

2023 | The White Ravens

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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PREFACE

With great pleasure, we present to you the 2023 edition of our annual recommendation list »The White Ravens«.

This year's cover features a large white raven, surrounded by a most colourful flock of smaller birds. These bustling birds have gathered around beneath the raven's outstretched wings and are fully absorbed in a book. They represent in a wonderful way the wide variety of children's and youth literature, the great diversity of our selection of »White Ravens«, and also the pleasure of reading in good company. The picture was created by Chiki Kikuchi, the illustrator of »Iro-iro kaeru« (Colour-ful frogs) (Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2021), a picture book that was selected for the »The White Ravens 2022« catalogue.

We are delighted and grateful that publishers, institutions, and organisations, as well as authors and illustrators, continue supporting the International Youth Library with donation and review copies of their new publications. Only thanks to their support are we able to present the »The White Ravens« catalogue, the most important annual publication of the International Youth Library. It aims to promote quality in children's book publishing and has become an increasingly useful tool for anyone interested in looking

beyond national borders. »The White Ravens 2023«, now published as a digital catalogue only, contains a selection of 200 notable children's and young adult books published in 37 languages from 57 countries.

The books of this unique selection cover a highly diverse range of voices. Its international nature results from the efforts of approximately twenty children's and young adult book experts. The library's in-house staff members in Munich cover many literary regions, and freelance readers and advisors are charged with monitoring and tending to further languages and countries. They all are tasked with sifting through the thousands of books received annually by the International Youth Library and set aside new publications that catch their attention and strike them as being noteworthy. Some of these works are then chosen for this list, based on the universal relevance of the topics they address, their literary and pictorial qualities, or their innovative approaches or design.

Our library team have long relied on various means to acquire a well-grounded overview of the topics, trends, and people involved in current international children's and young adult literature: Apart from reading new publications in the original languages, they visit international book fairs, scout and gather

information, maintain contact with publishing houses, institutions, organisations, and other experts. They also engage in conversation with the research fellows at the International Youth Library, foreign scholars who have a profound knowledge of the literature of their home countries.

As usual, »The White Ravens« are published a few days prior to the Frankfurt Book Fair where the IYL team will present some books from the catalogue, including their personal favourites. The event has been a fixture in the events calendar of the Book Fair for several years.

The reviews, bibliographical data, and book covers are also available in the White Ravens Database on whiteravens.ijb.de/list. In addition, we will present each of the 200 books over the course of the coming year on our Instagram account @thewhiteravens.books.

For decades now, all recommended books have been put on display in hard copy at the International Youth Library's booth at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. This tradition allows booth visitors to peruse the books at leisure, leafing through their pages and exploring their stories and illustrations. We look forward to having this opportunity again and hope to see you in Bologna in 2024.

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

I hope »The White Ravens 2023« will fall into the hands of many curious readers, and that these readers will make many new discoveries. May the selected books, along with their creators, receive the international attention they deserve. We hope that our work contributes to this goal.

Dr. Christiane Raabe
Director of the International Youth Library
October 2023

1



Jacobs, Jaco (text)
Stowe, Tori (illus.)

Die meisie met vlerke

(The girl with wings)

Northlands, Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan Suid-Afrika, 2022. – 175 p.

(Pan Macmillan Kinderboeke)

ISBN 978-1-77625-176-3

[Adventure](#) | [Secret](#) | [Revenge](#)

Wilson Fourie's life is quite out of the ordinary, but if there is one thing she longs for, it is to have a normal life. She lives with her parents in a house on wheels, so they can move to a different city every few months. Together with her new friend Errol, she takes birdwatching excursions in the nearby countryside. Just when she thinks this new city is quite as boring as all the past ones, they are witnesses to a mysterious event, something they need to keep secret. Soon things become dangerous, because their knowledge has become a threat to a person who is out for revenge »Die meisie met vlerke« is a gripping adventure story in which the suspense is sustained till the end. It also includes some fantastic elements. The main characters are fully drawn and believable. Jaco Jacobs (b. 1980) has written more than 220 books, several of which have been made into movies in South Africa. His work has received many awards. (Age: 10+) [TD]

2



Antonova, Katja (Antonova, Katya) (text)
Cantone, Anna-Laura (illus.)

Zeus

(Zeus)

Sofija: Izdatelstvo Ribka, 2022. – 43 p.

ISBN 978-619-7131-75-8

[Dog](#) | [Animal care](#) | [Picture book](#)

Zeus is the ugliest, daftest, naughtiest dog in the world. A prime example of stupidity! Shaggy, smelly, unable to learn things, he drives ten-year-old Viktor and his parents to the brink of madness. After taking in Zeus as a foundling, the family quickly has to bury their naïve idea of a cute, loyal four-legged friend. Yet when there is talk about sending Zeus to the animal shelter, Viktor realises that he can't give the dog away. He just has to accept him and love him for who he is. The incredibly humorous narrative tone of Bulgarian author Katya Antonova meets its match in the hilarious illustrations by Italian artist Anna-Laura Cantone. As Antonova has the protagonist Viktor spouting tirades about his dog, Cantone visually captures the moronic, hairy creature featuring an underbite and gigantic muzzle. He's clearly in a blissful mood and at peace with himself. This collaboration is great fun for young and old readers alike! (Age: 3+) [KW]

3



Spasova, Vasilena (text)

Vasileva, Eva (illus.)

Pisma do teb, do neja i do nikogo

(Pisma do teb, do neja i do nikogo)

(Letters to you, her, and no-one)

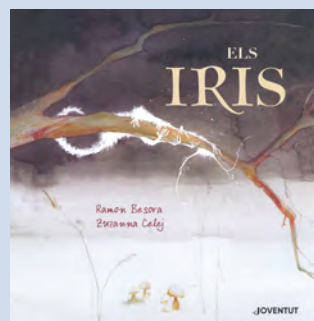
Plovdiv: Žanet 45 (Janet 45), 2021. – 84 p.

ISBN 978-619-186-694-6

Daughter | Mother | Longing | Separation | Letter |
Coming of age

A teen's deep longing to have seen, spoken to, and hugged her own mother just once in her life is at the centre of Vasilena Spasova's award-winning debut book for young people. However, the first-person narrator's dearest wish is not fulfilled, because she grows up in an orphanage and never got the chance to meet her mother. In order to be closer to her, the girl writes letters: to her mother, to herself, and to no-one. None of the letters are meant to be sent. Instead, they bear witness to a painful, one-sided mother-daughter-relationship, providing the reader with a disturbingly honest insight into the protagonist's psyche. The descriptions of everyday life and of the relationships with other children in the home are interspersed with the narrator's thoughts going round in circles; thoughts about herself and her (non-)relationship with her mother. Densely written, the letters evolve into a bitter novel about a young woman's feeling of forlornness. (Age: 14+) [KW]

4



Besora, Ramon (text)

Celej, Zuzanna (illus.)

Els iris*(Iris)*

Barcelona: Joventut, 2022. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-84-261-4782-0

Forest | Animals | Light | Picture book

The enigmatic text of this fascinating picture book is pure fantasy. It describes the iris as a small, furry, nocturnal animals with a slender body and seven legs – one of which is in reserve. They possess varying shades of colour and communicate in a charming manner with light. We know very little about them since they are reclusive residents of forests. Ramon Besora's text imitates the linguistic style of natural history books. At the same time, it contains echoes of fairy tales, and one feels reminded of old tales about elves and other phantasmagorical beings. Ultimately, readers must use their own imaginations to decide for themselves what exactly the iris are. Zuzanna Celej's illustrations exude a magic quite like the text and remain equally vague. The artistic, breath-takingly beautiful watercolour pictures show a delicate, enchanted autumn-winterly forest landscape. The colour palette is pale and muted. Most of the imagery seems fleeting and shadowy – just as the iris themselves are, safeguarding their secret. (Age: 5+) [JW]



5

Carrillo, Nereida (text)
Montt, Alberto (illus.)

Fake over

Barcelona: Flamboyant, 2022. – 116 p.
ISBN 978-84-18304-38-5

Media | Social media | Manipulation | Fake news |
Non-fiction

Fake news is one of the plagues of the digital age and of its expanding, accelerated means of communication, especially in the jungle of social media. It would be helpful if lies could be as easily recognizable as Pinocchio's nose! But since things are more complex, this informative and snappily written book offers valuable support. Nereida Carrillo, a communications studies specialist, journalist, teacher, and expert in this field, provides neutral, compact information in easily understandable wording on a variety of topics, along with tricks and techniques with which content can be twisted and public opinion manipulated. Topics include, for example, deep fakes, infodemics, bots, trolls, and conspiracy myths, as well as technical aspects, algorithms and also the goals, strategies, and methods used in spreading fake news – and, last but not least, how to recognize and deal with fake news. Alberto Montt illustrated this highly recommendable book with peppy, pointed, comic-like pictures. (Age: 12+) [JW]



6

Cubells, Cristina (text)
Casals, Joana (illus.)

Ppprrrrriit. Un llibre per crear i experimentar amb els sons

(*Ppprrrrriit. A book about creating sounds and experimenting with them*)
Barcelona: Zahorí Books, [2022]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-84-18830-12-9

Noise | Sound | Acoustics | Picture book |
Activities book | Non-fiction

In these days of increasing digitalisation and intensive use of multi-media it is downright audacious to make a book about sounds that only exists on the printed page. But the creators of »Ppprrrrriit« are daring and challenge the readers to become creative themselves. On each of the cheerfully and lively illustrated double-page spreads one sees a place filled with activity: a bustling city, a thick forest, a restaurant kitchen, or a cloud-washing factory. The reader's eye is drawn by letters and graphic symbols toward details that will help one remember or imagine how these things sound, and then want to try to produce the sound with their own voice and some other method. How does, for example, spaghetti slurping sound, or the breath of an astronaut, the nasty laughter of a Martian, or the watering of a peppermint plant? This magnificent book offers innumerable suggestions for imagining sorts of sonic possibilities and impossibilities. Great fun for everyone, young and old. (Age: 5+) [JW]

Jin, Haiyue / Yang, Jing / Xie, Dan (text)
Dong, Yanan (illus.)

Zhong guo kong long di tu

(The dinosaur map of China)

Beijing: Bei jing lian he chu ban gong si (Beijing United Publishing), 2022. – 73 p. + 6 supplements
ISBN 978-7-5596-6200-2

Dinosaur | Map | Paleontology | Archeology | Geography | Non-fiction

This exquisite non-fiction book about the dinosaurs that lived in ancient China about 250 million years ago introduces some 300 species, giving their geographical distribution and describing how they lived. Text and illustrations draw on scientific research in palaeontology, archaeology, and geography. Maps of dinosaur museums, a »dino-newspaper« and some postcards are included in an appendix. This volume is representative of the rise of Chinese informational picture books for children over the past decade. Jin Haiyue and Xie Dan are researchers in the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Yang Jing is a researcher at the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research. Dong Yanan (b. 1991), illustrator of »Kong long kuai di« (Express delivery from Dinosaur World) and »Kong long li fa shi« (Dinosaur hairdresser), is currently teaching at City Design College of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. (Age: 6+) [FW, ZX]



Jinbo (text)
Ni, Wen / Pang, Kun (illus.)

Xiang bian cheng yi ke shu

(Wanna be a tree)

Nanning: Jie li chu ban she (Jieli Publishing House), 2023. – 183 p.
ISBN 978-7-5448-8031-2

Nature | Tree | Life | Poetry

»Want to become a tree / with hundreds and thousands of leaves / all rustling in the breeze / and telling their stories in green.« The poetic imagery of trees is celebrated in this collection of children's poems, but many other correlated images – flowers, forests, birds, nests, sun, moon, planting, singing – also play a vital role. Sound and rhythm echo the spirit and mood of the poems, reminding readers of the sensations of growing, residing, and being at home. Jinbo (b. 1935) is Professor Emeritus of Capital Normal University in Beijing and a renowned writer of children's poems. His works appear frequently in primary school textbooks and other reading materials for children. His books include »Wo men qu kan hai« (Let's go to see the sea), »Yu ren« (The rain men), and »Wu Diu diu de qi yu« (Wu Diudiu's adventures). A winner of the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature, Song Qingling Children's Literature Award and many others, he was nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1992 and 2022. (Age: 6+) [FW, ZX]





9

Liu, Haiqi (text)

Yang, Bo (illus.)

Ping pang xiang liang

(The sound of ping-pong)

Guiyang: Gui zhou ren min chu ban she (Guizhou People's Publishing House), 2023. – 305 p.

(Series: Pu gong ying tong shu guan)

ISBN 978-7-221-17565-6

Sport | Table tennis | Physical education | Persistence

When Zhang Fangxiang decides to play ping-pong, it is a big decision at a time when a little kid cannot easily get hold of a ping-pong paddle and ball, much less find a table at which to practice. However, Zhang finds a way to save money for his own paddle, makes himself an expert in mending ping pong balls, finds a coach, and rapidly improves his skills. When challenged to a match at a tournament, he loses and learns the important lesson of accepting failure with grace. The novel is based on Liu Haiqi's (b. 1954) own childhood experiences and is representative of his writing, with its recognizable colloquial style and fundamental humor and warmth. Liu, former CBBY Deputy Chairman and renowned writer and publisher of children's books, is the author of »You ge zi de xia tian« (The summer of pigeons), »Wu wei xiao shu li xian ji« (Adventures of a tailless mouse), »Ba ba shu« (The father tree), and »You yong« (Swimming). Among others, he has received the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature. (Age: 8+) [FW, ZX]



10

Yu, Liqiong (text)

Zhang, Xiaoying (illus.)

Lou shang lou xia

(Upstairs, downstairs)

Hefei: Anhui shao nian er tong chu ban she (Anhui Juvenile and Children's Publishing House), 2022. – 142 p.

ISBN 978-7-5707-1350-9

School | Girl | Teacher | Self-esteem | Courage

The boy upstairs seems to live in his own world. He sings beautiful songs and knows so much more than others do, like a book too thick and complex to comprehend. To the complete surprise of his neighbour, he turns up at her school as a student teacher. He shares his favourite poems and books, encourages children to talk about their dreams, and tells them how to feel and express love through music. With his help, the girl gains enough courage to face those who are bullying her and gets a chance to fulfil her secret dream to become lead singer in a school concert. Now she will be able to face anything that stands in her way. Told in the voice and from the perspective of a shy girl, the story takes readers into the quiet turmoil in her heart and mind. The novel's language is an easy one with a rich aftertaste. Yu Liqiong (b. 1980), author of many picture books, including the award-winning »Tuan yuan« (A new year's reunion), is chief editor of »Dong fang wa wa« (Eastern Babies), a Chinese early education magazine. (Age: 8+) [FW, ZX]



Zhou, Xiang (text/illus.)

Ai, ni zhe ge xiao dong xi

(Hey, you little fellow)

Beijing: Xin shi jie chu ban she (New World Press), 2022. – 46 p.

(Series: Pu pu lan hui ben guan)

ISBN 978-7-5104-7385-2

Journey | Farewell | Grandfather | Dog | Friendship | Picture book

Grandpa Zhu travels overseas to visit his son. At his son's house, he meets Bella, the dog, and the two begin to keep each other company. Every day spent together is full of pleasure for Grandpa Zhu and Bella, who would otherwise be quite lonely when everyone else goes to work. The day comes when Grandpa Zhu has to leave, and sweet memories make the farewell hard to bear. The atmospheric narration moves along at a steady pace, with the deep friendship also reflected in the harmony between words and images. Renowned illustrator and author Zhou Xiang (b. 1956) has contributed, as a pioneering advocate of modern picture books, to the development of contemporary Chinese children's literature. His best-known works include »He hua zhen de zao shi« (The morning market of Lotus Town) and »Yi yuan qing cai cheng le jing« (A garden of vegetables became alive). These two books were awarded the Prize of Excellence and the Jury Recommended Prize of Illustration of the 1st Feng Zikai Children's Picture Book Award, respectively. (Age: 5+) [FW, ZX]



Lee, Josef (Li, Wenliang) (text/illus.)

Dang pi zhe yang pi de lang yu jian pi zhe lang pi de yang

(When a wolf in sheep's skin meets a sheep in wolf's skin)

Singapore: Xing zhi wen jiao zhong xin (Xingzhi learning centre), 2022. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-981-18-6225-0

Disguise | Prejudice | Stereotype | Friendship | Picture book

A big, bad hairy wolf disguises himself as a sheep to research the habits of his favourite source of food, while a young sheep, disguised as a wolf, sets out to spy on her archenemies. When they meet along the way, they are so taken with each other that both forget they are in disguise. Abandoning their missions, they decide to explore the world together. Their friendship remains unshakable, even when, one day, they hang out their fake furs to dry after a swim and see each other in their true forms. This ostensibly simple story about a friendship – illustrated in cheerful, anarchic images and sprawling childish writing – also addresses discrimination and racism: wolf and sheep can only become friends if they look beyond appearances and are not guided by prejudice toward their »enemies«. Singaporean designer and animator Josef Lee, who has won over twenty international design awards and published his first picture book in 2017, believes that picture books are an ideal way to introduce social issues to children. (Age: 4+) [LO]

13



Egretllu (Yu, Xiaolu) (text/illus.)

Hao di fang

(Somewhere)

Taipei: Da kuai wen hua (Locus Publishing),

2022. – [48] p.

(Series: iIMAGE3; if044)

ISBN 978-626-7118-33-7

Loss | Remembrance | Climate change |
Post-apocalypse | Dystopia | Picture book

CHINESE

Taiwan

In a surreal, dreamlike scene, a diver explores a magical, soundless space where time stands still – a flooded city where streetlights are still on, cars are stuck in traffic and a pet bowl sits on a living room floor. He passes through submerged industrial ruins and a deforested wasteland over which whales pass by, before emerging onto a tiny remaining island. Pale blue textless pages alternate with pages in smudged yellow, where images depict a dog frantically talking to the silent diver, who obviously cannot perceive him. These are the memories that the sole survivor of a climate disaster has of his beloved pet, which are interwoven with the present reality of a post-apocalyptic world. Egretllu received the Best Book Illustration Award at the 43rd Golden Tripod Awards in 2019 for his graphic novel »Hua shuo Bao Chun jie de za huo dian« (Talking about Sister Bao Chun's grocery store in pictures), published under his real name, Xu Minghong. This picture book debut was selected for the 2023 BRAW Amazing Bookshelf. (Age: 4+) [LO]

14



Qi Wei (Huang, Qiwei) (text/illus.)

Niu yan fei yu

(Rumours are going around the farm)

Taipei: Xin yi ji jin chu ban she (Hsin Yi Publications),

2022. – [26] p.

(Series: Xin yi tu hua shu jiang)

ISBN 978-986-161-696-4

Rumour | Truth | Folk tale | Reversible book |
Picture book

CHINESE

Taiwan

An ox tells the farm dog that he is exhausted after a hard day's work. The news spreads quickly, but each time it becomes exaggerated when passed on to another farm animal, each of which is depicted as a dark silhouette against a glowing evening sky. When the farmer receives the news that the disgruntled ox is looking for a new owner, he feels betrayed and scolds the ox vehemently. A completely different story unfolds when you turn the book around 180 degrees: the farmer investigates the situation and the ox is granted a day of rest. A vivid depiction of the harm caused by false rumours, »Niu yan fei yu« is based on the fable »Chuan yan« (Rumour) by Xu Can (Xu Lingdong, b. 1974), which was published in a supplement of the »Xi'an Evening News« in 2000. Distributed in many versions on the Internet, it had already become a »classic folk tale« when advertising designer Qi Wei adapted it for his beautiful picture book. It received the Outstanding Work Award in the category Picture Book at the 11th Hsin Yi Picture Book Award in 2021. (Age: 3+) [LO]

15



Čekolj, Josip (text)

Vuković, Dominik (illus.)

Hahari na dnu mulja. Crveni fragmenti jednog djetinjstva

(Drifters deep in mud. Red fragments of a childhood)

Zagreb: Mala Zvona, 2022. – 81 p.

ISBN 978-953-8313-58-5

Coming of age | Friendship | Conflict

CROATIAN

Croatia

In a laconic story written from a wonderfully serene omniscient perspective, Croatian author Josip Čekolj (b. 1999) talks about an eventful year in the life of the four friends Bruno, Siniša, Tomek, and Sunica. They are thirteen and fourteen respectively, and face major, conflicting internal developments that await them on the »muddy«, inhospitable path to adulthood: unrequited love, conflicts (and reconciliation) within their circle of friends, dubious influences from other peer groups, as well as the separation of their parents and possible emigration from Croatia. Josip Čekolj skilfully describes what it feels like when everything changes somehow and is in motion, and when previous certainties are lost. The entertaining text is accompanied by illustrations created all in red by Dominik Vuković (b. 1990), whose exhibition of childhood memories was the inspiration for this book. (Age: 10+) [KW]

16



Dočkalová, Bára (text)

Janiček, Jindřich (illus.)

Bitva o diamant

(The fight for the diamond)

Praha: Labyrint / Raketa, 2022. – 215 p.

ISBN 978-80-86803-75-3

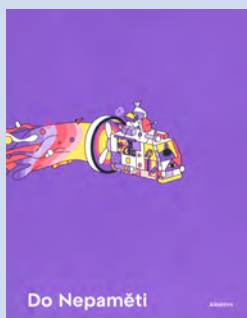
Sport | Baseball | Solidarity | Empowerment | Adventure

CZECH

Czech Republic

The baseball teams of the villages of Upperville and Lowerville are bound together by deep enmity. After the coach of a big baseball club visits them and selects young talent from both teams, not only are they short of players, but also of energy and enthusiasm for the game. However, when it becomes clear that the shared baseball field is to make way for a hotel, the teams pull together and hatch a rescue plan. From the viewpoint of eleven-year-old Luke, »Bitva o diamant« describes everything an exciting sports novel needs: the passion for the game, the dream of a professional career, the sometimes-frustrating training sessions, and the all-important game. Yet Bára Dočkalová's children's book also talks about clever children who make their own decisions and about equality among boys and girls. An appealing layout and great retro-style illustrations frame the action: Each chapter opens with a depiction of a trading card of famous US baseball players. (Age: 9+) [KW]

17



Končinský, Tomáš (text/illus.)

Špaček, Daniel (text/illus.)

Do Nepaměti*(Into Oblivia)*

Praha: Albatros, 2022. – 255 p.

ISBN 978-80-00-06613-4

Remembrance | Memory | Forgetting | Adventure

18



Rutová, Magdalena (text/illus.)

Já, chobotnice. Obrazová kniha o lidském světě očima moudrého hlavonožce*(I, the Octopus. A picture book about the human world seen through the eyes of a wise cephalopod)*

Praha: Baobab, 2022. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-80-7515-156-8

Octopus | Marine pollution | Image of humankind | Picture book

CZECH
Czech Republic

Why do we vividly remember certain events, special things, and tiny details, while we cannot recall others at all? After exploring the ageing process of objects in the children's book »Překlep a škraloup« (Typo and Skim), Tomáš Končinský and Daniel Špaček turn their attention to the human capacities of remembering and forgetting in »Do Nepaměti«. Their latest collaboration about Jasmina – a girl who sets off towards the town of Oblivia to retrieve the stolen memories of her cousin Jáchym – is a crazy story with a magnificent design: The short chapters are separated by a monochrome page; and each chapter is complemented by wimmelbook-like illustrations in bright purple, pink, and yellow, as well as black and white. They are full of symbolism and show how Jasmina encounters dodgy memory thieves and a series of shady henchmen, glimpses the collected memories of the inhabitants of Pompeii, and saves her memory and that of Jáchym in tumultuous ways. (Age: 8+) [KW]

CZECH
Czech Republic

What a charming way to hold up the mirror to the human race! An octopus sets out to write a book about the human world. Why? Because he finds so many intriguing objects belonging to humans in the sea that now, he wants to know more. Fascinated by discarded furniture, mobile phones, and the like, the octopus moves to the city. Once there, he builds a huge tower block from rubbish, worthy of an architectural award, gets a mention in the newspaper, accompanies a rapper to hospital, and even accidentally ends up in a zoo once. The cephalopod records all of this in notes and stories. In her large-format picture book, Magdalena Rutová provides an unfamiliar view of humans, their quirks, and their way of life. Everything that the octopus describes in a puzzled and enthusiastic way makes human readers smile, but also feel embarrassed. Each of the book's double-page spreads consists of one page of text summarising the action and a large illustration brimming with details. (Age: 5+) [KW]

19



Aakeson, Kim Fupz (text)

Slocinska, Kamila (illus.)

Kakerlakken

(The cockroach)

[København]: Gyldendal, 2023. – [36] p.

(Billednoveller fra Gyldendal)

ISBN 978-87-02-38754-4

Brother | Accident | Death | Grief | Guilty conscience

DANISH

Denmark

■ Danish books, and especially those by Kim Fupz Aakeson, are often »strong stuff«. »The cockroach« is no exception. »Min bror blev kørt over af en lastbil. [...] Min storebror. Mikkel. Vores mor græd, vores far græd. Men ikke mig. Jeg havde ønsket det. Jeg ønskede sådan her: Gid han døde.« (My brother was run over by a lorry. My older brother. Mikkel. Our mother cried, our father cried. But I didn't. I had wished for it. I had wished: If only he were dead.) Shock, a guilty conscience, grief – the younger brother feels all these things without being able to name them. Instead, a cockroach appears in his bedroom, claiming to be his brother. The boy tries to get rid of it, but it – or his brother – cannot be simply cast away, remaining adamantly present until the younger boy is able to accept his own feelings, to begin grieving for his brother and mourning his loss. Kamila Slocinska has chosen sombre imagery for this »billednovelle« (picture novel), but does not hesitate to add a friendly wink of the eye here and there. (Age: 12+) [IG]

20



Bjørn, Ane (text/illus.)

Påfugl

(Peacock)

København: Gutkind, 2022. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-87-434-0328-9

Gender role | Expectation | Father | Son | Freedom | Imagination | Picture book

DANISH

Denmark

■ Boys want to be either superman or a dinosaur? Through a carefully orchestrated interplay between text and image in her picture book »Påfugl«, Ane Bjørn puts gender expectations into question. It's carnival season and Momo and Papa are thinking about what costume Momo could wear. Papa suggests he go as a Ninja warrior, but Momo would rather be a fairy. Or even better: a peacock. When he discovers the gorgeous costume in a shop window, it makes him feel ecstatic. THAT is what he wants to wear. Meanwhile his father has an eye on a flying dinosaur. In the end we see a little heartbroken dino, with head hanging, sitting on a swing, while all the other children are merrily galivanting around in their costumes. Then, on the way home, Momo encounters the mystical birdman, who takes him along to see a real peacock: Amazing! When Momo finally arrives home with a shimmering peacock feather, Papa understands at least that Momo is not a flying dinosaur. (Age: 4+) [IG]

21



Bregnhøj, Rasmus (text/illus.)

Jeg leder og leder og leder...

(I search and search and search...)

København: Carlsen, 2022. – [24] p.

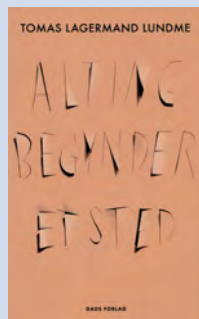
ISBN 978-87-2700019-0

Children's room | Dream | Imaginary trip |
Cardboard book | Wimmelbook | Picture book

DENMARK DANISH

Surrounded by stuffed animals, toys, posters, and pictures, the young narrator is asleep in his bed. At the end of the bed stand the two »wellie sisters«. The girls' heads are each sitting atop a blue-and-white rubber boot and exclaiming: »I like those the best«. Thus, it is hardly a surprise that the boy promptly runs off after them as they disappear through a hole in the wall where the mirror had been hanging. On the other side, he finds himself in a rainbow-coloured world, a weird and lively chaos with flying crocodiles, dwarves, submarine captains, giraffes, penguins, and much more. There he keeps searching high and low, passing through a forest, over and under water, until he finally finds the wellie sisters again, and the three of them return home together. With its merry »wimmelbook« style, teeming full of hidden items, »Jeg leder og leder og leder ...« includes many allusions to classics of children's literature, popular series, and comics. In other words, another great Bregnhøj! (Age: 4+) [IG]

22



Lundme, Tomas Lagermand (text)

Alting begynder et sted

(Everything starts somewhere)

København: Gads Forlag, [2022]. – 197 p.

ISBN 978-87-627-4163-8

Sexual abuse | Silence | Homosexuality |
Coming of age

DENMARK DANISH

The first-person narrator spends a lot of time with his cousin Luna. While Luna works on perfecting her punk look with black eyeliner and safety-pin piercings, the protagonist daydreams about Justin Bieber, his first-floor neighbour Hjalte, and the new boy in the class. Often he gets lost in a cascade of thoughts. At first one assumes these are just typical distractions of a teenager, but slowly a suspicion grows that something is messed up. What are these strange messages that the narrator receives and frighten him so? And why does he keep playing around with words, such as in »Und skyld« (sorry) and »Ond skyld« (wicked guilt)? Whatever is oppressing the narrator keeps on growing and seems to be getting more and more monstrous. Finally, he breaks his silence: Luna's father has been blackmailing and sexually abusing him. Tomas Lagermand Lundme's novel is a haunting tale of dependencies and power abuse. (Age: 14+) [IG]



Akveld, Joukje (text) / Fila, Djenné (illus.)

Een kleine geschiedenis van de mens door dierenogen. Over heilige koeien, ruimteapen en de roep van de kakapo

(A small history of humankind through the eyes of animals. On sacred cows, space monkeys and the call of the kākāpō)

Tielt: Lannoo, [2022]. – 93 p.

ISBN 978-94-014-8688-0

Humankind | History | Animals

Belgium
DUTCH

In this oversize book, Joukje Akveld writes no less than twenty-nine testimonials to the history of humankind, as viewed through the eyes of animals. This unique way of presenting history begins in Botswana, two hundred thousand years ago. A small antelope asks if those »two-legged animals« are dangerous. In the full-page illustration, the antelope looks out at the reader of the book with penetrating, dark brown eyes. Similarly, each historical period starts with the story of a specific animal. On each page that follows, the author provides quite thorough background information. The last chapter takes place in 2022, in South Africa, where the author currently lives. The book stands out for its easily understandable presentation of facts and straightforward layout. This is not a book to be read in one sitting, but rather picked up again and again. Enriched by Djenné Fila's impressive illustrations, in which there is always something new to discover, this critical, but objective book is written with an obvious love for nature. (Age: 10+) [TD]



DeLange, Ellen (text)

Snoek, Connie (illus.)

Zelfs Uiltje moet nog leren

(Even Little Owl still needs to learn)

Hasselt [et al.]: Clavis, [2022]. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-90-448-4490-0

Owl | Ametropia | Glasses | Picture book

Belgium
DUTCH

One day at the library, Owl is shocked when the words he is reading seem to float across the page. The next day, when he has to read aloud at school, he sees only blurry, dancing letters before his eyes. Owl is quite sad until his mother gives him a pair of glasses and the letters stop whirling about. Proudly he shows the glasses to his classmates and tells them that they belonged to his grandfather. With its well-structured story, this is an excellent (interactive) read-aloud, especially when mother Owl has a talk with her son. Ellen DeLange knows how to express emotions through the text without naming them. Thus, this heart-warming picture book can help prompt discussions about uncertainties and emotions. In the illustrations, Connie Snoek uses a collage technique with handmade paper containing real leaves and twigs so that the letters really float over the pages. Each double-page spread is a work of art with its own special perspective. This book is ideal for repeated readings, because each time there is something new to be discovered. (Age: 5+) [TD]

25



Goeminne, Siska (text)

Daenen, Frank (illus.)

Leesje – Wurm

Eke: De Eenhoorn, [2022]. – [42] p.

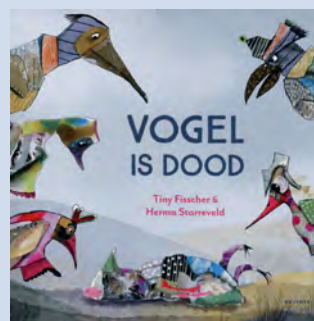
ISBN 978-94-6291-628-9

[Reading](#) | [Book](#) | [Library](#) | [Imagination](#) |[Reversible book](#) | [Picture book](#)

Belgium DUTCH

In books the most amazing encounters are possible. Wurm has wobbly legs with which he slowly crawls into all kinds of books, especially those that have pictures or funny, naughty rhymes. Gently shuffling, he enters the most beautiful stories where he meets famous children's book characters, such as Hans Christian Andersen's Little Mermaid and the Tin Soldier, or a princess in a tower who lets down her long braid of hair out of the window. Wurm also enjoys being all alone, until suddenly someone falls into his book. Now the readers need to rotate the book 180 degrees. A sweet little animal named Leesje is happily feasting on stories, sometimes quite literally, by taking a bite out of a letter or an illustration. She, too, wants to experience as many books as possible, as can be seen by her encounters with other literary figures, such as Winnie the Pooh, monsters, ghosts, and pirates. How much fun the author and illustrator must have had creating this humorous book, which wants to make young children enthusiastic about reading. (Age: 3+) [TD]

26



Fisscher, Tiny (text)

Starreveld, Herma (illus.)

Vogel is dood*(Bird is dead)*

Haarlem: Gottmer, 2022. – [34] p.

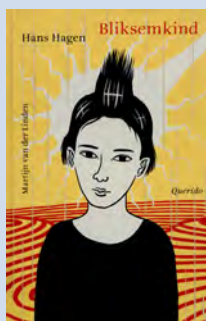
ISBN 978-90-257-7623-7

[Bird](#) | [Death](#) | [Grief](#) | [Picture book](#)

Netherlands DUTCH

When the birds discover a dead bird, they decide he must be buried. But who is going to do it? They begin to talk about what they actually thought of him. One says he was just a nuisance, another thinks he was not a friend, because he always stole others' food. Still, another bird is sensible and asks them all to stop quarrelling. In the end, they bury the dead bird in his final resting place, a hole in the ground. After a few words are spoken and something sung, they gather around to eat and drink. In a succession of lively dialogues, this picture book shows in a both moving and humorous way how animals (like people) react when someone passes away. It is precisely the different reactions that make this story powerful. It offers a lot to talk about when discussing death with young children. It shows how grief can be shared and that the dead have not disappeared completely, since they are held in a special place in the hearts and minds of the living. The beautiful bird illustrations also contribute to the book's quality. (Age: 5+) [TD]

27



Hagen, Hans (text)
Linden, Martijn van der (illus.)

Bliksemkind

(Lightning child)

Amsterdam: Querido, 2022. – 184 p.

ISBN 978-90-451-2766-8

Lightning | Stone | Psychic phenomenon | Miracle

Yoko is caught in a storm while out in the paddy field and struck by a bolt of lightning. Her father finds her and brings her home. When she awakens, Yoko notices a stone in her hand that does not want to be let go of and appears to have magic powers. Soon it becomes known in the village and far beyond that Yoko can heal people, and every day there is a long queue of desperate people waiting to be touched by the stone. A kind of »cottage industry« develops and a lot of money is made, which benefits the whole village. But Yoko is exhausted, feels exploited and would like to cast the stone far away from herself. The author has chosen a surprising structure for this magical-realist novel, in which the short chapters are told by different characters or things, such as a radio, a stone, or a lightning bolt, thus allowing the events to be viewed from different angles. Hans Hagen employs a poetic language to express important issues in just a few words. The text and the Asian-style images form a beautiful, convincing whole. (Age: 9+) [TD]

28



Hoogerwerf, Jeroen (text)
Paulina, Vanessa (illus.)

Slaven zijn net kippen. 18 verhalen en gedichten over slavernij in de Cariben

(Slaves are like chickens. 18 stories and poems about slavery in the Caribbean)

[Utrecht]: Levendig uitgever, [2022]. – 64 p.

ISBN 978-90-83222-28-8

Slavery | Caribbean | History | Folk tale | Short story | Poetry

This book begins with a creation story that originated in the oral tradition of the Ashanti people of West Africa. It tells about the sky god Nyama who made the earth, the woman spirit Lyaloda and the man spirit Pumzi. The latter mould small beings from clay in their own image, and, regardless of their colour, they love these children. The stories and poems in this collection deal with the times before the Dutch had colonized the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, and Suriname, and the times after the Dutch introduced enslaved people from Africa. Jeroen Hoogerwerf focusses on the enslaved people, their humiliation, and the unbelievable cruelty of life in slavery, by providing additional information with each story. In the colourful illustrations, African-Native American artist Vanessa Paulina demonstrates that she is well-acquainted with Caribbean history. Because this book can help to counter prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and racism, it is ideal for reading aloud and initiating discussions in the classroom. (Age: 8+) [TD]

29



Rieseke, Harm (text)
Emmen Riedel, Myra (illus.)

Bennie de baksteen

(Bennie the brick)

Amsterdam: Rubinstein, 2022. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-90-476-2990-0

Desire | Emotion | Disappointment | Amazement |
Picture book

DUTCH
Netherlands

Bennie the brick has one particular dream: how wonderful it would be to be given a spot high up in a beautiful skyscraper where he would have a fantastic view over the entire city. But that doesn't happen. At first, he is deeply disappointed because he didn't get placed higher in the tower, but at the bottom instead. His sadness quickly disappears, however, when he realizes that he is helping to hold up the entire building and he can watch the people walking on the street. This surprising story introduces children to two emotions, which the illustrator quite aptly shows in Bennie's facial expressions: disappointment and then wonder or amazement. Text pages alternate with colourful pages in which many buildings, cranes, bricks, and workmen are brought together. The harmonious blending of austerity and bustling activity in the illustrations, together with the well-structured story and surprising twist of plot, make this picture book a successful whole. (Age: 4+) [TD]

30



Various authors (text)
Hoogstad, Alice (illus.)

De nachtlantaarns van meneer Makkellie

(Mister Makkellie's night lanterns)

[Hoorn]: Hoogland & Van Klaveren, [2022]. – 59 p.

ISBN 978-90-8967-392-3

Dream | Night | Short story | Fantasy fiction |
Anthology

DUTCH
Netherlands

Alice Hoogstad created fourteen artistic prints, and then thirteen well-known Dutch authors were each invited to write a story to accompany one of them. In the first story, Sjoerd Kuyper introduces Mister Makkellie, who brings dreams around at night. Dreams are also an element in the other stories. In Paul van Loon's story, a werewolf pounces on Xeno and threatens to kill him unless Xeno manages to deliver the hat of the witch who bewitched him. To do this, Xeno must find his way through a maze – an allusion to the mythical story of the Minotaur. Koos Meindert's story deals with a boy in search of the father he has never met and encounters a man who turns out to be Death, carrying a list with the name of the boy's father at the top. The boy scratches out that name because he doesn't want his father to die. The dream-like, atmospheric images by Alice Hoogstad are reminiscent of renowned illustrators like Shaun Tan or Binette Schroeder. They exude mystery and leave the writers much freedom to conceive their stories. (Age 7+) [TD]



Boyle, Alice (text)

Dancing barefoot

Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2022. – 312 p.
ISBN 978-1-922-45871-1

Coming of age | LGBTQ+ | Unrequited love |
Jealousy | Bullying

Shy teenage girl Patch has a few things on her mind. True, she has a loving Dad (who owns a record shop) and cute younger brother, but she can't change the fact that she is a bookish scholarship kid from the wrong side of town with the wrong clothes, impossible hair, and a long-term unrequited crush on the posh private school's basketball-star Evie. It all seems hopeless. Yet then, an embarrassing coincidence puts Patch into the path of her love interest – and despite several problems and mishaps, this feel-good queer romcom plays out to a happy ending. Alice Boyle's debut YA novel, which was the winner of the 2021 Text prize, features a believable, quirky heroine and her reliable best friend (who just happens to be a trans boy) plus some wonderful supporting characters. The author has created an uplifting read that tackles multiple topics without being preachy, including step-parents, coming of age, queer romance (without homo- or transphobia!), friendship, and bullies, set in inner-city Melbourne. (Age: 14+) [CS]



Milroy, Gladys (text/illus.)

Silver leaves

Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books,
2022. – 77 p.
ISBN 978-1-922613-62-2

Bird | Habitat | Destruction | Sharing | Compassion

Bound in a white cloth cover, this fable-like story about the importance of compassion, community, and nature is told by Palyku elder and clan matriarch Gladys Milroy, a renowned author and storyteller. While all the chatty daytime birds roost close together, nocturnal Owl and Night Parrot are happy to keep their distance from the noisy crowd. Their white gum tree is their quiet sanctuary – until one day, when they are woken by a cacophony of voices. The daytime birds' trees have been cut down, and now the outraged crowd are desperately searching for a new home. Joining forces, the birds hatch a plan. The moving story is accompanied by stylised monochrome illustrations in black-on-white for daytime scenes and white-on-black for scenes set during night-time. Both text and illustrations are steeped in the Aboriginal tradition of storytelling with a timeless atmosphere – even though the tale tackles the very topical issue of the destruction of nature and precious habitats by humans. (Age: 5+) [CS]



33

Wagner, Michael (text)

Jellett, Tom (illus.)

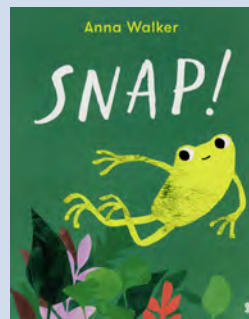
Dirt by sea

[Southbank, Vic.]: Puffin Books, 2022. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-1-76089-406-1

Australia | Road trip | Camping | Father | Daughter |
Memories | Picture book | Comic

In their latest collaboration, the picture-book dream team Michael Wagner and Tom Jellett take readers on an »unforgettable Aussie adventure«. The exciting father-and-daughter road trip comes about, when young Daisy's dad realises that his offspring has never ventured far from their farm in the Queensland outback, let alone seen a beach in her life. So Daisy and Dad grab her late mother's trusty old »Kombi« (aka VW camper) and set off on their journey along the Australian coastline (which readers can trace on the book's endpapers). Along the way, they see famous Aussie tourist attractions, encounter the typical animals and landscape, make new friends, and – most importantly – spend lots of quality time together. This large-format picture-book-cum-comic features engaging dialogues and witty illustrations that celebrate Australia with its diverse culture, fauna, and flora. It offers an enjoyable read and will doubtlessly inspire readers to set off on their own road trip as soon as possible. (Age: 5+) [CS]



34

Walker, Anna (text/illus.)

Snap!

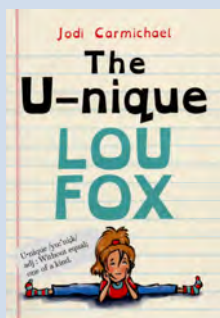
Brunswick, Victoria: Scribble, 2022. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-1-922585-38-7

Frog | Forest | Adventure | Surprise | Onomatopoeia |
Picture book

Successful author-illustrator Anna Walker is known around the world for her atmospheric watercolour illustrations in soft hues. In this entertaining picture book for the smallest readers, she goes big and bold with zippy collage illustrations in rich colours. The minimal text, a string of rhyming onomatopoeic words, leads readers to follow a small light-green frog on his adventurous journey through the forest. It's a rainy day, and although the sprightly amphibian at first assumes that he can venture into the wild unbothered by other creatures, this is clearly not the case. Danger is lurking around every corner: »Splash«, a huge fish jumps up; »Snap!«, goes the enormous crocodile; »Quack! Quack! Quack!«, spit the daggle of ducks. With a clever use of the page-turn for suspense and surprise, the artist always has the jumpy little fellow get away just in time – and at the end, she rewards him for this exhausting trip through his habitat with a relaxing nap. What a fun read! (Age: 3+) [CS]

35



Carmichael, Jodi (text)

The u-nique Lou Fox

Toronto, Ontario: Pajama Press, 2022. – 229 p. + [11] p.
ISBN 978-1-77278-258-5

Pupil | Teacher | ADHD | Dyslexia | Talent | Family

Being burdened with a ridiculously long name is clearly ironic when you're crap at spelling. Yet dyslexic Louisa Elizabeth Fitzhenry-O'Shaughnessy – who prefers to go by her future stage name Lou Fox – doesn't let this dampen her spirit. As a creative mastermind and budding playwright and director, this bubbly fifth-grader has big plans. How lucky that her loving parents, two best friends, and a very sympathetic school principal see beyond the challenges that dyslexia and ADHD pose and celebrate Lou's imagination and humour. In this empathic middle-grade novel, award-winning author Jodi Carmichael, who herself has ADHD, lets her vivacious protagonist shine without downplaying the hardships of having a differently wired brain that makes every school day a struggle. Admittedly, at 230 pages, the book might discourage some dyslexic readers. This is why publisher Pajama Press has made an effort to make the novel more reader-friendly by setting it in a clear font and highlighting some particularly challenging words. (Age: 10+) [CS]

36



Holden, Sarabeth (text)

Pedersen, Emma (illus.)

Benny the bananasaurus rex

Iqaluit, Nunavut: Inhabit Media, [2022]. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-1-77227-442-4

Family life | Banana | Dinosaur | Imagination |
Metamorphosis | Picture book

Dinosaurs and bananas are little Benny's favourite things. He loves them so much that he runs around in his pale green Tyrannosaurus Rex jumpsuit all day, devouring nothing but banana-themed dishes: banana pancakes, fried banana tacos, banana split ice cream, etc. Eventually, one morning, he wakes up to find he has actually turned into his favourite yellow fruit – just like his Anaana (the Inuktitut word for mom) said he might. Total bliss! This entertaining, tongue-in-cheek story about a child's obsession and the power of imagination is the second picture book by Inuk author Sarabeth Holden. Toronto-based illustrator Emma Pedersen clearly has a field day bringing the story to life, switching back and forth between cute little Benny-boy and his huge scary dinosaur persona, as she seamlessly mixes ordinary family-life and effervescent imagination. A fun read for all ages published by Inuit-owned Inhabit Media, who are committed to promoting fascinating Inuit stories both traditional and new. (Age: 4+) [CS]



37

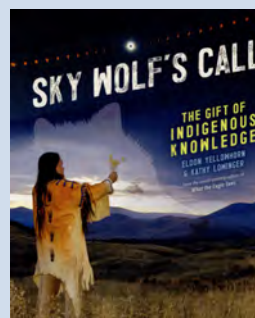
Tyler, Chloe (text/illus.)

Cultured donuts. Take a bite out of art history

Oakville, ON [et al.]: Flowerpot Press, [2022]. – 47 p.
ISBN 978-1-4867-1871-9

Art history | Artist | Donut | Non-fiction

There is no shortage of non-fiction books about famous painters for children. However, using a pink-frosted donut to explain different art styles is certainly an unusual angle – and a very amusing one. For her very personal stroll through art history, young US artist Chloe Tyler (b. 1996) has chosen sixteen world famous art creators – a selection of those who have influenced her own journey as an artist – and arranged them in chronological order. Each double-page spread features a brief overview of the respective artist's life and work, with an additional »delicious detail« and a sample image on the left-hand side; the right-hand side sports a full-page painting of said donut created by Chloe in the trademark style of that particular artist. An informative appendix holds a glossary and a few hands-on tips for budding artists. Meticulously styled, with font, layout, colours, and small details matching each creator's style, this idiosyncratic and witty gallery invites young readers on an entertaining trip into the art world. (6+) [CS]



38

Yellowhorn, Eldon / Lowinger, Kate (text)

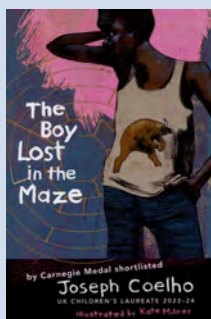
Various artists (illus./photos)

Sky Wolf's call. The gift of indigenous knowledge

Toronto: Annick Press, [2022]. – 120 p.
ISBN 978-1-77321-630-0

Canada | USA | Native Americans | Knowledge | Tradition | Storytelling | Non-fiction

»Sky Wolf's Call« is an engaging and thought-provoking non-fiction book for middle-grade readers about the wealth of knowledge that indigenous people have collected and passed on to younger generations for thousands of years. Divided into eight chapters, the book imparts wisdom about water, fire and smoke, food and food security, traditional healing, and the sky. In their third collaboration, the two renowned authors of »What the Eagle Sees« (Annick Press, 2019), present the material in attractive, bite-sized snippets of information. Readers meet various influential indigenous people, hear about environmental and scientific projects, and dive into some traditional stories from the Blackfoot tradition. The texts are accompanied by an array of photographs and illustrations in various sizes and on different backgrounds. This essential work makes young readers see how vital traditional knowledge is for our modern life, our relationship with our home planet, and the environmental and personal challenges we all face. (Age: 11+) [CS]



Coelho, Joseph (text)
Milner, Kate (illus.)

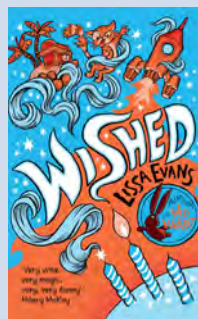
The boy lost in the maze.

A story told in poems

Burley Gate, Herefordshire: Otter-Barry Books,
2022. – 320 p.
ISBN 978-1-91307-433-3

Coming of age | Theseus | Myth | Father figure |
Masculinity | Poetry | Verse novel

Joseph Coelho, the current Children's Laureate in the UK, is an amazing performance poet and writer, penning poems and stories for all age groups. His young adult verse novel »The Boy Lost in the Maze« skilfully weaves together two tales: the ancient Greek myth about Theseus and the Minotaur and a modern story about seventeen-year-old Theo. Both boys, on the brink of adulthood, are searching for their biological fathers. This challenging quest leads them down blind alleys and into dangerous situations, making them question the meaning of family, father-and-son bonds, and manhood. Written from the two protagonists' as well as from a few other characters' perspectives, the short poems – both free and structured verse – allow readers glimpses into the boys' inner struggles. Just like his previous verse novel, »The Girl Who Became a Tree« (2020), this story, adorned by sinister and thoughtful black-and-white illustrations by Kate Milner, makes readers feel the power and beauty of poetry. (Age: 14+) [CS]



Evans, Lissa (text)
Barnes, Bec (illus.)

Wished

Oxford: David Fickling Books, 2022. – 255 p.
ISBN 978-1-78845-202-1

Holidays | Friendship | Wish | Magic | Accident |
Adventure | Disability

So far, siblings Ed and Roo have never exchanged more than a few polite greetings with Miss Filey, their slightly strange old neighbour. Now, however, they are to spend a whole week at her house during the half-term holidays. Wheelchair-bound Ed is convinced that this is going to be a disaster. Yet surprise: Not only are the holidays distinctly non-disastrous, they actually turn into an unforgettable adventure, with magic birthday candles, a new friend, space- and time travel, and a (very sarcastic) talking cat. Award-winning author Lissa Evans, who also has a background as a producer for TV comedy programmes, is a skilled writer for both adults and young readers. Her latest children's novel, which is reminiscent of Edith Nesbit's Psammead stories, mixes the everyday world with some magical elements – with somewhat unforeseen consequences. Chock-full of humorous dialogue, this book provides an entertaining read while at the same time tackling topics like false first impressions, friendship, and disability. (Age: 9+) [CS]

41



Gehl, Laura (text)

Metola, Patricia (illus.)

Apple and Magnolia

London [et al.]: Walker Books and subsidiaries, 2022. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-1-4063-8842-8

Nature | Tree | Friendship | Magic | Trust |
Picture book

Great Britain ENGLISH

Apple and Magnolia are two beautiful trees and – as Britta is convinced – best friends. No matter that her sensible dad and headphone-wearing pessimistic teenage sister Bronwyn consider her idea ridiculous, Britta just knows it to be true, and wise old Nana is on her side! Thus when Magnolia starts looking really sick, the determined young girl does everything to help her tree friends connect and cure poor Magnolia. The thoughtful, humorous story, with its charming use of repetition and its amiable cast of quirky characters, is brought to life by mixed-media illustrations full of energy and verve. In a warm palette of brown, rose, pink, and blue and vibrant, scribbly crayon lines, the artist has vivacious brown-skinned Britta and her pets jump off the page. This international collaboration between US author Laura Gehl and Spanish illustrator Patricia Metola celebrates a tale of determination, kindness, and friendship – with a true element at its core: Trees really do communicate with each other! (Age: 4+) [CS]

42



Gray, Nigel (text)

Welby, Bethan (illus.)

Phyllis & Grace

London: Scallywag Press, 2022. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-912650-51-4

Intergenerational relationship | Dementia |
Acceptance | Picture book

Great Britain ENGLISH

Elderly Phyllis and young Grace live next door to each other. The pigtailed girl often comes to visit her friendly old neighbour – with cake, or stew, or biscuits – and even though Phyllis never seems to remember Grace's name, and increasingly muddles up dates, times, and people in her life, the two of them are having a lovely time together, chatting about parties, horses, and holidays. Renowned Irish-born Australian author Nigel Gray has penned a sensitive and gentle story about the jarring effects of dementia and the beauty of an intergenerational friendship. Despite their age gap and Phyllis's memory loss, the two protagonists cherish each other's company. British illustrator Bethan Welby's soft pencil-and-water-colour illustrations in warm shades aptly capture Phyllis's facial expressions – turning from wistful and cheeky to confused and scared – and create a warm atmosphere, that visualises both the desolation but also the happiness and humour portrayed in the text. (Age: 4+) [CS]



Hanaor, Ziggy (text)

Phillips, Benjamin (illus.)

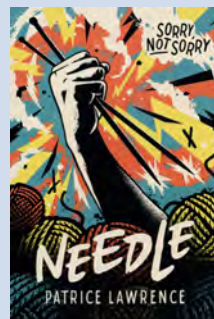
Alte Zachen – Old things

London: Cicada Books, 2022. – [72] p.

ISBN 978-1-80066-022-9

New York City | Jews | Family | Grandmother | Grandson | Shopping | Memories | Graphic novel

Set in New York, »Alte Zachen« is a profound graphic novel following Jewish Bubbe Rosa and her grandson Benji as they traipse around the city for some grocery shopping. At first, Bubbe comes across as a truly cantankerous old hag, who incessantly admonishes patient and kind Benji, as well as random people they encounter on their way. However, the dual visual narrative, which switches between Rosa's present life and her past memories, slowly reveals that Rosa's childhood as a Jewish girl, who had to escape from wartime Germany, has left its marks. The atmospheric pen-and-ink and watercolour illustrations, executed in black-and-white for present-day New York and in soft colours for flashbacks to the past, slowly let readers see behind Bubbe's grumpy facade to discover a caring elderly woman who struggles to adapt to the modern world. Both, Cicada Books founder Ziggy Hanaor's short text, interspersed with Yiddish terms, and Benjamin Phillips's expressive pictures draw readers in and portray a very special relationship. (Age: 8+) [CS]



Lawrence, Patrice (text)

Needle

Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke, 2022. – 120 p.

ISBN 978-1-80090-101-8

Grief | Foster home | Prejudice | Bullying | Anger | Punishment | Sister

Family and the foster care system are the topics at the centre of this powerful teen novelette. After being shifted from one foster family to the next following the death of her mother, fifteen-year-old Charlene finally feels somewhat at home with her new foster mum Annie. Nevertheless, her grief and her anger at being separated from her beloved younger half-sister Kandi constantly nag at her. When Annie's jealous son, home from university, wilfully destroys the blanket Charlene has been knitting as a present for Kandi, she explodes, and suddenly her life is upended again. Multi-award-winning writer Patrice Lawrence's compelling first-person-narration, presented in dyslexia-friendly format, traces the black teen's hurt and desperation as well as the prejudice she and her friends face daily. This may be a slim book, but the nuanced characterisation of the young protagonist as well as plenty of details and believable supporting characters render it an intense and moving read. (12+) [CS]

45



Risbridger, Ella (ed.)
Shepeta, Anna (illus.)

**And everything will be glad to see you.
Poems by women and girls**

London: Nosy Crow, 2022. – 141 p.
ISBN 978-1-78800-921-8

Poetry | Anthology

This treasure is the third beautifully designed large-format poetry anthology published by Nosy Crow after »I Am the Seed that Grew the Tree« (2019) and »Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright« (2021). Unlike the first two volumes, this new collection does not feature a particular topic. Instead, it focuses exclusively on female poetry writing, celebrating the often-underestimated creative output of women and girls. Next to well-known poets like Maya Angelou, Emily Dickinson, and Grace Nichols, the book also includes a number of poems by »anonymous« creators, which – as Ella Risbridger, who compiled the selection, convincingly argues – are very likely to have been written by women. You can tell by the stunning double-spread pictures, which adorn this kaleidoscope of poetry from various countries, that illustrator and ceramicist Anna Shepeta loves portraying strong female characters. Her vibrant illustrations in rich colours radiate warmth and energy and perfectly capture the different texts' moods, making this anthology a visual feast. (Age: 5+) [CS]

46



Shireen, Nadia (text/illus.)

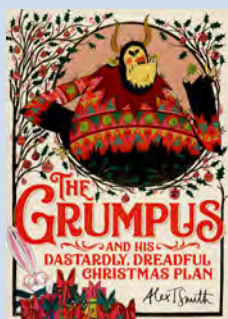
Grimwood. Let the fur fly!

London: Simon & Schuster, 2022. – 239 p.
(Series: Grimwood; 2)
ISBN 978-1-4711-9933-2

Fox | Forest | Friendship | Adventure | Courage

Nadia Shireen is the award-winning author and illustrator of witty picture books such as »Good Little Wolf« (Jonathan Cape, 2011) and »Barbara Throws a Wobbler« (Jonathan Cape, 2021). She has always enjoyed drawing crazy animals, so it is no wonder that her first series for early readers is teeming with hilarious animal protagonists who are completely bonkers. In a combination of regular text, words in large messy type exploding on the pages, and an abundance of scribbly black-and-white drawings, the laugh-out-loud stories take readers on a ride to the weird forest of Grimwood, where fox siblings Ted and Nancy have found a new home. In the second volume of the nonsensical series, the foxes' treebonking, theatre-play-performing friends are in danger. City-smart Nancy and her kind-hearted little brother need to be brave and try to outsmart the mean mayor of the neighbouring town to save Grimwood. A delicious romp for young readers – and their parents. (Age: 8+) [CS]

47



Smith, Alex T. (text/illus.)

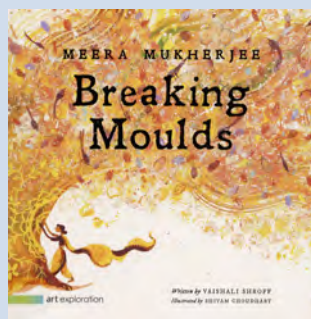
The Grumpus and his dastardly, dreadful Christmas plan. An illustrated Christmas chapter book for children and, of course, Grumpuses

London: Macmillan Children's Books, 2022. – 171 p.
ISBN 978-1-5290-4161-3

Christmas | Hatred | Determination | Sabotage |
Friendship | Change

The fact that Alex T. Smith follows up his endearing illustrated middle grade books »How Winston Delivered Christmas« (Macmillan, 2018) and its sequel, with another Christmassy adventure suggests that the successful author-illustrator has a soft spot for the festive season. When you look at the extremely grumpy Grumpus, though, and how desperately he tries to stop this terrible tradition for all time – maybe the opposite is true...? A visual mash-up of the scary, classic European Krampus-figure and the famous Grinch-Who-Stole-Christmas, this bad-tempered Brussels-sprouts-loving protagonist stars in a giggle-inducing tale of warped and whacky adventures – with some annoyingly fluffy rabbits. The comical digital colour illustrations feature many ridiculous details and make this book a perfect read for young and old alike. And what's even better: In the tradition of Charles Dickens's classic, »The Christmas Carol«, the true spirit of Christmas is revealed eventually. A perfect read for cold winter nights. (Age: 5+) [CS]

48



Shroff, Vaishali (text)

Choudhary, Shivam (illus.)

Bhavana (design)

Meera Mukherjee. Breaking moulds

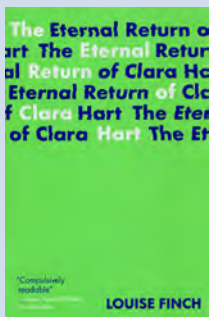
[New Delhi]: Artfirst; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, 2023. – [84] p.

(Series: Art Exploration)

ISBN 978-81-952980-0-6

Mukherjee, Meera (1923-1998) | Biography |
Artist | Sculpture | Craft | Pop-up book

Like the 2022 title »Abanindranath's House of Stories«, this picture book biography and craft book is part of the »Art Exploration« series by the creative collective Art1st Enterprises. Divided into three parts, the book focuses on the life, inspirations, and works of renowned Indian sculptor Meera Mukherjee (1923-1998). Born in Calcutta and attuned to art from a very young age, Meera trained as a painter with famous artists in Europe before returning to her home country to concentrate on sculpting and combine modern Western influences with ancient Indian traditions. In powerful watercolour illustrations with pop-up elements, the first part is a narrative biographical tale, while part two and three invite readers to think more deeply about Meera's sculptures and art in general, showing photos of selected works and even including a crafts section at the end with paper-models for re-creating various shapes. This very special book strives to ignite children's creativity, and it does so in style. (Age: 5+)



Finch, Louise (text)

The eternal return of Clara Hart

Dublin: Little Island, 2022. – 260 p.

ISBN 978-1-915071-02-6

Peer pressure | Masculinity | Alcohol |
Sexual abuse | Accident | Death | Repetition | Grief

All that Spence wants is forget the one-year anniversary of his Mum's death and his dysfunctional relationship with his grieving dad. So spending the night at his rich friend Anthony's wild party, drinking himself into oblivion seems as good a choice as any. Yet then events get out of hand and Clara, one of his classmates, ends up dead in the street. Could Spence have done something to prevent all of this? In this dark coming-of-age novel, debut author Louise Finch gives her teen protagonist a second chance to find the »key« and right some wrongs. When he messes it up once more, however, he gets stuck in a nightmarish loop of repeating the same day again and again ... in true Groundhog-Day fashion, yet definitely less comical. Slowly but surely, the teen re-evaluates his friends' and his own atrocious behaviour towards girls and gathers the courage to call them to justice. This thought-provoking book tackling toxic masculinity and sexual abuse is a wake-up call for young readers. (Age: 14+) [CS]



MacIver, Juliette (text)

Davis, Sarah (illus.)

The Grizzled Grist does not exist!

Wellington: Gecko Press, 2022. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-1-776574-15-5

School trip | Survival | Danger | Observation |
Monster | Rescue | Picture book

In this companion book to the award-winning »That's Not a Hippopotamus« (Gecko Press, 2016), Class 2B is on another exciting school trip. This time, they're off to the wilderness – so that their teacher, Ms. Whiskersniff, enquires about their survival skills. As usual, the noisy and overconfident bunch are quick to announce their craziest talents, along the lines of »I know how to trap a fox! / I can handle snakes and crocs.« Yet when a scary monster lurks in the bushes, and the kids and their flustered and weary teacher are in danger, quiet Liam is ready to save the day – once more. Renowned author Juliette MacIver is a whizz at delivering a flawless and exhilarating rhymed text, which meets its match in Sarah Davis's vibrant illustrations brimming with comical details. The witty pictures also provide plenty of visual clues and funny asides. All through the book, they reveal that Liam's talent of hiding and observing the environment carefully is a heroic skill indeed. An entertaining read that begs to be acted out on stage. (Age: 4+) [CS]



Moralidad, Glory (text)
Florendo, Danielle (illus.)
Lex (transl.)

The perfect tree – Ang himpit nga kahoy

Jaro, Iloilo City: Glory Moralidad, 2022. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-621-06-0360-6

Text in English and Hiligaynon

Narra tree | Environmental protection | Greed |
Bilingual book | Picture book

When Anyag's Narra tree, at the heart of the village, dies, the villagers replace it with an ever blooming metal tree. Growing richer every day due to the many admirers surging into the village, they decide to replace all the other plants in the same way. Only after the metalworking pollutes the air and water, making people sick, and the environment turns into a barren wasteland, do they once again plant natural trees that provide food, shelter, and medicine. Glory Moralidad is the founder of Bata Ako Ph, a non-profit organization committed to the empowerment of Ilonggo children and the promotion of children's literature in the Hiligaynon language. Illustrator Danielle Florendo used watercolours edited with a digital collage technique for this story, which – in a nod to Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale »The Nightingale« – paints an impressive picture of how greedy people can destroy their own livelihood. Bonus pages provide information about the endangered Narra tree and how to take care of the environment. (Age: 6+) [LO]



S., Cat (text/illus.)

Way way out there

Makati City: Komiket, 2022. – 147 p. + [5] p.
ISBN 978-621-8244-28-3

Ambition | Coming of age | Adventure |
Meaning of life | Graphic novel

Jules, a teenage Big Bear, born on White Cliff, the »small rock in the middle of Big Ocean«, has always dreamed big dreams. After he meets a giant tree called Jo at the age of eight, he starts wondering: What is Way Way Out There where the giants live? Can he achieve big things in his own life? Years later, he sets off on a journey with his new friend, Jo the heron, and his uncle, hoping to find the answers to all his questions. In her second graphic novel after the award-winning »Little Wolf«, Manila-based artist Cat S. is pondering the big questions of life – without providing an easy answer. Her imaginative, associative story is visualised in attractive pencil-and-watercolour illustrations in mellow shades of blue, turquoise, green, and brown. Published by the non-profit organisation Komiket.org, which aims to help nurture and grow the comics community in the Philippines, this imaginative adventure by a promising young creator offers readers a thoughtful story to get their imagination going. (Age: 10+) [CS]



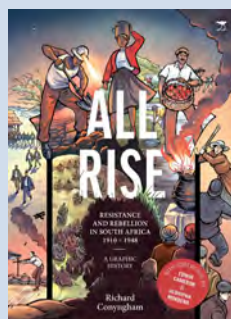
John, Alan (text)
Quek, Hong Shin (illus.)

Grandma's tiger

Singapore: Straits Times Press, 2022. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-981-5081-06-0

[Island](#) | [Tiger](#) | [Rumour](#) | [Fear](#) | [Search](#) | [Mistake](#) |
[Picture book](#)

A tiger? A real tiger? On their small island? This can't be true... or can it? Grandma – who was at the seashore searching for clams – comes running back to the village in fright. She is sure, there was a big, fierce striped animal in the bushes, and it was staring straight into her eyes. The whole island is in uproar, warnings are issued, and a search party is sent out to look everywhere. Yet the experts can't find a trace of the beast, not even a paw print... Did Grandma make a mistake? Journalist Alan John and illustrator Quek Hong Shin's third picture book collaboration cleverly combines a suspenseful story and colourful, comical illustrations. Based on a true story of a supposed tiger sighting on Pulau Ubin Island, just off the coast of Singapore, in 1997, the short tale is an entertaining read. In addition to the tiger, some of the region's native animals get a mention in the book, which also includes an appendix with facts about tigers, newspaper snippets from 1997, and further information about the island. (Age: 5+) [CS]



Conyngham, Richard (text)
Various artists (illus.)

All rise. Resistance and rebellion in South Africa 1910-1948. A graphic history

[Cape Town] [et al.]: Jacana Media [et al.], 2021. – 248 p.
ISBN 978-1-4314-313-1

(Parallel US ed.: [Minneapolis]: Catalyst Press, 2021)

[South Africa](#) | [History 1910-1948](#) | [Resistance](#) |
[Immigration](#) | [Strike](#) | [Activism](#) | [Graphic novel](#)

In six chapters, each illustrated by a different South African artist, this remarkable anthology-like work in graphic novel format, traces the story of resistance against the South African colonial government during the first part of the 20th century. The astonishing feat is that author Richard Conyngham focuses on the forgotten stories of a diverse cast of mostly working class people, whose brave acts paved the way for a more just world. In the fourth Chapter, for example, »The Widow of Marabastad«, a mother in 1956 tells her son about two neighbourhood women who, two decades earlier, had helped bring down the discriminating new »night pass« law, which severely restricted native women's movements. Each chapter ends with a »Behind the story« section of background information, historical photographs and letters, etc. This informative volume offers an inspiring and important read that digs deep into South African history beyond the few often-told stories of a handful of popular heroes. (Age: 12+) [CS]

55



Alexander, Jed (illus.)

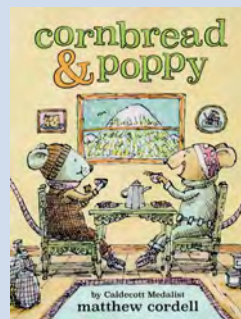
Gold

Berkeley, California: Creston Books, [2022]. – [38] p.
ISBN 978-1-954354-11-1

Goldilocks | Fairy tale | Retelling | Patchwork family |
Wordless book | Picture book

Author-illustrator Jed Alexander follows up his first picture book retelling »Red« (Cameron Kids, 2018) with another witty fractured fairy tale. »Gold« offers a number of surprising twists to young readers who think they know the Goldilocks plot. The wordless treasure in landscape format is executed in black-and-white with some details highlighted in golden-yellow. Set in a modern city, the story opens with three bears carrying their bikes down the stairs of their town house for an outing. As they're cycling away with tiny helmets on their massive heads, yellow scarves blowing in the wind, the book cuts to another scene: a little black girl stepping off a yellow school bus, striding up the street and boldly entering the bears' home. Is she Goldilocks, the little intruder wreaking havoc? Or could she actually be...? The detailed pen-and-ink drawings, with some sequential art scenes, build up the suspense only to thwart readers' expectations and have them rethink their concepts of family and belonging. (Age: 4+) [CS]

56



Cordell, Matthew (text/illus.)

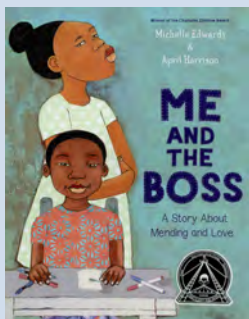
Cornbread & Poppy

New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, Hachette Book Group, 2022. – 80 p.
(Cornbread & Poppy, 1)
ISBN 978-0-7595-5486-3

Mouse | Friendship | Differentness

Matthew Cordell, Caldecott Medalist for »Wolf in the Snow« (Feiwel and Friends, 2017), has written and illustrated a fresh and creative early chapter book that is reminiscent of timeless works like Arnold Lobel's »Frog and Toad« books and the fable »The Ant and the Grasshopper«. The story, which is the first in a series, follows cautious mouse Cornbread, who always fastidiously plans for winter, and his adventurous best friend Poppy, who prefers to hike and play all summer long. As the first snowflakes fall, Poppy realises she has no food reserves whatsoever. Out of options, Poppy resolves to head up Holler Mountain to forage, despite harrowing dangers like mouse-eating owls. Naturally, Cornbread has reservations about her plan, but joins her anyway, like the true friend he is. Using pen, ink, and watercolour illustrations with some hand-lettered text, »Cornbread and Poppy« is a humorous and easy read about individuality and friendship, which will appeal to young, new readers for generations to come. (Age: 5+) [MB]

57



Edwards, Michelle (text)

Harrison, April (illus.)

Me and the boss. A story about mending and love

New York: Anne Schwartz Books, [2022]. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-0-593-31067-0

Siblings | Rule | Love | Embroidery | Determination | Picture book

USA ENGLISH

Big sisters can be a pain in the butt. Especially when they expect you to follow all their rules. However, as six-year-old Lee knows: Having his bossy older sister Zora in his corner also means he has someone who stands up for him. Thus, when Zora drags him to the library one afternoon to an embroidery workshop for big kids, he does get a sewing needle »with a sharp point, like a tiger's tooth«, even though he is a little young for it and almost perforates his fingers trying to stitch a smiling moon onto his cloth square. Yet with lots of determination and a little practicing in secret, he eventually gets the hang of the craft – and creates a surprise gift for Zora. Michelle Edwards's heart-warming story about sibling love, empowerment, and sewing is told in a lively text rich in similes. Award-winning illustrator April Harrison has created powerful mixed-media collage pictures in deep hues that radiate the warmth of the sibling relationship and mirror the topic of textile art. (Age: 5+) [CS]

58



Gomera-Tavarez, Camille (text)

High spirits. Short stories on Dominican diaspora

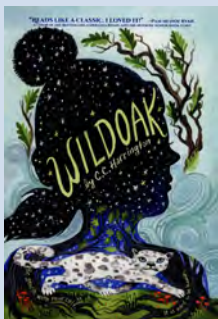
Montclair: Levine Querido, 2022. – 198 p.

ISBN 978-1-64614-129-6

Dominican Republic | Puerto Rico | USA | Family | Home | Everyday life | Poverty | Patriarchal society | Short story

USA ENGLISH

»High Spirits« is a book for young adults that ticks many boxes: This gripping collection of eleven interconnected short stories is based on memories and tales from debut author Camille Gomera-Tavarez's own family. Each chapter is set in a different time period (jumping back and forth) and told from a new point of view, thus offering fascinating glimpses into the lives of various members of the fictional Belén family. The extended Belén clan hails from the Dominican Republic but is spread out both on the island and beyond to Puerto Rico and the USA. The Afro-Dominican writer organically weaves Spanish and African-American vernacular into the dialogue-driven text, creating an authentic atmosphere for each location, ranging from Abuelo José's colmado or general store, to a barber shop, the beach, and a high school in New Jersey. Despite poetic imagery and a pinch of magic realism, the topics tackled are anything but easy, including identity, poverty, toxic masculinity, and the meaning of family. (Age: 14+) [CS]



Harrington, C. C. (text)
Sudyka, Diana (illus.)

Wildoak

New York, NY: Scholastic Press, 2022. – 324 p.
ISBN 978-1-338-80386-0

Stuttering | Love of nature | Snow leopard |
Intergenerational relationship | Courage

Maggie's stuttering makes her feel vulnerable in school and she even resorts to self-harm to avoid having to speak up. When her strict father plans to send her away for »treatments,« her mother instead comes up with a plan to have Maggie spend a few weeks with her grandfather in Wildoak, surrounded by nature. At first reluctant to leave her home and pets, she grows to love her grandpa's cottage and the beautiful forest close by. There, she encounters a trapped and hurt snow leopard cub, which was an abandoned exotic pet. Maggie's compassion leads to her determination to save this animal who cannot communicate on his own. Maggie herself must resolve how to communicate in effective ways before the beautiful creature is hunted and killed by the village folk, who fear a ferocious »monster« posing a threat to humans. Through the alternating perspectives of Maggie and of the leopard Rumpus, the touching novel with elements of magical realism explores the interconnectedness of humans, nature, and animals. (Age: 9+) [JY]



Hayes, K. C. (text)
Chotiner, Barbara (illus.)

Moving words about a flower

Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, [2022]. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-1-62354-165-1

Plants | Dandelion | Cycle of life | Concrete poetry |
Non-fiction

Text becomes part of the illustration in this non-fiction picture book written in the style of a concrete poem. Using mixed-media and digital collage, artist Barbara Chotiner depicts a boy in a busy city crouching down to observe a tiny sprout growing in a crack on the sidewalk. This seedling becomes a dandelion whose seeds fly far into the countryside. One seed survives to grow into a fluffy, white puffball that a little girl plucks and blows into the air, starting the life cycle once again. Aspiring writers, artists, and botanists will find something of interest in this creative work, which stays true to the journey a plant takes from seedling to flower, while at the same time using the typography to create yellow flowers or to mimic seeds blowing in the wind. Pages at the end provide scientific facts about dandelions in a straightforward, easy-to-read manner, which may teach something to children and adults alike. The author also provides bibliographic resources for readers to explore further. (Age: 4+) [MB]



61

Lippert, Tonya (text)
Stegmaier, Andrea (illus.)

Home

Washington, DC: Magination Press, [2022]. – [33] p.
ISBN 978-1-43383-686-2

Family | Homelessness | Home | Shelter |
Challenge | Picture book

As author Tonya Lippert, an expert in developmental psychology and clinical social work, states in her note for readers at the back of this topical picture book: »Families can become homeless anywhere«, and the need for »safety, comfort, warmth, [and] dignity« are universal. The two young protagonists in this lyrical story are faced with a challenging situation, when they have to leave their home and, for an indefinite time, have no place to call their own. They move from »nowhere« – i.e. sleeping at various houses of their family's friends – to »somewhere» – a shelter, where they are waiting for another permanent home. German illustrator Andrea Stegmaier's illustrations deftly combine full-colour images depicting Clare and Wes and their parents with black-and-white illustrations of the unfamiliar outside world, to mirror the depressing effect that the homelessness has on their daily lives. The book provides an important incentive to discuss homelessness, poverty, and related issues with young children. (Age: 5+) [CS]



62

Lyall, Casey (text)
Brosgol, Vera (illus.)

A spoonful of frogs

New York, NY: Greenwillow Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, [2022]. – [33] p.
ISBN 978-0-06-289029-0

Witch | Frog | Cooking | Television | Challenge |
Picture book

A witch on the cooking show »Bewitching Kitchen« demonstrates step-by-step instructions on brewing a batch of delicious frog soup. Everything is going smoothly until she reaches the title ingredient. As the frogs hop and leap about the kitchen, effectively evading capture, Canadian author Casey Lyall's comedic text and the expressive digital illustrations by renowned artist Vera Brosgol (whose 2016 book »Leave Me Alone!« won a Caldecott Honor) perfectly capture the witch's mounting frustration and determination to »put the frogs onto the spoon.« Finally, wet and bedraggled, the witch regains her professional composure and offers her viewers an acceptable, vegetarian substitute for when frogs do not make themselves available. Charming endpapers show rows of frogs at the beginning and the chosen ingredient substitution mirrored in the back. This story begs to be read aloud by an enthusiastic performer and would be sure to appeal to readers around Halloween or any time of year. (Age: 4+) [MB]

63



Onoseta, Rimma (text)

How you grow wings

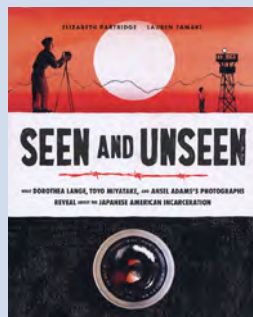
Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Young Readers, 2022. – 330 p.
ISBN 978-1-64375-191-7

Social class | Abuse | Mother | Daughter | Siblings | Kidnapping | Mental illness

USA ENGLISH

This engaging young adult novel by debut author Rimma Onoseta is told through the alternating first-person voices of two sisters whose mother inflicts on them constant physical and emotional abuse; in response, Cheta is openly defiant, while Zam is quietly compliant. Their opposite personalities and behaviours result in differences in the severity of their mother's treatment of them and eventually, the ensuing options in life that they have available as each makes decisions that impact their futures. Set in modern-day Nigeria and peppered with rich details, which ground the setting, the story follows the path of each sister while considering the ways in which social class, colour within race/colourism, trauma, and abuse impact the kinds of choices one may or may not have. The relationship of the sisters ranges from complete disregard to hatred, to intertwined dependence while facing dysfunctional family dynamics, kidnapping, mental illness, and more. (Age: 14+) [JY]

64



Partridge, Elizabeth (text) / Tamaki, Lauren (illus.)

Seen and unseen. What Dorothea Lange, Toyo Miyatake, and Ansel Adams's photographs reveal about the Japanese American Incarceration

San Francisco: Chronicle Books, [2022]. – 132 p.
ISBN 978-1452165103

World War II (1939-1945) | Japanese American | Internment camp | Civil rights | Photography | Non-fiction

USA ENGLISH

This non-fiction book allows readers a glimpse into US history, when – following the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941 – the American government sent people of Japanese descent to internment camps for the duration of World War II. Photo-journalist Dorothea Lange was hired to document the process as evidence of the supposedly ethical treatment of the interned population, but her belief in the wrongness of the government's plans clearly shows in her photographic perspective. Toyo Miyatake, a Japanese photographer, created a hidden camera to portray life from within the camp. Photographer Ansel Adams took an array of portraits to show the Japanese Americans' resilience; while he had not opposed the internment initially, Adams later argued that they should be reintegrated into the country. This book comes together with Elizabeth Partridge telling the story through multi-faceted narratives, and Lauren Tamaki seamlessly weaving together these three people's photographs with her own informative and atmospheric illustrations. (Age: 12+) [JY]



Tahir, Sabaa (text)

All my rage

New York: Razorbill/Penguin Random House,
2022. – 374 p.
ISBN 978-0-593-20234-0

Immigrant | Anger | Forgiveness | Addiction |
Abuse | Trauma | Islamophobia

This heart-breaking young adult novel about two Pakistani-American teens is told from alternating points of view. Devastated Salahudin is doing everything possible to save his family's motel after his loving mother Misbah's unexpected death, while his grieving father is a dysfunctional alcoholic. Sal's classmate Noor, who arrived in the USA at age six following an earthquake that killed her whole family, is almost suffocated by the manipulative and violent upbringing of her uncle and guardian. Sal and Noor had always been best friends until a huge fight some months previously caused a deep rift. At a critical time when they need each other most to face prejudice, grief, physical abuse, trauma, and the resulting rage, their relationship needs to be renegotiated carefully. Renowned author Sabaa Tahir offers a nuanced and profound family saga that tackles many interrelated topics. It is a tale about home, tradition, secrets, truth, and choices that urges readers to think about life's big issues. (Age: 14+) [JY]



Wilson, Diane / Shin, Sun Yung / Gibney, Shannon /
Coy, John (text)

MBD, Dion (Mehaga Bangun Djayasaputra,
Dionisius) (illus.)

Where we come from

Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, an imprint of
Lerner Publishing Group, [2022]. – [42] p.
ISBN 978-1-5415-9612-2

Humans | Origin | Identity | Difference | Tradition |
Culture | Storytelling | Picture book

In this picture book collaboration, four US-authors from different cultural backgrounds get together to ponder their roots – »We all come from stardust...« The poetic texts talk about family, ancestral traditions, struggles, etc.; and it becomes obvious how all these »ingredients« intermingle to create a unique identity for each person. Despite different experiences, the individual stories of these four diverse writers (whose ancestors are Mdewan-kanton/Dakhóta, Korean, West African, Irish, and Scottish) also show that we humans have a lot in common and that stories play an important role in shaping all of our lives. Indonesian illustrator Dion MBD's intriguing digital artwork may look deceptively straightforward at first glance. However, the illustrator skilfully plays with perspective, selected details, cropping, and negative space to emphasise elements that are unique to each person as well as those that bind them together. An inspiring multicultural read for all ages. (Age: 6+) [CS]

67



Kiho, Kadri (text)
Salumaa, Stella (illus.)

Endel ja Kati

(Endel and Kati)

[Saue]: Päike ja Pilv, 2022. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-9916-630-25-9

Coping with fear | Self-confidence | Picture book

ESTONIAN
Estonia

Bus driver Endel loves his job. Together with a colleague, Kati, he drives his passengers around the city every day. Endel has never actually met Kati, whose voice announces the stops from under the steering wheel. When Kati falls ill one day, Endel has to take over the announcements. This should not actually be a problem as he knows the route inside out – if it weren't for Endel's huge fear of saying the wrong thing, speaking in public or even speaking at all. Endel is a tall, likeable guy, but he is shy. Nevertheless, he rises to the occasion, at first stuttering, then prattling away like a waterfall. In their red-blue-grey picture book, Kadri Kiho and Stella Salumaa give a touching and humourful depiction of the inner fears that everyone has, whether big or small. In the process, they also show that overcoming fears is not easy and may even be accompanied by embarrassingly incongruous actions. »Endel ja Kati« is a small but weighty story and one of the most important Estonian picture books from 2022. (Age: 3+) [KW]

68



Sein, Liis (text)
Saar, Ulla (illus.)

Mona isepäine isa

(Mona's Dad has quirky ideas)

[Tallinn]: Pegasus, [2022]. – 86 p.

ISBN 978-9916-16-235-4

Father | Family life | Change

ESTONIAN
Estonia

Is he going through a midlife crisis or just bored with his life? Either way, Mona and her mother will have to get used to Mona's Dad's new way of living. Driven by a feeling that something needs to change, he has begun to turn his whole world, and that of his family, upside down. As an art collector, he begins to hang the walls of their home with paintings by Picasso, da Vinci and Rembrandt. Soon these begin to take on lives of their own: da Vinci's Mona Lisa, for instance, demands to have a new pattern on the wallpaper against which she is hanging. Or, another time, Dad turns their home into a hotel, leaving only the couch for Mona and her mother to sleep on. With humour and tinge of the fantastical, the author Liis Sein and the illustrator Ulla Saar relate the curious episodes of a turbulent family life. It is highly entertaining to follow how the supposed head of household gets bogged down in his grand plans, only to have the rest of the family show him the errors of his ways. (Age: 8+) [KW]



Hertell, Harri (text)

Merz, Laura (illus.)

Luomakangas, Pentti (music)

Absurdiit aakkoiset

(An alphabet of absurdities)

Helsinki: Etana Editions, [2022]. – [59] p.

ISBN 978-952-7105-85-6

Poetry | ABC book | Picture book

FINNISH
Finland

»An alphabet of absurdities«: the title says it all. This book of poems is a true grab bag! Each letter is attached to a sparkling verse. C, for example, runs riot at the swimming pool; F sails on a frigate; I hates the humming noise of the vacuum cleaner; and Å is enraptured by the elf's cap on its head. Meanwhile Ä und Ö get into all kinds of mischief at the end of the alphabet. Laura Merz has illustrated Harri Hertell's rhymes in witty collages, which are reminiscent of modernist poster art. Her playful use of typography and abstract shapes and figures not only capture the poems' nonsense, but even sometimes carry it to the extreme. At times the humour is subtle, at other times crude. In any case, there is lots to discover and laugh about. As icing on the cake, there are QR codes, which give access to a recitation of the poems, accompanied by an original soundtrack by the Finnish composer Pentti Luomakangas. (Age: 6+) [IG]



Lestrade, Agnès de (text)

Marchal, Stéphanie (illus.)

Le nuage de papa

(Papa's cloud)

Bruxelles: Alice jeunesse, [2023]. – [33] p.

ISBN 978-2-87426-495-5

Depression | Father | Daughter | Family |
Picture book

FRENCH
Belgium

In Agnès de Lestrade's text, »the cloud over Papa's head« symbolises the depression a father is suffering from. His malady makes it difficult for him to even get out of bed or to leave the house. In aptly child-like poesy, the young daughter tells how she tries to help her father. But neither reading aloud nor tickling make the cloud go away. In illustrations, which show dynamic alterations in the cloud, Stéphanie Marchal reveals the perfidious power of a depression: sometimes it encompasses the father, sometimes it lets loose a thunderstorm. Muted colours establish the moods, while further, sometimes bizarre details, drawn with a fine line, round out a loving family setting. The book ends with a phase in which the father has no symptoms of depression; the family has now learned to enjoy these moments all the more. Lestrade and Marchal succeed in creating a realistic and deeply moving portrayal of an illness without leaving their readers with a feeling of hopelessness. (Age: 4+) [OIS]



Pince, Chloé (text/illus.)

Tant qu'on l'aura sous les pieds

(Under our feet)

[Uccle]: CotCotCot éditions, 2022. – 89 p.

ISBN 978-2-930941-41-7

Activism | Protest | Military base | Non-fiction

Citizen protests in the 1970s against the expansion of a military base near Larzac, in the south of France, became a blueprint for peaceful resistance and civil disobedience against decisions made solely at higher levels of government, whether in France or elsewhere in the world. Fifty years on, the author and illustrator Chloé Pince explores the history and legacy of that movement. In a frankly subjective collage, she begins by presenting the historical facts, taken from political speeches and televised reporting. Digressions with personal reflections and a visit to Larzac today round out her multilayered investigation. Black-and-white illustrations on the sparingly designed pages reflect the barren beauty of the landscape. The varied sizes of the illustrations and the organic succession of texts and images propel the reader through the story. In 1981, the Larzac project was stopped. This book can be an encouragement to look beyond ideological boundaries and become engaged in essential causes such as responding to climate change. (Age: 14+) [OIS]



Pasquet, Marianne (text)

Ferrer, Marianne (illus.)

La nuit sans ZZZzzzz

(The night without ZZZzzzz)

Montréal, Québec: Les 400 coups, [2022]. – 32 p.

ISBN 978-2-89815-087-6

Bedtime | Sleep disorder | Creativity | Picture book

Because she has a thought that gives her no rest, a young girl is unable to sleep. Only after she entrusts it to her blue colouring book does she find the longed-for »ZZZZzzzz«. At first glance, this story suggests that the artistic treatment of an agonizing thought can be liberating. Quite logically, then, on the last page, the girl has laid out a pen and notebook at her bedside. The illustrations suggest a second way of reading the story: creativity is an arduous process. Indeed, the nature of the girl's churning thought is never specified. It even remains ambivalent in the pictures, such as when they are portrayed as beautiful flowers, yet wildly spilling from behind a pillow. To convey the nighttime ambience, Marianne Ferrer uses harmonious tones of dark blue, green, and red against a black background. In the end, the girl has not yet achieved the desired clarity of thought, akin to a neatly folded origami. But her tangled thoughts have now been corralled in her sketch of a house, allowing her to finally fall asleep. (Age: 6+) [OIS]

73



Wolfe, Frédérick (text)

Orbie (illus.)

Orbie, dessine-moi un billibouton

(Orbie, draw me a billibouton)

[Montréal]: Fonfon, [2022]. – 33 p.

(Series: Histoires de rire)

ISBN 978-2-925215-04-2

Creativity | Imagination | Patience | Illustration |
Picture book

Canada FRENCH

Do you know the billibouton? No? Not to worry, it is an invention of the writer Frédérick »Fred« Wolfe. And because he isn't able to draw it, he asks Orbie to make him a picture, just as once Saint-Exupéry's Little Prince requested help from the pilot. But Fred can't describe his animal, and is never satisfied, thus driving Orbie nearly mad. In this comic-book-like picture book the author and illustrator are also the protagonists. By addressing their collaboration, it shows how difficult it is, despite the best of intentions, to come to a mutually satisfactory conclusion. As a parody, this offers much ground for lively discussion and witty illustrations. The playful use of the medium of picture book is quite outstanding. Initially, with the turn of a page, Fred steps from his studio into Orbie's; later he stumbles over a page number right into the final catastrophe. Because the readers have not seen Orbie's drawing, they are encouraged to let their imaginations run free and draw their own version of the billibouton. (Age: 6+) [OIS]

74



Alméras, Gaëlle (text/illus.)

Le super week-end de l'océan

(The super weekend at sea)

[Lyon]: Maison Georges, 2022. – 166 p.

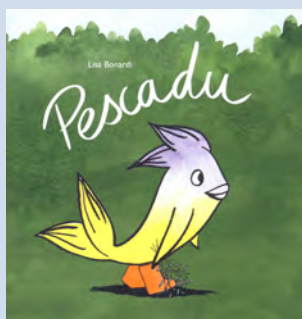
ISBN 978-2-38215017-7

Sea | Environment | Non-fiction | Picture book

France FRENCH

Gaëlle Alméras loves to »explain science with stories that emotionally captivate every reader«. In close cooperation with researchers, she writes and illustrates books, which can be described as non-fiction comics. After a first book about the outer space, in this even more comprehensive volume she devotes her attention to the oceans. The narrators are, along with Échid, an Australian short-beaked echidna, three other highly stylized animal characters who spend a weekend exploring the entire ecosystem of the ocean. The author makes clever use of these figures to explain connections in a pointed manner and give interesting details. The frame story is presented in simple black-and-white drawings. For the documentary illustrations, Alméras instead uses a precise, aesthetic watercolour technique. The book culminates in five double spreads that can be unfolded, revealing, for example, a blue whale or a coral reef. This entertaining and enlightening book will arouse and still a thirst for knowledge, not only among children. (Age: 7+) [OIS]

75



Bonardi, Lisa (text/illus.)

Pescadu

Paris: L' École des loisirs, [2023]. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-2-211-32485-4

Fish | Adventure | Search | Animals | Variety |
Picture book

The little fish Pescadu finds his pond quite boring. One morning he discovers a pair of bright orange rubber boots on the water's edge and runs off in them so he can at last experience »not-for-fish things«. In his first encounter, with the cow Numur, he learns to appreciate how refreshing a siesta is. Then he meets Pigou, a pig, who wants to do »not-for-pigs things«. So, they continue on together. Lisa Bonardi's first work is a picture book for preschoolers. For the illustrations she employs a mixture of watercolour and chalk. Setting them against simple, flat backgrounds, she focusses entirely on her charming figures. The images, the text and the speech bubbles are smoothly connected to convey a fine and at times even profound humour. For example, the fish interprets each new animal he encounters at first as just another cow. »Pescadu« inspires both a spirit of discovery and openness, while showing what reactions a carefree adventurer might provoke, if he or she is not too particular about ownership. (Age: 3+) [OIS]

76



Frier, Raphaële (text) / Kam (illus.)

Issa, Nada (transl.)

Les lettres du rêve

(*Dream letters*)

[Marseille]: Le port a jauni, [2023]. – [16] p.

(Series: Racines)

ISBN 978-2-919511-94-5

Text in French and Arabic

Dream | Language | Poetry | Bilingual book |
Picture book

This book is just one example of the new series »Racines« (Roots). Like all books published by the publishing house Le port a jauni, it is bilingual: French and Arabic. The series plays with the structure of the Arabic language, in which the roots of most words consist of three radical consonants. With further add-ons, word families with very different meanings are created. From the root word »holm« (dream), for example, one can derive the words for patience, puberty, or taste buds. Raphaële Frier takes these words as inspiration for her sensorial and tongue-in-cheek poems. In the illustrations by Kam, sprawling plants and oversize animals seem to be trying to reconquer an urbanized world. This is a colourful, surrealistic dream world, which nonetheless remains lucid and accessible. The inside pages of the book cover show rules of pronunciation for both languages, and a double-spread page in the middle is a detachable poster. The »Racines« create artistically ambitious bridges to a different language. (Age: 10+) [OIS]

77



Lasbleis, Hortense (text)

Boutin, Anne-Lise (illus.)

C'est quoi mon genre?

(What kind of gender am I?)

Arles: Actes Sud jeunesse, [2023] – 63 p.

ISBN 978-2-330-16767-7

Gender | Gender identity | Transgender | Diversity |
Non-fiction

France
FRENCH

The much-discussed topic of gender can elicit insecurity and defensiveness because it puts into question many people's traditional understanding of roles and identity. This non-fiction book by the journalist Hortense Lasbleis is intended as an introduction to the complex subject matter. In informative, clearheaded texts she first defines concepts such as sex, gender, or sexual orientation. A historical review debunks the preconception that trans identities are a fashionable trend of our times. Another section deals with transitioning from one gender to another and the resistance that may be encountered at the personal, family, or social level. As a supplement, three transpersons speak about themselves and show that every person has a special story in terms of gender. For readers who question their own identity, this work offers further tips and contact information without exerting pressure. The book supports people of all ages in their understanding of the issues, in feeling empathy, and by breaking down prejudices. (Age: 12+) [OIS]

78



Nebbache, Arnaud (text/illus.)

La tournée de Gaspard

(Gaspard's tour)

Paris: L'Étagère du bas, [2022]. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-2-490253-46-3

Garbage | Garbage collector | Recycling |
Environment | Picture book

France
FRENCH

Arnaud Nebbache describes a typical day of the garbage collector Gaspard. On the right-hand pages, Nebbache presents the strenuous tour that Gaspard takes with his co-workers Elsa and Carlos. It begins when others are still sleeping. Along with hard work, the tour is filled with tiny rituals that are important to Gaspard. Furthermore, on this day he will repair a boy's scooter with parts found along the tour. The left pages sensitively extend the story with documentation, giving details about waste management and recycling, other strenuous professions, or animals in a sleeping city. Fact and fiction flow into each other in the text and graphic design, enabling every double page to be a blended whole. Using the mixed media of ink and digital collage, Nebbache has created organic, atmospheric illustrations in powerful shades of petrol, yellow and brown. Insights into Gaspard's life will sensitize readers to the helping hands at work in the background and the issues of waste reduction and reusability. (Age: 6+) [OIS]

79



Parlange, Adrien (text/illus.)

Les printemps

(*Springtimes*)

Paris: La Partie, [2022]. – [66] p.

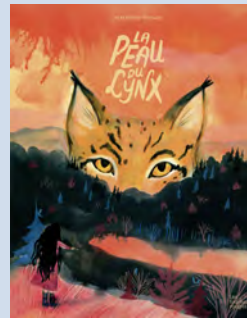
ISBN 978-2-492768-29-3

Memory | Life story | Family | Paper engineering

France
FRENCH

A first-person narrator describes his life from birth to old age. On thirty-two double pages the story unfolds in colours and harmonic lines, which are reduced to the essentials. A particular feature is that geometric shapes are cut out of the thin cardboard so that memories remain present in the following pages. The period over which these windows into the past remain open varies. A traumatic encounter with a blindworm fades as the narrator experiences a similar situation with his daughter; but the taste of a wild strawberry he experienced as a child remains with him even as an old man. Each page of text begins by stating the age of the protagonist and concentrates, in a few words, on a dramatic experience, an observation, or an emotion. Thanks to the book's design, cross-connections between generations are made manifest. The text and pictures trigger emotions, which will appeal to all age groups. »Les printemps« is one of many aesthetically pleasing and worthwhile books of La Partie, which was founded in 2021. (Age: 3+) [OIS]

80



Poncet, Mathilde (text/illus.)

La peau du lynx

(*The lynx coat*)

[Montreuil]: Les Fourmis rouges, [2022]. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-2-36902-170-4

Animals | Forest | Hunting | Environmentalism | Picture book

France
FRENCH

This picture book begins like a traditional fairy tale: On a foggy stretch of land, a lynx rules over his territory. Then one day, the sinister huntsman sets his sights on the lynx. The other animals engage a seamstress to create a camouflage coat for the lynx. Run-together watercolours contrast with rough shapes when Mathilde Poncet wants to show the eerie side of the natural world. In portraying people, however, there is an explicitness bordering on naïve painting. In addition, the illustrator uses shifts in relative size to create dramaturgical effect. Upon closer study, contemporary elements stand out: contrails in the sky or the brutal force of the hunter's weapon. Fittingly, the story has a very modern twist: In the end, the frustrated hunter takes up knitting – unknowingly helping the seamstress to provide even more animals with camouflage coats – and goes about the forest, unarmed, collecting mushrooms and berries. This modern fairy tale elegantly makes a case for a gentler treatment of the natural world. (Age: 4+) [OIS]



Sofianos, Églantine (text)

Guittet, Thibaut (illus.)

Zack a perdu sa langue

(Zack has lost his tongue)

[Nantes]: Six citrons acides, [2022]. – [28] p.

(Series: Des livres qui piquent la langue)

ISBN 978-2-38315-006-0

FRENCH Tongue | Language | Wordplay | Idiom | Son | Father

France

In a highly entertaining manner, »Zack a perdu sa langue« makes use of a double entendre: in French the word »langue« means tongue or language. The idiomatic phrase »someone has lost his tongue« is rendered quite literally as a lost tongue. How did it happen? At school one day, Zack is unable to answer a question; and afterwards he can't speak at all. Later he goes about town with his father and his brother in search of his tongue. At every station along the way, the text provides a new idiom, whereby the interaction between text and picture becomes an absurd gag. For example, there is a huge board hanging out of the mouth of the city mayor, because in French the phrase »langue de bois« (wooden tongue) stands for senseless political babbling. In the witty drawings by Thibaut Guittet, all sorts of funny red tongues are shown, framed in lots of yellow, blue, and green. Zack recovers the use of his tongue and language again when his father has a flash of genius and takes his son to the ice cream parlour. Right on! (Age: 6+) [OIS]



Veith, Marine (text)

Ma part de l'ours

(My share of the bear)

[Paris]: Sarbacane, [2022]. –180 p.

(Series: Exprim')

ISBN 978-2-37731-728-8

FRENCH Family | Winter | Half-orphan | Siblings | Nature | Adventure | Tolerance | Diversity

France

Poule is 20 years old and fed up – instead of leading the cool life of a student, she has to take care of her 13-year-old brother Ouest. Their father is dead, their mother in a psychiatric ward. After setting out to visit the mother in the Pyrenees, they are stranded in a snowstorm. Jacques, an aging globetrotter, and Piou, a boy with a bear mask, lead them to a house in the woods where Piou's grandparents live an alternative lifestyle. Snow continues to fall and Piou gets increasingly worried about his mother, who lives with bears to protect them from hunters. Cleverly and convincingly, Marine Veith combines a variety of genres – a coming-of-age story, an adventure novel, nature writing, a chamber play, and a utopian tale – while avoiding YA stereotypes. With self-irony and in a disarming manner, Poule tells how she and Ouest find an unorthodox family of choice and how they grow closer as siblings. This imaginative, suspenseful novel is also a reflection, en passant, on topics such as tolerance, solidarity, and commitment. (Age: 13+) [OIS]



Vignal, Hélène (text)

Une vie pour Matzi

(A life for Matzi)

[Paris]: Éditions Thierry Magnier, [2022]. – 107 p.

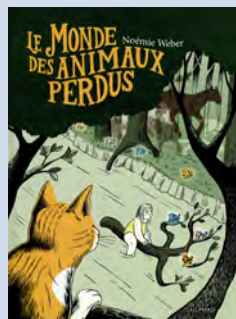
(Series: En voiture Simone!)

ISBN 979-10-352-0569-0

Revolution | Character | Diversity | Activism

France FRENCH

»Une vie pour Matzi« is an inventive parable of revolutionary action. Figures that have been set aside by the novelist Deborah Ben Moulec are searching, under the leadership of Matzi, for meaning to their lives: they want at long last to be part of a story. The seven resolute characters – including a spider-woman, a giant scarab beetle and an innkeeper – organise themselves and use every means they can to stimulate the author's imagination. Step-by-step they come closer to their goal. In the end, the author sees Matzi and her comrades in a dream and, upon waking up, writes down their story. Hélène Vignal tells, allegorically, the story of how social movements evolve from discontent, mobilise via conflict and coordination, and rise up in collective action. The seven disparate revolutionaries are a wink toward the ideal-typical kinds of personalities found in socially active circles. The book unites a love for literature with a child-friendly introduction to political action, without being didactic or abstract. (Age: 10+) [OIS]



Weber, Noémie (text/illus.)

Le monde des animaux perdus

(The world of the lost animals)

[Paris]: Gallimard, [2022]. – 63 p.

(Series: Bande dessinée)

ISBN 978-2-07-514976-1

Pet | Fish | Death | Coping with grief | Courage | Quest | Fantasy fiction | Comic

France FRENCH

Aldo, a goldfish, is Elsa's only friend. She reads him stories, and, in her dreams, she rides on his back through the rainy city. One day, Aldo is found drifting lifelessly in his aquarium, but Elsa is convinced he is merely asleep. When her sister flushes the fish down the toilet, Elsa drives in after him and lands in a fantasy world where sad silhouettes of animals are searching for their owners. Elsa encounters a mercifully honest but helpful cat named Unchat and an inebriated taxi-driving raven who drops her off in the middle of nowhere. At the Lake of Shadows, Elsa is able to take leave of Aldo during their final adventure together. The magical journey of a courageous child is depicted in this comic book as a bizarre trip. Noémie Weber employs large panels and colours stylishly and freely. The powerful text includes not only the authentic diction of an eight-year-old, but also poetic passages and allusions to works of world literature. Elsa's escapade can be read as a metaphor for a creative way to deal with grief. (Age: 8+) [OIS]



85

Hachimi Alaoui, Amina (text)
Chabot Lennon, Françoise (illus.)

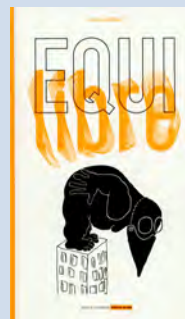
Le juste milieu

(The middle ground)

Casablanca: Yanbow Al Kitab, [2022]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-9920-771-21-4

Cricket | Ant | Friendship | Tolerance | Fable |
Picture book

In this picture book, the author Amina Hachimi Alaoui and the illustrator Françoise Chabot Lennon celebrate openness and impartiality. Told in a loosely rhymed text, the story is a variation on one of Aesop's well-known fables. The singing cricket Sarsour falls in love with the ant Nammoula and invites her to a festival where he will be performing. But first he finds pleasure in helping her with her work. In turn, Nammoula discovers dancing and singing at the festival. She realizes how much effort and concentration are needed to make music and promises Sarsour never again to judge him unfairly. The illustrations are an eclectic combination of drawings, cut-paper, natural materials, and photo cuttings that are either blurry or digitally edited. The harmonious colour scheme is dominated by yellow, green, red and shades of brown. The re-casting of this classic fable as an optimistic tale and the inventive design make this book a real experience. (Age: 5+) [OIS]



86

Jardel, Stéfán (text/illus.)

Equi libre

(Equilibrium)

[Saint-Gilles-les-Hauts, La Réunion]: Zébulo éditions,
[2022]. – [28] p.
ISBN 979-10-96163-27-4

Philosophy | Humanity | Society | Picture book

The painter and sculptor Stéfán Jardel, who lives on Réunion, prefaces his first children's book with a quote from the Chinese philosopher-poet Zhuang Zhou: »Every being is another and every being is itself – this truth [...] must be understood from within oneself.« In this tall, portrait-format book one finds a being – part human, part bird – standing on a skyscraper. In a dialogue with itself, it alternates between being participant and observer of situations. Gradually the question at the heart of the book emerges in partly philosophical, partly off-hand remarks: how do we preserve the equilibrium between ourselves and others, between lofty ideas and all-too subjective feelings? This balancing act is almost exclusively presented through the protagonist. The predominantly black-and-white illustrations are liberally complemented with colours, forms and creatively positioned text. Without claiming to give an all-encompassing answer, Stéfán Jardel provides an inspirational reflexion for both young and old. (Age: 9+) [OIS]



Abadía, Ximo (text/illus.)
Calmels, Anne / Schavelzon, David (transl.)
Khat. Journal d'un réfugié
(*Khat. Diary of a refugee*)
Genève: La Joie de lire, [2022]. – [136] p.
ISBN 978-2-88908-596-5

Africa | Migration | Discrimination | Graphic novel

Born during Eritrea's dictatorship; childhood and teenage years spent in the slums and prisons of Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa; then the flight over the Mediterranean. In his graphic novel »Khat«, the Spanish artist and writer Ximo Abadía tells the story of the half-orphan Natan up to his arrival in Valencia, Spain, in 2018. His stunning pictures are done in mixed media, but predominantly wax crayons. The course, brittle lines give the scenes of violence an abstraction, only to unleash their full force in the minds of the viewers, yet not seeming voyeuristic. While the text is mostly limited to facts and sparse dialogues, the strong colours of the illustrations engender all kinds of emotions. By combining very graphically rendered double spreads with richly detailed sequences, the narrative is given even more drive. »Khat« is a moving and deeply human book that helps readers understand why migrants put their lives at risk in their search of a better future. (Age: 12+) [OIS]



Hoogeveen, Tialda (text)
Reeder, Yke (illus.)
Abe en de Aardichman
(*Abe and the Earthman*)
Ljouwert: Afûk, [2022]. – 53 p.
ISBN 978-94-93159-88-4

Friendship | Bullying | Trust | Self-confidence | Imaginary friend

After Abe and his mother have moved into a new house, Abe discovers a little brown man living in an overgrown garden nearby. Abe calls the man with no name the »Earthman«. Because Abe has had bad experiences with other children and is fearful of them, it takes a while for him to get to know Sibrich, the new girl next door. He discovers that she also has an imaginary friend. She calls the creature living in her garden »Mudman«. What follows is a warm-hearted and original story about a traumatised boy, who learns to overcome his fears and make friends. In a realistic and graceful manner, Tialda Hoogeveen depicts how trust in others sometimes gets lost but can be rebuilt. The text is accompanied by atmospheric, almost fairytale-like illustrations by Yke Reeder. (Age: 7+) [TD]



Costas, Leticia (text)

A lebre mecánica

(*The mechanical hare*)

Vigo: Xerais, [2022]. – 134 p.

(Series: Fóra de xogo; 202)

ISBN 978-84-1110-149-3

Gambling | Addiction | Friendship

GALICIAN

Spain

»A lebre mecánica« depicts the normal life of teenagers. Everyday life revolves around family and school, while free time is spent on a skateboard or hanging out with friends. The clique includes Corvo and Nana, not a couple, but inseparable friends. Until the day that everything unravels and Corvo loses his footing in real life. He gets involved in gaming and starts betting money. At first just fascinated and enthusiastic, he slowly loses control of his impulses and is caught up in a dangerous whirlpool of gambling addiction. A metaphor for this compulsive condition is the titular hare that serves as the bait after which dogs chase, seemingly under remote control, during greyhound races. The story is told alternately from the first-person perspectives of Corvo and Nana respectively, allowing their differing perceptions of Corvo's addiction to come across clearly. Leticia Costas proves in this novel that she has a gift of observation and a keen sensibility for the lifestyle of her young protagonists. (Age: 14+) [JW]



Laibl, Melanie (text)

Brönnner, Nele (illus.)

Superglitzer

(*Super sparkler*)

Wien: Luftschacht Verlag, 2022. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-3-903422-17-9

Forest | Animals | Mobile phone | Picture book

GERMAN

Austria

What is that strange thing, lying there in the woods? Flat, rectangular, shiny. And the sounds that it makes! Naturally, it is a magpie that discovers it first. A specialist for things that sparkle. The other forest inhabitants are quick to arrive and help to solve the mystery. Fox, mole, badger, even the toadstools and oak leaves are looking on curiously. Is it a wiretap? A piece of bark? But it sounds like a cuckoo! Then the ants come marching along – they seem not only to have a plan that involves this thing, but even know exactly what they want to do with it. »Superglitzer« is a thrill! The neon illustrations combine graphic design and playfulness – try getting that right! – and the page layout varies between full-page images and panels. Even the endpapers participate in showing what happens when you try to get a handle on things that you do not (yet) know anything about. (Age: 4+) [IG]



Stavarič, Michael (text)

Dreis, Stella (illus.)

Piepmatz macht Wald aus euch!

Weltrettdings für Vorangeschrittene

(Piepmatz will turn you into forest! Saving the world stuff for progressives)

Graz [et al.]: Leykam, [2022]. – 53 p.

ISBN 978-3-7011-8242-8

Forest | Bird | Environmental awareness |
Environmental protection

GERMAN
Austria

»Isn't forest full-on papatastish? I'm totally forest myself, since forever. Nipping all about, always thinking how cool it is to be a bird. [...] What shallst thou call me? Some of you call me the forest gardner. Tree guardian, plaid forester, that checkered thingy. Others only say jaybird. Just a few, thick-bird and stuff like that, yeah, it's okay, everything's gucci!« What an entrée – and of course it's just the beginning. The jaybird narrator uses groovy bird speak – »grammar in bird families is alot different than yours« – throughout the book, in order to give humans a piece of his mind: What are they doing? Why do the »humies« have to ruin everything? But he's not whistling up a storm in a teacup, he's doing something about it – yeah, he makes forest! He carries acorns from here to there, so that new trees can grow everywhere. »Piepmatz macht Wald aus euch!« is first-rate – with a gucci message and still never boring-moralising, thanks to the funky language and to the nimbly-bimbly illustrations by Stella Dreis. (Age: 6+) [IG]



Crameri, Reto (illus.)

Alula: Garten. Alula: Urwald

(Alula: Garden. Alula: Jungle)

Mannheim: Kunstanstifter, 2023. – [58] p.

ISBN 978-3-948743-26-0

Imaginary trip | Garden | Jungle | Reversible book |
Picture book | Wordless book

GERMAN
Germany

In his reversible picture book »Alula: Garten. Alula: Urwald«, Swiss illustrator Reto Crameri proves that it is not necessary to use words to tell a story to open up an entire world. Read from one side of the book, two children – a girl and a boy – discover a dark cat in their garden; reversed and read from the other side, the same two children follow a yellow butterfly through the jungle. They chase each of these creatures and soon come to a place where the plants have grown to overtower them, where clothespins are suddenly crocodiles, and where a tree becomes both a mountain and a mangrove forest. In lush colours, with clear contours and equally energetic brushstrokes, Reto Crameri gives shape to children's subjective worlds and visualises their imaginative playfulness. He takes viewers into children's imaginations and simultaneously sends readers on their own journeys, inviting them to tell ever new tales. (Age: 2+) [IG]



Drvenkar, Zoran (text)

Kai zieht in den Krieg und kommt mit Opa zurück

(Kai goes off to war and returns with Grandpa)

München: Hanser, 2023. – 158 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-27594-2

Grandchild | Grandfather | Memory | Dementia | War | Heroism

GERMAN

Germany

■ Kai is visiting his grandpa, who is 100 years old and slowing dwindling away – physically and mentally. As his memory degenerates, the past and the present flow into one another. The old days are now very much at the forefront of his mind. The old days are above all the war years. Hey, those were the days, and grandpa was a true hero. Really? And what is a »true hero« anyway? Kai travels with grandpa along his journey into the past and back again – and the heroic legend begins to show cracks. War is nothing to be wished for, and if grandpa had acted »heroically«, he would most likely not have returned from the warfront at all. Formally ambitious, with many surreal touches and a narrative approach that remains reserved, Zoran Drvenkar has succeeded in creating an extraordinary anti-war book that deconstructs heroic myths while also reinforcing the value of the grandfather-grandchild relationship. (Age: 10+) [IG]



Fehr, Daniel (text)

Thomas, Lindsey (illus.)

Dieses Buch ist leer

(This book is empty)

München: Penguin Junior, 2022. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-3-328-30130-1

Book | Hamster | Picture book

GERMAN

Germany

■ What an amazing book this is! Even though it is actually empty! Oh, well, not completely empty. But almost! At least at the start. But soon, hidden initially under a full-page flap – so it doesn't really count – a hamster appears. »You saw something? No, that is hardly possible. This is an empty book. There is nothing to see here.« But things don't stop with just one hamster. As in real life, they multiply by leaps and bounds. And then a very funny-looking bird shows up. That's an awful lot for an empty book, isn't it? This picture book delightfully features white space, text, and then finally illustrations, masterfully playing with expectations. It comes to life through the interaction with its viewers, thanks to the strong dynamics and quite rhythmic and tactile opening and closing of every flap before each page is turned. Enormously fun! (Age: 2+) [IG]

95



Grüling, Birk (text) / Schulz, Tine (illus.)

Am Arsch der Welt und andere spannende Orte. 25 Landkarten für hellwache Kinder

(At the back of beyond and other fascinating places. 25 maps for quick-witted children)

Leipzig: Klett Kinderbuch, 2022. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-3-95470-264-0

Map | Transculturalism | Cultural diversity |
Local customs | Non-fiction

GERMAN

Germany

How long did Birk Grüling have to research to gather all these facts and anecdotes, to filter and organize them? And how long for Tine Schulz to orchestrate them all in her illustrations? This oversized book is a real grab bag of information and offers plenty of aha moments. On the one hand, it cleverly hooks into everyday experiences of its German-language readers; on the other hand, it is a real eye-opener and gateway to the world, presenting, for example, breakfast habits, school routes, and sweets or ice cream flavours from all over the world. Readers will be amazed to learn about all the things that can be eaten or licked. Often the book makes use of extreme cases or opposites to present the deepest, the highest, the safest, the most dangerous places, while curious German toponyms, such as »Cat Brain«, »Mosquito« or »Raincoat« are more likely to make readers laugh. Finally, on the last page, the book's German title »At the ass of the world« makes its appearance to show how and where people go to the loo. (Age: 5+) [IG]

96



Herwig, Johannes (text)

Halber Löwe

(Half a lion)

Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2023. – 234 p.

ISBN 978-3-8369-6205-6

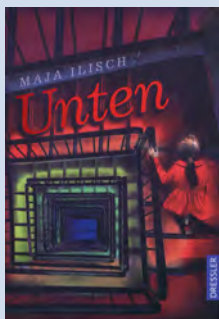
Leipzig | History 1990 | Dare | Accident |
Coming of age | Friendship | Historical fiction

GERMAN

Germany

Johannes Herwig is a true son of Leipzig, and his novels are always set in his hometown. Either they have an historical background, as in »Bis die Sterne zittern« (Until the stars tremble), or they are set in Germany's post-reunification period (after 1990), which now counts as contemporary history. Often, his own experiences have been re-worked into his novels. »Halber Löwe« is about Sascha. He and his pals hang out in a run-down wreck of a house, drink beer, and now and then play »I dare you« to get a special thrill – until one of those challenges goes out of control and leads Sascha to question everything. What does he really want from life? Should, and can, everything continue on as always? Embedded in a time of upheaval that accompanied the drastic social changes of the early 1990s, »Halber Löwe« draws a portrait of a complex personality who is »very hard on the outside, very soft on the inside«. Sascha often plays the tough guy but has at the same time a sense of responsibility, is empathetic and would do anything for his little sister and his mother. (Age: 12+) [IG]

97



Ilisch, Maja (text)

Unten

(Down)

Hamburg: Dressler Verlag, [2023]. – 301 p.

ISBN 978-3-7513-0104-6

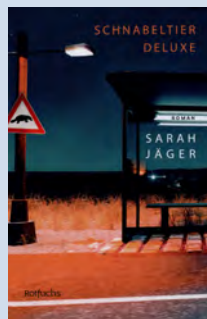
High-rise housing | Social class | Inequality |
Oppression | Misconduct | Dystopia

GERMAN

Germany

Depressing, frightening, and with a courageous heroine who won't be intimidated: that describes the novel »Unten« by Maja Ilisch. Nevo lives in a high-rise building, on the floor called Vermilion 4. A strict housing administration monitors and regulates the lives of the building's residents. Everything is standardised, restrictive, prohibited. No one has ever left the building; everyone wants to ascend to a higher level, but only a few succeed. Instead, misbehaviour is punished with descent. They all fear that. When Nevo's friend Juma falls down the laundry chute and is simply replaced by another girl, Nevo sets out to find Juma. Along her way downwards she encounters strange figures, and the lower she gets, the more sinister things become. Then at last she gets to know Mat, from the garbage dump. He has disengaged himself from the almighty system and is able to take Nevo to the headquarters of the housing administration. »Unten« is a dystopian parable about de-humanisation, captivity, repression, and absurd regulations – suspenseful, evocative and highly recommendable. (Age: 10+)

98



Jäger, Sarah (text)

Schnabeltier deluxe

(Platypus deluxe)

Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2022. – 203 p.

(Rotfuchs)

ISBN 978-3-499-00911-2

Expulsion | Aggression | Anger | Coming of age |
Rural life | Outsider | Friendship

GERMAN

Germany

Smooth is a no-go. Kim is anti. Always. When she pitches the expensive coffee maker out the window in a fit of anger, she gets tossed, too. Expelled from school. Completely overwhelmed, her mother sends Kim to the country, to the mother of her ex-boyfriend. Now Kim is stuck there. Needing to earn money (read: coffee maker), she takes a job at the local petrol station. There she gets to know Janne, who is also a misfit refusing to conform to the rural norm. She befriends him despite herself – she really doesn't need friends. Sarah Jäger captures all this to a hair: rural life, its people, and of course Kim. It is the rare youth novel that can depict such a genuine anti-hero in such a prickly narrative as »Schnabeltier deluxe« does. That is exactly what makes the book extremely interesting: from the very beginning one senses that under all that anger and armour there is a very sensitive, clever girl who really does care about others. Someone you want to get to know. (Age: 14+) [IG]



Krejtschi, Tobias (text/illus.)

Manchmal ist da einer

(Sometimes there is someone)

München: arsEdition, [2022]. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-3-8458-5269-0

Conflict | Escalation | Dialogue | Conflict resolution |
Peace | Picture book

GERMAN

Germany

Why are there people who threaten, oppress, imprison, terrorize, and kill others? An answer to this question won't be found in this picture book – and may be impossible to find in general – but the book clearly shows what happens when there is someone who »does not want peace«. The troublemaker disrupts a community's togetherness, the others offer resistance, a spiral of violence is put into motion until hopefully, at last, someone has remembered the power of dialogue. »Manchmal ist da einer« stands out with its captivatingly simple but subtle composition. The community consists of figures represented by red and blue squares and circles. Each one is different, despite having some similarities. The dialogue that leads to a resolution is illustrated with puzzle pieces that interlock with one another. This book wants to take away fears and give courage by creating a world where empathy and the power of the word can solve conflicts. A hope, however, that after a glance in any newspaper with its coverage of the »big« conflicts, is revealed as (also) utopian. (Age: 4+) [IG]



Kröner, Matthias (text)

Braun, Mina (illus.)

Der Billabongkönig

(The Billabong king)

Weinheim [et al.]: Beltz & Gelberg, [2022]. – 162 p.

ISBN 978-3-407-75641-1

Crocodile | Bird | King | Abuse of power |
Coup d'état | Dictatorship

GERMAN

Germany

»Der Billabongkönig« is truly a children's book of the superlative kind. Original, suspenseful, and artfully narrated thanks to its two points of view: that of a human narrator, and of Ben, the great Billabong king, who describes what really happened in the mangrove forest. Everything begins with a toothache. Plagued by a fishbone stuck crosswise between its teeth, Ben visits Kaukasius Fishbone-Puller II, a crocodile sentinel bird who is a master at pecking between crocodile teeth. To get help immediately, however, Ben has to enter a pact with Kaukasius – and finds himself trapped in a treasonous plot involving an attempted coup and abuse of power. In the best Orwellian tradition – but much wittier – Matthias Kröner spins out a compelling and entertaining parable about imperiousness, changing alliances, and dictators. Mina Braun splendidly illustrates this animal tale and deliciously portrays Kaukasius, the arrogant bad guy. (Age: 8+) [IG]

101



Mark, Josephine (text/illus.)

Trip mit Tropf

(Trip with a drip)

Hamburg: Kibitz Verlag, 2022. – 179 p.

ISBN 978-3-948690-14-4

[Cancer](#) | [Help](#) | [Rabbit](#) | [Wolf](#) | [Graphic novel](#)

GERMAN

Germany

Resigned to its fate, the little hare sits and waits for its first treatment. A long list of medications, an even longer list of side-effects, pills, injections, infusions. Then from the examination room next door, it hears a big rumpus. A wolf is refusing to cooperate with Sister Erdmute's efforts and has grabbed needle and thread to sew up its injuries by itself. Just as it finishes, hunters burst into the forest hospital. But it is the hare, with its intravenous drip, who (unintendedly) deflects the buckshot and thereby saves the wolf's life. According to wolf codex, this means: »Now I have to save yours.« And so begins the wild story of this uneven pair, during which the tough wolf discovers its caring side and helps the brave hare get through its therapy. Great characters, cocky dialogues, snappy illustrations, and a dynamic pace thanks to the different sized panels: »Trip mit Tropf« wraps up a serious topic in linguistic wit and black humour, without making light of the matter. 10 points out of 10! (Age: 12+) [IG]

102



Ogette, Tupoka (text)

Ein rassismuskritisches Alphabet

(An alphabet critical of racism)

München: cbj Kinder- und Jugendbuchverlag, 2022. – 123 p.

ISBN 978-3-570-16640-6

[Antiracism](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

GERMAN

Germany

Tupoka Ogette knows her subject matter. As a critical educator on racism, she holds workshops and training sessions, gives speeches, and consults with teams and organisations. Following on her highly successful handbook »exit RACISM« (2017), she has now created an alphabet book in which every letter stands for a term or concept related to racism: from A as in »Ally« – »A person who actively and continually opposes systems that are discriminatory« – to Z as in »Zurück zum Anfang« (»Back to the beginning«), because a racism critical journey lasts a lifetime. In between there are entries such as blackfacing, colonialism, or othering. Informative, constructive, and interactive, this book is clearly and precisely worded, without oversimplification. It is an excellent entry-level book for people who want to practice critical thinking, find the right vocabulary and act appropriately. In this masterful work, Tupoka Ogette challenges readers to question themselves and reflect on these issues. In an appendix there are many tips for further reading. (Age: 12+) [IG]

103



Raich, Sarah (text)

Equilon

München: dtv, [2023]. – 398 p.

ISBN 978-3-423-74088-3

Algorithm | Artificial intelligence | Dictatorship |
Surveillance | Resistance | Dystopia

GERMAN
Germany

Unbelievable! Jenna is really sitting in a hyper glider on the way to New Valley! Chosen by the algorithm EQUILON, she is among the lucky »one billion« who can leave poverty and hopelessness behind and begin a new life in New Valley, together with the elite of MegaGoods. Things look quite different for Dorian, who lives on the hissing edge of the San Andreas Fault in Old L.A. and no longer believes in anything. But then he encounters Maggie. Because he had promised his mother on her deathbed to expose the lies of the beautiful new world, he sets off with Maggie on a venturesome journey to New Valley. Contrary to the propaganda, EQUILON has no intention of improving the lives of the people. Instead, the ruling elite want to protect their privileges through a digitally enforced dictatorship, repressing and exploiting all others. And once Jenna recognizes this, she too rebels. Suspenseful and timely: »Equilon« is a shocking and convincingly realistic near-future dystopia. (Age: 14+) [IG]

104



Rautenberg, Arne (text)

Erlbruch, Wolf (illus.)

Mut ist was Gutes. Gedichte zu Bildern von Wolf Erlbruch

(Courage is a good thing. Poems for pictures by Wolf Erlbruch)

Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, [2023]. – 43 p.

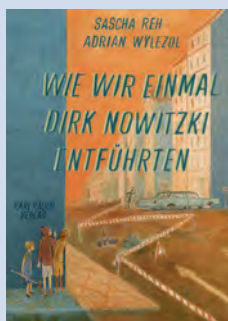
ISBN 978-3-7795-0712-3

Animals | Poetry

GERMAN
Germany

Wolf Erlbruch, the great illustrator of books like »Duck, death and the tulip«, which have long been international classics, passed away in 2022. Now Peter Hammer Verlag has asked Arne Rautenberg, one Germany's best-known contemporary children's poets, to write verses to accompany some of Erlbruch's pictures. The result is a marvellous little book where pigs wantonly dive into water or elegantly swing on gymnastic rings, rabbits race around merrily, or a goose gives a turn at acrobatics, because »oh you know I sometimes get such a thrill / when I start to drill.« In the poem »gansseiltanz« (»goose-walkstheropeé«) Rautenberg responds directly to Erlbruch's picture in which a goose is balancing on a tightrope high above the town. In other poems Rautenberg distances himself from the visible to express in free verse things that can be perceived as the essence of the pictures. The results are sometimes witty, sometimes rather pensive, sometimes laconic. »well, how can I say this«: Courage is simply a good thing! (Age: 4+) [IG]

105



Reh, Sascha (text)
Wylezol, Adrian (illus.)

Wie wir einmal Dirk Nowitzki entführten

(How we kidnapped Dirk Nowitzki)

Düsseldorf: Karl Rauch Verlag, 2023. – 75 p.

ISBN 978-3-7920-0376-3

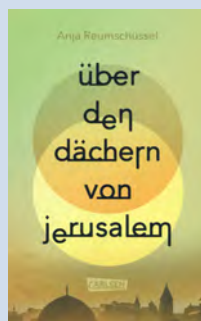
Basketball | City | Friendship | Graphic novel

GERMAN

Germany

Billie is crazy about basketball. Her biggest hero is the NBA star Dirk Nowitzki – who is coming soon to her town! That's why she wants to practice every spare minute she can, but the problem is: where? The improvised basketball hoop in the backyard falls down after just a few throws, and the local basketball court is the hang-out of a bunch of big-mouth morons. Then Billie and her friends remember there is an abandoned airport nearby. With the help of the building custodian, they quickly transform the old hangar into a decent basketball court – at least until the new owner, a nasty real estate shark, shows up. Only Dirk Nowitzki can help them now, so Billie needs to get to him somehow. Whoa! With »Wie wir einmal Dirk Nowitzki entführten« we not only get a crazy story and likeable underdogs as main characters. In this graphic novel the texts and pictures also dribble across the pages fast enough to make the reader downright dizzy. That's worthy of the NBA! (Age: 12+) [IG]

106



Reumschüssel, Anja (text)

Über den Dächern von Jerusalem

(Above the rooftops of Jerusalem)

Hamburg: Carlsen, [2023]. – 331 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-58514-1

Arab-Israeli conflict | History 1947-1948 | Palestine | Israel | Historical fiction

GERMAN

Germany

The Arab-Israeli conflict is one which is not easy to comprehend. Who is claiming which territories and why is the situation so explosive? In »Über den Dächern von Jerusalem« the journalist and writer Anja Reumschüssel unravels the tangled conflict in a deft manner – by working with two levels of time and linking them through her four youthful main characters. However paradoxical it may sound, she is not only able in this way to illuminate both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but at the same time to place it in an historical context that makes the roots of the conflict more transparent. Moreover, Anja Reumschüssel succeeds in telling the complex history so intimately and understandably that one can follow along at all times. She lets her readers share in the feelings and thoughts of Mo, Tessa, Anat, and Karim. Informative, well-researched, balanced and yet written (seemingly) with ease, this is an impressive novel. (Age: 14+) [IG]

107



Anlauf, Lena (text)

Konstantinov, Vitali (illus.)

Geniale Nasen. Eine kuriose Tiersammlung

(*Ingenious noses. A curious animal collection*)

Zürich: NordSüd, 2023. – [54] p.

ISBN 978-3-314-10633-0

Animals | Nose | Non-fiction

GERMAN

Switzerland

How and by what criteria can one classify »ingenious noses«? By how long, short, or bulbous they are? As ingenious, more ingenious, or the most ingenious? Lena Anlauf and Vitali Konstantinov have sorted them according to the »habitats of the nose owners«: air, water, trees, above or below the earth. The nosed animals presented here live on all continents. Some are well known, while others will have rarely been heard of. The Saiga antelope, for example, is at home in Kazakhstan and Mongolia and can filter dust through its short-trunked nose. Other animals with exorbitant olfactory organs include the elephant, which uses infrasound and its long trunk to communicate. Or the star-nosed mole, which has indeed got a star-shaped nose and is one of the few mammals that can smell while underwater. This richly illustrated non-fiction book neatly orchestrates factual knowledge and amusing anecdotes, and thus allows readers to browse through it again and again. (Age: 4+) [IG]

108



Ten Doornkaat, Hans (ed.)

Knecht, Elena (illus.)

Tschäderibumm. Mundartgedichte für Kinder von 45 Autor:innen

(*Tschäderibumm. Poems in dialect for children, by 45 authors*)

Luzern: Der gesunde Menschenversand, 2022. – [186] p.

ISBN 978-3-03-85312-65

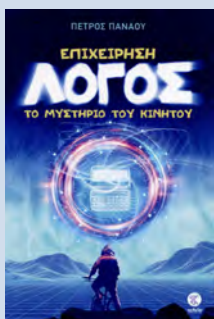
Poetry | Anthology | Swiss-German dialect

GERMAN

Switzerland

»Nonsense is sensible«, »A beastly number of animals« or »First this, then that, and finally off to bed« – these are but a few of the chapter headers under which the poems of 45 Swiss authors have been gathered. The rhymes deal with dwarves in stress or a tuna fish in love, and everything finds its expression in Swiss-German dialect. For those who only speak high German, »Tschäderibumm« is a phonetic and lexical grab bag! If at first something remains baffling (repeatedly reading out loud helps!), the marvellous illustrations by Elena Knecht – which are nothing less than »tschäderibumm« – will be most helpful for the »deciphering«, as they interact with the verses graphically, boldly, and with much wit. Additional momentum is created through the highly varied page design. The volume was edited by Hans ten Doornkaat, the nestor of Swiss children's and picture books. Both texts and pictures deserve to be republished in many schoolbooks and other anthologies – not only in Switzerland! (Age: 4+) [IG]

109



Panaou, Petros (Panaou, Petros) (text)

Epicheirēsē Logos. To mystērío tu kinētu

(*Operation Logos. The mobile phone mystery*)

Leukōsia: Teleia, 2022. – 222 p.

ISBN 978-9925-551-54-5

Technology | Manipulation | Corruption |
Political intrigue

GREEK
Cyprus

Fifteen-year-old Renos is growing up in a world dominated by crises. And being an introvert doesn't help to make his life easier. Renos prefers writing to speaking, and he is a bookworm. One day in the public library he discovers something in an old book by a professor that turns his life and that of others upside down. Hidden in the book is a device resembling a mobile phone, with the name Logos, or Speech. He succeeds in unlocking Logos and discovers that by entering texts, he is able to influence the speech of others. This turns out to be quite useful in his daily life. But Renos is not the only one who knows about Logos. Soon he is blackmailed by people in the secret service who want to use Logos to manipulate an election and thus help a dangerous politician win. Renos and his friends decide to act. Petros Panaou shows in this gripping and cinematically told novel, how community spirit and decisive political action can protect democracy and human rights from every kind of corruption and technology-based propaganda. (Age: 12+) [TA]

110



Apostolidē, Christina (Apostolidi, Christina) (text)

Strumpēs, Seraphēm (Stroumbis, Serafim) (illus.)

Parti sto potami

(*A party on the river*)

Athēna: Psychogios, 2022. – 45 p.

(Series: Phraoulitsa; 125. 5-6 etōn – Eueliktē zōnē: Philanagnōsia)

ISBN 978-618-01-4569-4

Adoption | Family | Diversity | Outsider |
Tolerance

GREEK
Greece

The last dinosaur on earth, the one-eyed snake, and the tailless platypus live happily together along the river, despite the malicious talk of the other animals. Their unusual family life becomes even larger and more colourful when they adopt a foundling, a pterodactylus they name Pteroti because of her feathers. She feels well-cared for by her three fathers: Papa Dino takes her on exciting excursions, Papa Platypus cooks the most delicious meals, and Papa Snake tells the best stories. Time passes, and when the first day of school arrives, all four are brimming with excitement. But at school Pteroti is treated as an outcast. Even though the papas do their best to console her, nothing changes – until they come up with the idea of throwing a party on the river! The topic of family diversity is approached here by showing that every family, no matter how it is made up, is based on love and caring. The expressive, simple illustrations in warm-toned colours enhance the world of emotions conveyed in the text. (Age: 5+) [TA]



Apostolidēs, Tasos (Apostolidis, Tasos) (text)
Papadatos, Alekos (Papadatos, Alecos) (illus.)
Di Donna, Annie (colour)

Aristotelēs

(Aristotle)

Athēna: Ikaros, 2022. – 221 p.
ISBN 978-960-572-515-0

Aristotele (384-322 B.C.) | Philosophy | Science |
Graphic novel

In fields ranging from logic, ontology, physics to politics, ethics and rhetoric, Aristotle has influenced the modern world like no other thinker. The significance of his real-life philosophy is praised in this exceptional graphic novel. Theophrastus, his most important pupil and friend, guides us through the life and work of the thinker and, particularly, the man Aristotle. In quick-witted everyday conversations with common people, in lectures and in dialogues with his teacher, Plato, and with his pupil Alexander the Great, the philosophy of the great scholar becomes understandable. Employing a well-balanced mix of fact and fiction, text and illustrations, the creators of »Aristotelēs« have produced a gripping book. It shows that people in that long past epoch – which has some resemblance to today's times of crisis – were concerned with questions similar to those we still grapple with. Aristotle's timeless thoughts will stimulate young readers to themselves become »political animals«, and act as social and rational beings. (Age: 13+) [TA]



Charitos, Kyriakos (Haritos, Kyriakos) (text)
Stamatiadē, Ntaniela (Stamatiadi, Daniela) (illus.)

Gia phantasu. Phantastika tragudia gia phantastika paidia

(Just imagine. Fabulous songs for fabulous children)

Athēna: Metaichmio, 2022. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-618-03-2757-1

Imagination | Subversion | Song | Poetry |
Picture book

What would happen if one day the sun decided not to get out of bed, and the stars had to work overtime? If days were made of sugar, and salt was sweet? If you could sneeze with your ears and hear with your eyes? What would an underwater concert sound like, and how would a mine of words look? What would happen if the world was an embroidery, and you could rip out the threads? Or if, rather than hair falling out when you comb it, a year falls out. If someone could once again catch everything that has disappeared into the heavens? Is all this possible? »Yes, indeed«, will always be the answer of the imagination. The poems of this collection (or »songs«, as author Kyriakos Haritos calls them) corroborate this in a philosophical, surrealistic, subversive, and above all very scenic manner. Daniela Stamatiadi's illustrations reflect sensually and playfully the metaphoric of the text and, in their simplicity, create visual space for the imagination to run wild. (Age: 5+) [TA]



Kukias, Thodorēs (Koukias, Thodoris) (text)
Tetragōna kymata, iptamenes meduses
(Quadratic waves, flying jellyfish)
 Athēna: Kedros, [2022]. – 357 p.
 (Series: Big Bang Books)
 ISBN 978-960-04-5315-7

Digitalisation | Manipulation | Social control |
 Dystopia

GREEK
Greece

■ In 2042, all governments of the world decide to implement Brainetnet. It connects human brains with the almighty digital cloud Argos, which will make decisions about each individual based on data and DNA. The world becomes divided into those who defend and those who oppose Brainetnet, into provinces and »new societies«. The latter take over access to the net and try to make the world infallible by means of censorship and thought control. To ensure new blood, a selection system is introduced for which only charismatic 15-year-olds are eligible. One of them, Konstantina, sets out to find her older sister, who was one of the chosen but has since disappeared. In the end, the promised Elysium is revealed to be a pact with the devil that seems to be unbreakable. The masterly written novel depicts a dystopia created through seamless digitalisation of a world in which people will only be able to defend their freedom and self-determination by finding a balance between the goals of a humane society and the use of technology. (Age: 15+) [TA]



Theocharēs, Kōstas (Theoharis, Costas) (text/illus.)
Oi akrobates
(The acrobats)
 Ellēniko: Kalentēs (Kalentis), [2022]. – [42] p.
 ISBN 978-960-594-092-8

Circus | Acrobat | Poetry | Picture book

GREEK
Greece

■ The acrobats' performances are glamorous, colourful and agile, bold, confident, and energetic. It is sensational how they juggle, float, sing, dance, spit fire, hoist, bolster, and twist. Always in action. What counts is concentration and discipline, but, above all, self-confidence, teamwork, and trust. They constantly maintain an animated balance which must be single-mindedly regained if it once is lost. In this picture book the renowned and versatile artist Costas Theoharis cleverly uses this as a leitmotif to show how these values help ensure balance in life and function as a safety net. This is the second-level message in his poems about all different kinds of acrobats. For each poem Theoharis has created a spectacular picture in strong, shining, fluorescent colours, which shows only the figure and the characteristic movement and minimalistic accessories of the acrobat. The images are highly geometric and yet full of vitality, dynamism, and elegance. (Age: 3+) [TA]



Tsou, Page (Zou, Junsheng) (text/illus.)

Bih-sio-tshuē

(Zhuo mi cang)(*Hide-and-seek*)

Taipei: Guo li Tai wan bo wu guan (National Taiwan Museum), 2022. – [37] p. | ISBN 978-986-532-545-9

(Chinese ed.: Zhuo mi cang. ISBN 978-986-532-544-2)

Text in Hokkien (Taiwan Minnan) and Chinese

Formosan clouded leopard | Extinction | Museum |
Non-fiction | Picture book | Bilingual book

Intrigued by the sight of a Formosan clouded leopard's skin, British diplomat Robert Swinhoe (1836-1877) started to search for the mysterious animal, which plays an important role in the mythology of the indigenous Ngudradrekai and Paiwan peoples. In the course of his quest, he collected more than 700 animal species, but left Taiwan without ever seeing a single living leopard. Over a hundred years later and after more than one decade of searching, naturalist Chiang Po-jen declared the species extinct. The stuffed specimen in the National Taiwan Museum seems to be the only remaining Formosan clouded leopard, although alleged sightings keep being reported. Attentive readers will enjoy the game of hide-and-seek that Tsou stages in this non-fiction book introducing several other species that are endemic to Taiwan. Tsou's artworks in his distinctive retro-futuristic, surrealistic style have won various international awards. »Hide-and-seek« was selected for the BRAW Amazing Bookshelf 2023. (Age: 4+) [LO]



Kemeny, Gabi (text)

A konkrét hiúz avagy két és fél nap kaland öcsémmel és egyéb állatfajtákkal

(*A special lynx or two-and-a-half adventure-filled days with my younger brother and other animals*)

[Budapest]: Móra Könyvkiadó, [2022]. – 139 p.

ISBN 978-963-603-134-3

Siblings | Self-assurance | Nature

Selected as a Hungarian Children's Book of the Year for under twelves, »A konkrét hiúz« is simply great fun. The very engaging main character and first-person narrator, twelve-year-old Marci, is quite chatty and takes great pleasure in telling, in humorous detail and many digressions, all about the adventures that he and his little brother have experienced. In his depictions of the other entertaining characters who become involved, he smoothly switches back and forth between then and now. When Marci gets to step in for another pupil on the school team and travel to a competition on the issues of nature and environmental protection, things begins to go awry: Marci has to take his little brother Jancsi along. Then their regular bus is not available, and the rickety substitute soon breaks down. Ultimately the group lands somewhere out in the woods and they have to prove their mettle – in front of each other and in the natural world. This is definitely a greater challenge than any school competition! (Age: 9+) [KW]

117



Turi, Lilla (text/illus.)

A Ló

(The Horse)

Budapest: Csimota, 2022. - [36] p.

ISBN 978-615-5649-98-1

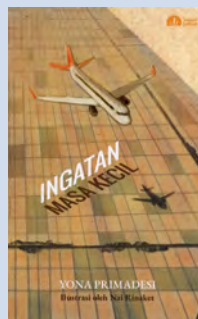
Trojan horse | Alienation | War crime | Picture book

HUNGARIAN

Hungary

In this picture book, Hungarian illustrator Lilla Turi renders the mythical tale of the Trojan horse with brushstrokes that go against the grain. She lets the horse tell the story from a first-person perspective – and it is quite a surprising one. Just like the inhabitants of Troy, the horse believes it is a gift and that a peace-making celebration is about to take place in the city. The horse is proud to be special and happy to bring along surprise guests. When those guests turn out to be invaders who set the town on fire, the horse initially believes it's a new game, only to realise at last, distraughtly, that it no longer wishes to be special. Lilla Turi contrasts the childlike innocence and naivety of the text with expressive images of a blazing city. Many of the illustrations suggest that the perfidious attack could have happened at any other point in time: Turi's figures are dressed in part in modern clothing and move through a city with buildings that have a contemporary appearance. (Age: 5+) [KW]

118



Primadesi, Yona (text)

Rinaket, Nai (Na'imatur Rofiqoh) (illus.)

Ingatan Masa Kecil

(Memories of a childhood)

Yogyakarta: Sahabat Gorga, 2022. - [55] p.

ISBN 978-623-99694-0-0

Timor Leste | Annexation | History 1975-1999 | Human rights | Poetry | Picture book

INDONESIAN

Indonesia

In the course of the Indonesian annexation of Timor Leste (East Timor), thousands of children were forcibly transferred to Indonesia. This poetry book for young readers gives a voice to four of them: Maukunda, who has to labour at an Indonesian military camp »weighed down by a backpack bulged full of bullets and rations«; Miggel, who has to watch a hungry dog dig up corpses »with claws that, like grief, continue to gnaw at your heart«; Alberto, who was abducted and returns home to find his own grave, where his parents had to »mourn him facing an empty casket«; Sabelinha, who has to work as a slave, until somebody »pays the ransom for the remainder of her childhood«. Yona Primadesi, whose poetic language helps to mitigate the atrocities depicted here, is one of the founders of Sahabat Gorga, a non-profit community focused on improving children's literacy skills. Nai Rinaket's opaque illustrations in calm shades of brown cast a distancing, softening veil over this painful subject. (Age: 10+) [LO]

119



Borando, Silvia (text)

Lot, Alberto (illus.)

Il dubbio

(The doubt)

Reggio Emilia: Minibombo, 2022. – [50] p.

(Series: Giochiamo con)

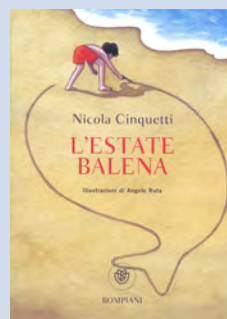
ISBN 978-88-98177-84-4

Friendship | Honesty | Doubt | Picture book

ITALIAN
Italy

Mouse and Crocodile have been very best friends for ever and ever. One day Crocodile asks Mouse to do him a small favour. Would it take a look in Crocodile's stomach and see whether it has perhaps, by accident, eaten its own maracas? Of course, Mouse would like to help; and so it hops courageously into the jowls of its friend and begins the search. Soon it discovers it is not alone. In Crocodile's stomach it encounters all sorts of other animals: a rabbit, a squirrel, a chick, a beaver, a turtle, a stoat, a racoon, a mole, and a parrot. Each of them is also looking for the (supposedly) missing maracas. Slowly a terrible suspicion dawns on them: Have they all been eaten? No, impossible, a true friend would never do such a thing... In striking illustrations rendered in bold colours, the story is ingeniously constructed using recurring sentences that will appeal to the youngest readers. The story comes, moreover, to a very funny, unexpected ending. (Age: 3+) [AB]

120



Cinquetti, Nicola (text)

Ruta, Angelo (illus.)

L'estate balena

(Summer of the whale)

Milano: Bompiani, 2023. – 142 p.

ISBN 978-88-301-1881-2

Summer holiday | Sea | Family | Pregnancy | Siblings | Jealousy

ITALIAN
Italy

Eight-year-old Carlo goes on vacation with his parents. As always, they spend their holidays at the same seashore in the same guest house, but this year something is different. His mother is »as fat as a whale«, jeer the other children. There is a little sister in her belly and she is due to arrive soon. For Carlo, it is embarrassing that everyone can marvel at his mother's voluminous belly. Moreover, he feels just a tinge of jealousy. Told from a child's perspective in the third person, this children's book uses lyrical, lucid words to describe what it means to become a big brother. The boy's days in this summer of changes are full of smaller and larger adventures: the adult guests at the guest house, the playmates, the sudden appearance of a real – or perhaps just phantasized – whale in the waves all work together to create this magical and very real period of time. The book's attractive graphic design rounds out an enjoyable reading experience. (Age: 8+) [AB]

121



Lazzaro, Bianca (text) / Scuderi, Lucia (illus.)

Il mangiafiabe. Le più belle fiabe italiane di cibi e di magia

(The fairy tale eater. The best Italian fairy tales about food and magic)

Roma: Donzelli editore, [2022]. – XX p. + 452 p.

(Series: Fiabe e storie)

ISBN 978-88-5522-327-0

Folk tale | Fairy tale | Food | Magic | Folklore | Anthology

ITALIAN
Italy

Over one-hundred Italian tales dealing with food are gathered here, retold in fittingly contemporary language, and illustrated with beautiful watercolour pictures. Food has always been an important topos for fairy tales and, moreover, it is frequently a catalyst for magical occurrences. Protagonists may set off on a quest for food or may bear a name that alludes to certain herbs, such as Rosmarina (rosemary) or Prezzemolina (parsley). Princes or princesses are born into the world out of magical fruits or seeds. There are any number of drinks that can rescue someone, or cause them to fall into a deep slumber, or even kill them. Witches and ogres turn out to be horrible man-eaters. Although most of these tales are no longer widely known today, we can recognize familiar motifs – reminiscent, say, of »Hansel and Gretel« or »Rapunzel« from the Brothers Grimm collection – and find ourselves, moreover, as welcome guests in the many fairy tale kitchens, in which we can sample delicious Italian specialties. (Age: 8+) [AB]

122



Magrelli, Valerio (text)

Sanna, Alessandro (illus.)

La guerra, la pace

(The war, the peace)

Milano: Rizzoli, 2022. – 43 p.

ISBN 978-88-17-17653-8

War | Peace | Nature | Seasons | Poetry

ITALIAN
Italy

How can you write poetry about war and about peace? How can you make the difference between the two perceptible? By drawing comparisons, seems to suggest the poet Valerio Magrelli in this short, exquisite book. Nearly identical pairs of poems guide the reader through a year and together they create a fascinating kaleidoscope. The scenes are the same, the differences in wording are minimal. One poem deals with wartime, the other one with peacetime. Across a snowy landscape once you can hear the muffled sound of cannon shots and the other time, innocent words of greeting. In one poem, you struggle to transverse a sandy beach in your uniform and helmet, while sand slips inside your boots; in the other you are lying half-naked on the same golden sand as sunbather. When reading these sober descriptions and looking at the masterful illustrations, one suddenly grasps the unfathomable evil of war and the infinite bliss of peace. (Age: 10+) [AB]

123



Morello, Ericavale (text/illus.)

Vendesì casa d'artista

(*Artist house for sale*)

[Monselice]: Camelozampa, 2023. – [56] p.

(Series: Le sinapsi)

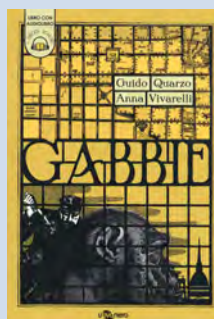
ISBN 979-12-54640-65-4

Art | Painter | House | Architecture | Non-fiction

ITALIAN
Italy

This real estate catalogue with its twenty-five houses for sale, is, in reality, a work of non-fiction that presents art history in an ingenious manner. On every double-page spread, the architect and illustrator Ericavale Morello ironically describes a property together with its advertisement and several pictures of the interior rooms. Deliberately using the vocabulary of a real estate agent, she leaves absolutely nothing to chance. Everything is meticulously researched. In the lively, coloured illustrations there are innumerable details to be discovered while the reader is guided along the trail of twenty-five of the greatest masterpieces of the visual arts. The buildings, some invented and some real, all contain clues about the art of their owners. But who are they? Nothing is revealed. Thus, many readers will be racking their brains, right up to the final pages where the names, biographies and addresses of some of these houses, which have become in fact museums, can be found along with »keys« which are drawn in the style of the respective artists. (Age: 12+) [AB]

124



Quarzo, Guido / Vivarelli, Anna (text)

Bianchessi, Peppo (illus.)

Gabbie

(*Cages*)

Crema: Uovonero, 2022. – 220 p.

(Series: I geodj; 52 – Geodi sonori: storie da leggere e da ascoltare; 1)

ISBN 979-12-80104-31-1

Science | Religion | Darwinism | Autism |
Crime fiction | Historical fiction

ITALIAN
Italy

The inspiration for this gripping crime story came from a true incident in the year 1879. The Academy of Sciences in Turin plans to award Charles Darwin a prize for his achievements in botany. However, several Italian scientists do not accept the Englishman's theory of evolution and balk at giving him this recognition. Fifteen-year-old Stefano works in the museum of science where his uncle is director. Unusually intelligent and manically dedicated to routine, he has spent several years in the royal insane asylum. Now he is simply called »the lunatic«. When the corpse of a scientist and that of an ape that has escaped from the zoo are found in the museum, Stefano is able to solve the case. The book's title, »Gabbie« (Cages), alludes to the real bars of an asylum and also, metaphorically, to preconceptions which at the end of the 19th century barred necessary reforms in social welfare. The authors, who live in Turin, have written a well-researched historical novel that is made even more elegant through its sophisticated graphic design. (Age: 12+) [AB]

125



Zambello, Sarah (text)

Zanella, Susy (illus.)

Ondario. I movimenti del mare*(Undarium. The movements of the ocean)*

Busto Arsizio: Nomos Edizioni, 2022. – 79 p.

ISBN 979-12-5958-055-9

Sea | Wave | Non-fiction

Italy ITALIAN

This non-fiction work deals with the ocean, but from a particular point of view, namely with its movements. The authors pursue the waves, identify currents, and observe the tides. Beginning with the Douglas sea scale by which waves are internationally classified, the book presents anecdotes of scientific research, refers to novels and architectural projects, and even includes graphic novels and music. Ensclosed in the manifold shades of blue of the illustrations, the reader gets to know all sorts of things about waves – from placid waters to the most violent storms. The large-sized and excellently designed book – which draws on the expertise of scientists at the University of Genoa – proves that science is closely entwined with art and can be communicated accordingly. Sarah Zambello and Susy Zanella have also published a cloud atlas («Nuvolario», 2020) and a catalogue of comets («Cometario», 2022). (Age: 12+) [AB]

126



Zoboli, Giovanna (text)

Di Giorgio, Mariachiara (illus.)

La zuppa Lepron*(Lepron's soup)*

Milano: Topipittori, 2022. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-88-33700-92-2

Work | Success | Happiness | Family | Picture book

Italy ITALIAN

Lepron the rabbit makes the very best vegetable soup in the world. While it is simmering, Lepron loses himself in reverie. The entire neighbourhood wants a taste of the soup and experts come from all over to sample it. That the soup is delicious is a well-known fact, but the recipe remains a secret. Thanks to his enormous success, Lepron establishes a soup factory and plans to put his soup on the market. But after some time he is overwhelmed by the work involved. The first customer complaints come rolling in. Lepron recognizes that too much work is not good for him or his soup and closes the factory. Together with his employees and his numerous relatives he returns to the fields to hop around freely by the light of the moon. Money alone cannot make one happy, he tells himself, and from now on he will only cook for his loved ones. This wise, philosophical fable, which is splendidly rendered in elegant watercolours, will encourage even the youngest readers to ponder over work, happiness, and success. (Age: 6+) [AB]

127



Hayashibara, Tamae (text)

Takegami, Tae (illus.)

Kusa no fue o narashitara

(Friends in the fields. Eight stories about grass whistles)

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2022. – 123 p.

(Series: Fukuinkan sōsaku dōwa shirizu)

ISBN 978-4-8340-8657-7

[Animals](#) | [Plants](#) | [Grass](#) | [Leaf flute](#) | [Short story](#)

Japan JAPANESE

Blowing musical notes with plants was a common pastime for Japan's children in older days. It needs some practice, but once you get the hang of it, you achieve beautiful tones. In this book of eight short stories, children make musical sounds with grass blades, flower petals, bean pots or hollowed-out acorns, and enjoy amazing experiences. When Mako blows »Bui, bui« on a Japanese leek leaf while cooking, a hungry pig comes along to help taste the food. When she blows »Bupi-« on a camphor tree leaf on the veranda, an Oriental turtle dove comes by to tell her how it longs for the former days when it listened to music as a baby bird in the camphor tree. When Tomo goes to a bamboo thicket and blows »Bibi-, bibu-« on a bamboo leaf, a racoon dog who trades in soy sauce, interprets the sound as a signal for placing an order, and eagerly offers to exchange soy sauce for a freshly dug-out bamboo shoot. The illustrations, created with a limited colour palette, are most heart-warming and fit well with the humorous characters in this enjoyable text. (Age: 7+) [RN]

128



Horikawa, Rimako (text/illus.)

Umi no atorie

(The atelier by the seaside)

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2021. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-4-03-435160-4

[Granddaughter](#) | [Grandmother](#) | [Painter](#) | [Sea](#) | [Childhood memories](#) | [Picture book](#)

Japan JAPANESE

Inspired by illustrator and painter Rimako Horikawa's (b. 1965) memory of her childhood art instructor who never treated her as a child, »Umi no atorie« depicts a girl's emotional growth in a week she spends with a painter. The older woman recounts memories of her own childhood for her granddaughter. Because she had had some bad experiences and stopped going to school, her mother's friend, a painter, who had her own style of living, invited her to stay at her seaside atelier. Besides doing unusual gymnastics and cooking new kinds of dishes together, the girl observed the painter at work and painted pieces of art herself, using her hands and feet as tools. Gradually she was able to open up her heart and discover a sense of belonging in this world. With nuanced colours and cinematic zooming in and out, the images perfectly capture the atmospheric scenes full of sunlight and sea breezes. The watercolour illustrations exude a powerful narrative. This picture book received three renowned Japanese children's book awards. (Age: 7+) [RN]

129



Kawata, San (text/illus.)

Uma to hanasu tame no nanatsu no himitsu*(The seven secrets of talking with horses)*

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2022. – 48 p.

ISBN 978-4-03-435170-3

Horse | Communication | Humans | Picture book |
Non-fiction

JAPANESE

Japan

San Kawata (b. 1964), a writer and publisher, lives on Yonaguni, Japan's most western island, which is inhabited by Yonaguni horses. Kawata took care of a lone baby girl horse once until it was grown and could survive alone in the wild. Even now they spend time together every day. This is Kawata's first children's book, made for those children who want to communicate with horses, who have a natural affinity for animals, or who possibly do not fit in and are searching for their place in the world. In this unique and engaging non-fiction picture book about horses' body language and other topics – such as how they feel, what makes them feel comfortable, and why humans need to take their time when making friends with horses – Kawata's profound sensitivity appeals directly to readers' own sensibilities. In the illustrations, the large-faced Yonaguni horses are humorously depicted, but also with respect, affection, and individuality. (Age: 7+) [RN]

130



Momoyama, Suzuko (text/illus.)

Henshin. Sugata o kaeru imomushi*(The transformation of a caterpillar)*

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2022. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-4-8340-8653-9

Caterpillar | Butterfly | Metamorphosis |
Picture book | Non-fiction

JAPANESE

Japan

For Suzuko Momoyama (b. 1972), caterpillars have helped relieve her loneliness since she was a child. In biology class at university, she made insect illustrations with help of a microscope and later became an illustrator for caterpillars. At home today she still keeps caterpillars and uses the technique of stippling to draw them on tea-dyed or coffee-dyed paper, thus creating the effect of old botanic paintings. The result of diligent work and close observation using a microscope or a magnifying glass, Momoyama's illustrations capture images of caterpillars ranging from the complicated patterns that remind the author of the Milky Way to tiny dots that look like living cells. This non-fiction picture book's dynamic and sophisticated design is breath-taking and will awaken every reader's sense of wonder for nature. The book concludes with explanatory texts about the life cycle of a butterfly and the amazing mechanism of metamorphosis. It was a Bronze Cube winner of the ADC Awards, given for excellence in creative design. (Age: 7+) [RN]



Tanaka, Hiko (text)

Ashita bentō o tsukuru

(Tomorrow I'll make my own bento)

Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2023. – 271 p.

ISBN 978-4-06-530595-9

School | Boy | Gender role | Gender inequality | Family

Twelve-year-old Tatsuki has for years taken for granted that his mother, who does not work outside the home, will do all the housework. One day, when she hands him his boxed lunch as usual and pats his back, he feels a sudden chill. He decides then to make his bento by himself every day from the next day on. His parents are opposed to his idea, saying that young people should focus on schoolwork instead of housework, and that men do not need to know how to cook. In resisting his parents and desperately struggling for independence, Tatsuki has come to feel that adults are too arrogant in claiming the right to control their teenage children. He also realizes that his father is bossy-mannered, while his mother is always obedient and submissive toward his father. He begins to wonder what kind of adult he wants to become. From a teenager's unfiltered and authentic point of view, this novel explores gender stereotypes and disparities in family life in a thoughtful and graceful way. (Age: 13+) [RN]



Utashiro, Saku (text)

Sukuratchi

(Scratch)

Tōkyō: Akane Shobō, 2022. – 333 p.

ISBN 978-4-251-07312-9

COVID-19 | Pandemic | School | Club activities | Painting

Among Japanese YA fiction about the COVID-19 pandemic, the awarded novel »Sukuratchi« (Scratch) stands out for handling the issues in an exceptionally masterly way. After 2020, daily life changed dramatically, even, as in this novel, in small Japanese towns with fewer victims. Young people were separated from their beloved grandparents and became depressed due to social distancing or cancelled art competitions and sports events. However, such adversities can be a springboard to self-reflection, as it is for Kazuaki, who moved to a rural town after a flood. He has been drawing brightly coloured paintings for years, but finally comes to face his suppressed emotions. When his friend accidentally spills black ink on his vividly coloured painting, he impulsively paints it all black and scratches her lively facial expressions all over the canvas. The novel's unique narrative, told in the voices of different humorous characters, creates a lively account of teenagers' frustrations as well as of their struggles to get through difficult times. (Age: 13+) [RN]

133



Yumoto, Kazumi (text)
Sakai, Komako (illus.)

Hashi no ue de

(On the bridge)

Tōkyō: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2022. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-4-309-29208-3

Depression | Suicide attempt | Resilience |
Picture book

JAPAN
JAPANESE

In »Hashi no ue de«, Kazumi Yumoto (b. 1959) and Komako Sakai (b. 1966) once again deal with the theme of resilience, as in their acclaimed picture book »Kuma to yamaneko« (2008). Using a limited colour palette, the picture book sensitively depicts how a boy is trapped in a depression and feels drawn toward death. After being falsely reprimanded for something he didn't do and being bullied by other kids, he comes to a bridge and imagines himself diving into the river below. An old, apparently homeless man tells him to shut out the sounds around him and listen only to the sound of water, which comes to everybody's inside and spreads through the whole body. The man believes that all people have a lake of their own in their minds, beyond dark underground channels. This soothes the boy's emotions and helps him remember his inner lake and the people who are dear to him. This book about an attempted suicide, which is still an unusual topic in Japanese children's literature, explores the boy's struggles with depth and sensitivity. (Age: 11+) [RN]

134



Za kyabin kanpanī (i.e. Kentaro, Abe / Saki, Yoshioka)
(text/illus.)

Gakkō ni maniawanai

(I'll be late to school)

Tōkyō: Akane Shobō, 2022. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-4-251-09955-6

Way to school | Being late | Time | Solar eclipse |
Picture book

JAPAN
JAPANESE

In this picture book, a boy's frantic haste to get to school on time is superbly expressed in the distorted images of rapidly rotating legs and texts that nearly fall off the page. By zooming in and out and continuously changing the point of view, the dynamic illustrations follow the boy as he runs at full speed from 7:47 AM to 8:00 AM, one double page spread for each minute of time. The world around him is richly coloured and amazingly surreal. One sees a crocodile lounging in a puddle, giant dogs walking down the street, and a footbridge winding oddly over the road. While the boy waits for the train to pass, the sky is full of stars, a wolf is howling, and three moons are chasing one another on the train's roof. In the illustrations, a number of other moon-related elements – like the Apollo spacecraft, or rabbits making rice cakes – and also sun-related images – like a rooster crowing, or the Sun Goddess of Japanese mythology – foreshadow the surprise ending with a spectacular solar eclipse. (Age: 7+) [RN]

135



Jo, Won Hee (text/illus.)

Geunyuk ajeossiwa ttungbo ajumma. Hosu

(*Muscle Man and Fat Woman. Lake*)

Paju: Sagyejeol (Sakyejul), 2022. – [56] p.

(Series: Dear geurimchaek)

ISBN 979-11-6094-936-0

Nature | Helpfulness | Prejudice | Picture book

Republic of Korea



In intensely coloured illustrations, which occupy the whole frame of the pages, a voluminous woman goes to a forest lake to swim. Her gentle way of dealing with the animals in the water contrasts with her bulky figure. The image of the other main character – a man struggling to get out of the water after he tumbled in while saving eggs that had fallen out of a tree nest – also contrasts with his tough »muscle man« appearance. The pithy text states only what needs to be explained in words, since most of the story's messages are expressed through the droll images. With incongruous characterizations, Jo Won Hee skilfully speaks to readers' expectations and assumptions to challenge their prejudices regarding body shapes. An author-illustrator who focusses on »nature and animals«, he was selected as »Illustrator of the Year« at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2013 and 2015 and also received a Special Mention in the Fiction category of the 2017 Bologna Ragazzi Award. (Age: 3+) [YC, MC, SP]

136



Ko, Jeong-Soon (text/illus.)

Okchundang

(*Okchundang Candy*)

Seoul: Gilbeot eorini (Gilbut Children Publishing),

2023. – [129] p.

(Series: Go Jeongsun geurimchaekbang; 01)

ISBN 978-89-5582-699-9

Love | Death | Farewell | Memory | Picture book | Comic | Graphic novel

Republic of Korea



In this novel a girl shares her memories of her grandparents, who both became orphans during the Korean War and lived a simple life in the changing modern Korean society. They used to feed her Okchundang, sweet candies, to show their deep affection for her. When the grandfather passed away, the grandmother, suffering from dementia, held on to one memory until her death: her husband stuffing the prettiest Okchundang into her mouth. Ko Jeong-Soon, who wrote her first picture book, »Choego meotjin nal« (The most wonderful day), in 2013, is known for dealing with challenging topics. For this comforting tale of love, separation, and death, her illustrations effectively employ a faded picture album rendered in black and brown pencil drawings. The colour red is used in the happy scenes, but slowly disappears towards the end. »Okchundang« was first published as a comic in 2022, and re-released in 2023 in an extended, more colourful picture book format. It was selected as one of the 50 best Korean comics in 2022. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

137



Lee, Su-Yeon (text/illus.)

Nae eokkae wi du chingu

(Two friends on my shoulder)

Paju: Yeoseot beonijae bom (Sixth Spring),

2022. – 213 p.

ISBN 978-89-5618-278-0

Loneliness | Depression | Orphan | Grief |
Graphic novel

KOREAN
Republic of Korea

A rabbit grows up without his parents. The story focuses on his loneliness as expressed through his inner voice, as spoken by a black cat, which, though invisible to others, is always perched on his shoulder. The cat first appeared to the rabbit when he was eleven years old, but has become a burdensome friend, now as huge as a leopard. Their relationship changes when the rabbit encounters a kind otter who encourages him to take care of other small creatures, and to pursue his dreams. As he gets older and matures, the rabbit begins to develop a new perspective on life. Once he is able to love others as much as he also wants to be loved, his cat friend is no longer a burden, and the rabbit gradually overcomes the trauma of his parents' death. Lee Su-Yeon studied architectural design in Korea and illustration in the UK. Rendered throughout in watercolour, this graphic novel was the winner in a project funded by the Korea National Manhwa Contents Agency (KOMACON). (Age: 12+) [YC, MC, SP]

138



Miu (text/illus.)

Na neun kkamagwi

(I am a crow)

Seoul: Noran sangsang (Noran Sangsang Books),
2023. – [42] p.

(Series: Noran sangsang geurimchaek; 95)

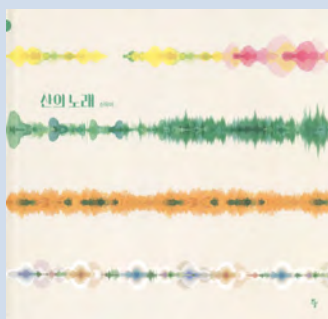
ISBN 979-11-91667-83-7

Depression | Self-doubt | Self-confidence | Diversity |
Picture book

KOREAN
Republic of Korea

A crow, depressed because of its injured wings, hides in a deep mountain forest. Or is it the forest of its own feathers? The mountain's voice constantly reminds it that it will end up being »a pitch-black crow« hidden in the darkness. One day, the crow overhears a man telling a child that »crows aren't always black, because in the skylight their iridescent feathers can shimmer in gold and purple« – a contradictory wink to the crow in Aesop's fable, who can only shine »in borrowed feathers«. Thus, the crow discovers new strength and realizes that both being colourful and black are part of its nature. The ominous, mostly black scenery gives way to warm, bright surroundings as the crow flies into the sky and begins to shine in beautiful colours. Adapted from an aphorism by the philosopher Bak Ji-won (1737-1805), this story advocates accepting one's darker side. Miu debuted in 2013, and »Na neun kkamagwi« was selected for the Book Illustrators Gallery at the Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC) in 2023. (Age 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

139



Shin, Yoomi (text/illus./music)

San ui norae

(Song of the mountain)

Paju: Bandal, Kindeoraendeu (Bandal, Kinderland), 2022. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-89-5618-399-2

Seasons | Nature | Mountain | River | Colours | Music | Picture book

Republic of Korea

KOREAN

What appears to be a sequence of colourful spectrograms of acoustic waves, turns out, on closer inspection, to be the image of a forested mountain and its reflection in a river. The mountain is sketched in an abstract style, while a boat sailing on the river, clouds, a flock of birds, and the sun are depicted more concretely. The boat slowly moves from left to right, suggesting the flow of time, with the different colours of the forest expressing the changing of the seasons. By using a QR code, readers can simultaneously listen to the musical version of this picture book – composed and played by the author – which includes cues for turning the pages. »San ui norae« (Song of the mountain) – a visual display of sound, a pictorial approach to reading music, and an aural experience of images – is Shin Yoomi's third work exploring the interplay between music and images. She often holds »picture book concerts« where she reads her stories while playing the piano. (Age: 3+) [YC, MC, SP]

140



Melece, Anete (text/illus.)

Paludušais miedziņš

(The lost sleep)

[Rīga]: Liels un mazs, 2022. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-9934-574-87-0

Bedtime | Falling asleep | Family portrait | Bedtime story | Picture book

Latvia

LATVIAN

A brightly coloured armada of toy animals drawn with felt-tip pens, paired with a hilarious story about falling asleep – this evolves into a truly funny, heart-warming, and true-to-life family portrait in Anete Melece's picture book. Mum has to work late – apparently from home – while Dad puts little Stella to bed. His bedtime story, however, has no effect whatsoever. Even when Daddy reads a dozen more, Stella just doesn't feel tired. The case seems clear: Her dose of »sleep« obviously hasn't arrived yet. So Dad calls the sleep centre and learns that someone at their house must have accepted the delivery. Toy flamingo and cuddly hippo turn into investigators searching for clues throughout the flat. Yet: nothing! Only when they look into Mum's study, do Stella, Dad, and the toy animals realise to whom the mail carrier has delivered his goods. Mum has fallen asleep at her desk. (Age: 3+) [KW]



Vinogradova, Laura (text)

Maurīte, Ieva (illus.)

Tētis un suns

(Daddy and dog)

Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, [2021]. – 47 p.

ISBN 978-9934-0-9219-0

Autonomy | Childhood | Summer holiday | Family

LATVIAN
Latvia

This year's holidays were supposed to be the best summer holidays ever! Yet then, Magda finds out that her dad – who is also her best friend – has to travel abroad for work for two whole months. Hurt and sad, Magda retreats into her own world. Over the summer months, she secretly plants a garden and adopts a big black dog that she finds there. The cucumbers, tomatoes, strawberries, and especially the dog make Magda feel happier again. After she breaks her leg in a fall from the shed, her siblings and her mother come to the rescue – not only by saving the garden from drying up. When her father eventually returns, too, Magda decides to be happy again: the best summer holiday ever! Laura Vinogradova and Ieva Maurite tell this small, precious story with great sensitivity for the hardships, worries, and dreams of the eight-year-old protagonist. Magda proves to be an independent and strong-willed girl with a mind of her own. (Age: 7+) [KW]



Daciūtė, Evelina (text)

Kiudulaitė, Aušra (illus.)

Pasakojimas apie katiną ir tulpę

(The story of a cat and a tulip)

Vilnius: Alma littera, 2022. – [52] p.

ISBN 978-609-01-5312-3

Connectedness | Farewell | Loss | Sadness | Optimism | Picture book

LITHUANIAN
Lithuania

Rumtums, a capricious tomcat, really suffers in winter. When spring finally arrives, he strolls around and discovers a tulip that is just starting to grow on a street corner, far away from all the other flowers. The two strike up a conversation, they argue, grow closer, and develop an intimate relationship. However, as the tulip gradually loses its petals, the time soon comes to say goodbye. So at night, the cat keeps watch by the tulip's side. Although he is heartbroken, he also feels sure that they will see each other again next spring. »Pasakojimas apie katiną ir tulpę« is a tale about connectedness and parting, the loss of a beloved being, transience, the suffering of those left behind, but also the hope and confidence of meeting again. Aušra Kiudulaitė has created images full of contrast for Evelina Daciūtė's touching text. The pictures' marvellous momentum perfectly shows the development of emotions – especially those of the cat. (Age: 4+) [KW]

143



Goldberg, Lea (text)
Chlebinskaitė, Sigutė (illus.)
Jonynas, Antanas A. / Gitkind, Nathan (transl.)
Nuomojamas butas
(Flat for rent)
[Kaunas]: Žalias kalnas, [2022]. – [10] p.
ISBN 978-609-8310-03-0

Neighbourhood | Acceptance | Harmony |
Story in verse | Leporello | Picture book

LITHUANIAN

Lithuania

■ The fairy tale »Nuomojamas butas«, written in verse by Lithuanian-born Lea Goldberg, is one of the most popular texts for children in Israel. In this story about acceptance and getting along with others, a flat is available to rent. Many creatures are interested in it, but none of them actually moves in – because of the neighbours: The hard-working ant finds the hen too lazy, the nightingale thinks the squirrel is a noisemaker, and so on. Yet eventually, a dove turns up who is looking forward to sharing the house. Illustrator Sigutė Chlebinskaitė has turned this fable into a fabulous book adventure. Not only does she use the accordion format to introduce the potential residents one by one. In addition, the pictures are cut in half horizontally and can be flipped up or down. This way, both the text becomes visible, and the portraits of the animals change when the half-pages are opened. This provides readers with the chance to take a magnificent walk both through the story and the building. (Age: 5+) [KW]

144



Crvenkovska, Biljana S. (text/concept)
Charms, Daniil (Kharms, Daniil) (text)
Nikolovska, Katerina (illus.)
Tigar na ulica
(The tiger on the street)
Skopje: Čudna šuma (Chudna shuma), 2021. – 44 p.
(Series: Različni i прекрасni)
ISBN 978-608-4938-13-2

Self-assertion | Courage | Imaginary friend |
Picture book

MACEDONIAN

North Macedonia

■ What an exquisite picture book story this is, published by the small publishing house Chudna shuma (Strange Forest). »Tigar na ulica« tells the story of a girl fleeing from a gang of other children, who follow and taunt her. The readers are able to help the girl by turning a page in the book to create a hiding place. When the girl tumbles through a hole onto a help button, a tiger suddenly pops up beneath it in the street. Together they roar and scare away the pursuers. Then the tiger accompanies the girl home. On the next page, readers encounter a poem called »The tiger on the street« by Daniil Kharms. It is the text on which the previous story is based. It revolves around the question of why a tiger suddenly appears in the street. The poem does not provide any answer, but Biljana Crvenkovska and Katerina Nikolovska's story about self-assertion and courage offers a great one. And eventually the readers learn that the tiger was actually just a kitten. (Age: 3+) [KW]

145



Gavrovska, Nika (text)
Radulović, Nikola (illus.)

Bambino

Skopje: Gavroš (Gavroche), 2021. – 63 p.
(Series: Edicija Gavroš sonuva)
ISBN 978-608-4870-06-7

Unicorn | Nature mysticism | Initiation | Mother |
Longing

North Macedonia ■ MACEDONIAN

Bambino grows up in his father's cabin in a mystical, magical forest. One morning, the boy goes hunting with his father for the first time. He is supposed to shoot a stag, but his courage deserts him. The following day, he stays at home sick, longing for his mother. When he follows some strange noise into the cellar, Bambino meets a legendary, one-horned stag that arrives on the warm winter wind and changes everyone it meets. A magical initiation process begins: Bambino suffers feverish hallucinations, is reunited with his mother, and has a near-death experience. The figure of the unicorn is the driving force for the narrative in Nika Gavrovska and Nikola Radulović's fairytale-like book. It is organically embedded in the story, which is equally appealing to children and adults. The delicate black-and-white illustrations and the scrap of a woman's red scarf enclosed in the book, which the unicorn was carrying when it met Bambino, also add to the story's appeal. (Age: 6+) [KW]

146



Akerlie, Iben (text)

Sommeren alt skjedde

(The summer when it all happened)
Oslo: Aschehoug, 2022. – 180 p.
ISBN 978-82-03-37854-6

First love | Refugee | Migration | Racism | Family |
Past | Guilt

Norway ■ NORWEGIAN

In the summer holidays Nora is supposed to visit her grandmother. Nora is not eager to go, because her Grandma – who in the past had travelled as a journalist all over the world to war zones and crisis regions – seems a bit strange. Moreover, she lives far from anywhere – so, no thank you. But then everything changes when Nora meets Abbas, a boy with beautiful green eyes. He makes her feel like a »mashed up banana«, but that feels quite okay! The two spend lots of time together. Except when Abbas doesn't want to go with her to Dorrit's Café. Not surprising, since Dorrit doesn't treat all her guests equally – she is a rotten racist. Moreover, there is something overshadowing Abbas' family story – in which Nora's grandmother had a role to play. Complex but not overlaid, »Sommeren alt skjedde« is a novel about first love, savouring the moment, entangled family stories, feelings of guilt and forgiveness, escape and marginalization. All these topics play a role in Iben Akerlie's novel, without it seeming deliberate or contrived. (Age: 12+) [IG]

147



Dibrani, Teuta (text)

Hvis dette var en film*(If this were a film)*

Oslo: Gyldendal, [2022]. – 132 p.

ISBN 978-82-05-50568-1

Friendship | Jealousy | Cancer | Silence |
Speaking up

NORWEGIAN
Norway

What a powerful debut novel. Arta and her best friend Elisa are crazy about films. On their Instagram account, »EA Films«, they present old and new films – and find recognition. The number of followers grows, and Arta and Elise are invited to post about a film festival in Oslo as IGers. And it is also pretty nice that Helene and Johanne want to help out with EA Films. But soon Arta feels pushed aside and becomes jealous. Friction develops between her and Elise. And she doesn't feel as cool as the others as her Albanian family expects her – unlike her brother – to help out with the housework, leaving her little leisure time. When her mother falls ill with cancer, it's all too much for Arta, especially her worries about her mother. But she refuses to talk with anyone – until, one day, she has no more choice in the matter. Arta is a strong and believable narrator, who recognizes that it does help to talk about feelings and hurt, and to articulate one's own needs. (Age: 12+) [IG]

148



Gaustad, Bo (text/illus.)

Kykkelivoff*(Cock-a-dowow-wow)*

Bergen: Vigmostad & Bjørke, 2022. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-82-419-5878-6

Bullying | Exclusion | Crisis of identity | Chicken |
Dog | Picture book

NORWEGIAN
Norway

Henri doesn't want to be a rooster anymore. The chickens won't wake up when he crows. Instead, they blather something about beauty sleep and throw eggs at him. How rude! Henri would rather be like Rolf, the much-admired German Shepherd. Thus, Henri begins to fetch sticks, scare cats and, of course, bark. Out of his beaky muzzle comes a loud »Cock-a-dowow-wow«. Although his mother had once told Henri »You can be anything you want to be«, this isn't exactly working out. The circus animals don't want him; as a guide dog he only creates chaos; and when he tries to blend in with a herd of sheep by going »Kykkelibæ« (cock-a-doodle-baaaa), he gets caught – and bounced. With his characteristically dynamic pen strokes and inventive use of typography and perspective, Bo Gaustad depicts an ambivalent anti-hero. He wants to be someone else, because he yearns to be admired, but he is also bullied and ostracised when trying to depart from a predestined course. This picture book invites readers to ponder and engage in discussions. (Age: 5+) [IG]



Myklebust, Hilde (text)

Splintrā

(Shattered)

Oslo: Samlaget, 2022. – 287 p.

ISBN 978-82-340-0687-6

Friendship | Love | Cancer | Death | Coming of age

NORWEGIAN

Norway

Mia – the first-person narrator – and Are have known each other for ages and are members of a staunchly loyal quintet of friends. When Are confesses to Mia that he has fallen in love with her, their relationship loses balance because Mia cannot return his feelings. After the summer holidays, Are continues at school in their hometown, while the other four move on. Mia is not the only one who fears that the quintet will drift apart. But then Are falls ill with an aggressive tumor. Shock, sadness, anger, helplessness, devastation: what can you do when your life offers so many wonderful moments, while your friend is dying? Especially Mia feels like a traitor – also because she isn't in love with Are. »Splintrā« is an intensive novel about the parallel existence of life and death, intimacy and speechlessness, pain and zest for life. Like the author Hilde Myklebust, who is a published poet, Mia writes poetry to help sort out her thoughts. These poems in particular endow the novel with a moving, emotional depth. (Age: 14+) [IG]



Uri, Helene (text)

Roskifte, Kristin (illus.)

Rare ord. 426 mystiske, merkelige og morsomme ord for nysgjerrige folk

(Exotic words. 426 mystical, strange, and funny words for curious people)

Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2022. – 103 p.

ISBN 978-82-02-68381-8

Language | Encyclopedia | Non-fiction

NORWEGIAN

Norway

In her books, the linguist Helene Uri has been able to take her own passion for language and make it interesting for children and adults again and again. And now she does it once more in »Rare ord«. She cooks up a number of unknown and forgotten »lekkerbisker« (goodies), which the illustrator Kristin Roskifte has quite charmingly depicted in original graphic illustrations. The alphabetically arranged dictionary gathers, on the one hand, terms which have fallen out of style, and thereby conveys, en passant, a historical perspective on how a language changes. And then there are highly unusual words like »crypto zoology« – which deals with the study of fantasy creatures – and, thirdly, expressions that have been imported into Norwegian, such as »Q & A« or »kismet« (fate). »Rare ord« is a true grab bag of treats and makes its readers realize that language is alive, changing, and above all, fun! (Age: 8+) [IG]



'Abdī, Rīdā (Abdi, Reza) (text)

Tazkareh-i Bādha

(Tazkareh-ye Badha)

(The tale of the winds)

Tīhrān: Mu'assas-i Farhangī Hunarī-i Rasm-i Kūdaki (Rasme Koudaki), [2022] (= 1401 h.sh.). – 97 p.

(Series: Rumān-i Nawḡawān; 15)

ISBN 978-622-96725-0-1

Superstition | Zār ritual | Voodoo | Demon | Suicide

In the southern regions of Iran and around the Persian Gulf there exist many customs influenced by the proximity to the sea and the historical connection with the countries of the Horn of Africa. Imaginary creatures such as the female water spirit Melmedas, demons, mean-spirited ghosts, among others, are an integral part of the life and beliefs of the people of that region. This is manifested, for instance, in the Zār ritual and the tradition of hydromancy. In »Tazkareh-ye Badha« (The tale of the winds), which is set on an island, the main character, Hormoz, is believed to have the special gift of being able to foresee events and reveal secrets. This time, however, Hormoz is faced with a problematic secret: why their teacher committed suicide. During the narration of what happened to the teacher, Hormoz deals with many issues: love, death, violence, betrayal, maturity, superstition, etc. The story's complex, nested plot, the idiosyncratic layout, and the use of Iranian calligraphic art motifs all help make the book a unique and outstanding work. (Age: 15+) [RM]



Dawlat-Ābadī, Parwīn (Dowlat-Abadi, Parwin) (text)

Babāḥān, Salīmāh (Babakhan, Salimeh) (illus.)

Āftāb Mahtāb čih Rangih

(Āftab Mehtab Che Range) (What colour is the moonlight? What colour is the sunlight?)

Tīhrān: Mu'assas-i Pažūhiš-i Tāriḡi Adabiyāt-i Kūdakān, Kitāb-i Tāk (Muasseheye Pajouheshi Tarikh Adabiate Koudakan, Ketabe Tak), [2022] (= 1401 h.sh.). – [16] p.

ISBN 978-622-6986-76-2

Sun | Moon | Poetry | Leporello | Picture book

The poem »What colour is the moonlight? What colour is the sunlight?« is based on an old Iranian singsong game played by children and is now published with new illustrations. The verses describe how things alternate, such as day and night, the moon and the sun, sleep and wakefulness, or the colours of the earth and the sky. The mood of the sky at night and the sounds of the morning have been turned into a melodious and imaginative form for children. The book's physical format, published as an accordion book printed on both sides, perfectly suits the contrasting yet complementary concepts featured in the poem. By depicting day and night or sun and moon as child characters, illustrator Salimeh Babakhan has given the poem a modern twist in which the children are not on the periphery but in the center of the book. The pictures were included in the shortlist of the Asian Festival of Children's Content 2023 (AFCC). (Age: 3+) [RM]



Qarrah-bāgī, Mas'ūd (Gharah-Baghi, Mas'oud) (text/illus.)

Dū sayyārah

(Do sayyareh)

(Two planets)

Tihrān: Tūtī (Intiṣārāt-i Fāṭimī) (Tuti Books), [2022]

(= 1400 h. sh.). – [32] p.

ISBN 978-622-7564-26-6

Tolerance | Attitude | Perspective | Peace |
Picture book

PERSIAN (FARSI)

Iran

Somewhere in the universe, there are two planets called Corto and Shonto, both of which revolve around the same sun. They are connected to each other by a huge and ancient bridge. The people of these planets lived together in peace until, one day, a scientist from Shonto invents a device with which outer space can be seen more clearly. The scholar enthusiastically draws a map of the sky and the stars. But this map leads to conflicts among the people of the two planets because the sky of Corto does not look the same as the sky of Shonto. What is wrong? The answer to this question is exactly the point that the book tries to raise with the reader: what impact do our respective attitudes and perspectives have on what we see? And wouldn't it be wise and sometimes necessary to look at the world through the eyes of others in order to understand that others can be just as right as we are? With »Do sayyareh«, the highly talented author and illustrator Mas'oud Gharah-Baghi gives another example of his excellent and creative work. (Age: 6+) [RM]



Mīrzā'ī, Laylā (Mirzaie, Leila) (text)

'Abdī, Mīnā (Abdi, Mina) (illus.)

Az šāhnāmah Mīāyam. Sīyawuṣ-nāmah

(Az Shahnameh Mi-Ayam. Siyavoshnameh)

(I come from Shahnameh. Siyavosh)

Tihrān: Hīradnamah (Kheradnameh), [2022]

(= 1401 h.sh.). – 97 p.

ISBN 978-622-99884-7-3

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

PERSIAN (FARSI)

Iran

The prince Siyāvash is the legendary character of the famous »Shanahmeh« epic and has a special place in the hearts of many Iranians. He is a symbol of purity, of being oppressed, and, also of a praise-worthy life. After being slandered by his stepmother, he goes through fire to prove his innocence, but dies, at the end, through the malice of those around him. This story is a good example of intertextuality and proves that myths, legends, and religious texts from different cultures have always interacted with each other. In this adaptation, written in elegant prose and at the same time simple enough for teenagers, Siyāvash's story is told by the women of his life: his mother, his stepmother, and his first and second wives. Taking this innovative perspective, the book shows how, behind the scenes in a men's world, women play a key role and determine the fate of the heroes. The author, Leila Mirzaei, who studied Persian literature, has done specific research on the topic of women's voices in the »Shahnameh«. (Age: 12+) [RM]

155



Ambrożewski, Jacek (text/illus.)

Ale odlot! Rysunkowa historia lotnictwa

(Off we go! A history of aviation in comics)

Warszawa: Dwie Siostry, [2022]. – 105 p.

ISBN 978-83-8150-092-0

Aviation | Flying | Non-fiction

156



Loth-Ignaciuk, Agata (text)

Nowak, Małgorzata (illus.)

Pa, pa, baloniku!

(Bye bye, balloon!)

Warszawa: Druganoga, [2023]. – [18] p.

ISBN 978-83-966940-1-0

Balloon | Dimension | Distance | Cardboard book |
Picture book

POLISH
Poland

Humans have always dreamt of flying. In this large-format non-fiction book for children featuring comic-panels, Jacek Ambrożewski shows how this dream became reality and what makes flying so fascinating. Rich in detail, funny, and informative, the book describes what the first flying objects looked like and how aviation has developed all the way up to today's solar-powered aircrafts. However, »Ale odlot!« is not simply a chronological list of aviation inventions and their founders, such as Leonardo da Vinci or Otto Lilienthal. Readers are also invited to inspect cockpits, airships, and cargo holds; to learn how radar and drones work; and to get closer to the most fundamental of all questions: How does an aircraft manage not to fall from the sky, but to glide through the air? In addition to the fascination for flying, Ambrożewski also points out the problematic use of aircrafts during wars. (Age 8+) [KW]

POLISH
Poland

A yellow balloon drifts out of a child's room into the yard, through the neighbourhood, the city, the country, the continent, the Earth, and outer space. Everything the balloon passes and looks at along the way is described in one or two short sentences at the end of each double-spread of this charming board book. In a playful way, author Agata Loth-Ignaciuk and illustrator Małgorzata Nowak provide the youngest readers with a sense of near and far, and show how aspects of the world change through the different distances and perspectives. The oversized balloon with its yellow colour clearly stands out against the illustrations rendered in blue, green, black, and light pink. The pictures show bustling scenes and landscapes similar to those in a wimmelbook. In addition to the unifying element of the balloon, which appears on every page, there is a lot to discover: people going shopping, dogs being walked, clusters of houses, rivers, mountains, and planets. All these details invite readers to look at each setting again and again. (Age: 2+) [KW]

157



Stanecka, Zofia (text)

Sztyma, Marianna (illus.)

Drań czyli moje życie z jamnikiem*(Drań, or my life with a dachshund)*

Warszawa: Kropka, 2022. – 160 p.

ISBN 978-83-67157-92-6

Dog | Pet | Childhood | Poland | History 1980s

POLISH
Poland

Zofia, who grows up in the 1980s, has one dearest wish: She longs to have her own dog. When dachshund Drań (i.e. Bastard) finally comes to live with her and her family, their world is turned upside down – both with happiness and literally; because Drań has a strong personality. The little dog takes up lots of space in bed, won't touch the most delicious food, but loves to fish things out of the rubbish bin and devour them on walks. In her autobiographical story, Zofia Stanecka uses short episodes to reminisce about the relationship between Drań and herself as a child. She focuses on the plethora of small moments and scenes that are part of a dog's life, or rather, of living with a dog. From the child protagonist's perspective, she empathetically describes Drań's visit to the vet, how he becomes house-trained, how he shreds pillows, slippers, and tassels, and how he protects the family against the socialist authorities during a raid. Marianna Sztyma has captured adorable Drań in cheeky illustrations and drawings. (Age: 9+) [KW]

158



Canônica, Volnei (text)

Cavalcante, Felipe (illus.)

O tempo todo*(The whole time)*

Rio de Janeiro: Oficina Raquel, 2022. – 42 p.

ISBN 978-85-95000-68-1

Humans | Solitude | Alter Ego | Fellowship |
Picture bookPORTUGUESE
Brazil

A creature – half human, half reptile – lives happily and contently in its small world. A place where day and night have their due places and which can be circumnavigated in five elephant paces or 40 steps of an ant. But because being alone and self-sufficient can also make one fearful, the creature gets quite a shock one day when it discovers that it is not alone. Who is this invader? Is it another creature or perhaps its alter ego? The »other one«, who has always been there, proves to be friendly and wants to share the creature's life, in order to enlarge and broaden their world. Volnei Canônica's metaphorical tale about aloneness and community, foreignness and familiarity, distance and proximity is poetic and moving, while leaving much room for interpretation. Felipe Cavalcante has illustrated the text with fanciful pictures in bright colours. They are idiosyncratic compositions using geometric or organic forms and elements, some of which stand independently next to each other. (Age: 6+) [JW]

159



Michelin, Daniella (text)

Carareto, Elisa (illus.)

Pode me chamar de Dodô

(You can call me Dodô)

São Paulo: ÔZé, 2022. – 207 p.

ISBN 978-65-89835-23-3

Garden | Animals | Humans | Coexistence |
Nature | Respect

Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

At first glance the setting of this book is straightforward. It is a garden in which people with limited horizons might think there is nothing to be found. But that is quite wrong. This piece of earth is full of life! And in the middle of it all is the narrator – who could easily be overlooked because it is a worm with the old-fashioned name of Haroldo. Haroldo tells about life in this microcosm, about coexistence, about neighbours and strangers, and about the mutual respect that is needed for everyone to get what they deserve. But there is also this peculiar animal that calls itself a human and lives in a house made of stone. It is powerful and blind to other creatures and their needs. Daniella Michelin's debut as a children's book writer is an imaginative story, which explores with humour and thoughtfulness the relationship between animals and humans and the diversity of nature. Elisa Carareto has illustrated the text with simple, expressive pictures in which the smallest creatures play the leading part. (Age: 10+) [JW]

160



Santos, Victor D. O. (text)

Forlati, Anna (illus.)

O que nos faz humanos

(What makes us human)

Belo Horizonte [MG]: Abacatte, 2023. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-65-89586-60-9

Humans | Language | Diversity | Non-fiction |
Picture book

Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

All living creatures communicate – whether by sound, movement, posture, or colour. What makes human beings unique and connects them with one another is the use of language. »O que nos faz humanos« explains the preeminent significance and enormous diversity of this specifically human skill using riddle-like statements: I am very old. I am everywhere. I can be gentle, but also hurtful. I exist in a huge number of variations. Some people only know one, others live in diversity. If one variant disappears, an entire culture and its history can get lost. With hints like these, the readers will be put on the right track, until they reach the solution: I am language. Matching Victor D. O. Santos's brief, curiosity-sparking text, Anna Forlati has created colour illustrations, which give very good depictions of the various aspects of language. This clever non-fiction picture book offers many opportunities to speak and reflect with children about the fascinating, universal topic of language. (Age: 7+) [JW]

161



Machado, David (text)

Gozblau, Alex (illus.)

Os reis do mar*(The kings of the sea)*

Alfragide: Caminho, 2022. – 185 p.

ISBN 978-972-21-3156-8

Childhood | Imagination | Reality | Adventure |
Coming of age

PORTUGUESE

Portugal

Following on »Não te afastes« (2018), David Machado now offers the second volume of his »Trilogia do Furação« (Hurricane trilogy). The two novels are not connected through their protagonists and plot, but by the fact that each is set in a hurricane-stricken land. After his family home is destroyed, twelve-year-old Samuel and his family move in with his grandfather in a small seaside town. Wishing for his old way of life and at first unwilling to come to terms with reality, Samuel prefers to believe his friend Rá, who claims that Samuel's home was robbed by »pirates from the Metaversum«. Together with Rá and a vivacious girl named Kaya, Samuel experiences a variety of adventures. For Samuel, Rá's tales are a form of escape; at the same time he removes himself bit by bit from the realm of fantasy and imagination. For this story about bidding farewell to childhood, David Machado convincingly employs a literary narrative form brimming with imagery that makes the entry into adulthood very tangible. (Age: 11+) [JW]

162



Oliveira, Inês Viegas (text/illus.)

O duelo*(The duel)*

Carcavelos: Planeta Tangerina, 2022. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-989-9061-10-1

Conflict | Duel | Non-violence | Picture book

PORTUGUESE

Portugal

Duels are ritualised fights, guided by the idea that a conflict cannot be resolved any other way. This is also what goes through the mind of the protagonist of the story, as he strides with a pistol through the forest to take up his shooting position. Alas, he doesn't know how many steps he should take. While he moves farther and farther away, his thoughts are circling in his head, grappling with the significance of his actions. In the end, in a letter, he invites his »dear« opponent to visit him. Whether this wish will be granted, is not revealed in the story. In her picture book debut, Inês Viegas Oliveira (b. 1995) narrates a clever parable about a learning experience and visualises it in a magnificent manner. While at first pale and static, the illustrations become filled, as the spatial (and temporal) distance increases, with people, animals, nature, and – above all – with colour. This is a world full of life, a utopian alternative to the violence and the forces from which the narrator is (unconsciously) withdrawing himself. (Age: 7+) [JW]

163



Pires, Jacinto Lucas (text)

Piaggio, Alice (illus.)

Faz diferença

(It makes a difference)

Figueira da Foz: Bruaá Editora, 2022. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-989-8166-51-7

Language | Ambiguity | Polysemy | Picture book

PORTUGUESE

Portugal

While speaking, one is often not conscious of the nuances that language has and how small modifications can change the meaning of individual words or sentences. In this original book, Jacinto Lucas Pires und Alice Piaggio use a number of amusing examples to reveal just such amazing possibilities of language. In short sentences that are paired off on the left and right sides of double page spreads, there is always one detail that – as the book's title tellingly states – makes all the difference. Take, for example, a case of singular and plural – »When one player changes the rules of the game, he is a cheat. When several players change the rules, it becomes a new game«. Or, in another example, we see what can happen when the same phrase is used in different contexts: »If a writer loses his head, it is an idiom. If a king loses his head, it is a revolution«. The expressive colour illustrations enact the texts with much humour by emphasizing their playful, associative, and slightly crazy content. (Age: 9+) [JW]

164



Cassian, Nina (text)

Ispir, Oana (illus.)

Prințul Miorlău

(Prince Miaow)

București: Frontiera, 2022. – 51 p.

ISBN 978-606-8986-52-4

Parents | Child | Behaviour | Poetry

ROMANIAN

Romania

Nina Cassian (1924-2014) was a highly distinctive voice in Romanian literature. Therefore, it is not surprising that her collection of children's poems, short stories in rhyme, and anecdotes – first published in 1957 – is now available in a new edition. In her texts, Cassian takes a close look at the relationship between children and their parents as well as at children's behaviour. The titular »Prince Miaow« demonstrates the fact that this is by no means always sweet: an only child demanding miaows its constant wish for new and special things, only to refuse everything offered to him with another »miaow«. Only after cats take over his care and present nothing but mice as food, does the child finally stop his cat-like wailing. Equally mischievous and just as veracious as the texts are the illustrations, which Oana Ispir has newly created for this beautiful compilation. Rendered in warm colours, they capture the key scenes in a thoroughly jovial style. (Age: 5+) [KW]

165



Rosetti, Adina (text)
Ungureanu, Dan (illus.)

Întâiul meu cuvânt de pionier

(My first word as a Pioneer)

București: Arthur, 2021. – 100 p.

ISBN 978-606-086-435-6

Romania | History 1989 | Conformism | Freedom |
Picture book | Historical fiction

Romania ROMANIAN

Adina Rosetti and Dan Ungureanu have joined forces for an important book project, in which they shed light on the communist dictatorship under Nicolae Ceaușescu, a topic that has not yet been widely represented in Romanian children's literature. Woven into the story about young Ada, who in 1989 is eagerly awaiting the day of her so-called Pioneer Ordination, are various hints about the double life that many Romanians are living: The publicly visible, conformist way of life, shaped by lack, restrictions, and fear – symbolised in grey-brown illustrations – hides another life; one in which people secretly tell each other jokes about the dictator and listen to Radio Free Europe. Ada only knows the facade, in which she believes, until a classmate tells a Ceaușescu-joke and subsequently is both expelled from the Pioneers and taken away by the Securitate, the secret police. Ada starts having doubts and confides in her parents, who show her a new truth behind the propaganda. (Age: 9+) [KW]

166



Rudaševskij, Evgenij (Rudashevsky, Yevgeny) (text)
Prankevič, Vol'ga (Prankevich, Volga) (illus.)

Zver' 44

(Beast 44)

Moskva: KompasGid Izdatel'skij Dom, 2023. – 156 p.

ISBN 978-5-00083-850-1

War | Ruthlessness | Inhumanity | Futility

Russia RUSSIAN

»We oppose those who attack«, says »Grey« to his comrade, »Tusk«. Both belong to a group of young men who collect corpses behind the ever-shifting front lines and take them for »processing« to the »mincing machine«. They have been living for an apparently endlessly long time in an enormous war vehicle, the titular »Beast 44«. Tusk suspects Grey of committing treason. It becomes clear, however, that Grey merely wants to give the deceased their names back and has thus been stealing their dog-tags. Together with others in the underground, he is trying to sabotage the meaningless war. Whether they will succeed remains open. »Zver' 44« is a disturbing, dystopian text about the martial horrors of war and how they can turn into pathological normalcy. The story describes the brutalisation and mind-numbing of the soldiers, together with their absolute tedium. By depicting such atrocities, »Zver' 44« takes a stand against war and clearly states about those in combat: »You have been led astray«. (Age: 15+) [KW]

167



Milošević, Stevan (text)

Pisma iz Verzuniума*(Letters from the Versunium)*

Čačak: Pčelica, 2022. – 58 p.

ISBN 978-86-6088-088-0

Disability | Letter | Communication

Serbia SERBIAN

While spending most of the day in his own room within his family home, a boy in a wheelchair communicates with the outside world through letters. With the aid of his friend, the elevator, he sends letters to Tamara, who lives in the same apartment house, but also to strangers, animals, and to poetry – to everything that can be found in »Versunium«. He is especially pre-occupied with wordplay: he puts names, places, and things into question, bringing an entire idiosyncratic world into being that is not only poetic and philosophical, and at times simply funny. One example is the connection between his parents' car, a LADA, chocolate (SchokoLADA) and a ballad (baLLADA). Stevan Milošević has assembled his novel out of short letters and descriptions. Rich in wordplay and metaphors, the story provides more than an insight into the versatile mind of the young first-person narrator. It also depicts how he overcomes barriers in his daily life and succeeds, through the power of language, in transcending all kinds of limitations. (Age: 12+) [KW]

168



Petrović, Ana (text/illus.)

Stripoterapija*(Comic art therapy)*

Beograd: Kreativni centar, 2022. – 167 p.

ISBN 978-86-529-1084-7

Psychotherapy | Mental health | Comic

Serbia SERBIAN

A client is sitting at her psychotherapist's – and she does so on every double-page spread in Ana Petrović's humorous comic book. The volume gathers various individual comic panels, which originally appeared as Instagram postings. Each can be read as a new psychotherapy session. The »client« is Petrović's alter ego – an illustrator. In the course of the sessions, readers learn about her fears and neuroses, but, above all, about her inner life. As a reader, you are inclined to keep nodding and calling out to the client: Yes, that sounds very familiar! Each strip is to the point and focuses on a single question asked by the therapist and the client's response to it. Through her images, Ana Petrović succeeds in creating great situational comedy, but also truthfulness; for example, when therapist and client are sitting opposite each other as helmeted astronauts during the COVID pandemic: as they sit looking at the Earth from a »social distance«, they contemplate how beautiful it is from afar. (Age: 12+) [KW]



Dulla, Matúš (text)

Vajsábel, Ján / Rusková, Gabika (illus.)

Architektúra. Stručné dejiny Slovenska pre mladých čitateľov

(Architecture. A brief history of Slovakia for young readers)

Bratislava: Slovart, 2022. – 304 p.

(Series: Stručné dejiny Slovenska pre mladých čitateľov)

ISBN 978-80-556-5009-8

[Slovakia](#) | [Architecture](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

Anyone interested in architecture will find this comprehensive non-fiction book for young adult readers most satisfying. In twenty chronological chapters, Matúš Dulla, himself an architect and specialist in architectural history, introduces various styles of buildings. Each chapter begins with a synoptic outline, which introduces important key words and delimits the relevant time period. For the so-called »New Era« (19th century - early 20th century) Dulla selects, among others, »reinforced concrete«, »electricity«, and »hygiene«. After a short overview, he presents each building style in more detail with three examples as found in Slovakia, closing the chapter with further fascinating or even surprising information. Ján Vajsábel and Gabika Rusková have endowed the book with a straightforward design executed in light-blue and grey. With its wealth of details, clear layout, and informative approach, »Architektúra« offers a historical survey that will appeal both to a youthful and an adult readership. (Age: 14+) [KW]



Hoffstädter, Jana H. / Púček, Ján (text)

Ilčík, Matej (illus.)

Veronika z paneláku ide dobyť svet

(Veronika from the block conquers the world)

[Bratislava]: E.J. Publishing, 2022. – 78 p.

ISBN 978-80-99954-11-4

[Skiing](#) | [Sports career](#) | [Velez-Zuzulová, Veronika](#)

This book does not only chronicle the beginnings of Slovakian ski racer and Olympic athlete Veronika Velez-Zuzulová; it is also a journey back into the 1990s, when the Walkman and Baby-G wristwatches were the latest fashion. In exciting episodes interspersed with full-page information about skiing, Jana H. Hoffstädter and Ján Púček tell readers what everyday life was like for a budding world-class downhill racer. It soon becomes obvious that Veronika, as well as her family, subordinate their entire lives to the dream of a sports career. This includes endless car journeys to training camps and competitions, camps on the ski slope under adverse condition, and the costly purchase of ski equipment. Particularly memorable, however, is the description of Veronika's special position at school and among the other teens in her neighbourhood, which at times becomes an internal ordeal for her. (Age: 10+) [KW]



Bauer, Jana (text)

Škerl, Peter (illus.)

Kako objeti ježa

(How to hug a hedgehog)

Ljubljana: KUD Sodobnost International, 2022. – [34] p.

(Series: Gugalnica. Zbirka najboljših slikanic)

ISBN 978-961-7132-29-8

Hedgehog | Hug | Friendship | Prejudice |
Picture book

Life isn't easy for Hedgehog. He longs to be hugged, but due to his spikes, no one dares to do it. Elephant and Bear invent flimsy and rude excuses, whereas for the turtle this kind of »challenge« isn't audacious enough (Only hugging a lion would do!); and the magpie is capricious. Pipe, a boy disguised as a fox, tries to help his friend. He creates, builds, and sews various inventions to make a hug possible. However, the hugging machine almost crushes Hedgehog; and besides, it is not a living creature. Only when Pipe is in danger and Hedgehog rescues him, does he finally receive a hug. It turns out that this hug doesn't hurt at all. In their award-winning picture book, Jana Bauer and Peter Škerl, tell a multi-layered story about a wonderful friendship, but also about exclusion and overcoming prejudice. In the process, they expose human characteristics and behavioural patterns through the animals, criticising them in a very witty way. (Age: 3+) [KW]



Kermauner, Aksinja / Vogrinec, Silvester (text)

Orfejeva lira

(Orpheus's lyre)

Dob: Miš, 2023. – 244 p.

(Series: Srebrna sekira; 1)

ISBN 978-961-272-612-6

Adolescence | Martial arts | Family | Secret | Myth

There is so much packed into this novel! First and foremost is the young, clever, modern, and self-reflecting protagonist, Evi. She has grown up in a well-to-do family and is quite intelligent, but cleverly disguises this fact in order to belong to the in-group of girls at her school. Yet she is not really a conformist. In secret she goes to karate class, rather than to ballet. And from karate she gains much more than physical strength. With time she is able to stand up for disadvantaged students and those being bullied by the girls in her clique, thus developing a personal strength of character. And it does not stop there: a new, mysterious boy has enrolled at school. In a final showdown, Evi gets to the bottom of some family secrets and explores the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice – whose namesake she is. This magnificent novel makes use of a wonderful narrative pace and with subtle cues gives its readers a little edge on the novel's figures, so that following the unfolding events is quite enthralling. (Age: 13+) [KW]

173



Koren, Majda (text)
Komadina, Tanja (illus.)

Čarobna kost

(The magic bone)

Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2022. – [16] p.

(Series: Knjižnica Čebelica; 471)

ISBN 978-961-01-6526-2

Dog | Bone | Search | Adventure | Detective story |
Picture book

SLOVENIAN
Slovenia

Čaro, a dog, is an absolutely normal four-legged friend who loves to read books in the evening. When he comes across a clue in a book that there is a magic bone buried at a depth of 203 cm somewhere in this world, his curiosity is aroused. As a detective, Čaro dons a real deerstalker cap in the manner of Sherlock Holmes and sets out to ask, in turn, the greyhounds, the bulldogs and the dachshunds whether they know anything about this bone. In the end, Čaro uses his own sleuthing skills and digs his way into the depths of the earth at exactly the right spot. What then happens to Čaro will forever remain unknown, because after eating the magic bone, he becomes invisible. In Majda Koren and Tanja Komadina's entertaining story, text and illustrations are spread dynamically across the book's pages. In this way, the plot is fast-paced and full of tension, leading up to its resolution in the extremely charming final punch line. (Age: 3+) [KW]

174



Vetere, Paola / Carnevale, Romina (text)
Trach, Martina (illus.)

¡Qué orejas tan curiosas tienes!

Ciencia para oírte mejor

(What amazing ears you have!

Science for hearing yourself better)

Buenos Aires: Ediciones iamiqué, 2023. – 47 p.

(Series: Tiene sentido)

ISBN 978-987-4444-55-4

Hearing | Ear | Non-fiction

SPANISH
Argentina

For more than twenty years, Ediciones iamiqué has consistently offered a program devoted exclusively to information books and repeatedly come up with new titles and series revolving around topics that are seldom found in the children's book market. The latest title of the series »Tiene sentido« (It makes sense) deals with the sense of hearing and the auditory organs. In typical iamiqué style, fundamental facts needed to understand the subject matter are presented compactly and vividly. At the same time, the book offers a wealth of information of different kinds and delightful digressions into the world of humans and animals, thus conveying a wide spectrum of knowledge in an entertaining manner. Do we only hear with our ears? What is an echo? Can you hear under water? These are a few of the questions that are answered. But the authors also deal with how the auditory sense changes with age, or with damage caused by noise. Richly furnished with colour illustrations, the book is instructive, curiosity-arousing, and simply fun. (Age: 8+) [JW]

175



Siemens, Sandra (text)

Frankel, Yael (illus.)

Familia de palabras*(Word family)*

Santiago de Chile: Claraboya Ediciones, 2023. – [60] p.

(Series: Colección Catalejo)

ISBN 978-956-9825-30-9

Language | Word | Association | Picture book

Chile SPANISH

Which words can be combined, for example, with »house«, »train«, or »school«? Does »cabbage« go with »cat« (due to the colour of its eyes) or »flies« (because it likes to hunt insects) or »rice« (which it scratches out of its fur after eating)? »Ah, no«, says the narrator, »I don't even have a cat...« And that is how this charming book continues. By letting thoughts wander and associations bubble up, Sandra Siemens gives the reader a taste for the riches and the possibilities of language in a surprisingly simple way. Yael Frankel's gentle, enigmatic illustrations in no way lag behind the witty text. At times sixteen square, roughly sketched and thematically quite unrelated pictures fill the entire page, at other times a single picture is surrounded by lots of space, inviting further thoughts. By using different techniques and styles, by free association and the use of collage, the main idea of this book is realised in a congenial manner: Whether in text or image, there are no limits to the creativity of language. (Age: 7+) [JW]

176



Undurraga, Sol (text/illus.)

Fuentealba, Marcela (text)

El bosque de lo diminuto*(The forest of tiny creatures)*

Santiago, Chile: Saposcat, [2023]. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-956-9866-27-2

Forest | Insect | Spider | Ecosystem | Non-fiction | Picture book

Chile SPANISH

Is this an information book? A picture book? A sketch book? In any case, it is a book that transcends the boundaries of genre and classification. In »El bosque de lo diminuto« the illustrator Sol Undurraga – also known by her pen name Mujer Gallina – devotes herself, with the support of Marcela Fuentealba, to the smallest creatures of the forest. Using bright colours, the magnificent, powerful images show the captivating beauty and diversity of the fascinating, but sometimes also a little creepy looking insects and spiders. Individual species are presented in small formats or in page-filling displays. In essence, the unusual book tries to illustrate the fragility of the forest as an ecosystem, in which everything is interconnected to form a greater whole, and to give evidence of how humans are endangering it. Sol Undurraga takes a personal approach to this topic by placing scientific facts alongside of curious details, and suddenly, in the middle of the book, by talking about the human lack of respect for nature. (Age: 8+) [JW]

177



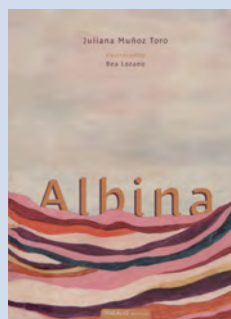
Guiral, Marcela (text)
Estrada, Alejandra (illus.)
A mediodía llovían pájaros
(At noon it would rain birds)
Bogotá: Babel Libros, 2022. – 259 p.
ISBN 978-958-5591-90-5

War | Militia | Violence | Arbitrariness | Trauma |
Child soldier

Colombia ■ SPANISH

During a war, eleven-year-old F is sent to stay with his grandfather in the small town of Barbascal, in the hopes that he will be safe there. In this strange »City of Birds« residents protect themselves from bird droppings with umbrellas. F's grandfather runs a homing pigeon post office, and his great-uncle is known as the dreaded »Pigeon Man«. At school the teacher is assisted by dozens of parrots, and the elderly Mamá Carmen predicts the future with the help of chickens. The seemingly peaceful days end abruptly, when militia occupy Barbascal. Daily life is governed by brutality, despotism, fear, and despair. People disappear, children are forced into the militia, and traumatic memories of a long-past war resurface. This disturbing novel stands out for excellent character depictions, an unusual narrative style, and its at times alienating, figurative and highly symbolic language. By weaving the real and the fantastic seamlessly together, Marcela Guiral succeeds in mitigating the impact of events without embellishing anything. (Age: 12+) [JW]

178



Muñoz Toro, Juliana (text)
Lozano, Bea (illus.)
Albina
Medellín: Tragaluz Editores, 2022. – 137 p.
ISBN 978-958-5463-60-8

Albinism | Family | Seasons

Colombia ■ SPANISH

Along with her mother and brother, Erea moves to another country in the north to live with her aunt. Over the course of a year, beginning in autumn, Erea describes her life as it is shaped by falling leaves, the cold and snow of winter, by the burgeoning nature in spring, and the heat of summer. In a continuous stream of thoughts and memories she shares her experiences and feelings, which are strongly influenced by two things. One is her struggle with being an albino because it forces her to avoid the sun, limits her vision, and consequently makes her feel transparent and unseen. Moreover, she misses her father. For reasons only vaguely hinted at, he has not come along with his family. »Albina« is a quiet book that nonetheless takes on resonance. With a lyrical, sensual, rhythmically flowing style, Juliana Muñoz Toro affords deep insight into the fragile inner life of the protagonist and enables the floating, fleeting atmosphere of the narrative to become palpable. (Age: 12+) [JW]

179



Chirif, Micaela / Medina, Ignacio (text)
Antinori, Andrea (illus.)

Sabor

(Taste)

México: Editorial Océano de México, 2023. – [84] p.
(Series: Océano Travesía)
ISBN 978-607-557-662-6

Taste | Flavour | Non-fiction | Picture book

SPANISH
Mexico

The cut open watermelon emblazoned on the cover gives us a foretaste: this book speaks to the senses. Readers learn not only how amazing and multi-faceted the sense of taste in humans (and animals) is. It is also quite possible that, while you are reading, a delightful taste will buzz through your head, or you will notice your mouth watering. What does the tongue do? Why do we have a soft spot for sweets? How does a spicy onion become sweet and then bitter? Is spicy a flavour or a painful feeling? Where is the boundary between tasting and smelling? This book compellingly approaches these questions from inside a child's world of experience. In texts, which employ an at times informative, at other times narrative, and sometimes almost lyrically light language, Micaela Chirif and Ignacio Medina ask everyday questions and give lucid, concrete answers. Andrea Antinori's inventive and detailed colour illustrations grace the book with further wit, verve, and airiness. (Age: 5+) [JW]

180



Düben, Alejandro von (text)

Álvarez, Diego (illus.)

Clara como un fantasma

(Clear as a ghost)

México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), 2022. – 150 p.
(Series: Hilo de Aracne)
ISBN 978-607-303072-4

Coping with trauma | Disappearance | Coming of age

SPANISH
Mexico

Shortly before her seventeenth birthday, Clara feels as if she is disappearing. Her body seems blurry, nearly transparent. But her mother, her siblings, girl friends and her boyfriend see no changes in her and think she has gone loony. Through the stories and memories of the first-person narrator, a possible explanation for her inexplicable state slowly comes together piece by piece. Clara had witnessed a girl of her own age being kidnapped. Like many others in Mexico, the girl disappeared without a trace. Disappearances play a central part in this novel. When Clara was nine, her father deserted the family abruptly, and her cat, Meme, also disappears under mysterious circumstances. In this award-winning book, Alejandro von Düben skilfully weaves the different threads of the story together in his protagonist, who must cope with a traumatic experience and distressing ruptures. Herself a complex figure, Clara observes her surroundings with a sharp eye and laconic wit. (Age: 15+) [JW]

181



Mansour, Vivian (text)
Valtierra, Emmanuel (illus.)

Código peregrino

(Pilgrim codex)

Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica,
2022. – [38] p.

(Series: Los especiales de A la orilla del viento)

ISBN 978-607-16-7610-8

Central America | Migration | North America |
Picture book | Leporello

SPANISH
Mexico

The fate of people who set out from Central America toward North America has often been the subject of literary works. In »Código peregrino« Vivian Mansour and Emmanuel Valtierra make use of an additional historical facet. The leporello picture book borrows quite clearly from the pre-Columbian culture of Mesoamerica and the codices, or illustrated manuscripts, of the Aztecs. It depicts the perilous journey of a family heading north toward the USA. Along their route, they face fear, hunger, threats, robberies, gangs of traffickers, humiliations, and border fences, until they reach their goal. Whether their hopes will be fulfilled remains open in the end. This realistic story is depicted in a sometimes quite idiosyncratic, pictorial language that echoes the style of old legends. In this way, the story appears to a degree removed from the brutal reality of the journey and the narrative acquires depth. The innovative illustrations, which show modern-day experiences using the iconographic imagery of the ancient manuscripts, are astoundingly timeless. (Age: 10+) [JW]

182



Adaui, Katya (text)
Codoni, Cecilia (illus.)

Otra cosa

(Another thing)

Lima: Mónimo, 2022. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-612-485666-4-8

Curiosity | Imagination | Creativity | Handicraft work |
Recycling | Picture book

SPANISH
Peru

»This child was born with a screwdriver in her hand«. Her mother's statement aptly captures the great passion of the protagonist of this book. After school is out, her favourite pastime is to take her toys apart and find out what's inside: cotton stuffing or sand, air or even nothing. She collects absolutely everything: broken objects and devices, coloured wire, odds and ends of all kinds and much more, all piled up in a heap. Apparently superfluous and no longer of any use, for the young girl these are a source of much pleasure. She lets her imagination fly, as her father says, and brings them back to life, creating things new and different, among them a curious vehicle out of tin, cardboard, lamps... What might it be, what name should it have? Katya Adaui and Cecilia Codoni's picture book praises the joys of unfettered play and the boundless inventiveness of children. The pictures, in tones of red and blue, humorously capture the creative chaos. (Age: 5+) [JW]

183



Garland, Inés (text)

De la boca de un león

(From the mouth of a lion)

[Zaragoza]: Edelvives, [2022]. – 219 p.

(Series: Colección Alandar; 173)

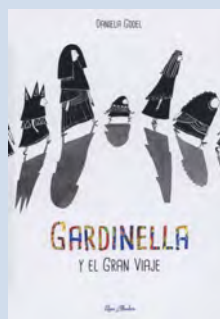
ISBN 978-84-140-3286-2

Family | Coping with trauma | Suicide attempt |
First love | Coming of age

Spain SPANISH

Fourteen-year-old Tadeo is the youngest member of a family that is trying to keep up appearances, even though it is in danger of falling apart. At the core of their conflict-ridden family life there seems to be a taboo surrounding Jano, the oldest son. Since having an »accident«, he is severely handicapped; he lives with a care-taker in his own apartment, but the family hardly speaks about him. Tadeo tries to free himself from this cloud of silence, rigor, coldness, and violence – and to understand why things are the way they are. He describes how light is slowly shed on the family secrets and he speaks of Vera, his first love. From her he learns that family can be more than what he experiences day after day. In her impressive coming-of-age novel, Inés Garland creates a complex portrait of a family nearly succumbing to its own speechlessness. It is notable for the multi-layered depiction of the quite different characters. The psychological tension will affect the readers and leave them pensive in the end. (Age: 13+) [JW]

184



Godel, Daniela (text/illus.)

Gardinella y el Gran Viaje

(Gardinella and the Great Journey)

[Aguadulce, Almería]: Editorial Libre Albedrío, 2022. – [58] p.

ISBN 978-84-124052-5-5

Journey | Migration | Homeland | Picture book

Spain SPANISH

Gardinella and the other »Citintos« set off on the »Great Journey«. Some cheerful, others subdued, they are headed towards an undefined goal. Along the way, each of them will need to part with one personal possession. The place where they eventually stay will become the new homeland – at least until, perhaps, they set out again. Daniela Godel has written a metaphorical story of departing and arriving, migration and being at home, the familiar and the unknown. Bidding farewell is linked to hopes for the future, even when this is shrouded in uncertainty. In the illustrations executed in ink, water colour, and gouache, the changes in colouring play a central role: at first the world is black-and-white – even the forest on their way, where there are »blossoming almond trees« and »fruits as large as suns«. Only after they arrive do the Citintos and their world acquire colour. This is a poetic and profound book, which leaves it up to the reader to find his or her own interpretations of the story. (Age: 5+) [JW]

185



Manzano, Eva (text)
Novillo, Carla (illus.)

La excursión

(The outing)

[Madrid]: Bookolia, 2023. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-84-18284-72-4

Bed | Excursion | Adventurousness | Picture book

Spain ■ SPANISH

Beds are not known for being adventurous. By undertaking an excursion on a train, the protagonist of this picture book is exception to the rule. And how exciting it is! Unlike always having the same old view of the backyard from the room at home, the vistas from the train window are constantly changing. Houses, trees and much more rapidly speed by. On a meadow, the bed meets a river and a tree who are eager to find out what it is like to sleep in a bed. Later, the bed experiences its first sunset, and soon a cow and a child join this motley company. Together they all gaze up at the starry skies. How will this story end, asks the child. But before it can hear an answer, it falls fast asleep. »La excursión« is a wacky ode to nonsense and the pleasure of making up absurd stories. The pictures by Carla Novillo are congenial companions to Eva Manzano's text. They are not only stock full of bizarre details but also use eccentric perspectives and proportions to create a funny, topsy-turvy world. (Age: 4+) [JW]

186



Ramos, Pedro (text)

Un ewok en el jardín

(An Ewok in the garden)

Barcelona: Edebé, 2022. – 119 p.

(Series: Periscopio; 130)

ISBN 978-84-683-5596-2

Depression | Suicide attempt | Coming of age

Spain ■ SPANISH

David has lost the will to live. The sixteen-year-old suffers from a deep depression and has been harbouring thoughts of suicide. One day, as he is roaming the streets of his city and just about to jump off a bridge, he rescues a cat that has been mishandled, gets to know a veterinarian, and meets a man who seems gruff at first but soon reveals a profoundly human character. In the end David draws up a list of things that it might be worth living for. In journal-like entries that alternate with the text messages that his worried sister Zoe sends him and a few flashbacks that help explain his family situation, David describes his encounters and records his thoughts. In just over hundred pages Pedro Ramos succeeds in giving an impressive, credible insight into the inner life of the young man. The looming emptiness that has taken hold of him is made evident to the reader by the fact that David shows no signs of emotional engagement. The succinct, unsparing, and unembellished language enhances the quality of this prize-winning novel. (Age: 15+) [JW]

187



Serrano Burgos, Pilar (text)
Montero Galán, Daniel (illus.)

La nota

(The memo)

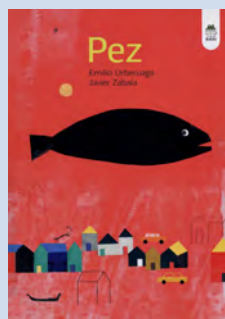
[Pontevedra]: Kalandraka, [2022]. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-84-1343-137-6

Memo | Communication | Coincidence | Cycle |
Leporello | Reversible book | Picture book

Spain SPANISH

The centerpiece of this cleverly designed picture book is a memo that covers a remarkable distance in just a single day. Stashed away one morning in a young girl's schoolbag, it is passed around, forwarded, thrown, or glued, many times over. Among other places, it lands in a pushchair, on a lantern post, in a doctor's surgery, on the tip of a nose until, finally, quite coincidentally, it ends up where it had started. And what was written on this note? An encouraging message, which the reader will learn only at the end of the book. Nearly four metres long, »La nota« is a leporello and a reversible book all at once. This attractive format is superbly suited to the circular structure of the story, making it an entertaining and playful read. In addition, the book can also be unfolded into a large poster, on the reverse side of which the various characters in the story are presented in more detail. This very pleasurable book animates children to read and look at it over and over again. (Age: 4+) [JW]

188



Urberuaga, Emilio (text)
Zabala, Javier (illus.)

Pez

(Fish)

A Coruña: Bululú, 2022. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-84-18667-39-8

Fish | Freedom | Adventurousness | Boredom |
Zest for life | Picture book

Spain SPANISH

Fish has had enough: day in and day out the same blue, orange, green, grey fish, and, what is more, all that vexatious plastic trash. There must be more to life than this! No sooner said than done, the adventurous coelacanth jumps out of the water, eager to get to know the wide world. After quickly getting used to life on land, he explores a large city, is rescued by a vegetarian cat from its hungry mates and makes friends with an ichthyologist. But soon Fish also finds this life boring: day in and day out the same people, trees, cars ... How about exploring the skies? Two great names in Spanish children's literature have joined forces for this picture book. Javier Zabala has illustrated Emilio Urberuaga's quirky tale about curiosity, adventurousness, freedom, and breaking down boundaries with pictures rendered in diverse mixed technique and glowing colours. They show a fantastic world with an enterprising protagonist who is full of joie de vivre. (Age: 5+) [JW]

189



Gómez Benet, Nuria (text)

Solís Montes de Oca, Santiago (illus.)

El berrinche de Moctezuma

(*Moctezuma's tantrum*)

Caracas [et al.]: Ediciones Ekaré, 2022. – [39] p.

(Series: Colección Rimas y Adivinanzas)

ISBN 978-84-124166-8-8

Moctezuma | Ruler | Anger | Defiance | Chocolate |
Picture book

Venezuela **SPANISH**

Anywhere and at anytime it can happen that the powerful let their position go to their heads. And this is what happens in the case of Moctezuma, the legendary ruler of the Aztec empire. No one knows what has peeved him the morning he wakes up and refuses to go to work. Today there shall be no temple services, no dictation of codices! The imperial court is perplexed, the people alarmed. Finally, a bowl of xocolátl (chocolate) calms Moctezuma down and puts him back on track. This compact, small-sized book, another gem in the series »Rimas y Adivinanzas« (Rhymes and riddles), depicts with wit and a twinkling eye the gap between ambition and reality, the thin line between dignified power and ridiculous showing off and childish defiance. Rendered in rhymed, four-line stanzas, the text contains vivid language and light-footed rhythm. The brilliant, intensive colours of the pictures have a lively effect and are the perfect vehicle for the humour in this story. (Age: 4+) [JW]

190



Gran, Nina (text)

Mander, Sanna (illus.)

Dikter för små öron

(*Poems for young ears*)

Helsingfors: Förlaget, [2022]. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-952-333-462-5

Poetry | Picture book

Finland **SWEDISH**

The »Poems for young ears« are all about bugs on wobbly legs, howling wolves sitting in highchairs, ponies who are in a bad mood, climbing monkeys who run, swing, and jump here and there and everywhere – and about the rabbit in a striped jersey that has ants in its pants, hopping about wildly, from left to right and up and down. After so much action, it's nice that things get a little quieter on the last pages of the book. »Sömnssand« (sleeping sand) gets scattered and a »Vaggvisa« (lullaby) is sung. And then we see against the midnight black background several of those animals, who have finally gotten tuckered out, now slumbering, such as the hyperactive rabbit who is now blissfully asleep on a cloud. Any resemblance of this animal behaviour to that of children is, of course, puuuurely coincidental. With alliteration and assonance, Nina Gran creates a rhythmic flow in her verses that Sanna Mander's illustrations take up in a clear colour scheme. (Age: 4+) [IG]



Hurme, Maija (text/illus.)

Alla mina sista

(All my lasts)

[Helsingfors]: Schildts & Söderströms, 2022. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-951-52-5802-1

Collecting | Moment | Experience | Memories |
Picture book

Childhood and youth are commonly associated with many »first times«. Hence, it is all the more charming that Maija Hurme came up with the idea to describe the »last time« and the »last one«. What the narrator then collects are not, as one might first suspect, necessarily associated with death and decay. Instead, these are often exciting and new experiences. »Spännande sista« (Exciting last ones), for example, deals with taking a final deep breath before jumping from a three-metre diving board, or the nervousness of the moment just before the stage curtain rises. »Efterlängtdade sista« (The long-awaited last), in turn, is the night before a birthday, and »Sista som fattes« (The last thing missing) is the last piece of a jigsaw puzzle. While we know here that the last piece is missing, that is not always the case. Can you really be sure that you have just caught the last snowflake of winter? These questions and the surprising changes of perspective are the highlight of this book, which is illustrated in watercolours and coloured pencil. Simply great! (Age: 6+) [IG]



AdBåge, Emma (text/illus.)

Såret

(The wound)

Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2022. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-91-29-73508-6

Wound | Blood | Comfort | Attention | Picture book

»Och det blödde och blödde och blödde och blödde och blödde och blödde, och ingen ville sluta titta. Det var nästan lite mysigt, för alla stod i en stor, tät ring. Som en flock. Runt mej!« (And it bleeds and bleeds and bleeds and bleeds and bleeds and bleeds, and everyone wants a look. It was even a little bit nice when they all stood so close together in a big circle around me. Like a herd. Around me!) After an unsuccessful leap off a ping-pong table, the young narrator's knee begins to bleed – and everyone else quickly gathers around to look and offer comfort. The wound is THE attraction, even if it does hurt. The narrator actually rather savours getting so much attention. Slowly but surely, the cut heals and finally the scab falls off. Underneath, the skin is light pink – and there is a scar that will remain forever: »Bra« (good). Once again Emma AdBåge shows her talent in portraying from a child's perspective the dramas, whether small or large, of everyday life – in words AND in pictures! (Age: 4+) [IG]

193



Åkesson, Mimi (text)
Bondestam, Linda (illus.)

Här är alla andra

(Here are all the others)

Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2022. – [28] p.

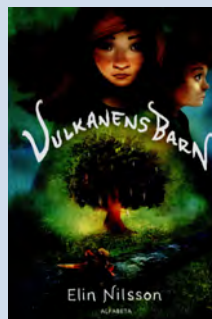
ISBN 978-91-27-16759-9

Difference | Equality | Picture book

Sweden SWEDISH

The picture book by Mimi Åkesson and Linda Bondestam is a major feat, inasmuch as it employs textual reduction – with only two short sentences on each double page spread – and concurrently creates complexity and aha moments through detailed and fanciful pictures. It plays with opposites, which at closer inspection are either not truly contrary or actually irrelevant and banal. This is achieved, on the one hand, by the statements themselves, and, on the other hand, through the interplay of text and images, whereby the pictures at times undermine and counteract the text. For example, on the double page spread with the texts »Here are all those who speak one language« and »Here are all those who speak a different language« we simply see different people. The possibilities provided in the medium of the picture book are put to use in both a rhetorically clever and aesthetically cunning manner, in order to convey the message that we all are different and yet all the same. (Age: 4+) [IG]

194



Nilsson, Elin (text)

Vulkanens barn

(The children of the volcano)

Stockholm: Alfabeta, [2022]. – 284 p.

ISBN 978-91-501-2210-7

Adventure | Friendship | Metamorphosis |
Coming of age | Fantasy fiction

Sweden SWEDISH

Lea and her cousin Luma live at the foot of a sleeping volcano. They are inseparable. Because Luma has turned thirteen years old, it is time for him to pupate. At this age, people disappear into a cocoon, like caterpillars, and are then hung in a tree in the »puppglantan«, the pupates' glade. For five years, these cocoons are in an interworld, maturing and dreaming of their future lives. No one must disturb them. All the adults rave about the years of pupation, but Luma has a queasy feeling and wants Lea to free him from the cocoon. She is not daring enough to do so, but because she misses Luma so much, she wanders through the glade one day and discovers his cocoon has disappeared. She is certain that something terrible has happened, so she needs to go in search of him. With »Vulkanens barn« Elin Nilsson has written an exciting adventure novel with powerful characters. Readers will be completely absorbed from the first to the last page. Fantastic! (Age: 10+) [IG]

195



Persson, Klara (text)
Ramel, Charlotte (illus.)

Min!

(Mine!)

Stockholm: Lilla Piratförlaget, [2022]. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-91-7813-368-0

Sharing | Egoism | Picture book

Sweden SWEDISH

Today Sally is expecting a playdate, Nico. But there is no way that he will be allowed to play with her stuffed squirrel. Sally is quite adamant about that. Therefore, Mama suggests putting it in the cupboard – so he won't see it and they can avoid any potential disputes. Sally decides that is a good idea. But why just the squirrel? After all, everything belongs to her! And Nico can't have any of it! So first, all the toys are stuffed into the cupboard, then the refrigerator and the toilet bowl, and naturally also Mama – because she, too, only belongs to Sally! Sally's excitement about the idea of hiding everything away can already be surmised by her saucy mischievous facial expression on the book's cover. We all know that young (and even older, and sometimes much older) children don't always want to share things. Klara Persson and Charlotte Ramel take this fact to its funniest possible extreme, without betraying the avaricious young hero or peevishly shaking a moralistic finger. (Age: 3+) [IG]

196



Güner, Nihan (text)
Demirağ, Mavis (illus.)

Tonguç Baba

(Father Tonguç)

İstanbul: Boncuk Yayınları, 2022. – 32 p.
(Series: Kendi Yolunu Çizen Hayalperestler)
ISBN 978-605-74535-8-7

Tonguç, İsmail Hakkı (1893-1960) | Education |
Teacher | School | Biography | Non-fiction |
Picture book

Turkey TURKISH

This non-fiction picture book refers to one of the leaders of early 20th century educational reform in Turkey. It presents İsmail Hakkı Tonguç's lifestory and sheds light on the development of Turkey's Village Institutes, which enabled children in rural areas to get a free education. The curriculum in Village Institutes is noteworthy for encapsulating an interdisciplinary coursework ranging from science to arts, while synthesizing local knowledge and practical know-how. The subtle illustrations inform the reader of the hardships of those years and show the developments in primary education. The book is significant in terms of presenting one child's devotion to education and the importance of following one's ideals. In Tonguç's case this benefited all of society in the end. The pastel colour palette conveys the atmosphere of tough times and well-rounded, tranquil images help the reader easily follow Tonguç's life path. Maps, architectural landmarks, and many cultural details such as stamps, tiles, etc. enrich the book. (Age: 5+) [IVA]

197



İrten, Gökçe (text/illus.)

Hepimiz

(All of us)

İstanbul: Doğan Çocuk, 2022. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-625-416-503-0

Feeling | Loneliness | Empathy | Humanity |
Compassion | Picture book

TURKISH
Turkey

»Hepimiz« (All of us) is an antidote for those who feel lonely or secluded for being or feeling a certain way. The title signals the importance of empathy and compassion at many levels. Gökçe İrten's picture book is a universal reminder that we are all together in this world and never truly alone and isolated by our feelings, thoughts, and inclinations. Imagination, boredom, admiration, impatience, worry, and curiosity are experienced by everyone. As such, the book encourages readers to consider the existential value of the common human nature. Reflecting upon the values they share with others can lead to building connections and understanding between individuals. The warm palette of the book is enriched with collages that create a soft and embracing atmosphere. The endpapers contain patterned illustrations with small dots in square units, some of which turn into people waving out of windows, thus hinting at the immensity of the world and the potential for building rapport. (Age: 5+) [IVA]

198



Fal'kovyč, Hryhorij (Falkovych, Grigory) (text)

Tomilenko, Sofija (Tomilenko, Sofiya) (illus.)

Abu Karakambada – Kolyskova dlja Mišeli

(Abu Karakambada – Kolyskova dlya Misheli)

(Abu Karakambada – Lullaby for Michelle)

Charkiv: Krokus Vydavnytstvo, 2022. – 29 p. + 28 p.

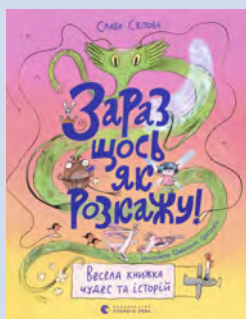
ISBN 978-617-7989-18-8

Poetry | Reversible book | Picture book

UKRAINIAN
Ukraine

This picture book can be read from both sides. In it, felt-tip pen-coloured, imaginative, onomatopoeic poetry for children that sometimes borders on nonsense meets quiet children's poems that resemble bedtime stories and lullabies. There's a zippy poem, in which a vampire accidentally wanders into a supermarket's storage room, is locked in and – out of necessity and thanks to tomato juice – turns into a vegetarian. Another, more thought-provoking text presents sleep as an all-important matter, which – according to some news broadcast – would be beneficial for the whole country. The poems are written by Ukrainian author Grigory Falkovych who has devoted himself to children's poetry especially in recent years and is considered one of the most important children's poets in Ukraine. Sofiya Tomilenko has created whimsical and witty, as well as atmospheric and quiet illustrations to accompany his sometimes playfully funny, sometimes ironic, and sometimes profound texts. (Age: 4+) [KW]

199



Svitova, Slava (text)
 Šatochin, Oleksandr (Shatokhin, Oleksandr) (illus.)
Zaraz šchos' yak rozkažu! Vesela knyžka čudes ta istorij. (Zaraz shchos' yak rozkazhu! Vesela knyzhka chudes ta istorij) (*Now I'll tell a story! A merry book full of miracles and tales*)
 L'viv: Vydavnyctvo Staroho Leva, 2022. – 198 p.
 ISBN 978-966-448-011-3

Empowerment | Role expectations | Anthology

A gruff and hot-tempered fairy, who in no way corresponds to the commonly held image of a sweet and enchanting being, unexpectedly finds a friend and tranquility. A clever boy rescues a small, rather musty old bookstore. A cow who has always dreamed of a career as a figure skater, asserts itself in the face of scorn and mockery and defends itself against the bullying of a steer. Slava Svitova's book is chock full of stories about animals, people, and imaginary creatures of the most diverse variety. It tells of dreams, desires, and worries; plays with clichés and stereotypes; and alternates between comedy and touching earnestness. The wide array of marvellous stories is accompanied by equally marvellous illustrations by Oleksandr Shatokhin, which get to the heart of the scenes and situations, deftly capturing their essence. (Age: 7+) [KW]

200



Thanh Nguyệt / Quỳnh Liên (eds.)
 Various artists (illus.)
Những miền lưu dấu. Cảnh Việt trong văn chương
(Regions marked in memory. Vietnamese landscapes in literature)
 Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Kim đồng (Kim Dong Publishing House), 2023. – 78 p. + [4] p.
 ISBN 978-604-2-28288-8

Vietnam | Landscape | Art | Poetry | Anthology

Intended as teaching material for high school students, this anthology with 35 poems and short stories by Vietnamese authors turns out to be an unusual art book. Revolving around the common theme of »landscapes« preserved by literature and thereby inscribed in the memories of generations, the texts recreate an extended journey through an imaginary map of Vietnam. Sounds and colours of countryside and cityscapes, sceneries of northern mountain villages and scents of southern forests, images of rivers and islands in changing light and seasons unfold, created by medieval emperors and scholars, famous poets and child prodigies, soldiers in the war of resistance against the French colonial rule, and contemporary journalists. The texts are accompanied by paintings by 26 contemporary artists in a variety of styles and media, which amplify the words within a visual dimension, which does not merely »illustrate«, but maintains a certain independence. (Age: 12+) [LO]

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