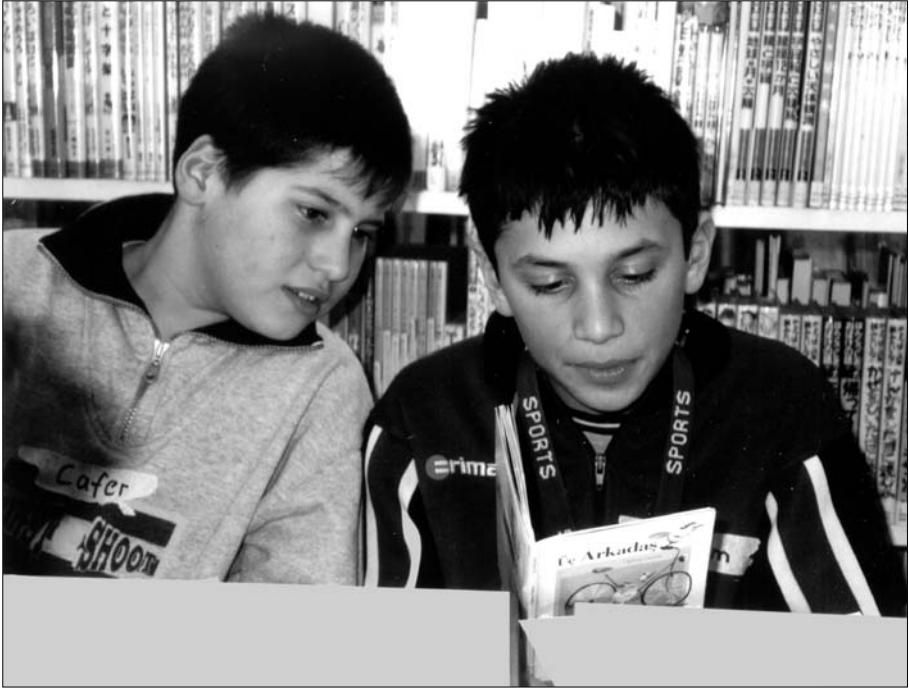


The White Ravens 2006



A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

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Children's and Youth Literature

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A Selection of International
Children's and Youth Literature

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Contents

Preface	4	Latin America	47
<i>East Asian Languages</i>	6	Argentina (Spanish)	47
Japan	6	Brazil (Portuguese)	48
Republic of Korea	10	Chile (Spanish)	49
<i>English Language</i>	12	Colombia (Spanish)	50
Africa	12	Mexico (Spanish)	50
Botswana	12	Venezuela (Spanish)	51
South Africa	12	North America	51
Asia and Oceania	12	Canada (French)	51
Australia	12	<i>Scandinavian Languages</i>	53
India	14	Denmark	53
New Zealand	15	Faroe Islands	54
Europe	16	Finland	55
Great Britain	16	Iceland	56
Ireland	18	Norway	56
North America	18	Sweden	57
Canada	18	<i>Slavic Languages</i>	59
USA	20	Croatia	59
<i>German Language</i>	23	Poland	60
Austria	23	Russia	61
Germany	24	Serbia and Montenegro	62
Switzerland	31	Slovakia	62
<i>Romance Languages</i>	33	Slovenia	63
Africa	33	<i>Other Languages</i>	64
Morocco (French)	33	Belgium (Dutch)	64
Europe	33	The Netherlands (Dutch)	65
Belgium (French)	33	The Netherlands (Frisian)	68
France	34	Greece	68
Italy	39	Hungary	70
Portugal	42	Mongolia	71
Romania	43	Rwanda (Kinyarwanda)	71
Spain	43	Egypt (Arabic)	71
Spain (Catalan)	45	Iran (Persian)	72
Spain (Galician)	46	Turkey	73
Switzerland (French)	47	Name Index	74
		Subject Index	76
		Reading Age Index	79

*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 32 languages from 47 countries**.*

*The titles are drawn from the books we received in 2005. 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 11th volume on the IYL homepage, you can find a pool of 2,750 »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 2006*

Japan

(Romanization according to the international Hepburn norms)

1

Bulatov, Michail A. (retelling)

Dekune, Iku (adapt./illus.)

M~sha to shiroi tori : Roshia no minwa

(Masha and the white birds : a Russian folk tale)

Tokyo : Kaiseisha, 2005. – 26 p.

ISBN 4-03-963860-3

Baba Yaga / Witch – Bird – Brother – Abduction – Search – Sister

While farm girl Masha is playing in the neighbour's yard, her little brother is kidnapped by the witch Baba Yaga's white birds. The girl sets off in search for him but is held up by a stove, an apple tree, and the cheese banks of a milk-river. They all need her help and, in return for her kindness, show her the right way. Iku Dekune interprets this Russian fairy tale with a palette of dark colours mixing oil- and tempera paints on wood panels covered with gesso. The bright red headscarf makes the brave girl stand out from the dark forest, the trees of which look as if they were penetrated by delicate veins. The illustrator's stylised pictures of the huge forest scenery lend a unique, fantastic atmosphere to the tale. (5+)

2

Hamada, Hirotsuke (text)

Imoto, YÇko (illus.)

Koritsu no hatsunome

(The squirrel and the bear cub's paw)

Tokyo : Kin no hoshisha, 2005. – [34] p.

ISBN 4-323-03881-x

Squirrel – Bear – Friendship – Hibernation – Looking for food

YÇko Imoto is noted for her particular technique of working with Japanese paper. In this book, she takes on an animal tale by the modern classic Hirotsuke Hamada (1893-1973). When a young squirrel gives her friend Bear a few grapes as a present, he squashes them and rubs them into his paws – as all bears do before they go into hibernation. Thus, when they wake up, they have something to satisfy their hunger. As soon as spring starts, the little squirrel runs to the bear's

den to lick his paws and he awakens. The animals' friendship and loving behaviour to each other is depicted in warm shades of brown. The large-format pictures radiate a cosy atmosphere, which even the youngest readers will feel. (2+)

3

Hirayama, Kazuko (text/illus.)

Hirayama, EizÇ (ed./photogr.)

Ochiba

(Fallen leaves)

Tokyo : Fukuinkan Shoten, 2005. – 40 p.

ISBN 4-8340-2141-6

Tree – Leave – Autumn – Season

Every year, Kazuko Hirayama used to collect fallen leaves from the different trees in her back yard, the nearby woods, and the mountain lake. With astonishing accuracy, the author shows how colours and shapes vary according to the season or the place where she found the leaves and presents the interesting patterns that can be created with them. Thanks to her meticulous observation and technical skills, the readers can almost feel the surface texture of each leaf and also sense Hirayama's dedication and respect for nature. Together, the pages, on which the leaves are skilfully arranged in subdued shades of colour, and the plain but inspiring comments form a perfect hymn to nature. (9+)

4

Iino, Kazuyoshi (text/illus.)

Negi bÇzu no AsatarÇ : Isogitabi Sobagaki Genemon

(The adventure of the Leek-Boy AsatarÇ : Wheatflour-Genemon's rushed journey)

Tokyo : Fukuinkan Shoten, 2005. – 32 p.

(Negi bÇzu no AsatarÇ shirŞzu; 5)

ISBN 4-8340-2108-4

Compassion – Assistance – Adventure – Samurai – Intrigue

Leek-boy AsatarÇ sets out to see the world. Because of his righteous and sensitive character, he always ends up helping people in need and getting himself into trouble. In this book, the fifth episode of AsatarÇ's adventures, the young Leek, his travel companion Garlic-Nikichi, and a samurai strive to prevent an intrigue of the vassals against their master. The tales, in which characters

are depicted with vegetable- or fruit-heads, are set in the Edo period and told in the style of the narrative folk-ballad »RÇkyoku«. The endearing pictures, which feature original protagonists with theatrical gestures, bright colours, and film-like perspectives, create an entertaining world in which Good and Bad collide and the good ones naturally win in the end. (5+)

5

Kisaka, RyÇ (text)

Yamamura, KÇji (illus.)

Shikishikimura no haru

(Spring in Four-Seasons-Village)

Tokyo : Iwanami Shoten, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 4-00-115307-6

Child – Season – Children's poetry

Four jolly friends – Cat, Dog, Snail, and Tortoise – enjoy nature all through the four different seasons. Among other things, they discover a sea of flowers, giant clouds, mountains speckled with multi-coloured trees, and the starry sky in winter. Depending on the season, they celebrate the birthday of the forest animals, the insects, the nuts, and the snowmen respectively. The four-volume series, of which this book is the first title, bring alive typical Japanese food, games, natural phenomena, and animals for little readers to enjoy. The highly rhythmic, funny verses by poet Kisaka inspire children to sing along while illustrator Yamamura, who specialises in animated films, adds various visual elements to the text and creates witty scenes. (2+)

6

Mashima, Setsuko (illus.)

Kobayashi, Emiko (concept)

Mate mate mate

(Wait, wait, wait)

Tokyo : Kogumasha, 2005. – [24] p.

(Warabeuta ehon)

ISBN 4-7721-0179-9

Baby – Crawling – Growth – Communication – Nursery rhyme

»Wait, wait, wait!« that's what all the cuddly toys shout after the little baby girl who crawls around the room. One after the other, the animals jump up and chase her, until, at the end, even the baby's mother joins in. The child hugely enjoys being the

centre of attention. This simple tale accompanying one of the shortest traditional Japanese nursery rhymes creates a convincing and affectionate picture of the pleasure of playing, of the pride babies feel during their early stages of development, and of the sense of comfort and security that toddlers develop when their expectations are fulfilled by people they trust. (1+)

7

Matsumoto, Takeshi (retelling)

Wu, Jianhua (illus.)

Tenkaichi no yumitsukai

(The best archer)

Tokyo : Shogakukan, 2005. – [36] p.

(Chihiro Bijutsukan korekushon ehon; 7)

ISBN 4-09-727239-x

Uighurs – Archer – Competition – Folk tale

In this ancient tale from the Uighurs (also spelled Uyghurs or Uyghurs), an ethnic minority in north-west China, two archers compete for the hand of the king's daughter. At first, the proud and rich candidate wins. However, when enemies invade the kingdom, the modest and honest young archer can show his true skills and is awarded the princess as wife. Eventually, the two archers are reconciled. The illustrator created decorative pictures dotted with specks of gold. The rulers and the warriors, ironically depicted with extra-large, green heads, are donned in glamorous historical costumes. Particularly interesting is the clever combination of left and right pages in the book and the way in which the typically Japanese use of blurry water-colours adds an illusion of depth to the pictures. (5+)

□ □ Special Mention

8

Ogiwara, Noriko

FÇjin hishÇ

(The tale of the flute player)

Tokyo : Tokuma Shoten, 2005. – 590 p.

ISBN 4-19-862016-4

Japan/1159 – Samurai – Dancer – Crow – Love – Power struggle

This delicately composed love story is set against the backdrop of the 1159 power struggle between the Heishi and the Genji warrior tribes, which was

lost by the Genji. As he flees, 16-year-old SÇjārÇ meets the dancer Itose who, like him, possesses magical powers. People and forest animals are deeply stirred by his flute playing, while Itose's dancing calms the warriors' souls. When the former emperor Go-Shirakawa forces the dancer to perform to the music of SÇjārÇ's flute to prolong the emperor's life, she suddenly vanishes into another world in the middle of the dance. To find her again, SÇjārÇ embarks on a dangerous journey assisted by the king of crows. With elements from a famous war epic and from old legends and myths, the author creates a historical fantasy novel embellished with quotations from an ancient anthology of songs. The picturesque scenes and the language, which is partly written in the characteristic style of the old times, will captivate readers of this demanding book. (14+) ◇

9

SanetÇ, Akira (text)

Inoue, YÇsuke (illus.)

Fukumochi tengumochi : SÇsaku minwa Buraku no yobanashi

(The mountain spirit Tengu's fortune rice cakes : tales told in the village at night)

Osaka : Kaiho Shuppansha, 2005. – 191 p.

ISBN 4-7592-5030-1

Japan – Village – Minority – Origin – Prejudice – Discrimination – Short story

The protagonists of this book are the children of charcoal makers, woodcutters, bear hunters, haters, and knackers from hamlets in the remote mountain regions of Japan. To help their parents, the children work hard in the forests, villages, and towns and live in abject poverty. Yet, because of their family background, these children are discriminated against by the rest of society. Using traditional folktale elements from the settlements in Western Japan that were segregated from Japanese society, the popular critical author wrote ten short stories about the life of these marginalised people. The illustrations, rendered in YÇsuke Inoue's characteristic brush strokes, mirror the people's hard daily life, but also their humanity and faith. (12+)

10

Seo, Maiko

KÇfuku na shokutaku

(Happily around the dinner table)

Tokyo : Kodansha, 2004. – 231 p.

ISBN 4-06-212673-7

Father – Life crisis – Family – Conflict – Childhood love

A family is devastated and cannot understand why the father tried to commit suicide. Deeply shocked and insecure, the mother leaves the family to regain her own strength. Her husband also gives up his role as a father and his profession as a teacher and starts to reorganise his life. Despite all this, they keep in touch and all family members treat each other with respect and consideration. It takes five years until the family is finally reunited at the dinner table. In a light-hearted tone with a lot of humour, the young author tackles this serious topic and describes the crisis-ridden life up to the new beginning. The unhappy teenage love of daughter Sawako, as well as that of her brother Nao, add some wonderful and dramatic moments to the novel. (14+)

11

Shinozaki, Mitsuo (text/illus.)

W~i wai yuki

(Hurray, it's snowing!)

Tokyo : Shikosha, 2005. – [24] p.

ISBN 4-7834-0292-2

Child – Snow – Winter

While playing outside, a little child discovers the different facettes of snow. When he gently blows against the weightless, delicate snowflakes on his gloves, they turn into tiny drops of water. The next morning, everything is white. The snow sparkles in the bright sunshine. It seems as if thousands of crystal flowers were growing in the sky, on the trees, and on the ground. Under the snow, the child spots a few real flowers – a sign of the coming spring. The poetic atmosphere of winter is expressed in a childlike harmonious manner. Thanks to the well-structured distribution of the text on wide fields of colour, the typography in various shades of grey, and the pleasing combination of warm and cold colours, the texture of the soft, wet snow can almost be felt. (2+)

12

Takadono, HÇko (text)

Dekune, Iku (illus.)

Watashitachi no bÇshi

(Your cap and mine)

Tokyo : Froebel-kan, 2005. – 208 p.

ISBN 4-577-03125-6

Girl – Friendship – Secret – Grandmother – Past

When for a while, Saki and her family move into a big old building, the girl discovers a cap left behind in a wardrobe. Inside the house with its winding corridors, long flights of stairs, and strange doors, Saki meets weird people, such as the girl Iku, who wears the same cap as her. They become friends and set off on many adventures together. Through their identical caps, the two girls learn about the past, the relationship between Iku's grandmother and her old friend, and their connection to the other inhabitants of the house. The author relates this tale in such a mysterious and gripping style that readers will turn each page expectantly until finally all the riddles are solved. The novel's slightly fantastic atmosphere is underlined by Iku Dekune's magical illustrations. (11+)

13

Takahashi, Hideo (text)

Miyamoto, Tadao (illus.)

JŞchan no iru iroribata

(The fireplace where my grandfather sits)

Tokyo : Komine Shoten, 2004. – 157 p.

(Ohanashi purezento)

ISBN 4-338-17019-0

Grandfather – Old age – Family – Understanding

In children's literature, the grandparents' role often consists in assisting less experienced young people, while their own wishes are rarely of major importance – in this book, however, they are. KÇta's grandparents live together with his family but the changing Japanese society greatly influences the way families live. Since the grandfather longs to create a familiar place for himself that serves as a connection to his former life, he starts building a hut in the garden with a fireplace. How embarrassing for KÇta's parents. This could damage their reputation in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, Grandfather insists on it. In the end, they all sit around the fireplace and KÇta and his sister learn a lot about the life in former times. (10+)

14

Tokuda, Yukihiisa (text)

Kusumi, Takuya (illus.)

Mushitachi no omatsuri

(The fair of the insects)

Tokyo : Doshinsha, 2005. – [32] p.

(Ehon kodomo no hiroba)

ISBN 4-494-00949-0

Insect – Characteristic – Association – Fair

Attracted by the stag beetles' drumming and the dragonflies' formation flight, all the insects hurry towards the dandelion field where a huge fair with numerous sales booths and carnival workers is about to begin. There is a labyrinth, a skittle lane, a trampoline, portrait painters, and lots of other attractions to entertain them. Longicorn beetles offer masks made from blossoms and leaves, sac spider families sell caps and jumpers. The author, an insect specialist, assigns the insects jobs that are closely related to their characteristic qualities. The basic information is cleverly woven into the narrative text, which the illustrator translates into simple, entertaining pictures. Thus, while enjoying a funny story, the readers learn a lot about the world of insects. (4+)

15

Yoshida, Michiko (text)

Fukuda, Iwao (illus.)

Kirameku natsu

(The sparkling summer)

Tokyo : Kumon Shuppan, 2004. – 106 p.

ISBN 4-7743-0870-6

Mother – Death – Grief – Son

With a lot of sensitivity, the author describes how ten-year-old Tomonosuke copes with his grief after his mother has died. Together with his little sister and the dog he was given by his grandfather, the boy plays funny games but often thinks of his mother. One day, on a construction site in the neighbourhood, he meets a boy who ran away from home to rebel against his alcohol-addicted father. His mother has disappeared and his father suddenly dies in an accident. Tomonosuke's family take him in until he is given a place in a children's home. This experience deeply influences the protagonist as he grows up. In this complex tale, the author succeeds in making young readers understand the harsh reality of a child's world. (9+)

Republic of Korea

16

Han, Py4ng-ho (text/illus.)

Saega doego sip²4

(I wish I were a bird)

Seoul : K²aerikt²4 Pßlan, 2004. – [40] p.

ISBN 89-91096-10-7

Craftsman – Daily life – Dream – Metamorphosis – Search for identity

The most fervent wish of a craftsman is to grow beautiful wings, turn into a bird, fly across the sky with his flock, and sleep in a tree at night. He is aware of the downsides, of course: the feeling of loneliness, or the fact that he will be shivering in the rain and snow – but still... However, one day, in his dream, his bird-self only just manages to escape a cat, and this event makes him realise that from now on he'd rather be a cat. This book deals with the constant wish for change so typical for the human search for identity. The short concise story is perfectly complemented by mysterious, subtly coloured pencil-drawings. (7+) (Golden Apple, Biennial of Illustrations, Bratislava; 2005)

17

Kim, Hyang-kßm (text)

Ch²oe Suk-hßi (illus.)

Sesang ßl damßn kßrim chido

(The world on the map)

Ky4ng gi-do : Porim, 2004. – [32] p.

(Ch4ntong munhwa kßrim ch²aek solg4nara)

ISBN 89-433-0523-0 / -0069-7

Human being – Nature – Map – Korea/History

What may have inspired people many thousand years ago to create a map of their home country by reproducing a faithful image of their surroundings? They probably worried about finding food in remote regions. It might have been necessary for orientation purposes in times of war and peace. Trying to find acceptable means for reproduction, they invented wood- and stone-printing techniques and produced expressive maps that can still be used today. This book explains to readers how means of information developed over the centuries and how useful such maps proved to be for living together. The illustrations are created in bright gouache paints. Particularly remarkable are

the pictures that present landscapes in relief and the effects that emphasise light and shadow. (7+)

18

Pak, Hy4n-j4ng (text/illus.)

Saesaeakssi

(The bride)

Seoul : Ch²obang Ch²aekpang, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 89-90614-12-0

Korea – Bride – Tradition – Traditional dress

In Korea, a wedding is considered the most important event in life, and the bride is therefore donned in magnificent, colourful robes. In this picture book, the details of a particularly valuable traditional bridal dress are presented in a minimalist way. The patterns and embroidery full of symbolic meanings, the headwear with jades, corals, pearls, silver, enamel, etc., and other accessories point towards a long tradition in creating craft-work. The lines and shapes of the various items of clothing and the dangling cords and ribbons are beautiful to look at. This attractive book is a high-quality attempt to introduce the younger generations to ancient culture with the help of highly aesthetic pictures. (4+) ◇

19

Wi Ki-ch²4l kßl (text)

Kim, Hwan-y4ng (illus.)

Horangi wa kotkam

(The tiger and the dried persimmon)

P²aju : Kungmin S4gwan, 2004. – [36] p.

(Yetnal yetchok e; 2)

ISBN 89-11-02224-1

Tiger – Persimmon – Misunderstanding – Folk tale

At night, a hungry tiger roams the hills and arrives at a remote hut in which a desperate mother tries to soothe her wailing child. Finally, she says: »Look, there is the dried persimmon!« and the child immediately stops crying. Frightened, the tiger steps back because he believes the persimmon to be a terrifying monster, a lot stronger than himself. When, on top of all that, a thief turns up, the chain of misunderstandings culminates. Tiger and thief are fooled by their own imagination and flee into the night. The expressive, wood-cut-like illustrations of this folk tale, which is also popular outside Korea, are sparsely coloured in warm earthy paints. (3+)

20

Yi, Su-ji (text/illus.)

Tongmurw4n

(The zoo)

Seoul : Piryongso, 2004. – [36] p.

(Piryongso ch²angjak kBrim ch²aek; 20)

ISBN 89-491-0047-9

Zoo – Girl – Imagination – Harmony

A little child and her parents visit the zoo. Fascinated by all the animals, the child embarks on a dream journey that makes it forget its parents and the real world around it. As a »member« of the animal world, it dances in the midst of water-spraying elephants, peacefully grazing giraffes, and flocks of colourful birds. In the child's imagination, the fences and cages of the zoo disappear and they all live happily ever after as a big animal family. While the sad and grey reality – the real world – is depicted in greyish-blue shades with only a few spots of colour, the utopian dream-world of animal-people, where everybody lives in peace despite their differences, is illustrated in sparkingly bright pastel-paints on vivid double-page pictures. (4+)

21

Yi, Tae-jun (text)

Kim, Tong-s4ng (illus.)

3mma majung

(I am waiting for my mum)

P²aju : Sony4n Hangil, 2004. – [40] p.

ISBN 89-356-5712-3

Winter – Darkness – Child – Waiting – Mother – Tram

A young boy walks to the tram stop to pick up his mother. Very patiently, he keeps waiting for her while the trams come and go without her arriving. Despite his growing disappointment with every »empty« tram, he stands his ground and doesn't even seem to notice his cold nose or the descending darkness. It starts snowing and still the boy keeps looking up into the winter sky: Is Mum ever going to come? Eventually, mother and child make their way home together. This simple tale about a child's fears comes alive through the imaginative illustrations – delicate sepia drawings, some of which are coloured in tender shades of green and brown. (4+) (Baeksang Publishing Award; 2004)

□ □ Special Mention

22

Yun, S4k-jung (text)

Yi, Y4ng-gy4ng (illus.)

N4kch4m ban

(Four and a half strokes)

P²aju : Ch²angbi, 2004. – [36] p.

(Uri si kBrimch²aek ; 3)

ISBN 89-364-5405-6

Child – Time – Playing – Nature – Mother – Daughter

A mother sends her daughter down to the corner shop to ask what time it is. But no sooner has the little girl learned the time, than she spots a cock pecking at the ground. Completely enthralled, she walks off after it until she suddenly notices the bustling ants on the path and follows them into the field. There, between flowers, she hears the dragonflies humming and lets the sound lead her into some stranger's garden. She picks up a flower, sits down, and immerses herself in the world of blossoms and colours. After sunset, like a sleepwalker, she finally finds her way back home and calls out with her flower in hand: »Mummy, it's half past four.« This humorous, simple tale about the typical behaviour of »timeless« children has a chain-like structure and is accompanied by delicate ink and water-colour drawings. They form an artistic unity and mirror the mother's deep trust in and understanding for her child. (5+)

Africa

Botswana

23

Seomeng, Judah (text)

Dunn, Annabel (illus.)

Dimo and the little bush doctor

Gaborone : Pyramid Publ., 2004. – [24] p.

ISBN 99912-555-1-6

(Kalahari adventure series)

Giant – Magic – Humans – Friendship – Trick – Threat

This picture book tells the story of a little boy who travels to some cattle post in the Kalahari Desert to learn about cattle. During his journey together with a young Dimo, one of the giant people with magical abilities who lived in Botswana in ancient times, clever little Iyapane manages to fend off several attacks by the cannibalistic giant and eventually outwits him and returns home safely. This traditional folk tale, based on an oral tale narrated by the author's grandfather, Samuel Seomeng of Tlhabala, and accompanied by full page digital pictures, is part of the Kalahari Adventure Series. The picture books published in this series strive to present aspects of life and culture in Botswana to children and adults. (4+) ◇

South Africa

24

Walton, Ann (text)

Hinrichsen, Natalie (illus.)

Tell the moon

Cape Town : Tafelberg, 2005. – [30] p.

ISBN 0-624-03968-4

(parallel ed. publ. in Afrikaans: Roep die maan;

ISBN 0-624-03989-7)

Farm – Man – Birds – Respect for nature – Happiness

One day, Ben decides to leave the city, move to the mountains, and start a new life in a little house built from clay and reeds. As he prepares the ground for gardening, he takes care not to disturb three pale pink Francolin eggs and to leave an ancient tree, which is the home of many birds,

standing in his fields. In return for his kindness, the birds resolve to help Ben during harvest time. This beautiful book with its striking, colourful double-page illustrations, offers an interesting look into the South-African flora and fauna. The fairytale-like story builds up to a climax, when Ben and the Francolin, as the bird representative, both make a promise to the moon that they will try to live together in peace, and respect and help each other. (3+)

Asia and Oceania

Australia

25

Abdel-Fattah, Randa

Does my head look big in this?

Sydney : Pan Macmillan Australia, 2005. – 340 p.

ISBN 0-330-42185-9

Teenage girl – Muslim – Search for identity – Multicultural society – Peer pressure – Self-confidence – Religion

16-year-old Amal faces a huge problem. Not only does she have to deal with all the typical teenager issues like friendship, first love, bullying, or standing out versus fitting in, but she has made up her mind to start wearing the hijab, the Muslim veil, full-time. Naturally, her decision is met with all kinds of prejudice and opposition at her high-brow private school, amongst her friends and enemies, and even her parents are not exactly doing a »cheerleader routine around the family room«. In her moving and witty first novel, interspersed with a lot of autobiographical experiences, the author sketches the convincing picture of a modern Australian-Palestinian-Muslim girl torn between two different cultures and confronts some of the typical clichés about Islam. (14+) ◇

26

Baillie, Allan (text)

Magerl, Caroline (illus.)

Castles

Camberwell, Victoria [et al.] : Penguin/Viking,

2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 0-670-04184-x

Girl – Boy – Beach – Imaginary adventure – Princess – Pirate – Friendship

A little girl spends a day at the beach imagining she is a princess in a wonderful castle. When a naughty pirate arrives on his ship loaded with cannons and tries to destroy her beautiful home, Her Royal Angryness enlists the help of the terrible Belchim and the fearsome Flaphantnim to fight the intruder. In this entertaining tale of a summer day, colourful full-page and double-page pictures ingeniously depict the two children's creative inventions and the fierce imaginary battle which ends with a simple offer: »Friends«. The vivid, blurry watercolour illustrations imperceptibly blend real and imaginary scenes and eventually leave the protagonists lying peacefully in the sun »Until next time...«. (4+)

27

Godwin, Jane (text)

Zak, Drahos (illus.)

The true story of Mary who wanted to stand on her head

Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin, 2005. – 47 p.

ISBN 1-74114-716-6

Girl – Otherness – Punishment – Rebellion – Happiness

Mary would simply be an ordinary and amiable little girl if it wasn't for her peculiar determination to stand on her head – forever. Neither of the stern doctors' and teachers' cruel remedies proves to be effective, so the desperate parents eventually agree to desert her in the desert – where the unruly child immediately befriends a camel, a mouse, and a lizard and happily spends her days looking at the world upside down. This witty and absurd tale in 31 verses follows in the footsteps of Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, and Edward Gorey, the masters of nonsense poetry. It is completed by ingenious, darkish mixed-media illustrations and vignettes in all possible sizes, which perfectly capture the mood of the story. (4+) □

□ □ Special Mention

28

Heffernan, John (text)

Sheehan, Peter (illus.)

The island

Lindfield, NSW : Scholastic Press, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 1-86504-813-5 / -814-3

Island – Monster – Happiness – Imprisonment – Freedom

In the middle of the sea, on a beautiful island, live a hard-working tribe who are so wrapped up in their work that they don't know how to enjoy life. The only exception is a neglected, blind little boy. One day, a friendly sea-monster turns up and befriends the lonely child. Soon enough, bouts of laughter resound across the beach encouraging the grown-ups to join in, too. Wary at first, the adults soon feel an irresistible urge to play and laugh – happiness has finally arrived. Yet, when the people anxiously employ ropes and chains to hold on to it forever, the monster and the boy secretly vanish, and all joy disappears with them. This touching, quiet, philosophical story raises the question of whether happiness can be captured. It is expressed in powerful, double-page pictures in which the unhappy people, drawn as plain grey-and-white straight shapes, form a stark contrast to the beautiful green island and the multi-coloured, bubbling, energetic sea-monster. (4+)

29

Kelleher, Victor (text)

Hurst, Elise (illus.)

Where's God?

South Melbourne, Victoria : Lothian, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 0-7344-0748-3

God – Search – Child – Religion

Everybody talks about God, but when little Peter wants to know where exactly this mysterious Mr. God lives, he gets nothing but evasive answers from his family. The »kind of ... up there« and »sort of ... around« information leaves the small boy so puzzled that he decides to go out looking for him. After a day filled with surprising revelations, Peter feels he is none the wiser but – so what. The witty and enjoyable story is wonderfully expressed in vivid, slightly blurry gouache

paintings. They follow the curious bald-headed protagonist in his bright red T-Shirt as he pokes his head around bends, hears about Mrs Patel's multiple gods, and shares his lolly with a ragged old tramp, only to learn that there may be more than one truth. (4+)

30

Knox, Elizabeth

Dreamhunter

Sydney [et al.] : Fourth Estate, 2005. – 434 p.
ISBN 0-7322-8193-8

Teenage girl – Rite of passage – Parallel world – Dream – Danger – Secret – Quest

New Zealand writer Elizabeth Knox's new novel, the first part of the »Dreamhunter« duet, is set in an un-named country – yet with a recognisable New Zealand vegetation and landscape – at the beginning of the 20th century. Laura and Rose, two 15-year-old cousins, are about to join the official »Try« to find out whether they belong to the lucky few who can enter the parallel world of »The Place« and follow into the footsteps of their famous parents and other dreamhunters, who retrieve its rich dreams for the benefit of the (affluent) general public. In this compelling, imaginative fantasy adventure, rife with dark secrets, intrigues, and powerful mythical songs, Laura is sent on a truly dangerous quest, which will make readers hold their breath until the very end. (14+)

31

Millard, Glenda

The novice

Sydney, NSW : ABC Books, 2005. – 239 p.
(Carradon trilogy; 2)
ISBN 0-7333-1494-5

Futuristic society – Government control – Freedom – Slavery

In this compelling sequel to »Bringing Reuben home«, Glenda Millard follows the fate of Judah, Cinnabar, their family, and new-found friends a few years after they have escaped from the domed city of New Carradon, where every aspect of life is controlled by the government. The young couple have settled down peacefully, but when they learn that the so-called Novice Scheme, allegedly a government programme to educate refugees, is

in fact abused as a slave business, they are determined to help and put an end to it. This science-fiction novel for young adults cleverly juxtaposes the tightly confined world of technological progress and political corruption and the ideal, democratic, nature-loving community outside the dome as it focuses on the issue of slavery in a futuristic society. (14+)

32

Porter, Annaliese (text)

Bancroft, Bronwyn (illus.)

The outback

Broome, Western Australia : Magabala Books, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 1-875641-86-6

Australia – Outback – Animals – Plants

Annaliese Porter's quiet poem reads like an ode to the Australian outback. The first published picture book by this talented eleven-year-old girl offers snapshots of the life of animals and (Aboriginal) people who have shared this land for centuries. The stunning illustrations by Bronwyn Bancroft, one of Australia's leading Aboriginal artists, perfectly capture the vastness of the red desert, its changing atmosphere through various seasons and times of the day, and its colourful inhabitants. In bright double-page pictures, which combine a traditional Aboriginal style of painting with modern watercolour illustration, she introduces readers to the exciting world of central Australia. (4+) ✧

India

33

Singh, Vandana (text)

Kamath, Manjunath (illus.)

Younguncle in the Himalayas

New Delhi : Young Zubaan [et al.], 2005. – 140 p.
ISBN 81-89013-39-4

Himalaya – Holiday – Adventure – Ghost – Environmental destruction

One particularly hot October evening, Younguncle and his relatives decide they need to escape the stifling heat of their small Indian town and travel to the Himalayas for a refreshing holiday. Yet, soon enough, the three children and their eccen-

tric uncle realise that strange things are happening in the mysterious Hotel Pine-Away. Could the weird group of Quantum Banana Spiritualists or the scheming braggart Pradeep Daalmakhni be responsible for it? In this hilarious sequel to the successful »Younguncle comes to town«, Vandana Singh again delights her readers with an enthralling and entertaining story interspersed with witty allusions and comments that will have children and adults laughing out loud. (8+)

□ □ Special Mention

34

Viswanath, Shobha (text/retell.)

Joshi, Dileep (illus.)

The blue jackal : a Panchatantra classic
Chennai : Karadi Tales, 2004. – [38] p. + 1 CD
(Talking book)

ISBN 81-8190-034-0.

Jackal – Bullying – Revenge – Trick

This retelling of a classic tale from the »Panchatantra«, an ancient collection of instructive stories, is about Chandarva, a tiny jackal who is bullied by the other jackals in his pack. Desperate for food, he secretly enters a village at night but is spotted and chased by the huge village dogs and falls into a pot of indigo dye. Upon his return, all jungle animals are frightened by this strange bright blue animal – and he takes advantage of the situation, pretending to be a creature sent from heaven to rule over the jungle. The beautiful illustrations are created with white paint on a reddish brown or dark blue background in the style of traditional Warli paintings. The double-page spreads, brimming with small vivacious white figures and animals dancing all across the pages, introduce scenes of the daily life in a village to the readers. The audio CD enclosed with the book offers a magical reading of the tale by the well-known Indian storyteller Naseeruddin Shah accompanied by atmospheric music. (4+)

New Zealand

35

Drewery, Melanie (text)

Malcolm, Sabrina (illus.)

Koro's medicine

Wellington : Huia, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 1-86969-102-4

M~ori – Herbs – Medicine – Grandfather – Grandson – Teaching

This attractive picture book tells the story of a young boy's first visit to his grandfather, who seems to know a remedy for any of the child's ailments, whether it is blisters, cuts, or a blocked nose. The short story, which consists mainly of the conversation between the old man and his grandson, is interspersed with M~ori terms and expressions, and completed with small tables of factual information about New Zealand plants and their healing power. Thus, the book is not only a touching tale, but may also serve as a first playful introduction to rongo~, traditional M~ori medicine. The text is complemented by striking illustrations with prominent purple outlines and several layers of paint overlaying each other. (6+)
(The New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children & Young Adults; Shortlist 2005)

36

Todd, Penelope

Box

Dunedin : Longacre Press, 2005. – 186 p.

ISBN 1-877361-12-7

Government – Experiment – Control – Rebellion – Freedom

In her most recent science-fiction novel, popular author Penelope Todd is dealing with a fairly sinister topic. In order to fight some deadly epidemics, the New Zealand government has just started a nation-wide experiment called »Endorsement«, in which every citizen over the age of 13 gets implanted a tiny metal device to »achieve the perfect balance of chemicals in the human body.« Although it is advertised as a highly beneficial health initiative, some people quickly realise that it will provide officials with the perfect means to monitor and control people, to take away their individuality and freedom. This gripping teenage

novel follows teenagers Derik, Marti, and Disco as they join other »abstainers« in their rebellion against a quasi-dictatorial scheme. (13+)

Europe

Great Britain

37

Attard, Enebor (retell.)

Holland, Richard (illus.)

Misra, Awadesh (Hindi transl.)

Ali Baba and the forty thieves

London : Mantra Lingua, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 1-84444-411-2

(Hindi and English text)

Thief – Secret – Cave – Plot – Happiness

When poor Ali Baba accidentally discovers the secret cave where a bunch of thieves have hidden all their riches, he knows that his fortune is made. Yet, his greedy brother is not quite so lucky. He is killed by the villains who then also try to get rid of Ali Baba – but instead come to a sticky end themselves. This attractive bilingual picture book in landscape format provides a concise retelling in English and Hindi of one of the most popular tales from »The Book of One Thousand and One Nights«. Published by Mantra Lingua, a small publisher who specialises in bilingual books, this lavishly illustrated volume is available in 28 different dual-language editions. The energetic collage illustrations full of Oriental patterns perfectly convey the story's intriguing atmosphere. (4+)

38

Glover, Sandra

Spiked!

London : Andersen Press, 2005. – 168 p.

ISBN 1-84270-431-1

Teenage girl – Party – Drugs – Kidnapping

When Debra Cardew, a straight-A student, attends her GCSE party at a nearby pub, she just wants to celebrate. Not one second does the (Goody Two Shoes) girl suspect that some dubious person bides his time to spike her drink and kidnap her. In this riveting new teenage novel, popular author Sandra Glover addresses a number of topics such as alco-

hol and drug abuse, Internet pornography, and kidnapping. The initially relaxed story in which tension quickly mounts, has protagonists and readers alike running after false clues, checking out various possible suspects, and starting afresh with every new turn of events. Short passages printed in italics allow readers to assess the situation also from the kidnapper's point of view, yet without giving away his identity. (12+)

□ □ Special Mention

39

Gravett, Emily (text/illus.)

Wolves

London [et al.] : Macmillan Children's Books,

2005. – [36] p.

ISBN 1-405-05082-9

Rabbit – Library – Book – Wolf – Danger

In this extraordinary picture book debut by Emily Gravett, a rabbit walks into the local library and burrows – sorry, borrows – a book about wolves. Walking around with his nose in the beautiful red cloth-bound volume, the little mammal doesn't notice the dangerous carnivore step out of the book. And neither does he sense it looming behind him until it is too late – or is it? Brimming with witty word play, hilarious details, and clever metafictional elements, the short informative text is accompanied by sketchy black-and-white charcoal illustrations depicting the huge, hungry wolf, while black-and-cream drawings and red collage elements present the little rabbit and his book. The powerful pictures, which tell a gripping story almost contradicting the rather harmless text, culminate in a (potentially) frightening scenario – but also offer an alternative, happily-ever-after ending for the more sensitive readers. This is a must-have for young and old picture book lovers. (4+) □

40

Newman, Marlene (text)

Jago (illus.)

Myron's magic cow

Bath, BA : Barefoot Books, 2005. – [44] p.

ISBN 1-84148-495-4

Boy – Shopping – Cow – Wish – Magic

Since his two siblings are either too busy or too little to help his mother, it is always Myron who gets sent on errands. On his way to the supermarket, he bumps into a bossy blond girl who grabs his shopping money, pushes a rope in his hands to which a huge cow is tied, and jumps into her car with three bears in it, disappearing »down the street in a cloud of smelly black smoke«, before he can react. What is he to do with a real-life cow in the middle of the city – and a talking, wish-granting cow at that? The amusing, imaginative story with various fairy tale elements is perfectly complemented by large, sometimes comic-book-like illustrations. The pictures with their angular shapes, rendered digitally in a mixed technique, superbly mirror the surreal touch of the story. (4+)

41

Stower, Adam (text/illus.)

Slam! : a tale of consequences

Dorking, Surrey : Templar, 2005. – [32] p.

(A Templar book)

ISBN 1-84011-196-8

Boy – Carelessness – Chain of events – Chaos

Sometimes, little causes have dramatic effects. Yet, who would have thought that a carelessly slammed front door could cause such a havoc? The beginning of this large, square, (almost) textless picture book, presents an ordinary street in an ordinary town on an ordinary day. A boy steps out of the house immersed in a magazine. As his ears are covered with headphones, he obviously doesn't hear the warning »Don't slam the...!« and, completely unawares, he literally sets the ball rolling. Illustrated in brush, ink, and water-colour in a comic-book-like style, the increasingly chaotic pictures are brimming with details. They invite readers to enjoy this absurd, fantastical story, look again and again and discover hilarious little tales within the tale. (4+) □

42

Thaxton, Giles (text)

Baines, Nigel (illus.)

Spud goes green : [the diary of my year as a greenie]

London : Egmont, 2006. – [144] p.

ISBN 1-4052-1731-6

Boy – Environmental awareness – Recycling

This droll, square little volume is a cross between funny fictional diary and practical guide about environment-friendly behaviour. It presents the story of young Spud, who decides to become a »friend-of-the-planet and looker-afterer-of-nature«, and his resourceful neighbour Adi, who comes up with tons of hands-on suggestions for »going green«. Unlike conventional non-fiction books about the protection of our environment, this amusing account does not only offer step-by-step instructions about how to create a bird table, build a pond, recycle rubbish, or plant seeds, it also includes interesting »Facts of the day«, witty asides, and bright, completely silly, cartoon-like illustrations, which will make readers dissolve into giggles. (8+) □

43

Usui, Kanako (text/illus.)

The fantastic Mr Wani

London : Little Tiger Press, 2005. – [36] p.

ISBN 1-84506-200-0

Crocodile – Party – Delay – Hurry – Accident

Mr. Wani, the crocodile, is invited to a party at his friends the frogs' place in town, yet unfortunately, he is a little late. In his eagerness to make it in time, the accident-prone animal does not only trip over his own feet, but also crashes into and flattens a few other, slightly smaller party-goers, who – luckily enough – don't seem to take it personally, and even offer some smashing ideas about how to speed up the crocodile's journey. Kanako Usui's bold full-page and double-page pictures on cream-coloured paper bristle with energy. The comic-book like illustrations in strong, matt colours, which offer unusual perspectives and close-ups reminiscent of an animated film, perfectly express the tone of the crocodile's amusing adventure. (3+) (Booktrust Early Years Award for Best New Illustrator; 2005)

44

Weatherill, Cat

Barkbelly

London [et al.] : Puffin, 2005. – 343 p.

ISBN 0-14-138116-7

Murder – Escape – Wooden boy – Foster parents – Quest

Barkbelly has always been different from everybody else, yet neither his human foster parents nor the other village people used to mind. Until the day when the wooden boy accidentally kills one of his classmates. Driven by guilt, Barkbelly runs away to a distant town, but – as the kind-hearted matron Missus Maddox wisely says – »You can't forget the past.« So eventually, the young Pinocchio-like protagonist sets off again and braves many an adventure with circus performers, pirates, and giant hedgehogs, on his quest for a place where he really belongs. In her breath-taking debut novel written in a poetic and convincing voice, renowned storyteller Cat Weatherill creates an intriguing world that will enchant young and old readers alike. (8+)

45

Whyman, Matt

The wild

London : Hodder Children's Books, 2005. – 184 p.

ISBN 0-340-88453-3

Brother – Illness – Fight for survival – Death

Alexi and his little brother Misha live in a bleak town close to the drained Aral Sea in Kazakhstan, selling fallen rockets and nuclear debris to make their living. When Misha falls seriously ill, the brothers leave for Moscow, where they hope to receive medical treatment, but the hospital turns them away. Alexi is forced to watch his brother die in a deserted sports stadium and eventually returns to his contaminated home town. In a down-to-earth and unsentimental way, Matt Whyman describes the fate of the two boys who strive to cope with their hard life. The »wilderness« that surrounds them is counterbalanced by some positive elements such as the close relationship between the two brothers and their strong connection with the harsh, yet familiar, environment they call home. (14+)

Ireland

□ □ Special Mention

46

Kostick, Conor

Epic

Dublin : O'Brien Press, 2004. – 315 p.

ISBN 0-86278-877-3

Fantasy role-playing game – Village community – Resistance – Suppression

On the planet of New Earth, people's lives are determined by their success or failure in the role-playing computer game »Epic«. Thus, prizes won, money earned (or stolen) in the game may win you a place at university or provide you with necessary goods, while being »killed« in a battle in Epic may result in the loss of all your possessions and the need to start at the bottom of society again. This is exactly the fate that Eric's family faces, but the rebellious teenager desperately tries to find a way to fight the powerful committee of Central Allocations and escape their unfair treatment. In this intriguing debut novel, Conor Kostick, who was also the designer for the first ever live fantasy role-playing game, creates a fascinating futuristic world in which the majority of inhabitants lead a joyless hard life in poverty, while the ruling few accumulate their wealth. Criticism of this system as well as a plea for creativity and individuality are only some aspects hidden in this complex science fiction novel. (14+)

North America

Canada

47

Davidson, Ellen Dee

Stolen voices

Montréal, Québec : Lobster Press, 2005. – 188 p.

ISBN 1-897073-16-X

Conformity – Outsider – Rebellion

15-year-old Miri lives in Noveskina, a conflict-free society, lead, protected, and suppressed by the Masker. Children become masked at the age of fifteen and have their energy taken away, leaving

them apathetic and conformist. Miri runs away to the secret valley, where people have more freedom. There she discovers that she is able to see other people's voices and sounds and can weave them into a harmonious pattern. The girl returns to Noveskina and, with the help of her new found gift and friends, she frees the city. This fast-paced and powerful science fiction novel examines a number of issues such as conformity and rebellion, mind control, the caste system, false appearances and self-expression, and compassionately portrays a teenager's struggle to be heard. (14+)

48

Jocelyn, Marthe (text)

Slaughter, Tom (illus.)

Over Under

Toronto, Ontario : Tundra Books, 2005. – [24] p.
ISBN 0-88776-708-7

Opposites

In their second picture book collaboration, award-winning husband-and-wife team Marthe Jocelyn and Tom Slaughter introduce the concept of opposites to very small children. The simple, ultra-short rhymed text is beautifully translated into brilliant paper-cut illustrations, which will remind readers of picture books by Dick Bruna and Eric Carle or artwork by Matisse. Common oppositions such as »big and small« or »up and down«, easily recognisable for little toddlers, are followed by slightly more complex ideas such as »a square is square, a circle's round«, which will also be of interest to an older audience. Just as its predecessor »One Some Many«, this work with its luminous animal protagonists is bound to become a favourite with parents and children. (1+)

49

Kyi, Tanya Lloyd

The blue jean book : the story behind the seams
Toronto [et al.] : Annick Press, 2005. – 79 p.

ISBN 1-55037-917-8 / -916-x

Blue Jeans – History

This attractive slim non-fiction title traces the history of the Blue Jeans from its origins in the late 19th century to the present day. It discusses the fabric these popular pants are made of, introduces some of the most famous jeans' designers,

such as Levi Strauss and Henry David Lee, talks of the jeans-shortage during World War II, the smuggling of jeans into Russia, Yugoslavia, East Germany, and other countries behind the Iron Curtain, but also raises the issue of fair working conditions and environmental protection. The well-written informative text is complemented by interesting facts printed on jeans-pocket-like boxes. Numerous photographs and old jeans advertisements add a wonderfully nostalgic touch to the book. (12+)

50

Olsen, Sylvia

Yellow line

Victoria, BC [et al.] : Orca Book Publ., 2005. – 107 p.
(Orca soundings)

ISBN 1-55143-462-8

Canada – Native people – Ethno-cultural separation – Racism – Prejudice

Like the yellow lines dividing Canadian highways, invisible lines run through the village in which 16-year-old Vince has grown up: white people on one side of the river, First Nations people on the other. When Vince's best friend Sherry starts dating an Indian boy, both communities are in an uproar. Vince gets caught up in the thick of taunts and threats, but soon his alliance begins to shift. He has to re-examine his own prejudices, especially when he discovers his affection for Raedawn, a girl from the reserve. This fast-paced novel is a compelling read and one of the latest titles in the ingenious »Orca soundings« series of short fiction for reluctant young adult readers, written for teens below grade level. (14+)

51

Porter, Pamela

The crazy man

Toronto [et al.] : Groundwood Books, House of Anansi Press, 2005. – 214 p.

ISBN 0-88899-694-2 / -695-0

Canada/1960's – Farm – Girl – Disability – Prejudice

Living on a Saskatchewan wheat farm in the 1960's, twelve-year-old Emaline is accidentally injured as she runs into a tractor driven by her father while chasing after her dog. Fed up with

farm life and weighed down by guilt, her father shoots the dog and leaves his wife and daughter. Emaline's mother takes on Angus, a patient from the nearby mental hospital and gifted gardener to work their fields. Taking a stand against the little town's prejudices and hostility, they succeed in keeping the farm and forming a new kind of family. Angus helps Emaline learn to come to terms with her disability and the loss of her father. Poetically told in free verse, the bitter-sweet story has both depth and simplicity and sensitively depicts the emotions the girl goes through as she struggles to move on with her life. (12+)

□ □ Special Mention

52

Watts, Irene N. (text)

Shoemaker, Kathryn E. (illus.)

A telling time

Vancouver [et al.] : Tradewind Books, 2004. – [32] p.
ISBN 1-896580-39-4 / -72-6

Grandmother – Granddaughter – Storytelling – Vienna/1939 – Persecution of the Jews – Courage – Book of Esther

This beautifully illustrated picture book offers a touching retelling of the Biblical tale from the Book of Esther. It is set within a double frame story, visually distinguished by the different typefaces and the colours of the illustrations. The book opens with a little Canadian girl listening to her grandmother, who tells her how, one afternoon in 1939, she hurried through Nazi-occupied Vienna to get to the rabbi's house. She wanted to listen to the old man narrate the Purim story about the secret plot by the Persian king's evil prime minister Haman against Mordecai and all Jewish people. With immense courage and cleverness, Queen Esther, herself a Jew, manages to uncover the intrigue and protect her people. The rabbi's storytelling is interrupted by some Nazi officials who plan to imprison him, yet, in the end, the wise man is miraculously saved. The fairy-tale-like pictures, set against a richly patterned background resembling an ancient scroll, perfectly translate the Biblical story's message of hope. (6+) ◇

USA

53

Birdsall, Jeanne

The Penderwicks : a summer tale of four sisters, two rabbits, and a very interesting boy

New York : Knopf, 2005. – 262 p.

ISBN 0-375-83143-6 / -93143-0

(A Borzoi book)

Sisters – Summer holiday – Adventure – Friendship

As soon as the Penderwick family arrive at their holiday destination, a cosy cottage on the grounds of grand Arundel Hall in Massachusetts, the four energetic daughters tumble headfirst into all kinds of adventures. Together with their new friend Jeffrey, whose snobbish, uptight mother is far from pleased about his acquaintances, sensible Rosalind, headstrong Skye, dreamy Jane, shy little Batty, and their shabby dog Hound roam the gardens and attic of Arundel, escape a fierce bull, and retrieve the lost rabbits, all the time trying to stay out of trouble – unsuccessfully of course. In this endearing debut novel with a nostalgic atmosphere, the author invites her readers to share a wonderful summer with an amiable bunch of protagonists. (10+)

54

Carlson, Lori Marie (ed.)

Hijuelos, Oscar (introd.)

Red hot salsa : bilingual poems on being young and Latino in the United States

New York : Henry Holt, 2005. – XIX, 140 p.

ISBN 0-8050-7616-6

(English and Spanish text)

Hispanic American – Poetry – Anthology

A good ten years after her first bilingual collection of poetry, the highly praised »Cool Salsa«, was published, Lori Marie Carlson has once more gathered a colourful array of works by Hispanic American poets. Most of the poems are provided in both English and Spanish, while a few are written in »Spanglish«. The five chapters of this inspiring anthology entitled »Language, Identity«, »Neighbourhoods«, »Amor«, »Family moments, Memories«, and »Victory«, offer humorous, thoughtful, moving, and witty glimpses into the

lives of young people speaking two languages at the same time. The appendix does not only present English translations for a number of Spanish expressions included in the poems, but also gives short biographical information about the 28 authors. (12+) ◇

55

Hobbs, Valerie

Defiance

New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. – 116 p.
(Frances Foster books)

ISBN 0-374-30847-0

Boy – Cancer – Old woman – Friendship – Death
Since kindergarten, Toby has been in and out of hospital for endless cancer treatments. Now, he is determined to enjoy his holiday in the countryside. He wants to be just a normal boy, escape his mother's constant worrying, ride around on an old bike, and – most important of all – forget about this new lump he can feel growing in his side. He would not have imagined that Pearl, a grumpy old ex-poet who lives on a farm close-by, and her equally ancient cow Blossom become his best friends and manage to teach him a some things about poetry, freedom, life, and death. This touching novel written in a quiet and convincing voice describes how an unusual friendship makes the eleven-year-old protagonist find new courage to face a difficult decision. (10+)

56

Hoffman, Alice (text)

Mahurin, Matt (illus.)

The foretelling

New York : Little, Brown, 2005. – 167 p.

ISBN 0-316-01018-9

Amazon culture – Matriarchal society – War – Peace – Loneliness – Search for identity

In ancient times, when many tribes roamed the steppes, the brave Amazon women were constantly fighting wars to defend their huge territory. Their ability to ride horses and their fierce upbringing made them almost invincible. Yet, Rain, who feels rejected by her cold-hearted mother, Queen Alina, starts questioning the cruel life they lead. Assisted by the old high priestess and guided by the spirit of her great-grandmother

and her bear-sister, the adolescent girl struggles to find her destiny. In this wonderfully sad and touching, magical novel, told in retrospect in Rain's quiet, poetical voice, the readers will find themselves whisked away to an unfamiliar yet fascinating past at the crucial moment when the life of the legendary Amazons starts to change forever. (14+)

57

Lester, Julius (text)

Barbour, Karen (illus.)

Let's talk about race

[New York, NY] : HarperCollinsPublishers, 2005.
– [32] p.

ISBN 0-06-028596-6 / -028598-2

Individualism – Race – Racism – Tolerance

In this stunning picture book, highly acclaimed author Julius Lester directly addresses his audience asking many questions about what defines a person. In a straightforward, easy-to-understand text, he makes young readers understand that everybody in the world is unique and special, and that each person's life story is made up of innumerable details of which race is just one – and certainly not the most important one. His touching plea for tolerance for others is converted into bold, bouncy pictures. Rendered in bright, unusual colours – a red-and-yellow sea, human skeletons in dark purple, orange, and blue – with thick black outlines, the artwork and the text will immediately capture the readers' attention. (4+) ◇

58

Olswanger, Anna (text)

Goodman Koz, Paula (illus.)

Shlemiel crooks

Montgomery : Junebug Books, 2005. – [36] p.

ISBN 1-588-38165-X

USA/1919 – St. Louis – Jew – Wine shop – Burglary

In this picture book, Anna Olswanger tells a funny folktale-like story based on the real event of an almost-robbery at the wine shop of her great-grandfather Elias Olschwanger in St. Louis in 1919. Written in a typically oral storytelling voice interspersed with Yiddish terms and phrases, the tale relates how two dim-witted crooks let

themselves be persuaded by the ghost of the Pharaoh who drove the Israelites out of Egypt to steal the kosher wine that Reb Elias had especially ordered for Passover. However, when a talking horse alerts the neighbours and they start making a racket, the frightened fools quickly take to their heels. The amusing story is complemented by brightly-coloured, lively wood-cut illustrations. (6+) ♦ (Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators Magazine Merit Award for Fiction; 1998 – [for an earlier version of the story]).

59

Poole, Josephine (text)

Barrett, Angela (illus.)

Anne Frank : a picture-book biography
New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. – [34] p.
ISBN 0-375-83242-4 / -93242-9

(A Borzoi book)

[orig. publ. by Hutchinson, London 2005]
Frank, Anne – Amsterdam – World War II – Persecution of the Jews

After two other highly praised picture book collaborations (»Snow White« and »Joan of Arc«), Josephine Poole and Angela Barrett have taken on a much more serious topic in this book: The quiet, matter-of-fact narrative follows the life of Anne and her family from her birth until they are discovered in their secret hiding place in German-occupied Amsterdam and deported. The realistic paintings in darkish, subdued shades of colour mainly focus on Anne but also allow (unusual) snapshots of the daily life of persecuted Jews during the Second World War. This touching book offers an intriguing first introduction to the life of Anne Frank familiar to readers world-wide thanks to her famous diary. (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

60

Scieszka, Jon (text)

Smith, Lane (illus.)

Seen Art?

New York, NY [et al.] : Viking [et al.], 2005. – [48] p.

ISBN 0-670-05986-2 / 1-415-57784-6

Child – Search – Friend – Museum of Modern Art – Art

Well, to be honest, the only »thing« that the little boy had been looking for was his friend Art, whom he was supposed to meet at that New York street corner. But although every single person he asks seems eager to help and sends him from one room to the next in this weird, huge building called MoMA, Art is nowhere to be found – instead, he stumbles across modern art in abundance, from Vincent van Gogh to Andy Warhol. In this witty guidebook with a difference, published in an unusually wide landscape format, the highly successful author and illustrator team give little readers a tour of the great artworks from the Museum of Modern Art, while at the same time (implicitly) questioning the term »art« and its definition. (4+)

□ □ Special Mention



61

Slonim, David (text/illus.)

He came with the couch

San Francisco : Chronicle Books, 2005. – [32] p.
ISBN 0-8118-4430-7

Family – Sofa – Stranger – Help – Friendship

At the rummage sale, Sophie's family finds just the perfect couch, but the weird blue creature who seems glued fast on it, is not for the world to be persuaded to leave his comfy seat. When the hurriedly called doctor diagnoses an acute case of upholsterosis, they take compassion and try to cheer the gnome up with trips to the Grand Canyon and the Sea – yet to no avail. The bright, energetic pictures in various sizes include a wonderful collection of hilarious details, which interpret the brief text in a uniquely tongue-in-the-cheek way. Rendered in oil paints, pencil, and ball point pen, they depict the parents' desperate attempts at getting rid of the stiff, immovable blue fellow with his purple bristle of hair, as well as

their eventual resignation. After everybody has given up hope that the new blue family member will be moved, the ice (or rather the window pane) suddenly breaks, and peace and happiness are restored – until the next unusual piece of furniture is collected... (4+)

62

Young, Ed (text/illus.)

Beyond the great mountains : a visual poem about China

San Francisco : Chronicle Books, 2005. – [32] p.
ISBN 0-8118-4343-2

China – Landscape – Nature – Plants – Atmosphere

In this visually stunning picture book, which opens vertically (just like a wall calendar), award-winning US illustrator Ed Young celebrates China, his beloved mother country. Once readers lift the cover page, the 14 lines of the beautiful poem describing the vegetation and landscape of the huge empire become immediately visible. Each line is interpreted in a double-page collage made from cut and torn structured papers. The pictures perfectly express the quiet mood of the verses while they also take up elements of the ancient Chinese characters printed in red on each page. In the back of the book, the author provides the modern equivalents to the ancient characters and rounds off this piece of art with his personal concept of visual poetry. (4+)

Austria

63

Janisch, Heinz (text)

Goedelt, Marion (illus.)

Drei Birken

(Three birch trees)

St. Pölten [et al.] : NP, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-85326-292-9

Birch – Environmental protection

Three birch trees, a few children, some books and their heroes – these are the protagonists of this poetic fairy-tale-picture-book. The trees are eager to travel the world. On their long journey, however, they do not find any place where they feel comfortable enough to stay: neither in the city, nor by the polluted lake, on the torn-up hills, or on the dirty, abandoned playground. Eventually, they take a rest at the green picnic area with friendly people who read and play. Afterwards, they return home. During their journey, they do not grumble or explain why they do not like some things. They simply leave. This implicit criticism is easy to understand even for a small child. Delicate yet expressive pictures accompany the subdued text. (4+) □

64

Pelz, Monika

Die Verschwörung der Dichter

(The poets' conspiracy)

Wien [et al.] : Jungbrunnen, 2005. – 270 p.

ISBN 3-7026-5770-3

France/1680-1790 – Enlightenment – Orphan – Aristocracy – Society – Intrigue

In this book, set in 18th century France, young Marguerite is used as a pawn in an intrigue machinated as quasi-entertainment by the aristocracy of a famous literary salon in Paris, among them Denis Diderot, the author of a great encyclopaedia. The girl, herself a member of the landed gentry, gains insight into a world that is strange to her. After a number of disappointments, however, she is reunited with her childhood love. The young couple emigrate to America and work for the educational and judiciary system in the New Colonies. Set against a meticulously accurate historical background, a riveting portrait of a woman unfolds before the reader's eyes. The appendix gives information about the most important dates and persons. (14+)

65

Schneider, Karla (text)

Kehlenbeck, Angela (illus.)

Kapitän Nemo taucht auf

(Captain Nemo returns to the surface)

St. Pölten [et al.] : NP, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-85326-295-3

Man – Dog – Friendship – Submarine – Escapism – Return

A rich old man is fed up with people in general and has a huge submarine built for himself to descend into the depth of the ocean with his little dog. Yet, the isolated life becomes unbearable for both of them after a while, especially for the dog (no sun, no trees, and only boring smells on board). The man feels sorry for his little companion, and therefore they tentatively return to the surface, just when the sun breaks through the clouds. Dog and man take a deep breath and – happier than before their journey – step ashore. Pencil drawings and collages in delicate colours on coloured pages make readers feel the vastness of the ocean and the sweetness of the air after their return. (6+) □

66

Weninger, Brigitte (text)

Kirchmayr, Jakob (illus.)

Tiroler Sagen

(Legends from Tyrol)

Innsbruck [et al.] : Tyrolia, 2005. – 215 p.

ISBN 3-7022-2715-6

Tyrol – Legend

The outstanding feature of this beautiful volume of legends from Tyrol is its pictures: There is nothing old-fashioned or antiquarian about them. Thus, the modern style of the illustrations transports the texts to a new level. The readers and observers gain the impression that the events described are recent ones, despite the fact that they seem outright fantastic: such as the giants' transformation into rocks when they refuse to accept both natural and human laws, or similar myth-like happenings. The table of contents lists the texts according to the various regions of Tyrol, and the appendix offers information about the sources, so that researchers will find the book as useful as the general reading public. (8+)

67

Zauleck, Franz (text/illus.)

Prinzessin Eierkuchen

(Princess Pancake)

Wien : Jungbrunnen, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-7026-5767-3

Man – Egg – Princess – Royal household – Imaginative game

Old Balthasar finds an egg from which a little girl hatches – a wondrous tale! Especially because the child claims to be a princess and Balthasar is forced to pretend to be her father, the king. To please the girl, the sweet-tempered man creates a fully-fledged royal household for her: Court Counsellor Penguin, Lord Stewart Dog, and Chambermaid Cat. Together they all live in Balthasar's old hut, but – tomorrow – they really need to win a proper castle on the tombola. This book, whose illustrations are drawn, painted, and collaged with a lot of wit, inspires (grand)parents and children to let their imagination run free. (4+)

Germany

68

Baltscheit, Martin (text)

K., Ulf (illus.)

Leuchte, Turm, leuchte

(Light up, House, light up!)

Leipzig [et al.] : Altberliner, 2005. – [48] p.

ISBN 3-8339-6540-1

Friendship – Separation – Reunion

Jan, the lighthouse, and Sven, the lighthouse keeper, are good friends. They work together to steer ships safely into the harbour. One day, however, the wide ocean and beautiful Eleonora lure Sven away from the island and Jan is left behind alone. When Jan cannot take it any longer, he sets off to find Sven – in vain. But then all the stranded ships start tooting their horns to call the three of them back to the island. The authors have dedicated their book »to friendship that gets lost sometimes in order to be recovered in an even more exciting way.« Full-page, computer-animated pictures with clear, broad shapes are reminiscent of the picture books by Gertrud Casparis who became famous almost 100 years ago as the originator of the so-called »Kleinkinderstil« (toddler-style). (5+) □

69

Baltscheit, Martin (text)

Blau, Aljoscha (illus.)

Der Winterzirkus

(The winter circus)

Frankfurt am Main : Fischer, 2005. – 78 p.

(Fischer Schatzinsel)

ISBN 3-596-85184-X

Girl – Aunt – Grief – Christmas – Imagination

Anna and her aunt Ruth used to be best friends until, not long ago, Ruth suddenly died. As often as she can, Anna imagines Ruth to be with her, especially at Christmas. In the past, Ruth would often tell Anna about the »winter circus«, which circus animals stage for pets every winter. That's where the girl wants to go this year together with her beloved aunt. All of a sudden, dream and reality seem to blend into each other for Anna. Talking animals appear, as well as Santa Claus (in whom Anna hasn't believed anymore for years), Aunt Ruth enters as a cat in fancy dress, and Anna herself as a mouse. Eventually, the child is comforted when her parents embrace her under the Christmas tree. This is a wonderful, imaginative tale about the existential sorrows and joys of a little girl. (6+)

70

Berner, Rotraut Susanne (text/illus.)

Ach nein – Und wenn schon! : eine Geschichte von Menschen und Hühnern

(Oh no – So what! : a tale of humans and chicken) München [et al.] : Hanser, 2005. – [34] p.

ISBN 3-446-20617-5

Siblings – Difference – Optimism – Pessimism

Black Hen, the more optimistic of two sisters, persuades pessimistic White Hen to go on an outing together. She counters each of her sister's objections with »So what!« and offers a simple solution to the supposed problem. So the two hens have a wonderful day together. By the time it starts raining at night, White Hen has learned her lesson: »So what!« she says and covers her head with a book. True, this may not be what books are for, but for a book within a book anything is permitted. »So what!« the readers might say. The text is short and concise, yet as powerful as the pictures. It's amazing how simple and easy to understand and follow some alternatives for a happier (or a sulkier) life can be. (4+) □

71

Chotjewitz, David

Crazy Diamond

Hamburg : Carlsen, 2005. – 298 p.

ISBN 3-551-58136-3

Teenage girl – Pop singer – Death – Friendship – Grief

»Seen from up above...« In this disturbing novel, the author makes young Mira, who died in an accident, hover above the world as a bodiless creature remembering all her friends from the pop-music-scene: Ghanaian teenagers, Rosa, Jackson, and Mel, who risked their lives when they came to Germany illegally, and Kralle, the lesbian girl who was Mira's closest friend and role model. Mira observes how they all dream of becoming famous. This changes the group and the relationships between them. They have to deal with jealousy, envy, friendship and love, chaos and insecurity, and psychological problems. The author conjures up the world of show business and, with a lot of empathy, looks behind the masks of both the business and its people, thus arousing the readers' sympathy for the protagonists. (14+)

72

Dammann, Rüdiger / Plenzdorf, Ulrich (ed.)

Ensikat, Klaus (illus.)

Ein Land, genannt die DDR

(A country called the GDR)

Frankfurt am Main : Fischer, 2005. – 204 p.

ISBN 3-10-009645-2

German Democratic Republic/History

Looking back on 15 years of living in a re-unified Germany, eight authors from the Federal Republic of Germany and the former German Democratic Republic comment on the political and cultural past and present of their home country. They voice both criticism and wishes for the future addressing East Germans and West Germans alike. They illustrate their reflections with revealing biographical anecdotes or telling historical events. This beautifully designed and (with a lot of irony) perfectly illustrated book points out the initial idealism and euphoria after the so-called »Wende« (turning point) in 1989, the following disillusionment, and the communication problems between people from different social systems. (12+) ◇

73

Fallada, Hans (text)

Glasauer, Willi (illus.)

Lüttenweihnachten

(The little ones' Christmas)

Berlin : Aufbau, 2005. – 23 p.

(Aufbau Bilderbücher)

ISBN 3-351-04066-0

Sea – Coast – Rural life – Christmas – Tradition

Three children, living in a village near the Baltic Sea, believe that the farm animals should be allowed to celebrate Christmas, too, because they serve the humans all year long. That is why they plan to cut down a fir tree for the traditional »Lüttenweihnachten« (Little ones' Christmas). They succeed in stealing the tree without being caught by the terrifying forester. When the children happily take a little detour along the sea-shore, they can hardly believe their eyes: The forester and a flock of wild geese are sitting around a beautifully decorated tree, having their own Christmas celebration. Silently, the two parties agree to keep their doings secret. Delicate winter pictures and a moving text tell about a pre-industrial, rural, yet not idyllic life. (7+)

74

Funke, Cornelia (text)

Gleich, Jacky (illus.)

Rosannas großer Bruder

(Rosanna's big brother)

Hamburg : Oetinger, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-7891-6508-5

School – Siblings – Lie – Truth – Courage

Rosanna is almost smothered by (unwelcome) attention from the strongest boy in her class but unfortunately her older brother Boris is more of a little scaredy-cat – not a protector. Yet, in a newspaper ad, some Professor Salomon Liefree promises to turn lies into truth, a truly difficult process. It takes quite a long time until Rosanna (who boldly claimed to be the strongest girl in her class) realises that only her belief in herself provides her with enough strength to fend off the boy's annoying advances. The readers will be pleased to meet a rebellious and successful female protagonist, depicted in green clothes signalling hope and with a shock of red hair, who fights for her life (although not literally). (7+)

75

Groszer, Franziska (text)

Capek, Jara (illus.)

Der blaue König und sein Reich

(The blue king and his kingdom)

Leipzig [et al.] : Altberliner, 2005. – 46 p.

(Picolibro)

ISBN 3-86637-727-4

King – Wooden toy – Tomcat – Friendship – Power – Happiness

The blue king, made entirely from wood, wants to have his own »Reich« (kingdom) simply because that's something a person like him should have. However, neither Oskar the cat nor he himself know exactly what a kingdom is. They both live at the girl Fanny's. The questions are: Who is whose subject here? Does »Reich« (German both for »kingdom« and for »rich«) have something to do with having a lot of money? King and Cat ponder and wonder – could »Reich« (kingdom) mean to be »reich« (rich)? One day, little Paul visits Fanny – and the room that the blue king inhabits suddenly turns into the boy's kingdom. Matters become even more complicated. This tiny, witty book is rich with a great number of hidden puns. (6+)

76

Grzimek, Martin (text)

Binder, Hannes (illus.)

Die unendliche Straße

(The never-ending street)

München : Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2005.

– 108 p.

(dtv; 62209; Reihe Hanser)

ISBN 3-423-62209-1

School – Family – Lie – Prank – Punishment – Search for identity

Hagen is a notorious liar. He tells lies to hide his inferiority complex and fear of failure until, one day, he almost dies because of his lies: When he claims to be sick (because of a test at school) he suddenly finds himself in some kind of rigor mortis. He is unable to react but can see and hear everything around him – it is as if he has turned into this character from their last school play: the mute troll. Through a sequence of dream events, Hagen's traumatic experience leads him back into reality. Full-page black-and-white wood cuts illustrate the boy's captivating dream journey. (10+)

77

Janisch, Heinz (text)

Blau, Aljoscha (illus.)

Rote Wangen

(Red cheeks)

Berlin : Aufbau, 2005. – 32 p.

(Aufbau Bilderbücher)

ISBN 3-351-04062-8

Boy – Grandfather – Childhood memories – Storytelling – Imagination

The most important sentence in this extremely quiet and contemplative book about the love between a young boy and his grandfather is: »And if my grandfather says so, it must be true.« It doesn't matter whether the adventures and deeds described are outright fantastic – grandfather would never lie. The young (and later older) man's positively glowing »red cheeks« serve as the motto for this book. Full-page pictures, almost surreal in their calmness and broadness, underline the fantastic elements of the tales. The text is set in hand-printed letters on lined paper, similar to a pupil's exercise book. This design completes the impression of a real childhood remembered. (5+) □

78

Knigge, Alexander von / Cornelsen, Claudia (text)

Kampmann, Stefani (illus.)

Expedition Knigge : oder das Geheimnis eines alten Buches

(The Knigge expedition or the secret of an old book)

Frankfurt am Main : Campus, 2005. – 205 p.

ISBN 3-593-37648-2

Good manners – Boarding school – Extraterrestrial being

Naturally, a guidebook about the earth given to an extraterrestrial has nothing in common with a geography book for human beings. This guidebook contains such matters as the rules for proper behaviour set down by Baron Adolf von Knigge in his famous 18th-century book of conduct. LambdaPhi 2.3, or Phi for short, has landed on earth and mainly tries to learn more about this foreign culture. Thanks to his guidebook, however, he already knows so much about the ideal way of living together on this planet that he involuntarily exerts a lot of influence on its refinement – at least in the boarding school he stays

at until his return home. This adventure for young and old, both exciting and useful, was written with a lot of wit and humour by a descendant of Baron Adolf von Knigge. (12+)

□ □ Special Mention

79

Lembcke, Marjaleena

Die Fremde im Garten

(The stranger in the garden)

München [et al.] : Nagel & Kimche, 2005. – 139 p.

ISBN 3-312-00954-5

Finland/1950s – Girl – Adolescence – Social status – Mental illness – Abnormal behaviour

The overgrown garden around the neighbouring house is Hillevi's secret paradise and dream-island until, one day, she spots an unfamiliar woman at one of the windows. The house owner, who is the same age as the girl's parents, is back. Slowly, a delicate friendship grows between the young girl and the stranger. Step by step, the woman's unusual story, caused by an early, unhappy love for a poor young man (Hillevi's uncle), is revealed. Eventually, the woman gives up her home and moves away again. What makes this story particularly touching is the sensitive description of the meeting of two very different persons, whose paths in life cross for a short time and who like and help each other. Moreover, the book describes, without becoming sentimental, all the common but nevertheless confusing feelings and worries of an adolescent girl among her family and friends. It paints a picture of a small and very friendly, though conflict-ridden, human community. (12+)

✧ 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

80

Maar, Paul (text)

Krause, Ute (illus.)

Herr Bello und das blaue Wunder

(Mr. Bello and the blue miracle)

Hamburg : Oetinger, 2005. – 222 p.

ISBN 3-7891-4251-4

Boy – Single father – Dog – Metamorphosis

Chemist Sternheim lives with his son Max and dog Bello. One day, an old woman brings some medicine to the pharmacy to be stored there – she claims it was mixed by an ancestor of Sternheim's. Astonished, they realise that this drink makes animals and plants grow and change their size, colour, and even species: Dog Bello as well as a rabbit and some chickens turn into weird-looking human beings. Things get out of hand. Bello, now »Mr. Bello«, and Sternheim compete for the new neighbour's favour. Still, luckily enough, the magic works only temporarily – and peace reigns again. With a lot of wit and tact, Paul Maar describes little animal and human follies so that readers will spot many similarities and transitions between the often similar yet not identical worlds and ways of life. (10+)

81

Meschenmoser, Sebastian (text/illus.)

Fliegen lernen

(Learning to fly)

Esslingen : Esslinger, 2005. – [52] p.

ISBN 3-480-22067-3

Penguin – Flying – Trainability – Group cohesion – Assistance

An allegedly »crashed« penguin meets a man, who tries his best to help his fosterling train his maybe-existent flying abilities, but in vain. Neither the various sophisticated practical devices, nor extensive theoretical studies make a difference, until, one day, a flock of birds – penguins? – crosses the sky above them, and the crashed one follows them. »He was a good flyer, for a penguin«, the text reads sounding like a sad farewell. The small book offers enough space for detailed, partly coloured pencil drawings of all the creative efforts that man and animal undertake together, and for a thoughtful text, which does not verbalise everything but still makes a strong statement: A group will support and carry each single member – even if it seems highly unlikely. (8+) □

82

Mothes, Ulla (text)

Krapp, Thilo (illus.)

Der rote Flitzer

(The red racing car)

Hamburg : Dressler, 2005. – 234 p.

ISBN 3-7915-1261-7

Friendship – Sports car – Old age – Driving test

Rafael and Lars share a secret: In an abandoned garage across the street an old sports car is hidden – ancient but in good working order. Unfortunately, their secret is discovered when an old woman, who used to work for the deceased garage owner, takes it in her head to get the beautiful old car on the road again. Chaos reigns. First of all, she herself intends to finally take her driving test – successfully. Yet, she doesn't even know that, according to the late owner's will, she is the rightful owner of the car. Eventually, they all meet for a wonderful afternoon trip and young and old become friends. The exciting, fast object that the book focuses on stands in sharp and sometimes witty contrast to the calm and slow pace of the narrative. (8+)

83

Persch, Ulrike (text/illus.)

Rotkäppchens List

(Little Red Riding Hood's trick)

Bad Soden : Kinderbuchverlag Wolff, [2005]. – [34] p.

ISBN 3-938766-02-6

Little Red Riding Hood – Adaptation –

Cleverness – Trick – Self-confidence – Naivety

Just like the Grimms' tale, this one is about a girl who walks through the forest on the way to her sick grandmother's house and meets the wolf (whom she is not afraid of because she doesn't know anything about him). When she spots strange marks in the hallway (animal tracks and traces of fur) she gets suspicious, creates the shadow of a hunter on the wall and imitates his voice to drive the wolf out of the bed (grandma has been hiding) and the house. The child returns home safely while her mother remains ignorant about the adventure. This remarkable modernised version of Little Red Riding Hood encourages readers to be courageous. It is illustrated with coloured charcoal drawings in which the symbolic colours red (the child's cap) and blue (her dress) stand out. (6+)

84

Pestum, Jo

Das Schloss am Moor

(The castle at the swamp)

Stuttgart : Thienemann, 2005. – 256 p.

ISBN 3-522-17700-2

Family – Genealogy – Germany/World War II – Young woman – Slave labourer – Love – Pregnancy – Expulsion – Murder

Quite accidentally, Daniel stumbles across a family secret: Because of a forbidden love affair with a French forced labourer during the Second World War, his grandmother was expelled from her family and forced to renounce her aristocratic title. Her older brother or her father then had her lover murdered. The love affair resulted in the birth of a child – Daniel's father. Secretly, the boy tries to follow the traces of his origins. Claiming that he is working on a film project, he takes his video camera to his great-grandparents castle, solves the mystery of his family, and also finds his own identity. Disguised as a thrilling detective story, this book combines contemporary history with Germany's past in a way that today's teenagers can relate to. (12+)

85

Pin, Isabel (text/illus.)

Wenn ich groß bin, werde ich Nobelpreisträger

(When I grow up, I'll be a Nobel prize winner)

München [et al.] : Hanser, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-446-20634-5

Boy – Resolution – Good/Evil – Nobel Peace Prize

To love your neighbours and help other people, to create peace on earth, to protect the environment and the animals, to prevent injustice, and to be brave – all this and more is what a little boy wants to do once he is old enough. For the time being, however – as shown on full-page pictures in minute detail – he does exactly the opposite. In short: He is a pest. And still, since he aims for the Nobel peace prize, he suddenly starts thinking. Maybe he should begin now ... and he does. The figures depicted in this picture book do only appear to be harmless and delicate. They actually suffer terribly and cause each other endless pain. Young readers will need to look very closely and carefully. (6+)

86

Prinz, Alois

Auf der Schwelle zum Glück : die Lebensgeschichte des Franz Kafka

(On the brink of happiness : the life of Franz Kafka)

Weinheim : Beltz & Gelberg, 2005. – 392 p.

ISBN 3-407-80953-0

Kafka, Franz

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) was not a well-known, let alone a famous writer during his lifetime. Unfortunately, he was never able to solve his family conflicts, which were strongly influenced by the overpowering father figure. Family, living conditions, and a profession he abhorred made his life unbearable at times. His unhappy relationships with women never resulted in marriage or a family of his own. It seems quite likely that (as he himself claimed) his tuberculosis was caused by the constant confrontation with all the external and internal matters that he sought to avoid by leading a life of poverty – and thus almost self-inflicted. This biography offers young adult readers a careful and comprehensible analysis of the connection between the real person and his literary work. (16+)

87

Rieckhoff, Jürgen / Rieckhoff, Sibylle (text/illus.)

Edgar übernimmt das Kommando

(Edgar is in command now)

Hildesheim : Gerstenberg, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-8067-5071-8

Dog – Obedience – Pet – Role reversal – Family

Edgar, a stubborn terrier, wishes to change his life. He calls upon the »Council of the Elders«, which consists of »the wisest dogs for miles around«. They advise him how to climb to the top of the family ladder: Be as cheeky as possible. Then, surely, your family will fear you and fulfil your every wish. Edgar is impressed and delighted at these future prospects. Until, suddenly, loud yelling and whistling has the »Wise Ones« obey post-haste and run off immediately ... not without reminding Edgar to keep their advice in mind, of course. Well, he may have managed to reach Dog Heaven, who knows. The rest is left to the reader's imagination. The text and the coloured ink drawings of this funny picture book exactly mirror the fantasies of smaller dogs (or children). (4+)

88

Rosenboom, Hilke (text)

Kuhl, Anke (illus.)

Ein Pferd namens Milchmann

(A horse called Milkman)

Hamburg : Carlsen, 2005. – 116 p.

(Lesezauber)

ISBN 3-551-55231-2

Boy – Horse keeping

Since the huge »stray« horse that suddenly appears on the terrace of Herman's home wears a headband with the letters MM on it, he decides to call it »Milkman«. His classmates and even a teacher find themselves in the same situation: suddenly, the city is full of horses, Toris to be exact, an almost extinct, very large breed. After the humorous description of all the ensuing problems, a practical solution is found: The horses are given a place to stay, the children have a new responsibility, and the local blacksmith gathers all his horse-knowledge to organise everything. This story, in which even small boys are fond of horses, draws the readers' attention to the problem of keeping pets in a city – on a realistic as well as a fantastic level. (8+)

89

Schär, Brigitte (text)

Müller, Jörg (illus.)

Die Weihnachts-Show

(The Christmas-Show)

Düsseldorf : Sauerländer, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-7941-5092-9

Christmas – Child Jesus – Easter bunny –

Role reversal

This cheerful story features role reversal on a grand scale. In a modern city on earth lives the calendar-maker who is responsible for all the public holidays and »supervises« the staff in heaven from a distance. The friendly old gentleman agrees to Easter Bunny's wish of swapping (role and) working time with the »Christkind« (Child Jesus). Yet, when on Christmas Eve the »Christmas-Bunny« in the manger gives a big performance live on television with a worldwide audience, trouble is on its way. Nevertheless, it was a lot of fun. Full-page pictures create space for the unexpected events and, through their realistic atmosphere, underline the original, disrespectful, and multidimensional character of the witty text. (8+)

90

Siegfried, Anita (text)

Binder, Hannes (illus.)

Flug in die Nacht

(Flight into the night)

Düsseldorf : Sauerländer, 2005. – 60 p.

ISBN 3-7941-6040-1

Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de/The little Prince –

Boy – Reading – Dream – Flying – Fear

This small picture book about an evening in the life of a ten-year-old boy comes in an unusual, midnight-blue design and print. Very detailed wood-cuts describe the dream adventures of a child who is afraid of the dark because his mother has gone out. Before she left, they read a chapter from Saint-Exupéry's »The little prince« together. Now, the boy flies to Antarctica in his little toy plane together with an imaginary pilot. Just like his favourite author, they crash with their plane, but, luckily enough, the child finds his way back home from the dream. The pictures, which invite readers to take a closer look, are accompanied by a corresponding text with many accurate observations. (6+)

91

Sternburg, Wilhelm von (text)

Reimers, Silke (illus.)

Die Geschichte der Deutschen

(The history of the Germans)

Frankfurt am Main [et al.] : Campus, 2005. – 304 p.

ISBN 3-593-37100-6

Germany/History – Historic person – Biography

The particular appeal of this unusual history book lies in its combination of historic events and developments in Central Europe and Germany on the one hand and biographies of important people from this era on the other. The author strives to explain the reasons behind the endless wars by introducing the people responsible for them as children of their time and educational environment, with all their personal weaknesses and faults. Cultural and social developments are seen as important, sometimes even formative, for the course of political history. This non-fiction book for teenagers is both an informative and exciting read. (12+) ♦

92

Tille, Peter (text)

Bofinger, Manfred (illus.)

Einstein mit der Geige

(Einstein with the violin)

Berlin : Eulenspiegel, 2005. – [24] p.

ISBN 3-359-01622-x

Einstein, Albert – Theory of relativity

People say that truly great ideas and revolutionary theories are usually simple (though not simplistic). The topic of this small picture book, which so-to-speak watches Albert Einstein think, is a formula that, of course, only seems simple: $E=mc^2$. The central problem discussed here is the time it takes to travel a certain distance: If the professor walks from A to B, he counts to 10 ten times before he arrives – what a long journey. If, however, he goes the same distance by car, he only counts to 10 once – a short trip indeed! But which of the two statements is correct? Very clearly and with a lot of wit, the pictures and the logical text prove that both are true – depending on the preconditions. This book is an entertaining contribution to the Einstein-year 2005. (4+) □

93

Tischewski, Ulf / Tischewski, Susanne (text/illus.)

Das machen wir gern

(With pleasure)

Gladenbach : Kempkes, 2004. – [32] p.

ISBN 3-88343-038-2

Cock – Cat – Hostility – Reconciliation

Cats and cocks have been enemies for so long that both parties have forgotten the reasons and motives that started their animosity. The demands for restoring peace are deemed impossible on both sides so that, one day, the cocks ask the dog to mediate between them and the cats approach the fox. »With pleasure!« they both say – secretly hoping the job will end in a »delicious meal« for them. Sensing this, the two disputants become wary and decide that they are certainly sensible enough to take matters into their own hands. This large-format picture book, illustrated with rich finger paints, features a short plausible text suitable to be told or read to small children. (4+)

94

Tondern, Harald

Mitschuldig? : die Geschichte eines Amoklaufs

(Guilty, too? : the story of a person running amok)

München : cbt, 2005. – 155 p.

(cbt ; 30174)

ISBN 3-570-30174-5

School – Running amok – Feeling of guilt

Tim, a young man expelled from school, practises the handling of weapons at a local shooting club. He manages to involve 13-year-old Jonas in his activities, who passes him the map of the school including the timetables of Tim's former teachers. Shortly before the final examinations take place, which he is not allowed to sit, Tim enters the school, kills the director, and commits suicide. This gripping novel focuses mainly on Jonas who unintentionally becomes a quasi-accessory or confidant to the crime. After the death of the two people, the helpless and desperate boy shuts himself off and refuses to talk at all. Based loosely on authentic events, the novel tries to take a specific case study to psychologically analyse the problem of violence in schools. (12+)

Switzerland

□ □ Special Mention

95

Bougueva, Sonja (text/illus.)

Zwei Schwestern bekommen Besuch

(Two sisters have a visitor)

Zürich : Atlantis, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-7152-0503-2

Island – Sisters – Household – Individuality

A relative's visit can be wonderful, especially on a remote island. Yet, for the two sisters in this delightful book, their cousin's stay turns out to be fairly strenuous. Without being asked to, he goes about changing the two ladies' household, which they admittedly run in a very individualistic (i.e. chaotic) way, according to his own ideas of order and hygiene. And thanks to the good manners and politeness of his hosts, he is almost successful. However, their connivance is not enough for him; he expects full praise. When this isn't offered and the sisters even dare to fall ill, the cousin leaves sulkily. Utterly relieved, the two sisters immedi-

ately get better and return to their former way of life. The pasty, earthen shades of colour as well as the chubby humans and animals in the illustrations are reminiscent of plasticine or wax figures. They lend a fairly cosy atmosphere to the pictures, which very effectively interprets the sparse humorous text and its plea for individualism. (6+)

96

Maar, Anne (text)

Harjes, Stefanie (illus.)

Lotte und Lena im Buchstabenland

(Lotte and Lena in the land of letters)

Zürich : Bajazzo, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-907588-57-6

Siblings – Age difference – Speech impediment

Little twin sisters can be extremely annoying for their elder brother: His name is »Georg« but the two sisters' limited linguistic ability makes them substitute every »g« with »d«. Therefore, for them he is simply called »Deord«. The young man has his siblings practice again and again because his girlfriend is about to visit them and of course he wouldn't want to be ridiculed in front of her. Eventually, a dream comes to his rescue: The dream about the land of letters. The twins travel there to fetch the »g«. Unfortunately, they leave the letter »z« in exchange for their old »d«... but luckily enough this doesn't worry Georg too much. Bold, witty, and colourful pictures invite readers to dive in and make their own discoveries. (4+)

97

Merz, Klaus (text)

Binder, Hannes (illus.)

Kunos grosse Fahrt

(Kuno's long journey)

Gossau Zürich : Nord-Süd, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 3-314-01433-3

Scooter – Helmet – Globe – Imaginary journey

A motorbike helmet painted like the globe makes a young boy set off on a fantasy trip around the world on his scooter. Dressed in his red sweater, he passes black-and-white cities and sceneries, encounters many people and ways of life. He plans to travel all around the globe starting at the North Pole and has decided to accept full responsibility for his adventure. When he returns home just after midnight – after a journey of self discovery – his parents eagerly await

him. The impressive wood cuts make the readers hear the whirring of the scooter's wheels and feel the boy's determination to become independent. (8+) □

98

Ringelnatz, Joachim (text)

Hauptmann, Tatjana (illus.)

Das große Ringelnatz-Buch : die schönsten

Gedichte und Geschichten

(The big Ringelnatz-book : the most beautiful poems and stories)

Zürich : Diogenes, 2005. – 132 p.

ISBN 3-257-01012-5

Poetry

Joachim Ringelnatz (1883-1934) was a sailor, librarian, poet, city guide, and many other things. His nonsense poems for children and adults who had not lost their child-like view of the world, possess a lot of profundity. He created his texts, prose as well as poetry, with wisdom, love, and foresight. In this large-format collection of his works illustrated for children, coloured pictures and black-and-white vignettes show a bold imagery that closely resembles that of the texts. The layout and the excellent design of the book also create an impression of openness and the longing for this openness – a lifestyle and mentality that perfectly match the poet's intention. (6+)

99

Schneider, Antonie (text)

Möltgen, Ulrike (illus.)

Jako : eine Geschichte

(Jako <proper name> : a story)

Zürich : Bajazzo, 2005. – [58] p.

ISBN 3-907588-58-4

Girl – Wish – Dog – Daydream – Community

There is nothing better that a little girl could wish for than a dog. She waits for a long time, a whole summer, a whole winter, and then, suddenly, there he is: a big dog that she can talk to. So, she shares all her questions, worries, and fears with him – and he answers. That's what a mere dog can do for a little girl – even if he is only a dream-dog. Pencil drawings on coloured cardboard, cut-out and arranged on dyed background in collage style, create a characteristic and distinctive shape for the protagonists. The clear forms and language confirm that the child's desire for this pet and playmate is as urgent as it is justified. (5+)

100

Vinke, Hermann

Fritz Hartnagel : der Freund von Sophie Scholl
(Fritz Hartnagel : Sophie Scholl's friend)

Zürich [et al.] : Arche, 2005. – 266 p.

ISBN 3-7160-2341-8

National Socialism – Resistance

In 1937, 16-year-old student Sophie Scholl met 20-year-old soldier Fritz Hartnagel. They developed a close but complicated friendship, which was tragically cut short when Sophie Scholl was sentenced to death by the Nazis in 1943. Following his own determination and in memory of Sophie Scholl, Hartnagel continued to spread the ideas of »Die Weiße Rose« (The White Rose Society) after the end of the war. From interviews with the family and hitherto unknown documents, the author has created a detailed portrayal of this resistance movement against Hitler, which invites readers to explore a new dimension of German history. (14+) ♦

101

Waechter, Friedrich Karl (adapt./illus.)

Prinz Hamlet : frei nach William Shakespeare
(Prince Hamlet : based loosely on the play by William Shakespeare)

Zürich : Diogenes, 2005. – 63 p.

ISBN 3-257-02084-8

William Shakespeare / Hamlet – Adaptation

This picture book for young adults is based on Shakespeare's famous play »Hamlet«. Two characters belonging to the nursery world – Teddy Bear and Mr. Punch – are trying to cheer up the sad prince. They discover his love for Ophelia and her father's intrigue. They stage the play »The Mousetrap« for the king and convict the former king's murderers. However, they do not manage to bring the two lovers together because they are both victims of the intrigue at court and the resulting events. In this book, Friedrich Karl Waechter adapts the classic theme to create a tale from and on large-format text- and picture-collages. His pencil and colour-pencil drawings perfectly complement the abbreviated yet highly dramatic plot. (14+) □

Africa

Morocco (French)

102

Mazini, Habib (text)

Bernet Rollande, Julie (illus.)

L'œuf de Noé

(Noah's egg)

Rabat : Marsam, 2004. – 47 p.

ISBN 9954-21-000-8

Noah's Ark – Animals – Hostility

When God sends the big Flood, he orders Noah to build an ark and invite one pair of each animal species onboard. But the animals do not get along very well. One thing in particular causes uproar and arguments: The hen's and the stork's eggs have disappeared. While a council led by the owl, the goat, and the squirrel tries to solve this mystery, the various species live in a climate of hate and revenge. The biblical story serves as background for the subtle and humorous explanations of certain phenomena within the animal kingdom. Thus, the author claims that the camel and the llama chose the desert as their habitat because they suffered terrible seasickness on the Ark. And which child has never wondered why cats chase mice or why wolves hunt sheep? (7+)

Europe

Belgium (French)

103

Pouget, Anne

Les brumes de Montfaucon

(The fogs of Montfaucon)

[Bruxelles] : Casterman, 2005. – 188 p.

(Romans Casterman Feeling)

ISBN 2-203-13672-3

Paris/Middle Ages – Anti-Semitism

After his father has been hanged although he was innocent, Hanin, a young Jew, flees his home town and travels to his uncle in Paris, where he also suffers bullying and discrimination because of his religion. Eventually, Hanin's fight for freedom and for his first love almost make him end

up on the gallows, too. In this gripping story, the thoroughly researched historical teenage novel paints a convincing and vivid picture of society during the Middle Ages. Footnotes and an appendix with explanations about historical events and persons, as well as about medieval Christian anti-Semitism, make it easier for readers to understand this excursion into history. (13+) ◇

104

Tillard, Patrick (text)

Barroux (illus.)

Titus l'éléphant

(Titus the elephant)

Bruxelles : Alice Jeunesse, 2006. – [28] p.

(Histoires comme ça)

ISBN 2-87426-029-0

Elephant – Sadness – Zoo – Freedom

Zoo elephant Titus is sad. Keeper Célestin, a good-natured old man, tries to cheer him up: On Monday he dresses up as a musician, Tuesday as a clown, Wednesday as a confectioner, Thursday as a scarecrow, and Friday as a magician. Yet even on Saturday Titus remains sad although the keeper lovingly scrubs his back. When on Sunday Célestin puts on his Tarzan-outfit and bends the iron bars of the cage, the elephant walks out into the sunny savannah. Finally, he is happy. Now, the keeper puts on his last costume: It is big and grey, with long ears and white tusks. The two protagonists are captured in roughly coloured, partly sketchy, partly thick black outlines. By exaggerating shapes and sizes, the illustrator adds a funny note to the sad aspects of the text. (4+)

France

105

Baussier, Sylvie (text)

Devaux, Clément (illus.)

Le livre de la Mer

(The book of the sea)

Paris : Nathan, 2005. – 118 p.

ISBN 2-09-211343-7

Sea – Legend – Discovery

How important are the world's oceans? What kind of legends have emerged about them? What kind of adventures have they inspired? What kind of dreams and techniques has humankind developed to discover and appropriate the sea? This original non-fiction title offers four chapters to introduce the sea as habitat and to take an informative and humorously poetic look at the mysteries of the ocean, its discovery, and its use and exploitation through humans. The short texts are as witty and entertaining as the overall design of the book, which is characterised by a mixture of photographs, comic-book-like sequences of drawings, and full-page colour illustrations. (8+)

106

Bigot, Robert / Grenier, Christian (text)

Le mal en patience

(Being patient)

Paris : Syros Jeunesse, 2005. – 128 p.

(Collection les uns les autres)

ISBN 2-7485-0334-1

Pharmacists Without Frontiers – Bosnian War

Patrick feels unhappy in his job as a pharmacist, so he joins the humanitarian organisation »Pharmacists Without Frontiers« and goes to Bosnia during the Bosnian war. He keeps in contact with his home country by writing to his childhood friend Romain. In their letters, the two men describe their current work but also try to come to terms with their past. In addition, the story also contains other mail correspondence and diary entries. This narrative form lends a great amount of authenticity to the fictitious letters, which touches the readers especially because it does not deal with cruel war situations but focuses on the daily life in times of war with all its worries and problems. (Published in cooperation with »Pharmacists Without Frontiers«) (13+) ◇

107

Bondoux, Anne-Laure

Pépites

(Nuggets)

Paris : Bayard Jeunesse, 2005. – 350 p.

(Millé Zime)

ISBN 2-7470-1635-8

American Civil War – USA/1775-1783 –

Young woman – Escape – Love

Bella Rossa is an extremely energetic young woman with flaming red hair. Yet, she is fed up with her life at the small farm with her severely handicapped father. When the American Civil War approaches their farm, Bella Rossa seizes the opportunity to flee from the stifling small place to the West and embarks on a quest for love, respect, and happiness. Compared to this fascinating woman, the men around her seem weak and full of mistakes – such as the dependent father who likes to drink a bit too much sometimes, or Jaroslaw, the love of her life, a tender but unfaithful soldier. Consequently, all the attention in this gripping unconventional Wild West novel focuses on the exceptional, strong-minded heroine. (13+)

108

Brami, Elisabeth (text)

Nascimbene, Yan (illus.)

Les vieux enfants

(The old children)

Paris : Éd. du Panama, 2005. – [34] p.

ISBN 2-84156-657-9

Old age – Loneliness – Childhood – Dignity

They lost their parents, walk with small steps, have grey hair and not many teeth left. Some of them suffer inside their bodies, others fall in love, some are active and energetic and others seem to be waiting for something. Like everybody else, they celebrate their birthdays, and without love, they wither away. This poetic picture book does not simply focus on old people but rather on »the old children«. The rhymed verses talk of sympathy for the problems of growing older, of a respectful behaviour towards old people who, like children, want to be listened to and loved. Realistic pictures full of hidden details interpret the moments depicted in a sensitive and moving way without being in the least kitschy. (5+)

109

Brenifier, Oscar (text)

Moïty, Iris de (illus.)

La vérité selon Ninon

(The truth according to Ninon)

Paris : Éd. Autrement, 2005. – 63 p.

(Autrement Jeunesse) (Les petits albums de philosophie)

ISBN 2-7467-0716-0

Truth – Lie – White lie – Concealment

This new series introduces young readers to a number of philosophical topics through tales about eight-year-old Ninon, her family, friends, and acquaintances. The first volume focuses on the question of truth. While playing, Ninon accidentally breaks the vase in the living room. She lies about it and thus the family's anger descends upon her. Why do people lie? Are there good and bad lies? Does the absolute truth exist? By discussing the girl's questions and weaving philosophical stories into them, terms like honesty, openness, believability, trust, perception, and reality are tackled. The comic-book-like design and the short, simple text render this a suitable, topical guide to life's essential questions for children. (8+)

110

Cauwet, Nouchka (text)

Reznikov, Patricia (illus.)

Ecrire le monde : la naissance des alphabets

(Writing the world : the birth of the alphabets)

Paris : Belem Éd., 2005. – 64 p.

ISBN 2-915577-48-X

Alphabet – Creation – Development – Painting

This large-format ABC-book offers a playful and poetic, as well as artistic and highly aesthetic description of how the alphabets were originally created and then developed further. Each letter is presented on a double-page spread. Every simple explanation of the linguistic and historical development is accompanied by a suitable poem and by a painting created by a well-known artist. Right at the beginning of the book, a story pointing out the necessity of an alphabet confirms the fact that a unified form of writing simplifies human communication. At the end, the author provides additional information about the existence of alphabets other than the Latin, Greek, Cyrillic, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chinese one. (8+) ◇

111

Desplechin, Marie

Séraphine

<proper name>

Paris : École des Loisirs, 2005. – 194 p.

(Médium)

ISBN 2-211-07934-2

Paris/1885 – Montmartre – Girl – Social injustice

In 1885, 13-year-old Séraphine lives in the Montmartre quarter of Paris and works as seamstress for the bourgeoisie. Although she does not exactly feel unhappy, she is determined to change her own life as well as the social injustice around her, and, thanks to her determination, she succeeds. This slightly feminist, political teenage novel tells the story of a strong-minded girl set against the backdrop of the historical and social changes 14 years after the Paris Commune in 1871. By describing many social classes and historical phenomena, such as the bourgeoisie, the clergy, the underworld, child poverty, or political and social rebels, the author creates a colourful picture of the everyday life at those times. (12+)

112

Doray, Malika

Le petit homme et la mer

(The little man and the sea)

[Nantes] : Éd. MeMo, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 2-910391-74-4

Sea – Fishing – Fish – Friendship –

Animal / Human being

A little man takes his boat and goes out to sea. He is determined to catch the biggest fish in the world and take it back home so that everyone admires him. Instead, he himself gets caught by a huge fish, who proudly presents the »gnome« to his parents. Luckily enough, they do not accept that their child tortures a helpless little creature. The author combines simple yellow-green illustrations with clear black outlines added by softly flowing brush-strokes, and a comprehensible language to tell a loving and humorous story about power, strength, friendship, taking, and giving. (4+)

113

Galea, Claudine (text)

Dewanckel, Goele (illus.)

Sans toi

(Without you)

Rodez : Éd. du Rouergue, 2005. – [44] p.

(Varia)

ISBN 2-84156-681-1

Father – Mother – Separation – Child – Grief

»Without you« is a picture book dealing with absence, waiting, and separation. »Without you, Mummy doesn't put on blue eye-shadow anymore,« the daughter says full of grief after her father has left. The protagonists' bodies are depicted in partly bold, partly pale, cold colours, with heads hanging down, lost in themselves and their memories, naked and hurt; bodies that bluntly express the state of suffering and waiting. The text full of anxiety with its short, disjointed sentences underlines the despair of the grieving bodies and eyes of the whole family. When the father finally returns, he brings life, colours, music, and joyful noise with him. (7+)

114

Lenain, Thierry (text)

Brouillard, Anne (illus.)

Julie Capable

(Julie Capable <proper name>)

[Paris] : Grasset-Jeunesse, 2005. – [28] p.

(Collection »Lecteurs en herbe«)

ISBN 2-246-67981-8

Girl – Incapability – Mother – Death – Grief

Julie is clumsy, unhappy, and capable of nothing. Nobody understands her. When her day ends in desperate tears, the girl calls for her mother. But her mother is dead. The cats at the cemetery are the only ones who comfort Julie. They take away her feelings of guilt and enable her to grieve. By putting up pictures of her mum on her bedroom wall and scratching »Mummy« on a gravestone, Julie finally confronts her grief and turns from »Julie Incapable« into »Julie Capable«. The despair and danger are depicted in shades of grey, brown, and red in both small and full-page illustrations which sometimes only show glimpses of a scene. In the end, the cold wintry atmosphere slowly turns into a colourful, comforting spring-scene full of hope, mirroring the girl's positive development. (5+)

115

Luján, Jorge (text)

Norac, Carl (adapt.)

Sadat, Mandana (illus.)

Soleil d'hiver

(Winter sunshine)

Paris : Didier Jeunesse, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 2-278-05665-4

(Title of the original poem: »Tarde del invierno«)

House – Window – Child – Mother

First of all, the book presents a town with colourful houses, then one particular house, and finally zooms in on a child standing behind its window.

»Today, I'll draw the moon on the misty glass.«

The child's fingers touch the window's surface and open a path into the world outside. Readers see the silhouette of a person approaching, and finally the mother arrives. This picture book, which interprets a poem by the Mexican poet Jorge Luján, does not only follow the mother's way to her child, but also the way from the outside to the inside, from the colourful world to the grey-and-white window frame. In the end, mother and child are reunited behind the window pane, in the midst of all the other houses. (4+)

116

Mingau, Muriel (adapt.)

Segovia, Carmen (illus.)

Au creux de la noisette

(In the nutshell)

Toulouse : Éd. Milan, 2005. – [28] p.

(Milan Jeunesse)

ISBN 2-7459-1586-X

Mother – Illness – Death – Life

Paul goes to fetch some medicine for his mother, who is seriously ill. On the way, he meets a huge creature with a sickle and immediately realises that this must be Death. He grabs the sickle, locks the shrivelled-up creature in a nutshell, and throws it into the sea. Yet, without death there can be no life either, as Paul soon learns. Thus he sets off in search for the nutshell again. This picture book, which is based on a Scottish folk tale, deals with death and the question of »Why do we have to die?« in a very sensitive way. The dark, warm colours of the illustrations support the careful and gentle treatment of a serious and painful issue. (5+)

117

Molla, Jean

Felicidad

<proper name> (meaning: Happiness)

[Paris] : Gallimard, 2005. – 300 p.

(Scripto)

ISBN 2-07-051040-9

Happiness – Rebellion – Murder – Genetic engineering – Cloning – Science fiction

Felicidad is the capital of a country in Greater Europe, where happiness is everyone's foremost personal right and duty. On the Secretary of State's orders, Lieutenant Alexis Dekked is assigned a most urgent case: The »Parumains« (artificial humans), who have been created to serve the »Humains« (human beings), have started a rebellion. Does their disappearance have something to do with the brutal murder of their creator, the geneticist Cholcher? After the second murder, Dekked tries to shed some light on this mystery together with Majhina, a woman he falls in love with. This teenage novel, which pays homage to the 1982 film Blade Runner, cleverly combines suspension, action, science fiction, and detective novel elements about a topical problem. (14+)

118

Nessmann, Philippe

Au péril de nos vies : la conquête du pôle

(Risking our lives : the conquest of the Pole)

[Paris] : Flammarion, 2005. – 145 p.

ISBN 2-08-162768-X

North Pole – Discovery – Adventure – USA/1908

In 1908, the black American Matthew Henson embarks on his third Arctic expedition as assistant to the explorer Robert Peary. Accompanied by Inuit people and dog sleds, they travel through the dangerous, unsafe pack ice until they can finally plant the American flag into the eternal ice of the North Pole. Written like a diary from Henson's point of view and interspersed with entertaining tales, this historical novel reads like a – fictitious – adventure story. The most interesting feature of this book is the fact that it is told by a historical person who, for a long time, was the victim of racism and other people's ambition and thus did not have a place in historiography. (10+)

119

Perret, Delphine (text/illus.)

Moi, le loup et les chocolas

(Me, the wolf, and the chocolate cookies)

[Paris] : Magnier, 2005. – [60] p.

ISBN 2-84420-347-7

Boy – Wolf – Depression – Fear – Friendship

At a street corner, a little boy comes across a wolf sitting in front of a house, whining. He complains that nobody buys into the idea of him being a »really big, bad wolf«. Since he has always wanted to have a dog, the boy decides to take the wolf home with him where he does his best to turn the poor wolf, whose real name was Bernard, into a truly frightening creature with the evocative name of Zorro. The comic-book-like series of pictures with minimalist black-and-white illustrations focuses mainly on the two protagonists. The short dialogues, written in a witty, slightly ironic way, turn particularly funny when the »bad« wolf is lectured by the little boy in his childish language. (6+)

120

Picouly, Daniel (adapt.)

Tallec, Olivier (ill.)

Poucette de Toulaba

(Thumbelina of Somewhere-over-there)

[Voisins-le-Bretonneux] : Rue du Monde, 2005. – [36] p.

ISBN 2-915569-41-X

Thumbelina – Journey – Love – Freedom

Colourful flowers and leaves, exotic fruits and animals, and in the midst of it all, a little girl sitting in an orange blossom – that's what's on the large cover of this picture book loosely based on Hans Christian Andersen's tale »Thumbelina«. On her journey, Thumbelina from Toulaba (Somewhere-over-there), an exotic, imaginary country, is faced with several dangerous situations, some of them of an amorous nature. She watches the land that she travels through, and feels that there are a million things she has to learn, especially how to say »no«. Even if the illustrations' glamorous colours and voluptuous shapes take readers far away from Andersen's original fairy tale, Thumbelina's aim of finding the path to freedom still remains the same. (7+)

121

Pilon, Pascal / Thomas, Élisabeth (text)

Duffet, Sophie (illus.)

Meihua, Shuilin et Dui vivent en Chine

(Meihua, Shuilin, and Dui live in China)

Paris : De La Martinière Jeunesse, 2005. – 47 p.

(Enfants d'ailleurs)

ISBN 2-7324-3356-X

China – Beijing – City – Countryside – Tibet

Each book of the new non-fiction series »Enfants d'ailleurs« (Children from abroad) introduces three children coming from different parts of a particular country. One of the first books features China. After providing the readers with a map, some basic data, and a short historical overview, the authors describe the everyday lives of a girl and two boys. The girl lives in a suburb of Beijing, one of the boys comes from central China, while the other one's home is in Chinese-occupied Tibet. Taking these three children as examples, the book explains in a very personal and easily understandable manner important cultural and historical events, traditions, and religions such as the one-child-policy, the migration to the cities, or the great number of ethnic minorities. (10+) ◇

□ □ Special Mention

122

Rodari, Gianni (text)

Alemagna, Beatrice (transl./adapt./illus.)

La promenade d'un distraît

(An absent-minded person's walk)

[Paris] : Seuil Jeunesse, 2005. – [28] p. + 1 DVD

ISBN 2-02-067428-9

Boy – Walk – Absent-mindedness – Carelessness – Mother – Love

A boy goes for a walk. When his mother warns him not to walk around absent-mindedly, he faithfully promises to be careful this time. Yet, soon his thoughts wander and, step by step, he loses a hand, an arm, a foot, a leg, an ear, his hat, and even an eye. »All children are like that,« say those who return to his mother all the body parts that the absent-minded child lost. The light boy floats through the clouds and the scenery like a string-puppet until he again finds comfort and security in his mother's arms. The text, written by Gianni Rodari (1920-1980), and the wonderful

collages accompanying it, created from drawings, fabric, threads, newspapers, and photographs, praise a carefree childhood and the unconditional, protective motherly love. An animated film, also created by the illustrator and enclosed on DVD, rounds off this poetic high quality work about the carefree attitude of children. (4+)

123

Schneider, Christine (text)

Pinel, Hervé (illus.)

Toujours dans la lune!

(Always with his head in the clouds!)

Paris : Albin Michel Jeunesse, 2005. – [42] p.

ISBN 2-226-14936-8

Dream – Colour – Teacher

Pierrot tells his mother about his »dream in red and green«: He drives along in a red car and the fire-fighters are green with envy. He flies around in a red plane and the birds are green with envy. He travels to the moon in his red rocket and ... the stars turn green with fear. Up on the moon, he meets his teacher. She, too, is green, very green, but turns red with rage when she shouts at him: »With your head in the clouds as usual, Pierrot. Come back to earth!« This picture book transports readers into the world of a child's dream, a dream between nightmare and wishful thinking, with a simple but elaborate text and expressive pictures of intense colours. (5+) □

124

Vantal, Anne (text)

Baas, Thomas (illus.)

Je hais la comtesse

(I hate the countess)

Arles : Actes Sud Junior, 2005. – 76 p.

(Les premiers romans) (Cadet)

ISBN 2-7427-5469-5

Mother – Children – Order – Intrigue

Madeleine, Camille, and Paul are fed up with the eccentricities of their mother who, on top of being the perfect housewife and mother, is an ardent admirer of the Countess of Ségur. The three children don't want to wearilly frocks or shiny shoes with bows, they long for T-shirts and trainers. During the holidays, the siblings start their operation »I hate the countess«. With all kinds of pranks and jokes, they strive to make their mother

see sense. Eventually, the »conspiracy« is successful and the mother (still perfect, of course) starts to understand her offspring's behaviour. This comprehensible and humorous book describes how the three children fight for some independence from their overprotective mother. (7+) □

Italy

125

Albertazzi, Ferdinando (text)

Fatus, Sophie (illus.)

Stelle di nebbia

(Stars of fog)

Troina : Città Aperta Junior, 2005 – [33] p.

(Lo specchio magico; 6)

ISBN 88-8137-185-5

Friendship – Handicap

Sometimes, things that adults find difficult to believe and problematic to face are easy and natural for children. This is the case with the friendship between the protagonist and Betta: a girl with »frozen muscles« forced to spend her days in an armchair almost isolated from the world. The two girls live in the same building on the same landing and, everyday, the protagonist goes to visit Betta even if she gets bored or thinks that Betta doesn't pay any attention to her. She just stays close to her with pens and paper, showing her different pictures. Little by little, Betta starts talking to her visitor in short sentences. This is the start of a wonderful friendship that seems almost impossible, made up of dreams, hopes, and sympathy. (9+)

126

Colombo, Tullia (text/illus.) [et al.]

Un mondo per giocare

(A world for playing)

Varese : La Coccinella, 2005. – [18] p.

ISBN 88-7548-125-3

Intercultural relationship – Personal identity – Diversity – Cultural diversity

This activity book, the profits of which will be assigned to the humanitarian organisation CESVI, is made of cardboard and invites readers on a journey rich in images and rhymes. Its purpose is for children of different cultures to get to know

each other and play together and to overcome the fear of ›the other‹. A big map opens up in various segments and children's faces from around the world appear at many windows. Rhymed verses invite them to look for a rainbow, which displays the most beautiful colour of all because it is composed of all the colours combined. Everyone learns to see each other in different ways. This is the first step to accept and respect diversity and the difference of others. (4+) ◇

127

Dell'Oro, Erminia

Dall'altra parte del mare

(From the other side of the sea)

Casale Monferrato : Piemme Junior, 2005. – 119 p.
(Il battello a vapore)

ISBN 88-384-3698-3

Eritrea – Clandestine immigrant – War refugee

Elsa, a young mother from Eritrea, decides to flee her country, which is always at war with its neighbour Ethiopia. Of all her family, she has only a baby girl left named Elen. Together, they face a very difficult journey through the desert until they arrive at the coast from where they sail to Italy with other clandestine refugees. The hard and very sad journey ends in a shipwreck but, luckily, both protagonists survive and are able to start a new life. The book describes the harsh reality of the journey and includes little Elen's story and her memories about her family. Therefore, the book is particularly enthralling and makes us participate emotionally in the tragedy that some humans suffer without understanding why. (10+) ◇

128

Erba, Edoardo (text)

Panebarco, Daniele (illus.)

Agenti senza pistole

(Agents without guns)

Roma : Gallucci, 2005 – 139 p.

(Universale d'avventure e d'osservazioni; 4)

ISBN 88-88716-36-X

Burglary – Friendship – Paranormal powers

In the province of Lecco, a lot of rich people's wonderful houses have recently been burgled. How can this difficult case be solved if even the police and the Italian Ministry of the Interior are

completely in the dark about how to find the burglars? Luckily enough, a special team of four young agents, all of them with supernatural powers, decide to help the police and try to solve the case. This highly amusing detective story lets its readers dive into the captivating story and involves them in the investigations. (8+)

□ □ Special Mention

129

Gandolfi, Silvana (text)

Orecchia, Giulia (illus.)

Qui vicino mio Ariel

(My Ariel, next to me)

Milano : Salani, 2005. – 254 p.

(Gl'istrici; 213)

ISBN 88-8451-552-1

Magic – Cultural diversity – Intercultural relationship – Journey

Leonora is an old writer who seems to have lost her strength and creativity with the passing of time. She fervently wishes she had a guardian angel by her side to help her write a new novel. Therefore, she decides to create one herself from clay and make him come alive through a magical ceremony. One night, the clay angel has suddenly turned into a real one. Even if he looks more like a shabby little boy, Leonora is absolutely certain that he is a heavenly creature. In order to gather information for her new novel, she decides to travel to Brazil, where the adventure becomes more and more tumultuous until the truth is discovered: Her ›Angel‹ is not a supernatural creature after all but a very poor Brazilian boy. He left his home country, arrived in Rome, and became a very clever thief, who managed to break into Leonora's apartment. This gripping story is told from two different points of view, Leonora's and Ariel's, and creates a magic atmosphere in which reality and fantasy are interwoven. (10+) ◇

130

Levi, Lia (text)

Orciari, Emanuela (illus.)

La portinaia Apollonia

(Apollonia's porter)

Roma : Orecchio acervo, 2005. – [24] p.

ISBN 88-89025-15-8

Italy/World War II – Persecution of the Jews – Deportation – Racial Laws

This book is set in the times of the Fascist Regime in Italy when racial laws were instigated. It tells a story, which evokes the daily banality of evil as seen through a child's eyes. Daniel and his mother live a life full of sacrifices, queuing up for bread, making ends meet with day-to-day jobs, keeping away from the soldiers. Quite naturally, the Jewish boy is scared of everyone, even of Apollonia, the porter of his building. Convinced that she is a witch, he always tries to avoid her. In Daniel's mind, the fairy-tale world and everyday life blend into each other. One day, however, the boy discovers that even a ›witch‹ can save a child, hiding him in a storage-room for coal. The story proves that it is essential to remember the past. (7+)

131

Nava, Emanuela (text)

Bosi, Marco [et al.]

Caro fiume

(Dear river)

Milano : Carthusia, 2005. – [26] p.

(Piccoli viaggi crescono)

ISBN 88-87212-59-7

Science – Ecology – River

This cardboard book, with its abundance of naturalistic illustrations, tells a quiet story in an impressive pop-up format: Lia and Francesco, two curious and adventurous children, go on a trip along the river. The book follows them on their imaginary journey with the help of two posters enclosed in the back of the book. They can be unfolded and show the reader a detailed map of the waterway, which makes it easy to explore the river and the surrounding territory. Readers will experience what life is like along its banks and form an almost physical relation with the environment presented. They can discover the underwater world, its inhabitants (animals and plants), and study their life cycle, food, what kind of tracks they leave and other exciting facts. (7+)

132

Perrone, Roberto

Banana Football Club

Milano : Fabbri, 2005. – 181 p.

ISBN 88-451-1168-7

Sport – Friendship – Honesty – Corruption – Football

Pierpaolo is a thirteen-year-old boy from a middle-class family in Milan who is enrolled in a football club, in which boys are supposed to lose weight and socialise with other friends. Pierpaolo loves this club and plays very well. Soon, he befriends Nino, a bricklayer's son, who is the most exceptional talent of the team. This story is told from three perspectives: that of Pierpaolo's family, the football club, and the young boys. The book is like a ›game‹ of differences, diversity, and enthusiasm for football but also points out that there is a lot of corruption in this field, a fact that is not well-known. The two boys manage to fight against this system through their friendship and retain the pleasure of playing football. (9+)

133

Salvi, Manuela (text/illus.)

Cavallaro, Francesca (text/illus.)

Nei panni di Zaff

(In Zaff's shoes)

Firenze : Fatatrac, 2005. – [44] p.

ISBN 88-8222-126-1

Sexual identity – Growing up – Gender role – Masculinity

Young Zaff has a dream: He would like to be a princess. His classmates always make fun of him, especially by forcing him to admit that a princess doesn't have a penis. But Zaff is stubborn and determined. One day, hey presto, the princess from the Andersen fairy-tale ›The princess and the pea‹ arrives and solves the problem. She is fed up with being a princess and her heart's desire is to become the goal-keeper of a soccer team. Zaff and the princess exchange roles and are finally happy, without having to be ashamed. This illustrated book is a very witty read both for children and for adults, who are invited to reconsider the interests and behaviour of their children and accept them as they are, acknowledging the value of diversity. (4+)

134

Tessaro, Gek (text/illus.)

Il salto di città in città

(The jump from town to town)

Bazzano (BO) : Artebambini, 2005. – [52] p.

no ISBN

Fantasy – Diversity – Journey

This illustrated book tells the fantastical story of a child with a passion for jumping. Nobody seems to understand him, so that for the protagonist the whole world is divided into two groups: Those who like jumping and those who don't. One day, after he has hit his head very badly during a ›wrong‹ jump on an elastic carpet, the boy faints and is forced to stay in bed for a long time without moving, let alone jumping. Slowly, he returns to ›normality‹. His jumping career seems over but then, when he stands in front of a puddle and his mother encourages him to jump, his real passion surfaces again. He leaps over it and starts a new, wonderful journey to discover the world, finally free to be himself. (5+)

135

Zannoner, Paola

Tutto sta cambiando

(Everything is changing)

Milano : Mondadori, 2005. – 116 p.

(Junior Mondadori : Junior gaia; 134)

ISBN 88-04-54355-8

Education – Conflict between generations – Friendship – Motherhood

This is the story of a friendship between two teenagers: Antonia, an introverted girl from a middle-class family, and Psiche, a beautiful and self-confident girl whose mother was a non-conformist pop star during the 1960s. Their friendship is almost destroyed when Psiche gets involved with Antonia's boyfriend Eros and becomes pregnant. Her mother desperately tries to persuade her not to marry Eros and even enlists the help of Antonia. However, the two girls are determined to act against the wishes of their mothers who completely disagree with their daughters. This book shows a positive picture of two teenagers who are prepared to take over responsibility and thus defy the negative opinion many adults have about modern adolescents. (14+)

136

Zoboli, Giovanna (text)

Scarabottolo, Guido (text/illus.)

Di notte sulla strada di casa

(On the way home at night)

Milano : Topipittori, [2005]. – [28] p.

ISBN 88-89210-04-4

Fantasy – Environment – Adult – Child

At night, a car is driving down the highway. The little boy in the back seat sees many images rushing by. The text of this book is only composed of the boy's questions. »What time is it?« and »When are we going to arrive?« Soon, he starts playing by asking himself if the fish dream and if the birds bark, at what time the street-sweepers go to bed, and the like. Once they arrive at home, the boy continues his game. The concise text is accompanied by dynamic pictures consisting of a combination of fields of colour, sketchy drawings, and collage elements. The pictures aptly convey the slightly surreal atmosphere of the night trip. (4+)

Portugal

137

Agualusa, José Eduardo (text)

Cayatte, Henrique (illus.)

A girafa que comia estrelas

(The giraffe who ate the stars)

Lisboa : Dom Quixote, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 972-20-2942-8

Giraffe – Hen – Friendship – Drought

»Running down the throat, the stars caused a slight itch, but they tasted sweet and soft, like a peach.« This is one of the beautiful poetic images from this story about the unusual friendship between Olímpia the giraffe and the hen Dona Margarida. The young giraffe, whose neck is so long that it reaches far up into the sky, spots clever Margarida perched on her nest in the clouds, slowly gliding across the world. Together, the two friends rescue the animals in the savannah from a dangerous drought. To interpret the fairy-tale-like story, Henrique Cayatte has created simple pictures with large fields of colour and few details – pictures, which make the wide landscape of the story seem almost two-dimensional. They perfectly express the dream-like atmosphere of the imaginative text. (4+)

138

Torrão, Marta (text/illus.)

Come a sopa, Marta!

(Eat your soup, Marta!)

[Lisboa] : Bichinho de Conto, 2004. – [44] p.

ISBN 972-95593-7-6

Child – Food – Loss of appetite

Ever since 1845, when »Struwwelpeter« (Slovenly Peter) was published containing the story of Augustus who insists: »I won't have any soup today!«, the refusal to eat has been a popular topic in children's literature. Even if the punishment is bound to be less dire today, modern parents still like to harass their unruly offspring with moralistic messages. Yet nowadays, the children are probably more self-confident and clever. With tremendous verve, Marta Torrão has illustrated the story about little Marta, who dreads her soup and imagines what kind of horrors may be lurking in the shallows of her plate. Expressive, even wild shapes, glowing colours, extreme distortions, unusual details, and a varied typography turn this picture book into an exciting read. (4+)

Romania

139

Slavici, Ioan (text)

Marian, Mihail (illus.)

Pacală în satul lui

(Pacala in his village)

București : Corint Junior, 2005. – 22 p.

ISBN 973-7789-36-9

Fool – Cleverness – Envy – Greed

Pacală, the popular Romanian trickster-figure, decides to settle down in his home village after years of travelling around. He soon realises that in his village, just like in the rest of the world, envy, greed, and unfaithfulness determine people's behaviour. Yet, clever Pacala always manages to trick them and ends up laughing at human stupidity. This retelling of the traditional subject stands out for its folk-tale-like language and its modern graphic design, which is unusual for Romanian children's literature because it stands in contrast to many other books with overloaded traditional illustrations. The humorous text is underlined by the clear shapes of the comic-book-like pictures. (6+)

140

Tarnavschi, Geta Doina

Aventurile lui de Cuc

(Cuckoo's adventures)

București : Ed. Bren, 2004. – 153 p.

ISBN 973-648-359-2

Boy – Adventure – Romania/1476-1478

Two courageous boys serve under Stephen the Great (Prince of Moldavia) as spies. At court and in the surrounding monasteries and forests, they frequently tumble into exciting adventures. With cleverness and ingenuity, they uncover intrigues and help the king put his government plans into practice. In the course of events, the fairly naïve and enthusiastic children slowly grow up to become thoughtful and responsible adults. This adventure-novel-cum-detective-story offers an authentic description of a popular era in Romanian history, written in a style attractive for teenage readers. While other Romanian books frequently try to glorify or romanticise the past or abuse it for political reasons, this book rectifies the nationalistic view in a convincing way. (10+)

Spain

141

Ferrari, Andrea

El hombre que quería recordar

(The man who wanted to remember)

Madrid : Ed. SM, 2005. – 139 p.

(Gran angular; 254)

ISBN 84-675-0391-2

Crime – Identity – Camouflage

Santiago, an intern at a newspaper in Buenos Aires, gets drawn into a dangerous criminal case becoming a pawn in an obscure and confusing game. A slightly »mad« man, who allegedly suffers from amnesia, asks him to assist with his attempt to regain his memory in order to reconstruct his former life. Unintentionally, the young man turns into an accomplice in a sophisticatedly staged, risky game, in which changing identities play a central role. Not only Santiago and other protagonists, but readers as well are thrown off the track by cleverly prepared red herrings. The Argentinean author skilfully juggles the various possibilities offered by the genre of crime fiction,

playing with the tradition of storytelling and blurring the line between reality and fiction. (12+)

□ □ Special Mention

142

Liván, Paco (text)

Olmos, Roger (illus.)

La cosa que más duele del mundo

(The most painful thing in the world)

Pontevedra : OQO, 2005. – [32] p.

(Colección O)

ISBN 84-934499-6-2

(parallel editions in Galician and Catalan)

Animals – Truth – Lie – Folk tale – Fable

This folk tale based on the oral storytelling tradition of the Ivory Coast deals with the meaning of truth and – as its counter point – the pain that lies and injustice can cause. The protagonists, hyena and rabbit, discuss what might be the most painful thing on earth. When the hyena comes up with nothing but superficial arguments, the rabbit decides to teach him an unforgettable lesson. This story is rich in symbolism, as is typical for a folk tale, and radiates with humour, boldness, and witty philosophical discussions, which will also delight small children. The splendid illustrations – a symphony of bright colours – stand out both for their skilled technique and their composition. The numerous hidden allusions invite young and older readers alike to »read« the pictures on a second level. This picture book is an example of the high quality books that the new publisher OQO is producing since 2005 in Galician, Spanish, and Catalan. (5+)

143

Nesquens Daniel (text)

Arguilé Elisa (illus.)

Una nube

(A cloud)

Madrid : Anaya, 2005. – [18] p.

(Mi primera sopa de libros)

ISBN 84-667-4573-4

Coincidence

This small-format board book stands out from the big group of books for very young children, which are often of average artistic quality. The simple,

original story deals with the arbitrariness of cause and effect and points out how an accident (or is it fate?) can trigger off a long chain of events. A rain drop falls on the back of a dog, who gets a fright and barks, scaring off a cat, who meets a mouse, who in turn runs into a hole, ... And whose »fault« is it? The rain cloud's, of course! The clear and unostentatious yet elaborate pictures, which focus on the few central elements of the plot, perfectly reflect the style of the text. This book will inspire the readers' and listeners' imagination to continue the story. (2+)

144

Rosell, Joel Franz (text)

Torrão, Marta (illus.)

Pájaros en la cabeza

(Birds in the head)

Sevilla : Kalandraka Andalucía, 2004. – [48] p.

(Tiramillas ; 3) – ISBN 84-933780-2-X

Power – Politics – Wisdom – Ambition

Told as a fairy tale, this story is more of a practical parable about the art of ruling wisely. Although a king is so old and short-sighted that he wouldn't even recognise a dragon from three steps away, he rules with farsightedness, wisdom, and always keeps nature and the interests of the whole country in mind. Not so his ministers of defence, economy, and »everything else«. Driven by ambition, they are eager to carry out their own plans, such as war, huge construction projects, and the raising of taxes. Just like a »proper« fairy tale – and unlike real life – the tale ends happily. The witty text by the Cuban author is rife with poetical images and topical satirical side-swipes about the power game. The expressive, abstract colour illustrations invite readers to reflect and look closely. (8+)

145

Ventura, Antonio / Nesquens, Daniel /

Pérez Escrivá, Victoria (text)

Ranucci, Claudia (illus.)

6-colores : tres cuentos

(6 colours : three stories)

Madrid : SPR/MSH, 2004. – 96 p.

ISBN 84-609-2765-2

Friendship – Individuality – Otherness

This carefully designed volume in a black slipcase contains three tales by three different authors. A child, who loves painting with »wrong« colours; a

bear, who is born into a human family; the friendship between a child and a stranger, who is »different«. At first glance, the three texts do not seem to have a lot in common. Yet, the right for individuality, the right to be different, to decide freely and not to let oneself be influenced by other people's pre-concepts – these are issues common to all three stories. Another feature that binds them together are the delicate, humorous, sometimes slightly surreal pictures by Claudia Ranucci. For each tale, she uses two colours, which adds up to a total of six colours – hence the title of the book. (8+)

146

Vicente, Marta (text/illus.)

Adelaida

<proper name>

Barcelona [et al.] : Albur, 2005. – [40] p.

(Libros del zorro rojo)

ISBN 84-96509-11-7 / -9795-193-X

Circus – Love – Jealousy – Freedom

This fascinating picture book relates how love and the longing for freedom stand their ground against jealousy and possessiveness. Totó, member of a gang of street dogs, falls in love with beautiful Adelaida, star of a travelling circus. With the help of his mates, Totó rescues his beloved from »imprisonment« by the bird-of-prey-like circus director and magician Rampur, who is so outraged that he sets fire to the circus tent and is then consumed by the flames. The atmospheric pictures painted with powerful brush strokes by the young Argentinean artist depict a melancholic and gloomy, almost unreal world, in which the suburbs' drabness and the magic of the glittering yet declining circus world form a special bond. (6+)

Spain (Catalan)

147

Carranza, Maite

El clan de la lloba

(The clan of the [she-]wolf)

Barcelona : Edebé, 2005. – 382 p.

(La guerra de les bruixes; 1)

ISBN 84-236-7490-8

Magic – Witch – Reality – Fantasy

This first part of the trilogy »La guerra des les bruixes« (The war of the witches) is a gripping novel successfully following in the fantasy genre, which is currently highly popular and promising. The author invents a realm full of magic, of fantasy images and ideas. The real world and the fantasy world, familiar locations and imaginary places, historical facts and para-historical myths are cleverly mixed to create an adventure well worth reading. The story, set in the present day, tells of the fight between two witch clans: the Omar, who have a close relationship with nature, and the powerful, immortal Odish. The numerous literary, historical, and geographical references make the novel all the more interesting. (14+)

148

Lienas, Gemma (text)

Luciani, Rebeca (illus.)

Busco una mare!

(I am looking for a mother!)

Barcelona : La Galera, 2005. – [44] p.

ISBN 84-246-3433-0

Bolivia – Poverty – Adoption – Mother – Child

A mother walks through La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, begging for food. She knows that she is too poor to care for her baby. To enable both of them to survive, she takes her child to an orphanage. At the same time, a family in Spain embarks on a journey to Bolivia to fetch this girl, whom they have adopted. Although the story ends positively, the readers are left with a feeling of sadness and bitterness – not because of the adoption itself, but because of the circumstances that led to it. The double-page spreads of this picture book compare these two worlds, which are so different from each other and so far apart. Thanks to the quiet text and the vivid, graphic illustrations, which present an alienated reality, this picture book is neither overly emotional nor dramatic. (7+)

149

Tortajada, Anna (text)

Luciani, Rebeca (illus.)

A la muntanya de les ametistes

(On the Amethyst Mountain)

Barcelona : Ed. Barcanova, 2004. – 81 p.

ISBN 84-489-1467-8

Human being – Nature – Environmental protection

This book takes readers into a magical nature populated by real and imaginary creatures. They are all inhabitants of the Amethyst Mountain, which protects them and their world. A tree, a rock, and some animals and mythical creatures lament that the human being is not able to value, let alone protect nature. The story, full of symbols and philosophical questions, mainly addresses humankind, the Amethyst Mountain's favourite child, and asks them to reflect upon their relationship with nature. The small black-and-white vignettes and the expressive double-page colour illustrations created by the Argentinian-born artist Rebecca Luciani perfectly complement the mysterious text full of images and written in a poetical language. (12+)

Spain (Galician)

150

Casalderrey, Fina (text)

Quesada, María Fe (illus.)

¿Quen me quere adoptar?

(Who wants to adopt me?)

Vigo : Ed. Xerais de Galicia, 2005. – [61] p.

(Merlín; 156)

ISBN 84-9782-359-1

Old age – Loneliness – Adoption – Family

After a life full of love and of books, the retired teacher Manuel feels lonely. His wife has died and his daughter works as a doctor in Africa. What can he do against his loneliness? Could it be true that nobody wants to share his life? Manuel puts up a sign: »Who wants to adopt me? I'm looking for a family with children.« Fina Casalderry has already written some other books about the coexistence of generations, in which she linked the worlds of children and elderly people. With a lot of humour but also some melancholy, she describes the feel-

ing of loneliness that many old people are faced with. In addition, the sensitive narration also tackles the topic of new family models in the changing Spanish society. (8+)

151

Gracián, Ánxela (text)

Trigo, Ramón (illus.)

Nun lugar chamado Labirinto

(At a place called Labyrinth)

Vigo : Tambre-Edelvives, 2005. – 99 p.

(Ala delta : Serie azul; 13)

ISBN 84-88681-38-0

Love – Death – Grief – Journey of initiation – Adventure

Seven-year-old Maru, a few animals – a dog, a cat, a cow, a tortoise, a cuckoo – and the wizard Axóuxere (formerly a scarecrow) live on an island in a lake. When the wizard persuades the moon to let a seven-pointed star fall from the sky to give Maru more self-confidence and enable her to make her wishes and dreams come true, the happiness ends abruptly. The following morning, a terrifying woman with a scythe turns up and takes Axóuxere with her. The central topics of this touching story are the death of a loved one and the question of how to overcome the grief about such a loss. The tale is embedded in a frame story: Reading it helps a boy, who has lost his father, understand his own feelings and find answers to some of his most urgent questions. (8+)

152

Oli (text)

Meixide, Andrés (illus.)

Conto para non comer

(A story for not eating)

Vigo : Galaxia, 2005. – [32] p.

(Árbore)

ISBN 84-8288-863-3

Going to bed – Eating – Mother – Child

It's a typical family situation: At night, Antón is sitting at the table with a huge cup of steaming hot milk in front of him, which he absolutely doesn't feel like drinking. To escape his mother, who insists he empties the cup, he first asks for his father to come, then his dog, his grandmother, his godmother, ... until he falls asleep with the now cold milk still untouched. This simple, humorous

Romance Languages

tale is told in the form of traditional chain stories: Central elements of the story are repeated again and again while the scene fills with more and more characters. The clear, simple illustrations are created in a mixed technique full of variation. With their bright colours and thick black outlines they particularly address a younger readership. (5+)

Switzerland (French)

153

Lestrade, Agnès de (text)

Bravo, Constanza (illus.)

Le plus gentil loup du monde

(The nicest wolf on earth)

Genève : Joie de Lire, 2005. – [34] p.

ISBN 2-88258-339-7

Wolf – Girl – Grandmother – Vegetarian – Trick

A hungry wolf meets a girl and, quite naturally, he wants to eat it. Yet, this clever girl is probably the wrong person to address: »Don't you know that eating so much animal protein is going to raise your cholesterol to a dangerous level?« With her arguments, she easily manages to convince the wolf. He accompanies her to the grandmother's house and turns into a vegetarian. But a wolf is still a wolf, and at night he can't resist the temptation any longer. Just like its source text, this humorous, modern adaptation of »Little Red Riding Hood« comes to a happy, if surprising, end. It is complemented by equally creative illustrations rendered in a refreshing and unconventional layout and variety of techniques. (6+)

✧ 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

Latin America

Argentina (Spanish)

□ □ Special Mention

154

Bombara, Paula

El mar y la serpiente

(The sea and the serpent)

Buenos Aires [et al.] : Ed. Norma, 2005. – 105 p.

(Zona libre)

ISBN 987-545-211-4

Argentina/1975-1985 – Dictatorship – Political persecution – Missing person

The country's military dictatorship is a topic also dealt with in Argentinean children's literature. In her impressive novel, Paula Bombara describes the traumatic experiences of the daughter of one of the thousands of »desaparecidos« (missing people). While the first part starts off in the middle of the 1970s, the other two parts are set eight and ten years later. It is moving to see how the adults strive to protect the little girl from the brutal reality, but thereby involuntarily prevent her from understanding the sudden and inexplicable loss of her father and from coping with it. Only years later, when her mother hesitatingly breaks the silence, is the daughter able to come to terms with it. The story focuses exclusively on the first-person-narrator's perspective and experiences. The concise language of the author, who observes and states facts without commenting or explaining anything, is very powerful. Thus, the events described gain immediacy and strength. (12+) ✧

155

Masetto, Antonio dal

Tres genieses en la magnolia

(Three geniuses in the magnolia)

Buenos Aires : Ed. Sudamericana, 2005. – 247 p.

(Sudamericana joven : Novela)

ISBN 950-07-2651-3

Coming-of-age – Disillusionment

The protagonists of this novel are three eleven-year-old girls, who live in an ordinary quarter of Buenos Aires. If they want to be undisturbed, the three friends retreat to a magnolia tree. This mysterious place, where reality and imagination blend,

also serves as the base from which they explore their surroundings. Step by step, they investigate the world and feel hurt and disillusioned when their experiences open their eyes to the rules and realities of the adult world, which is ruled by corruption, greed, and falseness, while values such as truth and justice seem to be of minor importance. This excellent novel for teenagers and adults bluntly and convincingly portrays modern society and stands out for its skilful use of language. (12+)

Brazil (Portuguese)

156

Bocheco, Eloi Elisabete

Beatriz em trânsito

(Beatriz on her way)

Porto Alegre : Nova Prova Ed., 2005. – 110 p.

ISBN 85-89344-68-1

Orphan – Girl – Daily life

Little Beatriz, who has been living with her grandmother, uncles, and aunts since her mother's death, is the protagonist of this sensitive narrative. The readers accompany the girl as she lives her daily life and walks the winding roads of human existence determined by farewell, loss, and other substantial experiences. A remarkable feature of this novel is the number of intertextual elements from folklore and religion, imaginary creatures from the folk literature of Southern Brazil, as well as works from world literature that Beatriz and her friends are reading, that are woven into the story. Thus, two vastly different worlds meet in the book's characters, their culture, and their reading experiences. (10+) (3° Prêmio Nacional Casa de Cultura Mário Quintana; 2005)

157

Furnari, Eva (text/illus.)

Cacoete <proper name>

(Tic <proper name>)

São Paulo : Ed. Ática, 2005. – [32] p.

(Sonho e fantasia)

ISBN 85-08-09720-4

Order – Chaos – Rule – Magic – Witch

Eva Furnari, a multiple award-winning author and illustrator, is renowned for her trademark sense of humour, again very palpable in this picture book,

in which text and pictures create a wonderful unity. Cacoete – which is actually the term for a nervous tic – is the name of a superbly organised city whose inhabitants strictly abide by every single rule. Even the streets, let alone the people themselves, are put in alphabetical order. Yet, one day, little Frido meets the witch Nurcia, and Cacoete suddenly witnesses a few surprising changes. The funny illustrations show the city, its inhabitants, and their behaviour in a lot of details. Particularly entertaining is the contrast between the initial order and the chaos caused by the witch. (8+)

158

Gabriel o Pensador (text)

Bueno, Daniel (illus.)

Um garoto chamado Rorbetto

(A boy named Rorbetto)

São Paulo : Cosac Naify, 2005. – 45 p.

ISBN 85-7503-383-2

Outsider – Individuality – Uniqueness – Self-confidence – Self esteem

Gabriel o Pensador is a popular Brazilian composer and singer. Yet, he is also a poet, and »Um garoto chamado Rorbetto« is his first children's book.

The fresh and original story told in melodic verses describes a unique boy who was accidentally registered after his birth as Rorbetto instead of Roberto, as he should have been named. Since he has six fingers on one of his hands, he hides this hand at school in his satchel. After a while, however, Rorbetto overcomes his shyness. With a lot of self-confidence, he shows his classmates why he is different and decides to become goal keeper of the school's football team. The witty illustrations are created in a combination of collages and computer graphics. The layout and design of the colourful pages will remind readers of (their own) exercise books at school. (7+)

159

Marinho, Jorge Miguel

Lis no peito : um livro que pede perdão

(Lis in the heart : a book that asks for forgiveness)

São Paulo : Biruta, 2005. – 181 p.

ISBN 85-88159-43-0

Youth – Love – Search for identity

Inspired by the works of Clarice Lispector, one of the great Brazilian writers of the 20th century

(1925-1977), Jorge Miguel Marinho tackles the topic of adolescent life revolving around passion, happiness, and the search and discovery of the world and one's own identity. The novel focuses on the love between two teenagers and on a probably unforgivable »crime«. The readers will easily understand the protagonists' doubts and insecurities. They are cleverly drawn into the story because they are constantly invited to take a stand on the protagonists and their actions. Each chapter opens with a quotation by Clarice Lispector which makes this ambitious book an invitation to read this writer's existentialist novels, novellas, and tales. (14+)

160

Queirós, Bartolomeu Campos

O olho de vidro do meu avô

(My grandfather's glass eye)

São Paulo : Moderna, 2004. – 48 p.

(Veredas)

ISBN 85-16-04192-1

Brazil/1940's – Childhood memories

The works of Bartolomeu Campos Queirós, one of the most well-known Brazilian authors of children's literature, are praised for their graphic, poetic, and emotional prose. This multi-award-winning autobiography novel, in which Campos Queirós talks about his childhood in the 1940s, is also composed in a dense, lyrical language. The readers share the perspective of the curious, imaginative child who is full of astonishment as he describes his impressions of meeting people and discovering so many different things. Set in a time that seems long past but still very close to the present, this slim book makes children witness a childhood in a predominantly rural Brazil where large cities like São Paulo were still an exception. (12+) (Prêmio Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil – FNLIJ, Best young Adult Book 2005; Prêmio Nacional Nestlé 2005)

161

Vassallo Márcio (text)

Moraes, Odilon (illus.)

O menino da chuva no cabelo

(The boy who had raindrops falling on his head)

São Paulo : Global, 2005. – 22 p.

ISBN 85-260-0984-2

Football – Rain – Imagination – Dream

This picture book tells the touching story of

Arthur who dreams of becoming a professional football player. One day, as he is playing football with his friends, it starts raining and he becomes so enchanted by the rain's poetic quality, that he totally wrecks the game. He forgets everything around him, loses his sense of time, the only thing that counts is the rhythm of the rain. This experience deeply influences the boy. No wonder that he doesn't become a football player but a writer. This empathetic story, inspired by the author's own childhood, is accompanied by delicate water-colour illustrations. They open up an additional dimension because they do not simply picture the action but rather emphasise the poetical aspects of the text. (6+)

Chile (Spanish)

162

Balcells, Jacqueline (text)

Cardemil, Carmen (illus.)

Simón y el carro de fuego

(Simón and the fire carriage)

Santiago : Ed. SM Chile, 2004. – 240 p.

(El barco de vapor : Colección volantín; 3)

ISBN 956-264-263-1

Treasure – Search – Time travel – Chile/1674 – Friendship

During a visit to the colonial museum at the Franciscan monastery in Santiago de Chile, twelve-year-old Simón looks at a painting and discovers a horse carriage, which looks exactly like the little wooden artefact left to him by his mother, who died in an accident together with his father. When he tries to solve the mystery of this so-called fire carriage, the boy goes on an exciting time travel adventure to 18th-century Chile and Peru. In this fast-paced, compelling novel, the author skilfully combines elements of historical novel and detective story and creates a number of convincing characters. Last but not least, this is also the story of two boys in today's Chile, whose close and constant friendship overcomes huge social differences. (10+)

Colombia (Spanish)

163

Lara, Enrique / García, Luis (illus.)

Circo de pulgas

(Flea circus)

Bogotá : Ed. GatoMalo, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 958-33-7436-9

Street dog – Outsider – Flea circus

Within the past few years, a number of small publishing houses have sprung up in Latin America, which are seeking their fortune in the fairly difficult children's book scene. In 2005, the Colombian publisher Gato Malo (Bad Cat) started with a handful of titles such as this textless picture book – a genre quite common on that continent. The dynamic, caricature-like illustrations – sketchy black-and-white drawings, which are partly coloured – tell the story of a dog who is driven from his home and has to survive in the streets. With a lot of courage and creativity, he forges a new career as the founder of a successful flea circus. On the outside, this optimistic book is a funny animal story, yet on a deeper level it also addresses the topic of outsiders living at the edge of society. (3+)

164

Paz Castillo, María Fernanda (ed./adapt.)

Osorio, María (illus.)

Muertos de susto : leyendas de acá y del más allá
(Paralysed with fear : tales from near and far)

Bogotá : Alfaguara, 2005. – 77 p.

(Nidos para la lectura) (Yo leo solo)

ISBN 958-704-283-2

Horror story – Fear

The series »Nidos para la lectura« (nests for reading) presents a number of carefully designed anthologies of folk tales, poems, and other short literary genres. This volume offers retellings of twelve horror stories of European and Latin American origin. The varied and by no means blood-thirsty selection is perfect for children who are in for a pleasant shudder of fear but not too much. The illustrations are a feast for the eyes. The abstract, dynamic digitally produced graphics, which dramatically amplify the characters' expressions and gestures, consist of black, grey, white, and red fields of colour. They provide an attractive contrast to the tales from bygone times. (8+)

Mexico (Spanish)

165

Birmajer, Marcelo

El siglo XX

(The 20th century)

México, D.F. : Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004. – 125 p.

(A través del espejo)

ISBN 968-16-7056-6

Tradition – Modernity – Civilisation – Freedom

In this riveting novel, partly told in the archaic language of ancient legends, Marcelo Birmajer again demonstrates his talent for creating gripping plots. Here, »The 20th century« is not only an era but also a country and modernity in general with its achievements for civilisation as well as its barbaric downsides. That's where Juan travels, a member of an isolated tribe, whose rites and myths offer clarity and comfort but on the other hand also prevent progress and individual freedom. Taking the boy, who struggles with inner conflicts but becomes more mature during his journey, as an example, this novel points out that the lines between tradition and modernity, innocent paradise and modern hell, suppression and freedom are blurred and not nearly as clear as we would expect them to be. (12+)

□ □ Special Mention

166

Gusti (text/illus.)

La mosca : [en: »Un día perfecto puede llegar a ser una pesadilla«]

(The fly [in: »A perfect day can turn into a nightmare«])

México, D.F. : Abrapalabra, 2005. – [36] p.

ISBN 970-9705-03-2

Fly – Excursion – Habitat – Perspective

A fly as the protagonist of a children's book? Yes, it is possible. In this highly comic picture book, a representative of this inconspicuous species makes a spectacular appearance. The readers join the cheerful insect, well-equipped with bath towel, ball, and sun screen, for an outing. Yet suddenly the relaxed beach fun turns into a horror trip. The sky turns black, a huge »meteorite« crashes into the water, and the fly only just manages to seek

shelter from a gurgling mega-maelstrom. Well, such a catastrophe is bound to happen when human beings and animals share the same »habitat«, in this case, the toilet bowl. This crazy tale is told with a lot of wit and intelligence. Right until the very surprising end, it consistently sticks to the unsuspecting fly's point of view. The refreshing illustrations, painted, torn, and glued together with energy and enormous imagination, skilfully play with film-elements such as extreme perspective, blow-ups, or the »actor's« direct stare into the »camera«. A truly delightful picture book! (4+) □ (parallel edition by Ed. Serres, Barcelona / Spain)

Venezuela (Spanish)

167

Espinoza, Gerald (text/illus.)

Gallo Galí Galo

(The cock Gali Galo)

Caracas : Camelia Ed., 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 980-6450-20-5

Opposites

Cock Gali Galo is a very special representative of his species: an animal with two heads – or could it be two animals in one body? Be that as it may, both of them are headstrong and have very different views of the world around them. Each double page in this picture book presents a moment in the life of Gali and Galo. One gets up too late, the other too early, one finds the teacher attractive, the other considers her rather ugly, one feels comfortable, the other wants to go home. Gerald Espinoza captures the odd couple's experiences in strongly coloured pictures, which focus on the amusing, partly absurd pairs of opposites depicting them in a more or less abstract way, and inspire readers to come up with their own examples. (3+)

168

Franco, Mercedes (text)

Salvador, Carmen (illus.)

Criaturas fantásticas de América

(Imaginary creatures from America)

Maracay : Playco Ed., 2004. – 33 p.

ISBN 980-6437-57-8

America – Mythical creatures

Who knows the big-footed Sasquatch, the gnome

Zipito, or the lizard-like Güije? For thousands of years, with their boundless imagination and pleasure in telling stories, people have conjured up a huge variety of mythical creatures, often used to explain magical and mysterious phenomena.

Quite naturally, both Americas abound with creatures from indigenous traditions as well as those shaped by European and African influences. This volume introduces sixteen mythical creatures from as many American countries, from Canada down to Chile. Each double page presents a descriptive text and a colour illustration, which shows each being in its typical context. This attractive and informative book enables readers to meet a flock of fascinating creatures. (7+) ◇

North America

Canada (French)

169

Bouchard, Camille

Les crocodiles de Bangkok

(The crocodiles of Bangkok)

[Montréal] : Hurtubise HMH, 2005. – 216 p.

(Collection Atout ; 100/101 : Récit)

ISBN 2-89428-767-4

Thailand – Sponsorship – First love –

Sexual slavery – Sex tourism

When 16-year-old Cédric and his mother travel to Thailand to spend a few days with Sukany, the 15-year-old girl they support, he does not only experience traditions, smells, and pleasures hitherto unknown to him, he also soon plunges into an exciting adventure. On his journey of initiation in a foreign country, the young man grows up, starts to see beyond his horizon, and even falls in love for the first time. Apart from describing the encounter between two young people from different cultures, this teenage novel also paints a critical picture of the daily life in Thailand, which includes sexual slavery, prostitution, and sex tourism. (13+) ◇

170

Chabin, Laurent

Le jeu de l'assassin

(The murder game)

Montréal (Québec) : Courte Échelle, 2005. – 135 p.

ISBN 2-89021-770-1

Solitude – Game – Murder – Victim – Offender

Eight friends who spend a few days in a mountain hut are cut off from the outside world by a snow-storm. To pass the time, they play a »murder game«: One person volunteers to be the victim, a second one to be the murder, and the rest of them to act as detectives. Yet unfortunately, the pretend-victim Claire is soon turned into a real one. Who is the real murder? In 15 chapters, the situation is presented from the different viewpoints of the eight friends and the doctor, unravelling all the emotions, background information, and fears of the respective first-person narrator. Step by step, readers learn about the lie-infested, problematic relationship between the so-called friends while the suspense and excitement are kept up until the very end. (13+)

171

Papineau, Lucie (text)

Adams, Steve (illus.)

Le trésor de Jacob

(Jacob's treasure chest)

Saint-Lambert (Québec) : Dominique et

Compagnie, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 2-89512-447-7/-449-3

Boy – Grandmother – Separation – Grief – Toy – Imaginary journey

Full of poetry and imagination, this picture book describes a young boy's close relationship to his grandmother, who has just been moved to an old people's home. She leaves her old toys behind for the boy and when he cannot find her favourite little horse anymore, he sets off in search for it: Through quicksand and meadows, he reaches the mysterious theme park Belmondo where he finally discovers the horse and frees it. On his next visit, he tells granny about the magic that she and her toys possess for him. The soft colours and the loving expression on the protagonists' faces perfectly capture the tenderness between grandson and grandmother. Focusing on the essential, the clear illustrations interpret the sometimes quiet, sometimes fantastic text with a lot of sensitivity. (5+)

172

Pratt, Pierre (text/illus.)

Le jour où Zoé zozota

(The day when Zoé lisped)

Montréal (Québec) : 400 coups, 2005. – [56] p.

ISBN 2-89540-196-9

Alphabet – Moment

In this book, the alphabet almost seems to be an excuse for the 26 snapshots presented. Each letter of the alphabet is accompanied by a sentence about a person full of pun-like alliterations and by a large-format, colourful picture that interprets each sentence in a way that makes readers spot the illustrator's sometimes biting, sometimes light-hearted sense of humour. For example, »Firmen Flynn flees in his own way« is complemented by a picture showing the back of a large man in dark clothes as he stands in front of an insurmountable wooden wall. The absurd, yet poetic combination of text and picture easily inspires readers to dream on and discover thousands of other interpretations. (6+)

173

Soulières, Robert

Ding, dong! : facéties littéraires ; 77 clins d'œil à Raymond Queneau

(Ding-dong! : literary pranks ; 77 winks at Raymond Queneau)

Saint-Lambert : Soulières Éd., 2005. – 238 p.

(Collection Graffiti ; 29)

ISBN 2-89607-020-6

New York – Journey – Chocolate – Sale

In order to earn money for a journey to New York, a teenager – sometimes a girl, sometimes a boy – goes from door to door trying to sell chocolates. This simple scene is repeated in 77 different versions in various literary styles: as a theatre performance, as a diary entry, in a language reminiscent of Perrault's or Andersen's fairy tales, as a fable in the style of Jean de LaFontaine, as a text repeated several times on different time levels, etc. This humorous approach to literature itself and to the act of reading pays homage to the French writer Raymond Queneau, who in 1947 offered 99 different versions of a banal story in his famous »Exercices de style« (Exercises in style). In »Ding-dong!« the author leaves version 78 to the readers' imagination and asks them to participate in a writing competition. (12+)

Denmark

174

Grønlund, Peter

Sub-land

(Sub-country)

København : Gyldendal, 2005. – 159 p.

ISBN 87-02-04205-3

Graffiti – Youth culture

Kim and Per, two high school students and graffiti artists, leave their (identity) tags mainly on suburban trains in Copenhagen. They are craving excitement, belong to the Hip Hop Scene and long to feel free. In story-form, yet with a lot of factual background knowledge, this book describes their world, their way of thinking, and their pride in their creations when they spot (and photograph) a train with their own works on it. No wonder it seems so convincing because the author himself, who presents his debut novel here, used to be a member of the subculture of graffiti artists in Copenhagen. Readers can therefore assume that his atmospheric descriptions as well as his vocabulary are fairly authentic. (13+)

175

Gyldenkerne, Nanna (ed.)

Drengen der gik over gevind og andre eventyrlige historier

(The boy who went mad and other adventurous stories)

København : Den Gode Historie, 2005. – 156 p.

ISBN 87-985704-4-7

Short story – Fantasy – Anthology

This anthology contains twelve tales and a comic-book-like story: everyday stories suddenly invaded by The Unbelievable, fairy tales, tall tales, and science fiction. They are supposed to whet a child's appetite for reading. The book was published on the occasion of the festival »The good story«, which was held all over Denmark in 2005 as a reading promotion event. The participating well-known Danish authors, among them Kåre Bluitgen, Louis Jensen, Hanne Kvist, Carls Quist Møller, Peter Mouritzen and Daniel Zimakoff, were commissioned to write an adventure story especially for this anthology. The illustrations for the various tales were created by the best Danish artists such as L. Brøgger, K. Raagaard, and J. Ranheimsæter. (9+) □

176

Hartmann, Nils (adapt.)

Karrebæk, Dorte (illus.)

Hvordan fuglene blev venner og andre eventyr om dyr

(How the birds became friends and other animal tales)

[København] : Gyldendal, 2004. – 76 p.

ISBN 87-02-03340-2

Burmese – Animal tale – Anthology

It's very rare that folk tales from Myanmar (formerly: Burma) find their way into other cultures or languages, but this small book of only ten stories came into existence directly in that country. Nils Hartmann discovered the storyteller, Irene Than Pe, in a bookshop in the Burmese capital Yangon (Rangoon), where he was looking for editions of folk tales. Irene, who also spoke English, offered to tell him her stories that had never been published before. He wrote them down, and Dorte Karrebæk created witty illustrations for them. In the appendix, readers learn about the fate of this woman: To escape the Japanese soldiers during the Second World War, she fled to India with her family. Hartmann intentionally follows in the footsteps of Rudyard Kipling, who also collected Asian folk tales. (8+) ◇

177

Schlosser, Dan (text)

Ranheimsæter, Jon (illus.)

Historien om Lille Blege Johnny

(The story of Little Pale Johnny)

København : Forum, 2005. – 54 p.

ISBN 87-638-0050-0

Child – Ambition – Mobbing

A neglected, pale little boy devoid of any self-confidence asks his parents to give him a hip leather outfit to be able to show off on the street. The rough and violent street boys, however, quickly rob him of his fashionable new clothes. Yet, when they start arguing about who is the coolest guy now, Johnny manages to regain hold of his things one by one. The boys beat each other up until they dissolve into an indistinguishable mess of »hamburger-dressing«, which the greedy father immediately picks up and uses for a huge feast of meatballs, fries, and blinis. Despite all its grotesque elements – e.g. the greedy father in

front of the TV is simply hilarious – this witty parody of the well-known »Story of little black Sambo« by Helen Bannerman contains obvious elements of social criticism. (10+) ◇ □

178

Sigmund, Pia (text)

Clante, Charlotte (illus.)

Emanuel og Louise fra Nyboder

(Emanuel and Louise of Nyboder)

København : Alinea, 2005. – 48 p.

ISBN 87-23-01549-7

Denmark/1872 – Working class

Two siblings and their family are the protagonists of this book that paints a colourful picture of Denmark's working class. The story, which is accompanied by reproductions of historical pictures and vivid scenes drawn by an utterly modern illustrator, describes life in a quarter of terraced houses built in a small Danish town as early as 1631. Since each house was shared by four families, space was scarce. The book does not resort to stereotypes, but rather shows life in all its different facets. Thus, the readers absorb a piece of the cultural history of everyday life at those times told from a child's perspective. The second book in the series focuses on the adventures of a family of emigrants. Both books are complemented by material for teachers. (10+)

□ □ Special Mention

179

Strandbygaard, Birgit

Drengen der samlede på ord

(The boy who collected words)

København : Høst & Søn, 2005. – 123 p.

ISBN 87-638-0194-9

Denmark/1945-1950 – Child – School – Outsider – Language

After the end of the Second World War, in a small, narrow-minded Danish town: Albert lives in depressing circumstances with an authoritarian father and a weak mother. His classmates enjoy teasing him because he is different. Yet, he is not the only child who has problems: Children are not supposed to ask questions, nor are they given many answers if they do. And the old teacher is prone to hit her pupils. The children try to over-

come the depressing post-war mood that does not allow them to believe in a better future. Albert discovers the power of language and starts collecting words. With his unusual and direct questions, he embarrasses people and exposes their small-mindedness. This novel makes children realise that there is no clear divide between good and bad in a war. Old, traditional patterns of adult behaviour towards children are presented in a dishearteningly realistic way. But the author also offers a convincing description of the children's happiness when some adults, a new teacher in particular, actually sympathise with them. (10+) ◇

Faroe Islands

□ □ Special Mention

180

Bárður Oskarsson (text/illus.)

Ein hundur, ein ketta og ein mús

(A dog, a cat, and a mouse)

[Tórshavn] : Bókadeild Føroya Lærarafelags,

2005. – [30] p.

ISBN 99918-1-420-5

Animals – Peace – Dispute – Reconciliation

Since dog, cat, and mouse declared a truce, life has become fairly uneventful: The mouse, undisturbed by the cat, is so full that he is disgusted when he finds a piece of cheese. The cat is given a ball of wool to play with, but chasing the mouse was a lot more exciting. The dog tries hard to restrain himself from barking at the cat – the water hydrant is no substitute for a panicking cat. Thus, all three of them are sitting around bored stiff. Finally, the dog cannot bear it any longer and barks his head off at the cat who immediately accuses the mouse of setting the dog on him. The mouse takes revenge by hitting the dog's tail with a hammer. It seems that a climate of hate is on the rise. However, peace is restored through a clarifying discussion – something that should also be possible among humans. The rough ink outlines are superimposed on fine pencil sketches and coloured in almost monochromatically. The illustrator's unerring caricature of the animals' moods turns this already witty story into a hilarious picture book experience. (6+) ◇

Finland

181

Huovi, Hannele (text)

Louhi, Kristiina (illus.)

Maailman paras napa : satuja sinusta

(The best navel in the world : stories about you)

Helsinki : Tammi, 2005. – 91 S.

ISBN 951-31-3315-x

Body parts – Anthology

Each of these 20 short tales by the well-known Finnish author is about one particular body part. Still, they are by no means non-fiction accounts but rather fairy-tale-like stories. Thus, a princess is granted new »music-ears« by the ear-maker because her »city-ears« can bear a lot of noise but are hardly able to perceive more delicate sounds such as language or music. A hen that sets off to discover the »navel of the world« is happy to explore its owner's navel and contentedly returns to laying eggs. These sometimes absurd tales are accompanied by equally fantastic illustrations. The picturesque paintings, depicting people in a slightly child-like style, are a delight to look at, also thanks to the wonderful high-quality print. (8+)

182

Kivelä, Malin (text)

Bondestam, Linda (illus.)

Den förträfflige herr Glad

(The excellent Mr. Glad)

[Helsinki] : Söderström, 2004. – [52] p.

ISBN 951-52-2202-8 – (Swedish text)

Loneliness – Love

Mr. Glad, who is single and a star-enthusiast, is extremely friendly and polite. Even his new neighbour, a truly abominable old bag, does not manage to smother his efforts of spreading harmony even if she does her best to drive him from her door. Thanks to his unrelenting eagerness to help and, in particular, because of an invitation to coffee and cake, she eventually gives in. When he bids her good night, Mr. Glad hears nothing but a peaceful snoring from her side of the bed. This book is a truly delighting read, not (only) because it deals with the way in which psychological obstacles can be overcome, but rather because of its extraordinary, vivid graphical interpretation. (6+)

183

Lindman, Mervi (text/illus.)

Urhea pikku Memmuli

(Brave little Memmuli)

Helsinki : Tammi, 2005. – [32] p.

ISBN 951-31-3411-3

Child – Fear – Nightmare – Shrinking

Little Memmuli wants to be a big girl who is never afraid of anything, but things like jelly, bath foam, or the toilet simply frighten her. One night, the girl has a nightmare: Chased by shadow monsters, she shrinks and stumbles through the city traffic and through a field that seems like a huge jungle to the tiny girl. When she finally wakes from this terrible dream, she confesses that she is afraid. Her mother tries to comfort her daughter by saying that it takes a lot of courage to admit to oneself and to others that you are scared. The caricature-like illustrations keep a perfect balance between a grotesque and a child-like style. The artist's witty ideas invite readers to study the detailed pictures very carefully. (5+)

184

Nevanlinna, Tuomas (text)

Melasniemi, Joel (illus.)

Antero joutuu luontoon

(Antero explores nature)

Helsinki : TEOS, 2004. – 296 p.

ISBN 951-851-003-2

Boy – School holidays – Village – Animals – Filming – Friendship

During the school holidays, ten-year-old Antero is sent to the countryside to improve his inadequate knowledge of animals and plants. Despite the culture shock (fish heads in the soup!), the »townie« soon settles in. On his expeditions with his host parents' daughter, he meets a rabbit, a hedgehog, and a fox who can speak. This idyll is disturbed by a film crew who catch and torture the animals for a nature documentary. When the rabbit is taken to the natural museum, the children embark on an adventurous rescue trip. With a lot of humour, the author presents Antero's development from an ignorant brat into a curious boy eager to help. Antero's difficulties to understand people and animals in the countryside because of his city jargon paint a vivid picture of the different ways of life. (10+)

Iceland

185

Gunnhildur Hrólfsdóttir

Ránið

(The enslavement)

Reykjavík : Frum, 2004. – 199 p.

ISBN 9979-9687-0-2

Algeria/1627 – Slavery

Katla, a modern teenager with psychic powers living on the Westman islands in Southern Iceland, suddenly finds herself transported into the year 1627 when Algerian pirates attack the island. Together with hundreds of other inhabitants, the girl is taken on a terrible journey, treated with cruelty, and sold off into slavery as soon as they arrive in Algier. In this compelling young adult novel, the final part of the »Katla« trilogy, renowned author Gunnhildur Hrólfsdóttir cleverly weaves together historical facts and fiction. The exciting plot and the vivacious characters will make a past era come alive for a modern audience and arouse interest for the lives of people from other cultures and different religions. (14+)

Norway

186

Austrem, Liv Marie (text)

Duzakin, Akin (illus.)

Skavanken

(Disability)

Oslo : Det Norske Samlaget, 2004. – [30] p.

ISBN 82-521-6395-5

Disability – Quality of life

This book describes an accident in the forest, in which a father, who cuts down a tree and gets buried under the falling trunk, is saved by his visually impaired son – an event that confirms that every life, with or without disability, is important and unique. Indeed, the father can no longer play his violin, but he can still read; while the son, because of his bad eyesight, is not able to read but learns to play the violin. However, all this is but the most obvious level of events happening to the illustrator's dog-like protagonists. As a whole, the work with its smooth drawings and soft colours is a romantic homage to gentle autumn. The realistic

narrative of the accident gets almost pushed to the background by the poetic interpretation in the pictures. (6+)

187

Ekman, Fam

PS. Hils morfar!

(PS: Say hello to Grandpa!)

[Oslo] : Cappelen, 2005. – 40 p.

ISBN 82-02-24519-2

Child – Daily life

The great variety and audacity of Norwegian picture books, made possible through the support received from the Norwegian Arts Council, surprises their readers again and again. For years, Fam Ekman has built up a reputation for creating extraordinary picture books. Provided that they actually get into the hands of children, not only those of adults, they present the manifold ways of graphical expression to them and can inspire a child's creativity. In this book, a young girl writes to her grandfather telling him of her various »adventures«. Surreal collages provide an interestingly distorted perspective on the daily routine. The little volume by Ragnar Aalbu »Grundig om gris« (Basic facts about pigs) published by the same publisher in 2005 is another example of exceptional book art. (6+) □

188

Hole, Stian

Den gamle mannen og hvalen

(The old man and the whale)

[Oslo] : Cappelen, 2005. – [44] p.

ISBN 82-02-24052-2

Siblings – Argument – Old age – Isolation – Reconciliation – Whale

An old man lives at the edge of a fjord. Many years ago, he fell out with his brother who lives on the other side. They haven't seen each other since the day that his brother pinched his girlfriend. Yet, when the old man finds a stranded whale and realises it will be impossible for him to shift it back into the water on his own, he forces himself to ask his brother for help. Together they succeed and finally bury the hatchet. The allusion to Hemingway in the book title is but a fleeting one because here the whale is rescued. The author and the illustrator have created a moving and

gripping story for children, although the protagonists are two old men. In the exquisite collages, the contrast between photographic elements and the highly abstract, partly illustrated scenes of a landscape offers an exciting visual experience.

(6+) ♦

189

Østgaard, Anne (text)

Bråthen, Ciri Tutkovin (illus.)

Magdas mage

(Magda's stomach)

[Oslo] : Damm & Søn, 2004. – [20] p.

ISBN 82-04-10079-5

Anorexia – Throwing up

In Scandinavian countries, people often come up with fairly unconventional ways to help children cope with life's problems. With this small picture book, authors and publisher strive to coax children with anorexia out of their isolation and take the suffering they desperately try to hide to a neutral level. To reach this aim, they offer a drastic depiction of the consequences of Magda's frequent bouts of puking, which do not only render the toilet completely useless but also thoroughly shock her parents and friends. In the end, she (or rather the author) comes up with the absurd idea of putting the half-digested contents of her stomach into the freezer and selling it as topping for pizza. Transforming mundane and sad matters into something grotesque may perhaps be the right way to »de-dramatise« them. (6+) □

Sweden

190

Brinkemo, Per / Ali, Ahmed Hassan

Dumpad

(Dumped)

Stockholm : Tiden, 2004. – 232 p.

ISBN 91-88879-61-5

Sweden – Immigration – Cultural conflict – Integration – Somalian boy – Abduction

A lot of children's book deal with integration problems of refugees from non-European countries. The host country is frequently portrayed as xenophobic. This book proves how cruel the confrontation between different cultures can be

even within a refugee family. Achmed, a Somalian boy, is regularly beaten up by his violent father because he tries to assimilate into the Swedish society. Eventually, his mother takes him to Somalia and abandons him there. Two years later, he manages to contact the Swedish embassy in Ethiopia, which finally enables him to return to Sweden, his mother country, albeit under huge bureaucratic obstacles. This case caused quite a stir in the press in 2002, and it's a journalist who convincingly presents this tale to young readers.

(12+) ♦

191

Everdahl, Göran (text)

Prah, André (illus.)

Bli expert på 5 minuter : bildningsakuten

(Expert in five minutes : intensive education unit)

Stockholm : Bonnier Carlsen, 2005. – 96 p.

ISBN 91-638-4914-3

General knowledge

People complain that there is an education crisis among young people. That is why this author wants to tell intimidated teenagers: »Education is cool!« To avoid their embarrassing themselves in conversation, his plan is to give reluctant students with a guilty conscience an »effective kick up the backside«, modelled on the good old encyclopaedias. On selected topics such as architecture, fashion, Vincent van Gogh, Winnie the Pooh, Stalin, etc, he provides basic knowledge and a bit beyond that, to arouse interest. The accompanying pictures, photographs, and drawings are fairly unobtrusive and do not take centre stage as they do in many popular non-fiction titles. (12+)

192

Falkirk, Anders

Andralaget

(The second team)

Stockholm : Bonnier Carlsen, 2005. – 165 p.

ISBN 91-638-4208-4

Football – Youth

Just as someone who curiously peeps into a horse book for girls to get an idea what this incomprehensible horse-world is like, so a football ignoramus may draw some unexpected wisdom about football from this book. It's not all about the pleasures of playing – oh no. The author, himself

a football coach of teenagers, also dares to voice some criticism about ambitious local clubs that dream of success without any consideration for their young players. Two small town clubs join forces to hit it big. By nominating an elite team, they create enormous pressure, which almost scotches the joy of playing for the ones excluded. Yet, one coach instils a new sense of confidence into this »bunch of losers«. Despite the happy ending, the criticism of a commercialisation of football is very palpable in this book. (10+) □

193

Karlén, Per José (text/illus.)

Boken om känslor

(The book about feelings)

Stockholm : Rabén & Sjögren, 2004. – [30] p.

ISBN 91-29-66029-7

Emotional behaviour

This book opens with a double-page maze to show readers what it means to lose oneself in the labyrinth of feelings. Conflicting emotions, such as feeling brave but at the same time afraid, cheerful but sad, too, are represented in convincing pictures. They can comfort the child readers, who will suddenly realise that they are not alone in their emotional world, which they do not understand. The illustrations with smooth fields of colour and strong outlines, created on computer according to the current trend, avoid sentimentality, but neither do they make fun of the readers. With their powerful, distinctive colouring, they are an impressive graphic experience that goes beyond the literal meaning. (6+)

194

Landström, Lena (text)

Landström, Olof (illus.)

Fyra hönor och en tupp

(Four hens and a cock)

Stockholm : Rabén & Sjögren, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 91-29-66015-7

Cock – Suppression – Hen – Rebellion – Women's emancipation

This time, the popular picture-book-writing couple have wittily translated the topic of women's emancipation for young readers. Four hens (with »typically female« broad backsides) are bullied by their (small and sinewy) cock. While their

feeding area becomes smaller and smaller, his grows. They are not even allowed to cluck anymore. At first, far too unorganised to fight him, the hens finally pull themselves together and join a personality training course including typical methods such as fitness training, relaxation, team work, and more, which the authors mockingly transport to the chicken level. Afterwards, they take on the cock and put him in his place. Now the hens rule the farm while the cock is allowed to continue his ivory-tower projects a little way off. (8+)

195

Selander, Margareta

Det är orättvist

(This is unjust)

Stockholm : Alfabet, 2005. – 175 p.

ISBN 91-501-0571-x

Chile – Mapuche – Minority – Suppression

In the Chilean village of Curileo live some members of the Mapuche people. Their relationship with the better-off descendants of the Spanish is rife with tension. When, one day, someone sets the house of an estate manager on fire, the Mapuche Luis is unjustly accused of the crime and thrown into prison. His daughter Millaray, who is friends with Felipe, the victim's son, fights for his release from prison and even manages to expose the true culprit. Thus, it is the children – children like Millaray, Felipe, and the landowner's son who does not believe his father, or the daughter of the arsonist who beats up his children when drunk – who have to save the world because the adults are neither willing nor able to enforce justice. (9+)

□ □ Special Mention

196

Stalfelt, Pernilla (text/illus.)

Våldboken

(The violence book)

Stockholm : Eriksson & Lindgren, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 91-85199-40-0

Violence – Prevention

Creating yet another provocation after her books about poop, death, dicks, worms, and love must certainly be boring. But no! Pernilla Stalfelt has now employed her talent for visualising and ex-

plaining unpleasant or embarrassing topics in order to solve an urgent problem. She shows various types of violence, and despite the amusing drawings, the readers feel hardly inclined to laugh when they witness somebody being stabbed with a needle, or a town being reduced to rubble in a war. However, Stalfelt's sense of humour often helps readers to endure the terrible events and smile about a flattened fly or a man furious that he cannot open a glass of jam (the topic, in this case, is »necessary violence«). In addition, the illustrator also shows the opposite of violence: humans talking to and caressing each other, helping others, listening, etc. Therefore, this book about violence is actually an impressive plea for peace and understanding. (8+) ◇ □

197

Tidholm, Anna-Clara (text/illus.)

Alla får åka med

(They can all come)

Stockholm : Alfabet, 2004. – [28] p.

ISBN 91-501-0435-7

Charity – Brotherly love

In terms of artistic quality, books for toddlers are often the stepchildren of the children's literature business. In Scandinavia, however, and in Sweden in particular, a unique sensitivity for the first books in a child's life has arisen. Yet even here, books with a special message are rare. In her trademark visual language, plain but beseeching, the illustrator interprets Christian virtues such as »Agape« (brotherly love) or »Misericordia« (charity). On her little truck, a girl collects all those who are suffering, who are sad, lonely, and helpless – the dispirited Father Christmas, the boy who bumped his knee, the shivering dog, the crying teddy bear – and invites them all into her cosy home for dinner. (2+)

Croatia

198

Dedić, Arsen [et al.] (text/singing)

Junaković, Svtjetlan (illus.)

Dječje oči

(Children's eyes)

Samobor : Meridijani, 2004. – 87 p. + 1 CD

(Biblioteka hrvatski pisci i umjetnici; 22)

ISBN 953-239-012-X

Children's poetry – Song

During the past few years, the highly popular Croatian songwriter Arsen Dedić has also earned some reputation as a poet. In this volume, he presents 49 of his own poems and songs as well as 12 works written by other authors, such as the modern classic Zvonimir Balog. The cheerful, thoughtful, and witty verses, often written from a child's perspective, deal with happiness, love, animals, (animate and inanimate) nature, and seasonal customs. The author refutes common preconceptions about the world and tries to present it to his audience, young and old people alike, just as it is. The texts are accompanied by imaginative illustrations reminiscent of pictures by the famous English illustrator Ralph Steadman. (4+)

199

Đokić Pongrašić, Ana (text)

Nemet, Sven (illus.)

Pitanja princa Alma

(Prince Almo's questions)

Zagreb : Autorska Kuća, 2004. – [28] p.

(Novi snovi)

ISBN 953-7199-00-2

Prince – Question – Curiosity

Little prince Almo is a curious boy who is interested in everything around him and wants to know everything in detail. In his naive manner, typical for a child, he often asks truly intelligent questions that leave adults at a loss for words. Whereas his father, King Alonso IV, is very proud of his clever son, even if he cannot come up with any answers to the boy's questions either, Almo's mother, Queen Annabella, starts getting worried and wonders why her child is not like the other princes. Without being overtly didactical, this picture book is a plea for tolerance and openness towards other people because being unbiased may sometimes actually help prevent a catastrophe. (4+)

□ □ Special Mention

200

Horvat, Jasna (text)

Vončina, Pika (illus.)

Alemperkina kazivanja

(Gemfeather's sayings)

Zagreb : Naklada Ljevak, 2005. – 87 p.

ISBN 953-178-666-6

Slavs – Mythology

By employing the chatty bird Alemperka (Gemfeather), the companion of the highest Slavic god Svarog, as narrator, Jasna Horvat passes on ancient Croatian myths that are hardly familiar anymore except from some folk songs, sayings, proverbs, and folk customs. The allegoric-symbolic tales and legends mirror the old Slavs' view of the world's organisation. They describe the creation of the world and of the first human beings, talk about the sky and the underworld, about the world tree, kind or evil gods, fairies, ghosts, and giants. Through their combination of rhymes and rhythmic prose, the texts perfectly lend themselves to reading aloud and are clearly reminiscent of folk poetry. The appendix, which explains names and specific terms to the readers, is also very useful. The illustrations resemble bright panel paintings and thus underline the symbolic character of the tales. They help young readers grasp the content of the texts even more easily. (8+)

201

Petrlik Huseinović, Andrea (text/illus.)

Moja obitelj

(My family)

Zagreb: Kašmir Promet, 2004. – [20] p.

(Biblioteka list)

ISBN 953-6613-70-0

Child – Family

In this picture book, five-year-old Luka introduces himself and his family to the readers: his sister, who feels superior simply because she is older than him, his mother and her difficulties in cooking, his father, who immediately realises when the children try to pull his leg, his grandfather, the retired captain, his grandmother, who tells him stories, and, last but not least, the family cat. For each family member, the boy presents a

little tale and recalls some happy moments and some difficult ones that the three-generation-family shares. The illustrations rendered in bright tempera colours have a slightly naive touch to them, yet without being simplistic. They perfectly underline the story's cheerful mood. (3+)

Poland

202

Beszczynska, Zofia (text)

Pawlak, Paweł (illus.)

Z górki na pazurek

(As fast as your legs will carry you)

Poznań : Media Rodzina, 2005. – 48 p.

ISBN 83-7278-157-5

Nature – Children's poetry

Zofia Beszczynska's new book of poetry focuses mainly on nature. Through various stylistic devices such as onomatopoeia, nonsense elements, and permutations of letters, the author manages to give the same intensity to her works that readers are familiar with from traditional verses even though she employs a free rhythm. The verses, which perfectly lend themselves to reading aloud, will delight both toddlers and school children, but will also make adults see the environment in a new light. The amusing watercolour illustrations do not remain isolated but rather form an artistic unity with the graphic design and the typography of the book. (4+)

203

Fabicka, Joanna

Świńskim truchtem

(Full speed)

Warszawa : Wydawn. W.A.B., 2004. – 244 p.

ISBN 83-89291-66-5

Teenager – Fictional diary

In his hilarious diary partly written in teenage slang – not unlike the well-known »The secret diary of Adrian Mole, 13¼« by Sue Townsend – high school student Rudolf Gąbczak does not only describe and comment on his slightly chaotic life with Hip-Hop, Rap, and typical teenage problems such as school, parents, lucky and unlucky romantic experiences, and crazy job ideas. In addition, he also reflects on the society, politics, and

culture in his home country Poland at the time when it joined the European Union – an event that kicked off some radical changes inside the country. The author successfully presents an authentic, albeit satirically exaggerated, description of the daily life of a Polish teenage boy. (12+)

204

Papuzińska, Magda

Wszystko jest możliwe
(Anything is possible)

Łódź : Akapit Press, [2004]. – 88 p.

ISBN 83-88790-25-0

Boy – Disability – Growing up – Family

Thirteen-year-old Jaś completely paralysed, yet emotionally and intellectually more talented than most people around him. While his mother lovingly cares for him night and day and cannot imagine putting him in a home for disabled people, his father was not able to cope with the situation and left the family a while ago. Told from the perspective of the teenager, the book deals with the topic of a severe disability in a sensitive but not overly sentimental way without any taboos. The author offers an impressive description of Jaś's vitality and zest for life, which he draws from the fact that there are people who need him. (12+)

205

Wójcik, Mikołaj

Dziewczyna z pociągu
(The girl from the train)

Łódź : Akapit Press, [2005]. – 151 p.

ISBN 83-88790-56-0

Sensational journalism – Love

While chasing after a story about a successful Polish cross-country skier, the sensationalist journalist Jan Tym falls in love with his victim. He feels torn between his job and professional success on the one hand, and his feelings for the woman and his moral scruples on the other hand. This dilemma leads to an unexpected twist in the plot. In this gripping teenage novel, Mikołaj Wójcik tackles a variety of cultural and social problems that Poland is confronted with today, caused by the huge changes occurring in the country over the last 15 years, such as the conflict between an increasing cultural tolerance and a stubborn, conservative religious attitude. (14+)

Russia

206

Kaštanova, Alena (text)

Kaštanov, Jurij (illus.)

Russkie ženščiny

(Russian women)

Moskva : Belyj Gorod, 2004. – 47 p.

(Istorija Rossii)

ISBN 5-7793-0839-x

Russia/History – Woman

This attractive volume contains 22 short biographies of women who had an important influence on Russian history or culture. Starting with Countess Olga (Kievan Rus; early 10th century), the author introduces the ataman (Cossack leader) Alena Temnikovskaja (17th century), the actress Varvara Asenkova (19th century), the mathematician Sof'ja Kovalevskaja (1850-1891), and the great Russian poets Marina Cvetaeva (1892-1941) and Anna Achmatova (1889-1966) concluding with the cosmonaut Valentina Tereškova (b. 1939). The texts are accompanied by numerous portraits and pictures that show life during the various eras and were partly created by contemporary artists. (10+)

207

Prokof'eva, Sof'ja L. (text)

Kalinovskij, Gennadij (illus.)

Glazastik i ključ-nevidimka

(Bright Eye and the invisible key)

Moskva : Moskovskie Učebniki i

Kartolitografija, 2004. – 210 p.

ISBN 5-7853-0394-9

Fairy tale world – Laughter – Theft – Magician

In this compelling fairy tale novel written by Sof'ja Prokof'eva, a children's book author who was already popular in Soviet times, the adolescent magician Alėša, his friend Katja, and the tomcat Vas'ka travel to the fairy tale land, where the evil king has stolen his subjects' laughter and turned it into golden bells. Alėša manages to solve the mystery of the invisible key, return the joyful laughter to the sad inhabitants of this country, and rescue the brave Master of the Keys from the dungeon. Gennadij Kalinovskij's expressive illustrations, rendered in various techniques, ingeniously mirror the mood of the respective episodes. (8+)

208

Šergin, Boris (text)

Kormer, Tat'jana (illus.)

Volšebnoe kol'co : skazki

(The magic ring : folk tales)

Moskva : Samokat, 2005. – 62 p.

ISBN 5-90232-613-3

Russia – White Sea – Folk tale

This beautifully designed book contains three folk tales by the author and folk tale collector Boris Šergin (1893-1976), who grew up on the coast of the White Sea. This isolated, rough region has almost been untouched by the changeable Russian history. That is why long forgotten traditions and motives have survived there and have also been introduced into new fairy tales, which are not necessarily set in ancient times. Through their fight between Good and Evil, these tales connect the lives of farmers, hunters, and sailors from the 19th and 20th century with the traditional folk tale world. Boris Šergin has faithfully recorded the folk tales from his home region including a lot of variations in the vernacular. The cheerful illustrations follow in the footsteps of Russian folk art and the constructivism of the 1920s and 1930s. (5+)

Serbia and Montenegro

209

Maletić-Vrhovac, Gordana

Krada vinčanske figurice

(The theft of the Vinča statuette)

Beograd : Narodna Knjiga-Alfa, 2004. – 182 p.

(Biblioteka Petar Pan; 166)

ISBN 86-331-1727-4

Youth – Theft – Moral – Statue – Stone Age

Gordana Maletić's new teenage novel, which is first and foremost a detective story, deals with the theft of a clay statuette from the Linear Pottery Culture (from the Neolithic Age) dug up at a prehistoric site near the Serbian capital Belgrade. The author shows how her young protagonists slowly develop a feeling for and an understanding of moral values, how they learn to assess people, and how they find out for themselves what is allowed and what isn't. Another defining element of the plot is a love story that is woven into it and lends an additional air of authenticity to the novel. (11+)

Slovakia

210

Križková, Zuzana / Horváthová, Margaréta

Juraj Jánošík : rozprávanie o zbojníckom

kapitánovi

(Juraj Jánošík : stories about the captain of the robbers)

Bratislava : Perfekt, 2004. – 110 p.

(Nevšedné životné príbehy)

ISBN 80-8046-282-8

Jánošík, Juraj – Slovakia/1688-1713 – Folk tale

There are a lot of tall tales about the legendary outlaw Juraj Jánošík (1688-1713), who embodied the Slovakian people's dream of freedom and justice for centuries. In collaboration with the historian Margareta Horváthová, Zuzana Križková has adapted Jánošík's spectacular life-story to create a more or less fictitious adventure tale, set against the backdrop of the anti-Habsburg rebellion under Ferenc II Rákóczi (1703-1711). After the rebellion was crushed, Jánošík continued fighting for social justice until he was captured by the Austrian authorities and executed in March 1713. The thoroughly researched and well-told book is illustrated with reproductions of artworks from the 18th to the 20th century and with photographs of original sites. (12+)

□ □ Special Mention

211

Vadas, Marek (adapt.)

Rozprávky z čiernej Afriky

(Folk tales from Black Africa)

Levice : Koloman Kertész Bagala L.C.A Publ.

Group, [2004]. – 148 p.

ISBN 80-89129-43-9

Africa – Folk tale

The Slovakian author Marek Vadas travelled to Africa four times and brought back more than 50 folk tales from tribes in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Angola, the Congo, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and Ghana, which he retells in this collection. The book is divided into three parts: animal tales, tales about animals and humans, and tales about humans and ghosts. The stories differ very much from European folk tales, so that, for ex-

ample, the fight between the Good and the Bad doesn't necessarily lead to a happy end, and the worlds of anthropomorphic animals, ghosts, and humans are closely intertwined. The straightforward tales are based exclusively on the worldview of people who have close bonds with nature. The black-and-white book is beautifully designed and illustrated with authentic ornaments and drawings from various ethnic groups in Africa. (6+) ◇

212

Válek, Miroslav (text)

Mydlo, Svetozár (illus.)

Do Tramtárie

(To Thingamajig)

Bratislava : Buvik, 2004. 50 p.

ISBN 80-89028-42-X

Journey – Nonsense – Poetry

In this picture book, author and illustrator have created a direct connection between text and graphic design. Miroslav Válek's texts revolve around vehicles, riding animals, and the topic of travelling in general. On the one hand, Svetozár Mydlo captures the playful nature of Válek's nonsense-verses in his pictures; on the other hand, he often uses graphical and typographical means reminiscent of structuralistic methods to express the words' meanings by completing and re-shaping them into concrete poetry. The letter »M«, for example, is designed in such a way that readers will recognise the face of a mouse, while the letters for the word »lietadlo« (aircraft) actually form a plane. (4+)

◇ 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

Slovenia

213

Peklar, Andreja (text/illus.)

Fant z rdečo kapico

(The boy with the red hat)

Ljubljana : Inšt. za Likovno Umetnost,

2005. – [12] p.

ISBN 961-91581-0-5

Human being – Animal – Environmental protection – Fairy tale

Inspired by some images on a golden vase from the Hallstatt culture (ca. 1,200-500 B.C), the author tells an ecological tale about a stag with golden antlers who destroys the fields and gardens in a wealthy kingdom to take revenge for the human exploitation of nature. The protagonist, a boy with a red hat, manages to mediate between the human beings and the animals by convincing the people that they should live in peace with their animal neighbours. This literary fairy tale, presented as a concertina book with a series of pictures, is completed by illustrations in shades of red, yellow, and gold. (4+)

214

Reba, Matea (text)

Prelog, Marija (illus.)

Maruška

<proper name>

Kamnik : Reba, 2005. – 59 p.

ISBN 961-90793-2-9

Mouse – Girl – Everyday life

In this book for small children, the author tells the story of a little mouse girl. The single episodes, in which human children can recognise themselves, are taken from the daily life of this friendly four-legged protagonist. They talk about all the things that play an important role in children's lives, such as playing together, sharing things, about little mishaps, kissing, good luck wishes, giving and receiving presents, ideas about a future profession, and a trip to the sea. The delicate water-colour drawings depict the little mice amongst poppies, ivy, and grass. They perfectly accompany the action and faithfully reflect the stories' atmosphere. (3+)

215

Štefan, Anja (text)

Lovšin, Polona (illus.)

Bobek in barčica

(Bob and the boat)

Ljubljana : Mladinska Knjiga, 2005. – [28] p.

(Zbirka velike slikanice)

ISBN 86-11-17005-9

Child – Animal – Solidarity

When little Bob rows across the lake, he comes across a number of animals, one by one: the mouse, the frog, the rabbit, the fox, and last but not least, the bear. They all want to join him and everything goes well until the heavy bear heaves himself into the boat. The barge keels over and the animals only just manage to reach the shore. Instead of giving up, they decide to build a bigger boat so that they all can go rowing together. This simple and humorous tale is similar to a folk tale, partly because of its affinity to nature. It focuses on the child and shows how much can be achieved if you work together and rely on each other. The illustrations in earthy shades of colour perfectly render the facial expressions of the boy and create the animals with simple but effective means. (3+)

Belgium (Dutch)

216

Minne, Brigitte (text)

Olaerts, Wout (illus.)

Van kol, poes, rat, uit en raaf

(About Kol, Puss, Rat, Owl and Raven)

Wielsbeke : De Eenhoorn, 2005. – 62 p.

ISBN 90-5838-330-x

Daily life – Friendship

Kol, the witch, Puss, Rat, Owl, and Raven live in a five-storey hut in the forest. Each inhabitant has its own peculiarities: Kol is mad about porridge, Rat always wants to sit in front of the television, Puss is expecting kittens, Raven likes to tease the others, and Owl is very wise. Together, they share innumerable daily adventures, but sometimes there are also frictions and misunderstandings between them. This highly imaginative tale about four animals and a little witch describes recognisable emotions for children. The author knows how to tell a funny and engaging story for beginning readers with only one-syllable words. The modern, appealing mixed-media illustrations complete the story. (6+) ◇

217

Thé, Tjong-Khing (illus.)

Picknick met taart

(Picnic with cake)

Tielt : Lannoo, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 90-209-6171-3

Animals – Search – Picnic

Mr. and Mrs. Dog are very proud of the cakes they prepared for the animal picnic. Unfortunately, the animals meet all kinds of obstacles that have to be removed on their way to the picnic field and then a little ›accident‹ with the cakes occurs, but in the end everything seems to turn out alright. However, when they arrive at the designated picnic spot, they suddenly realise that the cakes have disappeared after all. Two mice are suspected to be the thieves. This beautiful textless picture book has a lot of different storylines to offer. The story is very well composed, leads to an unexpected climax, and can easily be followed in the illustrations. The detailed watercolour pictures give children endless reading pleasure. (4+)

□ □ Special Mention

218

Van Rijckeghem, Jean-Claude / Van Beirs, Pat

Jonkvrouw : een roman

(Lady : a novel)

Antwerpen : Facet, 2005. – 279 p.

ISBN 90-5016-446-3

Flanders/14th century – Marguerite van Male – Gender role – Love – War

Marguerite van Male is born in 1341. Her father, the Count of Flanders, who wages a war against the English that will turn into a disaster for the Flemish army, had been hoping for a son and is deeply disappointed. Marguerite behaves like a boy, is obstinate, learns the art of fencing, and possesses her own sword. Everything seems to be going well until she is married off to Edmund van Langley, a very ugly and malicious Englishman, at the very moment that Filips van Rouvres falls in love with her. This fascinating novel introduces the everyday life of a young girl at the court in Bruges. It vividly describes the religion and superstition, the aristocrats' way of life, the horrifying events during the war, and the terrible consequences of a deadly disease such as the plague. All of this, plus the admirable characterisation of the main protagonists and the evocative creation of an authentic atmosphere of the 14th century, make this book one of the best historical novels for young people of the last years. (14+)

219

Veldkamp, Tjibbe (text)

Boer, Kees de (illus.)

Kleine Aap's grote plascircus

(Little Monkey's big pee-circus)

Tielt : Lannoo, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 90-8568-101-4

Gender-specific aspects – Humour

Little Monkey has a little willie and is very talented in piddling – therefore he sets up his Little Monkey's Big Pee-circus, which is a huge success. Apelien, a little female monkey, is not allowed to compete in the circus, of course. However, after the monkey girl has demonstrated that girls actually pee, too, the astonished Little Monkey finally allows her to take part in the circus. This well-composed, humorous picture book tackles a topic

that is rarely dealt with in such an original way. The gender-specific aspects of girls and boys presented in words and illustrations will certainly inspire interesting talks with children. The hilarious and literary text is a pleasure to read aloud, while all the details in the pictures lend an extra dimension to the story. (4 +)

The Netherlands (Dutch)

220

Grobler, Piet (text/illus.)

Het vogeltjes ABC

(The birds' ABC)

Rotterdam : Lemniscaat, 2005. – [60] p.

ISBN 90-5637-675-6 / -685-3

Birds – Alphabet

In this alphabet book, every letter is introduced on a double-page spread and shown in capital and small letters. There is a lot of action in the illustrations following the pattern of action and reaction, with all kinds of birds as protagonists. A big bird pursues a little bird, but when an even bigger one appears, the big bird cries »Iiiee!!« (letter I). A worm tries to escape from the beak of a bird, but in the end he is eaten by the bird, who says »Njam njam« (for »yummy«; letter N). Most of the words used to represent the various letters are onomatopoeic. The beautiful language and the magnificent, humorous, and surprising illustrations will make this alphabet book a raving success with readers of all ages. (5+)

221

Hammerstein, Mariska (text)

Boer, Kees de (illus.)

Het grote feestenboek :

van zwempartij tot straatfeest

(The big book about celebrations :

from swimming party to street festival)

Amsterdam : Ploegsma, 2005. – 125 p.

ISBN 90-216-1848-6

The Netherlands – Celebration – Daily life – Holiday – Tradition

In this splendidly produced book with an abundance of colourful illustrations, the central focus is on celebrations from the daily lives of children in the Netherlands. In addition to (inter)nationally

well-known festivities such as New Year's, Carnival, Easter, the Feast of St. Martin, Christmas, and Saint Nicholas, a great number of more personal celebrations are also included in the book: the first day of going to school, graduation (or the final swimming lesson), the start of the summer holidays, or moving to another city. For every celebration, the inspiring book for parents, teachers, and other educators provides a short description of its origins and offers lots of delightful and unusual suggestions for all sorts of activities. (6+) ◇

222

Jong, Hanneke de

Sterke schouders

(Strong shoulders)

Houten : Van Goor, 2005. – 155 p.

ISBN 90-00-03614-3

(originally published in Frisian in 2004)

Father - Son - Mental illness

When you are sixteen, it's time to stand on your own feet. Therefore, the main protagonist of this novel, Willem, has left his home island. Nevertheless, his past is still bothering him. What happened during his childhood? Why is he so angry with his father? By and by, the boy finds out more about himself, but also about his father's illness. This story about a topical problem, written in a modern language full of emotion, provides a convincing description of a boy's coming-of-age. The fact that Willem wants to become a filmmaker is part of the clever literary structure which uses film shots as flashbacks. Willem's dreams help him uncover secrets from the past and repair the broken relationship between father and son. (14+)

223

Lieshout, Ted van (text/illus.)

Mama! Waar heb jij het geluk gelaten? :

gedichten & prenten

(Mum! Where have you put the happiness? :

poems & pictures)

Amsterdam : Leopold, [2005]. – [32] p.

ISBN 90-258-4639-4

Poetry – Emotions – Art

This special collection presents poems about all kinds of emotions very recognisable to young people: Topics touched on are the unexpected loss of a father, the relationship between a mother and

her son, nostalgia for one's former life, a teenager who stops speaking because he has lost his loved ones, or a young person who finds moments of happiness. The wonderful poems offer aspects for identification to readers of all ages. For the illustrations, Van Lieshout used various techniques (such as photography and digital imagery) that are explained in detail at the end of the book. This is not only a poetry collection about emotions, but at the same time a book about art, and therefore also useful for educational purposes. (11+)

224

Remmersma, Daan (text/illus.)

Piertje is jarig

(It's Little Worm's birthday today)

Hilversum : Klaproos, 2005. – [28] p.

(Moffel en Piertje)

ISBN 90-77119-76-0

Sadness – Friendship – Birthday

Little Worm is anxious to open his birthday presents. When his best friend, Mole, delivers his gift, Worm thinks it's a football. But what is a worm without legs supposed to do with a football? The angry little worm hurries to the next friend and is offered a flight on her back. Yet, Worm is too heavy and so they don't manage to take off. Little Worm feels extremely sad, disappears into the forest, gets lost, and eventually meets Mole again. Now, he discovers that Mole's present was the moon illuminating the forest. This well-structured literary and humorous picture book about friendship points out how important it is to listen to each other. The brightly-coloured mixed-media illustrations with interesting details add an extra dimension to the story. (4+)

225

Sollie, André

Nooit gaat dit over

(This will never end)

Amsterdam : Querido, 2005. – 92 p.

ISBN 90-451-0207-2

Homosexuality – Loneliness

This book tells the tender and sad story about two neighbouring boys who are very attracted to each other. Whereas the younger one feels completely confident about his love, the older one is unsure and enters into a relationship with a girl before he

becomes conscious of his true feelings. The difficult relationship between the boys is characterised by sadness and loneliness: Both boys' fathers are absent and while one mother more or less manages to take care of the family, the other one hardly looks after her son. In this beautifully written, quiet story for adolescents, every chapter is a compact unity and a story in its own right, in which the author renders a convincing portrayal of the protagonists, the atmosphere, the situation, and the dialogues. (14+)

□ □ Special Mention

226

Tellegen, Toon (text)

Törnqvist, Marit (illus.)

Holt, Klaas ten (music)

Pikkuhenki

<proper name>

Amsterdam : Querido, 2005. – [44] p. + 1 CD

ISBN 90-451-0214-5

Imagination – Witch – Oppression – Injustice – Resistance

This modern fairy tale for all ages points out the importance of resistance against oppression. Every time, Pikkuhenki, a minuscule little witch invisible to human beings, flies over the kingdom, she witnesses a lot of injustice but soon discovers that she has a lot of power over people or animals when she flies into their minds. One day, for example, she helps a dog and a bear by letting them know how to escape from their cruel owners. Another time, she gets into the mind of young Iwan and guides his activities to show that people are able to fight against injustice. In this beautiful picture book, text and illustrations match extremely well. Iwan's red hat is an eye-catching element in the greyish paintings, the barking dogs and dancing people seem hypnotised in an absurd way in some pictures, whereas other illustrations reveal the fear and submissiveness of the people. (8+)

227

Westera, Bette (text)

Haeringen, Annemarie van (illus.)

Scholten van Aschat, Gijs (narration)

De vuurvogel

(The Firebird)

Haarlem : Gottmer, 2005. – [32] p. + 1 CD

(Universal kindercollectie klassiek)

ISBN 90-257-3988-1

Stravinsky, Igor /The Firebird

This volume, part of a series of well-written, beautiful little picture books that introduce the highlights of classical music to young children, presents Igor Stravinsky's story about Prince Ivan who quarrels with the giant Kashchei. In an easy-to-read, but very engaging text, the author easily captures the plot and atmosphere of the complicated original story. The detailed illustrations perfectly match the text and add an extra dimension to the story. On the enclosed CD, the story is clearly and vividly read aloud, accompanied by a recording of the music from 1974 conducted by Bernard Haitink. This picture book proves that classical music can be introduced to children in a modern and interesting way. (6+) □

228

Zwigman, Floortje

Schijnbewegingen

(Diversions)

Baarn : De Fontein, 2005. – 509 p.

ISBN 90-261-3103-8

London/19th Century – Victorian Age – Prostitution – Homosexuality

This historical teenage novel, situated in Victorian London at the end of the 19th century, tells the story of 16-year-old Adrian Mayfield who, at the young age of 14 already runs his parents' pub. After they have to shut down, he is forced to accept a boring job as a tailor's assistant. In this shop, he meets Augustus Trops, who introduces him to the world of artists, and, soon, Adrian becomes an artist's model. Under a different name, he also works as a male prostitute and becomes involved in burglary and blackmail. This vivacious story focuses on Adrian's inner conflicts without disguising his opportunism. Explicit sexual scenes are functional to the story. Apart from the fictitious protagonists, the novel also features many historical characters, such as Oscar Wilde. (14+)

The Netherlands (Frisian)

229

Jong, Hanneke de (text)

Wynstra, Babs (illus.)

De betoverhoed

(The magic hat)

Easterein : Koperative Utjouwerij, 2005. – 70 p.

(Aksjeboek foar bern; 19)

ISBN 90-6570-365-9

Hotel – Witch

Mira and her parents move to a Spanish island where they want to run a hotel. When they arrive, however, it seems that the hotel is somehow bewitched: Whenever Mira's family mentions the name of the hotel, all the islanders react strangely or seem to be terribly afraid. The girl sets out to find out the reason for this. Step by step, thanks to her curiosity and persistence and with the help of an old hat that she finds in the hotel, she unravels the mystery of the house. The well-composed story with its short sentences reads smoothly, while the suspense increases with every chapter. The grey pencil- and watercolour illustrations marvellously delineate the characters of the story and fit in well with the atmosphere of the text. (7+)

Greece

(Romanization according to German norms)

230

Alexopulu-Petrak', Phrantzeska (text)

Tzampura, Maria (illus.)

Philoi? PhÇs phanari

(Friends? All too obvious!)

Ath'na : Papadopoulos, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 960-412-394-7

Otherness – Friendship – Disability

It is such a drag when you have to get up early in the morning and take the school bus, isn't it? That's exactly how Ismini feels. How glad she is, when one morning a boy waves at her from behind the window of another school bus! The days pass by and the exchange of messages between the busses becomes a daily habit. However, when the two children finally meet, reality has a grim surprise in store for them: one of them is deaf-

mute. Still, a warm hug makes the children move on from where they first started. They are and always will be best friends! This book praises the sense of otherness as well as the way in which kids overcome problems that seem insurmountable at first. Maria Tzampura's lively illustrations successfully point out this message. (5+)

231

Babur', Nina (text)

Babur', Eliza (illus.)

To karo panteloni

(The chequered trousers)

Ath'na : Papadopoulos, 2005. – [28] p.

ISBN 960-412-423-4

Teenager – Fashion – Consumerism

When Eleni spots a pair of chequered trousers in a shop window, she immediately falls in love with them. She rushes into the shop to buy them and from that moment onwards hardly ever takes them off. After a while, however, the novelty fades and the poor trousers are left in the wardrobe collecting dust. One day, her mother decides to give them to a charity project that collects clothes to support people in developing countries. The chequered trousers are in a dither: Of course, they long to be in use again, but who is going to wear them? Will they be loved? Where are they going to end up? In this entertaining and affectionate little story, the author hides some criticism about consumer societies and encourages solidarity with less privileged people and countries. (5+)

232

Chortiat', Thet's (text)

Barlamos Chr'stos (illus.)

To periboli t's agap's

(The garden of love)

Ath'na : Ankyra, 2005. – [36] p.

ISBN 960-422-179-5

Love – Creation – Circle of life – Peace

Once upon a time, a poor girl and her sick father lived in a small house. One day, a young man walks by and offers her a rose. Although she is so busy that she can't even smile at him, the girl puts the rose in her bodice and later plants it in her garden where everyone admires the beautiful flowers that suddenly grow. Thrice, the young boy turns up leaving a rose for the girl. The

months pass and the garden fills with all kinds of flowers. Years later, she hears that a young boy in a faraway country has managed to enthrone Peace as the queen of his country. Thereafter, people live peacefully, still talking about the magnificent rose garden. This touching story, which borrows elements from traditional fairy tales, emphasises the power of love. (5+)

233

Lyratz', Maria

H' chamen' pol'

(The lost city)

Ath'na : Kedros, 2005. – 233 p.

(Mythistor'ma)

ISBN 960-04-2858-1

Adventure – History – Ancient Greece

The story of »The Lost City« is set in Corfu in two different eras: the modern times and the ancient past. The protagonists of the modern era are a group of children, who come across a big box full of ancient artefacts. The heroine of the ancient era is a girl who is very different from the women of her time. The hidden treasures of the big box as well as the love affairs in the story draw readers into an adventure full of action and unexpected events in which the children meet an ancient civilization and find the lost city that the island's archeologist had been looking for for years. In addition to the gripping story, this novel also includes valuable information about Ancient Greek people's lives in the 5th century B.C. (10+)

234

Mastor', Bula (text)

Papatsaruchas, Basil's (illus.)

DÇrilenia : mia istoria san paramythi

(Dorilenia <proper name>)

Ath'na : Patak's, 2005. – 74 p.

(Mikra spurghitakia; 46)

ISBN 960-16-1463-X

Love of books – Reading – Friendship – School

When Dorilenia grows up and starts school, her whole family is afraid that she suffers from severe learning difficulties and will encounter a lot of problems. They all worry about her progress until she discovers the magic world of books and her tongue suddenly loosens once and for all! She learns about people's different »tongues« and

stops worrying about forgetting things concerning the »other« languages. With a lot of humour, frankness, and an action-filled story, the book helps reduce children's fear of school and of failing in general. It makes young readers think and inspires their imagination. (6+)

235

MpulÇtes, Chr'stos (text)

Stephanid', Photein' (illus.)

O gaidarakos pu h'pie to phengari

(The little donkey that drank the moon)

Ath'na : Hestias, 2005. – 42 + 5 p.

ISBN 960-05-1217-5

Fantasy – Conflict – Resistance

In a moonless country where the moon exists only in old tales, a girl called Luna manages to bring the moon back to the night sky and make everybody happy. However, the country's cruel and bossy king gives the order that nobody is allowed to look at the sky anymore. He wants the moon to himself and therefore everybody else is to walk with their eyes cast down. If someone dares to break this law, they will be punished with death! Yet, things change when, one night, Luna's little donkey swallows the reflection of the moon while drinking water from the river. At once, the real moon disappears from the sky. Little donkey is in trouble. Who does the moon belong to? In a very humorous and poetic way, this surrealistic story makes fun of tyrannical behaviour. (6+)

236

Skordala-Kakatsak', Eudokia (text)

Babur', Eliza (illus.)

Na s' agapun kai n' agapas

(To love and to be loved)

Ath'na : Ankyra, 2005. – 44 p.

ISBN 960-422-315-1

Love – Lifecycle – Silkworm

Liki is a little worm who admires the way that Lefki, his beloved butterfly, flies. After many adventures, Liki's heart fills with love and happiness while his joyful tears turn into a white thread that wraps him in a cocoon. When he hatches from the cocoon, Liki has also become a butterfly. Together with Lefki, he flies around and all the tree branches fill with their little children also wrapped in cocoons made from that white, fine,

and silky thread until they become butterflies! This tender fairy-tale-like story describes the life-cycle of a silkworm. It is accompanied by full-page water-colour illustrations, which allow readers to take a look at a cheerful world of animals and plants. (6+)

237

Tsilimen', Tasula D. (text)

Barbarus', L'da (illus.)

Tzilinta kai Iban

(Gilda and Ivan)

Ath'na : Patak's, 2005. – 109 p.

(Chelidonia; 124)

ISBN 960-16-1528-8

Love for animals – Friendship

An eleven-year-old boy stumbles across two little puppies that someone has abandoned in the forest. He takes them home, but as the family is about to set off on a camping trip on which »dogs are not allowed«, the two foundlings are again left to fend for themselves. Luckily enough, they somehow manage to survive all the tragicomic and dangerous adventures that befall them during the summer months. The cute little dogs evoke a lot of tenderness in people, help some children renew their friendship, cause two young people to fall in love, and also help the boy's father to win the elections. This humorous, sensitive, and energetic story holds the young readers' attention until the very end. (7+)

238

Tsitás, Mak's (text)

Berutsu Katerina (illus.)

De mu aresei to gala

(I don't like milk)

Ath'na : Psychogios, 2005. – [48] p.

(Phraulitsa; 11)

ISBN 960-274-880-X

Milk – Dentist – Nutrition

Vassilis hates milk. Despite this, every single morning, his mum hands him a big glass of milk and insists that he drinks it. Sometimes he doesn't have a choice but close his eyes, hold his breath, and gulp down the hateful drink. There are other times, however, when he manages to pour it into the cat's bowl or down the kitchen sink while his mother is busy doing something else – but she

always seems to find out and scolds him afterwards. The boy becomes obsessed with milk, it even haunts his sleep. Until the day he visits the dentist. This story introduces children in an entertaining way to the issue of nutrition and makes them realise how important a healthy diet is. (4+)

Hungary

239

Békés, Pál (text)

Sajdik, Ferenc (illus.)

A bölcs hiánypótló

(The wise defect-remover)

Budapest : Móra, 2005. – 112 p.

(Az én könyvtárom)

ISBN 963-11-8007-7

Otherness – Individuality

The crazy clock, who doesn't have a sense of time, the hairless hair-monster, and the hole, being »Nothing« personified, decide to have their »abnormalities« remedied and set off on a long, exhausting, and adventurous trip to the »Wise Defect-Remover«. In the end, however, thanks to their very abnormalities, the three friends manage to save the sage's life. The funny philosophical confrontation with the modern society's obsession with beauty and perfection ends in the wise man's liberating »Solomonic decision« not to remove their defects. Realistic, sketchy black-and-white drawings complement this action-filled fantasy story. (8+)

240

Tamkó Sirató, Károly (text)

Banga, Ferenc (illus.)

Tengerecki hazaszáll

(Tengercki returns home)

Budapest : General Press K., 2005. – 38 p.

ISBN 963-9598-50-X

Children's poetry – Pun – Wordplay

To celebrate the 100th birthday of Hungarian avant-garde poet Tamkó Sirató Károly, General Press is publishing a three-volume edition of his works. Volume One contains his most popular children's verses, and Volume Three is going to come out in the course of this year. The second volume, reviewed here, presents 25 poems about

Other Languages

topics that span the world: From the penguins' dance to the shop in the Congo and the life of an Inuit, the author makes his readers experience a world, which will delight them with unexpected turns of events, a humorous language, and witty wordplay. Like the verses' puns, the rather unusual illustrations by Banga Ferenc play with colours and short pencil strokes. Their surprising simplicity perfectly underlines the message of the text. (5+)

Mongolia

241

Dašdondog, Žambyn (text)

Hüderculuun, N. (illus.)

Janzyn žaal = Boy who sees things in a different way

Ulaanbaatar: Öngöt hūvhl, 2005. – 31 p.

(Alham alhmaar)

ISBN 99929-10-48-8

Mongolian and English text

Kindergarten – Boy – Critical thinking – Tolerance

In this bilingual book by the well-known Mongolian author Žambyn Dašdondog, a new boy arrives at kindergarten. He doesn't simply answer questions or complete tasks, but rather wonders what may be behind a question or what the meaning of a task may be. In the beginning, the other children laugh at him, but eventually, they all realise that the new boy cannot be called strange simply because he behaves differently. Such a book is particularly valuable for Mongolia, a country which is on its way to democracy. The youngest inhabitants are the ones who most urgently need to learn about tolerance and understanding for people who are different and think differently. (4+)

Rwanda (Kinyarwanda)

242

Kilaka, John (text/illus.)

Gyr-Ukunda, Anyesi (transl.)

Ubucuti bw'imbeba n'inzovu

(The friendship between mouse and elephant)

Kigali : Ed. Bakame, 2004. – [28] p.

no ISBN

(German edition: Gute Freunde [Good friends].

Zürich : Atlantis [Baobab], 2004)

Rat – Friendship – Elephant – Trust –

Disappointment – Deceit – Forgiveness

Ratsi, the mouse, is the only animal who knows how to light a fire. While he is busy collecting supplies, his best friend Elephant enjoys doing nothing. When the idle pachyderm offers his solidly built house as a storage room for the food, Ratsi gladly accepts. Yet then, as a severe draught causes food shortage, Elephant doesn't hand over the stored supplies and so, utterly disappointed, the mouse leaves. Will he be plotting his revenge? Elephant feels guilty and decides to look for his friend. This book, full of luminous, colourful illustrations by the Tanzanian illustrator John Kilaka, tells a common (human) story about friendship, betrayal, and reconciliation. Still, by portraying the houses, clothes, animals, and games in detail, it also offers a glimpse of the daily life in Africa. (4+) (Bologna Ragazzi Award – New Horizons; 2005)

Egypt (Arabic)

243

Š~kir, 'h~b (text/illus.)

Ḥikayat al-Malak BŠr

(King BŠr's story)

al-Q~hira : Nahdat Mišir, 2004. – 24 p.

ISBN 977-14-2911-6

King – Child – Arbitrariness – Responsibility

A ten-year-old prince is suddenly made king and has to rule his country. Unable to cope with his new role, the boy abuses his power by creating new orders and laws as he pleases. Thus, for example, he decrees that all houses be painted orange, that people be only allowed to wear clothes of a certain colour, and that donkeys be made to

wear pointed hats. Only when a little girl utters the wish that the young king may grow up immediately and act accordingly – and this wish comes true – does the situation of the king's frightened subjects change for the better. This story, accompanied by colour illustrations in an Oriental style, discusses the wise and responsible way of using one's power and the value of individual freedom and a person's rights in an original and easily understandable way. (7+)

244

Š~rānŠ, Ya'qāb aš- (text)

MisrŠ, H~nŠ al- (illus.)

Ahl~m Hasan

(Hassan's dream)

al- Q~hira : D~r Ily~s al-AsrŠya Lit~Tib~'a wa-n' Našr, 2004. – [48] p.

(Ma—mā'at Šahrz~d)

ISBN 977-304-096-8

Human being – Metamorphosis – Curse – Love

In countless fairy tales all over the world, human beings are turned into animals. This well-known motif of metamorphosis is often part of a love story, as indeed it is in this narrative, which is inspired by an ancient tale from the Arabic culture. Searching for a device for turning copper into gold, a young man arrives at a remote village cursed by a magic spell. There, he falls in love with a woman with wings and feathers. After he has freed her from the curse, further complications arise, until eventually he decides in favour of his wife and love instead of gold or wealth. The atmospheric illustrations consist of a mixture of water colour and pencil drawings finished on computer. They are reminiscent of illustrations from ancient Arabian folk tale collections. (9+)

✧ 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

Iran (Persian)

245

Fāl~dwand, Mar—~n (text)

NŠk~npār, Akbar (illus.)

M~h-i mihrab~n

(The friendly moon)

Tihr~n : K~nān-i Parwariš-i FikrŠ-i Kādak~n wa

Naugaw~n~n, 2004 (= 1383 h.š.). – 22 p.

ISBN 964-432-485-4

Night – Moon – Child – Friendship

In former times, people in the Middle East used to sleep on the flat roofs of their houses because of the stifling heat inside. They would enjoy the refreshing breeze and watch the moon and the stars far up in the night sky. This picture book recalls this tradition. Despite their differences, the moon, who feels lonely and forgotten without the people watching him at night, and a boy, who looks out of his bedroom window up into the sky, become very close friends and this friendship makes them both happy. The imaginative illustrations painted primarily in shades of blue perfectly mirror the dream-like night atmosphere of this simple tale. (5+)

246

H~nŠy~n, –amšŠd (text)

Muht—, 'AlŠAšYar (illus.)

Qalb-i zŠb~i B~bār

(Babur's courage)

Tihr~n : K~nān-i Parwariš-i FikrŠ-i Kādak~n wa

Nau—aw~n~n, 2004 (= 1382 h.š.). – 79 p.

ISBN 964-391-006-7

City – Countryside – Reality – Fiction – Love

A boy from Teheran travels to a little village in Southern Iran. There, far from the big cities, he hears a tale about a poor young man who is married to the daughter of a rich merchant. When his beloved wife asks him to search for a rare pearl, he dives into the sea and drowns. Years later, their son Babur eventually retrieves the pearl from the bottom of the sea but pays a high price: he loses his voice forever. As the boy from Teheran is writing down this tale, he compares the Persian storytelling traditions with the international children's classics, with which he is also familiar, such as Alice, Oliver Twist, or Pinocchio. Thus, he cleverly links the contrasting elements in this book – reality and fiction as well as Orient and Occident. (10+)

247

Maulawš, --I-ad-Dšn (text)

Gul Muhammadš, Fšrāza (illus.)

Fšl dar h~na-i t~ršk

(The elephant in the dark house)

Tihr~n : Našr-i Ufuq, 2004 (= 1383 h.š.). – [40] p.

ISBN 964-369-075-x

Darkness – Sensory perception – Ignorance

The elephant in the dark house is an ancient Oriental tale, which readers worldwide are familiar with through various versions. This retelling by the poet Maulawi, who lived 800 years ago and is one of the classic authors of Persian literature, is followed by three other, even older versions. It's a story about ignorance, blindness, and narrow-mindedness. Through different doors, several people enter a dark room with an elephant inside. Since each of them can only touch a small part of the huge animal, they pour forth the most daring speculations about what it is they are faced with. Large double-spread pictures of delicate lines and warm, glowing colours, aptly illustrate the subtle, philosophical tone of the story. (8+)

248

Mur~dš Kirm~nš, Hāšang

Šum~ ka Yāršbanšstšd

(You're not strangers)

Tihr~n : Našr-i Mu'šn, 2005 (= 1384 h.š.). – 319 p.

ISBN 964-7603-47-9

Childhood memories – Mur~dš Kirm~nš, Hāšang – Writer

Although Hooscho leads a protected life at his grandparents' home in the countryside, he dreams of living in the city. When he is thirteen, his grandparents die and he moves to the nearby town of Kerman, yet – contrary to what he expected – he ends up in an orphanage. His passion for reading and writing makes him a success at school, but after his final exams, he feels that Kerman is also too small for him. Finally, in Teheran, his dream of becoming a writer comes true. Husang Muradi (b. 1944) is one of the most renowned contemporary Iranian children's book writers. In this book, the award-winning author – who is famous for his sharp eye for teenagers' social problems – tells the story of his own life. The first-person narration will impress readers with its beautiful language and its realistic descriptions. (12+)

249

Yāsuš, Muhammad Rid~ (text)

N~mwar, 'Alš (illus.)

Afs~na-i Afs~na

(Afsahne's fairy tale)

Tihr~n : Šab~wšZ, 2004 (= 1383 h.š.). – 84 p.

ISBN 964-505-043-x

Child – Book – Fairy tale – Storytelling – Reading

Inspired by a key that was left to her by her late uncle, Afsahne remembers the tales he used to tell her. One day at a family party, when she is sitting alone in her grandfather's library, the girl sinks into a deep sleep. The room turns into a castle built entirely from books and all the fairy tale characters familiar to her step out of the building asking her to join them in their search for an old storyteller. Very cleverly, the author weaves elements of old Oriental tales into the narrative about Afsahne. The book is an imaginative plea to arouse children's interest in reading and storytelling. The brown line drawings present ancient fairy tale motifs in a lively contemporary form. (10+)

Turkey

250

Say2n, Betül (text/illus.)

5 Çocuk 5 İstanbul

(Five children, five times İstanbul)

İstanbul : Gün2ş2Y2 Kitapl2Y2, 2005. – 31 p.

ISBN 975-6227-08-7

İstanbul/History

In a very original way, this book addresses the long and changeable history of İstanbul by following the lives of five children living in the city at different times of history. Starting with the present time, the story goes back further and further, first to the Ottoman Empire, then to the times when İstanbul was called Constantinople, then Byzantium, finishing off with the first settlement at that place during the Stone Age. The five episodes are connected through ordinary objects, such as a mirror that a boy discovers on a market, which formerly belonged to a girl, who, in turn, finds an ancient coin, and so on ... Thanks to these tales, the past comes alive for the readers. Numerous colour illustration allow further glimpses into this important city's fascinating history. (6+) ◇

Name Index

Abdel-Fattah, Randa 12
 Adams, Steve 52
 Agualusa, José Eduardo 42
 Albertazzi, Ferdinando 39
 Alemagna, Beatrice 38
 Alexopulu-Petrak',
 Phrantzeska 68
 Ali, Ahmed Hassan 57
 Arguilé Elisa 44
 Attard, Enebor 16
 Austrem, Liv Marie 56

Baas, Thomas 39
 Babur', Eliza 68, 69
 Babur', Nina 68
 Baillie, Allan 13
 Baines, Nigel 17
 Balcells, Jacqueline 49
 Baltscheit, Martin 24, 25
 Bancroft, Bronwyn 14
 Banga, Ferenc 70
 Barbarus', L'da 70
 Barbour, Karen 21
 Bárður Oskarsson 54
 Barlamos Chr'stos 68
 Barrett, Angela 22
 Barroux 34
 Baussier, Sylvie 34
 Békés, Pál 70
 Berner, Rotraut Susanne 25
 Bernet Rollande, Julie 33
 Berutsu Katerina 70
 Beszczyńska, Zofia 60
 Bigot, Robert 34
 Binder, Hannes 26, 30, 32
 Birdsall, Jeanne 20
 Birmajer, Marcelo 50
 Blau, Aljoscha 25, 27
 Bochecho, Eloi Elisabete 48
 Boer, Kees de 65
 Bofinger, Manfred 31
 Bombara, Paula 47
 Bondestam, Linda 55
 Bondoux, Anne-Laure 35
 Bosi, Marco 41
 Bouchard, Camille 51
 Bougaeva, Sonja 31
 Brami, Elisabeth 35
 Bräthen, Ciri Tutkovin 57
 Bravo, Constanza 47
 Brenifier, Oscar 35
 Brinkemo, Per 57
 Brouillard, Anne 36
 Bueno, Daniel 48
 Bulatov, Michail A. 6

Capek, Jara 26
 Cardemil, Carmen 49
 Carlson, Lori Marie 20
 Carranza, Maite 45
 Casalderrey, Fina 46
 Cauwet, Nouchka 35
 Cavallaro, Francesca 41
 Cayatte, Henrique 42
 Ch²oe Suk-hŏi 10
 Chabin, Laurent 52
 Chortiat', Thet's 68
 Chotjewitz, David 25
 Clante, Charlotte 54
 Colombo, Tullia 39
 Cornelsen, Claudia 27

Dammann, Rüdiger 25
 Dašdondog, Žambyn 71
 Davidson, Ellen Dee 18
 Dedić, Arsen 59
 Dekune, Iku 6, 9
 Dell'Oro, Erminia 40
 Desplechin, Marie 36
 Devaux, Clément 34
 Dewanckel, Goele 36
 Đokić Pongračić, Ana 59
 Doray, Malika 36
 Drewery, Melanie 15
 Duffet, Sophie 38
 Dunn, Annabel 12
 Duzakin, Akin 56

Ekman, Fam 56
 Ensikat, Klaus 25
 Erba, Edoardo 40
 Espinoza, Gerald 51
 Everdahl, Göran 57

Fabicka, Joanna 60
 Fāl~dwand, Mar~n 72
 Falkirk, Anders 57
 Fallada, Hans 26
 Fatus, Sophie 39
 Ferrari, Andrea 43
 Franco, Mercedes 51
 Fukuda, Iwao 9
 Funke, Cornelia 26
 Furnari, Eva 48

Gabriel o Pensador 48
 Galea, Claudine 36
 Gandolfi, Silvana 40
 García, Luis 50
 Glasauer, Willi 26
 Gleich, Jacky 26

Glover, Sandra 16
 Godwin, Jane 13
 Goedelt, Marion 23
 Goodman Koz, Paula 21
 Gracián, Ánxela 46
 Gravett, Emily 16
 Grenier, Christian 34
 Grobler, Piet 65
 Grønlund, Peter 53
 Groszer, Franziska 26
 Grzimek, Martin 26
 Gul Muhammad\$, FŞrāza 73
 Gunnhildur Hrólfssdóttir 56
 Gusti 50
 Gyldenkærne, Nanna 53
 Gyr-Ukunda, Anyesi 71

Haeringen, Annemarie van 67
 Hamada, Hirotsuke 6
 Hammerstein, Mariska 65
 Han, Py4ng-ho 10
 H~nŞy~n, ~amŞd 72
 Harjes, Stefanie 32
 Hartmann, Nils 53
 Hauptmann, Tatjana 32
 Heffernan, John 13
 Hijuelos, Oscar 20
 Hinrichsen, Natalie 12
 Hirayama, EizÇ 6
 Hirayama, Kazuko 6
 Hobbs, Valerie 21
 Hoffman, Alice 21
 Hole, Stian 56
 Holland, Richard 16
 Holt, Klaas ten 67
 Horvat, Jasna 60
 Horváthová, Margaréta 62
 Hüdrculuun, N. 71
 Huovi, Hannele 55
 Hurst, Elise 13

Iino, Kazuyoshi 6
 Imoto, YÇko 6
 Inoue, YÇsuke 8

Jago 17
 Janisch, Heinz 23, 27
 Jocelyn, Marthe 19
 Jong, Hanneke de 66, 68
 Joshi, Dileep 15
 Junaković, Svjetlan 59

K., Ulf 24
 Kaštanov, Jurij 61
 Kaštanova, Alena 62

Name Index

- Kalinovskij, Gennadij 61
 Kamath, Manjunath 14
 Kampmann, Stefani 27
 Karlén, Per José 58
 Karrebæk, Dorte 53
 Kehlenbeck, Angela 24
 Kelleher, Victor 13
 Kilaka, John 71
 Kim, Hwan-y4ng 10
 Kim, Hyang-kßm 10
 Kim, Tong-s4ng 11
 Kirchmayr, Jakob 24
 Kisaka, RyÇ 7
 Kivelä, Malin 55
 Knigge, Alexander von 27
 Knox, Elizabeth 14
 Kobayashi, Emiko 7
 Kormer, Tat'jana 62
 Kostick, Conor 18
 Krapp, Thilo 28
 Krause, Ute 28
 Križková, Zuzana 62
 Kuhl, Anke 30
 Kusumi, Takuya 9
 Kyi, Tanya Lloyd 19
- Landström, Lena 58
 Landström, Olof 58
 Lara, Enrique 50
 Lembcke, Marjaleena 27
 Lenain, Thierry 36
 Lester, Julius 21
 Lestrade, Agnès de 47
 Levi, Lia 41
 Lienas, Gemma 45
 Lieshout, Ted van 66
 Lindman, Mervi 55
 Liván, Paco 44
 Louhi, Kristiina 55
 Lovšin, Polona 63
 Luciani, Rebeca 45, 46
 Luján, Jorge 37
 Lyratz', Maria 69
- Maar, Anne 32
 Maar, Paul 28
 Magerl, Caroline 13
 Mahurin, Matt 21
 Malcolm, Sabrina 15
 Maletić-Vrhovac, Gordana 62
 Marian, Mihail 43
 Marinho, Jorge Miguel 48
 Masetto, Antonio dal 47
 Mashima, Setsuko 7
 Mastor', Bula 69
- Matsumoto, Takeshi 7
 MaulawŞ, --l-ad-DŞn 73
 Mazini, Habib 33
 Meixide, Andrés 46
 Melasniemi, Joel 55
 Merz, Klaus 32
 Meschenmoser, Sebastian 28
 Millard, Glenda 14
 Mingau, Muriel 37
 Minne, Brigitte 64
 MişrŞ, H-nŞ al- 72
 Misra, Awadesh 16
 Miyamoto, Tadao 9
 Molla, Jean 37
 Möltgen, Ulrike 32
 Moraes, Odilon 49
 Mothes, Ulla 28
 Moüy, Iris de 35
 MpulÇtes, Chr'stos 69
 Muht~--, 'AlŞ AsYar 72
 Müller, Jörg 30
 Mur~dŞ Kirm~nŞ, Håşang 73
 Mydlo, Svetožár 63
- N~mwar, 'AlŞ 73
 Nascimbene, Yan 35
 Nava, Emanuela 41
 Nemet, Sven 59
 Nesquens Daniel 44
 Nessmann, Philippe 37
 Nevanlinna, Tuomas 55
 Newman, Marlene 17
 NŞk~npår, Akbar 72
 Norac, Carl 37
- Ogiwara, Noriko 7
 Olaerts, Wout 64
 Oli 46
 Olmos, Roger 44
 Olsen, Sylvia 19
 Olswanger, Anna 21
 Orciari, Emanuela 41
 Orecchia, Giulia 40
 Osorio, María 50
 Østgaard, Anne 57
- Pak, Hy4n-j4ng 10
 Panebarco, Daniele 40
 Papatsaruchas, Basil's 69
 Papineau, Lucie 52
 Papužińska, Magda 61
 Pawlak, Paweł 60
 Paz Castillo, María Fernanda 50
 Peklar, Andreja 63
 Pelz, Monika 23
- Pérez Escrivá, Victoria 44
 Perret, Delphine 38
 Perrone, Roberto 41
 Persch, Ulrike 28
 Pestum, Jo 29
 Petrlik Huseinović, Andrea 60
 Picouly, Daniel 38
 Pilon, Pascal 38
 Pin, Isabel 29
 Pinel, Hervé 39
 Plenzdorf, Ulrich 25
 Poole, Josephine 22
 Porter, Annaliese 14
 Porter, Pamela 19
 Pouget, Anne 33
 Prah, André 57
 Pratt, Pierre 52
 Prelog, Marija 63
 Prinz, Alois 29
 Prokof'eva, Sof'ja L. 61
- Queirós, Bartolomeu Campos 49
 Quesada, María Fe 46
- Ranheimsæter, Jon 53
 Ranucci, Claudia 44
 Reba, Matea 63
 Reimers, Silke 30
 Remmerts de Vries, Daan 66
 Reznikov, Patricia 35
 Rieckhoff, Jürgen 29
 Rieckhoff, Sibylle 29
 Ringelnatz, Joachim 32
 Rodari, Gianni 38
 Rosell, Joel Franz 44
 Rosenboom, Hilke 30
- Sadat, Mandana 37
 Sajdik, Ferenc 70
 Ş~kir, 'h~b 71
 Salvador, Carmen 51
 Salvi, Manuela 41
 ŞanetÇ, Akira 8
 Ş~rânŞ, Ya'qāb aŞ- 72
 Say2n, Betül 73
 Scarabottolo, Guido 42
 Schär, Brigitte 30
 Schlosser, Dan 53
 Schneider, Antonie 32
 Schneider, Christine 39
 Schneider, Karla 24
 Scholten van Aschat, Gijs 67
 Scieszka, Jon 22
 Segovia, Carmen 37
 Selander, Margareta 58

Name Index

- Seo, Maiko 8
Seomeng, Judah 12
Šergin, Boris 62
Sheehan, Peter 13
Shinozaki, Mitsuo 8
Shoemaker, Kathryn E. 20
Siegfried, Anita 30
Sigmund, Pia 54
Singh, Vandana 14
Skordala-Kakatsak', Eudokia 69
Slaughter, Tom 19
Slavici, Ioan 43
Slonim, David 22
Smith, Lane 22
Sollie, André 66
Soulières, Robert 52
Stalfelt, Pernilla 58
Štefan, Anja 63
Stephanid', Photein' 69
Sternburg, Wilhelm von 30
Stower, Adam 17
Strandbygaard, Birgit 54

Takadono, HÇko 9
Takahashi, Hideo 9
Tallec, Olivier 38
Tamkó Sirató, Károly 70
Tarnavski, Geta Doina 43
Tellegen, Toon 67
Tessaro, Gek 42
Thaxton, Giles 17
Thé, Tjong-Khing 64
Thomas, Élisabeth 38
Tidholm, Anna-Clara 59
Tillard, Patrick 34
Tille, Peter 31
Tischewski, Susanne 31
Tischewski, Ulf 31
Todd, Penelope 15
Tokuda, Yukihisa 9
Tondern, Harald 31
Törnqvist, Marit 67
Torrão, Marta 43, 44
Tortajada, Anna 46
Trigo, Ramón 46
Tsilimen', Tasula D. 70
Tsitás, Mak's 70
Tzampura, Maria 68

Usui, Kanako 17

Vadas, Marek 62
Válek, Miroslav 63
Van Beirs, Pat 65
Van Rijckeghem, Jean-Claude 65

Vantal, Anne 39
Vassallo Márcio 49
Veldkamp, Tjibbe 65
Ventura, Antonio 44
Vicente, Marta 45
Vinke, Hermann 33
Viswanath, Shobha 15
Vončina, Pika 60

Waechter, Friedrich Karl 33
Walton, Ann 12
Watts, Irene N. 20
Weatherill, Cat 18
Weninger, Brigitte 24
Westera, Bette 67
Whyman, Matt 18
Wi Ki-ch²4l kßl 10
Wójcik, Mikołaj 61
Wu, Jianhua 7
Wynstra, Babs 68

Yamamura, KÇji 7
Yi, Su-ji 11
Yi, Tae-jun 11
Yi, Y4ng-gy4ng 11
Yoshida, Michiko 9
Young, Ed 23
Yun, S4k-jung 11
YäsufŞ, Muḡammad Rid~ 73

Zak, Drahos 13
Zannoner, Paola 42
Zauleck, Franz 24
Zoboli, Giovanna 42
Zwigtman, Floortje 67

Subject Index

- Adoption 45, 46
Age difference 32
Algeria/1627 56
Alphabet 35, 52, 65
Amazon culture 21
Ambition 44, 53
American Civil War 35
Amsterdam 22
Ancient Greece 69
Animal / Human being 36
Anorexia 57
Anti-Semitism 33
Arbitrariness 70
Archer 7
Argentina/1975-1985 47
Aristocracy 23
Art 22, 66
Aunt 25
Autumn 6

Baba Yaga 6
Beach 13
Bear 6
Beijing 38
Birch 23
Birds 6, 12, 65
Birthday 66
Blue Jeans 19
Boarding school 27
Body parts 55
Bolivia 45
Book 16, 72
Book of Esther 20
Bosnian War 34
Brazil/1940's 49
Bride 10
Brother 6, 18
Brotherly love 59
Bullying 15
Burglary 21, 40

Camouflage 43
Canada/1960's 19
Cancer 21
Carelessness 17, 38
Cat 26, 31
Cave 16
Chain of events 17
Chaos 17, 48
Charity 59
Child Jesus 30
Childhood love 8
Childhood memories 27, 49, 73
Children's poetry 7, 59, 60, 70
Chile/1674 49

Subject Index

China 23, 38
Chocolate 52
Christmas 25, 26, 30
Circle of life 68
Circus 45
City 38, 73
Civilisation 50
Clandestine immigrant 40
Cleverness 28, 43
Cloning 37
Coast 26
Cock 31, 58
Coincidence 44
Colour 39
Concealment 35
Conflict between generations 42
Conformity 18
Consumerism 68
Corruption 41
Countryside 38, 73
Courage 20, 26
Cow 17
Craftsman 10
Crawling 7
Creation 35, 68
Critical thinking 71
Crocodile 17
Crow 7
Cultural conflict 57
Cultural diversity 39, 40
Curiosity 59
Curse 72

D
Dancer 7
Darkness 11, 73
Daydream 32
Death 9, 18, 21, 25, 36, 37, 46
Denmark/1872 54
Denmark/1945-1950 54
Dentist 70
Deportation 41
Depression 38
Dictatorship 47
Dignity 35
Disability 19, 56, 61, 68
Discrimination 8
Disillusionment 47
Diversity 39, 42
Dog 24, 28, 29, 32
Dream 10, 14, 30, 39, 49
Driving test 28
Drought 42
Drugs 16

Easter bunny 30
Ecology 41
Egg 24
Einstein, Albert 31
Elephant 34, 70
Enlightenment 23
Environment 42
Environmental awareness 17
Environmental destruction 14
Environmental protection 23, 46, 63
Envy 43
Eritrea 40
Escapism 24
Ethno-cultural separation 19
Experiment 15
Extraterrestrial being 27

F
Fair 9
Fantasy role-playing game 18
Farm 12, 19
Fashion 68
Father 8, 28, 36
Father/Son 66
Fear 30, 38, 50, 55
Feeling of guilt 31
Filming 55
Finland/1950s 27
First love 51
Fish 36
Fishing 36
Flanders/14th century 65
Flea circus 50
Fly 50
Flying 28, 30
Food 43
Fool 43
Football 41, 49, 57
Forgiveness 70
Foster parents 18
France/1680-1790 23
Frank, Anne 22
Freedom 13, 14, 15, 34, 38, 45, 50
Friendship 6, 9, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 49, 55, 64, 66, 68, 69, 70, 73
Futuristic society 14

G
Game 52
Gender role 41, 65
Genetic engineering 37

German Democratic Republic/History 25
Germany/History 30
Germany/World War II 29
Ghost 14
Giant 12
Giraffe 42
Globe 32
God 13
Going to bed 46
Good manners 27
Good/Evil 29
Government 15
Government control 14
Graffiti 53
Grandfather 9
Grandfather/Grandson 15, 27
Grandmother/Granddaughter 9, 20, 47
Grandmother/Grandson 52
Greece/Ancient History 69
Greed 43
Grief 9, 25, 36, 46, 52
Group cohesion 28
Growth 7

H
Handicap 39
Happiness 12, 13, 16, 26, 37
Hen 42, 58
Herbs 15
Hibernation 6
Himalaya 14
Hispanic American 20
Homosexuality 66, 67
Honesty 41
Horse keeping 30
Hotel 68
Hurry 17

I
Imaginary journey 32, 52
Imagination 11, 25, 27, 49, 67
Imaginative game 24
Immigration 40, 57
Imprisonment 13
Incapability 36
Individuality 21, 31, 44, 48, 70
Initiation 46
Injustice 67
Insect 9
Integration 57
Intercultural relationship 39, 40
Intrigue 6, 23, 39
Island 13, 31
Isolation 56

Subject Index

Istanbul/History 72
Italy/World War II 41

Jackal 15
Jánošík, Juraj 62
Japan/1159 7
Jealousy 45
Journey of initiation 46

Kafka, Franz 29
Kidnapping 16
Kindergarten 71
King 26, 70
Korea/History 10

Landscape 23
Laughter 61
Library 16
Lie 26, 35, 44
Lifecycle 69
Little Red Riding Hood 28
London/19th Century 67
Loneliness 21, 35, 46,
55, 66
Loss of appetite 43
Love 7, 29, 35, 38, 45,
46, 48, 55, 61, 65,
68, 69, 72, 73
Love for animals 70
Love of books 69

M-ori 15
Magic 12, 17, 40, 45, 48, 61
Map 10
Mapuche 58
Marguerite van Male 65
Masculinity 41
Matriarchal society 21
Medicine 15
Mental illness 27, 66
Metamorphosis 10, 28, 72
Milk 70
Minority 8, 58
Missing person 47
Mobbing 53
Modernity 50
Monster 13
Montmartre 36
Moon 73
Moral 62
Mother/Child 37, 39, 45,
Mother/Daughter 11, 36
Mother/Son 9, 38, 46
Motherhood 42
Mouse 63

Multicultural society 12
Mur-dſ Kirm-nſ, Hāšang 73
Murder 18, 29, 37, 52
Museum of Modern Art 22
Muslim 12
Mythical creatures 51

National Socialism 33
Nature 10, 11, 23, 46, 60
New York 52
Night 73
Nightmare 55
Noah's Ark 33
Nobel Peace Prize 29
North Pole 37
Nutrition 70

Obedience 29
Offender 52
Old age 9, 21, 28, 35, 46, 56
Opposites 19, 51
Oppression 67
Optimism 25
Orphan 23, 48
Otherness 13, 44, 68, 70
Outback 14
Outsider 18, 48, 50, 54

Painting 35
Parallel world 14
Paranormal powers 40
Paris/1885 36
Paris/Middle Ages 33
Peace 21, 54, 68
Peer pressure 12
Penguin 28
Persecution of the Jews 20,
22, 41
Persimmon 10
Personal identity 39
Pessimism 25
Pet 29
Pharmacists Without
Frontiers 34
Picknick 64
Pirate 13
Plants 14, 23
Playing 11
Poetry 20, 32, 63, 66
Political persecution 47
Pop singer 25
Poverty 45
Power 26, 44
Power struggle 7
Pregnancy 29

Prejudice 8, 19
Prince 59
Princess 13, 24
Prostitution 67
Punishment 13, 26

Quality of life 56
Quest 14, 18

Rabbit 16
Race 21
Racism 19, 21, 41
Rain 49
Rat 70
Reading 30, 69, 72
Rebellion 13, 15, 18, 37, 58
Reconciliation 31, 54, 56
Recycling 17
Religion 12, 13
Resistance 18, 33, 67, 69
Respect for nature 12
Revenge 15
Rite of passage 14
River 41
Role reversal 29, 30
Romania/1476-1478 43
Running amok 31
Rural life 26
Russia/History 61

Sadness 34, 66
Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de/
The little Prince 30
Samurai 6, 7
Scooter 32
Sea 26, 34, 36
Search for identity 10, 12,
21, 26, 48
Season 6, 7
Secret 9, 14, 16
Self-confidence 12, 28, 48
Sensational journalism 61
Sensory perception 73
Sex tourism 51
Sexual identity 41
Sexual slavery 51
Shopping 17
Shrinking 55
Siblings 6, 18, 20, 25, 26,
31, 32, 56
Silkworm 69
Single father 28
Sister 6
Sisters 20, 31
Slave labourer 29

Subject Index

Slavery 14, 56
Slovakia/1688-1713 62
Snow 8
Social injustice 36
Social status 27
Sofa 22
Solidarity 64
Solitude 52
Somalian boy 57
Song 59
Speech impediment 32
Sport 41
Sports car 28
Squirrel 6
St. Louis 21
Statue 62
Stone Age 62
Storytelling 20, 27, 72
Stranger 22
Stravinsky, Igor /
The Firebird 67
Street dog 50
Submarine 24
Summer holiday 20

Thailand 51
Theft 61, 62
Theory of relativity 31
Thief 16
Thumbelina 38
Tibet 38
Tiger 10
Time 11
Time travel 49
Tolerance 21, 71
Toy 52
Traditional dress 10
Tram 11
Treasure 49
Tree 6
Trick 12, 15, 28, 47
Truth 26, 35, 44
Tyrol 24

Uighurs 7
Uniqueness 48
USA/1775-1783 35
USA/1908 37
USA/1919 21

Vegetarian 47
Victorian Age 67
Vienna/1939 20
Village 8, 18, 55
Violence 58

Waiting 11
War 21, 22, 29, 34, 40,
41, 65
War refugee 40
Whale 56
White lie 35
White Sea 62
William Shakespeare /
Hamlet 33
Window 37
Winter 8, 11
Wisdom 44
Wish 17, 32
Witch 6, 45, 48, 67, 68
Wolf 16, 38, 47
Women's emancipation 58
Wooden boy 18
Wooden toy 26
Working class 54
World War II 22, 41
Writer 73

Zoo 11, 34

Reading Age Index

Recommended reading age level

(Indexed by catalogue number)

0+ years: 6, 48

2+ years: 2, 5, 11, 19, 24, 43, 143, 163,
167, 197, 201, 214, 215

4+ years: 1, 4, 7, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23,
26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 34, 37, 39, 40,
41, 57, 60, 61, 62, 63, 67, 68, 70,
77, 87, 92, 93, 96, 99, 104, 108,
112, 114, 115, 116, 122, 123,
126, 133, 134, 136, 138, 142,
152, 166, 171, 183, 198, 199,
202, 208, 212, 213, 217, 219,
220, 224, 230, 231, 232, 238,
240, 241, 242, 245

6+ years: 16, 17, 35, 52, 58, 65, 69, 73,
74, 75, 83, 85, 90, 95, 98, 102,
113, 119, 120, 124, 130, 131,
139, 146, 148, 153, 158, 161,
168, 172, 180, 182, 186, 187,
188, 189, 193, 211, 216, 221,
227, 229, 234, 235, 236, 237,
243, 250

8+ years: 3, 15, 33, 42, 44, 59, 66, 81,
82, 88, 89, 97, 105, 109, 110,
125, 128, 132, 144, 145, 150,
151, 157, 164, 175, 176, 181,
194, 195, 196, 200, 207, 226,
239, 244, 247

10+ years: 12, 13, 53, 55, 76, 80, 118,
121, 127, 129, 140, 156, 162,
177, 178, 179, 184, 192, 206,
209, 223, 233, 246, 249

12+ years: 9, 26, 38, 49, 51, 54, 72, 79,
84, 91, 94, 103, 106, 107, 111,
141, 149, 154, 155, 160, 165,
169, 170, 173, 174, 190, 191,
203, 204, 210, 248

14+ years: 8, 10, 25, 30, 31, 45, 46, 47,
50, 56, 64, 71, 86, 100, 101, 117,
135, 147, 159, 185, 205, 218,
222, 225, 228

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