown away, was abused as a sketch and notepad, before it eventually ended up in YOUR hands. Thanks to a lot of humour and self-mockery, the book as well as the act of reading are turned into the entertaining subjects of this book. The story of the book is always announced but never entirely revealed because »the stories that people invent themselves are the best ones after all«. (11+)

166

Davidts, Jean-Pierre (text)

Cloutier, Claude (illus.)

Les mésaventures du roi Léon : Gros Bedon

(The misfortunes of the lion king : Big Belly)

[Montréal] : Boréal, 2004. – 54 p.

(Boréal Maboul)

ISBN 2-7646-0362-2

Corpulence – Overweight – Diet – Medicine

Thos book clearly illustrates the king's »weighty« problem. The glutton suffers from the »V.P.S.O.-syndrome« – »Voit plus ses orteils« (Doesn't see his toes anymore). One of the three »grand doctors«, the llama Juscul, insists that if he wants to be the judge of the cake-competition at the baker's festival, the lion king needs to go on a diet. Assisted by simple black-and-white drawings, the text portrays the animals as charming and humorous figures. In an entertaining yet sensitive manner, they send out a message that is explained in more detail in the short appendix: Just like the king, numerous children are too fat because they do neither eat a balanced diet nor stop themselves when they've had enough. (6+) ☼

167

Fortin, Caroline (ed.)

Atlas des océans

(Atlas of the oceans)

Montréal : Québec Amérique Jeunesse, 2004. – 96 p. – ISBN 2-7644-0817-X

Sea – Ocean – Water – Marine animals

This non-fiction title about the oceans of the world is divided into five chapters: »Portraits of the Oceans« presents oceans and seas, plus various types of shores. »In the Depth of the Ocean« introduces readers to the geology of the sea floor. »Water in All its Manifestations« provides information

about the water circle, the salinity of the water, about waves, currents, and tides. »An Ocean of Life« shows the great variety of marine animals and plants, while »Discovering the Oceans« describes the history of seafaring and how humans have made use of the oceans. Accompanied by lots of pictures, charts, and maps, this book offers a comprehensible, comprehensive, and informative insight into the ecosystem of the oceans that make up 70% of our planet and accommodate about 80% of the Earth's animals. (7+)

168

Hébert, Marie-Francine (text)

Nadeau, Janice (illus.)

Nul poisson où aller

(No fish to go to)

Saint-Laurent (Québec) : Les 400 Coups, 2003. – [48] p.

(Les grands albums)

ISBN 2-89540-117-9

War – Girl – Soldier – Friendship – Fish

What happens when soldiers invade your home? What do you take with you when you have to flee? Do you leave the fish in the bowl behind even though you promised the little creature the most wonderful life? In a sensitive and poetic way, this picture book tells about war, threat, and violence through the story of little Zolfe and her friendship with Maiy, a friendship that cannot be destroyed, not even by the war. Without explicitly showing scenes of violence, the pencil and water-colour illustrations demonstrate the horrors of war metaphorically, e.g. through the raven-like soldiers. The »picture book within the picture book«, called »The Pot of Dreams«, blurs the borderline between reality and imagination, yet raises some hope for a comforting future. (8+) ✧

169

Leblanc, Louise (text)

Favreau, Marie-Claude (illus.)

Le chevalier de l'alphabet

(The knight of the alphabet)

Montréal (Québec) : Courte Échelle, 2004. – [32] p.
ISBN 2-89021-660-8

School – Alphabet – Letters – Reading – Illiteracy

As soon as Ludovic starts school, his life is determined by a single nightmare: the alphabet. Letters whirl around in his head and even start attacking him. When the boy confides in his grandfather, the old man admits that he himself can neither read nor write. With a lot of humour, this picture book tackles a delicate topic that a lot of children are faced with when they start school. The comic-like figures and the colourful letters mirror the little hero's problems in an entertaining way. With the help of his grandfather, Ludovic conquers the alphabet like a brave knight – and what could be more suitable than to start with the letter »V« for »Victory«? (4+) ✧

170

Major, Henriette (text)

Béha, Philippe (illus.)

Les devinettes d'Henriette

(Henriette's riddles)

Montréal (Québec) : Hurtubise HMH, 2004. – [80] p.

ISBN 2-89428-690-2

Riddle – Human being – Nature – Imagination

Following their first collaboration »J'aime les poèmes« (I love poems), author and illustrator have again teamed up – this time, to create an illustrated collection of riddles. Plenty of imaginative and poetic power is inherent in these riddles, the chapter headings of which already hint at the witty use of language: »Guessyou«, »Guessnature«, and »Guessall«. The illustrations perfectly translate the freedom to play with words into a freedom of graphic design, illustration techniques, and colourful bright paints. In addition, they provide hints to the hidden answers. Each page is different from the next so that the readers are never in danger of getting bored while turning and flipping the pages as they search for the right solution. (4+)

Denmark

171

Albæk Nielsen, Lizette

Richs og rødspættesko : hverdag under besættelsen

(Richs [surrogate coffee] and flounder-shoes [shoes made from fish-skin] – daily life during the occupation)

[Risskov] : Klematis, 2004. – 60 p.

ISBN 87-7905-896-5

Denmark/1940-1945 – World War II – Occupation

This informative and graphic account of daily life in Denmark during the German occupation in World War II includes many historical documents and photographs. In chapters entitled »Blackout«, »Air-raid Alarm«, »Rationing«, »Surrogates«, »School«, »Youth«, »Illegal Press«, »Strikes«, etc., the author has gathered information that will be of interest to children and teenagers. Lizette Albæk Nielsen strictly sticks to the historical facts in her reports and avoids polemical undertones. She has thus created a non-fiction book that could be held up as an ideal example to other books on delicate topics. (12+)

172

Boll-Johansen, Boris

Det seje sjak går i aktion

(The Sticky Gang goes into action)

København : Rosinante, 2004. – 118 p.

(Det seje sjak / Boris Boll-Johansen)

ISBN 87-638-0060-8

Youth gang – Detective – Member – Rescue

A bunch of teenagers who have founded a kind of detective club are utterly bored. When suddenly one of them, Vikram from Sri Lanka, is arrested for an alleged theft during a stroll through town by a guard at the shopping mall, his friends come up with an imaginative plan to rescue him. The constellation of a guard who hates being disturbed and the children who cleverly enact some kind of tall-tale to free their friend leads to numerous amusing and gripping situations. In general, books with young detectives as protagonists are a hackneyed genre. Still, in this case, the publishing house has carried out an interesting concept: Each of the (so far) four volumes of this series is written by a different author. (10+)

173

Eibe, Anika

Nynazisten

(The neo-nazi)

[Frederiksberg] : Branner og Korch, 2003. – 163 p.

ISBN 87-411-5974-8

Youth – Right-wing radicalism – Xenophobia

Teenage neo-nazi Jørgen easily manages to stir up Thomas's animosity against a Tamil boy who pinched his girlfriend. Jørgen intends to abuse the slightly naïve boy for a criminal attack on a refugee home for Bosnian asylum-seekers. Thanks to Thomas's friend Peter, the plot is discovered and the attack prevented, the people responsible for it are arrested, and Thomas, who had had no intention of joining in, gets off lightly. This novel, which will even enthrall reluctant readers, is fitted out with the usual elements of an adventure story but told in a clever way. It might well succeed in making teenagers think critically. (14+)

174

Fupz-Aakeson, Kim (text)

Eriksson, Eva (illus.)

Så blev Farfar et spøgelse

(That's how grandfather became a ghost)

[København] : Gyldendal, 2004. – [30] p.

ISBN: 87-02-02245-1

Grandfather – Death – Grandson –

Coping with grief

In her illustrations, Eva Eriksson does not choose a realistic style at all costs – rather the opposite in fact. Young Esben's room is hardly one of these modern »stockrooms« filled with toys; instead, it is almost empty. Thus, the child reader can easily concentrate on what is essential: the cosy bed, the comforting night light, a glass of water to respond to the boy's sudden craving for a drink. A clock on the wall takes on symbolic meaning: It signalises the passing of time and human life to which the grandfather returns as a ghost to bid goodbye to his grief-stricken grandson. Eriksson's illustrations and Aakeson's text, which easily keeps the balance between comic and serious elements (suitable for the topic), have successfully merged to create an original and exciting as well as comforting book about death. (6+)

175

Jensen, Louis

Tinhjerte og ællingefjer : en bog om H.C. Andersen
(Tinheart and duckfeather : a book about

H.C. Andersen)

København : Høst, 2004. – 141 p.

ISBN 87-14-11905-6

Andersen, Hans Christian – Life – Fairy tale – Interpretation

Although this book about Andersen is primarily intended for children, it offers a comprehensive interpretation of the Danish writer's life and work that also keeps in mind the interested adult reader. The book starts with a young boy who has to write a school essay about Andersen and asks his father, a keen 'fan' of Andersen, for help. In former times, the ancient game of question and answer was often 'abused' as a means of educating children. In this modern version, Louis Jensen manages to turn it into an interesting and amusing text. One of the main tasks of this book is to explain various aspects of Andersen's life and show how they are woven into his fairy tales. (10+)

☺ Special Mention

176

Karrebæk, Oscar (text)

Karrebæk, Dorte (illus.)

Min familie

(My family)

[Hillerød] : Alma, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 87-7243-228-4

Dog – Family – Human relations

On the surface, this grotesque group portrait of a dog-clan, drawn by one of the most original Danish illustrators, presents a harmonious family. The solo portraits depicting the respective family members, however, soon reveal that, below the surface, things are not quite what they seem. In reality, this family is a hotchpotch of troubled and changing relationships, typical of modern times: The domineering dog-father has both his wife and his girlfriend beside him, while the grandfather, his ex-wife and her lover are also part of the family. The group portrait is teeming with loads of illegitimate children – nothing out of the ordinary in a dog family – yet for Oscar it is obviously a bit difficult to sort out the various relationships

for his story. And then, there is someone else: a little human child who ran away from its parents (dog-dealers). (8+)

177

Kidde, Rune T. (text)

Quist Møller, Flemming (illus.)

Sørøver Skumskæg og andre historier
(Scumbeard the Pirate, and other tales)

Århus : Forl. Modtryk, 2004. – 63 p.

ISBN 87-7394-832-2

Grotesque – Short story

The popular Danish author writes grotesque stories for children that carefully take into account children's particular sense of humour. Still, Rune Kidde's tales are not woven according to as simplistic a pattern as many other stories written in the same genre. This book features a bunch of rather sad characters: a pirate, a troll, a scruffy-looking father. The equally witty illustrations go with the 'new' fashion of linearity that already promoted homogeneous colours back in 1900. Thanks to computer graphics, this trend now has an unexpected revival. Before he turned blind in 1990, Kidde also used to create his own very original illustrations for his texts. (6+)

178

Kvist, Hanne (text)

Brøgger, Lilian (illus.)

Hr. Lykke : kaos og kærlighed i hr. Lykkes
kitteludlejning)

(Mr. Lykke : chaos and love in Mr. Lykke's smock rental)

København : Forum, 2004. – 107 p.

(Godkendt renset)

ISBN 87-553-3358-3

Middle class – Pessimism – Good luck

Mr. Lykke (i.e. Mr. Luck) is a modest middle-class citizen who scrapes a living by dry-cleaning and renting out smocks. Without the 'moral support' of his pet pig, his life would be very dull indeed. One day, however, he is forced to abandon his pessimistic motto of »There is nothing so horrible that it couldn't take a turn for the worse.« When his new shop sign accidentally reads »Mr. Smock's Good Luck Rental«, his shop is suddenly very popular: Every unhappy person walks in and receives a good-luck smock. Apart from that, Mr. Lykke's

extraordinary singing voice is discovered and he becomes famous. In the end, he even marries the lovely young cheese-seller. Told in a witty and optimistic tone, and adorned with very original illustrations, this story is a must for children. (8+)

179

Mouritzen, Peter (text)

Juul, Rasmus (illus.)

Tretten tykke tøndemænd : fjas og fjasanti

(Thirteen fat barrel-men – nonsense and silliness)

København : Apostrof, 2003. – [36] p.

ISBN 87-591-0539-9

Children's poetry – Nonsense

This picture book, which features concocted tales in rhyme plus numerous puns, stands apart for its truly original illustrations. On bits of squared paper, partly dyed, partly smeared with dirt, the artist has drawn his caricature-like creatures, animals, and objects with a broad quill in bright colours and glued them together afterwards. These collages, part of which are also covered in careless writing, form a buzzing chaotic surface. The origins of this art style that has recently come back into fashion can undoubtedly be traced back to the Dadaists and Cubists. Within the past ten years, however, modern painting and even book illustration have regularly made use of this alienating technique. (8+)

Finland

180

Frangén, Silja (text)

Yrjölä, Leena (illus.)

Isä Jumalan uni

(God's dream)

Helsinki : Lasten Keskus, 2003. – [32] p.

ISBN 951-627-439-0

Grandfather – Sculptor – Storyteller – Grandson – God – Creation

This picture book presents the story of the creation of the world in an original way. The storyteller is a grandfather – and sculptor – who tells the story to his grandchild. According to the old man, God took a lump of clay and formed it like a sculptor in order to build the unique creature he had imagined in his dreams: a human being. After many unsuccessful attempts during which a lot of

other beings are created, God is finally satisfied. In this book, several levels are brought together in a sensitive way: dream and reality, past and present, religion and fiction. They are perfectly complemented by the illustrations rendered in harmonious colours. The fine marks of the illustrator's pen are often visible in the pictures, an effect that highlights the creation process. (6+)

181

Jalonen, Riitta (text)

Louhi, Kristiina (illus.)

Tyttö ja naakkapuu

(The girl and the crow tree)

Helsinki : Tammi, 2004. – 45 p.

ISBN 951-31-3085-1

Father – Death – Daughter – Coping with grief

For the little first-person narrator, crows symbolise death. She watches them fly, wondering what might happen to them should they die during their flight. Through the crows' disappearance, the girl comes to realise what loss means – in her case, the loss of her father. She recalls individual scenes with him and firmly believes that he is protecting her from the heavens above. Although it is very painful, she also tries to get over the loss of objects and habits that used to play an important part in her life, such as the excursions she went on with her father or the family boat they have to sell now. For the girl, trees embody the constant aspects of life, crows the fleeting ones. The thought-provoking text and the subdued chalk drawings may help children cope with death. (8+)

182

Puikkonen, Arja

Haloo, kuuleeko kaupunki

(Hello, is the city listening?)

Helsingissä : Otava, 2003. – 175 p.

(Pultti)

ISBN 951-1-18802-X

Holidays – Countryside – Friendship – Bullying – Family

In this youth novel, Arja Puikkonen fluently describes the life of 10-year-old Anna. During the holidays, Anna's parents fly to Italy and dump her daughter at some relatives' place in the countryside. Therefore, the girl is forced to spend two weeks with her cousin whom she doesn't like at all – and the rest of this family isn't exactly very likeable

either: The father, for example, considers his son to be terribly weak and is disappointed that he always escapes into a fantasy world. This adventurous and exciting story carefully examines the relationship between a bully and his victim. Written in a smooth and easy-going style, it will certainly whet young children's appetite for reading. (10+) (Finlandia Junior Award; 2003)

183

Rönns, Christel (text/illus.)

Den lilla farbrodern med det långa skägget
(The little uncle with the long beard)
[Helsingfors] : Söderström, 2003. – [32] p.
ISBN 951-52-2098-x

Swedish text

Man – Beard – Adventure

In town, the little man with his long beard is a huge attraction – not so much for his wife though ... He really enjoys his popularity. Yet, when more and more objects vanish in his beard, last of all the cat, his wife finally loses her patience and brutally cuts off his beard. Suddenly, no one in the streets casts a second glance at the old man. But in the end, his wife relents: She takes the cut-off hair, dyes it, spins it, and knits a long cap for him that immediately wins back people's attention. This unpretentious tale is told in a lovely voice and is illustrated in a modern, witty, caricature-like style with pleasing colours. Once more, this small Finland-based publisher of Swedish literature has proven its outstanding publishing skill. (4+)

Iceland

184

Björk Bjarkadóttir

Leyndarmálið hennar ömmu
(His grandmother's secret)
Reykjavík : Mál og Menning, 2003. – [28] p.
ISBN 9979-3-2431-7

Grandmother – Grandson

Six-year-old Óli loves his grandmother dearly. For him, she is simply the best. One day, she promises him that, on his birthday, he will be able to fly. At night, she picks him up and together they fly across the town. Through their binoculars, they suddenly spot some thieves who are robbing a bank. But

thanks to Granny's courage and strength, the culprits are finally caught. The dream comes to an end, and so does the picture book. Within the context of Icelandic children's literature, this book's illustrations stand out for their unusual style. Both naïve and grotesque, they present a sober, realistic setting that is not toned down. (5+)

Norway

185

Braenne, Trond (text)

Sandemose, Iben (illus.)

Røde hunder

(Red dogs)

[Oslo] : Cappelen, 2003. – [56] p.

ISBN 82-02-23047-0

Children's poetry – Dog

The author, who has already written a few texts for children but is mainly known for his songs, presents a collection of witty (and sometimes even contemplative) children's poems that all focus on dogs, their environment, and their emotional world. Both with the thematically arranged poems and the original design, this book follows in the footsteps of the Swedish poet Lennart Hellsing (e.g. his »Bananboken«). The bold illustrations in black and red (hence the title) designed by Iben Sandemose make this book a little treasure. The illustrator's strictly linear drawings, in which the dogs' physiognomies are sometimes reminiscent of Picasso, are extremely striking because of their poster-like style. (8+)

186

Ewo, Jon

Svart. Og cirka hvitt : en fortelling om urett
(Black. And a little bit of white : a tale about injustice)

Oslo : Omnipax, 2004. – 159 p.

ISBN 82-530-2741-9

School – Bullying – Fighting back

Two boys and a girl are constantly being bullied at school. One day, Jo cannot stand the hate against him any longer. With a stolen gun, he points at the most vicious of his class mates. But then, just as he is about to pull the trigger, his common sense tells him one thing: He never wants to become like that, like *them*. Jon Ewo has headed the first few chap-

ters with commandments – modelled on the Bible. In the middle, however, he stops to think it over. He simply cannot end the story without any trace of hope. Thus, he turns back the clock and starts at the beginning of the three days again. Now, the victims form a close-knit group supporting each other. This outstanding novel by the well-known author encourages all victims of aggression not to let themselves be ordered about by others. (12+)

187

Gunerius Eriksen, Helga (text)

Moursund, Gry (illus.)

Flugepapir

(Fly catcher)

Oslo : Norske Samlaget, 2003. – [30] p.

ISBN 82-521-6184-7

Child – Fly – Pet

The illustrations of this book are just as chaotic as the family presented in the story: They consist of a tangle of shaky lines, crooked perspectives, blobs of paint carelessly daubed on the page – a modern picture book, to put it in a nutshell: In the daily rush when it's always a ›bad time‹, the only one to remain calm is the girl Bente who has befriended a fly. Unfortunately, flies don't understand anything about humans, not even about fly catchers, and Bente tries to save her fly from all kinds of calamities. In the evening, she organises a feast – for flies only. The buffet is crammed with delicacies such as cow-pats. Swarms of flies arrive, the family is in uproar, and the party turns into a massacre. In the end, Bente collects all the dead flies and puts them into a box. (6+) (Brage Award; 2003)

188

Randsborg Jensen, Grete (text)

Aurtande, Lars M. (illus.)

Fabel Jakop og de magiske eggene

(Fabel Jakop and the magic eggs)

[Oslo] : Landbruksforl., 2004. – 92 p.

ISBN 82-529-2822-6

Youth – Foolishness – Age – Wisdom

Fabel Jakop is a grey-winged, wise old crow who tries to save the crow-children from acting foolishly by telling them stories. Just like other ›teenagers‹, Konrad Crow suffers under peer-pressure – he wants to be a guy like all the others and so he hangs out with a bunch of suspicious young crows who

think of nothing but how to tease the naïve bird. The old story of the seducer and the seduced (who eventually sides with the good guys) is told in a brisk style. With its wild, comic-book-like illustrations, it will certainly inspire reluctant readers to start reading – probably more so than some more ›virtuous‹ or ›good-mannered‹ book. (10+)

189

Sande, Hans (text)

Moursund, Gry (illus.)

Frosken

(The Frog)

[Oslo] : Gyldendal, 2003. – [32] p.

ISBN 82-05-31085-8

Father – Blindness – Son – Frog – Belief

This splendid picture book, beautifully printed in mat colours, describes the close relationship between a blind father and his little son, whom he tells stories and teaches how to respect nature. At the same time, readers learn about a young frog that grows up looking for its destiny. Weaving together these two tales, the pictures show how the frog sees the blind father's hand reaching into the water and believes that this must be the hand of a higher being called ›Gokk‹. Thus the father's heightened sense of belonging to nature, the frog's image of a god, and the son's tender love blend together to create a wondrous and touching story. The text is contrasted by the expressive gestures of the protagonists rendered in a wild mix of colours. (6+)

Sweden

190

Blom, Tomas / Wessnert, Gudrun (text)

Lundberg, Sara (illus.)

Trosspojken med snurretoppen

(The page with the diablo)

Stockholm : Rabén & Sjögren, 2004. – 180 p.

(Tusen år i Sverige ; vol. 2)

ISBN 91-29-65626-5

Sweden/1500-1600

Three volumes of this four-volume history of Sweden have now been published. This work neither tries to reduce history to an assumed lower level that children may understand – as many of the older works do – nor does it follow the mod-

ern trend and split information into a bunch of pictures. Instead, the authors tell episodes from different eras and convey the specific atmosphere of the past rather than explain the general course of history. Imaginative illustrations underline the encyclopedia's literary tone. Double spreads, scattered between the various stories, offer short facts about each time period as well as reproductions of historical documents and objects that relate necessary background information. Readers will easily understand that there is more to history than just pictures and objects. (10+)

191

Casta, Stefan (text)

Ullström, Staffan (illus.)

Den vilda staden : boken om djuren som flyttar till stan

(The wild city : the book of the animals who move to the city)

[Bromma] : Opal, 2004. – 110 p.

ISBN 91-7299-085-6

City – Animals

This highly entertaining non-fiction book, which describes the surprising variety of animal species living in inner-city environments, has a pleasing layout and design and was thoroughly researched. Several good photographs and a lot of carefully drawn naturalistic yet unobtrusive illustrations are interspersed among the well-written, amusing text. The urban world depicted is unmistakably Swedish – so that, as an extra bonus, the book automatically evokes the special atmosphere in Swedish cities. (10+)

192

Haamer von Hofsten, Josefine (text)

Hamström, Marlene (photogr.)

Flyttahemifranboken

(The movingoutofhomebook)

Stockholm : Tiden, 2004. – 96 p.

ISBN 91-88879-55-0

Teenager – Independence – Flat – Everyday life

This book offers useful information for adolescents who are planning to move out of their parents' place and start living on their own. In addition to some suggestions of how to furnish one's flat with the essentials and other practical advice, the book also lists a number of important addresses that

might offer young readers some help. Naturally, this book describes and is geared towards the situation and life in Sweden and advice can thus not be transferred directly to other countries. Nevertheless, it provides a good insight into the characteristic social system of this democratic country and might therefore be used as a model for similar self-help books for young people leaving their ›nests‹. (16+)

193

Halling, Thomas (text)

Andersson, Kenneth (illus.)

I Stockholm med öppna ögon

(In Stockholm with open eyes)

Stockholm : Alfabet, 2004. – [44] p.

ISBN 91-501-0301-6

Stockholm – Tourist guide

This picture book about Sweden's capital is certainly more original than all travel guides for children. Unlike others, this book does not try to anticipate the traveller's own experiences through photographs reminiscent of travel brochures that distort reality by using small details or wide-angle shots. It is a lot more consistent to draw scenes and impressions and only use photographs as an additional graphic element. Kenneth Andersson's pop-art-like graphic style, which makes each page look completely different from the next, guarantees that the illustrations won't ever become boring. If you take the inventive use of colours into account, printed in a velvety matt quality, these pictures actually make readers long to discover their real-life model. (8+)

194

Ortman, Lisa Berg (text)

Kapparith, Madhu (photogr.)

Pooja från New Delhi i Indien

(Pooja from New Delhi in India)

Stockholm : LL-Förl., 2004. – 96 p.

(Barn i världen)

ISBN 91-89451-98-8

India – Child – Everyday life

Books describing the life of children in other countries are usually published as a series to present as many different cultures as possible. After 1945, a lot of committed publishing houses and authors had a strong desire to promote a better understanding between people with their books – and they still

do so today. A lot of these books are of astonishingly high quality. So far, the present series by the publishing house LL, which particularly caters for children and adults with reading difficulties, encompasses four titles. In a comfortable small landscape format, these books offer an insight into other people's daily life through a careful selection of high-quality photographs. A few lines of text, simple yet precise, give just the right amount of information. (10+) ✧ ✨

195

Pallin, Lena (ed.)

Du och jag : om kärlek

(You and I : about love)

[Stockholm] : Bromberg, 2003. – 125 p.

ISBN 91-7608-934-7

Poetry – Love

Once again, love is the topic of a children's book – it's a subject popular with readers and obviously a profitable business for publishers. This anthology presents an interesting selection of poems by popular children's book authors and by children themselves. How varied and surprising love can be is perfectly demonstrated in a poem by Ann Mari Urwald:

Together they are lying / in bed / same pillow / She is black, soft, and warm / He is blond, spindly, and sensitive / they lie close together / same position / their eyes are half closed / she enjoys / his hands / lovingly touching her ear / they are lying for a long time / until he falls asleep / then she stretches her four legs / and slowly leaves the bed. (10+)

☺ Special Mention

196

Stark, Ulf

Min vän Percy, Buffalo Bill och jag

(My friend Percy, Buffalo Bill and I)

[Stockholm] : Bonnier Carlsen, 2004. – 212 p.

ISBN 91-638-3631-9

Boy – Holidays – Summer – Grandparents

Ulf Stark is one of those authors whose lives serve as an endless source of inspiration for their work. It is no use to ponder about just how much of this story is indeed based on real childhood events. Stark simply handles the genre of fictional autobiography with such skill that he achieves a perfect and fasci-

nating atmosphere of authenticity. This tale of a family who spend their summer with the grandparents starts harmlessly but quickly develops into a drama between grandfather and grandmother that delves deep into the past. It tackles the grandfather's unrequited desire to be loved by his wife, which brings him to the brink of death but eventually seems to find fulfilment. Stark has created a touching portrait of both Percy, Ulf's friend, and the grumpy grandfather. In contrast to grandson Ulf, Percy is unbiased and can thus approach the taciturn old man more easily. With his Parsifal-like egoism and naïve ability to admire everything, Percy always manages to surprise the people around him. (10+)

197

Zetterholm, Finn

Lydias hemlighet : Ett magiskt konstäventyr

(Lydia's secret : a magical art-adventure)

Stockholm : Eriksson & Lindgren, 2004. – 316 p.

ISBN 91-85199-16-8

Stockholm – National Museum – Girl – Talent – Time travel – Artist

One day, the talented 12-year-old Lydia vanishes when she touches a painting at the Stockholm National Museum. Just like Alice (the famous protagonist from Lewis Carroll's children's classic »Alice in Wonderland«), the girl tumbles down a tunnel into a different world and time, from one era into the next. She meets various artists from different epochs – Rembrandt, Diego Velázquez, Leonardo da Vinci, Edgar Degas, Mary Cassatt, William Turner, and Salvador Dalí – and learns about them and their lives. Almost imperceptibly, this adventure turns into a short introduction to art. True, there may be a lot of similar introductions, but very few that are as amusing and exciting to read as this one. (11+)

Croatia

198

Kovačević Gjalski, Korana / Hlevnjak, Branka
Pridi bliže

(Come closer)

Zagreb : Kašmir Promet, 2003. – 200 p.

ISBN 953-6613-63-8

(Biblioteka 20 14)

Fairy – Reality – Fantasy – Love

This multi-layered fantasy-detective-novel is based on the film script »Come closer« from 1998. Fairy X-enija is supposed to sit her final school exams.

To pass them, she has to make a human being believe in her existence – »easy«, isn't it? She chooses the young American Leonardo, who is visiting his cousins Darko and Marina, as her »victim«. Just like any fairy-tale hero, X-enija has to overcome obstacle after obstacle and solve a lot of mysteries. The film-script origins of this work are still palpable, for example in the prominent presence of dialogues. The book very convincingly conveys feelings, impressions, colours, music, and even smells to its readers. (14+)

199

Lovrenčić, Sanja (text)

Vončina, Pika (illus.)

Bajka o Sigismundi i Krpimiru

(The tale of Sigismunda and Krpimir)

Zagreb : Autorska kuća, 2004. – 41 p.

(Novi Snovi)

ISBN 953-99400-7-9

Princess – Love – Baker's assistant – King – War – Fairy tale

The fairy tale of Sigismunda and Krpimir is a witty tale about a kingdom, the love between the king's daughter and a baker's assistant, and about two enemy kings who start a war. The message of this tale, which runs through the story like a thread (even if it is quite unobtrusive), is that it is pointless and stupid to try to solve conflicts with violence. The author plays with fairy tale motifs in a very dynamic and humorous way and thus creates an imaginative microcosm. The clear, cheerful gouache illustrations provide readers with an abundance of additional information. A parallel English edition of the book was published by the same publisher. (5+)

200

Pongrašić, Zoran

41,5°C ili Kralj cijelog svijeta

(41.5° Celsius or : King of the whole world)

Zagreb : Autorska kuća, 2003. – 362 p.

(Biblioteka Novi grafiti)

ISBN 953-99400-0-1

Boy – Parents – Journey – Everyday life

13-year-old Branimir, who – just like all adolescents – considers himself the king of the world, talks about his life in a very authentic teenage voice. Abruptly jumping from one idea to the next, the boy draws the readers into the story and hardly allows them to breathe. Branimir's mother, who longs to become an astronaut, travels to the USA with the whole family and visits the NASA space station. Only Branimir has to stay home with his little brother who is ill with measles. This situation leads to various problems and conflicts with people »who think with their fists« among others. Naturally, the protagonist-cum-narrator also falls in love and then – to make matters worse – his sweetheart's brother interferes. (12+) ☼

Czech Republic

201

Drijverová, Martina (text)

Sopko, Eugen (illus.)

Pohádky z hor

(Fairy tales from the mountains)

Praha : Brio, 2003. – 148 p.

ISBN 80-86113-55-8

Mountain – Fairy tale

This anthology is lovingly illustrated with large, romantic landscapes and portraits drawn in a slightly naïve style by the renowned artist Eugen Sopko.

It comprises a collection of fairy tales about mountains and their myths. The reader is introduced to motifs characteristic of a particular region or country, but also to universal ones that can be found all around the world in similar form. Gathered in this volume are fairy tales from Sweden, Germany, the Czech Republic, Moravia, Slovakia, Serbia, the Ukraine, Romania, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Karachay region, Mongolia, the Arabic countries, Sudan, and Mexico. (4+)

202

Wagnerová, Magdalena (text)

Skala, Martina (illus.)

Jablečňák : 366 příběhů na dobrou noc

(The apple gnome : 366 bedtime stories)

Praha : Brio, 2003. – 204 p.

ISBN 80-86113-56-6

Apple – Fairy tale character – Child – Everyday life – Prank – Short story

One night, 5-year-old Matěj throws an apple core under his bed. The next morning, he is utterly surprised when this core comes alive. The nosy, restless new friend, who doesn't miss a chance for a practical joke, causes Matěj a lot of trouble, yet they also have loads of fun and adventures together: They climb mountains, travel to the sea, and spend their summer with Grandma and Granddad in the countryside. The apple gnome is never short of ideas – even if some things go horribly wrong. The funny tales of this large-format read-aloud-book are accompanied by original, cartoon-like colour drawings. (4+)

Lithuania

203

Adomaitytė, Gintarė (text)

Kairevičiūtės, Daivos (illus.)

Vėjų miesto pasakos

(Tales from Wind City)

Vilnius : Gimtasis Žodis, 2003. – 45 p.

ISBN 9955-512-38-5

Imagination – City – Wind – Music – Ordinary object – Sound

Journalist and novelist Gintarė Adomaitytė (b. 1957) has only recently turned to literature for children and teenagers. The ten playful tales in this volume are connected through the place of the action, Wind City, and the stories' personnel. One of the main protagonists is Smiltė, a shoe-maker's daughter, who has attributed a characteristic sound to each of the objects in the city. She loves dancing in the rain and becomes friends with a violin player whose melodies are carried to people by the winds. This book with its simple layout is accompanied by amusing, casually coloured drawings and by vignette-like pictures that are scattered throughout the text. (6+)

204

Landsbergis, Vytautas V. (text)

Ach, Sigutė (illus.)

Arklio Dominyko meilė

(Dominykas, the horse in love)

Vilnius : Nieko Rimto, 2004. – 142 p.

ISBN 9955-9543-1-0

Horse – Cornflower – Friendship – Love

The wild horse Dominykas, who enjoys playing with frogs, falls in love with a cornflower. When winter approaches, the horse hides the flower under a stone to protect her from frost. He himself travels to Africa for the winter, where he meets numerous animals who all tell him their stories. In spring, he returns home just as his friend is about to wake from hibernation. For her birthday, Dominykas offers her a new name: Hope. Text and illustrations create a highly poetic atmosphere that makes readers smile and ponder about life, friendship, trust, love, and about how creatures on Earth treat each other. (6+)

205

Vėl, Vilė (text)

Janonytė, Aida (illus.)

Parašyk man iš Afrikos

(Write to me from Africa)

Vilnius : Gimtasis Žodis, 2003. – 109 p.

ISBN 9955-512-28-8

France – Return home – Lithuania – Boy – Everyday life – Friendship

In her first book, Vilė Vėl describes the life of 9-year-old Jonas after his return to Lithuania. The boy, who – as the son of a diplomat – spent most of his childhood in Paris, has to find his place in the new environment and, at the same time, search for his own identity. The book focuses on Jonas's sometimes difficult relationship with his mother, his longing for his Angolan nanny, and the friendship with his classmate Aušrinė. While a lot of books from Eastern Europe still avoid to show what life is like after the end of socialism, Vilė Vėl paints a vivid picture of everyday life in modern Lithuania. (7+) ✧

Poland

206

Lewkowska, Anna (text)

Mosz, Gosia (illus.)

Sen o krainie Parakwarii

(The longing for the land Paraquaria)

Warszawa : Wydawn. Nasza Księgarnia, 2004. – 94 p.
(Książka z jajam)

ISBN 83-10-11008-1

Shipwreck – Imaginary world – Fable animals – Conflict – Ethics

This humorous and amusing fantasy tale takes readers to the weird land of Paraquaria, where two Spanish people are washed ashore after a shipwreck. Paraquaria is inhabited by good-natured and friendly creatures, half-animal and half-human, who closely resemble the image that people in the Middle Ages had of creatures living overseas. By nature, the Paraquarian inhabitants seem to be strong individualists. When they are suddenly confronted with European civilisation, some very surprising events occur while any attempt to make them succumb to norms or rules inevitably ends in a complete disaster. Nevertheless, as readers we cannot but conclude that the anarchic Paraquarians are morally superior to us. (8+)

207

Musierowicz, Małgorzata (text/illus.)

Język Trolli

(Trolla's language)

Łódź : Akapit Press, 2004. – 207 p.

ISBN 83-88790-44-7

Family – Everyday life – Child – Love

This is already the 15th volume of a Polish cult saga about the Poznań family Borejko, now focusing on the third generation of protagonists. Mothers and daughters alike are eagerly awaiting every new volume in the series. The main character in this volume, which – just like the others – describes the life of an average Polish family, is 9-year-old Józinek. The story deals with his love for Stanisława Trolla, who is a few years older than him and whom he meets during a lesson with another class. Lively dialogues in colloquial language and teenage slang are the characteristic feature of this entertaining novel. (11+)

208

Pałka, Jacek (text)

Lenartowicz, Anna (illus.)

Bazylek daje sobie radę

(Bazylek manages on his own)

Warszawa : Wydawn. W.A.B., 2004. – 256 p.

ISBN 83-7414-042-9

Single father – Son – Everyday life – Humour
Jacek Pałka – journalist, English teacher, and single father – originally posted several everyday episodes with his 6-year-old son on the Internet at: www.badmofuker.blog.pl. Following the huge success of these witty tales, they are finally available in book form. In a simple and descriptive language, the author talks about visits to the zoo, shopping at the supermarket, games of football and basketball, and pets. He recalls conversations between ›men‹ about books, television, advertising, girls, and life in general. This book proves that children are not nearly as naive in respect to philosophical matters as they are sometimes believed to be. It provides both children and adults with an enjoyable read – either aloud or quietly. (6+)

☺ Special Mention

209

Ruszevska, Grażyna (text)

Fąfrowicz, Piotr (illus.)

Leon i kotka, czyli jak rozumieć mowę zegar

(Leon and the kitten, or How to understand the language of the clock)

Łódź : FR09, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 83-920384-0-1

Cat – Friendship – Jealousy

This is the first book by radio journalist Grażyna Ruszevska as well as the first title published by the new publishing house FR09. Through the tale of a cat, the author analyses the difficult art of friendship and makes readers realise that changes enrich our world and our lives, even if we might not always appreciate them. When Ada brings home a little kitten almost frozen to death, tomcat Leon is afraid that he might lose Ada's love and will have to share his favourite places in the house. The daily routine changes and even the strokes of the clock seem different. At first, Leon pretends not to care. Slowly, however, he gets used to the new family

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member and even becomes friends with her. The clear, plane illustrations by the well-known artist portray the varying moods of the story very convincingly. (3+)

Russia

210

Ball, Georgij (text)

Razuvaev, Michail / Razuvaeva, Anna (illus.)

Priključenija Starogo Bašmaka, razkazannye im samim : skazka

(The adventures of the Old Shoe, told by himself : a fairy tale)

Moskva : Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2003. – 171 p.

ISBN 5-86793-255-9

Russia – Travel – Europe – Adventure – Fairy tale

The new book by Georgij Ball is a fairy tale; still, it is not set once upon a time in the land of make-believe, but rather in our modern, ever-changing world. The Old Shoe narrates his search for his younger brother who was stolen by the mysterious Blue Lady. During his journey through Europe, a lot of different children help him, especially little Kartoškov from Atlantis. Since, in general, children's literature from Eastern Europe still avoids dealing openly with recent social conflicts, the author of this interesting book for both children and adults resorts to the genre of fairy tale in order to hint at problems that result from political and social changes. (10+)

Slovakia

211

Blažková, Jaroslava (text)

Votavová, Blanka (illus)

Traja nebosjsovia a duch Miguel

(The Fearless Three and the ghost Miguel)

Bratislava : Q111, 2003. – 95 p.

ISBN 80-89092-09-8

Moravia/1920-1935 – Childhood – Family prank – Ghost – Guardian angel

The author, who emigrated to Canada in 1968, tells her granddaughter tales from her own father's childhood. He and his two brothers were known in the

neighbourhood as »The Fearless Three« and were accompanied by the family ghost Miguel who took on the role of the guardian angel. In the 13 tales about typical boys' pranks, the author paints a vivid picture of the past and of the atmosphere in a poor family: She describes old customs, food, and children's games and thus offers the readers an insight into life in the countryside during the 1920s and 1930s. The warm-hearted book combines sensitive tales with authentic information of a historical non-fiction book. (6+)

212

Glocko, Peter (text)

Glocková, Barbora (illus.)

Tri vety pre ospedalské siroty : tanec v okovách

(Three movements for the orphans of the

Ospedale : dance in chains)

Bratislava : Cornea, 2003. – 108 p.

ISBN 80-89018-55-6

Growing up – Poverty – Music – Search for identity – Vivaldi, Antonio – Orphanage

Peter Glocko is one of the few Slovakian authors of teenage novels who writes in an authentic teenage voice and whose books tackle the present time and its specific problems. This novel relates the life of 15-year-old Tomáš. His whole family suffers because his father is unemployed and an alcoholic. When the gypsy musician Anton Kotlár discovers the boy's musical talent, he helps him cope with his problems through music. The author uses Anton's great love for Antonio Vivaldi's music to spin a parallel story about the crippled children in an orphanage in Venice. Vivaldi, who strongly believed in the healing power of music, composed pieces for them, taught them how to sing and play an instrument, made them perform in public, and thus managed to »mend« their souls. (12+)

Slovenia

213

Novak, Boris A. (text)

Manček, Marjan (illus.)

Kako rastejo stvari

(How things grow)

Ljubljana : Prešernova Družba, 2004. – 79 p.

(Sedmerica velikih)

ISBN 961-6512-33-1

Child – Everyday life – Household object –

Planet – Animals – Love – Children's poetry

The literary scholar Boris A. Novak (b. 1953)

works as poet and dramatist and translates poems

from English and French into his mother tongue.

In this collection of poems for children, the author

juggles words around: Nonsense rhymes, astonishing

phrases, and unexpected punch-lines alternate.

His topics range from items of clothing and house-

hold objects to the sun, the moon, and the stars,

and to love and animals. What renders the verses

particularly interesting is Novak's understanding

complicity with his child readers. Moreover, he

does not avoid tackling delicate issues. (5+)

☺ Special Mention

214

Prap, Lila (text/illus.)

Bela, Natalija [et al.] (transl.)

Mednarodni Živalski Slovar

(The international dictionary of animal languages)

Ljubljana : Založba Mladinska Knjiga, 2004. –

[36] p.

(Zbirka Žlabudron)

ISBN 86-11-16283-8

Animal sound – Dictionary

When we talk about the various ›languages‹ of

animals, we usually don't realise that the frogs'

croaking, the dogs' barking, and the goats' bleat-

ing is expressed very differently in different lan-

guages. In this picture book, illustrated in Lila

Prap's characteristic style with simple, expressive

pictures in bright colours with bold outlines, chil-

dren and adults discover how the animal sounds

are represented onomatopoeically in 41 different

languages and dialects from around the world.

Moreover, they also learn the correct expressions

for clucking, neighing, and meowing in these lan-

guages. On the first and last pages of this book, readers will find a complete dictionary of animal sounds. The middle section of the book, however, is designed as a ›normal‹ picture book introducing one animal per double-page spread with its typical sound presented in always changing sets of four languages. (3+)

215

Tomšič, Marjan (text)

Peklar, Andreja (illus.)

Kar je moje, je tudi tvoje : zgodbe o živalih

(What belongs to me, belongs to you, too :

animal tales)

Ljubljana : Založba Mladika, 2004. – 65 p.

(Trepetlika)

ISBN 961-205-117-8

Istria – Humans – Friendship – Animals –

Behaviour – Ecology

Writer Marjan Tomšič has been living in Istria for a

long time. In his remote cottage he has plenty of

opportunities to watch animals and get into contact

with them. These tales try to demonstrate that hu-

mans should not consider themselves the pride of

Creation, but that it is their duty to live together in

peace with all the other animals. In the end, how-

ever, they are left with the question of which be-

haviour really is in harmony with nature's laws. The

gouache illustrations in predominantly earthy col-

ours perfectly match the tone of the stories. (6+)

Ukraine

216

Jerko, Vladyslav (illus.)

Fysjuk, Ihor¹ (transl.)

Kazky tumannogo Al'bionu : brytans'ki rycars'ki

kazky

(Tales from foggy Albion : Celtic legends of chivalry)

Kyiv : Ababahalamaha, 2004. – 22 p.

ISBN 966-7047-37-7

Legend

This collection in picture book style contains the

retellings of an English legend and two Scottish

ones: »Young Roland« rescues his sister Ellen who

was taken prisoner by the king of the elves. In

»The Children of the Knight of Ailp«, druids put a

spell on King Ailp's children from which they are

released only after long-lasting adventures. The third tale relates how Earl Gregory is bewitched by the »Elf Knight« but finally saved by a friend and a few gnomes. Like the well-known Russian illustrator Gennadij Spirin, Vladyslav Jerko adopts elements from miniature painting of the late Gothic period and the Renaissance thus creating a powerful sense of depth. In his full-page pictures, the artist plays with detailed traditional patterns, while the people depicted clearly have modern faces. (8+)

✧ books whose content is found to contribute to an international understanding among cultures and peoples

✧ books with easy-to-read texts but nonetheless complex and high-interest topics

Belgium (Dutch)

217

De Kockere, Geert (text)

Musschoot, Griet (illus.)

Man

(Man)

Wielsbeke : De Eenhoorn, 2004. – [42] p.

(Medaillon)

ISBN 90-5838-233-8

Identity – Philosophy

Man lives in his little house quite happily. Yet, once he starts thinking, he becomes totally obsessed with an agonising thought. To find relief from this torment, he uses the four basic elements: fire, water, earth, and air. At the end of the book, the broken Man lies on the beach, still dealing with his torment. This is an artistically designed picture book about the question of »Who am I?«. The typographic diversity as well as the illustrations in various techniques make this true art. The philosophical idea behind the story is complicated and a lot is left to the interpretation of the (young) reader. This exceptional book for children is ideal for reading together with adults. (9+)

218

Doncker, Wally de (text)

Derave, Veerle (illus.)

Tsjilp, zegt de vis

(Chirrup, said the fish)

Leuven : Davidsfonds/Infodok, 2004. – 90 p.

ISBN 90-5908-095-5

Identity – Change of roles – Philosophy

A sparrow is looking at her reflection in the water and dreams of being somebody else. With the help of magic words she swaps bodies with a fish, while both creatures keep their own minds. Being in somebody else's body, however, turns out not to be so easy and sometimes even dangerous. In the end, the fish wants his own body back but the sparrow refuses. The story is written in a very poetic style, using only monosyllabic words. The black-and-white illustrations and the design of the book give the story an extra dimension. The philosophical idea of the book, i.e. how to deal with your identity even if you're not inside your own body, is explained in an easily accessible way for young children. (7+)

219

Leeuwen, Joke van (text/illus.)

Waarom een buitenboordmotor eenzaam is
(Why an outboard motor is so lonely)
Rekkem : Stichting Ons Erfdeel, 2004. – 94 p.
ISBN 90-75862-70-9

Language

This non-fiction book deals with the history, variety and peculiarities of the Dutch language spoken in the Netherlands, Flanders, Surinam, Aruba, the Netherlands Antilles, and South Africa. Through text and pictures we learn about words from the Middle Ages that don't exist anymore, about words with more than one meaning, or why the Dutch alphabet has 26 letters. Even the new forms of language used for e-mailing and text-messaging is included. The combination of text, illustrations, and typography is fascinating, well thought-out, and efficient. The book offers a great deal of information all wrapped up in a very humorous story. Thus, the well-known Dutch children's book author Joke van Leeuwen succeeds in creating a non-fiction book about the beauty and complexity of the Dutch Language. (12+)

220

Leue, Dimitri (text)

Clement, Sabien (illus.)
Lodewijk de koningspinguin
(Lodewijk, the king penguin)
Tielt : Lannoo, 2004. – 55 p.
ISBN 90-209-5873-9

Penguin – Dream – Freedom – Differentness

Lodewijk the king penguin is different from the other penguins of his colony. He is always tottering around and could be called a real doubter. He always does things his own way and that sometimes leads to conflicts with the other penguins. Since a penguin is a bird, Lodewijk firmly believes he can fly, but this opinion results in severe arguments with the king and so he is banished. The beautiful, rhythmical story about a quest for freedom and the fulfilment of dreams is divided into several scenes, and every chapter has a clear line of suspense. The dialogues enliven the story and make it suitable for reading aloud. The colours used in the illustrations of this well-designed book perfectly match the environment of the penguins. (8+)

The Netherlands (Dutch)

☺ Special Mention

221

Haeringen, Annemarie van (text/illus.)

Beer is op Vlinder
(Bear is in love with Butterfly)
Amsterdam : Leopold, 2004. – [28] p.
ISBN 90-258-4225-0

Love – Differentness

Bear is in love with Butterfly and does everything to attract her attention: He paints red hearts on almost every tree, but Butterfly doesn't appreciate this »mess«. He knits a coat for Butterfly, but she says it looks like an egg-cosy. Then, he even builds a high house for her, but Butterfly suffers from fear of heights. In the end, Bear gives up, cuts all his presents into little pieces and sets fire to them. Butterfly finds the gloomy clouds of the fire so beautiful that she immediately declares her love for Bear. Both the text and the illustrations of this picture book are gorgeous. The repetition in the story is a carefully planned element that creates a lot of suspense and leads to a very poignant final act. The full-page illustrations in water-colour and ink perfectly reflect the fanciful atmosphere; at the same time, they show various funny details that go beyond the text. Text and illustrations invite young children to imagine what it means to be in love. (4+)

222

Heesen, Martha

De Ijzeren Hemel
(The Iron Heaven)
Amsterdam : Querido, 2004. – 112 p.
ISBN 90-451-0125-4

Granddaughter – Grandfather – Invention – Envy

After school, 10-year-old Loor often visits her grandfather who invents amazing machines. Grandfather also listens to her stories, for instance about her quarrel with her best friend who »exchanged« her for a new classmate. Together they share the most wonderful moments in grandfather's workshop »The Iron Heaven«, till the day when Grandpa makes a new friend who plans to exhibit and sell all the inventions. Loor hates this woman and desperately tries to prevent all this. The beautifully written and well-structured story de-

scribes the emotions and feelings of a girl who can't stand the fact that somebody suddenly disturbs her close relationship with her grandfather. (10+)

223

Jonge, Harm de (text)

Smit, Noëlle (illus.)

De Peperdans van Panzibas

(A special dance for Panzibas)

Amsterdam : Van Goor, 2004. – 94 p.

ISBN 90-00-03580-5

Love – Death – Animals – Philosophy

Manne Mens (a human being) likes to sit on the edge of the pool and listen to the conversations between the poet H. Duif (a pigeon), the ever-pessimistic Mors Mol (a mole), the cheerful, flirtatious Bluebel Libel (dragonfly), the more or less philosophical Pa Pad (a toad), and some other animals. They all dream about the land behind the horizon called Panzibas. In twelve loosely connected chapters, the animals philosophise about the really important issues in life: Love, death, and what will happen after death. The very humorous dialogues show the animals' different points of view. The full colour illustrations match the atmosphere of the literary texts very well. (9+)

224

Moeyaert, Bart

Dani Bennoni : lang zal hij leven

(Long live Dani Bennoni)

Amsterdam : Querido, 2004. – 84 p.

ISBN 90-451-0145-9

Football – Sexuality – Friendship

It's the summer of 1939 and you can feel the threat of war. 10-year-old Bing asks the football player Dani Bennoni to teach him how to play football but Dani refuses simply because Bing doesn't have the 'right legs' to become a good player. As a kind of revenge, Bing and his friend Lenny set Dani and Martha, who is secretly in love with him, at each other's throats. Little by little, the reader unravels the secret between Bing and Dani Bennoni. Behind the sober, suggestive words and the sophisticated references in this short novel, a lot of secrets, suppressed emotions, and sexual desires are hidden. The style is uncomplicated, direct, and even physical, and the text pays lots of attention to facial expressions, smells, and all sorts of noises. (13+)

225

Noort, Selma (text)

Klaassen, Sandra (illus.)

Nou moet jij!

(And now it's your turn!)

Dordrecht : De Inktvis, 2004. – 74 p.

(Bart en Esra)

ISBN 90-75689-35-7

Toddler – Everyday life – Nursery school –

Multicultural society

Bart and the Turkish girl Esra are both three years old and live next to each other. They meet with all kinds of small adventures alone and together with their parents. One day, Esra is jealous when Bart is asked to water the flowers at the nursery school. Another day, she goes up and down the elevator in a shop all by herself. This collection consists of 24 well-written stories to read aloud about very recognisable situations of adventurous toddlers. The colourful illustrations in watercolour with outlines in ink add an extra dimension to the stories. The cultural differences between the Dutch and the Turkish family are never discussed explicitly but are a natural 'ingredient' in the stories. (3+) ✧

226

Schubert, Ingrid / Schubert, Dieter (text/illus.)

Mijn held

(My hero)

Rotterdam : Lemniscaat, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 90-5637-623-3

Mouse – Love – Courage

A mouse wants to declare his deep love to his girlfriend. He starts with an overstatement, vowing that nothing will keep him away from her. Then, he tries to list all the things he will do to be with her: Water, mountains, or ravines – nothing will stop him. For all his enterprises, he uses a long red rope. It serves as a tightrope, as a lasso to catch a camel, or might come in handy to catch some thieves, too. In full-page illustrations full of atmosphere with a lot of details and special attention to nature, these imaginary adventures are told. The small illustrations on the left pages, showing the two mice sitting on their branch, hint at the protagonists' emotions that are recognisably human. (4+)

227

Various (text/illus.)

Verhalen van de ronde tafel : tien verhalen over koning Arthur en zijn ridders
(Tales of the Round Table)
Amsterdam : De Bijenkorf/Zirkoon Uitg., 2004. – 96 p.

ISBN 90-853-1031-8

Middle Ages– King Arthur – Round Table – Knight

These stories by ten well-known Dutch authors of children's literature are based on or inspired by the legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. They are not faithful retellings of the tales but rather stories dealing with the important themes of the legends and using their characters. This provides a rich diversity of stories with sometimes surprising perspectives. Every story is illustrated by a different artist whose pictures add an extra dimension to the story. In a very useful ›who-is-who‹, characters and issues of the original legends are described. The beautifully designed book offers a kaleidoscope of stories by the best Dutch authors and illustrators. (12+)

228

Vriens, Jacques (text)

Schaap, Annet (illus.)
Tien torens diep : een verhaal over vriendschap
(Ten towers deep : a story about friendship)
Houten : Van Holkema & Warendorf, 2004. – 159 p.
ISBN 90-269-9800-7

Netherlands/1958-1960 – Mining industry – Friendship

1958. Stef is in sixth grade at primary school. He knows that in a few years' time he, just like his father and brother, will have to find work in the mines together with his friend Victor. The two boys and the girl Wietske have a secret club and undergo the most exciting adventures in the village where life's joys and sorrows are controlled by the coal-mine industry and the Roman Catholic Church. In this humorous yet touching novel about the friendship of three coal miner's children in the 1950s, the positive and the negative social circumstances are described in a well-balanced way. This is a thrilling story for children and at the same time a document of historical interest. (11+)

229

Vries, Elly de

Duveke : een kleine roman
(Duveke : a short novel)
Amsterdam : Sjaloom, 2004. – 86 p.
ISBN 90-6249-450-1

War – Peace – World War II

This short novel set during the last year of World War II is written from the perspective of Duveke, a perceptive and intelligent girl of almost five, who reflects on everything and interprets events with her own logic. Her father is part of the Dutch Resistance and her mother is so busy that she forgets to answer Duveke's questions. The girl is not given a lot of love from her parents and always feels like an outsider. This is not primarily a historical novel about the last year of the Second World War, but rather an impressive and sensitive story that examines the impact a war can have on people of all ages. (10+)

The Netherlands (Frisian)

230

Wytsma, Baukje (text)

Heijde, Carla van der (illus.)
De poes mei de lange sturt
(The cat with the long tail)
Ljouwert : Afûk, 2004. – 25 p.
ISBN 90-6273-647-5

Differentness – Friendship – Cat

Puss has an extremely long tail that causes her a lot of trouble. It makes it impossible for her to run around or to climb trees, and it is certainly very impractical when it comes to catching a mouse. The very worst, however, is that other animals tease her about it. She tries to get rid of her long tail – but in vain. Eventually, she uses gel to make it stand up straight. The other animals would love to do that too but cannot for want of a long tail. The illustrations in warm basic colours add a lot to the story. In the full-page picture at the end of the book, the readers can see how Puss helps all the other animals cross the street, using her tail as an orange flagpole. (3+)

South Africa (Various languages)

231

Various (illus.)

The rights of a child : in Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga
Cape Town : Kwela Books [et al.], 2004. – [28] p.
ISBN 0-7957-0162-4

Children's rights

Forty-five years ago, the United Nations proclaimed the universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Nevertheless, many people still don't know exactly what these rights are. This unique picture book presents the ten principles of the declaration in the eleven official languages of South Africa from Afrikaans to Xitsonga. On the left-hand side of every double page, a full-page illustration depicts one particular principle, the text of which is then given in all the eleven languages in coloured boxes on the right-hand side. This outstanding book can be used in schools all over the world to discuss the basic needs of children. In addition, it is also a kaleidoscope of some of the best illustrators of (South) Africa. (7+) ♦

Greece

232

Autzēs, Merkurios (text)

Andrikopoulos, Nikolas (illus.)

Thelō mono na paixō mazi su

(I just want to play with you)

Athēna : Hellēnika Grammata, 2004. – 25 p.

(Eikonographēmēna)

ISBN 960-406-874-1

Disability – Differentness – Friendship –

Down's syndrome

Manos suffers from Down's syndrome, something that makes him ›different‹ from many other children. Playing with the neighbourhood kids is the only thing he really wants to do. Convinced that he knows how to play games very well, he is surprised when he notices that some children severely snub him and try to avoid him. He decides to secretly follow them to the small stream where they usually go to catch butterflies. There, being persistent and spontaneous, Manos manages to give them a lesson

based on nature and its secrets and is finally accepted. This book will help young readers realise that children who suffer from Down's syndrome have the same right to live and are very well able to participate in other kids' social activities. (5+)

233

Barbarusē, Lēda (text/illus.)

Ena psari pu den hēxere na kolympaei!

(A fish that didn't know how to swim)

Athēna : Papadopoulos, 2004. – [28] p.

(Trelodankōnites ; 7)

ISBN 960-412-285-1

Loneliness – Decisiveness – Friendship

A little fish decides to leave its fishbowl because it doesn't want to be lonely anymore. Things are different in the lake though: The fish doesn't even dare to swim into the deep water. However, in the end, it finds the strength to fight its fears and insecurity and thus decides to stay in its natural habitat. This affectionate children's book proves how insistence, decisiveness, and friendship can help us overcome difficulties. Its simple, rhymed text written in particularly rhythmical verse lends itself perfectly to reading aloud to very young children. The author has also created the exceptionally humorous and amusing pictures. (4+)

234

Hēliopulos, Bangelēs (text)

Phentele, Kiara (illus.)

Hotan ho bibliopontikas synantēse tēn Tita

Grabiera

(When Mr. Big Book-Mouse met Ms. Tita Gruyere)

Athēna : Patakēs, 2004. – 28 p.

(Chōris sōsibio : Epipedo 2, psarakia ; 5) (Chōris sōsibio epipedos)

ISBN 960-16-1354-4

Romance – Book – Effort

Mr. Big Book-Mouse feeds on books. When he falls in love at first sight with Ms. Tita Gruyere, the librarian, he decides to change his habits. He starts looking for a job but doesn't manage to find one and thus decides to become Ms. Tita Gruyere's assistant in the library. Yet, how can he resist so many delicious books around him? In a moment of weakness, he takes a huge bite from a very old and rare book. The librarian gets extremely angry, while he makes a desperate attempt to replace the

missing bit and faithfully promises never to bite into a book again! Except for the ones that children secretly offer to him. The combination of lively pictures full of brainwaves and an amusing text makes young readers identify themselves with the heroes of the story and share their love of books. (6+)

235

Kanaba, Zōē (text)

Papatheu-Dulēgerē, Christina (illus.)

Hoi praxeis tōn Apostolōn gia paidia kai neus

(The acts of the Apostles)

(Akritas paidika)

Athēna : Akritas, 2004. – 205 p.

ISBN 960-328-240-5

Religion – Christianity – New Testament

St. Luke narrates to young Theophilos what happened after Jesus Christ's Resurrection and what the Apostles did to spread Christianity during the years that followed. This is the author's way of presenting a vivid, attractive, yet accurate version of the Acts of the Apostles in a language easily understandable for young readers. The illustrations of the book are inspired by the Byzantine tradition. (10+)

236

Kokkinakē, Nena (text)

Papanikolau, Pōlina (illus.)

Sōkratēs : ho daskalos tōn aiōnōn

(Socrates : a teacher over the centuries)

Athēna : Ankyra, 2003. – 51 p.

ISBN 960-422-083-7

Socrates – Philosophy – History – Greece/Ancient times

Socrates, who has been a great teacher for centuries, taught in ancient Athens and went down in history as a paragon of wisdom and consistency. The way he lived his life and the fact that he chose to accept to die instead of breaking the laws set an example that promoted absolute trust in laws. Humankind has always referred to his name with great respect because he is considered to be one of the greatest philosophers. Through this book, children have the opportunity to get in touch with the legendary philosopher's life and with his method of teaching. (10+)

237

Kontoleōn, Manos (text)

Markolin, Marina (illus.)

»Mazy tha perasume to cheimōna«, eipe to helato
(»We'll spend the winter together«, the fir tree said)

Athēna : Patakēs, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 960-16-1317-X

Christmas – Friendship – Winter – Forest

Winter is approaching but there are still birds that have not managed to leave for the warmer countries. While desperately trying to find a tree to rest on, these birds go to an acacia first, which sends them away because it does not want them to spoil its beauty. Next, they fly to a sycamore tree and to a chestnut, but in vain. It is only the fir tree that allows them to settle down on its branches. Their colourful wings dress the tree and turn it into the first and most beautiful Christmas tree ever. This fairy tale-like story offers an explanation of how the custom of decorating Christmas trees originally started. The poetic text and the aesthetic pictures are full of tenderness and affection. (4+)

238

Kontos, Giannēs (text)

Phasianos, Alekos (illus.)

Ta christugenna erchontai

(Christmas is coming)

Athēna : Kedros, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 960-04-2583-3

Christmas – Tradition – Customs

Little John lives in Athens and eagerly awaits Christmas – just like most children do. However, children are not the only ones who want Christmas to come: According to the tradition in Greece, some little goblins also look forward to it. These little creatures live under the Earth and climb up to its surface only during Christmas in order to make mischief and tease people. In little John's house, though, they do not manage to spoil the Christmas spirit. This book is dedicated to children who know how to happily enjoy the Christmas days. The well-known Greek poet Giannēs Kontos has created a text full of sensitivity and nostalgia while the famous painter Alekos Phasianos has painted pictures in the same mood and spirit. (5+)

239

Parashu, Sophia (text)

Karapanu, Despoina (illus.)

Ke hoi kakoi echun psyche

(Bad guys have feelings, too)

Athēna : Psychogios, 2004. – 159 p.

ISBN 960-274-838-9

Fairy tale – Humour – Imagination

The ›bad guys‹ of all the classical fairy tales decide to hold a meeting to ask their storytellers to change their character. They don't want to play their traditional role anymore because they never even had a choice. Naturally, they are fully aware that, although they survive so many dangerous situations in their fairy tales, nobody really likes them even though it is definitely not their fault. Andersen, Perrault, the Grimm Brothers, and all the other participants of the meeting, however, decide that fairy tales have no reason for existence without all these ›bad guys‹ in them. Just imagine: What would Little Red Riding Hood be without the wolf? This text includes elements about the theory of children's literature that are so humorous and well-presented that even very young readers can easily understand them. (10+)

240

Patroklu, Lila (text)

Papatsaruchas, Basiles (illus.)

Hē Chrysula

<proper name>

Athēna : Kastor, 2004. – 29 p.

ISBN 960-7906-56-X

Journey – Fantasy – Effort

Chrysula, a camel with a heart of gold, lives in Jordan but dreams of Sweden. She is so tired of the heat in her home country that every night she imagines how she would move to a country full of snow and ice. She finally decides to stop dreaming and do something instead; thus, she goes off on a long journey. After a route of hardship and suffering through Russia, she passes the snow-white fields of Finland and eventually arrives in Sweden. Her dream has finally come true! After all, perseverance and willpower are the best way to complete a difficult task. This book received an award for its unique illustrations that liberate children's imagination and make them travel to their dream land with Chrysula as their companion. (5+)

241

Petrobits-Andrutsopulu, Lotē (text)

Kunturēs, Michales (illus.)

To luludpaido

(The flower-child)

Athēna : Minōas, 2004. – 27 p.

(Synchrona paramythia)

ISBN 960-699-042-7

Granddaughter – Grandmother – Death – Flowers

Anthie's granny, who used to call her ›my flower‹, passed away some days ago. ›Forever‹ said the grownups. Anthie does not like this ›forever‹. She is upset and feels so very, very sad. Suddenly, she has an idea: If she managed to turn into a real flower, maybe granny would be so delighted that she would decide to come back. Therefore, Anthie prays to all the good fairies she knows from fairy tales and tries again and again to be transformed into different flowers. But without success! Still, granny will eventually be with Anthie forever, in another way. The popular and experienced author Lotē Petrobits-Andrutsopulu offers children a text that will help them approach the difficult issue of death through the fairy tale world. (5+)

Hungary

242

Kamarás, István (text)

Kalmár, István (illus.)

Kalamona kalamajka

(Kalamon chaos)

Budapest : Móra, 2004. – 234 p.

ISBN 963-11-7915-X

Child – Fairy tale world – Reality

The first tale on which all other tales are based is the world itself. Several siblings dive into it hoping that they will be able to find their parents' peace of mind and rescue the wind and their imprisoned grandfather. Along their humorously described way, they are accompanied by some fairy tale characters. They successfully come through various fairy tale-like adventures because their grandfather's old and new fairy tales help them. This book offers an insight into the soul of children who need the imaginary world to grow up. Sparing black-and-white drawings reminiscent of traditional fairy tale figures complement the narrative progression. (6+)

243

Lackfi, János (text)

Kalmár, István (illus.)

A buta felnőtt

(The stupid adult)

Budapest : Móra, 2004. – 59 p.

ISBN 963-11-7888-9

Child – Question

This book is a guidebook to life (not only) for children. Written from children's points of view, it gathers witty verses about a variety of situations typical for their lives. Apart from boys and girls, there are also a few personified feelings and inanimate objects in the story that try to explain the world to the child who questions them. Adults have no part in this. Although the world is so weird that it simply cannot be explained, the verses illustrate how interesting and diverse it is. Cheerful, slightly naïve colour illustrations underline the character of the verses. (6+)

Egypt (Arabic)

244

Ṭāhir, Walid (illus.)

Al- Aġbiyā'

(The idiots)

Al-Qāhira : Dar-aš-Šurūq, 2003. – [24] p.

ISBN 977-09-0961-0

Envy – Greed – Argument – War

Two people, a fisherman and a farmer, live peacefully side by side. Yet suddenly, each of them craves for his neighbour's possessions even though they both get by well enough with what they have. They start stealing, fight each other fiercely, and this eventually leads to war, destruction, and death. In the end, one thing is clear: The world could be much more peaceful if it wasn't for the humans. The pictures, created by the well-known Egyptian illustrator Walid Ṭāhir, clearly stand out among other children's books from his country. With its energetic, expressive, wild pictures in strong suggestive colours, this parable without words shows in a simple yet powerful way how much suffering people can cause out of envy and greed. (5+) ✧

Lebanon (Arabic)

245

Rizqallah', 'Adli (text/illus.)

Ḥikāyat šaġartān

(The tale of the two trees)

Bairūt : Asāla, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 9953-445-83-4

Religion – Islam – Christianity – Peace – Tolerance

Lebanon is a country where different ethnic groups, religions, and cultures coexist. The scars of the civil war that the country had to endure for 16 years before it finally ended in 1991 are slowly healing. This picture book is a plea for Christian and Muslim people to live together in peace. A mosque and a church are standing side by side, yet they are completely separate. In front of each building, a tree is growing. Thanks to the sun's powerful rays, the two treetops grow towards each other until their boughs intertwine. Small children will easily understand the symbolism of this simple tale. (5+) ✧

Iran (Persian)

246

Akbarpūr, Aḥmad (text)

Baḥrāmī, Ḥamīd (illus.)

Man nūkar-i bābā nīstam!

(I am not Father's servant!)

Tihrān : Našr-i Ufuq, 2003 (= 1382 h.š.). – 104 p.

(Rumān-i naugawān ; 12)

ISBN 964-369-108-x

Family – Father – Son – Social role –

Family conflict

The first-person narrator, one of many sons of a family living in rural Iran, wants to be his father's favourite child. Thus, the boy does his best to please the father, and his brothers soon start calling him »father's servant«. His unlimited love – or obedience – even makes him climb down into the stinking toilet shaft because the father accidentally dropped a bundle of banknotes down there. He doesn't have to wait long for his siblings' mockery. In a humorous and exaggerated way, the author closely examines the family routine and the conflicts that may result from a traditional role model characteristic of a patriarchal system. (10+)

247

Füladwand, Marḡān (adapt.)

Parsānizād, Kuruš (illus.)

Rustam wa Suhrāb : bargirfta az Šāhnāma-i

Firdausī

(Rustam and Suhrāb)

Tihṛān : Kānūn-i Parwariš-i Fikrī-i Kūdākān wa Naugawānān, 2004 (= 1383 h.š.). – 42 p.

ISBN 964-391-031-8

Persian – Verse epic – Father – Son –

Meeting again – Fight

This book is a retelling of one of the saddest and most tragic tales from »Shahnameh« (Book of Kings), the famous epic by Abul-Qasem Ferdowsi (940-1020). It tells the story of how a father and his long lost son meet again. Since neither of the two recognises the other, the father kills his son in a fight. For this book, the original text was re-written in a simple language appropriate for young readers. What sets it apart are the unusual illustrations in the style of the popular traditional Iranian tea-house paintings, i.e. murals that depicted both religious and secular epics. (8+)

248

Ibad, Ṭahira (text)

Nāmwar, ‘Alī (illus.)

Hāniwāda-i āqāi čarhišī

(The Tsharkheshi family)

Tihṛān : Kānūn-i Parwariš-i Fikrī-i Kūdākān wa Naugawānān, 2004 (= 1383 h.š.). – 112 p.

ISBN 964-432-877-9

City – Family – Everyday life

A schoolboy describes the fairly chaotic daily routine of his family who live in metropolitan Teheran. The father, in particular, keeps the family on the go. Ever since he has gone bald, he is bursting with creative ideas. His talent to fill others with enthusiasm makes it easy for him to persuade them to put his (sometimes very weird) ideas into practice. This book is an excellent example for a new tone in Iranian children's literature that is more realistic and characterised by modern everyday language. Witty, scrawly black-and-white drawings perfectly match the pace and the humour of the story. (8+)

249

Rahmāndüst, Muṣṭafā (text)

Nāmwar, ‘Alī (illus.)

Tarānahā-i ‘āšiqāna

(Love melodies)

Tihṛān : Šabāwiz, 2004 (= 1383 h.š.). – [32] p.

ISBN 964-505-090-1

Teenager – Everyday life – Love – Poetry

These seven poems focus on the life of modern teenagers. The tension between the ordinary everyday issues depicted and the condensed, highly lyrical language employed by the well-known author holds a special attraction. Imagination and poetry win over reality and take the reader into another world. Thus, common objects, such as a computer or a teacup, are given additional meanings. The contemporary illustrations – delicate, sketchy line drawings that are coloured in with warm shades – perfectly complement the poems. (10+)

Turkey

250

Ibiş, Şule

Kamp Arkadaşları : gençlik roman

(Friends in the summer camp)

Çağaloğlu-Istanbul : BU Yayınevi, 2004. – 144 p.

ISBN 975-8926-00-4

Teenager – Holidays – Summer camp –
Group behaviour

This novel takes a closer look at the relationships within a group of teenagers. In the summer holidays, three girls, three boys, and their teacher go on a camping trip into the forest of an island where, right at the beginning, they are attacked by a predator. Who kills the animal remains a secret. Some misunderstandings lead to various arguments that escalate at some point, but, eventually, the group members are reconciled when they rise to a difficult challenge together. The successful debut novel by the 18-year-old author, which was reviewed positively by the critics, examines patterns of social behaviour in a fascinating way. (12+)

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14+ years: 6, 8, 12, 26, 28, 32, 33, 34,
38, 40, 48, 50, 144, 173, 198

16+ years: 82, 192

Internationale Jugendbibliothek München

International Youth Library Munich

In brief

- opened in 1949 by Jella Lepman
- largest library for international children's and youth literature in the world
- centre for children's book specialists from all over the world
- multilingual staff
- 540,000 children's and young adult books in over 130 languages
- 80,000 historical children's books (published between 1574 and 1950)
- 30,000 volumes of reference literature
- 40,000 documentary materials and access to major bibliographic reference tools
- 140,000 volumes in an on-line Internet database: www.ijb.de
- 200 current journals
- annotated bibliographic catalogues and lists with international focus
- lending library for children with 23,000 volumes in 15 languages
- extensive model programs of book-oriented activities for children
- travelling exhibitions for public libraries, schools and institutions in Germany and abroad
- fellowship program for foreign professionals
- financed by the German Federal Ministry for Youth Affairs, the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture and the City of Munich
- administered since 1996 by the International Youth Library Foundation