

The White Ravens 2008

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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Symbols

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

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East-Asian Languages

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English

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German

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Romance Languages

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Antonio Leoni (Italian)

Jochen Weber (Catalan, Galician, Portuguese, Spanish)

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Scandinavian Languages

Dr. Andreas Bode (Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish)

with the support of Tytti Mäkinen (Finnish)

Slavic and Baltic Languages

Werner Küffner (Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Lithuanian,

Polish, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian)

Other Languages

Toin Duijx (Dutch, Frisian, Afrikaans)

Doris Amberg (Hungarian)

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Werner Küffner (Mongolian)

Lili Sadjadi-Grübel (Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish)

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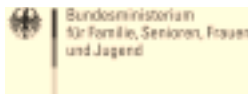
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Preface

The annual catalogue »The White Ravens«

features 250 new and notable titles of children's and young adult literature from over 40 countries. The language specialists of the Internationale Jugendbibliothek (International Youth Library) selected these books in the course of the previous year from the incoming donations to acclaim the most noteworthy and remarkable ones. As successor to Dr. Barbara Scharioth, editor-in-chief of the »The White Ravens« for 15 years, I am happy to present this unique list of recommendations for the first time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Christiane Raabe
February 2008

Japan

1

Arai, Ryōji (text/illus.)

Taiyō organ

(A sound of Taiyo-Organ)

Tōkyō : Āton, 2007. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-4-86193-084-3

Sun – Moon – Omnibus – Journey – Zest for life

»Sun-organ, sun-organ...«, with this rhythmic singsong, the elephant bus sets off on a long voyage with no specific goal in mind. The golden light of the sun, which plays majestically on its small organ, radiates in the sky. In high spirits, the bus drives over hills, through tunnels and cities, crosses bridges and seas, and allows the observers to freely join the crew at their leisure. Depending on the time of day, the bus is accompanied by the sun or the moon, sometimes also by a rainstorm, lightning, or thunder. Ryōji Arai lets his fantasies run free and sets exotic and familiar buildings, plants, and animals, resembling children's drawings, against an abstract backdrop. Spontaneity, brilliant colours, and diverse, playful pictures are characteristic for his unconventional visual language and express the colourfulness of the world and zest for life. (3+)

2

Awa, Naoko (text)

Dekune, Iku (illus.)

Yama no Tantara bāsan

(The old Ms. Tantara on the mountain)

Tōkyō : Shōgakukan, 2006. – 62 p.

ISBN 978-4-09-726101-8

Old woman – Magic – Nature – Spring – Forest animals

Ms. Tantara has extraordinary powers. She can help the forest animals with her herbs and fulfil their wishes. She summons the wind from above the snow-capped mountain where buds blossom in great abundance. Spring arrives and she changes her old kimono for a new dress, with which she can fly. She has woven the dress herself, out of grass and flower blossoms. The essential elements of Awa's artistic fairy tale – the characters, storylines, and the descriptive style – and the protagonist, a mix between sorceress, fairy, and benevolent mountain-witch, are at the same time European and Japanese. One of the distinctive features of the text is also the keen sense of nature, which is bound to a poetic imaginativeness. Iku Dekune has succeeded in reproducing the uniqueness of the fairy tale in her own visual language. (5+)

3

Hasumi, Haruo (text)

Hingan (idea/illus.)

Arōhan to hitsuji : Mongoru no kumo no monogatari

(Arohan and her sheep : the story of the clouds in Mongolia)

Tōkyō : Kogumasha, 2007. – 40 p.

ISBN 978-4-7721-0185-1

Inner Mongolia (Chinese province) – Nomad – Sheep – Death – Mourning – Vitality

On the steppe, the girl Arōhan finds a newborn lamb, which has been deserted by its mother. She accepts it as her own and names it Hongoru. They both become heart-felt friends. The years pass. Arōhan marries and is happy until, one day, a violent and sudden snowstorm kills countless animals, including Hongoru along with almost all of her lambs. Affected by the cruelty of fate, Arōhan begins to long for her happy childhood with Hongoru. The clouds, one of which resembles Hongoru, give the mourner comfort and renewed vitality. Inner Mongolia is the homeland of the artist Hingan. With his black-and-white ink drawings, some of which are coloured, he authentically conveys the nomads' way of life and renders the grasslands, clouds, wind, and snow in a direct manner. The text is based on a poem from the artist's youth, which has been transformed into a beautiful narrative by Haruo Hasumi, an expert in Mongolian literature. (6+) ★ ◆

4

Ibaragi, Noriko (text)

Yamauchi, Fujie (illus.)

Kai no ko Puchikyū

(The sea shell child Puchikyū)

Tōkyō : Fukuinkan Shoten, 2006. – [42] p.

(Nihon kessaku ehon shirūzu)

ISBN 978-4-8340-2143-1

Sea – Shell – Law of nature – Universe

One of the most representative ambassadors of Japanese poetry after 1945, Noriko Ibaragi, examines here the law of nature that all living creatures have a limited lifespan. The protagonist of this picture book is a lonely young sea shell child, who slumbers on the bottom of the sea, until, one day, he dares to take an adventurous journey to get to know the most beautiful things in the world and finally loses his life to a crab. No one learns of his death. All that is left of him is his shell, which has been washed up by the waves under a star-studded sky, shining unaltered for eternity. Fujie Yamauchi interprets the underwater world

and the existential question in his highly poetic images, which are reminiscent of the woodblock prints from the famous »Shell Book« by Kitagawa Utamaro (1789). Thematically and artistically, this is an unconventional large-format picture book for children and adults alike. (6+)

5

Imamori, Mitsuhiro (text/illus.)

Mushi no AIUEO : kirie to kotoba

(The A-I-U-E-O of insects : silhouettes and words)

Tōkyō : Dōshinsha, 2006. – [96] p.

ISBN 978-4-494-01091-2

Alphabet – Insects – Haiku

The multiple award-winning photographer and author Mitsuhiro Imamori, whose brilliant publications on ecological topics have also appeared outside of Japan, surprises us this time with a completely different side of his creativity. The most varied of insects are precisely and succinctly portrayed in silhouettes – a favourite activity from his childhood – and are arranged in Japanese alphabetical sequence according to their species. The texts, most of which are written in the form of Haiku poems, tie in with the qualities of the respective insects. Thanks to the great technical knowledge of the author and his playful way with the language, an extraordinary, artistic ABC-book about the insect world has emerged. (7+) ●

6

Imoto, Yōko (text/illus.)

Takenoko nyokinyoki

(The bamboo shoots grow higher and higher)

Tōkyō : Shikōsha, 2006. – [20] p.

(Shikōsha bukku kurabu kokusaiban ehon)
no ISBN

Mole – Excursion – Bamboo – Plant growth – Hat – Disappearance

Three small young moles go on an excursion to the bamboo mountain. Protected from the sunlight by their straw hats, they walk along merrily until they become tired and settle down to eat. They fall asleep among the bamboo shoots. When they awaken, they discover that their hats, which they had laid down on the ground, are no longer to be seen. In bewilderment they fetch their parents to come and help them look for their lost hats. The illustrator Yōko Imoto is known for her special collage technique with Japanese paper, which she finely tears and reassembles into pictorial elements and scenes. For this comical story, she effectively makes use of the characteristics of the bamboo that is quickly growing toward heaven. The picture

book, which also includes puzzle and pop-up pictures, offers children different possibilities to play on their own or with adults. (2+)

7

Kashiwaba, Sachiko (text)

Sasameya, Yuki (illus.)

Botansan no fushigina mainichi

(The wondrous days of Ms. Peony)

Tōkyō : Akane Shobō, 2006. – 174 p.

(Akane bukku raiburari; 12)

ISBN 978-4-251-04192-0

Family – Ghost – Life cycle – Compassion – Benevolence – Everyday life

Set in a traditional Japanese thermal-bath resort, nine original tragic-comedic stories unfold around Ms. Peony's family. After they move into an empty hotel, the family discover that a brave ghost by the name of Snow Willow already lives there. At first, the family is shocked, but then accepts the idea of living together with the unusual housemate. Everyday life becomes more and more exciting as the family comes into contact with locals, hotel guests, and even more ghosts. Strange phenomena occur, which make sad children and gloomy adults happy, such as the silent cherry blossom festival celebrated by the deceased who once lived in the resort. The author pleads for human charity and a sense of security to make life familiar and worth living. (12+) (Sankei Award for Children's Books & Publications; 2007)

8

Kimishima, Hisako (text)

Ono, Kaoru (illus.)

Tenryo no satogaeri : Chūgoku no mukashibanashi

(The homeland visit of the woman of the sky : a Chinese folk tale)

Tōkyō : Iwanami Shoten, 2007. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-4-00-111203-0

Folk tale – Sky – Fairy – Fisherman – Marriage ceremony – Task – Solution

The European fairytale type »The woman, who helps her groom to escape« is also common in Asia. The expert on Chinese folk stories Hisako Kimishima creates a version of this, which the village elder of the Miao people in China relayed to her. A fisherman hides the fans made of swan-feather belonging to a woman of the sky. Thus deterred from flying back, she marries him. Years later, she finds the hidden fans again. Thereupon, she visits her

father who imposes unsolvable challenges on the fisherman in order to punish and destroy him. However, thanks to the help of his fairy-wife of the sky, he is able to solve them. Back on earth, they both lead a happy life together. Kaoru Ono illustrated the eventful folk tale in her own artistic style, diversified and appropriate for children, using watercolours, pencil crayon, pastel, and ink. (7+) ♦

9

Nagita, Keiko

Renetto : kiniro no ringo

(Reinette : the golden apples)

Tōkyō : Kin no hoshisha, 2006. – 175 p.

ISBN 978-4-323-06323-2

Child – Death – Mourning – Family conflict – Chernobyl – Nuclear accident

Following her brother's fatal accident, Mika's hitherto intact family life collapses. Her mother, who indirectly blames the father, becomes depressive. To alleviate their mourning but also out of sympathy for the radiation victims of Chernobyl, the family invites a young boy from Belarus to recuperate, whom everyone becomes fond of. Once this happy time ends, the double loss afflicts the mother anew. In order to forget everything, she leaves the house with Mika. Many years pass until the family reconciles. The novel was created in the context of the Chernobyl Children's Fund, a Japanese citizens' initiative. The author vividly portrays the consequences of the loss of a child for a family and at the same time appeals for reconciliation and hope. (12+)

10

Nakao, Kenji (text)

Nishimura, Shigeo (illus.)

Ehon Mōhitotsu no Nihon no rekishi

(The picture book of Japan's other history)

Ōsaka : Kaihō Shuppansha, 2007. – 40 p.

(Eru Kurabu)

ISBN 978-4-7592-4303-1

Japan/History – Minority – Discrimination – Human rights

Within Japanese society, there have always been various marginalised groups, without whose existence the culture and tradition of the country would be unthinkable. These castes, which have been excluded from society since antiquity, included people from certain backgrounds and despised trades; for example, those who worked with leather and iron. These castes lived in ghettos outside of the cities or villages. Nomadic musicians, singers, or monks also

belonged to these groups. This picture book gives a bird's eye view of these underprivileged people and their occupations from ancient times to the present, whose status gradually improved thanks to human rights movements. This is a very informative read, which stimulates the reader to reflect. (11+) ♦

11

Ochi, Noriko (text)

Sawada, Toshiki (illus.)

Pirika, okāsan eno tabi

(Pirika, the journey to the mother)

Tōkyō : Fukuinkan Shoten, 2006. – 50 p.

(Nihon kessaku ehon shirūzu)

ISBN 978-4-8340-2214-8

Salmon – Nature – Reproduction – Life cycle – Eastern philosophy

Pirika senses something within herself. Perhaps it is the memory of her mother, whom she did not know, or a memory of something else that she experienced at the beginning of her life. Triggered by the irresistible yearning to rediscover the remembered, she undertakes a long, arduous journey. Using the example of a maturing animal ready to spawn, this book insightfully depicts the life of the salmon. It connects young readers first with the fish protagonist, then to the subject area, thereby demonstrating the value of animals' lives. The behaviour of the salmon, which travel in schools in the ocean and in bodies of flowing water, as well as the landscape are impressively portrayed in picturesque images. New life emerges from the thousands of fish eggs; Pirika, however, dies after spawning and definitively returns to the earth and to the water. (5+)

12

Ozawa, Toshio (adapt.)

Kanaida, Etsuko (illus.)

Sanmai no ofuda : Nihon mukashibanashi

(The three talismans : a Japanese folktale)

Tōkyō : Kumon Shuppan, 2007. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-4-7743-1181-4

Folk tale – Novice – Demon – Talisman – Cunning – Survival

Using a special graphic printing technique, Etsuko Kanaida strikingly casts a variety of well-known folk tales about the mountain witch Yamanba into pictures. The illustrative concept and book design agree perfectly in every detail and offer an artistic experience. The story of the seminarian who used his intelligence and the help of

a magic amulet to escape the cannibalistic old she-demon, is faithfully transposed into intense and highly contrastive images. Dark brown tones dominate the individual scenes in the temple square, in the mountain hut, at the river, on the sand-mountain, and so forth. Interacting with the succinct, articulate text, the gripping pictures captivate the reader. (5+) ♦

13

Takahashi, Hideo (text)

Miyamoto, Tadao (illus.)

Tōchan

(Dad)

Tōkyō : Komine Shoten, 2006. – 207 p.

(Bungaku no sanpomichi)

ISBN 978-4-338-22402-4

Son – Stepfather – Family – Poverty – Country life

After his children's book »Jichan no iru iroribata« (At the Fireplace with Grandpa, 2006), in which he draws attention to the position of the elderly generation within the family, Hideo Takahashi now takes on the topic of a difficult but gradually growing relationship between a boy and his stepfather. Ten-year-old Yoshio hesitates to address his mother's new husband, whom he knew before as a door-to-door salesman, as »Dad«. The stepfather is discreet, but through his industrious and confident way, he supports the family. With time, Yoshio learns to appreciate him, and in the end is even proud of him. The author depicts the personality of the protagonist and the father-son relationship in the utmost subtle way. The realistic portrayal of the everyday life of country folk, shaped by poverty, in 1950s Japan is masterful. (11+)

14

Uehashi, Nahoko

Kemono no sōja

(The beast player)

2 volumes

Tōkyō : Kōdansha, 2006. – 319 p. + 414 p.

ISBN 978-4-06-213700-3 / 213701-0

Kingdom – Loyalty – Intrigue – Honesty

Erin's mother, the keeper of the grand duke's giant fighting snakes, is executed, forcing Erin to flee. She eventually reaches the region of the queen, who keeps giant birds of prey as a symbol of her divine power. Erin loves these wild animals and learns their ways in the royal menagerie. There, contrary to the usual methods, she lovingly tames a young raptor, thereby coming into conflict with authority; something she does again, and more

so, when the grand duke and other conspirators revolt against the injustices of the kingdom. Nahoko Uehashi, a leading author of Japanese fantasy literature, has successfully produced a dynamic story with staggering martial scenes. The conflicts between state and individual, the ideal and reality, contempt and abuse of loyalty, also reflect our own times. (12+)

15

Uehashi, Nahoko (text)

Futaki, Makiko (illus.)

Ten to chi no moribito

(Guardian of heaven and earth)

3 volumes

Tōkyō : Kaiseisha, 2006/2007. – 348 p., 308 p., 364 p.

(Wandārando; 32, 33, 34)

ISBN 978-4-03-540320-3 / 540330-2 / 540340-1

Bodyguard – Prince – Magician – Power struggle – Fantasy world – Spirit – Natural disaster

With this trilogy, the multiple prize-winning, ten-volume »Moribito« series comes to an end. The setting of this grandiose work spans four fictional empires with different political systems and cultures. In the centre stands the bold bodyguard Balsa, who protects the prince of the mythical empire from the danger of an invasion. The author and cultural anthropologist Nahoko Uehashi ingeniously and enthrallingly assembles ambition, intrigue, diplomacy of peace, the relationship between ruler and people, as well as the mythical beings connected to nature. At the same time, the detailed depiction of the way of life of the individual peoples is no less impressive. The first volume, »Guardian of the Sacred Spirit«, is already well known in several other countries through its anime and manga adaptations. (12+)

16

Wettasinghe, Sybil (text/illus.)

Inokuma, Yōko (transl.)

Kasadorobō

(The umbrella thief)

Tōkyō : Tokuma Shoten, 2007. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-4-19-862337-1

Sri Lanka – Village – Man – Parasol – Disappearance – Monkey

Back when the people out in the country didn't know of parasols or umbrellas, a village man arrives in the city and, for the first time, sees people with parasols, which are as beautiful as flowers and greatly practical. Fascinated, he buys one. However, pride and joy don't last long,

because, hardly back home, his parasol disappears. Each time he buys a new parasol or umbrella, the same thing happens, until he discovers that a little monkey has hidden them in a tree. With all the resurfaced parasols and umbrellas, the villager can open a store and is not at all angry with the little thief. After many years, due to its quality and tremendous popularity, this humorous, endearing picture book has finally been reissued. In her folkloric pictures, the Sri Lankan-born artist lively demonstrates the people and their tropical habitat. (3+)

17

Yazuki, Michiko

Shizukana hibi

(Quiet days)

Tōkyō : Kōdansha, 2006. – 268 p.

ISBN 978-4-06-213587-0

Grandchild – Grandfather – Friendship – Growing up – Childhood memories

Quiet days – this is how the grown-up first-person narrator describes his life, which up until now has been uneventful. Nonetheless, or precisely for this reason, he fondly remembers those times when he was eleven and lived with his grandfather, apart from his mother, who, after the death of his father, had discovered a new meaning of life in esoteric practice. From his grandfather, he received the certainty and the feeling of security, essential for children. Drawing on these happy childhood memories, of which he is proud, he looks calmly and confidently into the future. In her novel, carried by a calm, melancholy keynote, Michiko Yazuki captures the memories of the protagonist in beautiful, expressive pictures. (15+) (Noma Award for Juvenile Literature; 2007)

People's Republic of China

18

Wu, Cheng'en (text)

Yang, Yonglan (illus.)

Xiyou-ji

(The journey to the West)

First volume

Beijing : Zhongguo-Shaonian-Ertong-Chubanshe,

2007. – XII, 230 p., [24] p.

ISBN 978-7-5007-8209-4

Supernatural creature – Priest – Journey – Gods – Demon – Magic – Taoism – Buddhism

In the 7th century, the priest Xuanzang Sanzang travelled to India in order to bring Buddhist sutras (canonical scrip-

tures) to China. Based on his travel report, »Xiyou-ji« (The Journey to the West) was composed in the 16th century and became one of China's four classic adventure novels. In this novel, the monkey king, the pig-demon, and the water-demon accompany the priest. Their journey is constantly hindered by gods and demons, against which the monkey battles with wisdom and supernatural powers. The monkey's turbulent adventures are particularly popular and are still being adapted by the Peking-Opera and in many other media. »The Journey to the West« is part of the four-volume edition of the classic, which has been completely transposed into modern language for young readers. The numerous traditional illustrations offer insight into the fantastic world of Chinese gods and demons. (14+) ♦

Republic of Korea

19

Kim, Bu-Kon (text)

Oonasi, Misono (illus.)

Chayŏnŏro chŏn Salrimchip

(A house in the country)

Seoul : Ssingkŭ Hautŭ, 2006. – 51 p.

(Arŭmdaun Urikŏt; 3)

ISBN 978-89-01-06066-8

Korea – Housing – Country life

This illustrated non-fiction book presents a traditional Korean country house. All houses are constructed the same way, but they can be distinguished into the straw-thatched clay structures of the simpler folk and the tile-roofed of the wealthier folk. The rooms can easily be redesigned. The paper-sided windows absorb the light and regulate the interior temperature. The courtyard, serving as the traditional Korean living space, is big and spacious with a fountain and a place to dry herbs or store clay pots. This is where the neighbours meet to converse or play, and where relatives and friends are entertained on holidays. The warm watercolour illustrations depict beautiful details and emanate a great tranquility mirroring the way of life of an almost bygone era. (4+) ♦

20

Kim, So-Yŏn (text)

Chang, Ho (illus.)

Myŏng Hye <proper name>

P'aju : Changbi, 2007. – 217 p.

(Changbi Adongmunko; 233)

ISBN 978-89-364-4233-0 73810

Korea/1900 – Occupation – Violence – Resistance – Death

14-year-old Myŏng Hye grows up around 1900 in a stable environment. When she is to attend secondary school, she goes with her older brother to the capital. Here she finds friends but also experiences discrimination and suppression by the Japanese occupying forces. A peaceful protest turns into a confrontation with the police, during which her brother is severely injured. While Myŏng Hye is caring for him in the hospital, she meets American doctors. When her brother dies, she leaves Korea and goes to the USA to study medicine. The novel gives an objectively distanced account of a decisive episode in recent Korean history. The subtly nuanced portrayal of the characters and their fate draws the reader into the spell of history. (12+) ♦

21

Kim, Yong-Taek (text)

Chŏn, Gab-Pae (illus.)

Malŭn nal

(On a beautiful day)

P'aju : Sa Kyejol Ch'ulp'ansa, 2006. – [64] p.

(Urimunhwa kŭrim ch'aek; 5)

ISBN 978-89-5828-146-7

Grandmother – Death – Funeral – Tradition

This book opens with the death of an old woman and the reflection on her life. In Korean society, this is not an empty ritual; rather, it gives mourners the opportunity to express the pain at the loss and the gratitude toward the deceased. Laughing or crying, depending on their feelings, family and friends remember the deceased, who, in this way, is honoured and whose spirit lives on in those who have survived her. Among the younger generations, these old customs are gradually disappearing. This richly illustrated book sensitively familiarises the reader with a subject that many adults nowadays suppress. Through the effortlessness of the narration, death becomes a part of life. Death is portrayed naturally and matter-of-factly in all its facets without losing sight of the dignity of the ritual as a homage to the deceased. The expressive, spirited illustrations in the Korean brush painting style together with a compelling text make for a fascinating whole. (6+) ★ ♦

22

Paek, Sŏk (text)

Kim, Se-Hyŏn (illus.)

Chunch'i kasi

(Chunch'i the fish)

P'aju : Changbi, 2006. – [36] p.

(Urisi kurim ch'aek; 8)

ISBN 978-89-364-5413-5

Fish – Helpfulness – Generosity – Solidarity – Giving

Chunch'i is different from his kind: The small fish has no fishbones! His biggest wish is to look like a normal fish. Thus, he goes off in search of help. Every fish he encounters readily offers him a fish bone. They accompany him on his quest and are delighted about his gradual transformation into a real fish. This book retells an old Korean fairy tale about the joy of giving and receiving in the form of a poem. Thick brushstrokes and vivid watercolours convey the changing moods and create a magic atmosphere. (3+)

23

So, Jun-Yŏng (text)

Yi, Jin-U (illus.)

Sansa ūi chongsoli

(The sounds of the temple bells)

Seoul : Ssingk'ŭ Hautŭ, 2006. – 51 p.

(Arŭmdaun Urikŏt; 2)

ISBN 978-89-01-06065-1

Korea – Musical instrument – Ring – Temple – Bell

This picture book is dedicated to the path of tranquillity and relaxation. Muffled by the clamour of civilization, the ear strains to perceive a barely audible range of sounds, from the temple bells and the bamboo flutes to the breaking of the ocean surf. An awareness of these subtle reverberations prepares for an understanding of the sounds of Korea's traditional musical instruments, some of which are described in detail with their specific playing techniques and timbres. The book motivates both children and adults to sharpen their senses through more conscious listening and seeing and to share their experiences by talking about them. The text is accompanied by soft stylised watercolour illustrations in a characteristically Korean style. (6+) ♦

Africa

South Africa

24

Partridge, S.A.

The Goblet Club

Cape Town : Human & Rousseau, 2007. – 136 p.

ISBN 978-0-7981-4878-8

Boarding school – Newcomer – Secret club – Poison – Cruelty – Revenge – Murder

This award-winning debut novel is set in a bleak boarding school for boys where the teenage protagonist is dumped by his well-to-do father as punishment for years of rebellious and delinquent behaviour. Ruled by cruel and dubious Mr. Crabtree, the school harbours quite a few sinister secrets that Mark and his new friends from the exclusive »Goblet Club« are trying to uncover. This mysterious and macabre novel is told in retrospect in a remarkably detached and calm, yet all the more intriguing voice reminiscent of that of the narrator in American author Donna Tartt's bestseller »The secret history«. It leads readers into a world full of friendship and betrayal, bullying, abuse, revenge, and cold-blooded murder. (14+) (Winner of the »I am a writer«-competition, 2007)

Asia and Oceania

Australia

25

Adornetto, Alexandra (text)

Grigg, Jenny (illus.)

The shadow thief

Pymble, Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 2007. – 288 p.

(Strangest adventures; 1)

ISBN 978-0-7322-8618-7

Individuality – Kidnapping – Evil – Fight – Rescue

As its name suggests, Drabville is a colourless, dull, and orderly town where all citizens readily abide by the strict rules set down in the Code of Conduct. Young Milli seems the only one who desperately longs for some adventure that adds sparkle to her grey existence. Little do the curious girl and her studious friend Ernest suspect that their secret trip to the mysterious gothic mansion in a nearby forest will result in more terrifying events than any Drabvillian could ever imagine. Written in a fairytale-like style and populated by sinister characters such as the evil

Lord Ardor, this humorous, fast-paced debut novel (created when the author was thirteen) follows two youngsters as they are striving to unravel the mystery of the stolen shadows and free them. (10+)

26

Cox, Tania (text)

Dawson, Janine (illus.)

Alberta <proper name>

Kingswood, SA : Working Title Press, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-876288-86-0

Penguin – Individuality – Exaggeration – Sister – New baby

Little things simply don't exist for penguin Alberta. Be it snowballs, slides, or the nest for her parent's new eggs, she likes it REALLY big. No wonder that she feels hugely disappointed when her mother's two eggs turn out to be very small. Yet ingenious Alberta is not thus easily defeated. She thinks again and happily realises that such tiny baby sisters mean an extra big responsibility for the (now even bigger) big sister. Painted in light watercolours with shades of blue, black, and grey dominating, the comic-style illustrations of this droll picture book present the vivacious protagonist whizzing around the chilly scenery with big ideas in her mind and her very own view of the world – regardless of any adversity. (4+)

27

Fitzgerald, F. Scott (orig. text)

Greenberg, Nicki (adapt./illus.)

The great Gatsby

Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin, 2007. – 305 p.

ISBN 978-174175-1338

New York/1922 – Social class – Ambition – Love – Intrigue – Murder

In a six-year-long creative marathon, writer-illustrator Nicki Greenberg has transformed Fitzgerald's classic, set in the 1920s, into a fascinating graphic novel. While cutting only as much of the original text as necessary to fit the new form, Greenberg decided to turn the protagonists into fantastical creatures trying »to make their physical attributes embody and illuminate their personalities«. First-person narrator Nick Carraway tells his story in retrospect, graphically presented as a series of sepia photographs pasted against a black background. Greenberg's adaptation perfectly captures the original's melancholic mood and the glamour of the »Jazz Age« as the love affair between ambitious imposter Gatsby and his former sweetheart Daisy ends in a tragic murder. (14+)

28

French, Jackie (text)
 Whatley, Bruce (illus.)

The Shaggy Gully Times : the f(p)unniest newspaper you'll ever read

Pymble, Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 2007. – 31 p.
 ISBN 978-0-7322-8410-7

Small town – Weekly newspaper – Animals – Zoo

Starring various protagonists from Jackie French and Bruce Whatley's previous collaborations (such as »Diary of a wombat« and »Josephine wants to dance«), this witty large-format picture book is filled to the brim with hilarious heroes, absurd adverts, and nonsensical puns. The catching layout and comical illustrations and the highly amusing texts, complete with the pompous newspaper editor's silly comments, will give young and old readers more than just one giggling fit. In the style of a typical country weekly – even including sections like TV-Guide, Polit(c)e Reports, and Horror Scope – the book chronicles news about all the events befaling Mothball Wombat, Emily Emu, Jilly Giraffe – eh, sorry, Jilly the rare long-legged Platypus – and others living in this crazy small-town community. (8+) ●

29

Honey, Elizabeth / Brandt, Heike
To the boy in Berlin

Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin, 2007. – 282 p.
 ISBN 978-1-74175-004-1

Email correspondence – Melbourne/1913-1915 – Immigration – Racism – Refugee

Despite the fact that Henni lives in Melbourne, Australia, and Leo's hometown is Berlin, Germany, the two teenagers have grown very close since the moment they exchanged their very first email. Confiding into each other, they feel that together they are strong and imaginative enough to tackle any problem, whether it be helping Leo's friend Felix and his African mother not to get deported or solving the mystery of Leopold Schmidt and his German family who emigrated to Australia in 1913. This right-around-the-world email-novel covers both funny and serious topics and is written in two distinct authentic teenage voices. The book clearly emanates the fun that popular Australian author Elizabeth Honey and her German colleague Heike Brandt must have had during their collaboration. (12+) ◆

30

Kakmi, Dmetri (ed.)

When we were young : [true stories from your favourite Australian authors]

Camberwell, Victoria [et al.] : Viking, 2007. – 254 p.
 ISBN 978-0-670-07188-3

Australia – Author – Illustrator – Childhood memories

After having worked with popular Australian children's book writers and illustrators for many years, editor Dmetri Kakmi decided to tap into these people's enormous creative potential and ask them to write about a particularly memorable childhood experience. The resulting anthology offers young readers fascinating glimpses into the lives of their favourite literary idols such as Ian Bone, Ursula Dubosarsky, Sonya Hartnett, Paul Jennings, and Tohby Riddle. In funny short stories, moving poems, witty comic strips, or nostalgic narratives, the authors describe what life was like when they were young and reveal something important about their upbringing, which may even have served as an inspiration for one of their later works. (10+)

31

Marin, Gabiann (text)
 Grantford, Jacqui (illus.)

A true person

Frenchs Forest, NSW : New Frontier Publ., 2007. – [32] p.
 ISBN 978-1-921042-19-5

Australia – Detention centre – Refugee – Mother – Daughter

Little Zallah has lived in a detention centre surrounded by a tall meshwire fence ever since she and her mother fled to Australia. Most of the procedures going on are a mystery to the refugee girl; she feels frightened and imprisoned and wonders what their new life will be like. With the help of her mother's love and reassurance, Zallah eventually discovers the secret of being a »true person«. The naturalistic double page illustrations aptly portray daily life in the centre as well as the girl's dreams for a brighter future. Just like another new title (»Ziba came on a boat« by Liz Lofthouse and Robert Ingpen, 2007), this square picture book can serve as the perfect incentive to discuss the complex, topical theme of refugees with small children. (5+) ◆

32

Morecroft, Judith (text)
Bancroft, Bronwyn (illus.)

Malu Kangaroo : how the first children learnt to surf

Surry Hills, NSW : Little Hare, 2006. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-1-921272-02-8

Aborigines – Creation story – Kangaroo – Surfing

This modern tale in the style of a traditional Aboriginal creation story was written in memory of a young man who loved the sea and »could ride the waves« like a dolphin. Bronwyn Bancroft's vibrant, colourful paintings trace the story of how Malu Kangaroo journeys from the bushland to the sea and teaches the first children how to play with the ocean. He shapes a wooden surf board for them and shows them how to float upon the water and dash along the rising breakers – a skill that modern Australian children love just as much as those in former times. Featuring dotted patterns and other elements often used in Aboriginal paintings, the rich pictures make readers feel the artist's fascination with and respect for the mighty sea. (4+) ♦

33

Ottley, Matt (text/illus./music)

Requiem for a beast : a work for image, word and music

Sydney : Hachette Livre Australia, 2007. – 90 p. + CD
(A Lothian Children's Book)
ISBN 978-0-7344-0796-2

Aborigines – Stolen Generation – Tradition – Loss – Coming of age – Cross-cultural dialogue

In this stunning multi-modal work, Matt Ottley's compelling text and haunting pictures painted in different sizes and from varying perspectives, weave together multiple narrative strands. Topics touched on are the conflict-laden relationship between white Australians and indigenous people and the infamous role the government played in the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. The main story follows a troubled teenage boy who works as a station hand in the Australian bush and is haunted by terrible dreams and an undefined feeling of guilt. When he confronts a huge bull on his own and almost gets killed by the beast, this act sets in motion memories of his father's guilt for not helping when a workmate killed a young Aboriginal boy. This unusual opus is completed by a 30-minute piece of music in four movements (recorded on the accompanying CD), that combines Bundjalung stories and songs with orchestral compositions by Ottley. (14+) ★ ♦

34

Stanley, Elizabeth (text/illus.)

Tyger! Tyger!

Crawley, West. Australia : Cygnet Books, 2007. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-1-920694-84-5

Thailand – Monastery – Poachers – Tiger sanctuary

Inspired by her visits to a Buddhist monastery in Thailand that has been caring for orphaned and injured tigers for the past twelve years, author Elizabeth Stanley has created a fairytale-like story about Indo-Chinese tigers and their human protectors. When the majestic tigers' lives are threatened by poachers, a young monk dreams that he is given the task of saving these mighty jungle creatures from extinction. Together with his fellow monks, the young man starts digging a deep moat around the monastery to create a sanctuary for his animal friends. The glowing, naturalistic double-page pictures are rendered in colour chalk. They perfectly convey the strong bond of friendship between the tigers and the monks as well as the awe-inspiring animals' dignity and »fearful symmetry«. (4+)

35

Wilkinson, Lili

Scatterheart

Fitzroy, Vic : Black Dog Books, 2007. – 377 p.
ISBN 978-1-921167-85-0

England/1814 – Upper Middle Class – Deportation – Sea journey – Australia/19th century – Prisoners' camp

When the book opens in 19th-century London, 14-year-old Hannah, the daughter of »a man of Quality« who disappeared after gambling away his late wife's fortune, is thrown into a dark prison cell reeking of vomit and urine. The naïve and proud girl closely resembles the selfish and vain heroine of a fairy tale (»Scatterheart«) that her tutor once told her. However, in the course of her imprisonment and the horrible five-months-long sea voyage to the colonies, the young ex-lady eventually learns that the true value of people is to find in their hearts, not their purses. Interspersed with bits of the fairy tale, the gripping narrative of this moving historical adventure novel introduces readers to a harsh world of cruelty, injustice, hardship, and love against all odds. (14+)

36

Wilson, Tony (text)

Jellett, Tom (illus.)

Harry Highpants

Malvern, SA : Omnibus Books, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-86291-603-6

Clothes – Oppression – Individuality – Freedom

Until Roy Bland decided to become the next mayor and improve – what he calls – the town's sluggish image, people used to wear their trousers any way they liked: high, low, or somewhere in between. From now on, however, the new wannabe-mayor is dead set on only tolerating pants worn at »normal height«. Yet dictatorial Bland and his recruits have reckoned without the Free Pants Convention and without resolute Harry Highpants, who is not afraid to fight for everybody's right to individuality. The pant-rebellion in this comical book with a serious undertone is presented in vibrant square and rectangular pictures painted in bold acrylics on coloured paper. The bright colours and reduced, angular shapes bear a slight resemblance to collages and other techniques from the 1960s. (4+) ●

India

37

Agarwal, Deepa (text)

Chakravarti, Manobhiram (illus.)

Caravan to Tibet

New Delhi [et al.] : Puffin Books, 2007. – 171 p.

ISBN 978-0-14-333012-7

India/1900 – Himalayas – Caravan –**Shauka people – Father – Disappearance – Son**

In this gripping historical adventure tale, Deepa Agarwal effortlessly transports her readers back to the end of the 19th century. The rich, easy-flowing narrative evokes the harsh everyday life and various customs of nomadic communities in northern India and Tibet a hundred years ago. Determined to find his father, who was lost and presumed dead during a blizzard in one of the treacherous passes of the Himalayas, 14-year-old Debu joins the caravan of traders travelling into Tibet. On his trying journey, he survives many dangerous situations, endures hunger and cold, and has to remain constantly on the alert. Eventually, he finds his missing father and a new friend and returns home triumphantly. (12+) ◆

New Zealand

38

Cowley, Joy (text)

Bishop, Gavin (illus.)

Snake and Lizard

Wellington, N.Z. : Gecko Press, 2007. – 85 p.

ISBN 978-0-9582720-7-0

Snake – Lizard – Difference – Acceptance – Friendship

Snake and Lizard, two desert creatures, have become close friends although they argue with each other almost constantly. Different as they are, this is only to be expected. While Lizard favours crunchy bugs and flies for lunch, Snake rather devours some chicken eggs whole. Fidgety Lizard is fond of adventures, whereas all that quiet Snake dreams of is a peaceful afternoon nap. Yet, in the end, no amount of fighting can destroy their mutual affection and friendship. These funny, ultra-short tales about two quarrelsome friends are complemented by amusing, little ink and watercolour drawings that aptly capture the desert atmosphere and the protagonists' follies. (4+)

39

Duder, Tessa / Orman, Lorraine (eds.)

Potter, Bruce (illus.)

Out of the deep and other stories from New Zealand and the Pacific

Auckland : Reed, 2007. – 148 p.

ISBN 978-1-86978-015-9

New Zealand – Pacific Islands – Maori people – Daily life – Traditions

In 2007, the New Zealand IBBY section hosted International Children's Book Day for the first time. To mark this occasion, well-known writers Tessa Duder and Lorraine Orman gathered and commissioned 16 short stories created by renowned children's book authors from New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, such as Sarona Aiono-Iosefa, David Hill, Margaret Mahy, Katerina Mataira, and Tim Tipene. The resulting anthology, illustrated by popular artist Bruce Potter, encompasses a great variety of stories ranging from retellings of traditional Maori tales and historical stories to modern narratives and fantasy tales. The diverse texts give readers a taste of New Zealand's rich multi-cultural society. (6+) ◆

40

Mackenzie, Anna

The sea-wreck stranger

Dunedin : Longacre Press, 2007. – 204 p.

ISBN 978-1-877361-88-3

Environmental catastrophe – Island – Separation – Superstition – Mistrust – Shipwreck – Survivor

Due to some kind of environmental disaster that poisoned the sea and fish and caused hundreds of people to die, the leaders of a small island community decided to close off its boundaries to the outside world and ban all technological progress. Since then, life for orphaned Ness, her brother Ty, and their cousin Sophie has been harsh, lonely, and full of restrictions and hard work imposed on them by mean step-aunt Tilda. When they stumble across an injured stranger washed up on the shore, Ness secretly nurses him back to health. This haunting first-person narration presents a rebellious teenage protagonist who is not willing to give in to the superstition of her backward society. Prepared to face great dangers, the girl eventually chooses to seek a brighter future across the sea. (14+)

Europe**Great Britain**

41

Doherty, Berlie

Abela : the girl who saw lions

London : Andersen Press, 2007. – 236 p.

ISBN 978-1-84270-689-3

AIDS – Death – Adoption – Mother – Daughter – Bi-national family

Little Abela's parents have died of AIDS, and she has no one left to turn to when her greedy uncle decides to send her from her Tanzanian village to England and sell her to a rich family there. Equipped with only a jumper, a pair of sandals, and a basic knowledge of English, she feels intimidated, lonely, and homesick at her new foster family in London. In Sheffield, 13-year-old Rosa loves ice-skating and sharing special moments with her mother Jen, whom she considers her best friend. Therefore, she starts panicking when Jen confides that she would love to adopt a sister for Rosa. Told in alternating chapters, the narratives reveal the hopes and fears of both girls. In this stirring novel about AIDS and adoption, Berlie Doherty creates two utterly believable and likable protagonists who face difficult changes in their lives. (10+) ♦

42

Hornby, Nick

Slam

London [et al.] : Penguin, 2007. – 292 p.

ISBN 978-0-141-38297-5

Skateboarding – First love – Unplanned pregnancy – Coping

15-year-old Sam lives with his 32-year-old mother, does ok at school, and simply loves skating (i.e. skateboarding – not »messaging around on ice«). Girls are not a big item on his agenda until he meets gorgeous Alicia. All of a sudden, life seems wonderful – for about a minute. But cool guy Sam feels a major panic attack when Alicia tells him she is pregnant. No one, not even his skating idol Tony Hawk, whose poster he talks to constantly, can't bail him out of this situation. In his first teenage novel, best-selling author Nick Hornby tackles a serious issue without preaching to his audience. The fast-paced first-person narration quickly draws readers in, presenting an amiable and by no means careless boy who manages to take responsibility for his actions and still see hope for a worthwhile future. (14+)

43

Kelly, Tom

The thing with Finn

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

2007. – 232 p.

ISBN 978-1-4050-9021-6

Twin brother – Mourning – Running away – Identity

Ever since »the thing with Finn« happened, his identical twin brother Danny and the rest of their family have been struggling to keep their grip on life. To spare his parents and sister the pain of being constantly reminded of the event, the agitated ten-year-old boy decides to run away. He ends up on a small island where the family once spent a happy holiday. In a deserted boathouse at the beach, and with the help of another grief-stricken person, the boy eventually manages to accept his grief and reclaim his own identity. The very short chapters, resonating with the small boy's peculiar logic, alternate between feelings of confusion, anger, fear, excitement, and despair but also contain a lot of humour. What really happened, however, is not disclosed to the readers until the very last chapter. (10+)

44

Na, Il Sung (text/illus.)

Zzzzz : a book of sleep

London : Meadowside Children's, 2007. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-1-84539-271-0

Night – Animals – Sleep – Individuality

This charming picture book allows readers a quick peek into the animal kingdom at night when all animals big and small are asleep (»apart from the staring owl«). Each species, from cuddly koala to trumpeting elephant and unblinking fish, has their favourite position, place, or arrangement: »Some sleep standing up, [w]hile some sleep on the move!« The short text is visually translated into stunning double-page illustrations, depicting the sleepy creatures (or parts of them) from unusual angles. The pastel colours and delicate patterns used for both animals and background cover large planes in which tiny line-drawings add witty details to the pictures. This bedtime book will have children fall asleep with a smile on their faces. (3+)

45

Nimr, Sonia (retell.)

Shaw, Hannah (illus.)

Ghaddar the ghoul : and other Palestinian folk-tales

London : Frances Lincoln Children's, 2007. – 96 p.

ISBN 978-1-84507-523-1

Palestine – Folk tale – Anthology

Every year, Ghaddar, a terrible ghoul, attacks villages and towns close to the ghoul valley and gobbles up as many innocent people as possible. Outraged by these events, the king promises his kingdom and his daughter's hand in marriage to the brave man who puts an end to these bloody raids. Resolved to try his luck, Ahmad the Saddler sets off and, with a lot of cunning and courage, eventually manages to steal the ghoul's three magic hairs and thus defeat him. This is just one of the nine folk tales from Palestine gathered in this small volume. Retold by Sonia Nimr in a smooth and easy-flowing narrative, the humorous tales about wise merchants, jealous aunts, and crafty animals introduce young readers to the rich story-telling tradition of the Arabic-speaking world. (6+) ♦

46

Sedgwick, Marcus

Blood red snow white

London : Orion Children's, 2007. – 304 p.

ISBN 978-1-84255-184-4

Russia/1905-1919 – World War I –
Ransome, Arthur – Spy – Love

In this engaging teenage novel, award-winning author Marcus Sedgwick seamlessly interweaves fairytale elements with historical facts and fiction to evoke the chilly and charged atmosphere in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. While the rest of Europe is fighting bloody battles in World War I, hunger, poverty, and dissatisfaction with the rule of Tsar Nicholas prepare the ground for revolution and the rise of the Bolshevik party. Divided into three sections written in different styles (fairy tale, spy story, love story), the book traces the history of Russia starting in 1905 as well as events concerning British journalist and author Arthur Ransome, who initially travelled to Russia to collect fairy tales, allegedly worked as a spy, and ended up falling in love with the secretary of Trotsky. (14+)

47

Singleton, Sarah

Sacrifice

London : Simon & Schuster, 2007. – 305 p.

ISBN 978-1-416-91708-3

England/1890 – Crusades/1179 – Relic – Curse – Supernatural power

In 1890, headstrong Miranda is sent to live with her haughty grandparents in London while her mother is treated in a mental asylum; young Jack in rural Ireland stumbles across a half-dead person in a derelict cottage; and Jacinth from Paris has been brought to a tower in Bohemia where she tries to improve her power of far-sight. These three teenagers have never met but are linked with each other through their ancestors – a group of knights who stole an African relic with destructive powers during the Crusades centuries ago. The mystery of the object's curse can only be solved by combining their forces. Weaving an intricate web of narratives set in different times and places, Sarah Singleton creates a powerful fantasy quest with a gothic novel atmosphere featuring a set of strong and resourceful protagonists. (12+)

48

Smith, Chris (text)
Fronty, Aurélia (illus.)

One city, two brothers

Bath : Barefoot, 2007. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-1-84686-041-6

Jerusalem/Foundation – Siblings –

Love – Peace – King Solomon

When King Solomon, wise ruler of Jerusalem, is approached by two arguing brothers fighting about their inheritance, he tells them a story from ancient times: Living in two neighbouring villages, a pair of brothers farmed their piece of land together, shared the harvest equally, and one night ran into each other as each was trying to secretly bring a generous gift to his brother. Their meeting place was the spot where later the city of Jerusalem was founded. The smooth and subdued narrative is based on a folk tale that is familiar to many Jews and Palestinian Arabs around the world. The expressive illustrations with colours and patterns reminiscent of traditional folk art transport readers into a distant time and underline the story's message of hope and peace. (4+) ♦

49

Ward, Helen (text)
Craste, Marc (illus.)

Varmints : Part 1

Dorking, Surrey : Templar, 2007. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-1-84011-323-5

Nature – Quietness – Modernity – Noise

In this touching philosophical picture book, award-winning author Helen Ward alludes to a future world in which peace and quiet are suddenly lost. Where »[t]here was once only the sound of bees and the wind in the wiry grass«, masses of creatures arrive and start destroying the peaceful wilderness to build enormous futuristic skyscrapers. As the overpowering noise threatens to suffocate any thinking, one creature sets out to secretly rebel against the robot-like intruders by raising tiny seedlings. Renowned film-maker and illustrator Marc Craste translates the poetic text into equally poetic pictures. Dividing the story into three (film) »scenes« separated by milky transparent sheets, Craste uses changing perspectives and picture sizes as well as a careful play with light and typography reminiscent of animation films. The oppressively dark settings that paint the nightmarish development in this small world eventually acquire a lighter note, which signals a new beginning. (6+) ★ ●

Ireland

50

O'Brien, Brendan (text)
The Cartoon Saloon (illus.)

The story of Ireland

Dublin : O'Brien, 2007. – 96 p.

ISBN 978-0-86278-881-0

Ireland/7000BC-2000AD

This unusual non-fiction book about the history of Ireland starts with the Stone Age some 9,000 years ago and goes right up to the present day. It offers an abundance of information about megalithic tombs, saints and pagans, the Black Death, and the arrival of the cinema, dished up in small portions easily digestible for young readers. The large-format pages are brimming with snippets of interesting facts, funny anecdotes, and witty asides that bring millennia of history alive. The text, written in an informal style, often addresses the readers directly and is arranged in a clear layout modelled after Internet pages with bright headlines, coloured boxes, highlighted words, and quotations guiding readers along the way. Photographs, maps, and cartoon-like illustrations complement the text. The author provides an amusing first encounter with Irish culture and traditions that is bound to inspire curious youngsters to start digging deeper into Ireland's fascinating history. (10+) ★ ●

North America**Canada**

51

Bouchard, David (text)
Beaver, Moses (illus.)
Aglukark, Susan (transl./music)

An aboriginal carol : Canada's first carol

Calgary, Alberta : Red Deer Press, 2007. – [28] p. + CD

ISBN 978-0-88995-406-9

Canada – Aboriginal people – Christmas carol

Originally written in the language of the Huron/Wendat people in 1643 by a Jesuit missionary, Canada's oldest Christmas song is entitled »Jesus Athonhia« (Jesus, he is born). The 1926 English adaptation on which this book is based is often seen as controversial. However, the collaboration on this book between artists from three Canadian Aboriginal groups offers a wonderful chance to learn more about indigenous cultures as they intersect with Christianity and could thus serve as impetus for a multi-

cultural dialogue. Popular Métis author David Bouchard's vivid text tells people to rejoice because Jesus, born in a lodge of broken bark and enwrapped in rabbit skin, will bring peace to the world. Aboriginal artist Moses (Amik) Beaver's powerful, multi-layered illustrations contain numerous visual renderings that allow insight into a First Nation's worldview. The first Inuktitut translation of this carol is provided by well-known Inuit musician Susan Aglukark, who has also written the enchanting modern music for this production. (Reading in English and Inuktitut and song included on CD) (5+) ★ ◆

52

Brooks, Martha

Mistik Lake <name>

Toronto [et al.] : Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press, 2007. – 207 p.

ISBN 978-0-88899-752-4

Mother – Death – Daughter – Mourning – Canada – Icelandic immigrants

As the sole survivor of a fatal car accident in which her friends drowned when she was 16, Odella's mother Sally has been unable to cope with her feeling of guilt. After years of secret drinking and unhappiness, she abandons her family and moves to Iceland with her new partner. Her decision and her sudden death leave 17-year-old Odella, her two younger sisters, and her father utterly bereft. Mutual love, their great-aunt Gloria's support, and a new romance for Odella help them come to terms with oppressing secrets from the past and find new happiness. Told from different points of view, the story unravels in a series of flashbacks. In this touching novel, award-winning author Martha Brooks creates a cast of strong, amiable characters and evokes the unique ambience of a small lakeside community. (14+)

53

Curtis, Christopher Paul

Elijah of Buxton

Toronto : Scholastic Canada, 2007. – 341 p.

ISBN 978-0-439-93647-7

Ontario/1860 – Black people – Settlement – Everyday life – Underground railroad

Eleven-year-old Elijah is the first child born free in the settlement of Buxton, a refuge for escaped slaves in Canada. A clever yet inexperienced lad, Elijah is easily tricked and frightened – his mother desperately tries to cure his »frag-ility« – but his heart is in the right place. So when a con man takes off with a neighbour's hard-earned money

that was supposed to buy freedom for his slave-family, the boy sneaks off to the nearby American border where events culminate in a terrifying climax. Through Elijah's chatter, the author paints a vivid picture of everyday-life in Buxton as well as of the horrors that slaves had to endure at the time. Written in an authentic 19th-century dialect, the engaging first-person narration sparkles with humour and will move readers of all ages to tears and laughter. (10+) ◆

54

Ellis, Deborah / Walters, Eric

Bifocal

Markham, Ont. : Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2007. – 280 p.

ISBN 978-1-55455-036-4

Canada – Muslim community – Terrorism – High school – Racism

At Central Secondary School, an ordinary Canadian high school, the students of different cultural backgrounds seldom mix. Instead, the school and cafeteria are invisibly divided into numerous subsections such as Cafrica, Brown Town, and the like. When a Muslim student gets arrested for suspected affiliation with a terrorist group, the climate at school starts to disintegrate into open hostility and racism. Told in alternating chapters, the plot follows two students – Jay, a (white) football player, and Haroon, a quiet Muslim boy – as they struggle to continue with their daily lives, withstand police harrassing, and overcome peer pressure. The straight-forward narrative admirably depicts the full range of possible reactions to such a threatening event without offering an easy solution. (14+) ◆

55

Fagan, Cary (text)

Petričić, Dušan (illus.)

My new shirt

Toronto, Ontario [et al.] : Tundra Books, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-88776-715-9

Grandmother – Birthday present – Grandson – Dislike – Understanding

As dearly as David loves his Bubbie and enjoys visiting her, there is one thing he dreads – his birthday »surprises«. Every year, she insists on buying him an identical (save for the size, of course) scratchy, stiff, white »gentleman's« shirt that makes him squirm and choke. He desperately wishes he could escape this annual ordeal – and, no sooner has he closed his eyes than the hateful object miraculously sails through the open window. The flabbergasted family gives chase until the shirt, having acquired muddy marks, red borscht stains, etc., is safely back in the hands of resolute

Bubbie. The witty watercolour illustrations, resembling photographs »glued into« a cream-coloured album, present the hilarious story and reveal how the grandmother finally understands and breaks with her own tradition. (4+)

56

Little, Melanie

**The apprentice's masterpiece :
a story of medieval Spain**

Toronto [et al.] : Annick Press, 2008. – 310 p.

ISBN 978-1-55451-117-4

Spain/1485-1487 – Spanish Inquisition – Jews – Muslims – Conversion – Tolerance – Father – Son

In this powerful novel composed in miniature chapters of elegant, haunting verse, Melanie Little evokes a turbulent era in 15th-century Spain. The queen and king are determined to christianise all of their kingdom, and Muslims and Jews are driven out of the country or forced to convert. Yet even as »conversos«, people live in poverty and fear of the almighty and cruel Inquisition. Ramon and his father, two master scribes in Cordoba, have to scrape by on the odd commission, and when the family takes in Amir, a Muslim slave boy, life gets even more complicated. Soon Amir's life is in danger and he secretly flees to Granada, while Ramon starts working for the Inquisition despite his scruples. Divided into three parts, two told by converso Ramon and one by Muslim Amir, this novel depicts their thoughts and fates in a dangerous time. (14+) ♦

57

Watt, Mélanie (text/illus.)

Scaredy Squirrel makes a friend

Toronto, ON [et al.] : Kids Can Press, 2007. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-1-55453-181-3

Squirrel – Fear – Loneliness – Friendship

Scaredy Squirrel is very aptly named indeed. In his second picture book adventure so far, he is afraid of everything in the world – and biters in particular. Creatures he must avoid falling prey to include bunnies, piranhas, wal-ruses, beavers, Godzilla, and the like. To him, only a goldfish appears to be 100% safe. Yet his perfect plan (»If all else fails, PLAY DEAD ...«) to make the perfect friend proves not to be so perfect after all when he encounters a smelly, barking, drooling, one-toothed dog. Soon however, he realises that even such a dangerous carnivore can make an almost perfect (83% safe) friend. The simple, clearly outlined, comic-book-like illustrations in pale colours, combined with the short witty text, make a perfect read for scaredy-cats/-dogs/-children of all ages. (4+)

USA

58

Alexie, Sherman (text)

Forney, Ellen (illus.)

The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian

New York : Little, Brown, 2007. – 229 p.

ISBN 978-0-316-01368-0

Indian reservation – Outsider – Alcoholism – Racism

With his lisp and stutter (and a few other medical problems), 14-year-old Arnold Spirit Junior is the »retard« in the Spokane Indian Reservation. Despite being beaten up regularly (»Yep, I belong to the Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club.«), and suffering various tragedies, the clever boy and budding cartoonist has a positive outlook on life. Determined to fight against a bleak future of alcoholism and poverty, he works up the courage to attend an all-white high school in the nearby farm town and finds some good friends there. In a direct and authentic voice full of quirky humour, the protagonist rambles on about his daily struggles. Based on the author's own experiences, this coming-of-age novel with its funny cartoon drawings acquaints readers with pressing issues in a light-hearted and entertaining narrative. (12+) ♦

59

Barrows, Annie (text)

Blackall, Sophie (illus.)

Ivy + Bean break the fossil record

San Francisco : Chronicle Books, 2007. – 114 p.

(Ivy + Bean; 3)

ISBN 978-0-8118-5683-6

World record – Fossil – Friendship

Ivy and Bean, ingenious second graders and best friends, are at it again. In their third adventure, they get it into their heads to break some world record – no matter which. After failed attempts at the 257-straws-in-mouth-record and the cleaning-a-pile-of-plates-in-five-minutes-record and the breaking-a-glass-animal-by-screaming-record, they realise that this is easier said than done. Yet, where there's a will, there's – a garden shovel. Just like the previous volumes about this pair of mischievous friends, book number three is full of wit and unexpected plot twists. The short chapters and large type as well as the cheerful black-and-white illustrations make this a highly entertaining read for second graders, their siblings and parents (and everyone else). (6+)

60

Berkeley, Jon (text)
Dorman, Brandon (illus.)

The tiger's egg

New York, NY : HarperCollins, 2007. – 400 p.

(The Wednesday Tales; 2)

(The Julie Andrews Collection)

ISBN 978-0-06-075511-9

Orphan – Circus – Fortune teller – Secret – Quest

Jon Berkely's second instalment of »The Wednesday tales« trilogy is every bit as exciting and engaging as its popular predecessor, »The palace of laughter« (2006). The fast-paced fantasy novel, told in short chapters filled with sparkling dialogue and colourful prose, throws its protagonists into one adventure after the other. It starts off with the evil and »once Great Cortado« plotting revenge after having escaped from the psychiatric hospital. Meanwhile, orphan Miles Wednesday, his stuffed bear Tangerine, and his best friend, the former song angel Little, have joined the Bosillo brothers' chaotic circus where they meet Doctor Tau-Tau. When this mysterious fortune teller suggests that Miles's father may still be alive, the friends set off on a secret quest. Slowly but surely, the single pieces of the puzzle fall into place and many more mysteries are revealed including the one of the powerful Tiger's Egg. (10+) ★

61

Decker, Timothy (text/illus.)

Run far, run fast

Asheville, N.C. : Front Street, 2007. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-1-59078-469-3

Europe/1348 – Bubonic plague – Survival

One night, a desperate mother sends her daughter away from their plague-infested hometown. Anxiously looking for a safe place, the young girl trudges through the country, witnessing sorrow, death, and fear, until she meets a kind young plague doctor who offers shelter and hope to her. Using stylised characters – faces without mouths, hands without fingers – this unusual picture book introduces young readers to a bleak chapter in European history. While the short and simple text describes the girl's search for safety, the somber black-and-white pen-and-ink drawings provide numerous glimpses of the world surrounding her. The full-page pictures on the left page and clusters of smaller pictures grouped around a larger centrepiece on the right page will trigger lots of questions and initiate further research into the topic. (12+) ●

62

Gershator, Phillis (text)

Meade, Holly (illus.)

Sky sweeper

New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-0-374-37007-7

Zen-Buddhism – Monk – Garden – Happiness – Modesty

All his life, Takeboki was happy with his simple job as flower keeper. No matter how much his family and friends scolded and nagged him about his obvious lack of ambition, he enjoyed his occupation and created beautiful »worlds« in the temple garden convinced that »[t]he monks need a temple, the temple needs a garden, and the garden needs a Flower Keeper.« After his death, he finds new happiness in his own sky paradise sweeping mountains of clouds and mist across the sun and the moon. The delicate yet lively watercolour- and mixed-media collages of this quiet book successfully transmit the protagonist's feeling of peace and enjoyment. The author weaves complex issues such as Zen-Buddhism, the Japanese art of gardening, and the search for true happiness into this fairy-tale-like story. (6+) ◆

63

Polhemus, Coleman (text/illus.)

The crocodile blues

Cambridge, MA : Candlewick Press, 2007. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-0-7636-3543-5

(British ed. published by Templar, 2007)

Man – Cockatoo – Egg – Shock – Crocodile – Escape – Invitation – Surprise

After their daily food-shopping, a man and his pet cockatoo stroll home cheerfully, take a bath, and settle down to sleep. In the middle of the night, they are suddenly awakened by a weird noise. Crack! The man picks up his torch and tiptoes down to the kitchen where, squeezed inside the fridge, he discovers an unwelcome sharp-toothed surprise obviously hatched from the inconspicuous little egg they just bought. Immediately, man and cockatoo flee the danger zone. This (almost) wordless cartoon-like picture book tells a hilarious story. The unusual illustrations in black-and-white plus bright yellow or royal blue depict silhouette-like figures and scenes reminiscent of shadow-plays. Readers will breathlessly turn the pages and open the fold-out flaps to follow the stylised, reduced figures as the witty adventure comes to an unexpected end. (4+) ◆

64

Robb, Don (text)

Smith, Anne (illus.)

Ox, house, stick : the history of our alphabet

Watertown, MA : Charlesbridge, 2007. – 48 p.

ISBN 978-1-57091-609-0

Alphabet – Origins – Development

This concise non-fiction picture book traces the development of the Roman alphabet from its origins to the present day. For each of the 26 letters (used by English-speaking people), the author explains how the shape of the original symbol or letter and its meaning gradually changed from the first Egyptian picture symbols (ca. 2,000 BC) up to the Roman alphabet (ca. 100 AD) as they were borrowed and passed on by the Sinaitic peoples (1,500 BC), the Phoenicians (1,000 BC), and the Greeks (800-400 BC). Accompanied by appealing and informative illustrations, the book provides a clear main text, additional details in differently coloured boxes, and a short bibliography. This varied mix turns a seemingly dry topic into a diverting read for all ages. (10+)

65

Sheth, Kashmira

Keeping corner

New York, N.Y. : Hyperion, 2007. – 281 p.

ISBN 978-0-7868-3859-2

India/1918 – Independence movement –
Child marriage – Widow – Emancipation

Leela, a spoiled 12-year-old girl, engaged at age two and married at nine, doesn't care much about education or politics. Adorned with colourful saris and bracelets, she cheerfully awaits her anu ceremony after which she will move into the family home of her husband. Yet after his sudden death, the Brahman caste custom forces her to shave her hair, stay indoors for a full year, never remarry, and live a life of eternal mourning. Luckily, her elder brother and her former schoolteacher decide to challenge this tradition, provide her with a proper education, and thus present her with some hope for a bearable future. Set in 1918, against the backdrop of India's growing independence movement led by Gandhi, this absorbing novel easily makes readers identify with the young heroine as she matures into a thoughtful young woman. (12+) ♦

66

Tankard, Jeremy (text/illus.)

Grumpy Bird

New York : Scholastic Press, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-0-439-85147-3

Bird – Bad mood – Company – Fun – Happiness

»When Bird woke up, he was grumpy.« Since he doesn't really feel like eating, playing, or even flying, the bad-tempered hero grudgingly decides to walk. If only all the other animals didn't bother him with their silly questions and cheerfulness. Yet as he stomps through the field and forest, Sheep, Rabbit, Raccoon, Beaver, and Fox start following him and copy his every move. Bird eventually manages to see the funny side of this, his grumpiness vanishes into thin air, and he invites them all to »fly back to my nest for a snack.« The irresistible mixed-media illustrations present a motley crew of cartoon-like animals with thick black outlines. The comical, boldly-coloured drawings are superimposed on pale photographs of farmland and forest scenery. This laugh-out-loud story about a silly parade is bound to cheer up any old grump. (4+) ●

Austria

67

Axster, Lilly (text)

Niederer, Christina (design)

Aebi, Christine (illus.)

Almhofer, Edith (ed.)

Alles Gut : die Geschichte von Leonies Umzug

(All's well : the story of Leonie's move)

Gumpoldskirchen : de' A-Verlag, 2007. – [44] p.

(Panoptikum)

ISBN 978-3-901867-28-6

Germany – Istanbul – Girl – Moving house

Leonie's mother gets transferred to Istanbul. Yet, Leonie speaks hardly any Turkish and, what's even worse, won't she be all alone there? At the same time in Istanbul, Fidan and Suzan start preparing for the German girl's arrival.

While Fidan is looking forward to meeting the new play-fellow, Suzan is afraid that Fidan will then be only Leonie's friend and not hers anymore. As they are anxiously waiting for the big day, lots of different emotions are whirling through the three children's heads – visually depicted in this book through to-do-lists, German-Turkish word lists, and glimpses of the packed moving items. The move itself is presented in clear, coloured pen-and-ink drawings, whereas the anticipation of the new life is shown in chaotically swirling colour-pencil pictures that illustrate everyone's inner turmoil. Taking the momentous changes in the life of a German-speaking girl as an example, the artists demonstrate what any child may feel who has to adapt to life in a foreign country. (7+) ★

68

Çelik, Aygen-Sibel

Seidenhaar

(Silk Hair)

Wien : Ueberreuter, 2007. – 143 p.

ISBN 978-3-8000-5288-2

Islam – Qur'an – Fundamentalism – Cultural conflict

Be it among her relatives or among her friends, Sinem, a girl of Turkish descent born in Frankfurt, is constantly confronted with the cultural conflict that all migrant families living in Germany face. At school, for example, they discuss the wearing of headscarves. Using realistic social constellations as an example, the author (who is Turkish-born herself) describes typical problems of young Muslim women in Germany. The harder they try to combine Islamic traditions with a more liberal life style, the bigger

the problems that arise. This is true both for their friendships with peers and for their family situations. In a literarily convincing form, this book shows that integration is a multi-layered problem. (10+) ◆

69

Fasan, Inge (text)

Wolfsgruber, Linda (illus.)

Pils, Richard (ed.)

Das Meer ist riesengroß

(The sea is vast)

Weitra : Verl. Publ. P No 1, Bibliothek der Provinz, [2007]. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-3-85252-765-9

Sea – Longing – Imagination – Growing up – Wish fulfilment

At the end of this unusual book for all ages, which plays with multiple shades of blue, the (almost) grown-up narrator has finally arrived at his dream destination, the unimaginably vast sea. His yearning for it started in his childhood. He was promised holidays at the sea with his parents but every year something happened to prevent it: an accident, an illness, the purchase of an expensive new TV set – on which the sea itself was visible but not its huge dimensions – the parents' divorce, a first love, etc. Finally, one day, the boy boards the train to »the end of the walkable earth«. The succinct text expresses the child's longing for an imagined place that seems almost extraterrestrial. The quest for it accompanies him as he grows up. Ocean-blue visual »blanks« in the sequence of events allow ample room for the reader's imagination. (8+)

70

Holländer, Karen (text)

Krapp, Thilo (illus.)

Ach hätte – könnte – wäre ich!

(If only I had – could – were!)

St. Pölten [et al.] : Residenz-Verl., 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-7017-2016-3

Competitive behaviour – Possessiveness – Vanity – Envy – Children's poetry

With its funny drawings and collages accompanied by rhymed verses, this picture book uses concrete examples to illustrate the old and often painful realisation that there is always someone better (prettier, smarter, richer, wittier, more successful...) than I (you, he, she, it). The parade of envious and sad people ends with Fritz: »Amusedly he thinks that's life, despite my baldness I'll survive ... his favourite hobby is giving parties. ... He wants them to

laugh and dance about. Could anyone surpass him?
This I doubt.« And the moral of the story is: The most sensible way to avoid turning one's only life into misery is to forget about one's shortcomings and be happy.
After all, everything is relative. (7+)

71

Wendt, Albert (text)

Blazejovsky, Maria (illus.)

Prinzessin Zartfuß und die sieben Elefanten

(Princess Tenderfoot and the seven elephants)

Wien : Jungbrunnen, 2007. – 68 p.

ISBN 978-3-7026-5780-2

Overweight – Elephants – Dance – Music –

Improvisation – Generosity – Self-interest

Seven circus elephants, a famous conductor, and a very fat and very clever little girl come to the rescue of a small group of travellers who are stuck with their cars at the foot of a mountain of volcanic debris. The heavyweights start dancing and stomping to flatten the mountain, accompanied by music that the conductor makes the people improvise. Yet suddenly, the ground is too low instead of too high and the angry people plan to line up the elephants to create a bridge over the crater. In the meantime, however, the elephants and the girl have walked on and are dancing their soon-to-be-famous dance all over the world. As for the tourists, they remain behind in their old clunkers, stunned and helpless. This is the retelling of an old legend in a linguistically and visually funny way interspersed with elements of present-day psychology. (5+)

Germany

72

Bach, Tamara

Jetzt ist hier

(Now is here)

Hamburg : Oetinger, 2007. – 352 p.

ISBN 978-3-7891-3169-1

Group behaviour – Search for identity –

Puberty crisis – Growing up

This book focuses on a group of pubescent teenagers during the school holidays at the end of the year. They all have their particular family situation that is sometimes quite difficult to cope with: Bowie's mother died; Finchen, the only girl, has no-one but her mother; Mono has to look after his little sister because of his parents' marital problems; Zanker's dad suffers a stroke. Amorous entanglements do not develop as planned, and when

school starts again, the boys' unauthorised tampering with the school computer leads to a huge scandal. The text, resembling a rap song, plays with interior monologue and creates a connection between the simultaneous events in short paragraphs focusing on each protagonist in turn. Thus, on the carefully designed linguistic level, the author successfully creates an image of the respective teenager's emotional chaos. (12+)

73

Baltscheit, Martin (text/illus.)

Major Dux oder der Tag, an dem die Musik verboten wurde! : erlebt und notiert von Bartolomäus Bob

(Major Dux or The day music was banned! :

witnessed and written down by Bartholomäus Bob)

Köln : Boje, 2007. – 93 p.

ISBN 978-3-414-82033-4

Dictatorship – Abuse of power – Music – Prohibition – Resistance

When a dictator bans music and any kind of sound, a writer sets out and risks his life to find the person who caused this catastrophe. He discovers that the »Minister of Sound« wants to find the lost love of his life, a singer. At his office windows, the minister has installed huge receivers to hear her sing. Naturally, no other sound must interfere with it. World peace (or noise, that is) is finally restored and everyone is happy – if only thanks to the purposeful resistance of a brave group of artists, animals, and imaginary creatures. In simple language, presented like a rap song and illustrated accordingly, this tale presents a highly complex situation. A dramatized Jazz audio book on CD was released by the same publisher. (12+)

74

Boie, Kirsten

Alhambra

Hamburg : Oetinger, 2007. – 430 p.

ISBN 978-3-7891-3170-7

Time travel – Granada/1492 – America/1492 – Inquisition

A school class goes on a language trip to Southern Spain. While the students are strolling through Granada, one of the boys called Boston discovers an ancient painted tile at a jumble sale from those times when the Moors reigned over the Andalusian town. This tile sends him on a time travel back to 1492, a significant year in history: The Moorish reign on the Iberian Peninsula is about to end, the Sephardi Jews are about to be driven out of Spain,

and Columbus is about to set sail for India and discover America. Caught in the crossfire of history, the modern-day boy gets into life-threatening situations. The author describes both the historical and the fictitious protagonists with distance but using modern psychological knowledge to create a captivating story that oscillates between past and present. (10+)

75

Brodersen, Inge / Dammann, Rüdiger

Das neue Europa : in Vielfalt geeint – Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Union

(The new Europe : united in diversity – the history and the future of the European Union)

Ravensburg : Ravensburger Buchverl., 2007. – 159 p.

ISBN 978-3-473-55138-5

Europe/450 B.C.-2007 – Unification process

In 2007, 27 countries were members of the European Union, some others have applied to join soon. The term »Europe«, its territory, and its name have had a changeable and often tragic history – as the innumerable wars and bloody battles that were fought on this continent clearly attest. The bigger the new Europe (initially created after World War II and enlarged after the end of the Cold War) becomes, the more important it is to provide information about its history and the neighbouring nations who move closer together. Despite its limited space, this non-fiction book offers a wide variety of facts, as well as the most important dates and developments, complemented by numerous illustrations. An index of countries and Internet addresses neatly round off this exquisite volume. (10+) ♦

76

Burkhard, Markus

Macht ihr eure Wende, ich bin verliebt! : Pauls Tagebuch im letzten Jahr der DDR

(You take care of the reunification, I am in love! :

Paul's diary during the last year of the GDR)

München : Terzio, 2007. – 112 p.

(edition quinto)

ISBN 978-3-89835-875-0

German Democratic Republic – Germany/1989-1990 – Reunification – Youth – Everyday life – Love

Set in a tiny village community in the German Democratic Republic in 1989, this book depicts a village life that will soon be turned completely upside down (just like that of the whole country). Every single day and without any explanation, more and more teachers and pupils disappear. They travel to Hungary or Czechoslovakia where

the borders are about to open. All of a sudden, Paul's family is free to go to Bremen and Austria for a holiday. Paul, however, is in love with Cornelia – and this emotional upheaval has the explosive political situation pale in comparison. German reunification on 3rd October 1990 heralds a new era, and Paul faces difficulties as a host for the »Dimdl« (girl) from Austria, Fanny from Bremen, and his Cornelia. In a laconic and serious yet witty style, first-person narrator Paul reports the not-quite-everyday joys and sorrows of a 15-/16-year-old boy during those years of political change. (12+) ♦

77

Charms, Daniil (text)

Glasauer, Willi (illus.)

Braungardt, Ganna-Maria (transl.)

Ich, Petka und der Esel zuletzt

(Me, Petka, and last of all the donkey)

Berlin : Aufbau, 2007. – 30 p.

(Aufbau-Bilderbücher)

ISBN 978-3-351-04076-5

Hiking – Encounter – Height – Cohesion – Adaption – Imagination

In this nonsense tale by famous Russian author Daniil Charms (1905-1942), an adventurous boy sets off without a destination. He meets another guy and, cheerfully whistling and singing, they march on and »hit on« a tiny man, a huge man (who tucks them all under his arm so they can travel faster), a donkey, a boat, and a car (which also need to be carried) until, in the end, the huge man finds an elephant, the tiny one a little dog to ride on. Thus the party arrives at a guesthouse where they sleep in improvised beds according to their size. The next morning, they eventually leave town and live happily ever ... Full-page coloured ink drawings illustrate the chain of unbelievable events in a believably realistic way. (6+)

78

Damm, Antje (text/illus.)

Alle Zeit der Welt : Anlässe um miteinander über Zeit zu sprechen

(All the time in the world : opportunities to talk about time)

Frankfurt am Main : Moritz, 2007. – [92] p.

ISBN 978-3-89565-183-0

Time

Real (i.e. measurable) time and »perceived« time (as often used in everyday speech) is captured in almost 100 different situations and photographs: then and now,

morning and evening, times of rushing around, quiet times, seasons of the year, a lifetime. Thus, this book offers children, ideally together with their parents, the chance to reflect on their own ways of dealing with and experiencing time. While five-year-old Tim says: »Time is when you can do everything very slowly«, ten-year-old Leonie states: »Time never ends, it goes on and on.« These statements inspire readers to philosophise about the phenomenon of time, as for example the Bible, writers, and intellectuals have done for centuries. Photographs, drawings, and other visual material present many a surprising new connection. (5+) ●

79

Drvenkar, Zoran (text)

Baltscheit, Martin (illus.)

Zarah : Du hast doch keine Angst, oder?

(Zarah : You're not afraid, are you?)

Berlin : Bloomsbury, 2007. – [68] p.

ISBN 978-3-8270-5249-0

Forest – Fear – Monster – Malice – Imagination

Four girls (not exactly the nicest sort) take a walk through the nearby forest and make little Zarah join them as fifth wheel. During the walk, they tell her the most terrible tales about some (absolutely harmless) creatures that they meet. A mole, a bat, a toad are thus turned into »monsters« – yet, every time, Zarah just utters a truly surprised »oh!« What the others don't know: Exactly these imagined monsters actually live in Zarah's house, and they love her dearly. In the evening, Zarah tells her flat-mates that the only creatures the girls met in the forest were a few boring animals. Numerous woodcuts, some of them full-page pictures, show the »monstrous« girls and other monsters for readers to shudder and laugh at in this unusual and imaginative picture book. (5+)

80

Erlbruch, Wolf (text/illus.)

Ente, Tod und Tulpe

(Duck, death, and tulip)

München : Kunstmann, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-3-88897-461-8

Duck – Dying – Awareness of death –
Death –

The Turkish word »lâle«, meaning »tulip«, contains the same letters as the word »Allah«. This may be the reason why tulips were worshipped in the Ottoman Empire and why an almost black flower is used as the companion of Death in this large-format picture book – serving at the

same time as a symbol of hope for every creature on the verge of death. Forgiving and friendly Death, wearing a tartan cowl, almost affectionately accompanies a duck through her remaining days, until one night, coldness suddenly spreads through her feathers and she doesn't wake up in the morning. Before that day, both protagonists seem full of life and a hesitant friendship even develops between them. All the feelings in these essential situations are powerfully articulated through the two figures and their postures and facial expressions. Just like in his other books, the artist uses textual and visual means economically – paper collages and (colour-) pencil – and thus achieves a maximum of touching clarity and truthfulness. (6+) ★ ●

81

Essig, Rolf-Bernhard

Schreiberlust und Dichterfrust : kleine Gewohnheiten und große Geheimnisse der Schriftsteller

(Author's pleasure and poet's pain :
the little habits and big secrets of writers)

München : Hanser, 2007. – 316 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-20851-

Writer – Literary production

»Art is beautiful but a lot of work.« This utterance (by Bavarian comedian Karl Valentin) serves as the motto for this collection of literature producers' hands-on experience and compendium of practical tips for young aspiring writers. Numerous insightful quotations by well-known authors about their own works reveal the highly individual way in which literature is produced. They prove that the creative process can hardly be taught or learned. Women who write were (and still are) faced with other constraints than their male colleagues. In a captivating way, the world of literary production is presented by discussing the following aspects: the way from the idea to the book, the chance of success or failure, reasons why people write, advantages and disadvantages of thorough planning, etc. This book offers a delightful read for writers as well as for (mere) readers. (12+)

82

Fühmann, Franz (adapt.)

Gleich, Jacky (illus.)

Ein Sommernachtstraum :

ein Märchen nach Shakespeare

(A midsummer night's dream :

a fairy tale based on Shakespeare's play)

Rostock : Hinstorff, 2007. – 40 p.

ISBN 978-3-356-01190-6

Shakespeare, William / A midsummer night's dream – Adaptation

Franz Fühmann's prose adaptation of Shakespeare's play

»A midsummer night's dream«, tracing the dramatic

entanglements between the lovers from the fairy realm

and the human world, is a children's classic by now.

(It was first published by Kinderbuchverlag in Berlin/GDR in

1968.) Delighting young and old reader alike, Fühmann's

witty language and directness give additional vitality to

the plot. Jacky Gleich's modern illustrations in this new

edition present the well-known human-animal masquera-

de in an endearingly un-ethereal, un-classical light. Kings

and lowly human beings act in a histrionic and slightly

caricature-like, idealised manner. As for the fairies –

nothing much is known about them; in this book at least,

they are depicted as winged creatures in transparent,

almost invisible light-grey-and-white. (6+)

83

Gießler, Christof (text)

Warter, Hubert (illus.)

Geniale Querköpfe : Träumer, Schulschwänzer und Genies – über Albert Einstein, Jules Verne und 15 weitere eigensinnige Persönlichkeiten

(Brilliant nonconformists : dreamers, truants, and

geniuses – about Albert Einstein, Jules Verne, and

other 15 headstrong personalities)

Kempen : Moses, 2007. – 111 p.

ISBN 978-3-89777-333-2

Famous person – Biography – Coincidence – Curiosity

»Stubborn and obstinate, always slightly discontented with their own achievements and delighted when something works out that no-one else is interested in.« This statement from the book's preface is true for all of the

»brilliant nonconformists« presented in this book. How-

ever, at some point in their lives, the really great ones are

noticed by the world; sometimes they even acquire

money or fame or both. This is as true for the oldest per-

son (Anna Maria Sibylla Merian, born 1647) as it is for

the youngest (Bill Gates, born 1955). Their lives and professions could not be more different – yet the statement quoted above fits all of them. Christof Gießler honours these people in a humorous and witty text. The illustrations mirror their unconventionality and portray central biographical details. (10+)

84

Gleichauf, Ingeborg

Sein wie keine andere : Simone de Beauvoir – Schriftstellerin und Philosophin

(Unlike other women : Simone de Beauvoir –

writer and philosopher)

München : Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl., 2007. – 298 p.

(dtv ; 62324 : Reihe Hanser)

ISBN 978-3-423-62324-7

Beauvoir, Simone de – Biography

In this biography of the French feminist Simone de Beau-

voir (1908-1986), Ingeborg Gleichauf focuses mainly on

the connection between her personal life and her work,

the reception and influence of which remain controver-

sial. Young adults, the target audience for this book, see

Beauvoir's self-determined life – including her emanci-

pation from her upper middle-class upbringing, her life-

long (yet not exclusive) relationship with Jean-Paul

Sartre, her friendship with some of the most important

contemporaries of the 20th century, and, particularly,

her work as philosopher and author – as a way of life that

is constantly reassessed. This carefully edited volume

comprises extensive photographic material, a bibliogra-

phy, an index, and a map of Paris with all the places that

were important for Beauvoir. (16+)

85

Grimm, Jacob / Grimm, Wilhelm (text)

Janssen, Susanne (illus.)

Hänsel und Gretel

(Hansel and Gretel)

Rostock : Hinstorff, 2007. – 54 p.

ISBN 978-3-356-01226-2

Forest – Witch – Cannibalism

To an even greater degree than Susanne Janssen's

»Rotkäppchen« (Little Red Riding Hood, 2001), this pic-

ture book challenges conventional fairytale illustration.

The large-format sheets, playing with realistic objects

arranged in a surrealist way, present earthen-coloured

double page pictures from which the glowing, bright red

colour of the witch's gown bursts forth at the most drama-

tic moments. The thoroughly designed text, which starts

off in large type, is later accompanied by darkish-red vignette figures from the gloomy forest in which the children get lost. The dramatic turn of events is visible on the protagonists' faces and in the way the characters are placed among partly threatening objects and bleak modern architecture. Susanne Janssen has created truly disturbing pictures that aptly capture the atmosphere of the original Brother Grimm text. (12+) ●

86

Grimm, Jacob / Grimm, Wilhelm (text)

Pacovská, Květa (illus.)

Rotkäppchen

(Little Red Riding Hood)

Bargeheide : Neugebauer, 2007. – [28] p.

(Minedition)

ISBN 978-3-86566-068-8

Girl – Grandmother – Wolf – Disobedience – Mortal danger – Rescue

Everybody knows the Brother Grimm fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood, which has been illustrated in a huge variety of styles. In this book, Květa Pacovská, the Czech Hans-Christian-Andersen-Award winner, presents her interpretation of the tale. She sketches and scribbles abstract forms, draws with pencil and felt-tip pens, creates collages with cut-out coloured and silver paper, and adds layers of paint in dramatically strong colours. Appropriately, the colour red predominates. At the end, she inserts a conclusion that does not exist in the original story: »For the rest of your life, you will never again want to stray from the path alone.« Thus she provides an astonishingly direct punch line for the abstractly illustrated tale. This extraordinary book lends itself perfectly to analysing the question of how and from what age on children are able to understand abstract portrayals and manage to associate them with texts that they are familiar with. (10+)

87

Herles, Wolfgang (ed.)

Mai, Klaus-Rüdiger (text)

Bücher, die Geschichte machten :

von der Bibel bis zu Harry Potter

(Books that made history : from the Bible to Harry Potter)

München : cbj, 2007. – 318 p.

ISBN 978-3-570-13362-0

World literature – Non-fiction books – Art – Sciences – Religion

This weighty volume introduces the content and states the significance of writings and literary works that have

influenced the cultural history of mankind. Their creation spans many centuries from approximately 2,350 BC, when the Egyptian »Book of the Dead« was written, to the publication of the last volume of the »Harry Potter« series in 2007. The selection of titles within such a huge time frame is, of course, partly influenced by the editor's personal interests. The book's chronological arrangement of chapters and the connecting historical background information make for a clear structure, as do the well-arranged layout and typography. Authors' biographies and (visual) references to their lives, as well as details about the origin, transmission, and rediscovery of anonymous works, offer reliable basic knowledge and show cultural interconnections. (12+) ◆

88

Janisch, Heinz (text)

Blau, Aljoscha (illus.)

Der Ritt auf dem Seepferd : alte und durch wundersame Zufälle neu entdeckte Schriften über die unglaublichen Abenteuer des Carl Friedrich Hieronymus Freiherr von Münchhausen

(The ride on the sea horse : old documents, miraculously rediscovered, about the unbelievable adventures of Carl Friedrich Hieronymus Baron Münchhausen)

Berlin : Aufbau, 2007. – 30 p.

(Aufbau Bilderbücher)

ISBN 978-3-351-04074-1

Münchhausen tales – Adaptation

Is there anyone who has not heard of these proverbial tall tales? This picture book adaptation opens with a scene, taken from one of the episodes of Baron Münchhausen's life »told by himself«. It shows the stone sculpture of the Baron's ride on a sea horse. The opening scene is followed by Heinz Janisch's own tall tale that adds bewildering details from handwritten documents, allegedly found in an attic, to the commonly known and widely published marvellous adventures of Münchhausen. The fantastical incidents are portrayed in full-page pictures carried out in delicate colours and complemented by drawn figures and vignettes. This book will delight readers of all ages. (8+) ●

89

Jeschke, Mathias (text)
Muggenthaler, Eva (illus.)

Peter Pumm sucht einen Freund

(Peter Pumm is looking for a friend)

Köln : Boje, 2007. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-3-414-82048-8

Loneliness – Friend – Search – Journey

Peter Pumm, a rotund little creature, feels lonely in his home inside the blackberry hedge. Therefore, he is happy when mouse Klaus visits and agrees to accompany him on his search for a friend who likes the same things as he does. Unfortunately, however, there is no one to be found, no matter how many creatures Peter asks. Instead, he and mouse Klaus have to fear for their lives (because of the cat, the bear, etc). In the end, they realise that actually it's they who like the same things – from vanilla ice-cream and hot blackberries, doing summersaults and smelling the scent of dog roses, to walking through the woods with a friend. And that's what they start with immediately. Detailed whimsical pencil and colour-pencil illustrations depict the seemingly futile search for a friend. (4+)

90

Kordon, Klaus (text)
Knorr, Peter (illus.)

Piratensohn

(The pirate's son)

Weinheim [et al.] : Beltz & Gelberg, 2007. – 226 p.

ISBN 978-3-407-79923-4

Orient – Boy – Trade journey – Pirate – Escape – Fight – Reconciliation

This is an enthralling tale told in the style of »1001 nights«. Young Assad sets off on his first sea voyage on board his uncle Saadi's sailing vessel. On the return journey, the ship is taken over by pirates and his uncle dies in the attack. For Assad, this is the beginning of a lifetime adventure because infamous pirate captain Turuk intends to raise the boy as his own son on his ship. Yet, the boy manages to escape. Guided by a father-like friend, he and some other children roam around the land and desert together until, years later, they encounter Turuk again. After the young man has (apparently) defeated his old patron in a last fight, the two are finally reconciled. Eventually, Assad feels truly free to start his own life. Full-page pictures with opulent oriental genre-scenes complete the fairytale book. (8+)

91

Kratzenberg-Annies, Volker

Mission Weltall : wie Astronauten leben und arbeiten

(Mission Outer Space : how astronauts live and work)

München : Knesebeck, 2007. – 95 p.

ISBN 978-3-89660-428-6

Space travel – Astronaut – Space research

International space travel and »on-site« space research have already (or only?) been in existence for 50 years. This outstanding non-fiction book enriched with excellent photographs presents the primary technical data, complemented by comments of famous astronauts (or cosmonauts and taikonauts as they are called in Russia and China). Texts and pictures describe life in a spaceship in great detail. Research labs on board the ISS (International Space Station) have the task of solving pressing problems and answer questions such as the one about our future: Is human or organic life outside of planet Earth possible? Plenty of room is given to the astronauts' training and the various steps during their journey into space and back to earth. This is a well-designed, comprehensive and topical book. (10+)

92

Kroker, Holger (text)
Schulze, Marc-Alexander (illus.)

Pinguine unter Palmen : Abenteuer Polarforschung

(Penguins under palm trees : the adventure of polar research)

Frankfurt am Main : Fischer-Verl., 2007. – 214 p.

(Fischer Schatzinsel)

ISBN 978-3-596-85240-4

Arctic – Antarctic – Polar research – Climate change

Hardly anyone realises that the Arctic Ocean is actually the largest sea in the world, even if it consists mainly of ice. The Arctic region is inhabited by roughly two million people living north of the Arctic Circle in America, Europe, and Asia. In contrast, the Antarctic is a continent only inhabited by scientists who work there. In this book, text boxes provide enlightening information, while longer, narrative texts describe the history and the present situation of the northernmost and southernmost regions of the Earth, their endangered flora and fauna, the scientific research, and their future importance in the light of climate changes. Realistic colour illustrations complement the text of this beautifully designed volume. (8+)

93

Lambeck, Silke (text)

Teich, Karsten (illus.)

Herr Röslein

(Mr. Röslein) <proper name>

Berlin : Bloomsbury, 2007. – 119 p.

ISBN 978-3-8270-5197-4

Moving house – Friendship – Magician

Moritz feels lonely in the new town. At school, he is too shy to become accepted and he doesn't find new friends easily. Yet, things seem to improve when he meets his neighbour from downstairs. Old Mr. Röslein clearly must have some magical power, and he acts and looks at life differently from normal people. He calls himself a »problem solver«. One thing he is particularly good at is spreading a good mood and thus making other people happy. This really helps with Mum's boss, so consequently it helps Mum, and Moritz, too. What a pity that Mr. Röslein leaves one day. He claims to have »missions« in other parts of the world, but he promises to return.

Written in a light style, this story takes readers into a cheerful, magical world where everything (good) seems possible. (7+)

94

Meschenmoser, Sebastian (text/illus.)

Herr Eichhorn und der erste Schnee

(Mr. Squirrel and the first snow)

Esslingen : Esslinger, 2007. – [60] p.

(Esslinger Atelier)

ISBN 978-3-480-22359-6

Animals – Snow – Hibernation

Mr. Squirrel, Hedgehog, and Bear have never seen snow because they normally hibernate all winter. With all kinds of tricks, they keep themselves awake this time and then set off in search for something white, wet, soft and cold. The things they find – such as an empty can (white, cold, but not soft), an old tooth brush (white, fairly soft, but not cold), a lost sock (soft, white, cold enough?) – make them wonder. Suddenly, the first snow flakes are falling. That's it! Quickly, they build a snow man and then, eventually, go into hibernation. Sebastian Meschenmoser's precise way of observing and presenting animals – showing them as anthropomorphic characters yet not in a cuddly way – is fantastic. The expressiveness of pictures and text even surpasses that in »Herr Eichhorn und der Mond« (Mr. Squirrel and the moon) (2006). (5+) ●

95

Moers, Walter (text/illus.)

Der Schreckenmeister : ein kulinarisches
Märchen aus Zamonien von Gofid Letterkerl;
neu erzählt von Hildegunst von Mythenmetz

(The master of the witches : a culinary fairy tale from Zamonien by G. Letterkerl; retold by Optimus Yarnspinner)

München [et al.] : Piper, 2007. – 382 p.

ISBN 978-3-492-04937-5

Mythical creatures – Monster – Art of cooking –
Topsy-turvy world – Telepathy – Alchemy

Succubius Eißpin (Icepin), master of the witches, his late childhood love Floria, and – last but not least – the witches themselves, repulsive fantasy creatures, are brought together under adventurous circumstances in the faraway country of Zamonien by Echo the little c(r)at, who intends to save his own life with this mission. The Zamonian expression »distillation of dextrorotatory steam-thoughts« shall serve as one example for the numerous obligatory word-creations, such as hyper- and sub- and faux-pas-words of great charm and splendid bulkiness. Language is the true hero of this book. However, the plot and its frequent allusions to and loans from classical German literature, such as Gottfried Keller's novella »Spiegel das Kätzchen« (Spiegel the cat), are fascinating and leave nothing to be desired. (12+)

96

Papan (text)

Glück, Gerhard (illus.)

Schaf, Kindchen, Schaf!

(Sheep well, little child, sheep well)

Oldenburg : Lappan, 2007. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-3-8303-1118-8

Family – Keeping sheep – Falling asleep

Father adores sheep, he even day-dreams about keeping one. The family agrees, and shortly after, ten woolly creatures are grazing in the front yard. When winter arrives, the sheep need to come inside (no problem, there is the guest room). Yet, it's getting a bit turbulent. Both the housewife's tidiness and the family's sleep are disturbed. That's why they need to remember an old trick for falling asleep: The insomniac simply has to count the sheep as they are jumping over the beds one by one, again and again – so the family can continue counting – and sleeping. They soon decide to patent this method and lend the animals to sleepless neighbours. The text treats this extraordinary situation utterly seriously, while the pictures with their painted and sculptured friendly Plasticine protagonists convey a lot of humour. (6+)

97

Pressler, Mirjam

Golem stiller Bruder : Roman

(Golem silent brother : novel)

Weinheim [et al.] : Beltz & Gelberg, 2007. – 372 p.

ISBN 978-3-407-81021-2

Prague/1600 – Jews – Golem – Antisemitism – Siblings – Friendship – Sacrificial death

Little Shmulik sacrifices his own young life to snatch the elixir of life from Golem, an animate clay figure who, according to legend, was created by Rabbi Judah Loew for the well-being of humanity. This elixir is a small document that used to contain the words »Elohim emet« (God is true). Now it only reads »Elohim met« (God is dead), and so the artificial man suddenly turns wild, focusing his destructive powers on the Jews of Prague and his creator, the rabbi. In this impressive and captivating novel adaptation of the classic myth, the author has her protagonist and the omniscient narrator side by side describe the life and the downfall of Golem. Along the way, she creates a picture of the customs and traditions of the Jews living amongst Europe's Christian majority around 1600. (8+) ♦

98

Schulz, Hermann (text)

Krejschi, Tobias (illus.)

Die schlaue Mama Sambona

(Clever Mama Sambona)

Wuppertal : Hammer, 2007. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-3-7795-0149-7

Death – Refusal – Trick – Zest for life

According to an African legend, Death has only three attempts to claim a human life. Mama Sambona, queen of the island of Ukerewe in the middle of Lake Victoria (called Lake Ukerewe in her language), is an old woman but she is not ready to die just yet. She plots such clever plans to trick Death that, even at his third and last attempt, he completely forgets his original intentions when Mama Sambona asks him to dance with her. In this book, the grim European motif of the Dance of Death proves to be a life-saving event. To depict the friendly, truly ancient, yet very sprightly queen, the illustrator uses earthy colours with a lot of red, while the Grim Reaper is presented in a dark suit in the pictures and through black lino-cut vignettes in the text. This colour contrast in the pasty full-page pictures clearly expresses the tension between a mundane zest for life and the netherworld. (6+)

99

Schulz, Hermann

Der silberne Jaguar

(The silver jaguar)

Hamburg : Carlsen, 2007. – 180 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-58176-1

Germany – Belarus – Aunt – Nephew – Cultural contact – Cultural shock

Rufus and his aunt travel to Belarus to deliver a wheelchair to a disabled woman. There, the boy comes into contact with his Belarusian peers and their lives in a very adventurous way. At first, the wheelchair – which the Belarusian boys dub »silver jaguar« because of its perfection – is stolen, but after a series of detours, it eventually reaches its intended destination. The boys themselves regularly »borrow« old, discarded, and mostly broken wheelchairs from the hospital cellar to organise downhill races on steep roads – one of the few adventures in their dull everyday life. The title of the book already hints at the socio-cultural gap between the different living conditions that the readers are confronted with in a sparse and brittle yet very gripping language. (12+) ♦

100

Tuckermann, Anja

Das verschluckte Lachen

(The swallowed laughter)

Düsseldorf : Sauerländer, 2007. – 110 p.

ISBN 978-3-7941-6091-4

Girl – Single father – Boy – Friendship – Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity-Disorder

Elli's father works as long-distance lorry driver and is hardly ever at home; her Mum is dead. Yet, the girl feels quite at home in her best friend Sascha's family. Sascha, however, has problems at school – the medical term for his condition is attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder (ADHD). He can only learn to cope with them with diligence and medical help and by going to a special school. Thus, Elli suddenly feels left alone. She has lost her cheerful, most important friend. Still, Sascha is determined to come back, and eventually manages to do so. Turning a medical diagnosis into a literary tale, the author uses this example to present a child's complicated world and huge emotions in a haunting and touching way. She succeeds by employing a direct and believable language with plenty of realistic humour. (8+)

Switzerland

101

Diedrich, Doris (text)

Zabala, Javier (illus.)

Der einsame Drache : eine Geschichte

(The lonely dragon)

Zürich : Bohem Press, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-85581-445-9

Dragon – Boy – Loneliness – Friendship

One day, a lonely boy and a dragon who feels so forlorn that he constantly plays his violin meet. At first, they are afraid of each other but, as the dragon music wafts through the air, they quickly become friends. The boy asks the dragon to come with him down to the village as his playfellow. And so they make music and stroll through the streets in perfect harmony with themselves and the world. The illustrations of this book stand out for their delicacy. Human beings, houses, and animals are painted and collaged as transparently coloured planes, partly resembling Japanese ink-drawings. Even the (supposedly dangerous) dragon is only sketched in red. A great tranquillity emanates from the pictures. (5+)

102

Duda, Christian (text)

Friese, Julia (illus.)

Alle seine Entlein : eine Geschichte

(All his little ducks : a tale)

Zürich : Bajazzo, 2007. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-3-907588-85-7

Fox – Duckling – Parenthood – Adoption

Due to some extraordinary circumstances, Konrad the fox becomes a duck daddy. The hungry fox craves roasted duck and, even though the duck hunt fails, he is at least left with an egg. Soon after, a duckling hatches and immediately chirps »MummyMummy«. »No, it's Daddy!«, Konrad retorts spontaneously although he had planned to say »I'm going to eat you!«. Still, you can't eat a duckling who's calling you Daddy. You'd have to wait until he's grown up. Yet, grown-up children fall in love, and thus, Konrad soon has to look after a new egg, and a new duckling, and so on until he has raised a whole forest of ducklings – but up to his peaceful death, hungry Konrad never again tastes roasted duck. Big and small pictures in mixed media technique – collages, pencil drawings, and coloured sheets – show scenes from this unusual (fairy-tale-like) friendship. (4+)

103

Lenz, Patrick (illus.)

Huang, Shui hua (idea)

Tom und der Vogel

(Tom and the bird)

Zürich : Atlantis, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-7152-0537-3

Friendship – Bird – Freedom

In clear colours and shapes, this quiet and contemplative textless tale in (puzzle-) pictures tells the story of Tom and the little bird. Readers will catch a first glimpse of the setting from a bird's eye view on the book's frontpapers, which show a big city. On the following pages, the pictures zoom in on a market square until they offer detailed views of the action: Tom discovers the lonely, caged animal, his father buys it for him, and at first, the boy is truly happy. Soon, however, the bird starts losing its feathers and sadly crouches on the bottom of its cage. Teary-eyed, the boy sets it free again. In his dreams, the two of them are soaring through the air together. The bird's needs win over human selfishness in the end (as can be seen on the endpapers). (4+) ●

104

Lewinsky, Charles (text)

Farner, Chrigel (illus.)

Einmal Erde und zurück : der Besuch des alten Kindes

(Return-ticket to Earth : the old child's visit)

Zürich : Atlantis, 2007. – 159 p.

ISBN 978-3-7152-0527-4

Earth – Visit – Extraterrestrial being – Topsy-turvy world

An extraterrestrial »trainee« comes to Earth. On his home planet, creatures are born as adults from a pumpkin and then mature into »old«, wise children. By chance, this child ends up at the house of a writer who explains a lot about life on Earth and thus himself learns to see things in a new light. Being almost 500 years old, the child is already fairly clever and his brain works clearly and strictly logically. This leads to some complicated situations and unexpected linguistic insights. The extraterrestrial manages to answer questions about language and the Earth's system of values with wit and confidence. Without a hint of didacticism, the text invites readers to reconsider social norms and values and their malleability through language alone. (10+)

105

Lorenz, Franziska (text/illus.)

Zu gross, zu klein, zu ...

(Too big, too small, too ...)

Zürich : Bajazzo-Verl., 2007. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-3-907588-87-1

Perception – Opposite – Language

A little rabbit sets off on his own. While his parents are still sleeping, he embarks on a journey of discovery and experiences amazing things: The whole world seems to be comprised of opposites – one thing is too big, another one too small, too high, too deep, too hot, too cold, too light, too heavy, etc. All of these terms are depicted in clear (yet never simplistic) illustrations that often distort reality in a humorous way. The young rabbit deals with the unknown and, eventually, returns safely to his mum and dad. The aesthetic design and playful manner of this easy-to-handle, square, untearable book provides successful visual and intellectual stimulation for children. Thus, they will easily grasp many terms related to problematic everyday situations and feel that they are able to solve them. (3+) ●

Africa

Morocco (French)

106

Laroui, Fouad (text)

Logié-Manche, Nathalie (illus.)

L' eucalyptus de Noël

(The Christmas eucalyptus)

Agdal, Rabat : Yomad Éd., 2007. – [40] p.

(Rêves d'enfants)

ISBN 978-9954-0-0076-2

Religion – Tolerance – Interculturality

The memory of a childhood experience is the subject matter of this book. On the farm of an American family in Morocco, the small first-person narrator, his siblings, and other children from the village are introduced to the Christian religion and tradition. The Christmas stories and the descriptions of the Christmas celebrations create a lasting impression on the boy, so much so that his grandfather, who is open-minded toward new things and also wants to make foreign customs available to the children, puts up a »Christmas eucalyptus tree« in the living room. However, the neighbours react sceptically and deprecatingly to the tree. The themes of tolerance and peaceful coexistence of religions are compellingly illustrated in this little story for young readers. (5+) ◆

La Réunion (France) (French)

107

Billet, Julia (text)

Margabim, Nana (illus.)

Pourquoi c'est toujours moi qui?

(Why am I always the one who ...?)

Saint-André (La Réunion) : Océan-éd., 2007. – [36] p.

(Océan Jeunesse)

ISBN 978-2-916-53327-8

Question – Answer – Advice – Friendship

»Why am I always the one who ...?«, Lison asks her friend, the Ravenale, also known as the Traveller's Tree. With its large fan-shaped fronds it stands protective at the side of the girl in her doubt. Lison's questions change from day to day: »Why must I clear the table? Be the first one to wash? Sit at this place?« The tree wants to help her and seeks answers to her questions from its friends. However, no answer is satisfactory to the Ravenale. Perhaps the questions require no answer but rather further questions, in order »to tell stories, to travel, to irritate oneself,

to rebel, to dream, to love?« The philosophical text is accompanied by playful, dreamy pictures, which mirror the scepticism of the child and the intensity of feelings. (7+)

108

Moynot, Aurélia (text/illus.)

Moi, bizarre?

(Me, strange?)

Sainte-Clotilde, Réunion : Epsilon éd., 2007. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-2-912949-19-6

Animals – Peculiarity – Variety

»With your head, your nose, your tail and your colours, you look really strange!«, says the cat to the chameleon, thereby making the reader aware of the exceedingly strange but natural characteristics of other animals. The virtual tour goes from the Asian elephant, which is an excellent swimmer and uses its trunk as a snorkel, to the perfectly camouflaged leaf-tailed gecko, and, finally, to the *Onymacris unguicularis*, which stretches up its backside as if in a headstand on the dune crest and allows the condensed fog to flow into its mouth. This book offers colourful, entertaining encounters with twelve exotic creatures, which are summarily presented again in a concluding glossary. (7+)

Senegal (French)

109

Dia Diouf, Nafissatou (text)

Dieme, Lamine (illus.)

Kidiwi la gouttelette curieuse =

Kidiwi the nosey little droplet

Dakar : Ed. Tamalys, 2007. – 29 p.

ISBN 2-9525152-2-0

Bilingual version (French and English)

Water droplet – Sea – Wind –

Journey of discovery – Water cycle

The inexperienced water droplet Kidiwi feels constricted by the waves of the ocean, which carry her along with all the other droplets. She has heard of another place: a place that is not wet, where one is not shaken about to the point of nausea, and where one can develop autonomously, without being mistaken for millions of other anonymous water droplets. This place is called earth. The journey of discovery begins with help from the wind, which describes to her the earth in the most dazzling colours. The unexpected consequences of the journey, at times adventurously marvellous, at times dangerously threatening, finally return the droplet happily to the longed-for ocean.

The English-French picture book brings readers closer to the natural elements: water, wind, sun, and clouds. On another level, it demonstrates how a curious heroine embarks on a journey for the first time alone and ultimately finds her identity. (6+)

Asia and Oceania

New Caledonia (France) (French)

110

Calandra, Nicole (text)

Schwamm, Miriam (illus.)

Le secret de Keiko

(Keiko's secret)

Nouméa, Nouvelle-Calédonie : Grain de Sable, 2007. – 165 p.

(Jeunesse)

ISBN 978-2-84170-129-2

Female youth – Father – Sexual abuse – Friendship – First love

Marine loves dolphins. When she wins a sailing trip to explore sea creatures, she brings her shy friend Keiko along. Keiko hides a secret that will be dramatically revealed during the trip: Since the death of her mother, her father has been sexually abusing her. In a compelling and sensitive way, the novel discusses how young people attempt to deal with sexual abuse and how Keiko successfully breaks her silence and stops blaming herself. The appendix includes a teacher's guide to this difficult topic. (12+)

Europe

Belgium (French)

111

Ashbé, Jeanne (text/illus.)

Tous les petits et toutes les couleurs

(All the small ones and all the colours)

Brüssel/Paris : Pastel/École des Loisirs, 2007. – [16] p.

ISBN 978-2-211-08395-9

Colour – Mood

The author of this accordion book made from strong cardboard, invites toddlers »to unfold the pages, to look at them from both sides, to tell stories, and to keep discovering new ones over the years«. For 15 years, the artist has been writing and illustrating books for infants and toddlers. On one side of the zigzag fold, simple, stylised drawings focus on objects, and on the other side, on a child's

moods and emotions. Through the combination with a specific colour and a short rhymed text, these images are easily comprehensible even for very young children. This toybook is a suitable all-around companion for children in their first years. (0+)

112

Florian, Mélanie

On me cache quelque chose

(Something's hidden from me)

Bruxelles : Alice Jeunesse, 2007. – [28] p.

(Histoires comme ça)

ISBN 978-2-87426-073-5

Grandchild – Grandmother – Illness – Mourning – Zest for life

»I tell myself that death must be like sleeping.« This is how five-year-old Suzie deals with the mourning of her sick grandmother. She thinks of her life as a »small little piece« and of the »big pieces« around her, which are sad and who keep secrets from her. A difficult subject is effortlessly taken up here, so that young children can be confronted with themes such as the fear of loss and mourning. The playful, imaginative illustrations radiate warmth and also demonstrate, next to the mourning, hope, which returns through the girl's zest for life. (4+)

113

Place, François (text/illus.)

La fille des batailles

(The girl of the battles)

[Tournai] [et al.] : Casterman, 2007. – 74 p.

(Les albums Casterman)

ISBN 978-2-203-55404-7

France/17th century – Arab – Outsider – Love – War

This story begins on a November day in the 17th century with a shipwreck on the rocks just off the French coast. The sole survivor is a small, mute girl with dark skin: She is a Saracen. An innkeeper and his wife welcome her into their loving home as if she were their own daughter. However, the adolescent girl still has a long way to go before she and the love of her life finally find a safe home for themselves and their daughter. 35 artistic watercolour paintings, which mirror the historical setting with great attention to detail, accompany the adventuresome, rapturous, and romantic life story of a courageous woman, and allow the readers to immerse themselves in a bygone time. (10+)

France

114

Bruehl, Christian (text)

Ganter, Judith (illus.)

Du soir au matin ... jusqu'au soir

(From evening until morning ... until evening)

Paris : Être, 2007. – [32] p.

(Harmonia Mundi)

ISBN 978-2-84407-061-6

Sleep – Dream – Dream world

»Each morning, Loulou-who-sleeps becomes just Loulou. And after a more or less adventuresome day, Loulou returns with a big treasure chest of emotions and new insights.« Every evening, Loulou's team of dream characters come to life and compete for room in the bed, because every night the world of the dream characters is reassembled. In the picture collages, one can witness this dream world with its whimsical characters and toys, its fantastic or phantasmagorical landscapes, and its realistic and unrealistic scenes. Full of wit and imagination, this picture book shows the reader the »other side of the mirror«, which accompanies children as they grow up. (4+)

115

Douzou, Olivier (text)

Bertrand, Frédérique (illus.)

Pierre et le l'ours

(Peter and the bear)

[Nantes] : Éd. MeMo, 2007. – [44] p.

ISBN 2-35289-008-X

Prokofiev, Sergej / Peter and the Wolf – Adaptation

The following characters make their appearance in this story: Peter, the grandfather, the green duck, the orange cat, the wolf, the hunter, and the bear. It is immediately clear that this picture book invokes Sergej Prokofiev's »Peter and the Wolf«. Large parts of the text, the »singing« onomatopoeic »po po po polo« and »pi pi pi pili«, as well as the opening illustration, which shows the characters who are present from the beginning in full colour and sketches in those who appear later in pale tones, are clear references to the symphonic fairy tale. However, by adding surreal and absurd elements – like the bear, who gobbles everyone up, or the giraffe and the lion – the author and illustrator playfully create a hilarious new version of the well-known tale so that it can be read as a story in its own right. (6+)

116

Guéraud, Guillaume

La brigade de l'œil

(The eye brigade)

Rodez : Éd. du Rouergue, 2007. – 406 p.

(Do a do : Noir)

ISBN 978-2-8415-6863-5

**Island – Future/2037 – Dictatorship –
Iconoclasm – Resistance – Science-fiction**

We find ourselves on the island Rush in the year 2037. Television, cinema, and photography, in other words all visual media are forbidden under the Bradbury Law. The »eye brigade« roams through the city and oversees that the law is not being broken. Every picture is burned and those who resist are robbed of their eyesight. 15-year-old Kao refuses to submit to this dictatorship, and upon discovering a stockpile of films of cinematic masterpieces, rebels. The fast-paced, suspenseful book for young adults offers intertextual references to Ray Bradbury's »Fahrenheit 451« and is a powerful homage to cinema. Similar to a great film, this science-fiction novel is packed with passion and stirring emotions. (13+)

117

Hanulak, Monika (illus.)

**C'était un crocodile ... : petite histoire
de l'évolution**

(There was once a crocodile ... : short history
of evolution)

[Aubais] : Lirabelle, 2007. – [40] p.

ISBN 2-914216-67-X

Evolution – Human – Crocodile – Fish – Food chain

Two humans in a boat, a crocodile, many small fish – these are the protagonists of this picture book. The crocodile is hunting for fish, and the humans are hunting for the crocodile. The crocodile is caught by the humans and cut up; the fish are freed, but then subsequently caught by other humans. In this story, both the humans and the animals are portrayed in stylised images in the same black-brown hues and in the same postures. In this way, both »hunters« are placed on the same level. The straightforward earthy illustrations, which combine collage and printing techniques, require no text to recount a »short« but nonetheless artistically ambitious »history of evolution.« (3+)

118

Jarrie, Martin (text/illus.)

Brassart, René (photogr.)

L' alphabet fabuleux de Martin Jarrie

(Martin Jarrie's fabulous alphabet)

[Paris] : Gallimard Jeunesse, 2007. – [60] p.

(Giboulées)

ISBN 978-2-07-055648-9

ABC-book

This large-format book is no usual ABC-book. Indeed, each letter is introduced on a page with a word beginning with that letter and, in addition, one of the appropriate lexical definitions. However, the sources of the definitions are »obsolete« – the lexicons are from the years 1934 to 1989 –, and the selection of words, for example »K« as in »kolkhose« (collective farm), are at times very unusual for a primer. The main focus thus shifts to the 26 full-page artistic illustrations. They either explain the words by showing the object – for example for the letter »T« as in »tasse« (cup) – or by offering artistically very free interpretations, for example for »V« as in »ville« (city). A wondrous compilation has emerged, which has made an art book out of an ABC-book. (4+)

119

Kessler, Frédéric (text)

Charpentier, Olivier (illus.)

Le grand bestiaire des animaux

(The big bestiary of animals)

Paris : Éd. Autrement, 2007. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-2-7467-1018-4

Animals – Characteristics

Twenty animals are introduced in this large-format book via artistic full-page illustrations, and are »defined« in texts full of bold humour and hearty scurrility. There is the »little grandma dog«, the giraffe that is afraid of nothing except a stiff neck, or, for instance, the big kangaroo that carries, in addition to a torch, iodine, a pocket knife, an alarm, a kitchen, bunk beds, and an Alpine hut, also a small baby kangaroo – when there's enough room left. Employing numerous jokes, »urgent« questions about the animal world are answered. Only one question remains unexplained: Where did the zebra buy his ridiculously striped pyjamas? (4+)

120

Mira Pons, Michèle (text)
Lerouvillois, Gilles (illus.)

Mers & plages

(Seas and beaches)

Arles : Actes Sud Junior, 2007. – 301 p.

(Encyclopédies Nature)

ISBN 978-2-7427-6819-6

Sea – Beach

The new series »Encyclopédies Nature« undertakes the task of awakening young readers' interest in our earth and nature. Following the volumes »Forests and Woods«, »Mountains and Mountain Ranges«, and »Rivers and Ponds«, this title gives a comprehensive and detailed overview of the subject of seas and beaches. Over 300 photographs and other visual elements invite children to learn everything about the oceans, the coasts, and the beaches, as well as about their flora and fauna. In the five chapters of the book, they can discover, recognise, and appreciate the world of the seas, live with it and love it. Suggestions for activities such as recipes and craft projects successfully top off this non-fiction book. (8+)

121

Pacovská, Květa (text/illus.)

À l'infini

(Ad infinitum)

Paris : Panama, 2007. – [124] p.

ISBN 978-2-7557-0266-8

Alphabet – Numbers

Květa Pacovská introduces the »Bible« of her oeuvre: an infinity of numbers and all the letters of the alphabet, which are the basic elements of her »architecture of pleasure«. In this artistically bound book, one encounters elements that have been cut out, glued on, or punched out. Geometric and seemingly arbitrarily dotted drawings display human and animal figures alongside letters and numbers. Round splashes of colour, collaged colour and silver paper, unexpected pop-ups, and the play with colourful tones, dominated by red and black, make the book a lively graphic and plastic art book, which promises visual and haptic pleasure for young and old. (4+)

122

Pietri, Annie

Le serment de Domenico

(Domenico's oath)

Paris : Bayard Jeunesse, 2007. – 232 p.

(Estampille)

ISBN 978-2-7470-1370-3

France/17th century – Glassmaker – Venice – Revenge

Versailles, 1666: 19-year-old Domencio, a glassmaker from the Venetian island Murano, provides his skills in the service of King Louis XIV for a high reward. However, the doge of Venice fears that the well-kept secret of the glass fabrication will be revealed, and has Domenico's wife and daughter murdered. From that point on, the young man is obsessed with only one thought: revenge. With this historical novel, the author further explores her favourite subject, namely, the milieu of the French court of the Sun-King. But this is the first time that she portrays a fictive male hero within this historical framework and has him interact with actual events and figures. She thus offers an enthralling insight into an eventful historical period. (10+)

123

Pinchon, Serge (text)

Minne, Lucie (illus.)

Frigo Dingo

(Refrigerator Dingo)

Le Puy-en Velay : L'Atelier du Poisson Soluble, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-2-913741-55-3

Father – Refrigerator – Subject – Anthropomorphism

One becomes quickly aware that the world in this book is topsy-turvy. A completely normal everyday situation is turned on its head in text and picture. A father, who is sitting with his children at suppertime, fetches something from the refrigerator. Inside, he discovers at first a man sitting on the vegetable drawer, then a woman in a brindled coat, and, finally, 36 speaking yogurt containers. Matching the unusual text, the illustrations show similarly surrealistic ideas: flying fish, a high voltage plant in the kitchen, or plants growing through the floor. Together, everything generates a humorous, fanciful, and sophisticated potpourri for young and old readers alike. (4+)

124

Rapaport, Gilles (text/illus.)

Un homme

(A human being)

[Paris] : Circonflexe, 2007. – [40] p.

(Albums Circonflexe)

ISBN 978-2-87833-416-6

France/17th century – Code noir –

Slavery – Freedom – Equality

»Your hatred has become my country. My unhappiness, my house.« The slave bitterly laments the daily humiliation and violence he suffers at his masters hands. What justification can there be for his enslaved life, ordained by others? Is his master bigger, stronger, more intelligent? His blood more red than that of the slave? The slaveholders destroy their slaves both internally and externally while exploiting them from the first to the last breath. The illustrations, dominated by the face of the slave, underline the inhumanity and perversity of slavery with big brushstrokes of powerful colours and a wild black. The annex explains how slave-holding became legitimate in French colonies with the notorious Code noir (The Black Code), which took shape in Louis XIV's edict of 1685. The Code's paragraph on slavery is reproduced in the annexe. (8+) ♦

125

Ravanello, Olivier

Paris – Bagdad

[Paris] : Grasset-Jeunesse, 2007. – 146 p.

(Roman grand format)

ISBN 978-2-246-71991-5

Iraq/2003-2004 – War – Reporter –

War coverage – Male youth – Aunt – Friendship

In »Paris – Bagdad«, the author reflects on his experiences as a war correspondent in Iraq. The documentary novel convincingly pairs an informal journalistic style with realistic descriptions of people, places, and situations. Incidentally, 16-year-old Jules travels with his aunt Magali, a war correspondent, to Baghdad. He is staying at the Hotel Palestine, shares the life of the reporters and directly experiences the consequences of war for the Iraqi people. Suspenseful and engaging, the novel introduces readers to the profession of a war correspondent at the same time as demonstrating the inhumanity and perversity of war. (12+) ♦

126

Sadat, Mandana (text/illus.)

L' autre monsieur Paul

(The other Mr. Paul)

[Paris] : Syros, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-2-74-850588-7

Order – Disorder – Differentness –

Neighbour – Help – Friendship

In his well-ordered home, Mr. Paul receives a letter meant for his neighbour – also Mr. Paul – a singer and poet. So, the organised Mr. Paul encounters his creative-chaotic namesake and his unorganised home. The illustrations strikingly portray the meeting of the two differing gentlemen without lacking in sensitivity. Mr. Paul One, drawn with vivid colours and strong lines like a video game character, stands next to the other Mr. Paul, who fades away with his light colours and soft lines. The two contrasting worlds complete each other brilliantly because both gentlemen allow their hearts to speak. Through their adeptness and goodwill, the two Mr. Pauls are not only able to help each other but also to become friends. (5+)

127

Serres, Alain (text/concept)

Et Picasso peint Guernica

(And Picasso paints Guernica)

[Voisins-le-Bretonneux] : Rue du Monde, 2007. – 51 p.

ISBN 978-2-915569-95-7

Picasso, Pablo – Guernica – Art –

Spanish Civil War – War

»Painting is unlike taking photographs. It is not about making statements – it is about asking questions«, writes the author of this book, which is dedicated to Pablo Picasso and his masterpiece »Guernica«. »Guernica« – the name has come to symbolise the crimes against humanity committed in the Basque town of Northern Spain in 1937, as well as Picasso's powerful indictment of the barbarity of war. Photographs, pictures, and documents introduce the reader to the life and work of the painter and reveal the enduring influence that the bombing of Guernica by squadrons of the German Luftwaffe during the Spanish Civil War had on the artist's work. The large-format aesthetically outstanding book is more than just an introduction to Picasso's art, and more than a history of this oil painting of colossal dimensions, which can now be seen in the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid. It compellingly illustrates how the timeless denouncement of war and inhumanity still resonates with us today. (8+) ★ ♦

128

Surget, Alain

Mary tempête : le destin d'une femme pirate

(Storm-Mary : the fate of a female pirate)

[Paris] : Flammarion, 2007. – 340 p.

ISBN 978-2-08-120354-9

England/18th century – Female pirate –
Men's clothing – Gender role – Freedom

»We were only happy at sea«, Mary Read admits to Anne Bonny at the end of her life. From earliest childhood, Mary felt drawn to the vastness of the ocean. Forced as a girl to take on the role of her dead brother, she later took advantage of this role to live freely in men's clothing. As a female pirate, Mary experiences bellicose as well as amorous adventures at the side of her friend Anne, who also dressed as a man. Alain Surget retells the true story of Mary Read, first adapted to literature by Daniel Defoe in 1726, with essential changes for today's readers. This suspenseful pirate novel with documentary traits insightfully portrays the tragic life conditions of the heroine and her inner development. (12+)

129

Tchernia, Gil (text)

Vincent, François (illus.)

Je ne suis pas contagieux : un enfant juif prisonnier dans la camp de Drancy

(I am not contagious : a Jewish child in the Drancy internment camp)

Paris : École des Loisirs, 2007. – 61 p.

(Archimède)

ISBN 978-2-211-08743-8

France/1943 – Persecution of the Jews – Concentration camp – National Socialism – Racism

»Let us reflect on the lessons of the past and pay attention to the present in order to care for the future.« That is the message of the author, who recounts his childhood in this book as a way of counteracting forgetting. Little Gil is transported together with his mother and his brother to the internment camp in Drancy near Paris in 1943. 60 years later, the experiences of the boy in the camp, the humiliations, the regimentation, and the arbitrariness he suffered as well as the cohesion among the prisoners he witnessed compel the author to stand up against racism and intolerance, and to call for vigilance. The story is valuably supplemented through an appendix with visual and textual documents, and a didactic glossary. (8+) ♦

Italy

130

Baccalario, P. / Peduzzi, E.

Pesci volanti : romanzo

(Flying fish : novel)

Roma : Fanucci, 2007. – 174 p.

(Teens)

ISBN 978-88-347-1321-1

Adolescence – Love – Diary – Autobiography

This novel recounts the experiences and maturation of a girl named Greta during the summer in which she learns of love. Happy days, sad day, intense days – all recorded in the pages of her diary, which later falls into the hands of a writer who uses the girl's memories to create this novel. The novel becomes a sort of correspondence between the writer and the girl, which culminates in a day of sweet reckoning when they meet. One of the best features of this light-heartedly written story is its natural and honest descriptions of the different moods typical for adolescents. (14+)

131

Cali, Davide (text)

Cantone, Anna Laura (illus.)

Voglio una mamma-robot

(I want a robot mother)

Milano : Ed. Arka, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-88-8072-163-5

Mother – Child – Humanity – Critique of technology

This picture book tells the story of a boy whose only point of reference is his mother. Unfortunately, she has to work all day so that there is only time left to prepare his dinner and to order him to brush his teeth, to do his homework, to tidy his room, etc. Thus, the boy decides to rebel against the situation and builds his own robot mother. She stays with him, protects him against all kinds of danger, be it stray dogs or bad guys. This ideal mom even cooks all the things he really likes, for example, French fries and popcorn. But even this robot mom has one fundamental fault: She lacks warmth, feelings, and softness. In an original way, both the text and the illustrations depict the child's needs. (5+)

132

Cerrato, Simona (text)
Ghigliano, Cinzia (illus.)
Struik, Mike (photogr.)

Mini Darwin : l'evoluzione raccontata dai bambini

(Mini Darwin : evolution told for children)

Trieste : Ed. Scienza, 2007. – 117 p.

(Viaggi straordinari)

ISBN 978-88-7307-367-3

Evolution – Darwin, Charles

A group of children from ages seven to twelve and from different countries are taken on a voyage by a biologist to re-experience Charles Darwin's visit to the Galapagos Islands, the most important leg of his journey around the world. Equipped with instruments used by real explorers, the children examine the extraordinary biology and geology of both the islands' land and the surrounding ocean. They conduct experiments in order to »discover« evolution and its beginnings and to learn about the conservation of species, biodiversity, and sustainability. This superb book describes step by step the observations, comments, and thoughts of the children, and includes short excerpts from Darwin's »Journal of researches into the natural history and geology of the countries visited during the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle round the world, under the Command of Capt. Fitz Roy, R.N.« (8+)

133

Galleria Tega (text)
Mascitti, Piero (idea)

Uno strappo alla regola : dedicato a Mimmo Rotella

(A breach of the rules : dedicated to Mimmo Rotella)

[Lucca] : Ed. Artebambini / Bazzano : Fondazione

Mimmo Rotella, 2007. – [48] p. + 1 CD + 10 illus.

ISBN 978-88-89705-11-7

Rotella, Mimmo – Contemporary arts

This is the first book for young readers about the artist Mimmo Rotella (1918-2006). He is internationally renowned for his collages, composed by overlapping fragments of advertisements such as cinema and circus posters torn from the walls. Young Thomas visits a vernissage of the great artist. With naïve and exuberant curiosity, he observes the pictures made from paper, different layers, colours, small and large writing, and images of famous people, and suddenly understands the »rule of the game«. These art pieces, mosaics of lively colours, depicting real and magic stories, evoke a sense of amazement and wonder in the child. This original art book includes a CD with phonetic poems by Mimmo Rotella. (8+)

134

Leoni, Giulio

Il sepolcro di Gengis Khan

(Genghis Khan's grave)

Milano : Mondadori, 2007. – 247 p.

(La compagnia dei serpenti; 2)

ISBN 978-88-04-56525-3

Genghis Khan – Esotericism

This novel is a kind historical thriller in which three teenagers are involved in the search for an archaeologist who disappeared while investigating a mysterious grave found during the construction of a new subway in Rome. The grave is supposed to be that of Genghis Khan, the mythical Temujin who was converted to Christianity by a legendary priest called Gianni. Filled with great suspense, peppered with many unexpected twists, and rife with daring, highly unpredictable historical assertions, this book is a classic example of the adventure novel genre. The convincing youth protagonists are well suited as positive role models for young readers. (11+)

135

Levi, Giulio (text)

Quarello, Maurizio A. C. (illus.)

1940 - 1945 Gioele : fuga per tornare

(1940-1945 Gioele : run away to return)

Firenze : Fatatrac, 2007. – 79 p.

(I nuovi ottagoni)

ISBN 978-88-8222-147-8

Italy/1940-1945 – Jews – Persecution – Exile – World War II

This narrative, based on historical documents, tells of the fate of an Italian-Jewish family in Florence. They are forced to flee their country because of the racial laws set by Mussolini's government in 1938. Thanks to the help of some friends, they are able to escape across the border through the Alps and find refuge in Switzerland. All this is witnessed through the eyes of the young protagonist, Gioele. By sharing the individual fate of this child, who is forced to live in refugee camps and is taken away from his family to live with different families who don't speak his language nor share his traditions, the book helps the reader to recognise the brutal experiences of the Jews, such as persecution, expulsion, and extermination. (10+) ♦

136

Luzzati, Emanuele (text/illus.)

Cantastorie

(Ballad singer)

Roma : Gallucci, 2007. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-88-6145-004-2

Fable – Love – Theatre

This illustrated book tells the story of the Oriental fairy Imani, who out of her love for King Solimano, decides to give up her immortality and marries him. Her envious fairy sisters try to obstruct her love but are unsuccessful, and the story ends happily. This tale, inspired by the French translation of »Les Mille et un jour« (Thousand and One Days), a collection of oriental tales translated from the Arabic by M. Sainte Croix Ajpot at the beginning of the 18th century, is a kind of poetic manifesto of Emanuele Luzzati. The partiality to specific themes, the talent, the classic stories retold in an entertaining manner, the exquisitely colourful and diversified plot, and the skilful literary language and irony are all the trademarks of this author and illustrator, who is one of the most important ambassadors of Italian children's and youth literature. As in many of his other books, he uses theatrical devices and elements such as asides or illustrations composed for stage design. (4+) ★

137

Mignone, Sebastiano Ruiz (text)

Ferrari, Antongionata (illus.)

Pelù, il goleador

(Pelù the goalkeeper)

San Dorligo della Valle (Trieste) : Einaudi Ragazzi,

2007. – 139 p.

(Einaudi Ragazzi / Storie e rime ; 308)

ISBN 978-88-7926-610-9

Football – Humour – Underdog

This tale appeals to the imagination because of its fantasy, humour, and beautiful language. It is set in a poor, miserable, and filthy suburb where the football match called Cup of the Seven Suns is organised for young inhabitants and their families. The »Salumi Fratelli Cosica« team (Salumi Brothers of Cosica) looks somewhat shabby and clumsy, and fate already seems to have cursed them with a stroke of bad luck. Then a miracle happens: A stocky, smelly stray dog with extraordinary skills in controlling and dribbling the football, joins the team and everything changes. Full of humour and a picaresque narrative tone, which deflate many of the dramatic situations, this book allows the reader to feel something of the passion for one of the most loved sports. (8+)

138

Nava, Emanuela (text)

Baboni, Elena (illus.)

C'era una volta il nonno

(Once upon a time there was a grandfather)

Roma : Sinno Ed., 2007. – 46 p.

(Intercultura)

ISBN 978-88-7609-077-6

Grandfather – Death – Sepulchre rite – Interculturality

An old grandfather prepares his little grandchildren for a big trial – the pain of his own death – by telling them a fascinating story. A great and expert traveller, he tells them about the funerals he has seen in African countries where both grief and humour can be found because people there believe that the soul of the beloved deceased will live on in happier regions and protect his or her relatives. The children immediately understand what the grandfather is trying to tell them. When he dies, ignoring their astonished parents, the children talk to him in a friendly way, place flowers on his body and play beautiful songs to him on their little instruments. In a respectful and at the same time light-hearted manner, this book addresses a difficult subject and inspires an appreciation for the diversity of cultures and traditions. (7+) ◆

139

Pecora, Elío (text)

Gutiérrez, Luci (illus.)

L'albergo delle fiabe e altri versi

(The fairytale inn and other poems)

Roma : Orecchio Acerbo, 2007. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-88-89025-52-9

Poetry

This book is composed of 18 nursery rhymes, which unite the child's imagination with the magic of language. The original verses combine different perspectives, create and destroy imagery and meanings in an ironic kaleidoscope. From the fairytale figures, who secretly meet in a hotel, to the infinite voices of nature and the animals, whose sounds are only heard by children, to the search for happiness, which cannot be found in external objects, this book invites the readers to stop and to look inside themselves to recover the wisdom and beauty of the world. (4+)

140

Solinas Donghi, Beatrice (text)

Abbateello, Antonella (illus.)

L'albero del mondo

(The World Tree)

Modena : Franco Panini Ragazzi, 2007. – [36] p.

(Illustrati d'autore)

ISBN 978-88-8290-991-8

Love for nature – Adventure – Self-confidence

The World Tree grows in a courtyard in the suburbs of a city. Luisina sees it growing and admires its impressive stature. One day, she takes a ladder and climbs to the top of the tree. From there, she can see far away – unknown things and houses, the beach, the sea, and the clouds. In short, she can see all the beauty of the world, full of colours, dominated by the red and pink of the sunset. The happiness of that moment suddenly disappears with the onset of a storm, as the tree, shaken by the wind, doesn't allow Luisana to climb back down to the ground. This delicate story, which has a happy ending, of course, beautifully depicts a child's emotions and experiences, such as curiosity, the joy of discovery, self-confidence, and conquest. (4+)

141

Varriale, Pina

Ragazzi di camorra

(Camorra boys)

Casale Monferrato : Ed. Piemme Junior, 2007. – 203 p.

(Il battello a vapore)

ISBN 978-88-384-8908-2

Organised crime – Lawfulness – Poverty – Solidarity

This book, written in the style of a journalistic reportage, confronts the issue of organised crime in the city of Naples, by telling the story of 12-year-old Antonio, whose rearing is entrusted to his mother's sister because of the family's poverty. His aunt is married to a man who works with the Camorra, a mafia-like organisation in Naples. The boy is forced into using violence, dealing drugs, and committing robbery – normal activities for young people in that neighbourhood. After meeting Arturo, a young teacher who helps youths straighten out their lives, Antonio starts to rebel against this vile environment, even despite the Camorra's relentless attempts to suppress all forms of social consortium among the youths. (12+)

Monaco (French)

142

Meunier, Henri (text)

Girel, Stéphane (illus.)

Ce printemps d'une seconde

[Monaco] : Ed. du Rocher, 2007. – [28] p.

(Lo país d'enfance)

ISBN 978-2-268-06161-0

Time – Season – Imagination – Story-telling

»Why aren't you in school?«, the bird asks the small boy, who then describes to the bird his long, complicated, and crazy day: a day outside of space and time, a day on which the seasons dance, the trees grow, the school disappears, and elephants are eaten up like chocolate Easter bunnies. Of course, he didn't tell the truth, the boy reckons at the end. »It's all about the desire to tell stories.« This picture book is not only an encomium to telling stories, but also – as the allusion to Pinocchio demonstrates – a homage to young and young-at-heart dreamers. The surreal illustrations, often dominated by the boy's shock of red hair, mirror the lyrical text, written in the form of a poem, which turns the laws of nature on its head. (6+)

Portugal

143

Tavares, Gonçalo M. (text)

Caiano, Rachel (illus.)

Os dois lados

(The two sides)

Lisboa : Caminho, 2007. – [26] p.

(Histórias do senhor Valéry)

ISBN 978-972-21-1951-1

Pedantry – Order – Obsession

The perfectionist Mr. Valéry makes his life (and probably that of others) difficult. Almost obsessively, he sets about to rearrange the world, which in his eyes is in disorder, to establish a perfect equilibrium. Henceforth, there are only two categories: either something is on the right side or it is on the left side – everything else is irrelevant. Questions and problems are bound to arise, of course, because the world resists simplistic classification. The story is accompanied by double-page colour illustrations. Only a few sketchy elements are set against monochrome flat backgrounds. This leaves the observer plenty of freedom to reflect and extrapolate. This is an exceptional picture book, for young and old alike. (4+)

Spain

144

Albo, Pablo (text)

Díez Navarro, Miguel Ángel (illus.)

Estela <proper name>

Barcelona : Ed. Thule, 2007. – [32] p.

(Trampantojo)

ISBN 978-84-96473-73-7

Star – Sea – Loneliness – Zest for life

Estela leads her life like the other stars: sleeping during the day, shining at night. Since she twinkles especially bright, however, many people make wishes upon her. One day, she is seized away by a giant meteor shower. Other stars are extinguished or transformed into glow-worms, but Estela is hurled onto the dark floor of the ocean. This dreamlike and beautiful picture book recounts how the little star feels lonely down there at first, how she eventually meets different kinds of creatures, how she keeps her chin up and in the end becomes a wishing-star for the animals of the deep sea. With flowing forms and intensive colours, dominated by a rich multitude of blue tones, the magical illustrations reveal both the melancholy and the zest for life inherent in this poetic story. (3+)

145

Carreras de Sosa, Lydia

El juramento de los Centenera

(The vow of the Centeneras)

Zaragoza : Edelvives, 2007. – 189 p.

(Alandar; 99)

ISBN 978-84-263-6626-9

Argentina/1905 – Immigration – Girl – Disappearance – Search

Five siblings immigrate to Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century. Based on real events, the novel authentically and impressively depicts the Centeneras' painful farewell from their Spanish homeland and their hope for a better future. However, a dark shadow is cast over their new beginning when their mentally handicapped sister disappears without a trace shortly before their arrival in Buenos Aires. Out of pain and guilt, the four brothers erect a wall of silence and repression that weighs heavily on them. Only after months, when Josep, who retrospectively narrates the story in first person, confides in others, do the brothers finally decide to search for their sister. This search, which develops more and more into a detective story, eventually brings about reconciliation (13+) (Premio Alandar; 2007)

146

Docherty, Thomas (text/illus.)

A la playa

(To the beach)

Madrid : Anaya, 2007. – [36] p.

(Sopa de cuentos)

ISBN 978-84-667-6406-3

Sea – Beach – Excursion – Imagination

Next to outstanding illustrated fairytale editions, the series »Sopa de Cuentos« offers many an original picture book. »To the beach« is exemplary for their characteristic simplicity, wit, and variety of illustration styles. Fully equipped with a snorkel, diving-glasses, and a floating tyre, a little boy stands at the window. How dumb that it's raining, he thinks to himself, wishing he could be on the beach right now! So, without further ado, his imagination takes flight and brings him to the destination of his desire. Various transportation vehicles – a plane, a camel, a ship, a bicycle, a tractor, etc. – bring him to the sea and return him safely home. The next adventure is just around the corner of his imagination. Thomas Docherty depicts the wild, cheerful outing in vivid pictures, which are bound to lend wings to the reader's imagination. (5+)

147

Frabetti, Carlo

Calvina

<proper name>

Boadilla del Monte (Madrid) : Ed. SM, 2007. – 123 p.

(El barco de vapor : Serie roja ; 179)

ISBN 978-84-675-1850-4

Identity – Reality – Imagination – Role reversal

Any attempt to summarise the story line of this book would be hopeless. The story is too enigmatic, too frequently does it mislead the readers on intricate paths, and too many questions are left unanswered. A dreary villa and a loony bin library (or is it a library-like madhouse?) provide the backdrop for the no less mysterious characters of this narrative in the style of a studio play, which deals with, among other things, identity, reality, imagination, and the possibilities of literary fiction. With allusions to other literary works, the book further teases the reader. »Calvina« is one of those books that some readers will probably snap shut with a shrug of the shoulders, while others, in fascination, will only put it down once they have reached the last page. (12+) (Premio El Barco de Vapor; 2007)

148

Gil, Carmen (text)
Luciani, Rebeca (illus.)

La sonrisa de Daniela

(Daniela's smile)

Sevilla : Kalandraka Andalucía, 2007. – [34] p.

(Libros para soñar)

ISBN 978-84-96388-62-8

Smile – Friendliness – Humanity

What a difference a good mood can make! On a spring-time day, Daniela's joyful smile flies out into the world, and even the toughest of cynics cannot elude it. On each double-spread of this cheerful picture book, the following characters catch the happiness-virus: a lady hippopotamus weighed down by her extra pounds; a grouchy, misanthropic chimpanzee; a listless, gloomy female elephant; a hard-hearted ostrich; and a righteous jackal. Daniela's smile gives them all the necessary push, to turn their lives around. Imaginative double-page illustrations in vivid colours, with original perspectives and humorous details underscore the optimistic message of this contagiously joyful story. (4+)

Spain (Catalan)

149

Armangué, Joan (text)
López, Mercè (illus.)

L'home Supercucamolla Man

(The Supercroachman)

Barcelona : Ed. Cruïlla, 2007. – 62 p.

(El vaixell de vapor : Sèrie blava ; 142)

ISBN 978-84-661-1439-4

Human – Metamorphosis – Cockroach

With a nod to Kafka comes an amusing story about a married couple that awakes one morning to discover, dumbfounded, that they have transformed into cockroaches. Bravely and with admirable optimism, the two try to make the best of their desolate situation. Their greatest threat turns out to be their own daughter, a resolute young thing who views them as disgusting vermin pattering through the apartment and is set on destroying them. Flanked with brooms, insect spray, and bottomless cleaning pails, a breathless pursuit ends with an unexpected happy ending. Among the countless more or less original animal stories that the children's book market has to offer, this turbulent, fast-paced grotesque is a refreshing exception. (8+)

150

Belda, Vicent Enric (text)
Boscà, Ferran (illus.)

La llegenda de l'amulet de jade

(The legend of the jade amulet)

Alzira : Ed. Bromera, 2006. – 124 p.

(El micalet galàctic; 129 : sèrie blava)

ISBN 978-84-9824-203-4

Talisman – Magic – Immortality –

Love – Redemption

This suspenseful story, which combines elements of legend, detective novel and fantasy, successfully interweaves the realistic and the fantastic, now and yesterday, Spain and China. 14-year-old Víctor works part-time as a delivery boy at a Chinese restaurant where he falls in love with Li Bei, who is two years his junior. When the girl suddenly disappears, and two shady characters show up who are on her trail, Víctor discovers little by little the details of an unbelievable story. A mysterious amulet and an artfully ornamented dagger are the keys to a secret about love and hate, but above all about immortality, which is no dream here, but rather a curse only to be overcome in the end. (12+) (Premi Vicent Silvestre; 2006)

151

Jové, Josep M. (text)
Tha (i.e. August Tharrats) (illus.)

L'home del sac

(The man with the bag)

Barcelona : La Galera / Cercle de Lectors, 2006. – [44] p.

ISBN 84-246-2146-8. – ISBN 84-672-1576-3

Imagination – Fear

A plastic bag seems to have aimlessly landed in front of a derelict house where an old, reticent man lives. This spurs the imagination of a boy, who, together with his grandmother, gets to the bottom of this mystery, for which there is ultimately a simplistic explanation. This large-format picture book is suspenseful in revealing how the imagination can influence our perceptions to such an extent that we create our own subjective reality. The large-format illustrations, predominantly in grey and blue tones, graphically elucidate the mood of the protagonist, which fluctuates between fear and thrill. Also, the selected picture clippings, the cinematically influenced perspectives, and the lighting effects intensify the effect of the story. (5+) (Premi Hospital Sant Joan de Déu; 2005)

Spain (Galician)

152

Calveiro, Marcos S. (text)

Díez, Miguel Ángel (illus.)

O carteiro de Bagdad

(The postman from Baghdad)

Vigo : Tambre, 2007. – 138 p.

(Ala delta : Serie verde; 21)

ISBN 978-84-96772-66-3

Iraq – War – Baghdad – Peace – Religion

Children's literature about topical subjects is often far too simplistic and message-driven. The author of this story about a boy in Baghdad managed to avoid this pitfall. Marcos S. Calveiro lets his protagonist describe a family's daily struggle for survival in the city afflicted by war. Politics and history are well dosed; they merely provide a convincing backdrop to the individual fate of the boy. The story of ten-year-old Abdulwahid is representative of that of countless other children and families. The readers share the characters' fatigue, mourning, desperation, especially the longing for normality, peace, religious tolerance, and private happiness. Calveiro adopts a quiet narrative tone and conjures memorable images without ever resorting to sensational drama. (10+) (Premio Ala Delta; 2007) ◆

153

Mosteiro, Carlos

Unha bruxa ben rara

(A rather weird witch)

Vigo : Ed. SM, 2007. – 126 p.

(O barco de vapor / Serie vermella; 39)

ISBN 978-84-675-1692-0

Witch – Magic – Role behaviour – Individuality

Raruxa Ben Rara is anything but an ordinary witch. Because she accidentally fell into a pot of magic potion when she was a child, she is absolutely incapable of doing anything evil, no matter how hard she tries. So, she lives as a recluse –in exile, so to say – in a human village, where even the children tease her. When Raruxa is kidnapped, however, the children free her from the clutches of the most nasty of head witches and transform these evil creatures into the most gentle ladies. Carlos Mosteiro tells this story with wry, frequently absurd, and sometimes drastic black humour. With imagination and nonchalance, he blurs the boundaries between reality and fantasy. The countless commentary asides, parodistic punch lines, and intertextual references provide additional reading pleasure. (10+) (Premio O Barco de Vapor; 2006)

154

Núñez, Marisa (text)

Lima, Teresa (illus.)

Ovos duros

(Hard eggs)

Pontevedra : OQO Ed., 2007. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-84-96788-16-9

King – Bridal quest – Riddle – Competition – Cleverness – Wisdom

»Once upon a time, there was a charburner who had two daughters...«. Drawing on old folklore, Marisa Núñez has created a contemporary fairy tale told in the traditional form. With wit and humour, she tells the story of a king who has his eye on a charburner's daughter, marries her, and then almost casts her away again. The story does, however, end happily. Man and woman fight it out in a witty, playful competition, whereby tricky riddles are constantly solved. In this way, the daughter proves herself to be more insightful, wise, and clever than her husband, whose status as king has made him somewhat lose perspective. Teresa Lima has complemented the text with delicate illustrations, which perfectly reflect the »riddled« confrontations and collaborations of the disparate couple. (6+)

Latin America

Argentina (Spanish)

155

Araya, María Alejandra (text)

Weiss, Mónica / Piñón, Virginia (illus.)

Examen final : novela

(Final exam : novel)

Córdoba : Comunic-arte, 2006. – 126 p.

(Colección Veinte escalones; 2)

ISBN 978-987-602-005-3

Grandchild – Grandmother – Death – Self-discovery – Growing up

17-year-old Andrea is trying to come to terms with the fact that her grandmother Greta will soon die. This situation, which burdens the whole family, is part of a greater process that Andrea is going through. Her parents, her friend Luciana, or impetuous Andrés, who's always making passes at her, they all play important parts on her difficult but healing path to self-discovery, which at the same time is a process of emancipation. The emotions of the first-person narrator, who is short-tempered and can be harsh toward others, determine the narrative voice. Short, frequently incomplete sentences, digres-

sions, elliptical and incoherent thoughts, associative wordplay, and a driving rhythm echo the unsteady stream of the protagonist's thoughts and emotions. (15+)

156

Blasco, Martín

En la línea recta

(As the crow flies)

Buenos Aires : Grupo Ed. Norma, 2007. – 117 p.

(Zona libre)

ISBN 978-987-545-439-2

Boy – Father – Death – Family – Search for identity – Growing up – Friendship

After the death of his father, Damián's orderly world falls out of joint. Mourning, existential angst, and, in addition, the usual problems of adolescents jumble his emotions. His relationship to his mother and his younger brother Diego, his love for music – everything at once is thrown into question and only gradually gets back on track. In the process, Damián is uplifted by witty, patient Laura, whom he meets at quite a peculiar afternoon job and learns to love. In short episodic chapters and with a lot of dialogue, the book laconically and humorously depicts the world of the young man. In the end, his shifting moods, uncertainty, and fears make way for a new confidence, thanks to experiences such as friendship and family bonds. All this is depicted in an entertaining and convincing way. (14+)

157

Suárez, Patricia (text)

Singer, Irene (illus.)

Amor dragón

(Dragon love)

Buenos Aires : Alfaguara, 2007. – 134 p.

(Alfaguara infantil)

ISBN 978-987-04-0695-2

Dragon – Love – Fairy tale

The three literary fairy tales of this book are about dragons, princesses, love, magic, and much more. The heroes are a slow-witted, kind-hearted prince who courts a capricious princess who has been transformed into a dragon; a shoemaker who redeems a lovesick man under the spell of a princess with dragon blood in her veins; and a washerwoman who finds a bride for the dragon and teaches an arrogant prince about love. The author plays with familiar fairytale patterns. By imaginatively brushing these patterns the wrong way, recasting stereotypes, and establishing new constellations, she offers the readers

something refreshingly different. The texts, at times parodistic but never shallow, distinguish themselves through humorous language. (9+)

Brazil (Portuguese)

158

Aguiar, Luiz Antonio

Sonhos em amarelo : o garoto que não esqueceu Van Gogh

(Dreams in yellow : the boy who didn't forget Van Gogh)

São Paulo : Melhoramentos, 2007. – 128 p.

ISBN 978-06-03344-9

Van Gogh, Vincent

With this book, one of the most creative Brazilian authors of juvenile literature conveys his admiration for Vincent Van Gogh's paintings and his compassion for the painter's tragic life. Camille Roulin, portrayed in »The Schoolboy« (Museu de Arte de São Paulo) as well as in many other paintings, is the narrator of this story about the last period of Van Gogh's life in France. Van Gogh's sadness made him disagreeable to his neighbours, but Camille's father, the postman Joseph Roulin, established a friendship with the artist. Eventually his whole family became models for Van Gogh. This moving and remarkable novel recounts many moments from the artist's life during his stay in Arles: his hopes, the famous »yellow sunflowers«, and his hospitalisation after he had cut off his left ear. The compelling text offers far more than just information about a great painter. (11+)

159

Barbieri, Stela (retell.)

Vilela, Fernando (illus.)

Bumba-meu-boi

(Beat-it-my-ox)

São Paulo : Ed. Girafinha, 2007. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-85-99520-43-7

Ox – Wish – Dance

Since the 18th century, Bumba-meu-boi is part of Brazilian folklore. It is a comic-dramatic dance, which tells the story of the death and resurrection of an ox. The drama is told and danced in the whole country to the present day. Depending on the region, it has different names and versions (Boi-bumbá, Boi-de-fita, Boi-de-reis, etc.). The readers of this version will be captivated by the protagonist Francisco's deeds in order to satisfy the fancies of his pregnant wife, Catirina, who is craving an ox tongue. The problem is that she only wants to eat the tongue of the

charmed ox, which sparkles with coloured strings and dances during the »festas juninas« in honour of Saint John and Saint Peter, or during the Nativity celebrations. In the end, Francisco is able to find a compromise and, to the joy of the audience, the ox can dance again. The mixed-media illustrations present the festivities of the »ox party« in vivid colours and transmit the joy of the traditional feast. (8+) ♦

160

Mello, Roger (text/illus.)

Zubair e os labirintos

(Zubair and the labyrinth)

São Paulo : Companhia das Letrinhas, 2007. – 32 p.

ISBN 978-85-7406-297-6

Baghdad/2003 – Mesopotamia/History – Time travel

Award-winning author and illustrator Roger Mello presents his readers a novel challenge with his new book. In 2003, in Baghdad, some of the 7000-year-old Mesopotamian relics were looted from the National Library and the Baghdad Museum. Amidst the ruins, Zubair finds a folded carpet and inside it a book called »The Thirteen Labyrinths«. A breathless time travel takes the boy through winding, sometimes labyrinthine paths all the way back to the time of the Sumerians, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. The reader is drawn into the plot, making his or her way through the equally labyrinthine story. As in real life, the hero and the reader discover that it is important to learn how to make the right choices. This is a very original book and a challenging (but worthwhile) read. The page numbers presented in reverse, just like authentic Arabic publications, and the illustrations are made with collages reflecting the chaos of a city stricken by war. The book seems designed to overwhelm the reader: the text, graphic elements, and the illustrations create a labyrinth of their own. (8+) ♦

161

Queirós, Bartolomeu Campos de (text)

Neves, André (illus.)

Ah! Mar

(Ah! The sea)

Belo Horizonte : RHJ Ed., 2007. 39 p.

ISBN 978-85-7153-204-5

Sea – Desire

Can those who live in the mountains have a great love for the sea? Is it possible to love the sea without knowing it? Is it possible to sail the sea when one is far away from it?

These are some of the questions, along with love, and the enchantment and mysteries of the sea, which have inspired this book. In poetic prose, award-winning author Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós presents a story about longing, love, impossibilities, and a sailor who lives in the mountains and seeks to fulfil his greatest desire: to see the sea. André Neves has created magical, slightly melancholic coloured illustrations with surreal elements, which perfectly capture the spirit of the text. (8+)

162

Rosa, Sonia (text)

Saraiva, Valéria (illus.)

A lenda do timbó

(The legend of the earpod tree fruit)

Rio de Janeiro : Pallas, 2007. – 23 p.

ISBN 978-85-347-0400-7

Love – Earpod tree

The fruit of the tropical earpod tree, with its rounded black strings, is shaped like the human ear. The earpod tree fruit legend, which originated among the indigenous people living in the Argentinean Chaco region, seeks to explain this resemblance. Huirá, the chieftain's beautiful only daughter flees with her true love, Luã, a warrior from the enemy village. Her father longingly waits for her return. He lies down and presses his ear to the ground in order to be the first one to hear his beloved daughter's footsteps. But she does not return, and the old chieftain becomes ill and dies. His ear detaches from his body and stays on the ground where the first earpod tree grows. This is a powerful story about different kinds of love: the chieftain's paternal love for his daughter, and Huirá's love for Luã. (6+)

163

Yamã, Yaguarê (retell.)

Sehaypóri : o livro sagrado do povo saterê-mawé

(Sehaypóri : the sacred book of the Saterê-mawé)

São Paulo : Ed. Peirópolis, 2007. – 157 p.

ISBN 978-85-7596-077-6

Creation legend

Many of the stories about the Brazilian indigenous peoples were written and published by anthropologists, missionaries, and researchers. However, in recent years, authors of indigenous origin are writing their own stories, documenting an undoubtedly richer experience. This book is written by a geography teacher from the Amazon region, who is a descendant of the Maraguá and Saterê people. In this book, he assembles 19 myths (ranging

from the creation of the world to the origin of night and fire as well as to the beginnings of animals and plants), five legends, and seven tales (mostly about anthropomorphic animals). The illustrations are composed of graphic symbols from Saterê-mawê art and sacred objects, such as an oar with carvings, that tell stories. (12+) ♦

Colombia (Spanish)

164

García Esperón, María

Querida Alejandria

(Beloved Alexandria)

Bogotá : Ed. Norma, 2007. – 141 p.

(Zona libre)

ISBN 978-958-04-9845-2

Egypt/1st century B.C. – Rome/1st century B.C. – Princess – Cleopatra Selene

Cleopatra Selene, the daughter of Cleopatra and Marc Anthony, was brought to Rome at the age of eleven after the suicide of her parents and Octavian's conquering of Egypt. There she was brought up by Octavian's sister and was later made Queen of Mauritania through marriage. Around these sparse historical facts, the author has constructed an absorbing novel, which not only depicts the individual fate of the noble hostage but also the major historical events of the first century B.C. The protagonist's long monologue is written like a letter addressed to her hometown Alexandria. In highly figurative language shaped by mourning and desire, the book portrays a lively picture of the girl as the pawn of the powerful and a bird in a golden cage. (12+) (Premio Norma-Funda-lectura; 2007)

165

Quevedo, Francisco de (text)

Coll, Ivar da (illus.)

A un hombre de gran nariz

(To a man with a big nose)

Bogotá : Babel, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-958-97822-7-9

Nose

Lately, more and more publishers are digging up treasures from the works of famous authors and retelling them to young readers in picture book format. This sonnet by the great Spanish writer Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645) is one of these discoveries. In this poem, a product of his ongoing literary duel with Luis de Góngora, Quevedo derides his favourite enemy with a pen dipped in

vitriol. Góngora's prominent olfactory organ obviously inspired him to a cascade of imaginative, figurative associations. To accompany this delightful poem, Ivar da Coll has created wonderfully delicate, whimsical pencil drawings, which capture the spirit and elegance of the verses in a felicitous manner. The result is a fine, carefully designed little book, which readers will hold in their hands with true delight. (8+)

Mexico (Spanish)

166

Baranda, María (ed.)

Pacheco, Gabriel (illus.)

Hago de voz un cuerpo : antología

(I form a body out of sound : anthology)

México, D.F. : Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2007. – 138 p.

(Los especiales de A la orilla del viento)

ISBN 978-968-16-8400-6

Human – Body – Body parts – Poetry

In this anthology, 20 poems by Mexican authors explore the human body. Very naturally, without any inhibitions about ›touchy‹ zones, they examine it from top to bottom, from head to toes. Whether hair, nose, elbows, buttocks, or knees – everything has its place here. The poems, which have lots of room to breathe, avoid naturalistic representation but prefer instead imaginative, enigmatic, striking imagery. The colour illustrations perfectly complement the text without overwhelming it. Confident and not enslaved by the text, they playfully open up another dimension, which offers room for original interpretations. Refreshing verses, intriguing pictures, a pleasing typography, and an accomplished design make this volume a little gem for young and not-so-young readers. (10+) ★ ●

167

Orozco, Rebeca (text)

Tachi (photogr.)

Detrás de la máscara : máscaras de México

(Behind the mask : masks from Mexico)

México, D.F. : Ed. Tecolote, 2006. – 32 p.

ISBN 978-970-971-843-0

Mexico – Mask

Every other page of this book displays a mask representative of Mexico's rich cultural diversity. Freely placed coloured photos have an impressionable effect – foreign, secretive, and even somewhat uncanny. Although their stare is blank, these masks gaze back at the reader with

expressive faces, powerful colours, and distinctive mouths or noses. What is fascinating, is not only the diversity of types and forms, but also the differing materials and textures, which can be well deciphered from the photos. In the accompanying texts, the masks – people, animals, and mythical creatures – introduce themselves, explain their origin, their function and meaning, and which saga, myth, or historical event is important to their heritage. This is an appealing, beautifully designed book. (6+) ♦

Venezuela (Spanish)

168

Sáez Castán, Javier (text/illus.)

La merienda del señor Verde

(Mr. Green's teatime)

Caracas [et al.] : Ed. Ekaré, 2007. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-84-934863-8

Colour – Monochromacity – Variegation

Six colours, disguised here as elegantly dressed gentlemen, live in their own respective monochromatic worlds. However, one day at the house of Mr. Green, they discover behind a secret door something breathtaking: a multi-colour world, much more beautiful and diverse than anything they have ever known. In the same way, this new picture book by Javier Sáez Castán doesn't reveal everything right away; rather, it wants the reader to find his or her way little by little. Children will approach it more directly; whereas adults will approach it more intricately, overlooking the overt, at times mysterious allusions. The illustrations (the originals are in large format, painted onto wood) depict an art world, which reminds one of a surrealistically constructed theatre stage. Immersed in mild light and delicately oblique green tones, this world appears tender, light, and a little melancholic. (5+)

North America and the Caribbean

Canada (French)

169

Hinckel, Florence

La fille qui dort

(The sleeping girl)

[Montréal] : 400 coups, 2007. – 141 p.

(Connexion)

ISBN 978-2-89540-345-6

Narcolepsy – Affirmation of life – First love – Theatre

15-year-old Johanna is a girl like any other, who would like to be a little thinner and have a »normal«, less eccentric mother. However, she is constantly falling asleep everywhere lately. Following her diagnosis with the uncommon illness narcolepsy, Johanna is deeply shocked, but soon thereafter she resumes her life. She wants to act the role of Antigone in the school play and to win handsome Benjamin for herself. In a clear and lively language, the author uses the example of narcolepsy to represent any possible hurdle in a young person's development. This novel illustrates how unforeseen difficulties can be accepted and confronted. (13+)

170

Mativat, Geneviève (text)

Thibault, Paule (illus.)

SOS, c'est l'hiver!

(SOS, it's winter!)

[Montréal] : Hurtubise HMH, 2007. – 67 p.

ISBN 978-2-89647-013-6

Canada – Immigration – Algeria – Winter – Friendship – Interculturality

The boy Mouloudh emigrates from Algeria with his family to wintry Québec. His initial experiences with snow, cold, and ice – snow that falls from the roof, or cold that makes your tongue stick to metal – go along with the fascination he feels for the young girl with the red coat, living next door. After small adventures, Mouloudh learns to adapt to his new surroundings. Entertaining and easily accessible to beginning readers, this is a literary introduction to Québec's winter with all its charms and hazards. Furthermore, this tiny book depicts the beginning of a friendship, unintimidated by cultural differences. (6+) ♦

171

Tibo, Gilles (text)

Arsenault, Isabelle [et al.] (illus.)

Rêves d'enfance : 30 poèmes

(Childhood dreams : 30 poems)

Saint-Lambert (Québec) : Dominique et Compagnie, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-2-89512-518-1

Child – Life – Play – Dream

Thirty poems invite children as well as adults to read about the world of childhood. The poems are about dolls, clowns, tin soldiers, wolves, and about children who love life, are against war, help animals, and have nightmares. The gentle, touching, funny, and whimsical poems accompany pictures from five renowned illustrators. The artists top the texts off with their imaginativeness and diversity – from clearly structured, geometric shaped pictures to light and sketchy drawings – this homage to the child, published on the occasion of the ten-year anniversary of the publisher and the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts. (3+)

Martinique (France) (French)

172

Cage-Florentiny, Nicole (text)

Fortuné, Jocelyne (illus.)

Une robe couleur soleil

(A sun-coloured dress)

Case Pilote, Martinique : Éd. Lafontaine, 2007. – 32 p. (Jeunesse) (Ti colibri)

ISBN 978-2-912006-87-5

Doll – Egoism – Arrogance – Sharing – Forgiveness – Friendship

Linda loves her beautiful white, blond porcelain doll. However, she doesn't let her cousin Hortense play with it. So, Hortense runs away crying and discovers a dismembered doll, which speaks to her. Together with her friend, the bunny Lapinou, the girl fixes up the doll, restoring it to a new splendour. The three new friends are playing together contently, when Linda shows up – crying, because her porcelain doll broke. May she now also play with them? In a simple way, this book teaches young readers how sharing can make you happy and how important it is to take care of people and objects. (4+)

Denmark

173

Bendix, Tea / Kvist, Hanne / Algreen-Petersen, Elin (eds.)

Børnenes ænsyklopædi

(Children's Encyclopaedia)

[København] : Gyldendal, 2007. – 193 p.

ISBN 978-87-02-06137-6

Encyclopaedia

It was the publisher's idea to create a dictionary containing only terms that would – instead of should – interest children! The texts should first of all be entertaining, not didactic, and the illustrations should not be naturalistic, but rather, full of imagination. The authors and illustrators who were invited to contribute were enthusiastic; no less than 63 artists have worked on this book, among them many of renown. This collaboration resulted in a splendid book with varied illustrations, original texts, fine paper and print, a cheerful cover, and clear endpapers like one seldom encounters. Reading this book and leafing through its pages is pure pleasure for children and adults alike. The text does not always give explanations, but often adds something absurd – under »mushroom«, for example, readers will find a psychological map of family relations, and under »music« a round of Boschian fantasy figures. Even the references serve no other purpose than to incite readers to continue turning the page. (5+)

174

Ford, Michael (ed.)

Schmidt, Regitze (illus.)

Moderne danske eventyr II : antologi

(Modern Danish fairytales II : anthology)

Ålsgårde : ABZebra, 2007. – 304 p.

ISBN 978-87-91687-53-5

Literary fairy tale – Anthology

This selection of modern fairy tales, chosen from an annual fairytale competition in honour of Hans Christian Andersen, presents works by young Danish authors who have been inspired by Andersen's works. Not only the themes (for example, a fairy tale about a dragon on the Wawel in Krakow), but also some of the authors have an international background. Furthermore, the fairy tales are printed both in Danish and English. Although plenty of princes and princesses dwell in these tales, and luxurious palaces abound, the irony or parody of Andersen's originals lends a modern tone to these new fairy tales and thus makes for an amusing read. (10+)

175

Guldager, Katrine Marie (text)

Pardi, Charlotte (illus.)

Frøken Ignora og Georg sætter deres

præg på verden

(Miss Ignora and Georg make their mark in the world)

[København] : Alinea, 2007. – 21 p.

(Frøken Ignora i vandtårnet; 5)

ISBN 978-87-23-04694-9

Child – Philosophy of life – Humanity

The Alinea publishing company specialises in simple texts for beginning readers, some of which are well done, some of which are trivial. The series about the girl Ignora, of which ten volumes have been published to date, exceeds the best, which can be found in this difficult terrain between pedagogical intention and artistic ambition. With few, simple words, the story tells of how Ignora, who lives in a water tower, and her friend resolve to follow the call of charity and compassion. Her name, Ignora, suggests she shares qualities with the innocent fool Parsival. The city with the similarly meaningful name Stridstrup (»Conflict Town«) stands for a world full of contradictions. Two adults, the tough dog-abuser and the friendly fishmonger, are the two extremes between which the children must form their own point of view. The artist has perfected her signature style of ingenious illustrations blending caricature and realistic portrayals of daily life. (6+) ★

176

Jensen, Helle Vibeke (illus.)

Slangehund – Snakedog – Hebi inu

(Snakedog)

København : Høst & Søn, 2007. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-87-638-0647-3

Mythical creature – Fantasy trip – Fantasy world

There are only a few picture books by Helle Vibeke, who works primarily as a textile designer. But because of their explicit modernism (inspired, above all, by pop-art), these rare creations are all out of the ordinary. Working extensively with reportage-like repeated picture elements, used in the once-popular pattern style, this wordless picture book follows the air journey of a mythical creature in fantastic, almost extraterrestrial-looking surroundings. For the backgrounds, Vibeke uses grainy photo reproductions of patterns, including designs from the Japanese fashion designer Issei Miyake's »Pleats please« collection. The result is an extraordinary picture book, which adults may frown upon, but which will open up a new aesthetic world for children. (6+)

177

Mathiesen, Eske K. (text)

Seeberg, Ursula (illus.)

Den sultne kat

(The hungry cat)

København : Høst & Søn, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-87-14-11907-2

Cat – Eating – Greed

Ursula Seeberg belongs to the school of illustrators who value picturesque landscapes and soft hues. Thus, the old story of an insatiable glutton creates a strong stylistic contrast – its grotesque vehemence exceeds anything an illustrator could possibly conceive. While resting on a garbage pile of many empty packages, whose contents have been eaten clean, a cat – even when slim, an unsocial brute – eats simply everything in its way: from the mouse to the school bus, including the minister of state. Nothing is too revolting to it. With the butcher's apprentice, however, the gluttonous creature finally meets its master, who, with an elegant swing of his knife, slits its stomach open. Once the beast is completely gutted, a tailor sews up the wrinkled coat of the cat again. (6+)

Finland

178

Eronen, Marikki

Paavo Iivanainen perimmaisten

kysymysten äärellä

(Paavo Iivanainen and the basic questions of life)

Helsinki : Otava, 2006. – 159 p.

ISBN 978-951-1-21248-5

Youth – Everyday life – Country life

In a turbulent and humorous way, this book provides insight into the life of adolescents in provincial eastern Finland. Paavo, alias Paavi, a 15-year-old city dweller, comes from a village and is therefore familiar with both ways of life. In both places, Paavi is part of the community, each with its own distinctive qualities. Accordingly, the language both in the country and in the city as well as the preoccupations of city and country dwellers, have their own special touch. The entertaining story is told in a fragmented style from different perspectives. In this way, many themes are broached that encourage the reader to reflect. (13+)

179

Franzon, Päivi (text)

Airola, Sari (illus.)

Surusaappaat

(Mourning boots)

Helsinki : Lasten Keskus, 2006. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-951-627-591-1

Child – Grandmother – Death – Mourning process

This story allows the reader to participate in the mourning process of a small boy. Eemi experiences beautiful moments with his beloved grandmother, which are imaginatively depicted. The sudden illness and death of the grandmother plunges the boy and his parents into deep mourning. Eemi's feelings and his attempt to deal with his grandmother's death are vividly portrayed from the child's perspective. He copes with his mourning alone, but he needs his family to compensate for the loss. The title of the book foreshadows how Eemi eventually overcomes his grief with the help of his boots. With their uniform colour shades and changing perspectives, the illustrations underscore the atmosphere of the story. (5+)

180

Manninen, Ina (text/illus.)

Leijonan nimi

(The name of the lion)

Helsinki : Söderström (WSOY), 2006. – 34 S.

ISBN 978-951-032118-8

Child – Imagination – Friendship

This story about the adventures little Minna experiences in a single day, is shaped by motion. Motion pervades the entire book in the form of physical locomotion as well as in the form of movement between the real and the fantastic. Hurt because the family moved, Minna plays alone in the yard until suddenly Anisa appears. The little girl takes Minna away into a fantasy world, where the familiar and the strange, real memories and fantastic events blend together. Back in their familiar surroundings after many exciting experiences, the two immediately make plans for the following day. This picture book was produced for the 2004 competition for Nordic picture books. (5+)

181

Parkkola, Seita (text)

Ikonen, Jani (illus.)

Viima

<proper name>

Helsinki : Söderström (WSOY), 2006. – 334 S.

ISBN 978-951-0-31710-5

Special school – Anti-Utopia – Fear – Resistance

The twelve-year-old first-person narrator, Viima («gust of wind»), is labelled as a being »at risk« because of repeated attempts to run away. The father's girlfriend, an educator, considers sending the boy to a special school, which claims to get youths with problems back onto the right track, as his last chance. Viima, who does not manage well with the strict, questionable disciplinary measures, meets some »misfits« or »outcasts«, with whom he develops a trusting friendship. Despite their fear, they want to rebel against the school system together and save the »inmates«. The situation becomes more and more dreary. Themes like the individual's right of self-determination, forced learning, and the belief in the possibility of change are all dealt with in this enthralling novel. (12+)

182

Peltoniemi, Sari (text)

Kallio, Liisa (illus.)

Kerppu ja tyttö

(Kerppu and the girl)

Helsinki : Tammi, 2007. – 72 p.

ISBN 978-951-31-3794-6

Child – Dog – Pet – Responsibility

The wish for a pet is addressed in every family at one time or another – apparently not only among humans. The small dog Kerppu needs a long time to convince his parents to get him a human pet. He welcomes the girl, which he finally receives for his birthday, full of excitement and with great expectations but without much concern about the theoretical fundamentals of owning and keeping a human. Living together brings with it beautiful moments for both, but also grief because of the differences in opinion and typical differences between dogs and humans. Kerppu must learn to be more considerate and responsible. The story is told in a fresh new way and encourages readers to reflect on their accustomed ways of thinking. The artistic black-and-white illustrations perfectly capture the facial expressions and changing moods of the two protagonists. (6+) ●

Finland (Swedish)

183

Sandman Lilius, Irmelin (text/illus.)

Rasse Rask flyger upp

(Rasse Rask flies up)

Helsinki : Schildt, 2007. – 175 p.

ISBN 978-951-50-1729-1

Small town – Idyll – Imaginary world

The Finland Swede Irmelin Sandman-Lilius is a literary soulmate of Tove Jansson, who was a friend of hers. She does not, however, create a Moominland with its own set of creatures, but, rather, various small-town fantasy worlds. Hangö really exists, but the town in this story remains unrealistically fairytale-like. The story tells about the Rask family, the Easter bunny who fulfills wishes, the good-weather dragon, and the flying horse. Fights, petty jealousies, and fears are everywhere but they do not result in existential anguish. The author seems to know that in our harsh reality children perhaps need escapist fantasies more than ever. Like Tove Jansson, the author illustrates the texts herself. This book is especially rich in fine pen-and-ink drawings, which take integral part in carrying the mood of the story. (10+)

Norway

184

Andersson, Rune Johan (text/illus.)

Containerfortellinger

(Container stories)

[Oslo] : Cappelen, 2007. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-82-02-26558-8

Garbage – Imaginary world – Yearning

In the large, filled garbage container, there is something stirring. The discarded items are alive and begin to tell their stories: the broken accordion remembers its sailor, the chair made of wood dreams about the Amazon forest. Even discarded humans can be found. An aged prima donna emerges from the garbage and recounts her successes – with operas and with men. Still stuck to the office chair is a small employee; even a girl has slept among the rubbish. They all have their disappointments and yearnings. They begin to build a blimp out of the rubbish and take off toward the destination of their dreams, leaving all their earthly troubles behind. The large-scale pictures accompanying the small stories invite the readers to dream themselves out of dismal everyday life into a fantasy world. (6+)

185

Borge, Øistein

Kidnapperne fra SubCity

(The kidnappers from SubCity)

[Oslo] : Schibsted, 2006. – 194 p.

(Nino Glass; 1)

ISBN 978-82-516-2324-7

Father – Kidnapping – Son – Rescue

This title is Øistein's debut novel and the first of a new series named after the protagonist, Nino Glass, a boy around 13 years old, whose father is an inventor. It is remarkable how the author, a stage director, successfully reaches boys especially, who notoriously read less and less, without ingratiating itself with the readers. Hence, there is a whole array of adventurous elements packed into this volume: a father who is kidnapped in London, a young dolphin, whom Nino saves and who later kidnaps Nino on his back to take him out to sea and then back to England where the boy is supposed to rescue captured dolphins. However, he rescues his father there from the hands of bandits with the help of another young boy. Boys who enjoyed this read will be happy to know that the second volume of the series has already appeared. (10+)

186

Deberitz, Jan (text)

Qvale, Annine (illus.)

Morgenkåpedyrets lille, store verden

(The morning-robe animal's small large world)

[Oslo] : Damm, 2006. – 141 p.

ISBN 978-82-04-11503-4

Imaginary setting – Mythical creature

Written in the tradition of »The wind in the willows« and similar stories with anthropomorphised animal protagonists, this book features the adventures of different fantasy animals. Strange things happen around the morning-robe animal and his three friends. Letters fly out of a dictionary and dance in the air, a flute doused with magic water plays on its own, grass and leaves suddenly turn blue. A paradisiacal world is evoked and invites readers to immerse themselves in it. But it also gently demonstrates how we need to respect our fellow (human) creatures and their needs. The earth-coloured pen-and-ink drawings add to the charm of the story. The stories follow in the footsteps of animal narratives without mimicking them. (8+)

187

Hole, Stian (text/illus.)

Garmanns sommer

(Garmann's summer)

[Oslo] : Cappelen, 2006. – [44] p.

ISBN 82-02-25922-3

School holidays – Summer – Beginning of the school year – Life cycle

Once, collage illustrations were a technique; now they seem to have become an obsession, and few artists can resist pasting torn paper bits all over the picture book pages. Despite this wide-spread collage craze, Stian Hole uses the technique to create uncommon and captivating moods. On backdrops of diffused but never monotonous colours, Hole combines pictures from varying origins (it's hard to tell if some are drawings or photos) in often grotesque, at times even troubling, but always fascinating compositions. The story of the emotional state of a six-year-old boy shortly before the end of the holidays is merely the framework for a deeper story told from different perspectives. For Garmann, who likes to ask everyone what they fear, school is just beginning. For his three elderly aunts who visit Garmann and his parents, life is drawing to a close. The book leaves different impressions on each age group depending on whether the reader identifies with the boy or his aunts. (6+) ★

Sweden

188

Engholm, Bengt-Erik

Kameleontpojken

(The chameleon boy)

Stockholm : Bonnier Carlsen, 2007. – 307 p.

ISBN 978-91-638-5603-7

Father – Daughter – Circus – Search for the father

The author lets an old woman recount the story of her youth and thereby adroitly legitimises the first-person narrative of a 13-year-old. The girl Moa has been stuck between a rock and hard place ever since her father disappeared and her mother has gradually become depressive. Friendly neighbours bring Moa to a foster family; however, she feels unhappy with them. She runs away, gets mixed up with jugglers, and becomes fascinated by the »chameleon boy«, who can change colours. When he suddenly disappears, she joins the jugglers and their circus on their search for him. In the end, she unexpectedly finds her father again. The author depicts life among the vagrants with empathy and variety and has thereby crea-

ted a book, which one enjoys reading – even though there is no denying Enghol's debt to Lloyd Alexander. (10+)

189

Kieri, Katarina

Majas morsas kompis sambo och andra noveller

(Maja's mother's girlfriend's partner and other novellas)

Stockholm : Rabén & Sjögren, 2007. – 143 p.

ISBN 978-91-29-66791-2

Sweden – Youth

In this book, the author who created a sensation with »Ingen grekisk god, precis« (Not exactly a Greek god), which broaches the delicate topic of love between a teacher and a pupil, has composed several shorter novellas, painting a portrait of present-day Swedish youths' lives. The author is less concerned with creating suspense than with capturing the moods and emotional states of the teenagers. She does so by presenting kaleidoscopic insights into different living conditions. Instead of resulting from the plot, suspense builds up because the reader's are left in the dark about how the psychical configuration will develop. These novellas are a more demanding read; but since mental pain is reputed to be only brief, the strain may ultimately result in familiarisation with literature – in which case little harm would be done. (14+)

190

Lindgren, Barbro (text)

Wikland, Ilon (illus.)

Potatisbarnen

(The potato children)

[Stockholm] : Brombergs, 2007. – 34 p.

ISBN 978-91-7337-027-1

Toy – Imagination

Since Astrid Lindgren's death in 2002, Wikland is always on the lookout for new illustration projects. In a series of picture books, she has been working through memories from her Estonian childhood in images, preferring to leave the text to others. The stories with the dog Sammeli are set in Haapsalu, the city of her youth. In this book, Sammeli plays only a marginal role. In the centre is the story of the potato children, products of the child's fantasy who come alive and suffer from the jealousy of the doll Rosalinda; however, everything ends in harmony. Wikland's style lost its graphic formality long ago and has given way to more impressionist gouache paintings. Echoes of her former stylistic devices are still apparent, however, for example the bird's eye perspective looking down into a room. The landscape exudes the soft lighting and the harmonious relationship to nature typical of Scandinavian painting. (5+)

191

Lundström, Janne

Flickan som var vacker i onödan

(The girl who was beautiful in vain)

Stockholm : Natur & Kultur, 2007. – 323 p.

ISBN 978-91-27-02585-1

West Africa/1600-1700 – Clan –**Girl – Emancipation – Gender role**

This story takes the reader back to the historical past in the savannah of West Africa. The heroine, Asombasine, lives with her family in a clan which is ruled by the authoritative grandfather. The girl daydreams herself away from the hard life-struggle to enter a fantastic, magical heaven in which God speaks to her and promises to let her be born again as a boy. She naïvely shares her dream with her family and soon begins to sense the hatred of the men. Eventually, she flees from the clan into the savannah in order to begin her own life. The author convincingly depicts the hardships of the girl, including a scene of female genital mutilation. The book is not an informational pamphlet about the evils of patriarchal society, however. Instead, the fate of the girl is an integral part of an adventurous story. (12+) ♦

192

Pohl, Peter

Nu heter jag Nirak

(Now I am called Nirak)

Stockholm : Alfabeta, 2007. – 240 p.

ISBN 978-91-501-0787-6

Adult – Girl – Seduction – Coping with life – Love

It is astonishing that the themes of love and sexuality can still provoke. With this novel, Peter Pohl, whose penchant for exploring problematic human behaviour is well known, has dared to portray the seduction of a 14-year-old girl by her stepfather. Not only the choice of the first-person narrative for Karin's alter ego, Nirak, but also the whole course of the drama abruptly ending in front of the judge prove Pohl's mastery in the psychological motivation of the character's actions. The uproar among reviewers has been considerable. What they found especially unsettling is that Pohl does not unilaterally condemn the seduction of a minor; instead, he shows that the desire to seduce can correspond to a desire to be seduced. One female reviewer wrote a scathing critique about this »dirty old man's lechery«. Peter Pohl countered with an equally scathing critique of the critic. In any case, Karin is no Lolita, and Pohl is no Nabokov, but Pohl does know how to write a similarly compelling novel. (14+) ★

Bosnia and Herzegovina (Serbian)

193

Spasojević, Pero (ed.)

Stojisavljević, Marija (illus.)

Cvijeće

(Flowers)

Banja Luka : Nova Škola, 2006. – [32] p.

[poster picture book]

(Biblioteka Na krilima vjetra)

ISBN 978-99938-780-6-3

Flower

This title from the series »On the Wings of the Wind« (the other volumes appeared as »Family,« »Insects,« and »Spring,«) from the Nova Škola publishing company in the Republika Srpska is especially notable. From the 18x18 cm square format, this book opens up into a double-sided 72x72 cm poster. The front and back are each divided up into multiple frames in which flowers are pictured in different contexts. For example, flowers are displayed in the garden, in the park, in the flower shop, as a gift, in children's games, or in a wedding bouquet. The short explanatory texts are supplemented by poems from different Serbian poets. The cheerful illustrations in bright colours are presented in a traditional style. (3+)

Croatia

194

Balog, Zvonimir (text/illus.)

Zmijice, mačkobus i osmeronogi konj

(Small snakes, cat-bus, and eight-legged horse)

Zagreb : Profil, 2007. – 47 p.

ISBN 978-953-12-0547-4

Animals

Zvonimir Balog has been one of the classic Croatian children's book authors since the 1980s. He is the founder of nonsense fiction for children in Croatia, and his prose is shaped by wit and humour. Impartial, adopting the perspective of a child or of someone who doesn't know our world, Balog examines what goes on with us humans. Funny yet earnest, and working with puns and other wordplays, he describes the behaviour of children and the world around them. At the same time, he draws comparisons to the animal world, in turn anthropomorphising the animals, so that snakes wash dishes or do what the mother has forbidden the children to do. In the expressive, wildly eventful, and technically varied illustrations, Balog's visual humour competes with that of his texts. (5+)

195

Đokić, Ana

Zoe, silazi dolje!

(Zoe, come down!)

Zagreb : Knjiga u Centru [et al.], 2007. – 128 p.

ISBN 978-953-7514-05-1 / 978-953-7199-36-4

Metropolitan – Female youth – Family – Puberty

In this realistic novel with a hint of the fantastic, Ana Đokić, whose work has not only been published in the countries of former Yugoslavia but also in France, tells the story of the almost 14-year-old girl Zoe, who lives in a tower block in Zagreb. Zoe's single-parent father marries a neighbour, and although Zoe gets along well with her new four-year-old brother, there are, of course, the usual problems of patchwork families. This intriguingly and entertainingly written book, with colloquial dialogue, depicts the life, the difficulties, and the feelings of a pubescent city kid. The fictitious dialogues between Zoe and the author are especially humorous. (12+)

Czech Republic

196

Fučíková, Renáta (text/illus.)

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk

<proper name>

Praha : Práh, 2006. – [44] p.

(Největší Češi)

ISBN 978-80-7252-152-4

Masaryk, Tomáš G.

The illustrator Renáta Fučíková recounts in words and pictures, and in a way understandable to children, the life story of the founder and first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Thus, this book is also a history of Bohemia and Slovakia dating from the end of the Habsburg Monarchy to Masaryk's death one year before the Munich Agreement in 1938. It depicts Masaryk's childhood and youth and describes his family life with the American Huguenot Charlotte Garrigue Masaryková. It also gives an account of his scholarly work in philosophy and literature. Furthermore, it tells of how he stayed away from politics at first, but then later became involved in the Czech cause, helping the Czechs and the Slovaks to create an independent state through negotiations with Russia and the USA after World War I. The thoughtful book design lovingly combines ornaments, maps, and comic strip elements. Fučíková's watercolours convey to young readers a clear picture of that time in history. (8+) ★

197

Procházková, Iva (text)

Prachatická, Markéta (illus.)

Myši patří do nebe ... le jenom na skok

(Mice belong in heaven ... but only for a short spell)

Praha : Albatros, 2006. – 103 p.

ISBN 978-80-00-01558-3

Mouse – Fox – Death – Paradise – Reincarnation

The mouse Speedy and the fox Whitebelly meet again in animal heaven, and, because they are freed from their earthly feelings and needs, become friends. When their time comes for reincarnation, they return to earth – the fox as a mouse and the mouse as a fox. Iva Procházková has already made a name for herself outside of the Czech Republic, especially in Germany, where she has received many prizes, from the German Youth Literature Prize (Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis) in 1989 to the Protestant Book Prize (Evangelischer Buchpreis) in 2008. In this case, she has written a religious book – without adhering to a specific doctrine. In her interpretation of death she combines Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist teachings, and depicts death not as something definitive, but, rather, as the passage into another form of existence. (6+)

198

Šrut, Pavel (text)

Čapek, Jindra (illus.)

Pohádky Brášky Králíka

(The tales of Brother Rabbit)

[Praha] : Knižní Klub, 2007. – 84 p.

ISBN 978-80-242-1960-8

Rabbit – Trickster – Adventure

With Brother Rabbit, the Czech children's book author, poet, and translator, Pavel Šrut has created a new kind of Eulenspiegel (a traditional German trickster figure). Without appropriating specific fairy tales, he uses fairytale motifs from Africa, South America, and the Caribbean. The somewhat boasting but, nonetheless, likeable rabbit has a rough time with the snakes, foxes, wolves, tigers, and ghosts lurking around every corner. But thanks to his cunningness, the rogue successfully outsmarts all of his opponents. He even succeeds in fulfilling the tasks the Heavenly Father himself sets out for him. This amusing book, equally enjoyable for adults, is enriched with witty illustrations from the internationally renowned illustrator Jindra Čapek, which perfectly capture the tone of the tales. (6+) ◆

Estonia

199

Ojar, Triinu (text)

Plats, Marja-Liisa (illus.)

Suur must koer = Suur must pini

(The big black dog)

Tallinn : Päike ja Pilv, 2007. – 44 p.

ISBN 978-9985-9770-5-7

Bilingual book in Estonian and Võro

Dog – Prank – Family

In order to strengthen the identity of the Võro-minority in the country, the Estonian Minister of Culture, together with the publishing company Päike ja Pilv, announced a competition in 2006 for dual-language children's books in Estonian and Võro. Triinu Ojar's submission won the category for animal stories. Lively and with a lot of humour, she depicts the likes and dislikes of the big black dog, his pranks, his games with children, his behaviour on official occasions, experiences with other animals, driving in cars, collecting mushrooms, and above all, his favourite activity, exuberantly greeting humans. Water-coloured drawings in atmospheric tones and the appealing graphic design make this picture book attractive to both children and adults. (5+)

Lithuania

200

Žilinskaitė, Vytautė (text)

Talaikienė, Jolanta (illus.)

Kintas : apysaka

<proper name>

Vilnius : Alma Littera, 2006. – 190 p.

ISBN 978-9955-08-966-7

City – Country life – Arrogance – Cowardice – Courage

When Kintas has to go on vacation to the country with his stepfather, he claims he cannot live without television. He hides in order to pressure his father to take the family back home to the capital Vilnius. Compared to the village children, Kintas feigns the strong man, but when he is confronted by criminals, he doesn't have the courage that the naïve, fearful Silvestras has, to defend the girl, Gile. Using an ironic undertone, the popular Lithuanian children's and youth book author, Vytautė Žilinskaitė, demonstrates here where bravado and egoism lead to, and that taking on responsibility for oneself and others offer another – more rewarding – option. (12+)

Poland

201

Bardijewska, Liliana (text)

Kanios-Stańczyk, Monika (illus.)

Dom ośmiu tajemnic

(The house of eight secrets)

Warszawa : Nasza Księgarnia, 2006. – 155 p.

ISBN: 978-83-10-11145-6

House – Dog – Goblin – Time travel

The hero of this story is a mysterious old house. It anxiously observes, together with similar houses in the neighbourhood, the construction of a modern apartment building. Martin moves into the somewhat derelict house with his parents. In the beginning, the boy is not enthusiastic at all. He would much rather live in the new apartment building. However, after he experiences unexpected adventures in the house, he changes his mind. Through journeys into the past, accompanied by his dog Caesar, the house goblin, and his grandma Anselma, he meets former residents of the house. Martin feels truly at home now. The award-winning author skillfully moves between fantasy and reality in this novel for young readers. (7+)

202

Kasdepke, Grzegorz (text)

Rychel, Piotr (illus.)

Pamiętki detektywa Pozytywki

(Memories of Detective Positive)

Warszawa : Nasza Księgarnia, 2007. – 61 p.

ISBN 978-83-10-11388-7

Detective – Riddle

During the biannual clean-up of his office »To the Pink Eyeglasses«, the peculiar but friendly Detective Positive finds different forgotten items that remind him of completed cases. Each chapter of this book is dedicated to such a case. For the most part, the cases are less about solving crimes than about enjoying strange events, tall tales, and conflicts. At the end of each chapter, the detective solves the case, but he does not reveal how he arrived at his conclusion. That is the task of the readers, who, by adding up the clues, and with the help of their general knowledge have to figure it out by themselves. The solutions are only revealed at the end of this humorously cartoon-illustrated book. (8+)

Russia

203

Čukovskij, Kornej (text)
Diodorov, Boris (idea)
Suvorova, Nadežda (illus.)

Putanica

(Hurly-burly)

Moskva : Samokat, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-5-902326-42-7

Animals – Poetry

The text of this picture book originates from the year 1926 and gives the impression that Kornej Čukovskij (1882-1969), the doyen of modern Russian children's literature, had anticipated the well-known book »Wir können noch viel zusammen machen« (»Three is Company«) by the German illustrator and satirist F. K. Waechter, published half a century later. In his poem, Čukovskij reflects on children's imagination, therein discovering surreal elements as well as the delight in topsy-turvy worlds and comic inversions: The cuckoo wants to bark, the sparrow wants to moo, the pig wants to meow, etc. This edition is one of five picture books that illustrators of the artist group »The magical saw« created within the context of an art project at the French school in St. Petersburg, and proves once again the progressiveness of the Soviet (children's) literature of the 1920s. (3+)

204

Pečerskaja, Anna N. (ed.)
Dugin, V. [et al.] (illus.)

Boľšaja kniga o prirode : stichi, rasskazy, zagadki, primety, posloviцы

(The big book about nature : verses, stories, riddles, country sayings, and proverbs)

Moskva : Drofa-Pljus, 2006. – 206 p.

ISBN 978-5-9555-0886-3

Nature

This anthology, illustrated with atmospheric, sometimes full-page watercolours, brings together literature about nature in the course of the seasons. The palette encompasses texts by classic Russian poets from Aleksandr S. Puškin to Sergej A. Esenin, folk riddles, proverbs, idioms, and country sayings. Moreover, the volume contains stories from the best Russian nature observers who have written for children: Vitalij V. Bianki, Michail M. Prišvin, Georgij A. Skrebickij, Nikolaj I. Sladkov, Gennadij Ja. Snegirev, and Ivan S. Sokolov-Mikitov. Pictures and texts depict the deeply snow-covered woods, the awakening of

nature in spring, the countryside, and the people and animals in the summer heat, or nature's preparation for the next winter. (7+)

205

Sedakova, Ol'ga (text)
Novosel'ceva, Irina (illus.)

Kak ja prevraščalas'

(How I transformed myself)

Moskva : TimDizajn, 2007. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-5-903375-01-1

Child – Metamorphosis – Animals

The multiple prize-winning Russian writer, poet, and essayist Ol'ga Sedakova recalls her own childhood in this book and skillfully uses poetic language to explore the inner life of children. During an argument, when afraid, or if something was uncomfortable for her, the little girl Ol'ga would imagine taking another shape such as that of a chicken, a fish, a bear, a piglet, or, when that no longer helped, of lightning and thunder. Through these metamorphoses she wanted to frighten the adults and receive more sympathy and attention. This book, with its expressive coloured-chalk illustrations, allows children to feel understood and adults to learn a lot about dealing with children. (4+)

Slovakia

206

Groch, Erik Jakub (text)
Kiselová-Siteková, Jana (illus.)

Pisťalkár

(The flutist)

Prešov : Slniečkov, 2006. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-80-969577-7-4

Contentment – Vanity – Altruism – Christmas – Metamorphosis

This lovingly designed picture book is as much poetic in its text as it is in its pictures. In the first of two stories, contentment and the need for recognition are juxtaposed. A man goes through the world naked, playing his flute, and is content with himself and with the world. The second story applies Christian motifs from Christmas time. The narrator finds a half-frozen girl, wants to save her and brings her home, where a wondrous transformation occurs. Both stories cannot easily be understood using logic; however, they arouse deep-seated feelings in the readers, and allow them to grasp what life is really about. The melancholic watercolour illustrations are full of unexpected discoveries. (4+)

207

Moravčík, Štefan (text)
Moravčíková, Dana (illus.)

Ako klobúk stratil hlavu

(How the hat lost the head)

Martin : Vyd. Matice Slovenskej, 2006. – 114 p.

ISBN 978-80-89208-35-7

Fairy tale – Saga – Legend

Štefan Moravčík has made a name for himself not only within the genre of sagas and legends, but also for children's poems. Employing the lyrical language of folk literature, many alliterations and repetitions, as well as elaborate imagery, the author creates fairy tales, sagas, legends, picaresque stories, and anecdotes about Matthias Corvinus of Hungary or Emperor Joseph II of Austria, as well as about medicine peddlers, simpletons, and tricksters who outwit the devil. The watercolour illustrations, whether atmospherically mystical or humorous, always underscore the unique character of the various stories, which are written in prose or in verse. (10+)

208

Palík, Peter (text)
Stanislavová, Denisa (illus.)
Smitten, Ernest C. (transl.)

Bol raz jeden kameň = There once was a stone

[Kysucké Nové Mesto] : Modré na Bielom, 2006. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-80-969553-0-5

Bilingual book in Slovak and English

Stone – Geology – History of Earth

This small picture book from the publishing company Modré na bielom (Blue on White), affiliated with the Slovak illustrators union, effectively recounts in abridged form the entire history of the Earth through the experiences of a stone. Still molten lava, it is hurtled from the earth's hot interior, then it cools down, and is burnished smooth in the river. Moss grows on it and then, in turn, is eaten up by fish and crabs. After an oil spill, the stone is carried home by a girl, cleaned and painted. The entire book is colourfully illustrated with images of painted stones which retell the story of the hero. (4+)

Slovenia

209

Kermauner, Aksinja

Berenikini kodri

(Berenike's hair)

Dob pri Donžalah : Miš Založba, 2007. – 186 p.

(Zorenja+)

ISBN 978-961-6630-06-1

Love – School – Country life – City

In her youth novel, Aksinja Kermauner tells the story of 15-year-old Anina, a visually impaired girl with albinism and beautiful hair. Anina lived a sheltered life until she transfers to high school and moves in with her grandfather in the city. She fully savours the allurements that urban life offers. Nik, the spoiled son of rich parents, bets he can win her over and nearly plunges her into unhappiness. The book portrays the situation of the youth in Slovenia, torn between post-modern, neo-liberal values and traditional moral and ethical beliefs. The author combines the plot with the legend about the Egyptian Queen Berenike, who sacrifices her hair, which can now be seen as a constellation in the sky. (12+)

210

Koren, Majda (text)
Bricelj, Suzi (illus.)

Eva in kozel

(Eva and the billy goat)

Ljubljana : Mladinska Knjiga, 2006. – 86 p.

(Zbirka Deteljica)

ISBN 978-86-11-17642-0

Loneliness – Outsider – Imaginary friend

Little Eva doesn't have it easy. She is somewhat of a dreamer, and in school all the others are always finished with their tasks before her. Even at home she feels alone – if it wasn't for the blue billy goat. Majda Koren's stringently and very delicately depicts the feelings of the girl. The story concentrates on Eva's onerous and melancholy world. In the representation of her imaginary goat companion reality and fantasy are given equal measure. Strictly speaking, the story is not about a fantasy world made up by the author, because the billy goat is not an illusion to Eva; to her, it is real and always there for her. Children, especially in primary school, with similar difficulties and feelings as the protagonist, will be able to identify with the little protagonist. (6+)

211

Rozman, Andrej (text)

Košir, Ana (illus.)

Johnson Debeljak, Erica (transl.)

Kako je Oskar postal detektiv =**How Oscar became a detective**

Ljubljana : Sodobnost International [et al.],

2007. – 66 p. + 69 p.

ISBN 978-961-6564-15-1

Bilingual book in Slovenian and English

Curiosity – Detective

The versatile author Andrej Rozman wanted to be a detective himself one day. Because nothing came of that, he wrote this suspenseful and humorous book instead. Oscar doesn't read well and generally is not exactly a genius at school. Therefore, he searches for the philosopher's stone, works alongside in the investigation of the case of »Little Red Riding Hood«, hunts ghosts, and is accused of being a thief himself. But as fate will have it, he can also help to fight »real« criminals. This bilingual turn-around-book is graphically very lively designed, with differently coloured book pages and varying font colours, topped off with fanciful typography and humorous illustrations. (6+)

Belgium (Dutch)

212

De Kockere, Geert (text)

Vermeire, Kaatje (illus.)

De vrouw en het jongetje

(The woman and the little boy)

Wielsbeke : De Eenhoorn, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-90-5838-399-0

Fear – Prejudice – Friendship

A little boy is intrigued by an elderly woman he sees every-day. In his imagination, she appears as a giant who eats little children. The woman tries to speak to the little boy, but it does not help: He runs away when she approaches him. One day, the woman doesn't appear in the street, and the boy is worried and wonders what might have happened to her. He is relieved when he sees her again. She no longer appears as a giant, and when she drops her basket of apples, the little boy helps her gather them. This is a captivating picture book about how prejudices can determine the image of others and feed fear of other people. (6+)

213

De Moor, Paul (text)

Olaerts, Wout (illus.)

Bellen blazen in de violentuin

(Blowing bubbles in the garden of violins)

Hasselt : Afijn, 2007. – 124 p.

ISBN 978-90-5933-093-1

Music – Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus –**Friendship – Imagination – Death**

The protagonist of this narrative has a special bond of friendship with Erasmus, her next-door neighbour, who has a room full of books. He tells her stories about Mozart as a youth, and most of the anecdotes don't end happily. The little girl has her own problems too. She is lonely, with a father who is only interested in his work, and a mother away in Spain. At the end of the book, the reader discovers that the mother is dead and that this is the reason why the little girl refuses to speak. This book is not only about problems but also about strength and imagination and about how music and the art of language can stimulate the imagination. Mozart's music comforts the girl and helps her to accept her mother's death. (10+)

214

Godon, Ingrid (illus.)

Naar zee

(To the sea)

Tielt : Lannoo, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 987-90-209-7038-8

Family – Sea

This book's double-spread illustrations are full of atmosphere, depicting the activities of toddlers on the beach and in the sea. The art requires no accompanying text – activities, such as playing, swimming, building sand castles, searching for shells, or eating ice cream are all vividly represented. The illustrations are designed in half-tones with a touch of humour, and sometimes caricatured. The use of simple lineation and a child's perspective give the illustrations a touching effect. Against the backdrop of sky, beach, and sea, the illustrations offer plenty of detail, all easily recognisable by toddlers, providing them with hours of viewing pleasure and allowing them to create their own stories from the pictures. (4+)

215

Moeyaert, Bart (text)

Matthys, Katrien (illus.)

De baas van alles

(The boss of everything)

Antwerpen : Manteau [et al.], 2007. – [60] p.

ISBN 978-90-223-1954-3

Night – Animals

The cat sits herself in a tree next to the owl. The owl, knowing the true nature of the cat, displays his sharp claws and warns her not to play any nasty tricks. The two nocturnal hunters are well matched, and after some time they both go their own ways. With the stealth of a tiger in the darkness of night, the cat goes on to encounter several other animals on her expedition and discusses with each who will be the boss of everything. This book contains 13 stories printed with luminous texts and illustrations, so that it can even be read in darkness. Each story gives some detail about the question of what it means to be the boss of someone else. The illustrations (silhouette pictures) are double scenes, which depict simultaneous events, ideas, and thoughts. This book creates an aesthetic play between light and shadow. (6+)

The Netherlands (Dutch)

216

Bos, Chris (text)

Felicie, Claire (photogr.)

Het meisje van De Nachtwacht

(The girl of »The Night Watch«)

Amsterdam : Leopold, 2007. – 24 p.

ISBN 987-90-258-5108-8

Rembrandt van Rhijn – Art

Curious to know her creator, the girl depicted in Rembrandt's world-famous 1642 painting »De Nachtwacht« (The Night Watch) comes to life. Her search takes her to the house where Rembrandt used to live (today a museum) and to meet the writer Jan Wolkers, who is a great admirer of Rembrandt. The author and photographer of this book were inspired by Rembrandt's painting to create a children's book from the perspective of a girl. The story's informative narrative and many dialogues give it vividness, creating a perfect tool to help children learn about Rembrandt's life and work. (8+)

217

Elpers, Noëlla

¡Dolores!

<proper name>

Houten : Van Goor, 2007. – 208 p.

ISBN 978-90-475-0008-7

Spain/15th-century – Dwarf – Inquisition – Friendship

Dolores is no common girl; rather, she is a smart dwarf. The lord of the castle thinks her a fit playmate for his daughter, so when Dolores is eight years old, he brings her to live at the castle as his daughter's companion and jester. Here she receives an education, room, and board. After a few years, Dolores is sold to the king of Spain to cheer up his sombre daughter, Juana (Joanna the Mad). She moves to the Spanish court and learns about the cruelties of the Inquisition. This is a well-written story full of suspense, which wonderfully portrays not only the intense friendship between Dolores and Juana but also Spain at the end of the 15th century and all the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition. (14+)

218

Lier, Bas van (text)

Goede, Irene (illus.)

Sprekens we in Europa straks allemaal Europees? : en andere vragen van kinderen aan de Europese Unie

(Will we all speak European in Europe? : and other questions from children about the European Union) [Amsterdam] : Nieuw Amsterdam [et al.], 2007. – 112 p. ISBN 978-90-468-0205-2

Europe – European Union

With this book, the author attempts to answer all kinds of questions concerning the European Union. For example: Will we all speak the same language in the future? Who invented the Euro? Will there be a European passport? The author answers 50 questions with detailed descriptions, giving children of ten years and up all the information they need to create an insightful image of contemporary Europe. Thanks to the clear narrative style of the author, some typically dull topics are explained in a captivating way. The black-and-white illustrations highlighted with green fit the text well. The simple maps of Europe, links to Web sites, and a summary of all European countries (including information about their capitals and population) complete this informative book. (10+) ♦

219

Rempt, Fiona (text)

Smit, Noëlla (illus.)

Kampioenen

(The champions)

Haarlem : Gottmer, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-90-257-4335-2

Forest – Animals – Competition – Diversity

Squirrel announces that there will be a sporting event in the forest and that he is going to be the champion. But since that is what all the other animals want as well, everyone begins to practise immediately. Every race is won by a different animal that uses its special characteristics to leave the rest of the animals a long way behind. At the end of the event, there is a relay race for which the animals are encouraged to work together. This oblong-sized picture book presents a well-constructed story told in an often humorous manner, whereas the colourful illustrations add an extra dimension. The characteristics of the individual animals are well depicted in the text and images. The simply written text is very suitable for children, and the illustrations allow them to expand their ideas about the story. (4+)

220

Snoodijk, Tijn (text/illus.)

qwl + krz en de raadselachtige planeet

(qwl + krz and the mysterious planet)

Amsterdam : Zirkoon, 2007. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-90-5247-396-3

Planet – Solar system – Earth – Alien

During their adventurous journeys, qwl and krz, two brave heroes from the galaxy »brgwlx«, land on a funny little planet in a remote area of the universe. However, they soon discover that it isn't funny at all when they are attacked by a group of bloodthirsty monsters. This is a very special book written in the language of »brgwlx«. The book contains a translation key with which the young reader can decipher the story. Once decoded, the story reveals itself to be a series of jokes by which the two aliens attempt to fathom the true nature of Earth and the earthlings. This book is a captivating mix of adventure, cartoons, and cryptography. (8+)

221

Sollie, André (text/illus.)

Een raadsel voor Roosje

(A riddle for Roosje)

Amsterdam [et al.] : Querido, 2007. – 47 p.

ISBN 978-90-451-0557-4

Siblings – Death – Mourning process

Roosje terribly misses her sister Pia, who died much too early. When Roosje was ten, Pia gave her a little notebook with ten little poems. Shortly thereafter, her sister died and she didn't look at it again for a very long time. Once she finally does read the poems again she discovers the mysterious lines at the beginning of the book. »One out of one. Ten out of ten. Roosje will see it then. A riddle for Roosje. From your big sister, Pia.« Roosje manages to solve the riddle and thereby learns how she must remember her sister. This is a compelling book about the process that begins after losing a loved one. The story is well constructed, both textually and visually, with continuous suspense. The illustrations of Roosje are composed with various techniques that perfectly complement the text. Roosje's emotions are accessible to the reader. The search for the solution of Pia's riddle completely draws the reader into the story. (7+) ★

222

Spee, Gitte (text/illus.)

Er was eens een aapje ... :

over letters van aap tot zee

(Once there was an ape ... :

about letters from Ape to ocean breeZe)

Vianen [et al.] : House of Books, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-90-443-2000-8

Alphabet

A monkey (aap = A) is in search of the sea (zee = Z), but since he doesn't know how to get there, he wants someone to go with him. After some wandering, the monkey arrives on the beach where he finds a piglet. Together they eat ice cream, watching the boat full of letters of the alphabet. The story depicts the search for the sea, and on each page words are used to introduce two new letters of the alphabet. Different from traditional ABC books, in which only the first letter of a word is important, this book consists of verses that compel the young reader/listener to look for the letters in the words and in the illustrations. This is a well-designed book with humorous endpapers into which the whole alphabet is incorporated. (4+)

223

Stein, Mathilde (text)

Hout, Mies van (illus.)

De kindereter

(The children-eater)

Rotterdam : Lemniscaat, 2007. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-90-5637-942-1

Cannibal – Girl – Kidnapping

A plucky girl is bored during the summer holidays and is happy to be kidnapped by a savage robber. Finally, she has someone to play with! The robber takes her for a wild ride on his horse, eventually bringing her to his hideout. While he sleeps, she decorates his home with flowers, but at breakfast she discovers he is just an ordinary children-eater. This is a great disappointment to the girl, who quickly escapes back home. The story draws the reader in directly. Play and reality are seamlessly interwoven and the images layered with fine humour and subtle jokes. The main characters are rendered in scratchy black lines and are therefore clearly recognisable within the mixed-media illustrations. Beautiful changing tints reflect the changing tones of the story. (4+)

224

Vendel, Edward van de (text)

Godon, Ingrid (illus.)

Kleinvader

(Little father)

Amsterdam : Querido, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-90-451-0384-2

Grandfather – Grandson – Death – Mourning process

A little boy is very proud of his grandfather, who lives at the edge of the forest and takes care of the squirrels, the old badger, the fox, and the chickens. His grandfather is also good at coming up with fun activities and is more enthusiastic than most of the fathers who attend their son's football games. Sometimes, his grandfather is quiet because he is thinking of his deceased wife, and in those moments, the little boy is a great support to him. This is a well written story, in which the love of a little boy for his grandfather is exquisitely portrayed and with an emotional turnaround of characters at the end. The page-filling illustrations drawn in crayon against a colourful background convey feelings of love and safety. (5+)

The Netherlands (Frisian)

225

Wijnstra, Mindert (text)

Wijnstra, Babs (illus.)

De stilte fan Joachem

(The silence of Joachem)

Ljouwert : Afûk, 2007. – 77 p.

ISBN 978-90-6273-755-0

Stuttering – Keeping silent – Outsider

Twelve-year old Joachem has a handicap: He stutters, and this causes him a lot of trouble. He hasn't spoken for half a year, neither at home nor at school. But he possesses an exceptional talent: He can draw anything he sees, he thinks, feels, and wants to say. In an intriguing way, the author weaves the central theme of someone unwilling to speak through the story. The problems caused by stuttering are described well. The black-and-white drawings are austere but nonetheless fit the text very well. (11+)

South Africa (Afrikaans)

226

Muller, Derick

Vuil Skottelgoed

(Dirty cutlery)

Kaapstad : Human & Rousseau, 2007. – 136 p.

ISBN 978-0-7981-4876-4

Hard-rock music – Drugs – Suicide

Bastian rebels against his parents' wish that he study law at the University of Stellenbosch, and instead makes off to Cape Town. The young man gets a job in a skate shop on Long Street, joins an Afrikaans punk band and immerses himself into the mosh pit culture of Cape Town's night life. His Cape existence is actually nothing more than a whirlpool of alcohol, drugs, sex, hard rock, and even harder partying. Just before he is completely devoured by this excessive life style, he decides to return home to Kimberley. But even there, his problems continue and bring him to the edge of suicide. This book is a typical punk novel, written in a language taken from the world of hard-rock musicians and skateboarders. At the same time, it is an excellent coming of age story. (16+) (Winner of the 2007 competition »I'm a writer«)

Hungary

227

Berg, Judit (text)

Kálmán, Anna (illus.)

Rumini

<proper name>

Budapest : Pagony, 2006. – 215 p.

ISBN 978-963-9727-05-2

Mouse – Adventure – Sea journey

The mouse Rumini is the hero of this humorous, suspenseful fairytale novel. Rumini is – like most youngest sons in a folk tale – a cunning but endearing fellow who bravely takes on every adventure according to the motto »Veni, vidi, vici«, even though he often trembles with fear. After he is not admitted into the rat gang, he joins the ocean liner »Szélkirályné« (Wind Queen) as a sailor and embarks on a long journey. Together with his friend, the mouse Baliko, and the support of secret aids, like a magic cap, magic cream, and shrinking and growing powder, he saves the ship from dragons, monsters, and pirates. Expressive black-and-white illustrations and an ocean chart accompany the witty text. (7+)

228

Boldizsár, Ildikó (text)

Szegedi, Katalin (illus.)

Boszorkányos mesék

(Witch tales)

Budapest : Móra, 2006. – 100 p.

ISBN 978-963-11-8259-0

Witch – Love for nature – Helpfulness – Literary fairy tale

Ildikó Boldizsár's well-known fairytale figure, the witch Amalia, makes her reappearance in this volume of the first-person narrated artistic fairy tale. We meet the young, dazzling witch in an imaginary world, where all creatures are friends. Prince, squirrel, but also the rain and the trees come to know the loving attention and assistance of Amalia. For she is not evil, but rather the first sad and furthermore most beautiful witch in the world, loved and respected by everyone who meets her. Amalia knows the language of the plants and animals and tells wonderful stories about the rain and clouds, sun and moon, birds and flowers, colours and shadows. The magic of this story bewitches readers both young and old. The numerous illustrations in sepia tone as well as the full-page colour pictures by the well-known illustrator Katalin Szegedi perfectly complement this enchanting fairy tale. (5+) ★

229

Lesznai, Anna (text/illus.)

Idődíszítés

(Time ornaments)

Budapest : Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, 2007. – 173 p.

ISBN 978-963-19-6029-7

Fairy tale

Anna Lesznai, who was born the daughter of Jewish parents in Budapest in 1885, emigrated to the United States in 1939 and died in New York in 1966. As an ambassador of the Jugendstil (Art Deco) movement, she has worked both in the visual and literary arts. Already early on, she began to write fairy tales in which she interwove motifs from European folk tales, the Hindu fairytale world and Jewish mysticism. Next to princes and princesses, the heroes are often inanimate objects, like invisible houses or a path. This volume is compiled from the artist's estate and contains several complete fairy tales as well as many drafts. Together with her drawings of animal and plant motifs, whose abstract symbolism complement the symbolic language of the Jugendstil movement, they invite the reader on fantasy journeys to the fairytale land, to which Anna Lesznai would have probably directed us herself. (10+)

Greece

230

Antonakēs, Giōrgos (text)

Gusidēs, Chrēstos (illus.)

Peripeteia sto Agion Oros

(Adventure on Mount Athos)

Athēna : Akritas, 2007. – 127 p.

ISBN 960-328-294-4

Mount Athos – Religious tradition – Adventure

Two children travel to Mount Athos. From the moment they set out on their journey, mysterious things happen and the readers are steeped in a monastic atmosphere. The children come upon puzzles and unforeseen events, meet strange fellow travellers and hagiographers, discover new landscapes and take part in celebrations, which take them all the way back to Byzantium and its emperors. This is an exciting story, which tells a unique travel adventure written from the perspective of children who become guides even to adults. This book offers the opportunity for both adults and children to learn about the Garden of Madonna and other religious sites in a clear and effective way. (8+)

231

Ēliopulos, Bangelēs (text)

Barbarusē, Lēda (illus.)

Ta genethlia tu trigonopсарulē

ī pōs ē agapē nikēse ton polemo

(The Little Triangle-Fish's birthday or

How love conquered war)

Athēna : Patakēs, 2007. – 72 p.

(Spurgitakia)

ISBN 978-960-16-2258-3

War – Peace – Love – Respect

This is the sixth and final book of the series about the Little Triangle Fish, the beloved children's hero. It can also be read first since it goes back in time: On his tenth birthday, the little yellow fish seeks information about his family background. He enters the sea time-tunnel and travels into the past. Here, he discovers how his parents first met, learns that they belonged to different fish societies, and witnesses how their love broke all the rules and became the cause for the big war of the sea. It was an irrational war, as every war is. The only thing that could stop it was his parents' love and an egg – the egg from which the Little Triangle-Fish was born. This is a modern anti-war book, which demonstrates the irrationality of war and the fact that it can only be based on lies and prejudices,

helping the powerful ones rule the world with their cunning schemes. The only antidote to war and hatred is love and respect towards all creatures. (4+)

232

Kantzola-Sampataku, Beatrikē (text)

Pepona, Maria (illus.)

Ena biblio gia mas tus dyo

(A book for the two of us)

Athēna : Portokali, 2007. – 32 p.

ISBN 960-666-413-9

Love – Human relations

This tender little book »for the two of us« is dedicated to the »other one«, whoever that may be. It is a humorous declaration of love, which is bound to cheer up people who feel lonely and sad. The illustrations are particularly inventive and accompany the rhymed text with the reminder that love is the best cure for loneliness. This is a book for everyone, and it will always put a smile of hope on the reader's face. (6+)

233

Karakōsta, Melina (text)

Sgueros, Giōrgos (illus.)

T ... opōs Apostolēs

(T for ... Apostolis)

Athēna : Patakēs, 2007. – 64 p.

(Spurgitakia)

ISBN 978-960-16-2407-5

Friendship – Love – Childhood

Apostolis is a little boy who could be anyone's child. He grows up in an adult world, which he ceaselessly observes with the open eyes of his heart, imagination, and his alert mind. He reveals the adults' weaknesses, their contradictions, and mistakes. His apparently naïve words reveal an acute sense of truth and make him the most valuable and simple-hearted judge of those he loves and trusts. Apostolis freely shares the colourful bustle of his childish thoughts: He talks about his own complaints and jealousies; he laughs at his mistakes and the adults' weaknesses, and explores the boundaries between dreams and reality. He sees and feels everything deeply because of the power of the most beautiful period in people's lives – childhood. (8+)

234

Mpulotēs, Chrēstos (text)

Papatsaruchas, Vassilēs (illus.)

O gatos Leopoldos

(Leopold, the cat)

Athēna : Ellēnika Grammata, 2007. – [32] p.

ISBN 960-442-933-7

Art – Creation – Love

Leopold is in despair. How can he capture all of these thousands of mice that he unleashed? He runs through the streets, looks for them, and begs them to get back into his paintings where they really belong. However, they do not pay any attention to him. His mother and friends, his professors and fellow university students sympathise with him and try to find a way to help him. Could they catch the mice using nets? This is not possible because the mice run faster than cats and people. Could they kill them with wooden boards? Leopold cannot bear to hear that! These mice are of his creation; in other words, these mice are like his own children. Leopold and his mice thus humorously mirror the relationship of real artists to their artistic creations. (6+)

235

Nebrokoplē, Basilikē (text)

Andrikopulos, Nikolas (illus.)

An ta agapas xanarchontai

(Whatever you love, it will return)

Athēna : Libanēs, 2007. – 30 p.

ISBN 978-960-14-1401-0

Life – Death – Seniors – Grandchild – Grandmother

As the grandchild grows up, he keeps asking his grandmother questions about the stars, the world, and the whole universe. His grandmother responds in the most tender way in order to make him understand that »everything that departs returns a bit different«. One day, it is the grandmother who »departs«, and »returns« when he himself has become an old man. Finally, he understands that what now connects them is not only their white hair, but also eternal love and all those things that one finds in the embrace of loved ones. The story broaches the issue of loss and death in a sensitive way, turning sadness into love for the children's sake. (6+)

236

Paterakē, Giolanta (text)

Apostologiannēs, Giannēs (illus.)

O planētēs tu Den Xerō pu

(The planet »I Don't Know Where«)

Athēna : Psychogios, 2007. – 216 p.

(Xinomēlo)

ISBN 978-960-453-154-7

Imagination – Travel – Planet

In this exciting novel, the ingenious scientist Harry Ment and his family visit the moon, the planet Venus, and most importantly, the »I Don't Know Where« planet, where they experience unbelievable and crazy adventures of complicated and magical dimensions. Finally, they come back to Earth, more rational, experienced, and wiser than before. They prepare for their next journey full of impatience and renewed energy. In a simple and fairytale way, this book introduces children to universal scientific developments and, possibly prepares them for future travels to other planets! (11+)

237

Stathatu, Fransē (text)

Dēmu, Chrēstos (illus.)

O mpampas mu : o kalos, megalos, gkrizos lykos

(The grey wolf : my good, big father)

Athēna : Aggyra, 2007. – 32 p.

ISBN 960-422-494-8

Adoption – Love – Father – Child – Foster parent

A little dog from the city gets lost in the forest and encounters not the big bad wolf of the well-known tales, but rather the best and biggest grey wolf imaginable. The grey wolf takes care of the little dog, brings it up, and loves it. In an absolutely natural way, he becomes the dog's »father«. This picture book introduces children to the notion of adoption and refers to the figure of the foster father in a tender, loving way. (5+)

238

Tsilimenē, Tasula (text)
Karapanu, Despoina (illus.)

To dentro apo agapē

(The love tree)

Athēna : Papadopoulos, 2007. – 32 p.

ISBN 978-960-412-686-6

Nature – Love – Tree

One rainy day, Stephanos looks out his window and sees a tree damaged by the heavy rain, the wind, and the cars. Stephanos decides to run out to help it. With much effort, he manages to haul the tree away from the street and fasten it to the beams of a building under construction using his shoelace. Stephanos' tree has no roots. Is it an unlucky tree that will end up burning in a fireplace, or will it survive? Stephanos discovers that trees do not only need water, fertile soil, and sun to grow and to become tall and strong. This is a tender story about the symbiotic relationship between man and nature. At the same time, it also touches upon the miracle of love and the difficulty of loss. (4+)

239

Zeē, Alkē (text)
Stefanidēs, Fōteinē (illus.)

O pseftēs pappus

(The story-telling grandpa)

Athēna : Kedros, 2007. – 155 p.

ISBN 960-043-41-82

Grandfather – Grandson – Death

This novel describes the unique relationship between a grandfather and his grandson. As members of two different generations, they are opposites but still love each other deeply. Ten-year-old Antonis stays at home together with his grandpa and their Russian caretaker. Grandpa, a retired actor in his eighties, has a youthful heart and is full of emotions, knowledge, experience, as well as special habits. He ignites the boy's imagination with the stories about his life. To Antonis, all the stories seem exaggerated and unbelievable, and he ends up wondering if they are true or just made up. The tender relationship between grandpa and grandson as well as the adventures they share come to an end when grandpa »departs«. However, the grandson is ready to live his own life in the unique way his grandpa has prepared him for. This is a novel that touches the reader with its tenderness and sensitivity. (11+)

Mongolia

240

Dašdondog, Žambyn (text)
Ovdogmid, D. (illus.)

Ėrijn gurvan ũlgēr

(Three stories of men)

Ulaanbaatar : Öngöt Chēvlēl, 2006. – 23 p.

ISBN 99929-5-963-0

Mongolia – Sports – Naadam festival

Each July in Mongolia at the Naadam festival, there are grandiose tournaments in archery, horseracing, and wrestling. Except for wrestling, women and girls participate in all competitions. In this book, the eminent Mongolian children's book author Žambyn Dašdondog depicts, in three different stories, events in which these types of sports play a central role. At the same time, the reader gets an idea of the way of life, the mind-set, and everyday dealings of the people in a country shaped by the steppe and the desert. The unadorned, symbolic, lucid water-colour illustrations with simple pop-up figures not only demonstrate the three different sports, but also convey an impression of the diverse Mongolian landscapes. (5+) ♦

Turkey

241

Der, Aşlı (text)
Korman, Huban (illus.)

Büyük tuzak

(The big trap)

İstanbul : Günışığı Kitaplığı, 2007. – 196 p.

(Çocuk Roman; 26 : Küçük Cadı Şerok'un ikinci macerası)

ISBN 978-975-6227-76-3

Evilness – Language – Fairytale land – Fairy

This is a story about the power of language and imagination. The evil prince Milla would like to conquer the fairytale land and, in his attempt, sets a trap in the archives of his palace. A trapped mouse can only free himself by eating through a fairytale book. This has unforeseen consequences: The inhabitants of the fairytale land can no longer communicate with each other. Help comes from the fairy Sherok, who rewrites the story, so that the land and its inhabitants, their language, and freedom are preserved. Composed like a traditional fairy tale, this enthrallingly narrated book under-scores the social and cultural importance of having a common and distinct language for the harmonious coexistence of human beings. (8+)

Israel (Hebrew)

242

Rabiner, Avishag (text)

Grosman, Li'orah (illus.)

Sipur ʔa'im

(Yummy story)

Tel Aviv : Am Oved, 2007. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-965-13-1907-5

Nature – Forest – Conservation – Excursion

After a heavy rainstorm, three siblings – the twins Ely and Yotam, and their little sister Oryana – set off on an outing. In a forest full of marvellous flora and fauna, they collect baskets full of mushrooms. In their excitement, they don't realise that they are taking away the animals' food. Their wish to share the mushrooms with others leads them into a cave in which a one-eyed giant dwells with her child.

At first somewhat afraid, the three soon discover that they are welcome. Finally, they return home, well befriended with the inhabitants of the forest. The fanciful and fairy-tale-like coloured-pencil drawings invite the readers to take a closer glance at the pictures and to discover the message of the story: Treat nature with care and respect. (3+)

Egypt (Arabic)

243

Tūnī, Hilmī al- (text/illus.)

'Arūsāt Ḥanān

(Hanan's Doll)

al-Qāhīrah : Dār aš-Šhurūq, 2006. – 23 p.

ISBN 977-09-1821-0

Doll – Cultural identity – Diversity

Hanan treasures her doll collection. She has all kinds of dolls: blonde ones, red-heads, Russian matryoshka dolls (also called nested or stacking dolls), Japanese ladies in kimonos, and young women dressed in the newest Western fashions. Suddenly, the girl realises that among these dolls from other parts of the world she is missing something familiar to her. Therefore, she wishes for a doll that looks like a simple Egyptian woman from the countryside. Together with her mother, Hanan sews this doll herself. In a simple way, this picture book addresses the question of cultural identity and origins in a global world. The thick, fibred paper pages add haptic pleasure to the reading of this delightful story. (5+) ♦

Lebanon (Arabic)

244

Sa'ādīh, Rāfī (text)

Fadāwī, Māyā (illus.)

'Inqīdūnā

(About us)

Bairut : Dār al-Kutub, 2006. – 30 S.

ISBN 978-9953-0-0022-0

Endangered species – Extinct animals –

Extinction – Wildlife protection

Nedim is bored at home, so he goes to the public library, where he nods off while reading. In his dream, he finds himself in the forest of extinct and endangered species: He meets mammoths and dinosaurs as well as rhinoceroses, tortoises, polar bears, and pandas. The boy interviews them like a reporter and gathers plenty of worthwhile information about the animals. Most importantly, he learns how we humans are involved in their threatened extinction and how critical it is to protect them (for example: Don't buy any fur!). With its well-presented factual information and its large-format colour illustrations, which elucidate this serious topic in a child-friendly and a good-humoured manner, this picture book sends out a clear message about protecting wildlife and the environment. (6+)

Lebanon (Arabic/French)

245

Schneider, Stéphanie (ed.)

Ghosn, Sandra/ Ghosn, Ghadi (illus.)

Sindeu, Sébastien (photogr.)

Si la porte de ma maison parlait, elle vous inviterait à entrer ... = **lā takallamu bāb manzilī : **Sayada'ūkum ilā al-duḥūl****

(If my front door could speak, it would invite you to enter ...)

[Beyrouth] : Première Urgence, 2007. – 41 p. + 1 CD

ISBN 978-9953-0-0886-8

Bilingual book in Arabic and French

Lebanon – Refugees – Palestinians – Everyday life – Family – House – Destruction

»If my house could fly, I would go away with it...« 16

Lebanese and Palestinian children between the ages of ten and twelve have written poems in which they openly bear witness to their everyday lives in Ain El Helwe, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. Their homes figure prominently in these poems: the view from the house, the supposed protection it grants, the little and big dramas

Other Languages

that unfold between their walls, or their destruction. The poems, also available on CD in French and Arabic, are wonderfully embedded in illustrations and photographs, which depict the dreams and the merciless reality of the young witnesses. With support from the bureau for the Humanitarian Development of the European Commission (ECHO), the French aid organisation Première Urgence published the book, distributed it to Lebanese and international institutions, and now hopes for a broader distribution in order to reach the largest possible audience. (8+) ★ ◆

Morocco (Arabic/French)

246

Tazi, Lalla Iââziza (text)

Mernissi, Fatima (ed.)

Loudighi, Fatima (illus.)

Laâbi, Abdellatif (transl.)

Ruses de femmes? Ruses d'hommes? : conte populaire marocain

(Women's cunning? Men's cunning? :

a Moroccan folk tale)

Rabat : Marsam, 2006. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-9981-21-075-2

Bilingual book in Arabic and French

Prince – Woman – Cunning – Gender role

Based on a Moroccan folk tale, this story tells about Prince Sidi Mohammed, who has cast an eye on Lalla Aïcha, the daughter of the cabinetmaker, and wishes to demonstrate to her his superior cunning. The young woman takes on his challenge and proves her superiority. Impressed by her cunning, Sidi Mohammed asks for her hand in marriage. But when he wants to convince Aïcha that he should after all be declared the winner, the gender struggle between the two continues on for years ... Vibrant illustrations, mirroring the colourfulness of Morocco, accompany the witty text, making it into an entertaining book to be read aloud or to oneself. (7+)

Iran (Persian)

247

Akramî, Ğamāl-ad-Dīn (text)

Šafī'ī, Farīd (illus.)

Dil ba darā

(From the sea)

Tihṛān : Šabāwīz, 2007 (= 1386 h.š.). – 66 p.

ISBN 978-964-505-207-0

Poverty – Social reality – Bicycle – Wish – Friendship

In a small city on the Persian Gulf, Abidi dreams of owning a bicycle to ride to school with his friend Gafor. But his family is poor and does not have the money to fulfil such wishes. Quite by accident, the two friends observe a box from a docking ship fall into the harbour. During an adventurous dive, they recover it and discover inside none other than a bicycle! But the joy doesn't last long, as the bicycle is constantly in disrepair. Abidi has to, once again, hitch a ride on the back of Gafor's bicycle and dream of his own. In simple everyday language shaped by the dialect of the Iranian south, this illustrated story strikingly relates a boy's longing for independence and his aspirations to improve the social reality of his family. (8+)

248

Harāmān, Muṣṭafā (text)

'Aṭāi, 'Alī (illus.)

Firīštah az kuḡā mīrāīand

(Where do angels come from?)

Tihṛān : Našr-i Ufuq, 2006 (= 1385 h.š.). – 68 S.

(Rumān-i nūḡawānān; 31)

ISBN 978-964-369-298-8

Poverty – Assistance – Solidarity

Just as Gitti passes the university entrance exam, her father dies in a car accident. For the first time, the family doesn't have enough money to live on. Just before the distressed young girl is about to offer herself to the landlord to wipe out their rental debt, a boy takes her away and leads her to an old shoemaker, who gives her money. When the family gets out of the toughest malaise, Gitti gives the money to another person in need. This is the first of four short stories in this book whose characters are connected through the bundle of money that is passed on from one to the next. In a concise, beautiful language, without mawkish dramatisation, these stories depict how, through solidarity and humanity, humans can support each other like »angels«. (12+)

249

Raḥmāndūst, Muṣṭafā (text)

Rūdābih, Ḥā'if (illus.)

Qiṣṣahā-i Šahrīwar : hir šab yik qiṣṣa

(Stories about the month of Sahriwar [September])

Tihiran : Kitābha-i Mahtab, 2006 (= 1385 h.š.). – 143 p.

(Maṭālhā wa qiṣṣahāišān; 9)

ISBN 978-964-323-343-3

Iran – Proverb

In his twelve-volume oeuvre, of which we here have the volume dedicated to the month of Sahriwar (September), the author elucidates Persian proverbs and the history of their origins. In a beautiful, literary language, he conceptualises the selected examples in entertaining stories with modern drawings. The first chapter, for example, is about the old saying: »Why I don't milk the bull«, which roughly means: »Why I don't stubbornly pursue something«. This saying purportedly dates back to an encounter between a peasant woman and Nadir Shah, who ruled Persia in the 18th century. At the end of these short jaunts into cultural history, questions establish a link to readers' experiences and illustrate what kind of meaning the proverbs have in today's everyday life. (10+) ♦

250

Tūpčī, Faṭīma (text)

Wazīfašinās, Šarārah (adapt.)

Hairia, Rāšīn (illus.)

Ān bālā in pān

(Up there, here below)

Tihiran : Kānūn-i Parwariš-i Fikrī-i Kūdākān wa

Nauḡawānān, 2007 (= 1386 h.š.). – 30 p.

ISBN 978-964-391-126-3

Old woman – Loneliness – Star –

Metamorphosis – Curiosity

A small star gets the moon's permission to transform itself into a girl to go help a lonely, old woman knit socks – but only as long the star's origins are not discovered. Little by little, other stars join them, more and more socks are sold, and the woman becomes wealthy. However, in the end, she cannot contain her curiosity any longer, the stars are forced to return to the sky and the woman is left sadly alone. The moral, »curiosity gets the cat«, is also present in countless variations in other story-telling traditions. It is the beautiful design of this picture book which gives it special appeal. Above all, the original layout of the handwritten text allows for interaction with the illustrations and lends the story a fresh, modern look. (5+)

Symbols

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

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