2026 | The White Ravens

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2026 edition of our recommendation list »The White Ravens«.

This year's cover illustration was created by the Croatian artist Vendi Vernić. According to her own description of her work, the picture features an imaginary library. It is an inviting, colourful space where people come together, read, relax or play. White Ravens fly in from many directions bringing books that connect readers, spark conversation and foster mutual understanding.

We are delighted and grateful that publishers, institutions, and organisations, as well as authors and illustrators, continue to support the International Youth Library with donation and review copies of their new publications. It is only thanks to their support that we are able to present 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 2026« contains a selection of 216 notable children's and young adult books published in 46 languages and from 62 countries and territories.

The books in this unique selection cover a wide range of voices. Its international character is the result of the efforts of some 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 monitor and consult on other languages and countries. They all have the task of sifting through the thousands of books that are donated to the International Youth Library each year and highlighting and reviewing new publications that catch their attention and strike them as being noteworthy. Some of these works are then selected for this list on the basis of the universal relevance of the themes they address, their literary and visual qualities, or their innovative approach or design.

Our library team have long relied on a variety of means to gain a sound overview of the issues, trends, and people involved in current international children's and young adult literature: As well as reading new publications in the original languages, they attend international book fairs, scout and gather information, and keep in touch with publishers, institutions, organisations, and other experts. They also engage in discussions with the research fellows of the International Youth Library,

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

As usual, the »White Ravens« are announced and published just in time for the Frankfurt Book Fair, where our team will present some of the books from the catalogue to the fair's visitors. This podium event has been a fixture in the Book Fair calendar for several years.

The reviews, bibliographical data, and book covers are also available in the White Ravens database on whiteravens.ijb.de/list. We will also be showcasing each of the 216 books on our Instagram account @thewhiteravens.books throughout the coming year.

For decades, all the recommended books have been displayed in print at the International Youth Library's booth at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. This tradition allows visitors to the booth to peruse the books at their leisure, leafing through their pages and exploring the stories and illustrations. We look forward to having this opportunity again and hope to see you in Bologna in 2027.

Once again, my sincere thanks go first and foremost to the countless publishers who have been supporting the work of the International Youth Library for decades with their book donations. I would also like to thank all those who have contributed to this catalogue both abroad and in Munich.

I hope that »The White Ravens 2026« will fall into the hands of many curious readers, and that they will enjoy making new discoveries. May the selected books and their creators receive the international attention they deserve. We hope that our work will contribute to this goal.

Dr. Christiane Raabe
Director of the International Youth Library
September 2026

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1

Šawā, Nāhid aš (AlShawa, Nahed) (text)
ʿĀwūr, Barāʾ (Awoor, Baraa) (illus.)
Sana'ūd
(San'ud)
(We will return)
Montréal: Nūn Books (Noon Books); Nahed Al Shawa Cultural Foundation, 2025. – 36 p.
ISBN 978-1-990676-31-4

Canada ■ ARABIC

Palestine | Home | War | Displacement | Memory | Hope | Resilience | Picture book

A Palestinian child remembers home through the small things that once made it his: a blue bed, a favourite toy, a kite, sandcastles by the sea, jasmine, palm trees, and the shadow that accompanied him to school. War violently interrupts this intimate landscape, but the lyrical text gradually transforms loss into renewal: the child's tears water the jasmine, the sun offers light, and the earth embraces it as a root from which oranges and olives can grow. Baraa Awoor's striking, vibrant illustrations move freely between realism and surrealism, allowing the child's expansive imagination to materialize on the page. In this visual world, fantasy and play become ways of confronting trauma and making sense of life during war. They also acquire political meaning, enabling the child to imagine beyond destruction and displacement. Poetic and visually inventive, this book turns memory, imagination, and play into expressions of attachment, resilience, and hope. (Age: 5+) [LW]

2

Daʿdūš, Mārīyā (Dadoush, Maria) (text)
Barġūṯī, Dīmā ʿAlāʾ Ilhām (al-Barghouti, Dima Alaa Elham) (illus.)
Malik al-ʿālam *(King of the world)*
[Amman]: Kalila Wa Dimna (kwd publishing), 2026. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-9923-733-55-4

Jordan ■ ARABIC

Rule | Authority | Agency | Imagination | Picture book

What would happen if a child became king of the world? The young ruler immediately begins issuing laws that reorganize everyday life according to children's wishes: school lasts only half an hour, swimming pools stay open in winter, and familiar adult rules are cheerfully overturned. Each new decree pushes the fantasy of changing the rules a little further, transforming ordinary frustrations into an increasingly playful alternative world. Maria Dadoush uses the language of laws and authority to capture a distinctly childlike desire to renegotiate the rules imposed by adults. Dima Alaa Elham al-Barghouti's inventive illustrations make this reversal especially funny: handwritten lines, exaggerated figures, signs, objects, and typography turn every law into a visual joke. The text itself bends and travels across the page, making reading part of the game. Light-hearted and mischievous, this picture book gives children the pleasure of imagining what the world might look like if, for once, they were the ones making the rules. (Age: 5+) [LW]

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Palestine ■ ARABIC

Bašārāt, Aḥlām (Bsharat, Ahlam) (text)
Ḥalāw, Hayā (Halaw, Haya) (illus.)
Miyāw Miyāw
(Miaw Miaw)
(Meow Meow)
Rāmallāh: Mu'assasat Tāmir lit-Ta'līm al-Muǧtam'ī (Tamer Institute for Community Education), 2025. – 30 p.
ISBN 978-9950-27-119-7

Gaza | War | Displacement | Home | Memory | Belonging | Picture book

When a Palestinian family must suddenly leave their home in a city surrounded by soldiers, each person is told to take something loved, important, necessary, and light. The father chooses the children's birth certificates, the family packs passports and bags, and the children search among toys, plants, photographs, and familiar objects. Outside, neighbours are making the same painful choices. At the heart of Ahlam Bsharat's story is a deceptively simple question: what is truly essential when you are forced to leave home? Haya Halaw's delicate illustrations linger on domestic details, gradually allowing war to enter their warm visual world through smoke, ruins, aircraft, and emptied spaces. The recurring »meow meow« of Mansour, the family cat, gives the story tenderness and rhythm. Dedicated to the children of Gaza displaced with their pets, the book approaches forced displacement through attachment rather than spectacle. Home becomes the people, animals, memories, and relationships one refuses to leave behind. (Age: 6+) [LW]

4

Palestine ■ ARABIC

Ṣbaiḥ, Nuhā (Sbeih, Nuha) (text)
Ḥasan Zadih Šarīf, Amīn (Hassanzadeh Sharif, Amin) (illus.)
al-Ġūlat al-umm
(Al-ghula al-umm)
(Mother Ghoul)
al-Quds (Jerusalem): Dār ar-Ri'bāl (Dar Ribal), 2026. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-9950-8587-2-5

Ghoul | Demon | Courage | Resistance | Picture book

Drawing on the ghoul, a demon-like creature of Arab and Palestinian folk culture, this story transforms a familiar figure of fear into the heroine of an unusual family tale. Mother Ghoul lives peacefully with her daughters and sons until a violent ghoul steals her three magical hairs and with them her strength and memory. It reshapes family life through fear: the daughters are chained inside the home, the sons learn to imitate the ghoul's authority, and the family eventually forgets how differently they once lived. Yet the youngest children, Shams and Qamar – Sun and Moon – recover fragments of the past and bring the family to resist. Iranian illustrator Amin Hassanzadeh Sharif creates a striking visual world in which Arab and Persian traditions meet, giving this Palestinian folk tale a distinctive cross-cultural language. Its idea that heroism belongs to the family collectively is especially compelling: liberation begins when its members remember one another, break the chains together, and help Mother Ghoul recover her strength. (Age: 8+) [LW]

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5

Nāṣir, Amal (Nasser, Amal) (text)
Mūrġān, Būlīnā (Morgan, Paulina) (illus.)
Abī yuḥibbu Ummī
(Daddy loves Mommy)
aš-Šāriqa (Sharjah): Kalimāt, 2025. – [20] p.
ISBN 978-9948-743-12-5

Family | Parents | Love | Affection | Animals | Picture book

United Arab Emirates ■ ARABIC

What does love look like to a very young child? This tender picture book begins with affectionate pairs from the animal world: birds, fish, and other creatures come together, care for one another, and create warm homes and families. Gradually, the book moves from these playful examples toward the relationship closest to the child: mother and father. With very simple language and gentle illustrations, »Abi yuhibbu Ummi« introduces love through gestures that even the youngest readers can recognize: closeness, affection, care, and the joy of being together. Particularly charming is its focus on the loving relationship between the parents themselves, presenting the family not simply as a group of individuals but as something built through affection between partners. Simple, warm, and perfectly suited to shared reading, the book gives toddlers an accessible first vocabulary for love, partnership, and family. (Age: 2+) [LW]

6

Tūnisī, Dāliyā (Tunsi, Dalia) (text)
Manāṣira, Ḥassān (Manasrah, Hassan) (illus.)
Aġlā mā fi 'l-wuǧūd
(Aghla ma fi al-wujud)
(The most precious thing in the world)
Dubai: Dār Ašǧār (Ashjar Publishing), 2026. – 64 p.
ISBN 978-9948-69958-3

Philosophy | Happiness | Contentment | Friendship | Desire | Values

United Arab Emirates ■ ARABIC

An emperor has everything money can buy: lavish food, magnificent clothes, music, entertainment, and treasures from across the world. Yet he remains unhappy. When he demands »the most precious thing in the world«, a mysterious merchant offers him happiness – but every precious thing has its price. The emperor begins a series of exchanges involving happiness, youth, friendship, and contentment, only to gradually discover that value cannot be separated from what we are willing to sacrifice for it. The story ends with a question, leaving readers to decide for themselves what is truly most precious. Hassan Manasrah's spectacular, intricately detailed illustrations give the philosophical tale an additional layer of wit. Palaces, costumes, and visual references to artistic traditions coexist with contemporary technology and objects, collapsing past and present into one exuberant world. The result is a humorous, thought-provoking book about desire, happiness, friendship, and possessing what we value most. (Age: 8+) [LW]

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7

Bulgaria ■ BULGARIAN

Angelova, Michaela (Angelova, Mikhaela) (text/illus.)
Oblakăt, kojto ostava
(Oblakat, koyto ostava)
(The cloud that stayed)
Plovdiv: Punkt.Studio, 2025. – [20] p.
ISBN 978-619-92134-2-1

Cycle of life | Nature | Transience | Leporello | Picture book

A little boy in a bright yellow playsuit runs through nature and discovers dandelions. He is accompanied by a cloud, which a short time later becomes encircled by a thunderstorm. The rain and wind look sinister and tear the flowers to shreds. The boy is left saddened at first, but soon the »cloud that stayed« re-appears in the company of the sun and all forms of life return – sprouting again splendidly. The boy relishes his time in this paradisical jumble of plants, with the cloud in the sky as his companion. In strong, intensive, almost neon-bright colours, the illustrator Mikhaela Angelova tells a story of the cycle of life, of growth and decay, showing that along with joy, sadness also has its place in life. To visualize these changes in mood, Angelova makes clever use of the leporello format. At the »turning point« of the front and back sides, the dramatic build-up reaches its climax, only to be resolved in the second half. (Age: 3+) [KW]

8

Bulgaria ■ BULGARIAN

Mogilska, Ivanka (text)
Janeva-Tabakova, Mila (Yaneva-Tabakova, Mila) (illus.)
Poljanka za snežni čoveci
(Polyanka za snezhni choveci)
(A meadow for snowmen)
Plovdiv: Žanet 45 (Janet 45), [2025]. – 45 p.
ISBN 978-619-186-993-0

Childhood | Winter | Fantasy | Short story

When winter arrives, the world is transformed into a magical space just asking to be discovered. There are dancing ovens, cheeky snowflakes and a giant overstuffed cloud. A modest, pensive snowman, who is still only snow on the meadow, just waiting to be built, is also the subject of one of these 14 short stories by Ivanka Mogilska. In »Polyanka za snezhni choveci« the texts readily shift back and forth between fantasy and reality, giving rise to wondrous moments in the everyday world of the protagonist, a sensitive boy who appears again and again throughout the collection. Mila Yaneva-Tabakova's warm-coloured illustrations magnificently capture the sense of security and the little pleasures that are inherent to the stories. Together with the poetic texts, they make for a calm yet buoyant wintertime book, which focusses on the little wonders and marvellous encounters in the life of a child. (Age: 5+) [KW]

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Spain ■ CATALAN

Comelles, Salvador (text)
Gusti (illus.)
Que estan mirant?
(What are you watching?)
Barcelona: El Cep i la Nansa Edicions, 2025. – [16] p.
(Series: Olivia col·lecció)
ISBN 978-84-19747-73-0

Animals | Fantastical creature | Poetry | Board book | Picture book

Have you ever heard of a »Focavall« (Sealorse), a »Cocopard« (Crocopard) or a »Lleoneu« (Liox)? No, not ever? No wonder, for these peculiar and unique fabulous beasts originated in the head of Salvador Comelles. In his short poems, the well-known Catalan author has brought to life eleven such creatures, each comprising two types of animals and names. We see, for instance, the sealorse (seal-horse) trotting along with its front legs while juggling a ball with its tail fin, or the two halves of the liox (lion-fox), each hoping that the other won't become a vegetarian. The humorous, frisky poems are perfectly suited for small children. The verses are illustrated by Gusti in his own inimitable style. The colourful pictures that, at first glance, appear to be crooked, askance and rather unsuccessful representations of animals, are weird creatures dashed onto paper with ingenious strokes. »Que estan mirant?« is a fabulous invitation to everyone to play with language and give free rein to one's own imagination. (Age: 3+) [JW]

10

Spain ■ CATALAN

Longan, Laia (text)
Vila Delclòs, Jordi (illus.)
El cor del Bosc Negre
(The heart of the Black Forest)
Barcelona: Animallibres, 2025. – 307 p.
(Series: L'Arca; 37)
ISBN 978-84-10302-91-4

Coping with grief | Forest | Family | Mystery | Fantasy fiction

Dinu moves with his father to a remote Romanian mountain village where his recently deceased mother grew up. The boy feels drawn to the Black Forest, which extends nearly up to the village and has supposedly not been entered by anyone for many years. During his forays into the woods, Dinu encounters an ancient raven and fantastical creatures who watch over the forest. At the same time, he stumbles upon secrets about his mother's past. In this novel Laia Longan combines an adventure story, a coming-of-age tale, and family history in a suspenseful, highly atmospheric narrative. Beginning as a fantasy story, it develops into a multi-layered narrative about grief, family origins and connection to nature. The forest is not only setting and background but also interacts with the protagonist as a space for memories and is a habitat under threat. Further strengths of the novel are the combination of suspense and reflection as well as the descriptions of landscape which create a bewitching mood. (Age: 10+) [JW]

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Spain ■ CATALAN

Solsona, Núria (text/illus.)
Coreografies animals
(Animal choreography)
Barcelona: Zahorí Books, 2025. – [42] p.
ISBN 979-13-87709-52-5

Animals | Movement | Coordination | Communication | Non-fiction

The narrow vertical format and elegant cover design of this book immediately spark curiosity. Inside there are six aesthetically illustrated double-page spreads on strong, matt paper which can be unfolded from the middle fold into a sheet double in size. Each chapter is devoted to an animal species or animal family that organises and forms aggregations, sometimes counting thousands of individuals. On the first double pages there are geese, starlings, bees, sardines, ants and penguins, each moving in groups: the gaggle of geese, for example, in a wedge-shaped flight pattern or sardines in a circularly rotating shoal. Subsequently, on the twice-as-large pages, there are further illustrations and compact texts which explain how the animals execute their »choreographic« achievements, why they act in such a spectacular manner, and how they communicate among themselves. In text and picture, in content and in design, this is a fascinating non-fiction book that forms a consistent and harmonious whole. (Age: 8+) [JW]

12

Malaysia ■ CHINESE

Gasing Buku (Qi dian wen hua) (text)
Teh, Way Chin (Zheng Weizhen) (illus.)
Rou gu cha xiang
(The fragrance of Bak Kut Teh)
Shah Alam, Selangor: Persatuan Kebajikan Tangan Sejati (Little Hands Action Charity Foundation), 2025. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-629-99685-6-6

Food | Bak Kut Teh | Worker | Coolie | History | Picture book

In her debut, Teh Way Chin introduces Bak Kut Teh, a popular dish in the city of Klang, Selangor, by following a little girl and her father to a restaurant. Bak Kut Teh translates from Hokkien as »meat bone tea«. It consists of pork ribs slow cooked in a rich broth made with spices and Chinese medicinal herbs. While the girl enjoys mouth-watering ingredients like pork feet and trotters, her dad explains the dish's history. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, thousands of Chinese immigrated to work as »coolies« at the Klang docks or in Malaya's tin mines and plantations. A local food stall owner, Lee Boon Teh, added Chinese medicinal herbs and seasonings into his soup for them. Legend has it that the locals named the dish after him. While Dad's story ends, the girl finishes her meal with a full burp. They depart with takeaways, belly full, heart warm. Crucial to the ethnic identity of the Chinese community in an Islamic country, Bak Kut Teh was recognized as a Malaysian national heritage dish in 2024. (Age: 3+) [LO]

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13

Liu, Haiqi (text)
Zou, Xiaoping (illus.)
Wan wu sheng zhang
(All things grow)
Tianjin: Xin lei chu ban she
(New Buds Publishing House), 2025. – 191 p.
ISBN 978-7-5307-7975-0

Childhood | Moral education | Short story

People's Republic of China ■ CHINESE

This short story collection for children draws its title from a popular 1960s »red song« (revolutionary song), evoking the writer's childhood and the spirit of childhood today. With his innovative narratives, Liu Haiqi deviates from the typical style and content of Chinese children's fiction and its notions of childhood. Realistic images of children collide with contradictory moral concepts, revealing the vibrancy of a »red« generation's childhood, and proving that, in any era, while the lives of children can be disciplined by mainstream ideologies, their innate free spirit still prevails. With rare precision and density, this collection reworks the era's formal literary language and revives forgotten historical experiences. Liu Haiqi is a renowned publisher, former CBBY Deputy Chairman, and outstanding children's author. His books include »You ge zi de xia tian« and »Wu wei xiao shu li xian ji«. He won the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature twice and received the 2023 China's Good Books prize. (Age: 10+) [FW, ZX]

14

Peng, Yi (text)
Tian, Yu (illus.)
Xue lu
(Snow deer)
Nanning: Jie li chu ban she
(Jieli Publishing House), 2025. – 208 p.
(Series: Wu li wa la shu shu gu shi ji)
ISBN 978-7-5448-9443-2

Deer | Snow | Love | Fantasy fiction | Graphic novel

People's Republic of China ■ CHINESE

A snow deer that has saved a boy and his father is transformed into a little girl who comes knocking on their cabin door. Their bond continues to grow but at the price of the deer becoming invisible. This love story, told in the boy's voice, is marked by a masterfully paced narration and genuine emotions. The illustrations blend the aesthetics of Chinese ink-painting with expressive, modern graphic-novel techniques. Blacks, whites, and greys create an atmosphere drawing on memory and myth, flowing in harmony with the text. This graphic novel was named a 2025 China's Good Book and won the Canadian Applied Arts Award. Peng Yi is a celebrated fantasy writer, translator, and scholar. His works include the fantasy novel »Yu you ling ca jian er guo« and the picture book »Xun lu ren de hai zi«. He received the China Publishing Government Award. Tian Yu's picture books »Qiao men xiao xiong« and »Chang bai sun« received the Times Picture Book Award and the Laurel Children's Book Award. (Age: 10+) [FW, ZX]

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Tongzi (i.e. Zhao, Zhongsheng) (text)
Jin, Zhaoxin (illus.)
Du jiao shou xian shen de chun tian
(The spring when unicorns appear)
Jinan: Ming tian chu ban she (Tomorrow Publishing House), 2025. – 158 p.
(Series: Xin tong shi)
ISBN 978-7-5708-2549-3

Imagination | Language | Play | Poetry

CHINESE ■ People's Republic of China

This collection features nearly eighty children's poems by Tongzi. They are marked by wild innocence, boundless imagination, playful surprises, and profound philosophical undercurrents. Composed in free form and flowing in rhythm, they delightfully alternate between the quotidian and a world of wonder, suggesting no dissociation between real life and fairy tales, everyday words and poetry. »Halfway through the dream / I suddenly forgot who I was...« »I once threw a lion up into the sky / and it hasn't come down yet...«. Tongzi's generation of authors has expanded the artistic expression and aesthetic scope of Chinese children's poetry, while their seemingly aimless whimsy and ostensibly casual free verse also sparked debate. Should poetry for children be like this? Tongzi's poetry collections include »Chi zu tiao lai tiao qu« (Jumping about barefoot) and »Wo zhi dao suo you wen ti de da an le« (I know the answers to all the questions), the latter won the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature. (Age: 8+) [FW, ZX]

16

Zhou, Xiang (text/illus.)
A li ya zhao ba ba
(Aliya looks for her Dad)
Ürümqi: Xin jiang qing shao nian chu ban she (Xinjiang Juvenile Publishing House), 2025. – [46] p.
(Series: Bei bei xiong tong shu guan)
ISBN 978-7-5756-0669-1

Xinjiang | Uyghur <people> | Bazaar | Daughter | Father

CHINESE ■ People's Republic of China

Aliya, a little Uyghur girl, eagerly follows her father to the grand bazaar to buy sheep. Afterwards, her father leaves to fix his vehicle, telling Aliya to wait. A startled horse and a rainstorm soon plunge the bazaar into chaos, and Aliya gets lost in the clamour and confusion of the vast market. But people notice her in her red dress and come forward to help, calling her father's name until they find him, thus helping to reunite father and child. Earthy yellows and russet browns in the illustrations evoke a harsh but warm-hearted land where busy folk pause to help a child. Zhou Xiang is a leading figure in promoting contemporary Chinese picture books. 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). In 2023, Zhou Xiang won »Chinese Excellence in Children's Illustration« at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. (Age: 5+) [FW, ZX]

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Taiwan ■ CHINESE

Neqou Soqluman (text)
Maoyu (i. e. Chiang Meng-Yun) (illus.)
Tongku Saveq. Taki Ludun tu Vazaz Tiang
(Dong gu sha fei. Shan de hai zi Di ang)
(Tiang. Child of the mountain)
Taibei: Si ye wen hua (SACCA Publishing Company), 2025. – [56] p.
ISBN 978-626-96841-6-8

Taiwan | Mountains | Ecology | Bunun <people> | Picture book

The story follows young Tiang, who desires to climb Tongku Saveq, the sacred mountain of the Bunun people. Although his father – a high-altitude porter who wants to shield his son from back-breaking labour – is at first reluctant, they embark, together with the grandfather, on a trek that requires courage, responsibility, and physical stamina. Weaving in mythology, ecology, and ancestral wisdom, the narrative follows their ascent to the summit, where Taiwan's breathtaking beauty unfolds. Illustrator Maoyu's intuitive approach rejects stereotypical »tribal styles«; using coloured inks to interweave reality and fantasy, she depicts thin air, mist, textures of trees, rocks, mythical creatures and the well-defined calves of the hard-working Bunun. The book reflects the worldview of the Bunun and their desire to reclaim their sacred mountain. Author and illustrator have received numerous national and international awards. This book was awarded the TIBE Grand Prize 2026 for Children's and Young Adult Literature. (Age: 7+) [LO]

18

Taiwan ■ CHINESE

Xi Xi (i.e. Ellen Cheung Yin / Zhang Yan) (text)
Liu, Joanne (Liao Beien) (illus.)
Ke bu ke yi shuo
(Can we say?)
Taipei: Xiwang zhizao youxian gongsi (Hopology Publishing), 2025. – [42] p.
(Series: Xi Xi shi ji hui ben xi lie; 1)
ISBN 978-626-98257-6-9

Language | Norm | Rebellion | Poetry | Picture book

»Ke bu ke yi shuo« pairs the literary imagination of the iconic late Hong Kong writer and poet Xi Xi (1937–2022) with the bold, whimsical visual storytelling of award-winning Hong Kong illustrator Joanne Liu. This celebrated poem has been adapted into a vibrant visual narrative where text and imagery engage in an entertaining exploration of language through a deceptively simple and rebellious poetic device: the deliberately incorrect assignment of measure words. By rearranging conventional phrases to name the world in unexpected ways, the poem subverts rigid grammatical norms and accustomed perspectives alike: »Can we say: A gourd of universe? A bloom of umbrellas? A bottle of Milky Way? A tail of an emperor?« Beneath this playful surface lies a more subversive intent to upend linguistic norms and question societal rules and world views. Joanne Liu's imaginative illustrations bring this rebellion to life, transforming absurdity into acts of resistance against censorship, highlighting creative freedom and challenging hierarchies. (Age: 3+) [LO]

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Croatia ■ CROATIAN

Đula, Ivana (text)
Sinkauz, Milica (text)
Vuković, Dominik (illus.)
Ništa strašno
(Nothing to be afraid of)
Zagreb: Bodoni, [2024]. – [52] p.
ISBN 978-953-8398-40-7

Falling asleep | Fear | Coping with fear | Picture book

To fall asleep all alone in his bedroom, in his little bed – this seems quite impossible to the main character in this prize-winning picture book. He is much too afraid. Thus, his father tells him the story of a dark world in which another little boy lives, whose name is Little Fear. He is part of a family whose mission is to scare other people and teach them a lesson in fearfulness. But Little Fear is himself afraid and doesn't want to scare anyone. When the two boys meet each other, they are able to overcome all their own fears in no time at all. This oversized book is done in dark colours and inhabited by a wonderfully spooky gallery of ancestral portraits, uncanny silhouettes and a whole classroom of zombies. They symbolise all that is eerie. Hence, it is good to know that among them all there are also living beings who are plagued by fears. The short, rhythmical text makes this a perfect book to be read aloud. (Age: 4+) [KW]

20

Croatia ■ CROATIAN

Milun, Koraljka (text)
Petrović, Ana (illus.)
Kamelia Leona
(Chamelia Leona)
Zagreb: Ibis grafika, 2025. – 178 p.
ISBN 978-953-363-209-4

Outsider | Self-acceptance | Supernatural power | Detective novel

Kamelia Leona (Chamelia Leona) has extremely good vision and scaly skin on her thigh that changes with her emotional states. The reason that she must keep this distinguishing mark secret, and accept being an outsider, is connected to her father's job as a chameleon researcher. He has invented a formula for a special vitamin concoction that some shady characters want to get their hands on. They invite Kamelia to fake art workshops in hopes of gaining access to the formula. But everyone there is acting quite strangely, and when her father's oldest chameleon is stolen, she is sure that the supposed art professor and his crew are behind it. Kamelia forms a detective team with her friends, nicknamed Hearts, Spades, Clubs, and Diamonds to expose the gangsters' dark secret. Clever children, dodgy adults, lots of secrets and a fast-paced story for readers to help solve – paired with witty illustrations by Ana Petrović – make for a thoroughly enjoyable reading experience. (Age: 8+) [KW]

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21

Iblová, Františka (text/illus.)
Co na to vzduch?
(What about air?)
Praha: Baobab, 2025. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-80-7515-200-8

Air | Picture book

Czech Republic ■ CZECH

In her small, fine picture book »Co na to vzduch?« Czech illustrator Františka Iblová (b. 2000) lets the natural element of air speak for itself and, as narrator, enter into a dialogue with the reader. Thus, air confronts humans and their lifestyle with a multitude of questions. This stimulates us to give more thought to everything around us, things we neither perceive nor see, but most surely are able to sense. We experience how we can be left gasping for air, how it attacks us as a blast of air, how a breeze caresses the skin, how we pollute the air and make it smelly. With a reduced, understated colour palette in pale blue tones, black pen strokes and a white, colourless background, all of which she brings together in comic-book-like panels, Františka Iblová presents us with a sensitive and philosophical exploration of air as an element vital to human existence. It is (almost) always there, as a matter of course, and thus deserves to be consciously appreciated. (Age: 3+) [KW]

22

Illnerová, Kateřina (text/illus.)
S láskou V.
(With love, V.)
Brno: Host, 2025. – [69] p.
ISBN 978-80-275-2744-1

Postcard | Imaginary trip | Old age | Granddaughter | Grandmother | Comic

Czech Republic ■ CZECH

How nice it is to get mail! Especially from a granddaughter who is away on her travels. From along her route, she sends postcards to her grandmother, who is old and homebound. And thanks to the postcards, Grandmother can do more than just follow the itinerary. In Kateřina Illnerová´s comic, she steps beyond the walls of her living room and enters the landscapes shown on the postcards. In this way, she experiences her granddaughter's adventures, too. With muted colours and through the harmonious alternation of full-page illustrations and comic panels, a wonderful story is developed in which reality and imagination are extremely cleverly interwoven. »S láskou V.« is a profession of love for intergenerational bonds. And it makes the strongest possible case in support of the small gesture, such as writing simple postcards that let a granddaughter keep in touch with her grandmother and let the grandmother take part in her life. (Age: 8+) [KW]

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23

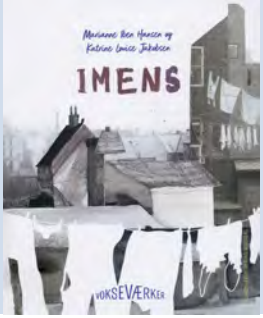
Czech Republic ■ CZECH

Nizri, Avihai (text)
Antczak, Patrik (illus.)
Malý, Radek (transl.)
Kolona
(Convoy)
[Praha]: Meander, 2025. – [24] p.
(Series: Repolelo; 64. Svazek)
ISBN 978-80-7558-296-6

Traffic jam | Story in verse | Leporello | Board book | Picture book

How nice it can be to be stuck in a traffic jam! Sure, at first one gets impatient and wants to get there quickly, but then an unbelievable group dynamic arises: people, animals, and creatures of all sorts get out of their vehicles and move about on the highway. They engage in conversations, make new friends, dance, enjoy an ice cream treat together, drink coffee at the coffee truck. When the traffic rolls again, it is almost a pity. For their funny and nonchalant story about what is normally an unbearably long and boring wait in a traffic jam, Israeli author Avihai Nizri and Czech illustrator Patrik Antczak have chosen the well-nigh perfect book format: the accordion book. Patrik Antczak's illustrations depict a road that is lined with seemingly never-ending blocks of high-rise buildings and bustling with wondrous, angular creatures and vehicles. The verses flow smoothly, following along like a convoy, in Radek Malý's rhymed translation of Avihai Nizri's original Hebrew text. (Age: 3+) [KW]

24



Denmark ■ DANISH

Hansen, Marianne Iben (text)
Jakobsen, Katrine Louise (illus.)
Imens
(Meanwhile)
[Frederiksberg]: Dansklærerforeningen, 2025. – 69 p.
(Series: Vokseværker)
ISBN 978-87-7211-431-6

Moment | Simultaneity | Short story

»Imens« contains an array of short stories that unfold simultaneously: Whilst one thing is going on, something else is happening, too. The result is a panorama full of different moments brought together in a book that has an intimate, diary-like quality due to its ink drawings and headings written in fountain pen. Some texts are half a page long, others just a single sentence: »Imens er der en, der tager fat på den første kasse i kælderen.« (Meanwhile, there is someone in the cellar lifting the first box.) This sentence immediately sets the imagination racing: What sort of box is it? Is someone moving? If so, why? The texts are rhythmic, concise, and often deal with the form of speechlessness that arises in moments of being together, moments of doubt, happiness, longing, or fear, which are hinted at in the stories. (Age: 14+) [IG]

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25

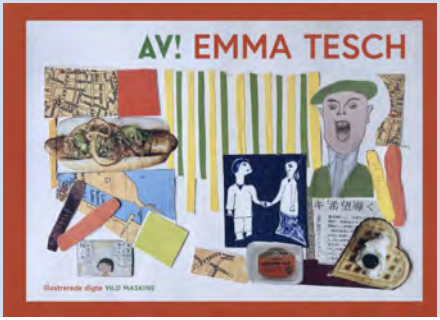
Krogsbøll, Birgitte (text)
Wichmann, Kamilla (illus.)
Himlen er en helleflynder
(The sky is a halibut)
København: Høst & Søn, 2026. – [23] p.
ISBN 978-87-02-40920-8

Poetry | Picture Book

Denmark ■ DANISH

Kamilla Wichmann and Birgitte Krogsbøll are a true dream team. Each of their jointly published picture books is a whimsical, playful, and surprising treasure trove. Right on the front endpapers, the eponymous halibut unfurls like a heavenly blanket. Drawn in the style of old maps, imagined constellations such as the snow hare and seahorse, as well as a cow-box and a horn-owl, can be spotted amongst the scales and shading. The author and the artist think, write, and paint with a love of sounds and tones, with great precision yet with boundless imagination. The illustrations are masterful and precise, yet perspectives and proportions often shift slightly. These minor discrepancies echo the whimsical nature of the texts, for alongside bizarre lists and tables, the verses also contain words that are turned upside down. (Age: 6+) [IG]

26



Tesch, Emma (text/illus.)
AV! Illustrerede digte
(OUCH! Illustrated poems)
[Vordingborg]: Vild Maskine, 2025. – 43 p.
ISBN 978-87-7227-499-7

Poetry | Picture book

Denmark ■ DANISH

Emma Tesch's debut collection brings together poems and collages. Her language is often driving, rhythmic and alliterative. The texts, like the images, are characterised less by coherent meaning than by an open, associative flow. At times they are sensual and playful; at others, raw, wild, absurd, and absolutely bonkers. This is the case with the poem »Mis« (Kitten): »De 14 brødre fik ikke lov til at røre ved / de grøntsager mor Søren hadde kjøbt. / Butikken hedder Dødens Pølse / og ligger ved den leverfarvede / nok så iøjnefaldene katedral.« (The 14 brothers were forbidden to touch the vegetables / that Mother Søren had bought. / The shop is called »The Sausage of Death« / and is situated next to the liver-coloured / rather eye-catching cathedral). By the way, the eponymous kitten only appears in the penultimate line: It is supposed to take its pills. Anyone who gives these poems a go can leave well-trodden linguistic paths and have a lot of fun. (Age: 10+) [IG]

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Belgium ■ DUTCH

De Vlieger, Evelien (text)
Panders, Wendy (illus.)
De mooiste van het land. Sappige weetjes en verhalen over de appel
(The fairest of them all. Juicy facts and stories about the apple)
Tielt: Lannoo, [2026]. – 151 p.
ISBN 978-90-599-6192-0

Apple | Food | Myth | Fairy tale | Non-fiction

Although the title of this book, »The fairest of them all«, seems to allude to Snow White, in fact the book is dedicated to the other »beauty« in the well-known fairy tale: the apple. For many, apples are an ordinary fruit that people eat every day, but as Evelien De Vlieger reveals, they are so much more. Along with a history lesson about how the apple originated and travelled around the world, children learn many fun facts about apples. For example, that the Celts attributed sacred powers to the apple because, when cut in half, its core looks like a pentagram. Or that the Italian word for tomato, »pomodoro«, means »golden apple«. The bite-sized texts are not only accessible and often witty, but also well-matched by the humorous illustrations. In addition, the book contains several stories – adapted from the Bible, mythology, fairy tales and other classics – in which apples play a key role. And should the reader feel like eating apples after the reading, the book includes some nice recipes. Sweet! (Age: 8+) [VJ]

28

Belgium ■ DUTCH

Jacques (Maes, Jacques) (text/illus.)
Lise (Braekers, Lise) (text/illus.)
De oorsprong der dingen
(The origin of things)
Kalmthout: Pelckmans, [2025]. – [64] p.
ISBN 978-94-6234-859-2

Microplastics | Pollution | Alternative history | Philosophy | Picture book

The ubiquitousness of microplastics has become an important theme in campaigns for environmental awareness. Flemish artists Jacques and Lise take up the idea that »plastic is everywhere« and create an alternative evolutionary history that raises fundamental questions about what it means to be alive, and how living matter can co-exist with plastic matter. In their alternative history, microplastics came first and then clustered to form the first objects which are seen in the illustrations: plastic bags, cutlery and toothbrushes floating in the sea. These are given Latin names, such as »sacculus plasticus«, that mimic paleontological names for fossils. After crawling onto land and further evolving, plastics get bored and invent life. The tale blends elements from the Bible, natural history, encyclopedia articles and pollution warnings in a slightly absurd storyline that prompts more serious discussions. All of this is done in a stylized form, with parodic illustrations that playfully cast familiar objects in a strange light. (Age: 6+) [VJ]

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Belgium ■ DUTCH

Khodabux, Sacha (text)
Van Bergen, Leriette Desir (illus.)
Ik wil geen nieuwe broek
(I don't want a new pair of pants)
Wielsbeke: De Eenhoorn, [2025]. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-94-6291-842-9

Clothing | Recycling | Upcycling | Fashion | Family | Picture book

This cheerful picture book tackles the issue of fast fashion with an original story and an informative afterword. A girl called Sky wants to wear her favourite trousers for her grandmother's visit, but she discovers that they no longer fit her. A trip to the shop doesn't solve the problem, as no pair of trousers can compare to her old jeans. Thanks to her resourceful and creative mum, they find an alternative: they make a new pair of trousers from old clothes, and even have enough for a matching skirt for Mum. The illustration style complements the content very well, since like the »new« patchwork clothes, the pictures consist mainly of collages. Leriette Desir van Bergen plays with many shades of blue, the colour of the old jeans. The message is important – upcycling and recycling help to reduce the mountain of textile waste – but the playful tone ensures that the story never becomes preachy. It is the family's warmth and creativity, above all, that linger in the reader's mind. (Age: 3+) [VJ]

30

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

Beek, Louis van (text)
Straten, Harmen van (illus.)
De vergeetachtige vleermuis en andere verhalen van dierendokter Sam
(The forgetful bat and other stories about Sam the vet)
Houten: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 2025. – 48 p.
ISBN 978-90-00-39979-6

Animals | Illness | Gender | Dementia | Rhyme

Not all princesses dream of ruling a kingdom or marrying a prince. Sam wants to become a veterinarian, and she's determined to succeed. As a beginning vet, she sees all sorts of sick animals: a bat suffering from dementia, a little pig who doesn't feel comfortable in his own skin – or, as it turns out, in their gender – and a centipede with a broken leg (good luck finding which one). The combination of fairy-tale elements and fantasy fiction with a modern and realistic setting creates amusing contrasts, as does the blend of human and animal characters. Louis van Beek's debut demonstrates boldness of imagination, as well as a flair for wordplay. Serious themes like gender dysphoria and dementia are handled with a light touch without being trivialized. There is a lovely interplay with the illustrations by Harmen van Straaten, an artist with extensive experience, who gives the animals a funny touch with their particularly lively facial expressions. (Age 5+) [VJ]

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31

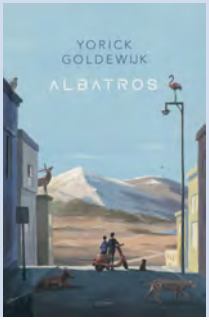
Brummelen, Nicole van (text/illus.)
Siemon even wachten
(Wait a moment, Siemon)
Amsterdam: Luitingh-Sijthoff, [2025]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-90-210-5347-9

Time | Counting | Bird | Seasons | Picture book

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

Despite the somewhat sterile appearance of the computer-generated images on the cover, this picture book offers a charming story that combines an educational message with an entertaining plot. The seagull Siemon cannot wait to leave on an adventure, but his friends tell him he needs to wait: first a year, then a month, then a week, and so on. As the story progresses, readers learn about the seasons, months and days of the week, and other divisions of time. The back-and-forth between the impatient Siemon and his slow-moving friends soon becomes pleasantly predictable for young children, allowing them to anticipate what comes next. The ending playfully subverts those expectations. There is a lovely interplay between text and images, and the compositions display considerable variation. Nicole van Brummelen's illustrations feature funny details, such as the seagull doing a disco dance or the shape of his friend the mayfly, while giving Siemon a wide variety of facial expressions to add a further comical layer. (Age: 4+) [VJ]

32



Goldewijk, Yorick (text)
Albatros
(Albatross)
Amsterdam: Ploegsma, [2025]. – 272 p.
ISBN 978-90-216-8660-8

Animals | Metamorphosis | War | Philosophy | Fantasy fiction

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

When thirteen-year-old Abel wakes up one morning, he finds that his mother has been transformed into a doe and his father into a dog. In a country already severely affected by a long war with the North, there seem to be no other humans around. As Abel explores the city, he eventually finds a note from a girl called Kat who lives in the hated North. As all around them the transformed animals gradually lose their human traits, Abel and Kat become reluctant companions who need to find out what has happened to their world. Embarking on a road trip to the sea, they experience several adventures and have to make difficult choices. Yorick Goldewijk's fantasy novel raises powerful questions about what it means to be human, to be at war, and to become friends. The story is captivating and cruel, but also funny and deeply moving. With imaginative worldbuilding, carefully crafted characters and surprising plot twists, »Albatros« easily holds the readers' attention from the first to the last page. (Age: 12+) [VJ]

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33

Huisman, Liz (text)
Boterman, Anna (illus.)
Durf
(Courage)
Rotterdam: Lemniscaat, [2025]. – [112] p.
ISBN 978-90-477-1777-5

Moving house | Running away | Adventure | Friendship | Courage | Rural life | Family

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

Eleven-year-old Kek can use a bit of courage to deal with having a new baby sister at home. Moreover, his family has moved to a small village, leaving his grandfather alone in the city. With Christmas approaching, Kek no longer feels wanted. Rather than sharing his anxieties with his parents, however, he decides to run – or rather cycle – away from home to live with his grandpa. But how can he get to the city all alone, especially when the worst snowstorm in years is coming? His new neighbour Harper is ready for an adventure, so together with her little dog Tos, the two children set off on the journey. They get lost in fields, ride on a farmer's truck, and break into a cottage in a holiday park to spend the night. They discover that courage can take different shapes and be found in unexpected moments. This feel-good story features no spectacular scenes, but author Liz Huisman is good at evoking atmosphere and employing the right words for the conflicted feelings that children find so difficult to express. (Age: 9+) [VJ]

34

Main, Gerson (text)
Tjin, Hedy (illus.)
Alle dingen die mijn opa stiekem is
(All the things my grandpa secretly is)
Amsterdam: Querido, [2025]. – [26] p.
ISBN 978-90-451-3128-3

Old age | Dementia | Death | Fantasy | Picture book

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

While visiting her grandfather in a care centre, a girl explains to the reader how everybody is fooled by how simple his life appears to be. »But I know better«, she says. For her, he is a sultan who plays video games and chases the staff with water pistols. When the doctor helps him into bed, his granddaughter is sure that he is secretly plotting more adventures, such as visiting an island where donuts grow from trees or joining a diving expedition to hold conversations with colourful fish. The story can be read on two levels: as a story about a girl who is in denial about her grandfather's approaching death, or as a challenge to the narrative about old age which assumes that this stage of life must be boring and filled with illness and loneliness. Hedy Tjin's pleasure in bringing these adventures to life in radiant pictures is evident on every page. The illustrations are a powerful invitation to side with the girl and imagine older people differently, while the hospital scenes give the book a particularly moving touch. (Age: 5+) [VJ]

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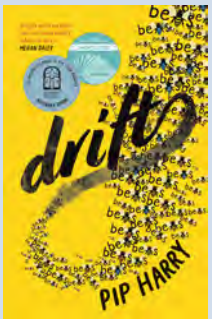
Wittenbols, Peer (text)
Debroey, Shamisa (illus.)
Konijntjes op het kerkhof
(Rabbits in the cemetery)
[Amsterdam]: De Harmonie, 2025. – 92 p.
ISBN 978-94-6336-219-1

Animals | Emotion | Death | Poetry

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

Rabbits in a cemetery can make graves look less threatening, and similarly, the poems in this collection make serious topics feel lighter. The opener, »Alles stroomt« (Everything flows) sets the tone: the speaker thinks »in my previous life / I must have died in a very funny way« because everybody was so happy when he was born. The poem carries a hopeful message that sees life and death as a cycle in which every end leads to a new beginning. Several poems in the collection take the perspective of a child who looks at the world with fresh eyes, sometimes finding comfort in unexpected places, often seeing the cracks in reality. Shamisa Debroey's expressionist illustrations match the poems' vitality: some are reminiscent of Matisse's abstract paintings; others are an uncanny mixture of realistic drawings with colours that are out of place. They are well-matched to the daring approach that Peer Wittenbols takes to children's poetry. Several of the poems are slightly unsettling, showing that happiness and sadness often go hand in hand. (Age: 10+) [VJ]

36



Harry, Pip (text)
Drift
Sydney, NSW: Hachette Australia, 2025. – 312 p.
(A Lothian Children's Book)
ISBN 978-0-7344-2390-0

Bullying | Mental breakdown | Outsider | Friendship | Loyalty | Bee | Verse novel

Australia ■ ENGLISH

Fourteen-year-old Luna and her new next-door neighbour Nate both feel isolated and distressed. Nate has just moved back to Australia with his sick mother, while his dad is still working in Singapore, where Nate grew up. Luna, meanwhile, is reeling from a harrowing incident of school and cyberbullying that threatens to send her into a mental breakdown. Soon, the two lonely teens become each other's lifelines, bonding over their conviction to save the swarm of 20,000 bees that picked Nate's house as their new home. Yet when Nate breaks a promise he made, Luna retreats into her shell and her self-harming behaviour gets worse. Award-winning author Pip Harry's quiet verse novel, told in alternating chapters from both friends' perspectives, tackles a number of challenging topics without ever feeling preachy or overloaded. Her heartfelt verse, which includes expressive visual elements, gives insight into the young protagonists' thoughts and anxieties, while ultimately creating an atmosphere of hope and healing. (Age: 12+) [CS]

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Lonesborough, Gary (text)
Good young men
Sydney [et al.]: Allen & Unwin, 2026. – 292 p.
ISBN 978-1-76118-217-4

Indigenous people | Police shooting | Racism | Homosexuality | Bullying | Grief | Friendship

Australia ■ ENGLISH

Acclaimed Indigenous author Gary Lonesborough's fourth teen novel is the moving story of four Aboriginal boys from a small coastal town who used to be close friends, but slowly drifted apart during their high school years. Then one of them is killed by a white cop. Told consecutively from each of the three teens' points of view, the book discloses how the boys struggle during their final year. Kallum becomes the victim of a homophobic prank, lashes out, and loses his prestigious sports scholarship in Sydney; Jordy dreams of attending acting school, but is afraid to leave his grieving father and siblings; and Dylan, the only eyewitness to their friend's murder, gets threatened by a gang who try to prevent him from testifying at the impending trial. Spanning several months, the three first-person narrations reveal how the boys rebuild connections, fall in love, fight against racist bullying, and move towards a brighter future. An intriguing and insightful YA novel that will stay in readers' minds for a long time! (Age: 13+) [CS]

38

McLennan, Alison (text)
Pearce, Mel (illus.)
How to get rid of a princess
Collingwood, Victoria: Bright Light, an imprint of Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2026. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-7612-1297-0

Knight | Princess | Guidebook | Siblings | Imagination | Play | Picture book

Australia ■ ENGLISH

There is no doubt about it: Princesses can be a nuisance. Thus, every knight should know ways of getting rid of them. Yet no matter what the frustrated young knight in this laugh-out-loud picture book attempts, he cannot keep the mischievous little princess out of his castle; she sneakily outsmarts him every single time. Alison McLennan's deliberately factual tongue-in-cheek text reads (almost) like a proper knightly manual, as Mel Pearce's scratchy, vibrant, comical illustrations reveal just how catastrophically things go wrong. With exaggerated body movements and facial expressions, the digitally coloured drawings uncover what is really happening between the two protagonists. When the armour-clad boy finally admits defeat and lets his sister join in his imaginative play, the two – and their entire army of stuffed toys – have an absolute ball. A wonderfully fantastical and joyful story that offers a glimpse into the ups and downs of sibling dynamics. (Age: 4+) [CS]

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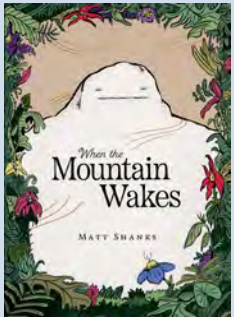

Australia ■ ENGLISH

Shanks, Matt (text/illus.)
When the mountain wakes
South Melbourne: Affirm Press, 2025. – [66] p.
ISBN 978-1-923419-05-6

Earth | Environmental destruction | Climate change | Graphic novel | Picture book

For millions of years, the mountain has slept peacefully, quietly witnessing the comings and goings of plants, animals, humans (and aliens?) on Earth through different eras. Yet when everything becomes eerily quiet, the lonely mountain wakes, heaves itself up, and lumbers off »searching for a song«, only to be met with nothing but »the silence of stone and sand.« It almost gives up hope – when, suddenly, it spots a tiny blue flower, the fragile survivor of unnamed catastrophes. Award-winning Matt Shanks provides a powerful philosophical story of destruction, patience, and hope in a large-format graphic novel. The sparse lyrical text leaves ample room for readers to embellish the tales alluded to by the expressive illustrations, alternating between sequential snapshots in small panels and single larger images. The reduced colour palette in the middle of the book signals the oppressive silence of a dead world, highlighting the contrast to the colourful Earth nursed back to health at the end. A beautiful and impactful read. (Age: 8+) [CS]

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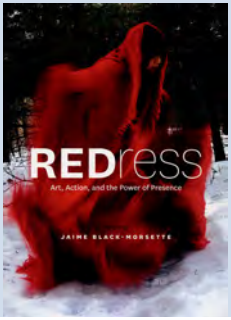

Canada ■ ENGLISH

Black-Morsette, Jaime (ed.)
Merrick, Cathy (foreword)
REDress. Art, action, and the power of presence
Winnipeg, Manitoba: HighWater Press, [2025]. – 140 p.
ISBN 978-1-77492-138-8

Canada | Indigenous people | Woman | Racism | Genocide | Poetry | Art | Essay | Anthology

REDress is a project created in 2010 by Métis artist and activist Jaime Black-Morsette. For her art installation, she collected hundreds of red dresses and presented them in public places to make people aware of the shocking number of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people who are murdered or have gone missing without a trace. In this anthology, Black-Morsette has gathered memories of her art project along with personal stories as well as poems, songs, photos, and essays by family members, survivors, Elders, artists, activists, and academics who have been affected – and continue to be so– by what Karine R. Duhamel, former director of research for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), calls a »gendered genocide«. The insightful and moving collection provides a wealth of background information and gives a voice and a place to the Indigenous victims of racist and colonialist prejudice. It is also a plea for solidarity in the fight against this tragedy. (Age: 14+) [CS]

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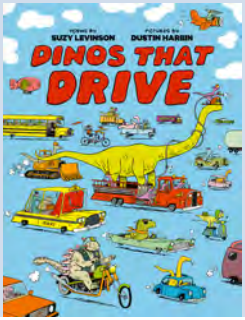

Levinson, Suzy (text)
Harbin, Dustin (illus.)
Dinos that drive
Toronto: Tundra, [2025]. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-1-77488-523-9

Dinosaur | Vehicle | Poetry | Picture book

Canada ■ ENGLISH

Dinosaurs and modern vehicles?! What's impossible in real life, because – well, duh: extinction! – becomes an irresistible combination in Suzy Levinson's latest collection of poetry. Her witty verses rife with wordplay reveal that these reptiles are just as fascinated by cars, trucks, trams, and planes as a lot of humans. Readers encounter a giant Brontosaurus zoom past on a motorbike, a large family of rabbit-sized Aquilops chill out in their campervan, and ravenous »car-nivore« T-Rex employ not one, but several schemes using vehicles to get easier access to his next meal, such as: »T. rex drives a taxicab / up and down the street. // His customers don't know it but / he's really there to eat.« Cartoonist Dustin Harbin clearly enjoys transforming the dynamic poems into colourful comical pictures that are full of movement, (e)motion, and monstrous fun. Small dinosaur-and-car-enthusiasts will discover a myriad of entertaining details and witty asides and even learn some facts along the way. (Age: 4+) [CS]

42

Plourde, Dorson (text)
Eggenschwiler, Byron (illus.)
Unnaturally blue
Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, [2025]. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-1-5253-1133-8

Swimming pool | Outsider | Sadness | Acceptance | Picture book

Canada ■ ENGLISH

Dorson Plourde's second picture book follows a young girl as she struggles with severe sadness. She is blue, »Unnaturally Blue«, on the verge of drowning in her own sorrow. Yet stuck in a crowded swimming pool of happy kids who laugh and play, she can't let her feelings out as »There just isn't any room … for tears«. The only escape she sees is diving down through the plughole into a swampy underground world, where she can finally release her tears and address her anxiety. Award-winning Byron Eggenschwiler's stunning, magical illustrations play with different perspectives, zooming in and out of scenes, and visualising the girl's emotions in oppressive shades of blue and black. Slowly, the blues merge into warmer colours and swirling patterns, as she grows into herself and urges her friends to express and accept their feelings as well. This philosophical look at society's pressure to conform and hide one's struggles is a powerful and touching read that can also serve as incentive to talk about emotions and mental health. (Age: 6+) [CS]

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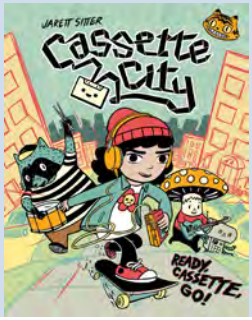

Sitter, Jarett (text/illus.)
Ready, cassette, go!
Toronto: Annick Press, 2026. – 204 p.
(Series: Cassette City; 1)
ISBN 978-1-83402-056-3

Music band | Competition | Bullying | Revenge | Anxiety | Friendship | Graphic novel

Canada ■ ENGLISH

Raccoon Snackwich and his best buddy Taki, a spotted mushroom, are excited: The annual »junior battle of the bands« is coming up and the two music buffs are eager to finally prove themselves. When they convince new-in-town girl Melody Li and robot Atikus to jam with them, it looks like they might actually have a shot at the competition. However, mean ginger cat Styles and his evil sidekicks keep harassing the friends and driving a wedge between them. A day before the event, a huge fight between Melody and Snackwich threatens to end it all. In music aficionado Jarett Sitter's debut graphic novel, a truly diverse cast of quirky characters, including a bunch of anthropomorphised plants and animals, tackle some challenging problems such as insecurity, bullying, and the fear of being abandoned. Yet eventually their friendship proves to be stronger. The soft colour palette of orange, red, teal, etc gives the story a clear retro vibe, which fits perfectly with analogue Cassette City, the place of tapes and record stores. (Age: 8+) [CS]

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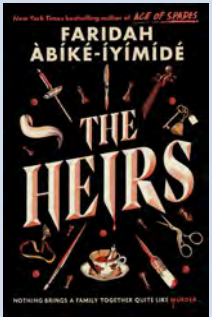

Àbíké-Íyímídé, Faridah (text)
The heirs
London: Usborne, 2026. – 349 p.
ISBN 978-1-83540-100-2

Murder | Investigation | Siblings | Secret | Genius | Pressure | Loyalty

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

The morning after his glamorous tenth Prodigy Ball, billionaire Leontes Button is found dead on his yacht. Among the prime suspects for the murder are his heirs, the five orphan teens he adopted as babies and brought up to be geniuses using his (in)famous »Button Method«. Yet the five 17-year-olds are not the only ones who had reasons to want the cruel, powerful man dead. Best-selling author Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé's latest offering is told in third person from multiple viewpoints and alternates between pre- and post-murder chapters. The story slowly reveals each teen's personality, hidden feelings, relationships, and some of their sinister secrets. The breathless pace and numerous twists capture readers' attention and keep them guessing until the end. This YA novel is not just a gripping, dark thriller, but also invites readers to think about the devastating effects of excessive parental pressure and of social expectations for perfection. (Age: 14+) (CS)

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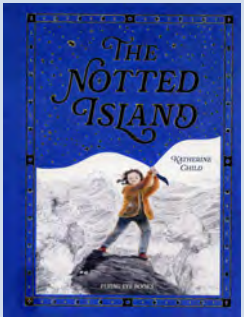

Child, Katherine (text)
The notted island
London: Flying Eye Books, 2025. – 139 p.
ISBN 978-1-91312-314-7

Island | Journey | Magical creature | Rescue | Colour | Fantasy fiction

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

It's 1861, and Colour has finally arrived in the whole world. Well, not the whole world: One small island seems to have been punished by remaining in drab black and white. Is it because their »notte« – the creature who is supposed to draw the veil of night over the island every evening – has become unreliable of late? When the disappointed islanders are offered an automated night sky, they are tempted… Maybe this can convince Colour to favour them, too? Young Tisky seems the only one who smells something fishy going on. She sets off toward the reclusive notte's home in the north, accompanied by energetic shadow Jink, to rescue her home village from the salesman's villainous plans. Peopled with a compassionate and determined heroine and a cast of peculiar magical creatures, this original fantasy novel is accompanied by atmospheric black-and-white drawings that beautifully conjure up Tisky's wondrous adventures. Author-illustrator Katherine Child has created a magnificent tale that will enchant readers of any age. (Age: 6+) [CS]

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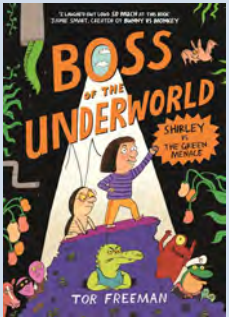

Freeman, Tor (text/illus.)
Shirley vs the Green Menace
London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2025. – 149 p.
(Series: Boss of the Underworld; 1)
ISBN 978-1-444-97639-7

Underworld | Adventure | Danger | Rescue | Storytelling | Comic

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

Tor Freeman is known for comics and children's stories imbued with wry humour. The first volume of her new comic book series called »Boss of the Underworld« is ample proof of her talent for wonderfully wacky tales. When young Shirley accidentally tumbles down an open manhole and ends up in »a world that's, you know, under your world«, she is a little confused to be enthusiastically welcomed by the motley crew of creatures living there. Her new friends claim she is the »Chosen One« sent there to fight against their evil boss and bring peace and harmony to the Underworld. Reluctantly, she agrees to venture into the ruthless ruler's lair, as it seems to be the only exit back to her own world. Accompanied by amiable giant cockroach George, Shirley braves great danger and encounters various weird beasts, until she eventually comes face to face with »the Green Menace«. This hilarious book features several stories within the story, fun intertextual references to fairy tales and classics, and lots of unexpected twists. (Age: 7+) [CS]

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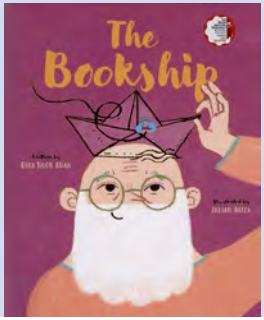

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

Khan, Hiba Noor (text)
Ariza, Julian (illus.)
The bookship
[London]: Ketebe Publishing, [2025]. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-625-5929-56-3

Grandfather | Death | Granddaughter | Grief | Storytelling | Memory | Picture book

»The Bookship«, by British Pakistani Hiba Noor Khan, the author of the award-winning »Safiyyah's War« (Andersen Press, 2023), is a celebration of the art of storytelling. Alia has always loved her grandfather's stories. For every situation in life, he had a suitable tale at his fingertips, sending the blue-haired girl into marvellous realms and wondrous galaxies. When he dies, Alia becomes overwhelmed by her sorrow – until she boards the magical Bookship and is whisked away, once more, into »sparkling tales« connecting her to her beloved grandad. The metaphor-filled story is masterfully visualised in Colombian artist Julián Ariza's colourful illustrations. The double-page spreads feature imaginative beasts, giant teacups, lush landscapes, and ingenious details, such as letters from different alphabets seamlessly embedded in the mythical creatures. The soft, warm colours change to dark grey and black to mirror Alia's grief and despair until the stories bring light back into her life. (Age: 4+) [CS]

48

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

Sharpson, Neil (text)
Santat, Dan (illus.)
Don't trust fish!
London: Andersen Press, [2025]. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-1-83913-642-9
(Simultaneously publ. in the USA: New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2025)

Fish | Behaviour | Deception | Warning | Picture book

Humans love to categorise. When it comes to animals, they put them all into neat groups according to »rules«, i.e. their behaviour and characteristics: There are mammals, reptiles, birds, etc. However, as the (mysterious, invisible) narrator of this pseudo-factual picture book points out, »Fish don't follow any rules.« Ergo: They're not to be trusted. Not at all. Never! Fish are devious creatures, living underwater, hidden from other beings' eyes, secretly spying on people, employing various disguises (Yes, a seahorse is a fish, too), and probably »plotting our doom«. Therefore, readers need to be vigilant and heed the warning: »Don't Trust Fish!« Renowned Irish playwright and novelist Neil Sharpson has teamed up with bestselling US illustrator Dan Santat to create this nonsensical plea to unsuspecting humans for extreme caution. Delivered with deadpan humour, ingeniously witty illustrations and a perfect sense for comic timing, this story has its audience laughing all the way through until the surprise ending. (Age: 5+) [CS]

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Smejkal, Kim (text)
The dandelion riots
London: Pushkin Press, 2025. – 270 p.
ISBN 978-1-78269-525-7

Witch | Curse | Discrimination | Abuse of power | Rebellion | LGBTQ+ | Fantasy fiction

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

Sixteen-year-old Drinn has spent her life completely isolated, being dragged from one remote foster place to the next by cruel and powerful Aunt Melusine. When Drinn finally breaks free and escapes to the city of Oblison, she discovers that she is not the only one cursed at birth by a tyrannical witch matriarchy. The young women she encounters are all burdened with devastating magical skills that make them outcasts hunted by non-magical people. Rallied by Drinn and her newfound allies, Story and Bash, the girls start organising a fierce rebellion, turning their curses into useful skills to reclaim their autonomy. Kim Smejkal's intriguing young-adult fantasy subverts traditional fairytale tropes by combining a dystopian setting with an inventive, emotionally responsive system of magic. The narrative explores the weight of systemic oppression alongside the power of female agency, celebrating the community and solidarity in a story interwoven with queer love. A poignant, nail-biting tale of courage and sacrifice. (Age: 14+) [CS]

50

Todd, Traci N. (selection)
Orlando, Jade (illus.)
This is not a small voice. Poems by Black poets
London: Nosy Crow, 2025. – 128 p.
ISBN 978-1805132646
(Parallel US ed.: Lincoln, MA: Nosy Crow, 2025)

Black people | Everyday life | Activism | Food | Family | Poetry | Anthology

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

This magnificent large-format poetry anthology is chock-full of poems created by Black writers from around the world. Invited by publisher Nosy Crow to compile this volume, renowned US author and editor Traci N. Todd followed her vision of selecting works that all children (and families) around the world would be able to enjoy, relate to, and understand. Sourcing texts from the rich and expansive history of Black poetry, she put together 100 gems written both by well-known poets – classic and contemporary – such as Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, Benjamin Zephaniah, Joseph Coelho, and Grace Nichols, and by promising new voices. The poems touch upon a wide variety of themes including family, food, hope, music, and joy. An insightful afterword adds more context to the collection as a whole, as well as to specific poems. Each double-page spread is enriched by Jade Orlando's vibrant, colourful illustrations that perfectly capture the different moods, turning the book into a grand celebration of Black experiences. (Age: 4+) [CS]

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Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

Yuen, Circle (text/illus.)
Our dance. Living apart, time together
Cardiff: Graffeg, 2025. – 32 p.
ISBN 978-1-91746-746-9

Family | Divorce | Co-parenting | Child contact centre | Dance | Picture book

When parents split up, making sure that the children can stay in touch with both parents is often a challenge. In this picture book, Hong-Kong-born Circle Yuen has a young girl tell the story of her family's separation through a beautiful and very fitting metaphor: Dancing. Back when the family was happy, all three of them used to dance together. However, harmonious dancing becomes increasingly difficult, as Mummy and Daddy each fight for the leading part – until, one day, the father leaves. His little daughter misses him terribly. Luckily enough, the adults find a way of co-parenting that allows the girl to see her father in a protected place every week. Now she twirls through life with two separate dances. Yuen created a heartfelt story, told in short lines of text and soft, scribbly, almost monochrome pictures that perfectly mirror the small protagonist's feelings. The author's afterword and a text by the National Association of Child Contact Centres stress the importance of such centres for struggling families. (Age: 4+) [CS]

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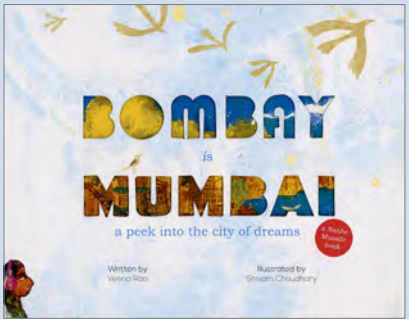

India ■ ENGLISH

Rao, Veena (text)
Choudhary, Shivam (illus.)
Bombay is Mumbai. A peek into the city of dreams
Bangalore: Roro books, 2025. – [68] p.
ISBN 978-81-987347-0-9

Mumbai | City | History | Landmark | Non-fiction | Picture book

This enticing narrative non-fiction title chronicles the history and development of Mumbai from its earliest beginnings as a cluster of island villages to its present state of modern metropolis. Narrated by a Koli woman – the Kolis being the first inhabitants of the area – the story introduces readers to the most important changes throughout history, such as the islands being connected, coming under the rule of first the Portuguese – who called the place Bombay – then being ruled by the British, and finally its rise to mega city Mumbai after India's independence in 1947. Veena Rao has her narrator weave some interesting local myths and tales into the account that add an almost folktale-like layer to the book. In his boisterous mixed-media illustrations, Shivam Choudhary makes the city come alive for young readers with a kaleidoscope of details that depict joyful events but don't shy away from alluding to darker times. A wonderful glimpse into this city's history rounded off by additional facts and a historical map. (Age: 8+) [CS]

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O'Brien, Gráinne (text)
Solo
Dublin: Little Island, 2025. – 266 p.
ISBN 978-1-915071-79-8

Musician | First love | Break-up | Breakdown | Healing | Friendship | Verse novel

Ireland ■ ENGLISH

It's her final year of school and talented classical musician Daisy should be concentrating on acing her school and music exams. Instead, she spends her days crying. Since her boyfriend David suddenly broke up with her, the eighteen-year-old is spiralling, feeling desperate and alone; even more so as her best friend Shannon abandoned her, too. Not even music matters anymore. Yet with a lot of determination, new choir friend Flora slowly manages to coax Daisy from the depths of her despair and persuade her to work hard on making up for the lost months. Gráinne O'Brien's award-winning verse novel follows Daisy's slow healing in short poems, each written in a style that matches its title – a music term followed by its English translation or definition, from »Crescendo. gradually increasing in loudness« to »Fiero. proud, fierce, high-spirited«. The powerful texts grip readers and make them witness how Daisy reclaims her strength and sense of self. (Age: 12+) [CS]

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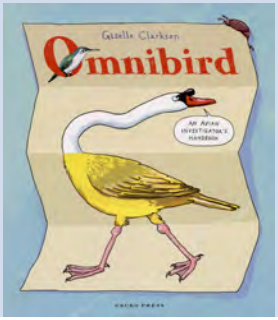

Clarkson, Giselle (text/illus.)
Omnibird. An avian investigator's handbook
[Wellington, New Zealand]: Gecko Press, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group Minneapolis, USA, [2025]. – 92 p.
ISBN 979-8-765670-51-4

Bird | Non-fiction

New Zealand ■ ENGLISH

Have you ever wondered what a caruncle is? Or why some birds poop on their legs? Or how many species of penguins actually live in icy areas? In her large-format handbook for eager birdwatchers, renowned author-illustrator Giselle Clarkson presents answers to these questions and countless others, too. She combines her trademark witty illustrations, ranging from anatomical diagrams to labelled portraits of ordinary and extraordinary avian species to depictions of birds in action, with fascinating feathery facts. By comparing the study of birds to a detective's investigation and constantly pointing out the parallels between the two, she easily captures the attention of young and older readers alike. The comical scenes and the birds' own comments in witty speech bubbles make this tongue-in-cheek field guide an informative and entertaining read for all ages. What's more: It has the potential of turning people who are not (yet) that keen on flying creatures into committed bird enthusiasts. (Age: 8+) [CS]

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New Zealand ■ ENGLISH

Cotter, Sacha (text)
Morgan, Josh (illus.)
A guide to rocks
Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2025. – [42] p.
ISBN 978-1-77550-719-2
(Parallel Māori ed.: He Taonga Te Toka.
Huia Publishers, 2025)

Anxiety | Mental health | Prejudice | Acceptance | Picture book

Sacha Cotter and Josh Morgan, the award-winning couple behind such marvellous picture books as »The Bomb« (Huia Publishers, 2018), have created yet another gem. In »A Guide to Rocks«, they address the still all too prevalent prejudice that boys must not acknowledge, let alone talk about troublesome emotions. When little Charlie starts feeling confused and worried and attempts to discuss this problem, which materialises as a small pink rock, his embarrassed father quickly shushes him. He hands his son the ancient-looking »A Gentleman's Rule Book for ›Rocks‹«. Yet the more the parent urges his child to deny and ignore his feelings, the larger the rocks grow, until the two are separated by a huge wall of boulders. The warm, empathic text and the lively digital illustrations full of humorous details lighten the mood and provide a hopeful way out by having Charlie and his Dad finally start talking to each other. And – surprise – slowly but surely, they manage to get rid of their stony conundrum. (Age: 4+) [CS]

56

Philippines ■ ENGLISH

Pagaduan, Arli (text/illus.)
Cat cafeteria
Makati City: Komiket Inc, 2025. – 208 p.
ISBN 978-621-8244-74-0

Neighbourhood | Stray cat | Care | Community | Graphic novel

»Cat Cafeteria«, the debut graphic novel of author and comics artist Arli Pagaduan, is a moving story inspired by personal experiences. Like Pagaduan and her mom, the young protagonist of this story and her mother, Mining, are passionate about feeding and caring for stray cats in their neighbourhood. They're already struggling to make ends meet with costs for cat food and vaccines, but when one of their charges falls ill and needs surgery and a grumpy new neighbour seems likely to cause trouble for them, too, Kit and Mining feel really concerned. They need all the support they can get from their neighbourhood to ensure the community's felines won't end up back on the streets hungry and sick. The authentic and heartfelt tale with its uncluttered images in soft, warm colours describes the challenges but also the rewards of caring for stray cats. Passing lots of helpful information to readers on the go, Pagaduan fervently advocates for more people to join forces, create safe spaces, and become cat allies. (Age: 8+) [CS]

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Singapore ■ ENGLISH

Davies, Shreya (text)
Wong, Vanessa (illus.)
To the last gram
Singapore: Difference Engine, 2025. – 116 p.
(DE shorts; 4)
ISBN 978-981-94-1217-4

Body image | Outsider | Anorexia | Eating disorder | Graphic novel

Divya, a girl from a loving Indian family in Singapore, has always felt like an outsider because of her brown skin, curly hair, and – most of all – her body size. To fit in better with her classmates, she starts obsessing over losing weight. She monitors every bite she eats, goes for excessively long runs, and anxiously watches every gram that drops off, soon spiralling into full-blown anorexia. First written as a short story, Divya's tale evolved into a poignant graphic novel through the close collaboration between author Shreya Davies and comics artist Vanessa Wong. Wong translates Divya's emotions and anxieties into engaging scenes in orange and brown rife with surrealist elements. In a seamless unity of words and pictures, the creators have readers witness the girl's draining struggles with her eating disorder and how she eventually learns to live with it. »To the Last Gram« is a fitting addition to the DE Shorts Imprint, a selection of comics that tackle social issues through stories of lived experiences. (Age: 12+) [CS]

58

USA ■ ENGLISH

Cherrywell, Steph (text)
The ink witch
New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2025. – 274 p.
ISBN 978-0-316-58593-4

Transsexuality | Witch | Curse | Power | Rescue | Belonging

Twelve-year-old Becca Slugg feels bored. Helping her annoyingly overprotective mother keep their small, run-down hotel afloat isn't her idea of a fun summer holiday. Yet when suddenly her estranged, power-hungry, evil aunt Malatrice turns up and transforms her mom into a mindless puppet, Becca is shocked to learn that she comes from a family of powerful witches. Together with a talking black tarantula and a friendly troll, the trans girl sets off on a dangerous road trip to gather the ingredients for a potion to save her mother. During their journey, Becca gets a crash course in honing her own magical skills and meets a bunch of scary and wondrous magical creatures. Steph Cherrywell's second middle-grade novel takes readers on a joyful, absurd, thrilling, and comical adventure that touches upon various important topics such as belonging, self-assurance, and pollution. Peopled with believably flawed characters, this hilarious Stonewall Honor Book has a lot of surprises in store. (Age: 9+) [CS]

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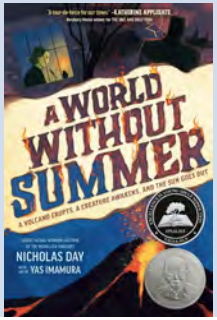

Day, Nicholas (text)
Imamura, Yasmin (illus.)
A world without summer. A volcano erupts, a creature awakens, and the sun goes out
New York: Random House Studio, [2025]. – 294 p.
ISBN 978-0-593-64387-7

Volcano | Natural Science | Environment | History 19th century | Nature | Weather | Climate

USA ■ ENGLISH

How can an Indonesian volcanic eruption starve cows in the hills of Switzerland? While many have heard of the explosion of Krakatoa in 1883, it was the lesser-known Mount Tambora eruption of 1815 that already plunged much of the world into chaos. Projecting massive amounts of ash into the air, Tambora blocked out much of the sun's light to the earth for months. Crops failed, flooding increased, and the summer months were cold and gloomy. In the midst of describing this chaos, Day focuses on the human stories that defined the era. Mary Shelley's life and the creation of Frankenstein during this time, for example, are synthesized beautifully on the page. In concluding this history, Day takes pains to remind young readers that the chaos of Tambora occurred without warning. In contrast, the changes humanity is currently wreaking on the Earth with its own forms of climate change and global warming exhibit one significant difference: we can see this disaster coming. A wise and engrossing tie between past and present. (Age: 10+) [EB]

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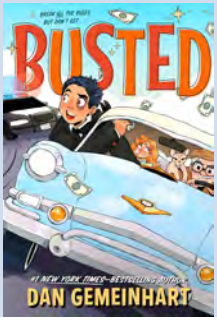

Gemeinhart, Dan (text)
Busted
New York: Henry Holt Books and Company, 2025. – 352 p.
ISBN 978-1-250-37836-1

Adventure | Friendship | Death

USA ■ ENGLISH

By age 12, Oscar has attended 49 funerals. It's the only life he's known, growing up with his grandpa, Pops, at Sunny Days Retirement Community. But the latest service was for Sunny Days' owner, so life is about to change. The new owner will quadruple Pops's rent, forcing the pair out, but Oscar has an idea to solve their money problems by helping possible-former-mobster Jimmy bust out of the retirement home for a day. However, Oscar is in for more than he bargained for when Jimmy's hairless cat and the new owner's daughter Natasha join in and expect Oscar to come along for the ride. Together they peel away in Jimmy's vintage car, a 1953 Kaiser Dragon, and check items off Jimmy's bucket list while they »squeeze the orange« of life. This comedic escapade with a dash of lawlessness goes deeper than a simple adventure story. While the three characters are very different from one another, they have each experienced devastating challenges, and as they get to know each other, they learn and share an unforgettable day. (Age: 11+) [MB]

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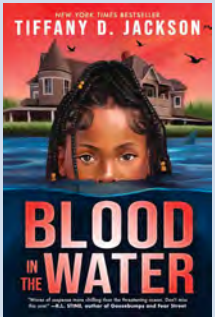
Harper, Charise Mericle (text/illus.)
The Shindig is coming!
New York: Union Square Kids, [2025]. – 116 p.
ISBN 978-1-45495-501-6

Forest animals | Mystery | Party

USA ■ ENGLISH

»The Shindig is coming!« Mouse exclaims 112 times, and the forest animals call a meeting, though no one knows what a Shindig is. The animals discuss its meaning, wondering if it's a scary swampy thing or large kitty with supersoft paws. The excitement causes Opossum to faint (for the first of many times), but thankfully Bear arrives and looks up the word: a Shindig is a party! They start to prepare until Blue Jay, who first shared the message with Mouse, asserts his call was actually a warning. The animals, wide-eyed, wait to discover what the Shindig could be. Colourfully clad with patterned black-and-white fur, each cartoon-like animal is expressive and silly, adding to the story's humour. The text, at times ornate and stylised or framed within the imagery, marries with the illustrations throughout. Brightly hued full-bleed images juxtapose with single colour pages, some with intricate borders, others bold or sparse. From beginning to end, this chapter book is a shindig in and of itself. (Age: 6+) [MB]

62



Jackson, Tiffany D. (text)
Blood in the water
New York: Scholastic Press, 2025. – 255 p.
ISBN 978-1-338-84991-2

USA | History | African Americans | Mystery | Murder

USA ■ ENGLISH

Sent to live out the summer on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, away from her beloved Brooklyn, Black twelve-year-old Lani is unhappy. She'd much rather continue to research a way to appeal her father's conviction than hang around with her grandparents' rich friends and their snobby grandchildren. Yet the more time Lani spends on Martha's Vineyard, the more she comes to appreciate its rich African-American history. That is, until one of the boys she's met ends up dead in the water. Is he a victim of a shark attack or is foul play at work? And if Lani continues to dig too deep, will she become the next victim? Jackson plays fair, weaving together a mystery that gives readers all the clues they'll need. Lani's investigative skills are cleverly laid out on the page (a direct result of her time spent investigating her father's case). Winner of the 2026 Edgar Award for Mysteries in the Young Person's category, this proves to be a story with complexity worthy of Agatha Christie herself. (Age: 9+) [EB]

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63

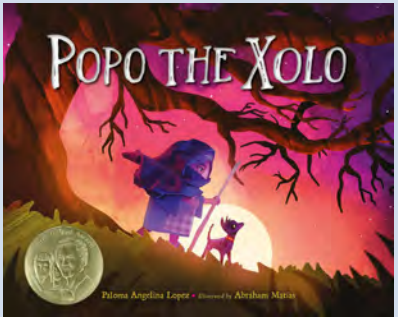
Kang, Angie (text/illus.)
Our lake
New York: Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2025. – 40 p.
ISBN 978-0-593-69823-5

Brother | Lake | Swimming | Courage | Grief | Father | Memories | Picture book

USA ■ ENGLISH

Chinese American Angie Kang's award-winning debut picture book is a tender and touching story of two brothers who, on a hot summer day, visit a lake that holds many memories for them. It is the place where their father used to take them swimming. The older brother leads the way to the top of a large boulder, stretches with his sibling, and then dives into the cool water below, beckoning him to join in – just like their father used to. Yet the young narrator of this story hesitates. Can he really do this without his beloved Dad? Yet then he closes his eyes, allowing joyful memories of his father to fill him with lightness and courage. Executed in gouache, crayon, and coloured pencil, the stunning illustrations create a vibrant atmosphere. The slightly surrealistic colour palette with a lemony-yellow sky, blue-green foliage tinged with violet, and dark purplish-blue water radiates both the summer heat and the icy cool water, and at the same time makes the boys' feelings of grief mingled with joy palpable for readers. (Age: 4+) [CS]

64



Lopez, Paloma Angelina (text)
Matias, Abraham (illus.)
Popo the Xolo
Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2025. – 40 p.
ISBN 978-1-62354-457-7

Mexico | Death | Afterworld | Dog | Grandparents | Bereavement | Mythology | Aztecs | Grief | Indigenous traditions

USA ■ ENGLISH

An abuela's passing becomes the journey of a lifetime. Based on the Aztec belief that the soul passes through nine levels of Mictlān before it reaches its final home, this story's protagonist dies at the start of her tale. Fortunately, Nana is accompanied by her small xoloitzcuintle dog, Xolo, the two facing snowy winds, monkeys, and more. As she grows stronger, Nana reaches her destination and now watches over her family from the other side. Xolo, based on the Aztec god Xolotl, who guides souls through the afterlife, provides a connecting link between Abuela's old life and her new one. This is a vastly comforting look for young children at the subject of death, providing relief to those who have lost a beloved grandparent. Meanwhile, paper puppet artist Matias utilizes a breath-taking array of multimedia techniques, from the soft white of abuela's hair to scenes infused with rose-hued light. The ethereal quality of the art perfectly complements the text. Unforgettable. (Age: 4+) [EB]

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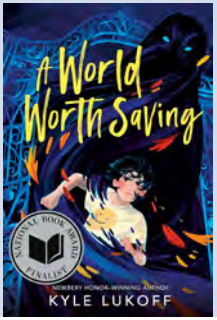
65



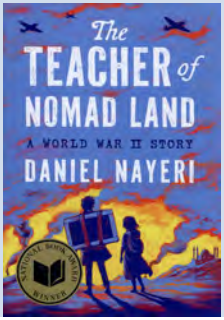
Lukoff, Kyle (text)
A world worth saving
New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2025. – [337] p.
ISBN 978-0-5936-1898-1

LGBTQ+ | Transgender | Mythology | Jews | Homelessness | Gender | Fantasy | Adventure

USA ■ ENGLISH

Forced by his parents to attend obligatory conversion therapy at their local church, A – a 14-year-old trans and Jewish teen – at least has friends Yarrow and Sal to rely upon. When an outburst causes Yarrow to be sent away, A fears they may all be in danger. That danger becomes all the more clear when A investigates further and accidentally conjures a small helper golem. Dark forces from Jewish mythology are conspiring to suck the will from young queer people, and it's up to A to help put an end to the practice. However, is a world where young gender expressive people are so vulnerable even a world worth saving? Touching on such difficult topics as unhoused queer runaways and abusive elders, Lukoff deftly interweaves this story with deeply researched Jewish mythology in wholly new and interesting ways. Offering food for thought previously unavailable in most literature for youth, Lukoff sets high standards for young readers, opening their eyes to both real-world concerns and ancient mythological ones. (Age: 12+) [EB]

66



Nayeri, Daniel (text)
The teacher of nomad land.
A World War II story
Hoboken, NJ [et al.]: Levine Querido, 2025. – 181 p.
ISBN 978-1-64614-566-9

World War II (1939-1945) | Iran | Teacher | Nomadic tribes

USA ■ ENGLISH

Allied troops invade Iran, and when soldiers mistake their teacher father for a resistance fighter, thirteen-year-old Babak and eight-year-old Sana become orphans. They run away to join the nomadic tribe where their father taught but are denied entry for the season. While in search of a winter refuge, the children lose their way in the mountains and become more entangled in the faraway war. They escape a Nazi spy searching for a Jewish boy; then they stumble on a British camp where they exchange lessons in Farsi for rations and water; and later, the siblings happen upon the Jewish boy, sent to Iran and seeking passage to Israel. From the author of »The Many Assassinations of Samir, the Seller of Dreams« (Levine Querido, 2023), this short but powerful read highlights a lesser-known history of World War II from Iranian experiences to Jewish child refugees. Characters are imperfect and complex, and Babak's perspective as a budding teenage teacher is nuanced and thought-provoking. (Age: 9+) [MB]

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67

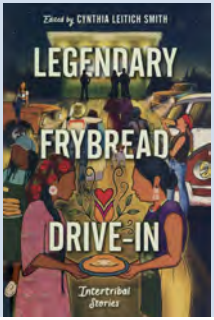
Ruttenberg, Jay (text)
Schreiber, Lucinda (illus.)
Gabba Gabba we accept you.
The wondrous tale of Joey Ramone
Chicago: Drag City, 2025. – 52 p.
ISBN 978-1-937112-42-4

USA | Music | History | Ramone, Joey (1951-2001) | Punk | Biography

USA ■ ENGLISH

The life and times of rock legend Joey Ramone is set within the larger context of the punk music genre. Jewish, bespectacled, tall, and thin, young Jeffrey Ross Hyman was often bullied by other children who had a »devil's instinct« for his differences. Rock and roll music served as a lifeline, offering escape. Debut picture book illustrator Lucinda Schreiber gives these pages the mod look and feel of the 1950s, turning the audible into the visual as music becomes Joey's passion. Bright and vibrant colours highlight Joey's transformation from gangly youth to punk icon. Ultimately, the message of the book is one of acceptance, as Joey and his band sing to their audiences, »We accept you one of us!« Portions of the book explain the rise and importance of the punk rock wave, clarifying its position in the larger pantheon of music, and explaining to young readers why it was a key cultural movement. A cut above many rote biographies for kids, this remarkable biography sets the standard for picture-book histories of music. (Age: 7+) [EB]

68



Smith, Cynthia Leitich (ed.)
Legendary Frybread Drive-In.
Intertribal stories
New York: Heartdrum, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, [2025]. – 336 p.
ISBN 978-0-06-331426-9

USA | Indigenous people | Restaurant | Culture | Tradition | Anthology

USA ■ ENGLISH

This award-winning anthology, edited by acclaimed Muscogee author Cynthia Leitich Smith, features an enticing collection of short stories penned by well-known Indigenous writers – such as Eric Gansworth and Darcie Little Badger – as well as new talents. What is extra special is that the tales are all interconnected, being set in one specific place: Sandy June's Legendary Frybread Drive-In. This magical restaurant seems to shift through time and space, offering both delicious comfort food and a much-needed refuge, meeting place, and cultural hub for young (and older) people from every tribal Nation across the North American continent. Each story is written in its own distinct voice and style, and offers glimpses into the protagonists' lives, background stories, and inner thoughts. Yet elements from the other authors' stories pop up across the tales, tying the narrative strands together into a magnificent and varied First Nation universe that celebrates Native tradition, connection, and pride in the shared culture. (Age: 13+) [CS]

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69

Smith, Lane (text/illus.)
Leach, Molly (design)
Recess
New York: Abrams Books For Young Readers, 2025. – 40 p.
ISBN 978-1-4197-7689-2

School | Break | Chaos | Fun | Picture book

USA ■ ENGLISH

It's a well-known fact that most school children hate sitting still during class. The next official break is always ages away. Yet why wait? Surely kids should be allowed to release their pent-up energy right when they need it, i.e, »this minute«! So, whether it is in the middle of a weird math problem or in a tedious spelling class, award-winning illustrator Lane Smith lets the protagonists of his hilarious interactive picture book run wild during extra recesses: They get to yell »Bananas!«, throw and bounce an invisible ball, make ear-splitting music, and more. Smith takes readers on a rambunctious visual and verbal journey: He alternates orderly grey-ish pages and pictures in drab hues, signalling the regular lessons, with bright, chaotic double spreads painted in energetic strokes and loud colours and paired with bold text in different sizes, contrasting colours, and typefaces. The intruding (teacher's?) voice of reason is never able to tame the kids for long before the next wild rumpus ensues. (Age: 5+) [CS]

70

Koff, Indrek (text)
London, Olena (illus.)
Ära oota midagi
(Don't expect anything)
[Tallinn]: Varrak, 2025. – 201 p.
ISBN 978-9985-3-6314-0

Estonia | Soviet Union | History 20th century | Childhood memories | Grandfather | Graphic novel

Estonia ■ ESTONIAN

With memories of his grandfather as a starting point, Indrek Koff draws upon his own childhood in Estonia, at a time when it was part of the Soviet Union. His grandfather's experiences during the revolution and the war years or at work on the collective farms (kolkhozes) are set parallel to the first-person narrator's (Koff's alter ego) schooldays, Pioneer years and adolescence. Feelings of being restricted, controlled, or harassed are pervasive. Individual experiences are linked to historical and societal upheaval. The brief episodes and reflections do not form a linear plotline, but instead make the gaps, uncertainties and contradictions of memory visible. Olena London's expressive illustrations create a further narrative plane, giving visual expression to feelings that are often only hinted at. This many-layered graphic novel combines graphic narrative elements with autobiography and collective cultural remembrance to make the traumatic Soviet years accessible and comprehensible for today's generations. (Age: 16+) [KW]

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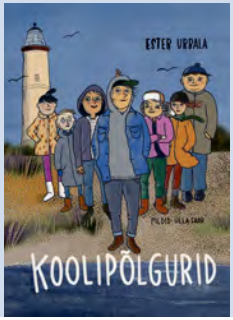


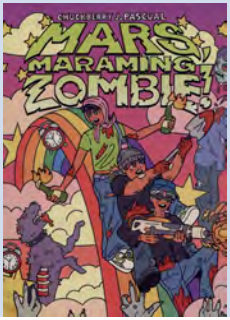
Estonia ■ ESTONIAN

Urbala, Ester (text)
Saar, Ulla (illus.)
Koolipõlgurid
(School rebels)
[Tallinn]: Puänt, [2025]. – 191 p.
ISBN 978-9916-9346-0-9

Group dynamics | Pupil | Self-empowerment

Children alone on an island – but in no way like those in »The Lord of the Flies«. These are six »school rebels« around young Erik. They have all been sent to the island as part of a six-month project, during which they are to live freely and self-governed, without having to attend school. But the fifth graders are not entirely alone in the wilderness. At some locations there is electricity and not far away there are two 93-year-old lighthouse keepers. In the course of their stay, a penguin washes up on the shore, and in the end even the school principal. In Ester Urbala's debut novel, this setting gives rise to a fascinating group dynamic. Each character has certain endearing quirks which crop up when it is time to make decisions about their communal life. Who will clean up? Who wants to trade sleeping places? Who's cooking? The author tells the story in short, to the point chapters with a gloriously mischievous humour. Ulla Saar illustrated this splendid children's novel with masterful strokes of the pen. (Age: 10+) [KW]

72



Philippines ■ FILIPINO

Pascual, Chuckberry J. (text)
Mars, maraming zombie!
(Mars, there's a lot of zombies!)
Quezon City, Manila: Adarna House, 2025. – 367 p.
ISBN 978-621-120-004-0

Pandemic | Zombie | Apocalypse | LGBTQ+ | Survival | Dystopia

This concluding sequel to »Mars, may zombie!«, winner of the »Kid's Choice Award« at the 8th National Children's Book Awards, is set in 2029, nine years after a zombie apocalypse ravaged the Philippines. The first novel presented an alternate reality mirroring the Philippine COVID-19 lockdown and depicted a society divided into colour-coded zones. Using the zombie metaphor, the sequel offers an even sharper critique of a political system that neglects its population. Following a failed invasion of the zombie-free blue zone, disillusioned protagonist Mars faces daily struggles in a zombie-infested black zone as well as a government hunting down the invaders. Chuckberry J. Pascual seamlessly weaves LGBTQIA+ elements into the story without making the protagonists' queer identities a ground for conflict. While writing with unmistakably Filipino »Bakla« humour and pop-culture references, he avoids clichés and steers clear of parodying the horror genre. Instead, he tells a story about hope and the strength and warmth of a found family. (Age: 13+) [LO]

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73

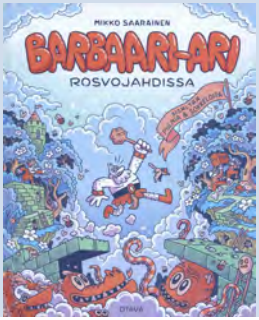
Luhtavaara, Miira (text)
Maristo, Marjut (text)
Kettunen, Satu (illus.)
Tunnemuskelit
(Emotional muscles)
Helsinki: Etana Editions, [2026]. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-952-7581-15-5

Emotion | Training | Picture book

Finland ■ FINNISH

»Hej«, the friendly robot calls out at the start of the book, welcoming readers to a very special gym. It's a place where you don't train your triceps or biceps, but rather various emotional muscles: »Strutsi Strösselssön«, for example, is responsible for joy and hope. He makes everyone laugh and manages to see the silver lining of things that most people wouldn't associate with anything positive, such as the flu or a party without sweets. How does he do it? Strutsi Strösselssön forms a circle with both hands and uses it like a telescope to focus on lovely details only. It actually sounds quite simple, doesn't it? Yet there is more: You can also strengthen your muscles for patience and flexibility. None of this seems to be rocket science. Miira Luhtavaara, Marjut Maristo, and Satu Kettunen have created a fun book with plenty of exercises that make regulating emotions a breeze. (Age: 4+) [IG]

74



Saarainen, Mikko (text/illus.)
Barbaari-Ari. Rosvjahdissa
(Ari the Barbarian. Chasing robbers)
Helsingissä: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava, [2025]. – [27] p.
ISBN 978-951-1-49703-5

Treasure | Robbery | Wimmelbook | Picture book

Finland ■ FINNISH

What a wimmelbook! Lavish, exuberant, and brimming with details for readers to discover: »Rosvjahdissa« is already the third book by award-winning illustrator and comic artist Mikko Saarainen about Ari the Barbarian, who may look dangerous in his loincloth and mace, but is quite a nice chap. In this volume, the king's treasure has gone missing, and Ari sets off to catch the robbers and find the treasure. Along the way, he and the readers experience countless adventures, as they follow false leads, encounter nasty villains and wild animals such as snakes, kraken, and crocodiles, get lost in the jungle and in towns, and have to cross rushing rivers. So, will they catch the thieves in the end and return the king's treasure to him? This seek-and-find book not only keeps young ones busy for hours, it also guarantees they'll have lots of fun! (Age: 3+) [IG]

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75

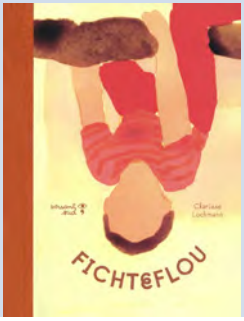
Dony, Aurélien (text)
Neuray, Nina (illus.)
Cric! Crac! Les taupes passent à l'attaque!
(Cric! Crac! The moles are starting to attack!)
[Bruxelles]: CotCotCot éditions, [2025]. – [56] p.
ISBN 978-2-930941-78-3

Mole | Resistance | Construction work | Nature

Belgium ■ FRENCH

All's quiet underground? The cinematic opening of this book sets us right on that. After a black double spread, in a few pages we reach a colourful labyrinth of corridors and roots where Mira, the lady mole, lives with her fellow moles. While the others dig, Mira and her friend Mireille take a short break on the surface. On a riverbank they encounter a girl in tears over the coming of a supermarket that will destroy the untouched countryside. The slogan that the animals and the human girl raise against the heavy construction equipment is: »Resistance!« In empathy-filled rhymes, Aurélien Dony conveys their communal effort and energy. The words are intertwined with Nina Neuray's illustrations in an airy layout. The protagonists inhabit the text blocks, and script is incorporated into the drawings. Using water colours and wax crayons, the illustrator captures the geological layers just as vibrantly as she does the animals and landscapes. Moles may be blind, but with intuitive opposition they reach their goal almost effortlessly. (Age: 6+) [OIS]

76



Lochmann, Clarisse (text/illus.)
Fichteflou
[Bruxelles]: Versant Sud, [2025]. – [44] p.
ISBN 978-2-931296-23-3

Play | Language | Imagination | Freedom | Picture book

Belgium ■ FRENCH

Théo wants to stay at the playground. Again and again, he slips away from his mother. Then at last he poses the disarming question: »Why am I named Théo? Why not Fichteflou?« Mother and son amuse themselves in a fantastical language, drifting into a parallel world. When they start to improvise a rousing rock concert, the park warden asks them to finally go home. Tones of red, yellow and brown are dominant in Clarisse Lochmann's gentle colour palette, with contrasts of green and an occasional blue. Spaces and figures are only roughly delineated, yet precisely defined. One idiosyncrasy is the artist's portrayal of heads without facial features, which thus function perfectly as surfaces for projection. Lochmann cleverly employs image cropping and the use of perspective. Hence the cover seems like a Baselitz painting until we realize that it depicts Théo hanging upside down from a tree branch. This picture book is so evocative that »Fichteflou« could easily become a byword for escaping the everyday. (Age: 3+) [OIS]

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77

Tallec, Olivier (text/illus.)
En attendant les Barbares
(Waiting for the Barbarians)
[Bruxelles]: Pastel, [2025]. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-2-211-34612-2

Rumour | Threat | Militarism | Peace | Picture book

Belgium ■ FRENCH

In this oversized picture book, the renowned French illustrator Olivier Tallec offers an adaptation of a poem by the Greek poet Konstantinos Kavafis (1863-1933). It begins with a rumour that the barbarians will invade the city that very day. For the small soldiers in their oversized helmets – no one else is to be seen – both the forests and mountains beyond the city walls immediately seem dark and threatening. Flags are raised, medals polished, canons brought into position. Yet when the attack never comes, the soldiers resemble disappointed children. With the loss of their imaginary counterparts, their own excitement is exposed as an end in itself. To express the crisis, Tallec employs predominantly dark colours. The clear forms of the city contrast with the diffuse, but more complex depiction of the countryside. This book can be read as a commentary on current political conflicts and militarization. In the end we see soldiers enjoying a happy picnic and smiling for the first time. Give peace a chance! (Age: 6+) [OIS]

78

Barber, Caroline (text)
Pasquet, Marianne (illus.)
Pome et Dina. Quatre saisons d'amitié
(Pome and Dina. Four seasons of friendship)
Montréal: Les 400 Coups, [2025]. – [184] p.
ISBN 978-2-89815-094-4

Bear | Deer | Friendship | Seasons | Hibernation | Picture book

Canada ■ FRENCH

It is springtime in the forest. Starving after her hibernation, Dina, a bear, thankfully gobbles up the cookies prepared by Pome, a doe, who is an outstanding baker. A good start to the friendship between the contemplative Pome and fun-loving Dina. After enjoying many experiences together over the summer, an argument arises after all as autumn sets in. While gathering mushrooms they must decide whether to eat them immediately and put on some winter fat or store them up for later. Caroline Barber's story sensitively relates how, through self-reflection and empathy, the protagonists learn to deal with their differences. Marianne Pasquet renders the animals – often against a white background – in simple drawings that are nonetheless expressive and dynamic. Landscapes and interiors are done with affection, varied through the use of cutouts and surprising perspectives. When the first snowbells appear and Dina awakens again, Pome is waiting for her with delicious treats. This substantial picture book is a wise ode to friendship. (Age: 5+) [OIS]

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79

Canada ■ FRENCH

Parent, Emmanuelle (text)
Texter, publier, scroller
(Texting, posting, scrolling)
[Montréal]: Les Éditions Écosociété, [2024]. – 143 p.
(Series: Radar)
ISBN 978-2-89719-985-2

Internet | Social media | Media | Data protection | Knowledge | Non-fiction

Emmanuelle Parent admits to a love-hate relationship with social media. In trying to develop a balanced approach to media, she has written this readable blend of an essay, non-fiction and self-help book. Because teenagers are intensive users of social media and her target audience, the author conducted many interviews with young people and quotes them extensively. At the start she explains how tech giants use addictive functions to gather and then sell information. At the same time, she also criticises the defensive reflex reactions of adults who reject all new forms of media. And she offers a systematic deconstruction of our behaviour on messenger services, such as self-promotion on Instagram or excessive scrolling on TikTok. Each chapter concludes with practical tips. The book closes with a recommendation list of other hobbies. In conjunction with discussions about age restrictions for social media, this book's nuanced and realistic approach offers an informative source for both young people and adults. (Age: 14+) [OIS]

80

Canada ■ FRENCH

Salvione, Marie-Dina (text)
Pinabel, Laurent (illus.)
La ville nous parle.
Petite initiation au patrimoine
(The city speaks to us. A brief introduction to cultural heritage)
[Montréal]: les éditions du passage, [2025]. – [47] p.
ISBN 978-2-925091-37-0

Cultural heritage | City | Architecture | Knowledge | Non-fiction | Picture book

This narrative non-fiction picture book is an introduction to cultural heritage conservation. Marie-Dina Salvione focuses on buildings, but later also delves into the UNESCO programmes for World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The book's framework is a dialogue between a younger and an older bird. Using creative layouts, the pages offer numerous examples to sensitize the reader to view architecture as a manifestation of human activity worthy of preservation. Double spreads with greater detail are interleaved to show special architectural features such as friezes or curtain walls. Laurent Pinabel's illustrations smoothly combine black-and-white drawings and photographs to support the texts in a humorous and congenial manner. Red, used as a third colour, combines with the yellow cover and violet-toned endpapers to give the book a truly striking aesthetic. Beyond its important topic, this book is highly recommendable for its successful design and outstanding illustrations alone. (Age: 6+) [OIS]

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81

Baer, Julien (text)
Cussac, Camille de (illus.)
Mamita Sandwich
Rouen: L' Étagère du bas, [2025]. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-2-487631-22-9

Food | Generosity | Sharing | Humanity | Picture book

France ■ FRENCH

»Everyone needs help sometimes, don't they?« In this colourful picture book, Mamita Sandwich offers her help with all kinds of delicious snacks. From morning till night, until her basket is empty, the lady with the blue eyeglasses roams the city. Whether she meets a child or the president, she stills not only hunger but also pain, and helps bring about reconciliation. As a former lawyer, Mamita has changed careers because she wants to achieve immediate positive effects. Against white backgrounds, Camille de Cussac uses brushpens to depict a crisis, then zooms in on the sumptuous solution. Each text segment begins with large, colourful exclamations or calls to action that are cleverly combined in text and picture. Author Julien Baer succeeds in directly addressing the reader, especially with seemingly contradictory statements: »Stop reading! [...] Listen to me!« But the message is unequivocal: We need more individuals who share, who soothe, and who bring people to talk to one another. Eating together can indeed work miracles! (Age: 5+) [OIS]

82

Botte, Raphaële (text)
Marignane, Aloïs (illus.)
Le grand livre du cinéma
(The big book of cinema)
[Paris]: Éditions Arola, [2025]. – 53 p.
(Series: Dada)
ISBN 978-2-35880-200-0

Cinema | Movie | History | Media | Visual arts | Pop culture | Non-fiction | Picture book

France ■ FRENCH

Raise the curtain! This non-fiction picture book about cinema is (almost) as large as a screen – and just as exciting as a good film. Clearly organised, it devotes four pages each to eight genres, such as comedy, animation or documentary film. After a double-page spread with large illustrations that gives a general characterization of the genre, there follow smaller text-image ensembles dealing with famous directors, film quotes, or archetypical figures. Technical aspects and related professions are also presented. In between the genres, special sections delve into topics like superheroes or the history of Hollywood. Aloïs Marignane's vivacious illustrations, often done in primary colours, invite the reader to browse but also, thanks to the dynamic layout and numerous film references, to linger over a chapter. Raphaële Botte's absorbing texts read fluently and maintain a fine balance between information and anecdotes. Thus, the reader will stay until the lights come up, and also enjoy the film tips in the book's closing credits. (Age: 12+) [OIS]

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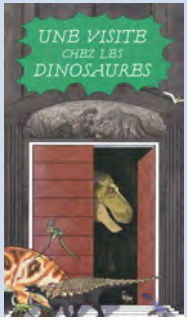
83



Danslecieltoutvabien (text/illus.)
Une visite chez les dinosaures
(A visit with the dinosaurs)
Paris: Éditions des Grandes Personnes, [2024]. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-2-36193-766-9

Dinosaur | Paleontology | Museum | Leporello | Picture book | Non-fiction

France ■ FRENCH

This work appears to be tall and narrow, until it turns itself into an extremely wide, three-metre long fanfold book. On the front, one sees a paleontological museum. In a darkened room there is an exhibition of 40 well-lit dinosaur skeletons. The illustrations are both vivid and precise. The visitors who are standing between the skeletons help to demonstrate their actual scale. When a young girl touches a Pachycephalosaurus (forbidden!), all dinosaurs suddenly awaken. On the reverse side of the leporello, night becomes day and the children are seen riding and sliding down the animals, depicted with such realistic morphology and subtle colouring that they seem truly alive. On the inside of the book cover, key information about the dinosaurs is presented next to their silhouettes. The debut work by danslecielttoutvabien, »Un long voyage« (A long journey), was most impressive for its spectacular landscapes. Now his potent illustrations bring the creatures of the Mesozoic Era into children's rooms! (Age: 3+) [OIS]

84

Genet, Rebecca (text/photos)
Assénat, Marie (illus.)
J'ai rêvé d'un gâteau très haut qui ne peut se décrire en un mot
(I dreamed of a very large cake that cannot be described in one word)
[Lyon]: Maison Georges, [2025]. – 64 p. + [22] p.
ISBN 978-2-38215-082-5

Baking | Cake | Poetry | Photo book | Cookbook | Picture book

France ■ FRENCH

This book about cakes is a luscious celebration of the arts! The work is the result of a collaboration between illustrator Marie Assénat and photographer and food stylist Rebecca Genet. First of all, Assénat makes drawings of fantastical cakes. She imagines classic fancy cakes and Gugelhupfs, highly decorated cones or a heap of colourful balls. Taking these as models, Genet bakes her creations as true to the original as possible. It is a delight to see how creatively she turns these culinary dreams into reality. Then she takes photos of the creations. On each of two double-page spreads, a drawing and a photo appear on the right-hand page, while a poem on the left connects the two. The poetic reflection on the drawing culminates in a witty name for the cake, while its continuation, alongside the photo, celebrates the »making-of« – often closing with an invitation to eat the cake. The book's final feat is an appendix with recipes. They are to be interpreted freely and, above all, executed in tandem. (Age: 5+) [OIS]

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85

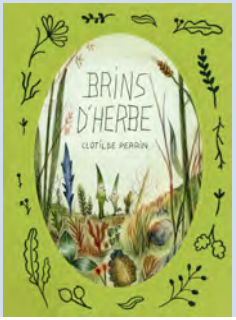
Heller Algazi, Inbar (text/illus.)
Refuge Mouchette
(Mouchette's animal shelter)
[Montreuil]: Les Fourmis rouges, [2025]. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-2-36902-203-9

Animals | Everyday life | Wish | Resilience | Picture book

France ■ FRENCH

Dream or nightmare? Little Lou's mother runs a shelter for wild animals. While many a child's greatest dream is to have an animal, for Lou they are a real challenge in his everyday life. Tiger babies tear down the curtains, the elephant blocks the bathroom, and the boy has to share his birthday with a donkey. When he takes the crocodile for a walk in the park, all his potential playmates run away. No wonder Lou just longs for a cuddly toy cat. But his request for a stuffed animal gets drowned out by the hubbub of all the animals at the dinner table. When Lou finally loses his temper, the dejected animals come up with a surprise for him. In her picture book, Inbar Heller Algazi humorously depicts the difficulties children have in articulating their needs amidst all the hustle and bustle of everyday life. In the illustrations, she delightfully creates parallel scenes of the boy and the impertinent animals to emphasize Lou's mounting distress. Fortunately, his subjective nightmare leads to an objective happy end! (Age: 3+) [OIS]

86



Perrin, Clotilde (text/illus.)
Brins d'herbe
(Blades of grass)
Paris: Kaléidoscope, [2025]. – [67] p.
ISBN 978-2-37888-290-7

Change | Crisis | Personal development | Diversity | Picture book

France ■ FRENCH

Two blades of grass, Yuki and Bao, enjoy an ideal childhood. In playful games of all sorts, they celebrate their friendship in an untouched landscape. Until one day, Yuki's perception of himself and the world is turned completely topsy-turvy. On his quest for new experiences, he meets a »chambardeur« (a disrupter of conventions): a friendly heap of stones that constantly changes shape but remains true to itself. An unexpected role model! After many more encounters, Yuki returns to Bao, who has also matured. Together they observe the cycle of nature and understand that »tomorrow will always be a different day«. Clotilde Perrin supplements her vibrant, pithy text with dialogues and commentaries in the illustrations. She employs muted colours for a stunning plant world, always depicting it from the perspective of her witty protagonists. »Brins d'herbe« is a superb book about transformation and can encourage even the youngest readers to shape change themselves and to expand their own horizons. (Age: 3+) [OIS]

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87

Roux, Delphine (text)
Duhazé, Gaëlle (illus.)
L'échappée belle de Marta
(Marta's great escape)
Amboise: HongFei, [2025]. – 88 p.
ISBN 978-2-35558-229-5

Work | Burnout | Regeneration | Self-reflection | Zest for life

France ■ FRENCH

In this richly illustrated children's book, Marta the goose is an excellent baker. She runs the highly popular pastry shop in her village. But as she grows increasingly tired, more and more of her recipes fail to turn out. The village doctor, Hedgehog-Varlindo, advises her to take a holiday. After a sleepless night, Marta pulls the plug and escapes to the holiday island of her childhood – not without leaving treats behind for the village. What on the surface appears to be a little feel-good book is a subtle reckoning with a serious topic – Marta is suffering from a genuine burnout. Overwork, loneliness, and repressed childhood trauma – only gradually can she put a name to her problems. But finally – in part thanks to the hotelkeeper, seagull Yannpatt' – she regains her joie de vivre and spirit of adventure. This is a very humane fable with a well-balanced text and empathetic illustrations that shows in a child-appropriate way that if you want to do good, you must also protect yourself. (Age: 7+) [OIS]

88

Sané, Insa (text)
Try again
Paris: Éditions Thierry Magnier, [2025]. – 139 p.
(Series: L'Ardeur)
ISBN 979-10-3520-880-6

Coming of age | Family | Sexuality | Condom

France ■ FRENCH

Who is most suitable to describe the life of 16-year-old Sény? Author Insa Sané decided: the impatient condom in Sény's pocket. The story begins with the embarrassing attempt to disguise its purchase in a pharmacy with a second »harmless« product that turns out to be a pregnancy test. Next, Sény's problems at school escalate when his ambitious mother writes an essay for him and he gets 0 points for suspected use of AI. Happily, his punishment consists of working on a project with Ava, toward whom he has more than just friendly feelings. But at the party that could decide things, all goes wrong, and the condom sees its chances of an imminent »Wesh-Wesh-Yo« disappear. Of a what? Author Insa Sané pulls out all the stops – from Banlieue slang to Balzac's French – and even intersperses film quotes, rap and Orwell's »1984«. Situational humour and strong dialogues ultimately make the book an insanely funny page-turner. The condom will have to wait but it is looking forward to its role on behalf of true love, teenager style! (Age: 15+) [OIS]

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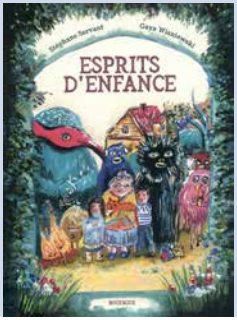

Servant, Stéphane (text)
Wisniewski, Gaya (illus.)
Esprits d'enfance
(Ghosts of childhood)
[Arles]: Rouergue, [2025]. – 134 p.
(Series: Dacodac)
ISBN 978-2-8126-2741-5

France ■ FRENCH

Ghost | Childhood memories | Siblings | Grandmother | Country

This book talks about the small mysteries and fears which we as children found inexplicable. Stéphane Servant and Gaya Wisniewski do not seek objective explanations for their stories and illustrations, since it is much nicer to imagine ghosts as the culprits. The two artists depict themselves as siblings who are visiting their grandmother in the countryside. The author tells of the mischief done by Soukapat, the ghost of disarray. In sublime pictures the illustrator adds a bear-like ghost on the roof of the family car and its antics in grandma's guest room. With each new ghost, the reader learns more: thanks to the kitchen ghost Chante-Marmite nothing tastes better than grandma's cooking; and Boud'Bois turns children's sticks into sacred objects. »Esprits d'enfance« conjures up a nostalgic childhood, but not without critical commentary about the present day. With the power of dreams, according to the two imaginary siblings, it is possible to create a better world for tomorrow. (Age: 8+) [OIS]

90

Tariel, Adèle (text)
Peyrat, Jérôme (illus.)
Peuple de plumes
(Feathered folk)
Strasbourg: Éditions Père Fouettard,
[2025]. – 72 p.
(Series: Marave)
ISBN 978-2-37165-123-4

France ■ FRENCH

Environmental destruction | Climate change | Segregation | Friendship | Graphic novel

Gloria and Swan actually live in strictly separate spheres. While the girl lives in a floating city for the elite human caste, young Swan belongs to the »feathered folk« – flightless birds who, as the result of environmental destruction, must lead a disenfranchised life on the ground. Spurred on by their friendship, the two want to overcome this separation. And there are tangible reasons for doing so. The »feathered« are better able to deal with the natural forces unleashed by climate change than the humans, who remain obsessively optimistic about technology. But the first efforts of the duo are manipulated by reactionary forces and end in pogroms. Climate crisis, inequality, blind belief in progress: Adèle Tariel's plot for this graphic novel is a parable of our times. Jérôme Peyrat contributes a retro-futuristic setting in blue and red tones, inhabited by expressive characters. After the dramatic first act, the book shows how friendship, solidarity and idealism can lead to a better society. (Age: 10+) [OIS]

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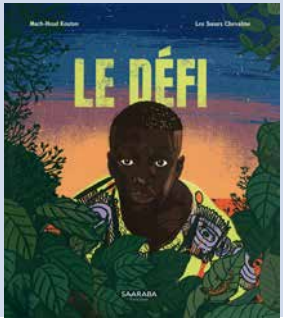


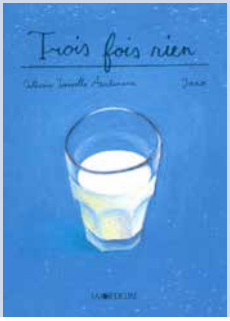
Kouton, Mach-Houd (text)
Les sœurs Chevalme (illus.)
Le défi
(The challenge)
Dakar: Saaraba Éditions, [2026]. – 45 p.
ISBN 978-2-494527-45-4

Rumour | Prejudice | Exclusion | Migration | Storytelling

Senegal ■ FRENCH

Two brothers and their cousin are sitting outside their house in Port Novo, Benin. Then the twelve-year-old narrator is sent to buy some »kouli-kouli« peanut balls. Inside, the boy is trembling with fear: rumour has it that Awé, the shopkeeper, is a witch. Yet she responds to the panicky boy with humour and kindness. Soon she is reading the great African novels to all three boys and telling them about her home in Senegal. Mach-Houd Kouton's brilliant text, full of humour and wisdom, debunks the slanderous gossip – it could have just as well arisen in social media – serving as a reminder that there is also migration within Africa. Les sœurs Chevalme congenially illustrate the narrative with a kind of magical realism. They employ suitable colours for the night-time scenes in the Davié quarter or the glistening light of the fishing harbour of Soumbédioune. Fascinating portraits look the reader directly in the eye. »Le défi« shows the positive power of stories and is also an appeal for more compassion and tolerance.
(Age: 8+) [OIS]

92



Tinivella Aeschimann, Catherine (text)
Jano (illus.)
Trois fois rien
(Next to nothing)
Genève: La Joie de lire, [2026]. – [192] p.
(Series: Somnambule)
ISBN 978-2-88986-063-0

Mother | Daughter | Family | Suicide | Mental disorder | Depression | Graphic novel

Switzerland ■ FRENCH

This graphic novel is the diary of a teenage girl, Nath. At first, she writes about problems at school and changes to her body. But the entries soon shift the focus to her highly depressive mother, such as when she appropriates Nath's name through insensitive or intrusive behaviour. The chronological main narrative – whose tragic climax is the mother's suicide – is predominantly illustrated with pencil. Recurring themes are done in oil pastels that punctuate the plot, as, for example, the glass of milk from which the mother wants to drink after she has taken too many pills. Nath's father is also portrayed repeatedly as he telephones with his parents-in-law. In this multi-layered text the author endows her protagonist, who is plagued by so many uncertainties, with a credible voice, subtly mirrored in Jano's sensitive, free-associative illustrations. The graphic novel portrays the process of coming to terms with someone's mental illness in an empathetic and artistically sophisticated way.
(Age: 15+) [OIS]

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93

Netherlands ■ FRISIAN

Houten, Mirjam van (text/illus.)
Anton yn it museum
(Anton in the museum)
Ljouwert: Afûk, [2025]. – [39] p.
ISBN 978-94-93318-59-5

Art | Museum | Inspiration | Creativity | Meaning of life | Picture book

Anton leads a dull life. He eats the same breakfast every day and finds his job neither enjoyable nor unpleasant. That is, until he spots a museum poster. Suddenly, work is the last thing on his mind. He heads to the museum instead, where somewhat dark, drab drawings take on more colour, and painted images are filled with intriguing details. The next morning, a little bird from one of the paintings invites Anton to create art himself. He immediately sets to work. His hands can barely keep pace with his creativity. The illustrations and the concise, powerful text of this book tell a story about finding meaning in life. Bright pink creations serve as the thread running through the story, tying everything together. The neon-pink paper cutouts practically leap off the page. Anton's unbridled creative drive will captivate young children. At the end, the museum invites Anton to exhibit his work. There, a woman gazes at his paintings and soon colourful flowers are filling her thoughts. Another creative spirit has been inspired! (Age: 4+) [LD]

94

Austria ■ GERMAN

Laibl, Melanie (text)
Schwalbe, Linda (illus.)
Na Zoowas! Wie die Wilde Kraa den Tiergarten aufmischte
(Utterly zooprising! How Wild Kraa rocked the zoo)
Graz [et al.]: Leykam, 2025. – [44] p.
ISBN 978-3-7011-8382-1

Zoo | Revolution | Freedom | Picture book

Revolution! After much pondering, Wild Kraa – a crow – has finally come up with a plan. Excited, she flies from one zoo enclosure to another: first to the Where-Wheres (meerkats), then to the Ook-Ooks (orangutans), and last to Sizzle (the snake) and Squeak (the gerbil). Surely, they must all feel trapped! But when she asks, »Who wants to say goodbye to the zoo?«, no one speaks up. The beasties enjoy their comfortable life behind bars – hazard-free, with regular meals and entertaining shows put on by the Look-Looks (visitors). Kraa is disillusioned, angry, and disappointed – until, very quietly, someone finally speaks up who does want to break free … What is freedom? And what is it worth? Melanie Laibl and Linda Schwalbe explore one of humanity's central questions using creative and playful language. The expansive, vividly coloured illustrations employ magnificent new ways of staging Wild Kraa and the other beasties. The book is an aesthetic delight, full of fun and food for thought! (Age: 5+) [IG]

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95

Ofner, Agi (text)
Problemwölfe
(Problem wolves)
Innsbruck [et al.]: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2025. – 187 p.
ISBN 978-3-7022-4313-5

Nature | Environmental protection | Wolf | Conflict | Compromise | Democracy

Austria ■ GERMAN

The wolf is on the prowl, and this divides the village. Some villagers want to protect the canine, others want to shoot it. This conflict, further fuelled by plans to build a new hotel in an unspoilt area, is also proving a real test for Marlene, Amal, Rudi, Jonas and Saskia-Mattea. Whilst Rudi fears that the wolf will destroy his family's livelihood, Marlene is an all-out nature conservationist. She doesn't even shy away from radical solo actions and thus lands herself in great danger, from which she is rescued by the others in a risky operation. This breathless novel, masterfully crafted and told from multiple perspectives, offers an insight into the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of five teenagers who, despite all controversy, manage to help one another and to understand and tolerate other points of view. As such, the book is not only a socially critical coming-of-age novel, but also a parable about the challenges of democratic processes. (Age: 14+) [IG]

96

Bach, Tamara (text)
Yelin, Barbara (illus.)
Jakob und Jelena
(Jakob and Jelena)
Hamburg: Carlsen, [2025]. – 250 p.
ISBN 978-3-551-55757-5

Outsider | Loner | School | Friendship

Germany ■ GERMAN

Jelena and Jakob are paired up for a school project. Jakob isn't thrilled. He doesn't even know Jelena – so what are they playing at?! The teen's favourite pastime is reading books; in fact, he prefers books to people. Change isn't his cup of tea either; and besides, he's afraid of a lot of things. That's why he's been skipping swimming class for weeks, knowing full well that it's a stupid idea and that he'll get caught eventually. Jelena misses her best friend Lotte, who goes to a different school. She isn't exactly jumping through hoops about working with Jakob either. Yet, as time passes, the two get used to each other and get along better, even if it isn't always easy. With warmth, charm, and a dash of self-deprecating humour, Tamara Bach tells their story alternately from Jakob's and Jelena's perspectives. Barbara Yelin has created tender illustrations to depict how the two loners slowly grow closer. (Age: 10+) [IG]

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97

Dröscher, Daniela (text)
de Carvalho, Adams Teixeira (illus.)
Mädchen allein zu zweit
(Two girls alone together)
Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, 2026. – 186 p.
ISBN 978-3-407-79068-2

Capitalism | Inequality | Money | Classism

Germany ■ GERMAN

Issa and Grace are best friends. They are clever, witty, and fearless, and they attend a posh boarding school as day pupils. Unlike Issa and Grace, however, most of the pupils there come from very wealthy families. Issa works a lot in her spare time to support her mum and to be more independent. Grace spends quite some time thinking about capitalism. Both girls are very much aware of the way the system works. Still, when they urgently need money, they face a major problem: where shall they get it from? With razor-sharp wit, verve, and originality, bestselling author Daniela Dröscher explores classism, money, power, and anger, as well as shame, dependencies, and lack of freedom; in addition, she also addresses the schizophrenic attempt to break the system whilst simultaneously playing by its rules, simply because one is subject to it. (Age: 14+) [IG]

98

Gmehling, Will (text)
Rassmus, Jens (illus.)
Der Sternsee
(The star lake)
Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, [2025]. – 52 p.
ISBN 978-3-7795-0766-6

Lake | Ice | Summer | Friendship | Skyscraper

Germany ■ GERMAN

»Something like this has never happened before.« The star lake, where the narrator and Mo, Sissi, and Anastasia live – so called because it looks like a star when viewed from the tower block – is frozen over. It feels almost magical there now: the light, the silence. And it remains magical. For when spring arrives, the ice does not melt. Even during the summer heatwave, the lake remains covered in ice. Naturally, it has become a huge attraction; people from far and wide gather to gaze at it in wonder, study it scientifically, and put forward various theories. Still, the phenomenon remains a mystery. Yet, for the four friends, this »unprecedented and shocking event« has become part of their daily life by now – until, one night, when the ice eventually begins to thaw. Will Gmehling and Jens Rassmus have crafted a carefully composed jewel that describes how the inexplicable intrudes upon everyday life. Full of poetry that permeates both the text and the illustrations in black-white-and-blue, this book makes you marvel and ponder. (Age: 10+) [IG]

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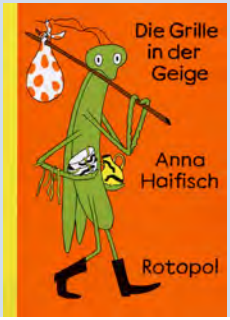
99



Haifisch, Anna (text/illus.)
Die Grille in der Geige
(The cricket in the violin)
Kassel: Rotopol, 2025. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-3-96451-061-7

Cricket | Music | Winter | Fable | Picture book

Germany ■ GERMAN

Anna Haifisch, based in Leipzig, is – amongst other things – a nationally and internationally renowned newspaper cartoonist and comic artist. With »Die Grille in der Geige«, she has created a contemporary adaptation that gives Aesop's fable »The Cricket and the Ant« a new twist, rendered in her trademark style. Featuring a varied page layout, clear lines, and vibrant colours – particularly orangey-red, green, and yellow – this version tells the story of a cricket who finds a violin in the forest and uses it as both a home and an instrument. All the animals are enchanted by its music, but when winter arrives and they start freezing, they spontaneously decide to chop up the cricket's home for firewood. Although the fire warms them for a moment, they quickly realise what they have done and come to understand one thing: only art makes life worth living. (Age: 4+) [IG]

100

Khider, Abbas (text)
Der letzte Sommer der Tauben
(The last summer of the pigeons)
München: Hanser, 2026. – 214 p.
ISBN 978-3-446-28222-3

Islamism | Dictatorship | Freedom

Germany ■ GERMAN

They're here. The men of the religious police, the men with beards, the men with their ammunition belts and rifles. They are proclaiming a new caliphate. Fourteen-year-old Noah describes how this changes his life. Arbitrariness, fear, and terror now dominate day-to-day life. Noah finds comfort and hope in his pigeons, which he has been breeding since he was a small boy. When he lets them fly over the city and watches them dance in the air, he is happy. Yet then, pigeon flights are banned, and Noah is forced to lock his birds away in a shed. Abbas Khider, who hails from Iraq, was imprisoned there for his political activities and has lived in Germany for over 25 years. In his novels, he explores themes of dictatorship, terror, and the destruction of human dignity and integrity. The books are characterised by harrowing realism as well as poetic language and symbolic density – and by protagonists who strive to preserve kindness and compassion and remain human beings. (Age: 14+) [IG]

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101

Klinge, Ayşe (text/illus.)
Der Zahn
(The tooth)
Hamburg: Kibitz Verlag, 2025. – 209 p.
ISBN 978-3-948690-36-6

Vampire | Friendship | Individuality | Diversity | Acceptance | Comic

Germany ■ GERMAN

Karla is a vampire. She keeps this a secret as best as she can, not only because her best friend, Mila, is afraid of vampires, but also because vampires do, after all, have certain preferences (blood!). What's more, they can do things that »the others« (i.e. humans) can't, such as flying through the night on their own. However, when Karla's fangs begin to grow, it becomes increasingly difficult to hide her vampire identity. That's one of the reasons why her family thinks it's high time she left the human school and transferred to a special one for vampires. Yet, does she really have to? Karla is sceptical and, besides, she wants to stay with Mila. In an original, empathetic, and warm-hearted way, Ayşe Klinge's comic »Der Zahn« explores the process of coming of age with all its upheavals. Moreover, it shows that there is enough room for many lived experiences and social realities: for both vampires AND humans. (Age: 6+) [IG]

102

Konstantinov, Vitali (text/illus.)
Wenn nicht die Menschen
(If not humans)
Mannheim: Kunstanstifter, 2026. – 51 p.
ISBN 978-3-948743-22-2

Humans | Animals | Civilisation | Thought experiment | Picture book | Non-fiction

Germany ■ GERMAN

What a stimulating and fascinating thought experiment! What would the world look like, if it weren't humans who are in the driving seat and who have left their mark on the world – with their cities, cars, and computers? What if, instead, raccoons had built a civilisation? Or dolphins? Or octopuses? They certainly have the social and intellectual capacity for it, just in a different way to humans. Vitali Konstantinov has created a masterpiece. His non-fiction picture book captivates readers' attention with its originality and factual knowledge, and in addition, it is also a true aesthetic delight. The engaging texts whet the appetite for complex topics, whilst the fold-out pages depict the various »animal worlds« with precise lines and a touch of humour. A book for countless hours of sparkling aha moments and wild flights of fancy! (Age: 10+) [IG]

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Kranenburg, Eva (text)
Freunde
(Friends)
Frankfurt: Fischer Sauerländer, [2026]. – 441 p.
ISBN 978-3-7373-7499-6

War | Trauma | Friendship

Germany ■ GERMAN

Three ragged figures make up the last contingent: Nata, the hooded girl, little Tuk, and narrator Ren. They are supposed to fight in a war against »the Others«, but their commander, Tarek, barely older than the three of them, is war-weary. Thus, the four desert and go into hiding, until, after a final devastating bombardment, the war ends, and the occupying forces march into the city. They hand out bread and quickly set up a museum to tell the victors' story. Meanwhile, the four friends try to carry on with their lives. Yet scars remain – both physical and emotional – and the past keeps intruding on the present. Eva Kranenburg's debut is a moving anti-war story that tells of enmity, hatred, hunger, pain, and suffering, as well as the will to survive, solidarity, trust, and unconditional community. This truly impressive story will linger in the readers' minds for a long time. (Age: 12+) [IG]

104

Manow, Jona (text)
Dürr, Julia (illus.)
Spion Nr. 9 und die Kunst, nicht aufzufallen
(Spy No. 9 and the art of not attracting attention)
München: Mixtvision, [2025]. – 168 p.
ISBN 978-3-95854-251-8

Neurodivergence | Observation | Alien

Germany ■ GERMAN

This debut novel by theatre director and playwright Jona Manow is quirky, humorous, and heartwarming. At the centre of the story is reserved eleven-year-old Estrich, who is constantly counting to nine. Nine is his favourite number because he is convinced that he has been sent to Earth from planet Okosha as »Spy No. 9« to document human behaviour in detail. Estrich records his observations and the resulting reflections in his logbook, which he hides in a secret place at school. When it suddenly disappears and various weird things occur, Estrich is certain that some other spies from his home planet must be on Earth. Frenetically, he hatches plans about how to get in touch with them without having to reveal too much about himself. Told without even a hint of paternalism, the novel skilfully allows readers to share in Estrich's way of seeing the world: sensitive, imaginative, and clever. (Age: 10+) [IG]

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105

Nielsen, Maja (text)
Das falsche Leben
(The wrong life)
Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2025. – 189 p.
ISBN 978-3-8369-6355-8

German Democratic Republic | Secret service | Secret agent | Escape

Germany ■ GERMAN

A spy thriller becomes reality: »Das falsche Leben« tells the incredible story of Thomas Raufeisen's involuntary relocation from West to East Germany. When his father, an unofficial employee of the East German Ministry for State Security, is in danger of being exposed as a spy in West Germany, Thomas's family hurriedly moves from Hanover to East Berlin. Without warning, Thomas is catapulted into a completely new life: He has to attend »Oberschule« instead of »Gymnasium«, there are flag-raising ceremonies, surveillance, interrogations and, finally, imprisonment for »preparing to escape«. Thomas's only wish is to flee this wrong life. In her story of a forced relocation from West to East, Maja Nielsen explores a new theme in young adult literature.
In a flawless and credible narration, she describes Thomas's struggle with »the system« as well as his feelings of betrayal, disappointment, and anger towards his father, who has deceived the family.
A gripping, moving, and extraordinary novel.
(Age: 14+) [IG]

106

Raidt, Gerda (text/illus.)
Klassenbuch.
Wer gewinnt im Spiel des Lebens?
(Class register.
Who is the winner in the game of life?)
Leipzig: Klett Kinderbuch, 2026. – 76 p.
ISBN 978-3-95470-325-8

Classism | Inequality | Social disparity | Family

Germany ■ GERMAN

What sort of music do you like? How do you dress? How do you speak? What do you eat? Where do you live? »Klassenbuch. Wer gewinnt im Spiel des Lebens?« explores the huge influence that a person's background has on their life: on who they are and who they will become. The book also looks at the opportunities that open up for you – and those that do not. Gerda Raidt emphasises: »This is a book about real life. What's written here is based on research. Nothing is made up. It's true. It's been proven. And yet people don't like to talk about it.« This author, however, does. She has drawn and written a brutally honest book about invisible yet manifest class differences, about prejudice, insecurity, and shame. »Klassenbuch« holds up a mirror to society and debunks the myth of equal opportunities. It enlightens – and it makes you angry. This is essential reading for everyone. (Age: 6+) [IG]

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107

Schlichtmann, Silke (text)
Bohn, Maja (illus.)
Staub
(Dust)
München: Tulipan Verlag, 2025. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-3-86429-683-3

Dust | Non-fiction

Germany ■ GERMAN

The book's endpapers are teeming with them: dust flakes, fluff, dust bunnies; some smiling harmlessly, others grinning maliciously. We all know it, of course: the dust that seems to have the upper hand. No matter how much you clean, it just floats around and sticks to everything. Yet even though dust is a nuisance, without it, lots of things wouldn't exist. So, what is dust exactly? Silke Schlichtmann and Maja Bohn take readers under the bed to see the so-called »big dust« but also introduce them to the »personal cloud« – that unique puff of dust that surrounds each of us and consists, for example, of dead skin cells. The longer you read this book (perhaps sneezing occasionally, because, well: dust), the more you'll learn, but also the more you'll be fascinated by this previously much-maligned housemate – despite the »dustpan paradox« (what's that you say? It's in the book!). Maja Bohn's illustrations are brimming with wit, and Silke Schlichtmann's text is as light as dust – and just as full of substance. (Age: 6+) [IG]

108

Weyhe, Birgit (text/illus.)
Schweigen
(Silence)
Berlin: avant-verlag, [2025]. – 360 p.
ISBN 978-3-96445-141-5

Dictatorship | Resistance | Argentina | Graphic novel

Germany ■ GERMAN

Birgit Weyhe's new graphic novel is another masterpiece. In this book, she links the era of National Socialism in Germany with the rule of the military junta in Argentina in the 1970s. She does so through the stories of two women: Firstly, she presents 17-year-old Jewish Ellen Marx, who flees Germany in 1939 and emigrates to Argentina, where, 40 years later, her daughter Nora disappears during the military dictatorship. Secondly, she follows young German Elisabeth Käsemann, who moved to Buenos Aires in 1970 and – like Nora – was also abducted by the military regime because of her political views. The West-German government refused to call out the terror and did not campaign for Elisabeth's release, as this might have jeopardised the 1978 FIFA World Cup hosted by Argentina. To this day, this stands as a symbol of fundamental cowardice and corruptibility. »Schweigen« is a powerful book about arbitrariness and powerlessness, but also about moments of resistance and courage. (Age: 14+) [IG]

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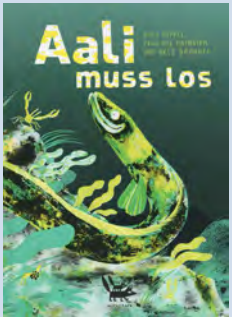
109



Zipfel, Dita (text)
Heinrich, Finn-Ole (text)
Brönner, Nele (illus.)
Aali muss los
(Eeli needs to set off)
Hamburg: Huckepack, 2025. – [64] p.
ISBN 978-3-948722-48-7

Sea | Eel | Trip

GERMAN
Germany

In »Aali muss los«, Dita Zipfel, Finn-Ole Heinrich, and Nele Brönner tell the story of an eel's coming of age – and so much more. They have chosen an unusual hero, one of those creatures who seem to have come straight from prehistoric times and whose life is unique and special. Eels undertake long journeys in the sea and in rivers and undergo a metamorphosis four times during their lives. Aali is at one such turning point. He has been swimming in the Kiel Canal for twenty years, but suddenly »[he] feels a tugging in his chest, a tingling sensation running through his whole body«. Aali is transforming from a yellow eel into a silver eel and sets off on the long, perilous journey back to his origins: the Sargasso Sea in the Atlantic Ocean. The book combines natural history and adventure fiction, magnificent illustrations – in many shades of blue and green, accented with some yellow – and a creative, conversational narrative style, in which not only the anthropomorphised Aali, but also the narrators themselves have their say. (Age: 8+) [IG]

110

Gutzschhahn, Uwe-Michael (ed.)
Wilson, Henrike (illus.)
Gedi, Geda, Gedichte.
Reimlichkeiten für Klein und Groß
(Poo, paa, poetry. Rhyme-lings for young and old)
Zürich: Atrium, 2026. – 65 p.
ISBN 978-3-85535-229-6

Krüss, James (1926-1997) | Poetry | Anthology

GERMAN
Switzerland

On May 31, 2026, James Krüss – language whizz par excellence – would have turned 100. Reason enough to publish a poetry collection featuring brand-new verses created in his honour. Seven poets got together to collaborate on Heligoland, a tiny, cragged Northern German island, and James Krüss's birthplace. The results of this highly productive gathering can now be admired in the book »Gedi, Geda, Gedichte«, illustrated by Henrike Wilson. It features »Helgaland« (Helga country) by Arne Rautenberg, »geschorene Schäfchenwolken« (shorn sheep clouds) by Mona Harry, and »Haarige Gezeiten« (Hairy times and tides) by Lena Raubaum. Nils Mohl introduces a fish afraid of water, Uwe-Michael Gutzschhahn raps the »Basstölpel Song« (song of the northern gannet), Michael Augustin invents animals like »Kegelbahnrobben« (Bowling alley seals), and Manfred Schlüter spins »Seemannsgarn« (sailors' tales). Cheerful and lively, the poems take readers on a journey to visit funny animals, waves, and wind. (Age: 5+) [IG]

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111

Hau, Kerstin (text)
Dreis, Stella (illus.)
Obacht!
(Watch out!)
Zürich: NordSüd, 2026. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-3-314-10734-4

The Unknown | Anxiety | Communication | Picture book

Switzerland ■ GERMAN

There's some creature lying on the ground outside the town. Something big. Something huge! Wimpf, Wompf, Timpe-Ma and Timpe-Pa feel uneasy: »Watch out!« They try all sorts of things to make this beast disappear: They throw a blanket over it, build a bridge across, then a road around it; but the thing is still there. And when it moves, everyone is afraid of it. Little Mienchen is the only one who isn't petrified or full of suspicion, but rather curious and compassionate. She plucks up the courage to lift the blanket and speak to the creature. And lo and behold, the fellow means no harm. Kerstin Hau and Stella Dreis have created a picture book that is highly compelling in both text and illustration. It explores the fear of the unknown, a fear that often grows to enormous proportions, but could so easily be contained by getting to know the unknown and thus transforming it into something familiar. (Age: 4+) [IG]

112

Schärer, Kathrin (text/illus.)
Lange Schlange stehen
(Standing in a really long queue)
Zürich: Atlantis, 2026. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-3-7152-0933-3

Animals | Queue | Waiting | Patience | Picture book

Switzerland ■ GERMAN

Few illustrators are as adept as Swiss artist Kathrin Schärer at drawing animals that are both so naturalistic and so anthropomorphised. In »Lange Schlange stehen«, she has plenty of scope to showcase her talent, as lots of creatures line up, one behind the other, in a long queue, including Fox, Bear, Hare, Hedgehog, Penguin, Walrus, and Rhino. As she has done in previous books, Kathrin Schärer also uses the front and back endpapers for her story – almost a trademark element of hers! Thus the queue stretches seamlessly from the cover, across the front endpaper, right into the main part: There, the animals wait patiently in front of the ice-cream stall, by the slide and diving platform at the outdoor pool, or outside the toilet. In the chocolate shop, however, something happens: A real – and, what's more, hungry – snake slithers into the shop: Help! Suddenly a big hullabaloo ensues… This picture book does not only test the protagonists' patience, it also offers a good deal of action (and a happy ending, of course). (Age: 3+) [IG]

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113

Geōrgulas, Ēlias (Georgoulas, Ilias) (text)
Mandēlaras, Philippos (Mandilaras, Philippos) (text)
Giobanēs, Tomek (Giovanis, Tomek) (illus.)
Pythagoras. Paichnidia tu nu
(Pythagoras. Games of the mind)
Athēna: Ekdoseis Patakē (Patakis Publishers), 2025. – 99 p.
ISBN 978-960-168048-4

Philosophy | Pythagoras (c. 570–c. 495 BC) | Summer holidays | Grandfather | Comic

Greece ■ GREEK

Lou spends every summer with his 2,400-year-old grandfather Aristotle and enjoys listening to the visitors philosophize in the garden. This time Pythagoras is their guest. Lou and his friends eagerly do their research, followed constantly by a weasel, which in this end turns out to be Pythagoras reincarnated. The children are enthralled by the animated discussions on the beach under the night sky – about limits and eternity, universal harmony and music, the tricky tetractys, or reincarnation. Grandfather Aristotle answers their questions with beans or an improvised glockenspiel at the local blacksmith, because for Pythagoras experience takes precedence over theory. In this fascinating comic, the author team presents Pythagoras's seemingly irrational way of living and thinking, his philosophical-mathematical concepts and ideas about spiritual questions in a clever and understandable manner. Tomek Giovanis wittily stages the characters and dialogues within a lively, light blue and white Greek summer landscape. (Age: 9+) [TA]

114

Kyritsopulos, Alexēs (Kyritsopoulos, Alexis) (text/illus.)
To kalo tu kalu
(The good of the good)
Athēna: Kedros, 2025. – 60 p.
ISBN 978-960-04-5561-8

Athens | City | History | Everyday life | Taxi | Altruism

Greece ■ GREEK

Plagued by a toothache, Alekos needs to get to a dentist as fast as possible. No problem for Thanasis, the taxi driver, who likes to make his guest's trips through Athens as varied as possible. While they weave their way through the busy city centre, he relates the tale of how he once saved the victim of a hit-and-run driver. After that he decided to do his passengers a good deed by telling them about the street names and thereby leading them through the history of Athens. Alekos's curiosity is suddenly stronger than his toothache. Alexis Kyritsopoulos turns this children's book about a hectic, impersonal taxi ride into a leisurely, personalised conversation not only about the heroes of the past but also heroic deeds in today's bustling metropolis. In the illustrations, the hustle and bustle of Athens's urban life are vibrantly depicted using the stark contrast of light and shadows, while the peaceful moments are rendered in warm, mild colours. (Age: 7+) [TA]

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115

Marantidu, Chara (Marantidou, Xara) (text/illus.)
Echō phōnē
(I have a voice)
Athēna: Kaleidoskopio (Kaleidoscope Publishing), [2025]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-960-471-308-0

Voice | Language | Communication | Picture book

Greece ■ GREEK

The voice is the acoustic instrument for human communication. But is it also active when we do not speak? Can we see it when we don't hear it? Well, possibly – as this book shows – as a dot in our heads, that quietly praises, chides, warns us and makes fun of us. If it rolls into the mouth, it comes out as a line that arrives at other heads clear or confused, gentle or shrill, whole or shattered. If it cannot get out, it gets stuck in the stomach or throat and turns into a teardrop, dance, music, a poem or a hug. With this poetic allegory, architect and artist Xara Marantidou has created a visual homage to the voice in this highly artistic book for readers of all ages. As if on a spectrogram, to which the endpapers also allude, she lets the dot take on ever new shapes in orange (a colour for high tonal energy) against a white background (a colour for silence or maximum volume). At the end of the book, after a deep exhalation sequence, one finds the same picture as at the beginning, so that everything can begin anew. (Age: 8+) [TA]

116

Mponanos, Manos (Bonanos, Manos) (text)
Stamatiadē, Ntaniela (Stamatiadi, Daniela) (illus.)
O anthrōpos kai ē kukubagia
(The human and the owl)
Metamorphōsē Attikē: Ekdoseis Papadopulos (Papadopoulos Publishing), 2025. – 36 p.
(Series: Istories apo enan kalytero kosmo; 2)
ISBN 978-618-232-177-5

Humans | Nature | Coexistence | Thoreau, Henry David (1817-1862) | Picture book

Greece ■ GREEK

In a diary entry dated 28/29 October 1855, author, philosopher and naturalist Henry David Thoreau describes a wondrous encounter with an owl at Walden Pond. Manos Bonanos has rewritten this text as a poetic story in which Thoreau and the owl speak in parallel. Thoreau talks about his peaceful life in the woods and about a boat ride during which he discovers the owl on the shore and, amazed at its tameness, carries it to his hut. The owl, in turn, tells of its stay there and its astonishment over the strange creature with whom it unexpectedly feels comfortable. For hours, each observes the other and finally, with difficulty, go their separate ways. What remains is a respectful co-existence of human and animal in their mutual habitat, nature. Daniela Stamatiadi's illustrations endow the interaction and the landscape expressive depth. Thoreau's timeless »Walden message« about finding one's self and important values by being in harmony with nature is presented in an atmospheric and child-oriented manner. (Age: 5+) [TA]

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117

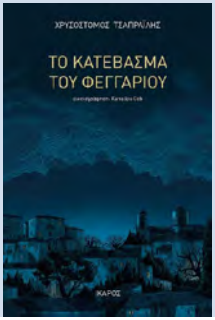
Serephas, Sakēs (Serefas, Sakis) (text)
Giobanēs, Tomek (Giovanis, Tomek) (illus.)
Phantasu na … epephte ena synnepho sto kephali su!
(What if … a cloud fell on your head!)
Athēna: Metaichmio, 2025. – 72 p.
ISBN 978-618-03-4372-4

Science | Question | Non-fiction

Greece ■ GREEK

What if … you washed the claws of a spider? Can you tickle yourself? Would chips taste good if there were no air in the bag? And did you know that the cloud that floats along so lightly weighs as much as 2,500 small donkeys? Whether discussing the kinship between chicken and dinosaur or the number of ants living on Earth – in this book the renowned author Sakis Serefas confirms in ten delightful texts, composed in his unmistakable, humorous manner, that no question is absurd or stupid. His explanations of facts and information draw convincingly on examples from children's everyday life. At the end of each chapter, the reader is prompted with further questions, bits of knowledge, video links, lines of poetry or beginnings of stories to keep on reflecting and researching. The versatile illustrator Tomek Giovanis expands on the texts and wittily exaggerates their surreal dimension. A savvy book that motivates children to ask questions and search for answers on their own. (Age: 9+) [TA]

118



Tsaprailēs, Chrysostomos (Tsaprailis, Chrysostomos) (text)
Cob, Kanellos (i. e. Bitsikas, Kanellos) (illus.)
To katebasma tu phengariu
(Drawing down the moon)
Athēna: Ikaros (Ikaros Publishing), 2025. – 107 p.
ISBN 978-960-572-748-2

Ancestor | Ritual | Supernatural power | Magic spell | Mother | Grandmother | Daughter | Cultural heritage | Fantasy fiction | Horror fiction

Greece ■ GREEK

Kirke and her mother arrive at the house of their ancestors in the Thessalian village of Pezula to prepare it to be sold. The young woman wants to spend a few days there with her memories, observing the sky, and recalling the tales her grandmother told. But soon a mysterious shadow falls over everything familiar, as a Syrian woman celebrates an ancient local ritual that would heal her son and is known as Drawing down the Moon. Life in the village is transformed into a demonic dystopia where reality and the supernatural are reflected in one another. Kirke must navigate a path through the gruesome maze of occultism, death and superstition to break the spell for everyone affected. This folkloric thriller, the first young adult book by Chrysostomos Tsaprailis, a well-known fantasy writer in Greece, involves a compelling interplay between folk mystic, mythology and contemporary life – even including gender-related elements. Renowned artist Kanellos Cob provides context with pictures employing film-like fantasy and surrealism. (Age: 15+) [TA]

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119

Tsarfati, Einat (text/illus.)
Ani śonet leḥakot
(I hate to wait)
Moshav Ben-Shemen: Keter (Keter Books), 2026. – [36] p. no ISBN

Waiting | Time | Boredom | Imagination | Observation | Everyday life | Picture book

Israel ■ HEBREW

A young girl has to wait for her grandmother to answer the phone, for the elevator to arrive, for the right bus to come, and, perhaps worst of all, for sleep. Waiting is everywhere. Einat Tsarfati turns these familiar moments of childhood frustration into elaborate visual adventures. While little happens in the text, the detailed illustrations don't stand still: Grandma's long phone call inspires wild explanations, passengers come and go while the bus never arrives, and a waiting room fills with strange characters and unexpected stories. Reality continually slips into fantasy, suggesting that boredom itself can be an invitation to observe, imagine, and invent. Grandma proposes another possibility: instead of waiting for something to happen, one might simply enjoy the present moment. The girl-narrator remains unconvinced, at least at first. With humuor and visual abundance, this book explores a child's experience of time while showing how seemingly empty moments can open spaces for attention, imagination, and play. (Age: 4+) [LW]

120

Ṿereṭeh-Zehavi, Tamar (Verete-Zehavi, Tamar) (text)
Marzuḳ, No'am (Marzouk, Noam) (illus.)
Ma'avaḳe tsedeḳ me-A 'ad T. Ekh lehatsliaḥ leshanot le-ṭovah, beli alimut u-veli lehitya'esh (Ma'avakei tzedek me-Alef ad Tav)
(Justice alphabet. How to achieve changes without violence or despair) Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved (Am Oved), 2025. – 232 p. – ISBN 978-965-580-079-1

Activism | Social justice | Non-violence | Protest | Democracy | Civil rights | Political agency

Israel ■ HEBREW

Tamar Verete-Zehavi introduces young readers to 22 struggles for justice from different periods and places, organized according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The book moves between historical events and movements, from civil rights and LGBTQ+ activism to resistance against dictatorship, slavery, racism, and social inequality, while presenting protest, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, and other forms of collective action as tools for change. Rather than functioning as a historical encyclopedia, these stories are woven into the friendship between a girl and a boy, Tamar and Dan, who meet in a Jerusalem park. The struggles Tamar tells him about encourage Dan to transform anger into reflection and action. Noam Marzouk's expressive illustrations give each episode its own visual character and emphasize both the diversity of the people involved and the possibility of change. The book offers children political vocabulary, historical knowledge, and a sense that injustice can be confronted creatively and collectively. (Age: 9+) [LW]

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India ■ HINDI

Saikia, Pankaj (Saikiyā, Paṅkaja) (text/illus.)
Gunaguna ôrkeṣṭrā
(Gungun orchestra)
New Delhi: Jugnoo Prakashan, an imprint of Ektara Trust, 2026. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-93-4928-686-3

Assam | Village | Music band | Wedding | Grandfather | Granddaughter | Wordless book | Picture book

This fun-filled wordless picture book follows a small girl and her grandfather in rural North-east India. As the girl wakes up to her granddad's clarinet melodies, she decides to join him for the old man's last performance with his musician pals as the village's wedding brass band. The two hop on his bike to meet the other grey-haired band members. At the party the elderly musicians give it their all, enchanting the wedding guests with their energetic playing when suddenly a rival orchestra turns up and a noisy competition ensues. Assamese illustrator, author, comic maker, and animator Pankaj Saikia tells a vivacious and hopeful story starring a group that holds fast to a profession that unfortunately is on the verge of dying out. He uses techniques like crosshatching to achieve depth and textures in his digitally coloured comical line drawings and imbues them with authentic local details to enrich the enjoyable story. (Age: 4+) [CS]

122

Taiwan ■ HOKKIEN (TAIWAN MINNAN)

Corn Chen (Yumi Chen, i.e. Chen Minyu) (text/illus.)
Nā sī leh sàng phue
(If you were delivering letters)
Taibei: Yu shan she, Xing yue shu fang (Yushan Publishing, Star Moon Study), 2025. – [90] p.
ISBN 978-986-294-383-0
Text in Hokkien (Taiwan Minnan) and Chinese

Taiwan | History 1945-1992 | Political persecution | Prisoner | Letter | Poetry | Bilingual book | Leporello

This book by award-winning illustrator Corn Chen focuses on the recovery of state-censored farewell letters written by political prisoners facing execution during Taiwan's authoritarian »White Terror« era. Faced with the question, »If you were delivering letters, what kind would you want to deliver?«, a postman vows to take care of these forgotten messages. He pedals across a magical landscape of old postal envelopes, until after sixty winters the letters finally become accessible and can be delivered to their rightful recipients. During his journey, he witnesses how these letters originate from »pitch-black fenced compounds«. He observes the victims' families' lifelong wait, aware that »house numbers have turned into tombstones« and many letters have become undeliverable. The volume also includes letters and biographical accounts of five dissidents as well as essays on the White Terror period, encouraging readers to reflect on historical trauma and its relationship to present-day freedom. (Age: 6+) [LO]

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Nagy, Diána (illus.)
Babageometria formàló. Kukucskálós könyv
(Baby geometry. Forms. A peephole book)
[Budapest]: Móra, [2025]. – [14] p.
(Series: Baba geometria)
ISBN 978-963-603-831-1

Forest animals | Geometry | Basic form | Wordless book | Board book | Picture book

Hungary ■ HUNGARIAN

Geometrical forms lend themselves not only to making amazing objects, but also to telling stories. For many years, illustrator Diána Nagy has devoted herself to early childhood perception and created an incredible variety of board books based on geometrical forms. In »Formáló« she develops black-and-white patterns from various round and wavy forms such as circles, semi-circles, crescents or waves. These serve as the scenery and the background out of which individual small figures emerge in the colours blue, red and yellow. Thanks to the multicoloured butterflies, squirrels, birds, foxes and bats, the black-and-white background is now recognisable as a forest. On each double-page spread, two animals encounter each other, sitting in trees, in bushes, or hiding behind the lift-up flaps, which are also incorporated into each double page. This creates a fascinating journey of discovery through the forest's wildlife. (Age: 1+) [KW]

124

Szinvai, Dániel (illus.)
Álmomban az eső
(The rain in my dream)
Budapest: Csimota, 2025. – [110] p.
ISBN 978-615-6472-50-2

Imaginary trip | Underwater world | Wordless book | Picture book

Hungary ■ HUNGARIAN

In this award-winning wordless picture book, Dániel Szinvai takes readers on a marvellously surreal journey. When never-ending rainfall causes the world to be inundated, a boy and girl set off by ship to try and stop the storm. Their quest leads them through flooded cities full of old skyscrapers, past strange vehicles, into the belly of a whale, down into absurdist underwater worlds, and to a giant octopus. Finally, they find the »weather maker«, who flips a switch in his control centre to stop the rain, and the children pull a gigantic plug that lets all the water in the world flow away. In »Álmomban az eső« much remains pleasantly vague and in limbo. The journey and the flooding of the world could also exist merely in the boy's fantastical drawings. Dániel Szinvai's detailed, richly evocative pictures invite the reader to come along on the journey and decipher the wordless story in all its many nuances. (Age: 10+) [KW]

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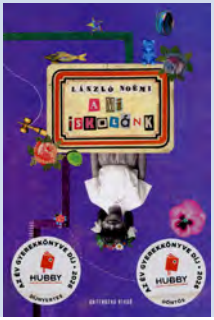

Romania ■ HUNGARIAN

László, Noémi (text)
Hathází, Rebeka (illus.)
A mi iskolánk
(Our school)
[Miercurea Ciuc]: Gutenberg Kiadó, [2025]. – 92 p.
ISBN 978-606-9001-47-9

School | Socialism | Memories

Nearly every short chapter of Noémi László's memories of her school days begins with the phrase »Our school is …«. Each one takes the reader back to Romania's socialist period and to Cluj-Napoca, the second largest city, where a Hungarian minority lives. The book gathers widely varying impressions that are neither chronological nor connected by a plotline. Instead, they are coalesced into a multipartite mosaic, which is complemented by Rebeka Hathází's brilliantly composed collages. The first-person narrator frequently makes use of a latently ironic tone. She depicts school scenes which every pupil will recognize – strict teachers, sports days, playground dynamics. She intersperses these with descriptions of the historical background of socialism – with its shooting practice at school, with Pioneer songs and Pioneer uniforms. All of this makes »A mi iskolánk« a part of the culture of remembrance of an era which the present-day generation still have yet to discover. (Age: 14+) [KW]

126

Indonesia ■ INDONESIAN

Subarja, Andina (text/illus.)
Musik
(Music)
Jakarta: Penerbit Noura Kids, 2025. – [54] p.
(Series: Read Aloud)
ISBN 978-634-7389-01-5

Music | Musical taste | Diversity | Harmony | Open-mindedness | Picture book

Music lies dormant underground until a girl coaxes sounds from a flute and delicate green notes sprout from colourless staves. When a drummer appears, producing wild, red rhythms, a musical contest escalates into a wild scuffle that plunges everything into darkness as the music falls silent. Eventually, the two harmonize their styles into a fusion of colours. What seeds will fall on the barren staves when musicians clad in blue approach? Seeds of harmony or noise? While rhythm and a flowing melody can be visualized through sprouts – which correspond to real, playable notes – the minimalist text comments only briefly on the essence of music. It is not merely about sound, but about musical taste, emotion and diversity – music can make you feel alive, evoke a sense of wonder, foster understanding, or leave you speechless. It can be a burst of fireworks or a calm stream. And sometimes, different voices must fall silent to hear each other. »Musik« was curated in the 2022 »dPICTUS Unpublished Picturebook Showcase«. (Age: 6+) [LO]

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127

Bellemo, Cristina (text)
Ruotolo, Flavia (illus.)
Poesie notturne
(Night poems)
Milano: Topipittori, [2025]. – [60] p.
(Series: Parola magica)
ISBN 978-88-33701-64-6

Italy ■ ITALIAN

Night | Day | Time | Light | Darkness | Dream | Sleep | Poetry

For a child, the night consists of sounds, questions, wonderings and anxieties. On the threshold between wakefulness and sleep, between seeing and dreaming, between the certainty of existing and the fear of not returning, a blanket sometimes serves as protection. The child listens for the breathing of the nearby parents and asks itself what various inanimate objects are doing at night and whether there is any other child that is similarly trying to fall asleep. Employing a very musical language, Cristina Bellemo's profound volume of poems is devoted to childlike feelings that arise in the mysterious darkness of nighttime. Flavia Ruotolo gives the words colour and defines the starry heavens in such a way that atoms, planets and celestial bodies take on the shapes of toys, Lego bricks, socks and dinosaurs. The poems and illustrations are thoroughly refreshing and quite close to childlike thoughts, experiences and feelings. (Age: 5+) [AB]

128

Borando, Silvia (text/illus.)
Come riconoscere una forchetta e molti altri oggetti di casa
(How to recognize a fork and many other objects at home)
Reggio Emilia: Minibombo, [2025]. – [60] p.
ISBN 979-12-81054-18-9

Italy ■ ITALIAN

Home | Object | Picture book

Adults know how to classify things, little children are still learning. Hence Silvia Borando has written this surprising, witty »handbook« to make the many ordinary objects in the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and living room distinctly recognizable for the very young reader. But soon it becomes evident that certain animals may share the same characteristics. Doesn't a shark put food in its mouth, have teeth (in Italian »denti« also means the tines of a fork) and the same silver-gray colour as a fork does? And suddenly a predatory fish appears at the kitchen table. Similarly, the kitchen is inhabited by a bird (the espresso pot has a beak, whistles in the morning and is often found near biscuits) and a bear (like a refrigerator, it takes up a lot of space and holds food). Funnily enough, the entire kitchen is soon depicted, but while most objects are correctly identified, the shark, bird and bear are still named fork, espresso pot and refrigerator! And so the text proceeds, on and on, in this very enjoyable picture book! (Age: 3+) [AB]

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129

Canuti, Massimo (text)
Tre dita
(Three Fingers)
Crema: Uovonero, 2025. – 250 p.
(Series: I geodi)
ISBN 979-12-80104-67-0

World War II | Resistance | Humanity | Disability

Italy ■ ITALIAN

Taking inspiration from the childhood of his father in a Tuscan village occupied by German troops during the Second World War, Massimo Canuti has composed a moving and highly literary novel which gives an authentic view of those years from the perspective of a child. The eleven-year-old narrator, Nado, was given the nickname »Three Fingers« after he found a grenade while playing; it exploded in his hands, and he lost his entire left hand and two fingers of the right. His life was saved by a young German soldier who took him immediately to the hospital. Later this soldier was caught in the crossfire of resistance fighters, whom Nado had allowed to use the laboratory of his deceased father as a hideout. This sensitive depiction of Nado's feelings of guilt and the nuanced portrayal of the friend-foe dichotomy allow the reader to reflect on the folly of war. Incidentally, the real Nado – the father of the author – later became a renowned sculptor, despite his damaged hands. (Age: 12+) [AB]

130

Carminati, Chiara (text)
Tappari, Massimiliano (photos)
Mare mosso
(Rough sea)
Milano: Mondadori, 2026. – 208 p.
(Series: Contemporanea)
ISBN 978-88-04-81523-5

Island | Holidays | Photography | Sea | Water

Italy ■ ITALIAN

These two authors previously collaborated on several books in which photography was the inspiration for poetry and provided the illustrations for them. Now they have joined forces to write their first novel. Photography – the »eighth art« – also has a role to play here. Salicornia, who is spending a month on a small island with her sisters and mother, befriends Glauco, who is pursuing a photo project with his camera. He hopes to make »photo translations« of the names of famous pop groups. As in the classic film »Blow-up«, his photos unexpectedly capture evidence of a crime which involves the island's water supply. This thrilling summertime novel, which cleverly intertwines prose and photographs, is illustrated with magical pictures of the sea. The plot alludes to the story of a doctor who, in the 1970s, drew attention to wrongdoings related to the water supply on the island of Salina and was summarily fired for doing so. (Age: 11+) [AB]

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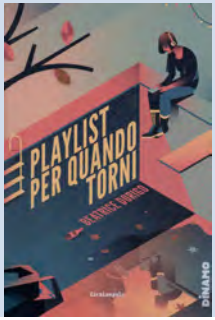

Dorigo, Beatrice (text)
Playlist per quando torni
(Playlist for when you get back)
Torino: Giralangolo, [2026]. – 191 p.
(Series: Dinamo)
ISBN 979-12-23703-09-0

Love | Mother | Depression | Daughter | Coming of age | Music

Italy ■ ITALIAN

This debut novel by Beatrice Dorigo offers adolescents thought-provoking reading material, in which they may find much that resonates with their own lives. The 19-year-old narrator Liza lives with her depressive mother and has recently begun a relationship with Milo. The two of them have invented a secret game. They break into abandoned places (holiday flats or clubs open only in the summer) to have sex. When Liza's mother disappears one day, Liza is afraid her mother could have harmed herself. This brings the young woman to reflect on her own identity and rethink her relationship to Milo. When her mother reappears, it is time for a new start. The novel examines love in all its facets, leaving nothing out and at times going into explicit detail. But because the portrayal of the world as the narrator sees it pulsates with realism, the book has a very special flair. Its unconventional, ironic but authentic voice is also very compelling.
(Age: 14+) [AB]

132

Morello, Ericavale (text/illus.)
Traslochi d'artista
(Master movers)
[Monselice]: Camelozampa, 2025. – [56] p.
(Series: Le sinapsi)
ISBN 979-12-54642-07-8

Art | Artist | Painter | Non-fiction

Italy ■ ITALIAN

Following upon her book »Cercasi casa d'artista«, Ericavale Morello once again demonstrates considerable originality in presenting art history. This book is structured around a list of 25 »removal companies«. Each bears the name of an artist and conducts its business in a particular manner. For example, the company Escher offers »relocations that seem to be never-ending«, but are mathematically precise. The company Seurat plans every move down to the last dotted detail, while Christo & Jeanne-Claude Inc. pack up – of course – everything thoroughly. With highly detailed illustrations and a narrative in the stylistic format of advertisements, the author describes with great humour the style of each artist. Starred internet ratings from famous people who have made use of these »companies« offer further puzzles to solve. In the appendix there is a brief overview of each artist. Those who want to track down all the secret quotes and allusions in the text will be aided by the QR codes at the end of the book. (Age: 12+) [AB]

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133

Negrin, Fabian (text)
Di Giorgio, Mariachiara (illus.)
Un cane anch'io
(I want [to be] a dog, too)
Roma: Orecchio acerbo, [2026]. – [38] p.
ISBN 979-12-5507-109-9

Family | Siblings | Dog | Imagination | Picture book

Italy ■ ITALIAN

Martina and her brother want to get a dog. They plead with their parents, whose terse answer is that dogs lose too much hair, constantly bark and howl and need to be walked several times a day. They have no need for a further house pet, they add, since they already have two! While mother and father meant this as a joke, Martina takes them quite seriously. Hence, she convinces her younger brother to turn himself into a dog for her sake. From that moment on, he moves about on four legs, on a leash, eats from a dog bowl and barks loudly. The other children in the neighbourhood, who share the same fate, catch on quickly. A new fashion breaks out and one night all the children go into the nearby forest and begin to howl at the moon. And thus, this rather eccentric picture book skips the classic happy ending readers might expect. And that is just fine! (Age: 5+) [AB]

134

Nosella, Stella (text)
Carlini, Lucia (illus.)
La mia nonna ratto
(My granny, the rat)
Milano: Terre di mezzo, 2025. – 91 p.
(Series: Acchiappastorie)
ISBN 979-12-5996-319-2

Grandmother | Death | Coping with grief

Italy ■ ITALIAN

Sveva believes she can see her grandmother's red hair peeking out over her armchair. But how could that be? Grandma died two weeks ago. In fact, the little girl sees her grandmother in a rat. Doesn't she have the same features as her beloved grandmother? Her parents disagree, and the neighbour's cat is out to catch the rat one way or the other. Sveva takes the rat under her wing, cares for it and plays with it, until it suddenly disappears. Then the neighbour gives Sveva a little kitten with fur the same red colour as her grandmother's hair. From that moment on, it is clear that the girl will be able to accept her loss and begin to get on with her life. In 14 short chapters, a convenient size and with lovely colour illustrations, this short novel is perfect for first-time readers. The topic of death is sensitively dealt with. The book focusses on a child's imaginative curiosity toward big questions and the childlike manner of dealing with trauma through a belief in reincarnation. (Age: 7+) [AB]

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135

Abe, Hiroshi (text/illus.)
Higuma
(Brown bear)
Tōkyō: Bronze Publishing, 2025. – [32] p.
+ 1 supplement
ISBN 978-4-89309-746-0

Brown bear | Animals | Annual cycle | Picture book

Japan ■ JAPANESE

The 2026 Hans Christian Andersen Award nominee Hiroshi Abe (b. 1948) is acclaimed for his animal illustrations, which are based on 25 years of experience as a zookeeper on Japan's northernmost main island Hokkaido. In »Higuma«, Abe's dynamic illustrations, his thoughtful design and the clever changes of perspective celebrate the beauty of the natural environment on Hokkaido. When the autumn mountains are covered with brilliantly coloured leaves, a brown bear eats voraciously before hibernating over the winter without eating, digesting, or excreting. To the still and snow-covered outside world, the bear seems to disappear completely, but actually it gives birth in the den. In spring, the mother bear leads her cubs outside. The images tenderly capture the young bears' astonishment as they see the vast, teeming world for the first time. The humorous text perfectly captures the bear family's intimate world underground. Through this picture book, young people can imagine what it is like to live with other creatures on Earth. (Age: 5+) [RN]

136

Harapeko Megane (text/illus.)
Harapeko ebisu no oshōgatsu
(The hungry god Ebisu's New Year)
Tōkyō: Holp Shuppan, 2025. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-4-5931-0530-4

Japan | New Year | Food | Tradition | Seven Gods of Fortune | Picture book

Japan ■ JAPANESE

Harapeko Megane is the pseudonym of an artist couple known for mouth-watering food illustrations. In this picture book, traditional Japanese New-Year dishes, Osechi, are fascinatingly depicted with warmth and detail. The story begins with the gods' servant mice preparing Osechi in the bustling kitchen. When the text says »The sea bream is missing«, the illustration suggests that the cat has taken it. Ebisu, the God of Shipping, Fishing, Commerce, and one of the Seven Gods of Fortune, is asked by another god to fish for another sea bream. As Ebisu is hungry, every landscape around him looks like a delicious Osechi dish. When he seems to have found the sea bream, the slight change in the illustration on the following page invites readers to guess what the fish really is. The thoughtful and humorous illustrations and the sophisticated design, including the endpapers – a Chinese landscape illustration in the front and Osechi dishes at the back –, make this book highly appealing. The text's rhythmic language is suitable to be read aloud. (Age: 3+) [RN]

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137

Ishikawa, Eriko (text/illus.)
Besshī chan
(Little Bessie)
Tōkyō: Arisukan, 2026. – [42] p. + 1 supplement
ISBN 978-4-7520-1169-9

Japan | Canada | History 20th century | Immigrant | Picture book

Japan ■ JAPANESE

In »Besshī chan«, an elderly woman recounts memories of her childhood for her granddaughter, because the girl wonders why her grandmother is singing an English hymn. Born of Japanese parents in Vancouver, Canada, she was given a Japanese name, but called Bessie in her Canadian surroundings, where she mostly spoke English with her family and friends. At the age of eight, she left Canada and went to Japan for her education. Inspired by her grandmother's memories, author Eriko Ishikawa (b. 1955) depicts a Japanese-Canadian girl's everyday life, her perseverance in adapting to unfamiliar Japanese customs, the discomfort of being separated from her family, and her distress at not being able to return to Canada or speak English during World War II. The picture book sensitively explores how a sense of belonging emotionally supports people for a long time. This story about emigrants and immigrants is all the more welcome today in Japan, where people who would like to stay in the country are facing legal and social difficulties. (Age: 7+) [RN]

138

Iwase, Jōko (text)
Sakai, Komako (illus.)
Watashi, wakannai
(I don't get it)
Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2025. – 218 p.
ISBN 978-4-0653-8952-2

Family | School | Group pressure | Conformity | Friend

Japan ■ JAPANESE

It is not easy for the protagonist of this book, fourth-grader Naka, to describe her feelings, so she often responds to others by saying, »I don't get it«. Every morning she has a vision of a girl who is about to jump from a high window of a school building. Naka feels entrapment and pressure to conform within the typical Japanese school community. Her parents are separated – her father has moved to a remote island to join a movement against the construction of an atomic power plant, her mother lacks confidence in her ability to be a writer –, and Naka's neighbours, an old man and his son, have been estranged for years. As she begins to recognize the adults' problems, challenges, and feelings, Naka comes to realize that they also have doubts and do not always know what they ought to do. The 2022 and 2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award nominee Jōko Iwase (b. 1950) masterfully portrays the girl's struggle to find her true feelings and a sense of belonging. (73rd Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award; 2026). (Age: 11+) [RN]

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139

Kakinokihara, Masahiro (text/illus.)
Jabajajān
(Milky shapes)
Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2025. – 32 p.
(Series: Nihon kessaku ehon shirīzu)
ISBN 978-4-8340-8841-0

Milk | Shape | Photo | Picture book

Japan ■ JAPANESE

Graphic designer Masahiro Kakinokihara (b. 1970) has created ingeniously designed books for babies and toddlers. In his innovative, artistic picture book »Jabajajān,« each time a glass tips over on a table, the spilled milk takes a different shape, such as a dolphin, a ship, a bugle, a snail or a plane. The simple, repetitive text, full of onomatopoetic sounds, is easy to follow, its rhythm cleverly building the tension as the glass falls and the milk splashes. A series of photos invites young children to guess what is shown. Objects with similar sounds and animals of various kinds and sizes appear one after another. The loose connection between the individual pages shapes the story right up to the unexpected final scene, which is convincing and clever. In very small type on the back of the book jacket one can read: »Failure is not always bad.« Rather than crying over spilled milk, the book suggests, it is good to embrace one's own experiences – and to celebrate the apparent mishaps that happen every day. (Age: 2+) [RN]

140

Mori, Yōko (text/illus.)
Aru hoshi no kisha
(A train on a planet)
Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2025. – [48] p.
(Series: Nihon kessaku ehon shirīzu)
ISBN 978-4-8340-8874-8

Animals | Endangered species | Extinction | Train | Night | Picture book

Japan ■ JAPANESE

In her characteristic style of pencil drawings in dark tones, Yōko Mori (b. 1959) has broken new ground with »Aru hoshi no kisha«. In this picture book, a boy is travelling at night on a train with unusual animals. One of the passengers, Dodo, who is holding a potted Calvaria tree, is called by the conductor to get off at the station named »1681«. When the gloomy bluebuck gets off at »1800«, and a noisy group of passenger pigeons gets off at »1914«, readers may notice that the station number indicates the year each species went extinct. The short-tailed albatross couple flies out of the window and, sometime later, a baby albatross gets on the train, indicating that the population of this species has increased once again thanks to preservation measures. With beautiful, stunning illustrations, Yōko Mori captures the sense of great loss and addresses the issue of the coexistence of different species on Earth. This book has received three renowned Japanese children's book awards. (Age: 5+) [RN]

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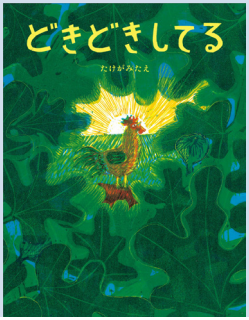

Japan ■ JAPANESE

Takegami, Tae (text/illus.)
Dokidoki shiteru
(My heart is thumping)
Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2025. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-4-03-350440-7

Life | Animals | Nature | Zest for life | Picture book

All living creatures share a common feature: they have a heartbeat. This book begins with a rooster whose heart is thumping when he crows in the morning. On the following pages, more animals appear, such as the chrysalis with a heart filled with hope before hatching, an elephant making huge droppings, and dogs running at full speed. Subtle changes in the animals' minds, like a hint of fear of being noticed by a predator, or a burst of affection during intimacy, are freely and sensitively captured through Tae Takegami's unique technique of wood-block printing: after printing one colour, the same wood block is further engraved and re-used to print another colour. The loose connection between the pages cleverly gives the book rhythm and a sense of unity. Every page turn brings a surprise with dynamic changes of perspective and celebrates the joy of living on Earth. Here, even the sea, a mountain and a cherry tree have a soul, forming a world without hierarchies. (73rd Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award; 2026). (Age: 3+) [RN]

142

Japan ■ JAPANESE

Takiwa, Asako (text)
Kyō, Machiko (illus.)
Kawasemi no michikusa
(A kingfisher tarries along the way)
Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2025. – 220 p.
ISBN 978-4-03-727500-6

Gender | Old age | Life | Death

Following »Tamanegi to hachimitsu« and »Hikoboshi o miagete«, Asako Takiwa's most recent novel in the series sensitively depicts the same protagonist, Chiharu, in her unsteady steps toward maturity. In »Kawasemi no michikusa«, the high school girl has not yet decided what she wants to do when she is grown up. During the summer holidays, she stays in the countryside and listens to her grandmother recounting memories of the joys and difficulties in her life as a woman. Grandmother and granddaughter enjoy sewing together with the neighbour Hinata, an elementary school boy. Inspired by his deceased mother, Hinata loves fashion but has been teased by his classmates for his gender non-conformity. While Chiharu comes to understand how Hinata is getting used to a world without his mother, she gradually overcomes her restlessness and frustration in the face of innumerable options for her own future. Comic artist Machiko Kyo's graceful illustrations match the story and will certainly appeal to teenage readers. (Age: 11+) [RN]

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Cho, Eun-joo (text)
Chang, Sunhwan (illus.)
Biro wa horang halbae
(Biro and Tiger grandpa)
Seoul: Munhakgwa Jiseongsa (Moonji Publishing), 2025. – [144] p.
(Series: Munji aideul; 182)
ISBN 978-89-320-4420-0

Metamorphosis | Adventure | Grandfather | Grandson | Korea | Division

Republic of Korea ■ KOREAN

After yellowish fur grows all over his body, an affectionate grandfather turns into a tiger. He is not weak or elderly, but an independent man who subsequently declares his decision to return to Mount Baekdu in North Korea. His grandson, Biro, cannot bear to let him go alone and foolhardily follows him. When a search party is sent to look for Biro and poachers are driven by the scent of money to hunt them down, a perilous adventure unfolds against the backdrop of Mount Duta and Mount Seorak. During their thrilling journey, which reveals the essence of familial love, Biro struggles with and resolves existential questions about his identity, even while he protects his beloved grandpa, whose lifelong secret is finally revealed. The fantastical premise sheds light on the pain of war and Korea's deeply felt national division. Renowned painter and picture book artist Chang Sunhwan created the expressive illustrations for Korean-Canadian author Cho Eun-joo's novel that earned the 21st Ma Hae Song Literary Award. (Age: 10+) [YC, MC, SP]

144

Hyun, Min-kyung (text/illus.)
Eoneu nal bamhaneureul taltaltal teoreotdeoni
(One night, after vigorously shaking the night sky)
Paju: Sagyejeol (Sakyejul), 2025. – [48] p.
ISBN 979-11-6981-402-7

Cleaning | Sky | Night | Star | Friendship | Picture book

Republic of Korea ■ KOREAN

Ruzabit loves to clean, though her methods are anything but ordinary. Along with sweeping floors and dusting furniture, she scrubs mountains, shakes trees, and even lifts an entire house to get at hidden dirt. One evening, she notices the night sky is covered with dust. Without hesitation, she cleans the sky herself, tackling the vast expanse in her own extraordinary way. The next morning, she finds a crying baby star that has fallen to the ground. It turns out that by casually shaking the night sky as if it were a bedsheet, she has accidentally scattered apart an entire star family. Together with the baby, Ruzabit tracks down the rest of the family and whimsically attempts to send them back home. Brought to life by Hyun Min-kyung's bold yet delicate artistic style, this imaginative picture book follows the hapless adventures of a lovable woman. With its daring compositions, dynamic pacing, and a painterly touch that employs warm yet textured brushwork, the story delivers a visual delight with every turn of the page. (Age: 5+) [YC, MC, SP]

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Kim, Min-seo (text)
Hogu
(The pushover)
Paju: Changbi, 2026. – 213 p.
(Series: Changbi cheongsonyeon munhak; 145)
ISBN 978-89-364-5745-7

Go (board game) | Bullying | Imitation | Identity

Republic of Korea ■ KOREAN

After his parents' divorce, Yunsu is raised by his grandfather, who has a disabled leg. The grandfather is both a parent and Yunsu's closest companion, teaching him the principles of life through the game of Go. A diligent, kind and helpful student, Yunsu is teased as a »hogu« (pushover). Things worsen when Kwon Yi-cheol, the class's most influential student, labels Yunsu a »hypocrite« and mocks his grandfather as a »dwarf«. The bullying intensifies as other students join in. Backed into a corner, Yunsu tries for a short time to appear strong and ruthless by imitating Yi-cheol's behaviour. »Hogu« originally refers to a »tiger's mouth« in Go, a precarious position where a stone is surrounded on three sides by the opponent's stones. Through this double meaning, the gripping novel portrays a boy pushed to the brink as he searches for the decisive »move« that will shape his future, without turning into a bully himself. Kim Min-seo received the 17th Changbi Prize for Young Adult Literature for »Yul ui siseon« (Yul's viewpoint). (Age: 13+) [YC, MC, SP]

146

Lee, Seung-A (text/illus.)
Choego ui gisaengchung
(Ultimate Parasite)
Seoul: Bukgeukgom (BookGoodCome), 2025. – [70] p.
(Series: Gunggeumhae sirijeu; 30)
ISBN 979-11-6588-470-3

Parasite | Competition | Prejudice | Ecosystem | Biodiversity | Non-fiction | Picture book

Republic of Korea ■ KOREAN

On planet No-Bug, pesticides have wiped out all parasites, resulting in a monotonous imbalance in the flora and fauna. Plagued by inexplicable itching and autoimmune diseases and seeking to restore environmental stability, the inhabitants try to lure parasites to their planet by hosting a cosmic talent competition to crown the »Ultimate Parasite of the Universe«. During the tournament, which is organized as a kind of reality-TV casting show, participants engage in challenges such as rap battles and field trials on their hosts. Although parasites usually evoke disgust as exploitative organisms, this hilarious book with its vibrant, artistic design illuminates their contributions to biodiversity and a balanced ecosystem. By presenting compelling parasitological phenomena, it deconstructs misconceptions about parasites as uniformly harmful. Along with »Choego ui gisaengchung«, Lee Seung-A has published several other humorous nonfiction picture books that combine scientific facts with modern pop culture. (Age: 8+) [YC, MC, SP]

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147

Min, Ahwon (text/illus.)
Boton
(The ordinary)
Goyang: Girin Midieo (Girin Media), 2026. – [59] p.
ISBN 979-11-92340-54-8

Normalcy | Uniformity | Uniqueness | Beauty | Picture book

Republic of Korea ■ KOREAN

This picture book masterfully deconstructs the societal concept of normalcy. The narrative follows a blue square named »Boton« (Ordinary) who strives for a »normal« life, which is touted as the formula for happiness. However, this seemingly uniform way of life easily becomes a trap when competitive individuals form rigid walls based on prejudice and exclusion. The brilliance of this philosophical picture book lies in its brevity. Min Ahwon animates simple blue rectangles to create vibrant imagery, inviting readers to search for the protagonist within crowds of identical squares. Soon they will notice that each of them is endowed with unique expressions and distinct stories. When the walls break down, harmony ensues as monochromatic patterns transform into a full-spectrum rainbow. Author-illustrator Min Ahwon successfully redefines »boton« not as an instrument for discrimination, but as a »normal« way of life that embraces difference and underscores that people are beautiful because everyone is unique. (Age: 6+) [YC, MC, SP]

148

Krēsliņa, Dace (text/illus.)
Spīdošās gaismas tracis
(The furor over bright lights)
Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, [2025]. – [30] p.
(Series: Aizvēstures pilsētas detektīvi; [3])
ISBN 978-9934-33-643-0

Bioluminescence | Light pollution | Sustainability | Environmental protection | Detective story | Picture book

Latvia ■ LATVIAN

The two animal detectives, Dina and Zigis, a smart pink-coloured Triceratops and a fairly gluttonous unicorn, have a new case to solve – or actually two! This time they find out why pink-coloured ghosts circle over the city at night, scaring the city residents, and especially the conservator Kubanas Kundze. It turns out that these are luminescent flying squirrels. And along the way, Dina and Zigis find an explanation for the strange behaviour of many animals at nighttime. The newly installed street lamps are too bright, and so, without further ado, they are turned off. With both of these prehistoric animal detectives, Dace Krēsliņa has created a thoroughly enjoyable series of eco-crime stories for a very young audience. The kindly but quirky protagonists always get to the bottom of an environmental problem that they resolve with the cooperation of the town's inhabitants. In this way, the detectives raise awareness among their readers for topics of sustainability and environmental protection. (Age: 5+) [KW]

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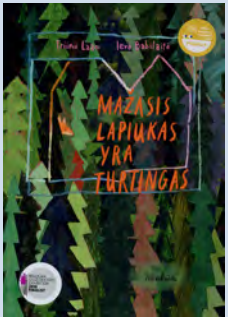
Pastore, Luīze (text)
Neilands, Svens (illus.)
Te tu esi!
(There you are!)
[Rīgā]: Liels un mazs, [2026]. – [64] p.
ISBN 978-9934-633-46-1

Dog | Siblings | Death | Coping with grief | Comic | Picture book

Latvia ■ LATVIAN

Two brother dogs play football, squabble, and are glad to have each other. But then the older of the two falls ill. Seriously ill. Incurably ill. For the younger brother and their parents there is nothing to do but accompany him until death, to say farewell, to grieve, and then continue on with their lives. Just how emotionally charged it is to go through and experience such a situation is related by Luīze Pastore and Svens Neilands in this multi-layer, empathetic and accessible comic for children. The dynamic, brightly coloured panels and short dialogue sequences develop the close relationship of the brothers, which endures through small symbols and gestures even after the loss. Their story does not end with farewell and burial but continues to focus on the many aspects of the survivor's mourning: sharing memories, sticking together, allowing themselves to be cheerful. In the final twist, the dog family reveals itself to be, in fact, a stand-in for a human family. (Age: 7+) [KW]

150



Laan, Triinu (text)
Babilaitė, Ieva (illus.)
Urbaitė, Viltarė (transl.)
Mažasis lapiukas yra turtingas
(Little fox is rich)
[Vilnius]: 700 eilučių, [2025]. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-609-8288-19-3

Multilingualism | Identity | Migration | Grandparents | Grandchild | Picture book

Lithuania ■ LITHUANIAN

In this Estonian-Lithuanian coproduction, Triinu Laan and Ieva Babilaitė tell the story of a young fox. Leaving behind the beloved grandparents, he migrates with his parents from the Green Forest to the Blue Forest, to join other foxes who speak a foreign language. The young fox not only learns the new language but also how to fit into his new environment. »Mažasis lapiukas yra turtingas« depicts on the one hand a loving grandchild-grandparent relationship, and, on the other hand, casts light on what it means to grow up bilingual. This is made clear in all its facets: feeling lost in a strange language, the recognition of the benefits of being able to communicate in two languages, and the feeling that one is always more at home in the native tongue. That identity-establishing moment is beautifully symbolised in the illustrations: under the typical, orange-toned fox fur, snippets of newspaper texts shine through – each fox carries its own language in itself. (Age: 3+) [KW]

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Lithuania ■ LITHUANIAN

Vaitkutė, Neringa (text)
Tomingas, Reda (illus.)
Odilės pasaka
(Odile's tale)
Vilnius: aukso žuvys, 2025. – 245 p.
ISBN 978-609-8335-39-2

Underworld | Curse | Probation | Fantasy fiction

Neringa Vaitkutė's fantasy novel gets off to a wonderfully eerie start. While working on a remote road through a swampy terrain, road workers stumble upon a mysterious chest from which ghostlike sounds can be heard. After they abandon their discovery in a panic, the chest is soon discovered by the protagonist. Upon opening it, Odile is whisked away, as if down Alice in Wonderland's rabbit hole, into a different world. In this underworld, which resembles a gigantic forest, she meets strange creatures and learns that these have been put under a curse that is waiting to be broken. Powerful natural beings, tricksters, secret rules of the underworld that must be followed, and a series of trials that the protagonist needs to overcome – these are the ingredients that make up an incredibly gripping plot. Sprinkled with numerous allusions to fairy-tale motifs and fantastical narratives, the novel cleverly intertwines the realities of modern life with a mythical world of fantasy. (Age: 10+) [KW]

152

North Macedonia ■ MACEDONIAN

Crvenkovska, Biljana (text)
Tintor, Hana (illus.)
Najmaliot ostrov na svetot
(The smallest island in the world)
Skopje: Čudna šuma (Chudna shuma), 2025. – [44] p.
(Series: Edicija Volšebna šuma [Ediciya Volshebna shuma])
ISBN 978-608-4938-93-4

Fantasy world | Escapism | Picture book

For this simple and at the same time contemplative picture book, Biljana Crvenkovska joined forces with Croatian illustrator Hana Tintor. »Najmaliot ostrov na svetot« wants to embolden children who need to distance themselves from parents who fight with one another. The siblings Alen and Irma cannot endure the verbal arguing they can hear through their bedroom door. They close their eyes and set off on an amazing journey through wild waters and showers of leaves to reach the smallest island in the world, a blue tree with a treehouse. There they discover a coven of fantastical beings who invite them to a banquet. Back in their bedroom, everything is quiet, the argument over. Alen and Irma know that the island will be waiting for them, but also that they will always be there for each other. With only three colours – black, red and blue – Hana Tintor succeeds in imbuing Biljana Crvenkovska's story with coherent, dynamic and symbolic imagery. (Age: 4+) [KW]

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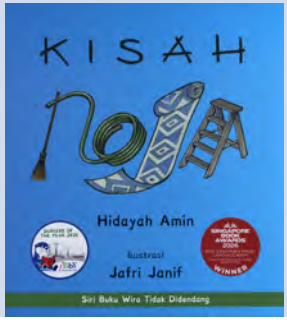

Singapore ■ MALAY

Amin, Hidayah (Nor Hidayah binte Mohd. Amin) (text)
Jafri Janif (illus.)
Kisah noja
(The story of noja)
Singapore: Helang Books, 2025. – [32] p.
(Series: Wira tidak didendang)
ISBN 978-981-94-3676-7

Mosque | Caretaker | Social disparity | Non-fiction | Picture book

While religious scholars (asatizah), imams, or muezzins (bilal) at a Singaporean mosque are always visible to the public, the mosque's caretaker (noja or tok siak) mostly goes unnoticed. He handles everyday maintenance, prepares the prayer halls, maintains the sanctity of the space, and looks after the grounds. Behind the scenes, he ensures the comfort and safety of the congregation, and he is the last to leave each day. Although his role may seem ordinary, he is indispensable to this community-held space. »Kisah noja« spotlights those unsung heroes whose tireless dedication and service to the community are often unappreciated or looked down upon. At the same time, the book commemorates the legacy of the historic Radin Mas Mosque, which was demolished in 2001 as part of urban renewal measures. Hidayah Amin, an award-winning author, translator, publisher, filmmaker, and social activist, and multimedia artist Jafri Janif won a 2026 Singapore Book Award and an IBBY Singapore Durian of the Year 2026 with this non-fiction book. (Age: 6+) [LO]

154

Mongolia ■ MONGOLIAN

Ėrdėnėbajar, Mišėėl (Erdenebayar, Misheel) (text/illus.)
Ür min' čamajg chülėėž bajna
(Ur min chamayg khuleezh bayna)
(Look what awaits you)
[Ulaanbaatar]: Geren/Uxer, 2024. – [27] p.
ISBN 978-9919-0-2438-3

World | Nature | Child | Discovery | Picture book

In her picture book »Ur min chamayg khuleezh bayna«, Mongolian illustrator Misheel Erdenebayar makes a young child a huge, exciting, loving promise: that there is a world »out there« brimful of things, just waiting for the child. Wide rivers, tall mountains, animals, trees, loving people, bright stars, a warm yurt, a bustling city, fairy tales and stories – all wanting to be discovered. Each double-page spread contains a simple illustration – a wave, a yurt or a firmament of stars, all with smiling faces. The pictures are accompanied by the brief naming of the objects shown, enabling the process of discovery to progress as the pages are turned. Moreover, with each turn of the page, the very short texts develop a wonderfully fluid narrative rhythm. This makes reading aloud a great pleasure, also the second and third time around. (Age: 2+) [KW]

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Norway ■ NORWEGIAN

Basso, Aina (text)
Før det blir morgon
(Before the morning comes)
Oslo: Samlaget, 2025. – 191 p.
ISBN 978-82-340-1333-1

Rape | Abuse | Pregnancy | Gender inequality | History 17th century

A historical novel of alarming relevance: Fifteen-year-old Josefa is sent to work as a maid for a wealthy farmer. The work is hard, she is homesick, but she gets on well with the other servants, especially Sara, who is the same age as her. Yet one day, her employer brutally rapes Josefa. The teen is completely distraught and ashamed and tries to forget the whole thing. She does manage to intimate to Sara what happened, but when Josefa realises she is pregnant, she keeps it a secret. She gives birth to a stillborn child, hides the body, and simply wants to put it all behind her. Yet then the corpse is found and Josefa is put on trial – accused of something she didn't do and of which she isn't guilty. Historical themes are a speciality of Aina Basso's. The author paints a vivid picture of life in the 17th century. At the same time, just like her previous books, the novel has a timeless quality, as it deals with the abuse of power by men.
(Age: 14+) [IG]

156

Norway ■ NORWEGIAN

Breen, Marta (text)
Fluge Hole, Sunniva (illus.)
Født fri
(Born free)
Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2025. – 117 p.
ISBN 978-82-02-87120-8

Gender | Patriarchal society | Women's rights | Women's emancipation | Religion | Graphic novel

Marta Breen and Sunniva Fluge Hole's non-fiction comic deals with »Religion og kjønn« (religion and gender), and the title itself – »Født fri« (Born free) – makes the central message unmistakably clear: Everything that is imposed on women, in particular in the name of (whichever) religion, is not »God-given«, but is often a (patriarchal) instrument of power that serves to keep women down, control them, and prevent them from developing their full potential. Marta Breen's style is sober and clear, yet it resonates with an enlightening and combative attitude – which is hardly surprising, given that the author is one of Norway's most prominent feminists. Sunniva Fluge Hole's line is sharp, but also imbued with a delicate lyricism. She often lets her pictures extend beyond the panel borders, thereby demonstrating that boundaries can be ignored and crossed – something that also applies to societal expectations and constraints.
(Age: 12+) [IG]

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Hagerup, Hilde (text)
Du eneste. Historien om Gunvor Hofmo og Ruth Maier
(Only you. The story of Gunvor Hofmo and Ruth Maier)
Oslo: Gyldendal, [2025]. – 181 p.
ISBN 978-82-05-61651-6

Hofmo, Gunvor (1921-1995) | Maier, Ruth (1920-1942) | Love | World War II (1939-1945) | Holocaust

Norway ■ NORWEGIAN

Hilde Hagerup's impressive novel tells the (love) story of Ruth Maier and Gunvor Hofmo in fictionalised form. In 1939, young Ruth emigrates from Austria to Norway. Whilst on a work assignment, she meets Gunvor, who comes from a working-class family. Ruth and Gunvor fall in love, become a couple, and call themselves »twin souls«. Ruth draws and paints, whilst Gunvor writes poetry – later she would become one of Norway's best-known poets. Ruth, however, is arrested during the German occupation of Norway, deported on the transport ship »Donau« and murdered at Auschwitz concentration camp. Hilde Hagerup finds a voice that is unpretentious, tender, clear, yet also full of doubt, to recount how danger and threat become part of everyday life. She alternates her focus between Gunvor and Ruth, often describing them from both a third-person perspective and an omniscient one. This brings readers closer to the characters, whilst at the same time maintaining a distance that reflects how Ruth and Gunvor often felt alienated and out of place. (Age: 14+) [IG]

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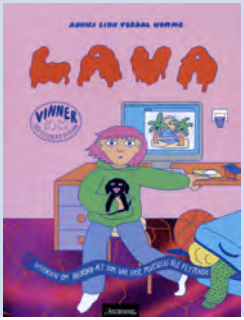

Homme, Annika Linn Verdal (text/illus.)
Lava. Historien om hvordan alt som var fast, plutselig ble flytende
(Lava. The story of how everything solid suddenly turns liquid)
Oslo: Aschehoug, 2025. – 250 p.
ISBN 978-82-03-45768-5

Parents | Daughter | Divorce | Revenge | Escape | Graphic novel

Norway ■ NORWEGIAN

»F@#*!!!« They can't do that! Evi feels deceived, betrayed, and like she's plummeting down into an abyss. As if it isn't bad enough that her parents are getting divorced and her long-awaited holiday to Tenerife has been cancelled. No, Mum is also moving from Oslo to Tromsø, nearly 2,000 km away. Nobody asks Evi what she wants. Just as she's about to fly to her mum's new place, the ticket to Tenerife – which her dad forgot to cancel – suddenly pops up in the flight app. Evi doesn't hesitate for a moment: the Canary Islands instead of northern Norway! Let her self-centred parents get a taste of their own medicine – vengeance is sweet, after all! In Tenerife, Evi has the time of her life, until she gets sunstroke on a volcano tour… »Lava« is a brilliant graphic novel that lays bare Evi's anger with bold lines, bright, garish colours, distorted proportions, and snappy dialogue. (Age: 12+) [IG]

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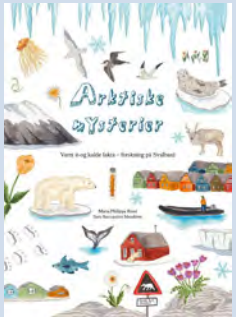

Norway ■ NORWEGIAN

Rossi, Maria Philippa (text)
Boccaccini Meadows, Sara (illus.)
Arktiskte mysterier. Varm is og kalde fakta – forskning på Svalbard
(Arctic mysteries. Warm ice and cold facts – research in Svalbard)
[Longyearbyen]: Arctic Storm, 2025. – 123 p.
ISBN 978-82-6940460-9

Svalbard | Arctic | Climate change | Picture book | Non-fiction

Do polar bears like hazelnut spread? Oh yes! So much so that they lick the whole jar clean. Polar bears eat pretty much anything that comes their way – be it walrus or whale, algae or seaweed, or said Nugatti. Because their habitat is literally melting away, they take to coming closer to human habitations and helping themselves to their supplies. »Arktiske mysterier« is a non-fiction picture book in which journalist Maria Philippa Rossi, who lives on the island of Spitsbergen, has researchers show and explain »Svalbard-specific« phenomena to her: in addition to polar bears, for example, the Northern Lights, ice formations, and plankton in the sea. Together with illustrator Sara Boccaccini Meadows, she has created an informative, well-written, entertaining »Svalbard primer« that instantly sparks curiosity, fascination, and a protective instinct for this unique, fragile habitat, which is severely affected by global warming. (Age: 8+) [IG]

160

Iran ■ PERSIAN (FARSI)

Ḥasan-zādah, Farhād (Hasanzadeh, Farhad) (text)
Qurbānī, Hālih (Ghorbani, Haleh) (illus.)
Ištibāh-i Čamidānī
(Eshtebahe Chamedani)
(The suitcase mix-up)
Tihrān: Kitābḫurhā (Ketabkhorha), [2025]
(= 1404 h.sh.). – [40] p.
ISBN 978-622-91470-8-5

Iran | Cuba | Migration | Cultural diversity | Friendship | Picture book

Sometimes the art of friendship is best learned from children – simple, sincere, and free of pretence. Such is the friendship between Gisoo and Ibis. After immigrating to Canada with her family, Gisoo discovers that her suitcase has been mistakenly swapped with that of a Cuban girl named Ibis. When the families meet to exchange the suitcases, an unexpected friendship begins between the two girls. This is a story not only about personal friendship, but also about the connection between two peoples, introducing aspects of Cuban and Iranian life as the two girls discover both similarities and differences between their cultures. The engaging narrative and the captivating illustrations make this book especially distinctive. With notable attention to detail, Haleh Ghorbani demonstrates her mastery in vividly depicting diverse places and cultures. Farhad Hasanzadeh has twice been shortlisted for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, while Ghorbani won the 2024 Image of the Book International Illustration and Book Design Competition. (Age: 6+) [RM]

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Iran ■ PERSIAN (FARSI)

Hiǧwānī, Mihdī (Hejvani, Mehdi) (text)
Bīgdilū, Ġazālah (Bigdelou, Ghazaleh) (illus.)
Mā Hamih Parandah-im
(Ma Hameh Parandeh-im)
(We are all birds)
Tihrān: Ufuq, Kitābhā-i Fanduq (Ofoq, Ketab-haye Fandoq), [2025] (= 1404 h. sh.). – [32] p.
ISBN 978-622-332-231-0

War | Refugee camp | Displacement | Home | Freedom | Playing | Picture book

This book celebrates both the feeling of belonging and the value of freedom. Forced by war to leave her home and city and move with her family to a refugee camp, the young narrator chooses not to dwell on sorrow. Together with the other children in the camp and the birds around them, she creates small diversions to ease the pain of displacement and homesickness. Yet the birds teach her another important lesson: a cage can never become a home. Home is a place where safety exists alongside freedom and joy. Told with remarkable brevity, the story relies on only a few sentences, while the illustrations carry much of the narrative. This approach moves the book beyond the conventional picture-book format and closer to the language of a graphic novel. Acclaimed author Mehdi Hejvani offers a fresh perspective on issues such as refuge and exile. Through wide visual perspectives, illustrator Ghazaleh Bigdelou conveys both the longing for freedom and the sense of homelessness that lie at the heart of the work. (Age: 7+) [RM]

162

Iran ■ PERSIAN (FARSI)

Šafīʿī Kadkanī, Muḥammad Riḍā (Shafiei Kadkani, Mohammad-Reza) (text)
Ḥadādī, Hudā (Hadadi, Hoda) (illus.)
Īn Hamīših-hā wa Bīših-hā
(In Hamisheh-ha wa Bisheh-ha)
(The eternities and trees)
Tihrān: Mīrmāh (Mirmah), [2025] (= 1404 h.sh.). – [32] p.
ISBN 978-600-333-586-8

Homeland | Migration | Meaning of life | Poetry

Poetry has always held a special place in Iranian literature. Works of certain poets have become embedded in the collective memory of Iranians and have found their way into everyday speech and writing. Mohammad-Reza Shafiei Kadkani is one of Iran's most distinguished contemporary poets, and his verses have earned an enduring place in the hearts, minds, and language of Persian speakers. This anthology includes poems chosen for their appeal to young readers, featuring themes that are both emotionally resonant and universally meaningful. Despite their brevity and concision, these poems encompass profound themes such as migration, identity, travel, nature, homeland, love, and the meaning of life. Hoda Hadadi's captivating illustrations further enhance the beauty and depth of the text. In this book, the acclaimed Iranian artist remains faithful to the techniques that have long defined her work, while at the same time moving beyond her customary style to create a visual atmosphere distinct from that of her previous books. (Age: 14+) [RM]

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Iran ■ PERSIAN (FARSI)

Saidābādī, 'Alī-Aṣġar (Seidabadi, Ali-Asghar) (text)
Baġdādī, Hādī (Baghdadi, Hadi) (illus.)
Ḫuršīd-i Ǧangal Ḫuršīd-i Daryā
(Khorshide Djangal Khorshide Darya)
(Where the sun rises)
Tihrān: Tūtī Kitābi Kūdak wa Nawġawan-i Fāṭimī (Fatemi, Touti), [2025] (=1404 h.sh.). – [32] p.
ISBN 978-622-6630-91-7

Point of view | Conflict | Escalation | War | Peace | Picture book

Many conflicts arise because people cannot see the world from the point of view of those who contradict them. This picture book, like other works such as David McKee's classic »Two Monsters«, presents this idea with striking clarity. Two towns lie on opposite sides of a mountain. The people of one town see the sun rise from the sea and set behind the mountain, while those on the other side see it rise behind the mountain and set in the forest. These differing perceptions lead to a bitter dispute that escalates into war. When both sides climb the mountain to confront each other, they discover the forest and the sea on the respective opposite side and finally understand the reason for their conflicting views. One of the book's strengths lies in showing how children recognize this difference in perspective and help prevent further conflict. Hadi Baghdadi's detailed illustrations enrich the story, reinforcing its themes of diversity and inclusion while at times creating engaging detail-rich »wimmelbilder« with their own visual narrative. (Age: 6+) [RM]

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Poland ■ POLISH

Błach, Sylwia (text)
Jeske, Karolina (illus.)
Nie znajdziesz mnie po śladach stóp
(You won't find me by following my footprints)
Poznań: Wydawnictwo Albus, 2026. – [63] p.
ISBN 978-83-67085-30-4

Disability | Wheelchair | Experience | Empathy | Diversity

In »Nie znajdziesz mnie po śladach stóp« the six-year-old Dobrawa and the 33-year-old narrator, who uses a wheelchair to get around, meet each other and speak about the experiences of a wheelchair user in everyday life, about how she deals with the looks from others and with barriers to mobility, and how she nonetheless goes dancing and swimming and enjoys life. Sylwia Błach's descriptions are very enlightening, give food for thought, and may even spark laughter. This empathetic children's book about differences in perception and changing one's point of view encourages further questions. It recognises that physical limitations are an integral part of human diversity. At the end of the book, there is a series of suggestions about how to think about one's abilities and one's weaknesses; what one likes about one's own body – or not; and how, as a wheelchair user, one would respond to certain tricky situations. Karolina Jeske's minimalist, poetic illustrations match the text's openness and create a serene atmosphere. (Age: 8+) [KW]

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Dek, Maria (text/illus.)
Przywitanie lata
(The welcoming of summer)
[Pelplin]: Wydawnictwo »Bernardinum«,
2025. – [35] p.
ISBN 978-83-68579-01-7

Character | Diversity | Community | Summer | Picture book

Poland ■ POLISH

Once the inhabitants of the Little Forest have been awakened by a warm wind, the message is clear: off to the clearing! Summer is coming and waiting to be welcomed. The throng of animals that sets off on their way offers illustrator Maria Dek the chance to explore the full range of possible personality traits, peculiarities, oddities, opinions and views. The monkey Zdisia, for example, needs to get prepared for any eventuality along the way, while the caterpillar Rosa simply sets off spontaneously. Shy crocodiles, curious penguins, nerdy-savvy mice or raucous rabbits – they all join forces to celebrate the arrival of summer together. The encounters between animals who are the opposite of one another are captured in Dek's typical multicolour child-like style of illustration. She creates wonderful scenes which children will delight in and adults will gladly smile at. (Age: 3+) [KW]

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Figura, Michał (text)
Mizielińska, Aleksandra (text/illus.)
Mizieliński, Daniel (text/illus.)
Rysie. Historie prawdziwe
(Lynxes. The true story)
Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Dwie Siostry,
2025. – 297 p. + [2] p.
ISBN 978-83-8150-705-9

Lynx | Comic | Non-fiction

Poland ■ POLISH

Unbelievably fascinating, inviting and informative. This non-fiction comic can match any documentary programme on television. Naturalist and writer Michał Figura, supported by the magnificent illustrator team of Aleksandra Mizielińska and Daniel Mizieliński, takes the reader to the Polish Beskids to visit the lynxes and accompany Figura and other animal conservationists on the job. One learns, for example, that it took any number of wildlife cameras, tracking devices, and years of patience to locate the shy animals, delineate their territory and get to know their eating habits. The chapters describe specific lynxes – such as Marysia, Jantar oder Płona – and their individual stories. Marysia, for example, was found as a young animal and later returned to the wild. One learns about how they hunt, how they raise their young, and how they communicate with one another. In this way, the readers gain an extremely empathetic view of the animals and their world, as well as of the humans who are there to protect them. (Age: 10+) [KW]

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Kisielewska, Zuzanna (text)
Dudek, Agata (illus.)
Nowak, Małgorzata (illus.)
O tańcu
(All about dance)
Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Druganoga, 2025. – 91 p.
ISBN 978-83-978018-1-3

Dance | Non-fiction

Poland ■ POLISH

This book is simply bursting with energy! With dynamic! With movement! Not a surprise for a non-fiction book about dance. Ranging from ancient Egyptian depictions of dance to tango, flamenco, hiphop, pogo, cancan and ballet, the author Zuzanna Kisielewska expands upon all the things dance can be. She goes into the traditional dances of various cultures (the Ukrainian Kozak, the Korean Bachaechum), to dance as a type of ritual (Haka), dance as sport, as protest or a political statement (Capoeira), and dance as a non-verbal means of expression and storytelling. Naturally, famous dancers such as Martha Graham or Kim Baek-bong are also featured. The illustrators Agata Dudek and Małgorzata Nowak, who work collaboratively as the »Acapulco Studio«, have developed an expressive colour palette of orange, green, pink and black and deploy a magnificent troop of bending, stretching, knotted, rotating – dancing – figures. With each page of this book, the reader can sense the fascination that emanates from dance. (Age: 7+) [KW]

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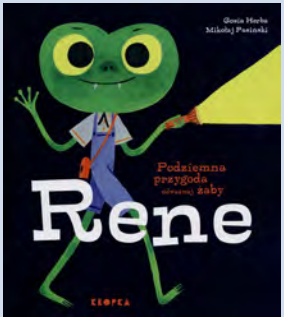

Pasiński, Mikołaj (text)
Herba, Gosia (illus.)
Podziemna przygoda odważnej żaby Rene
(The subterranean adventures of Rene, the brave frog)
Warszawa: Kropka, 2025. – [53] p.
ISBN 978-83-68382-19-8

Frog | Underground | Expedition | Adventure | Picture book

Poland ■ POLISH

Below the Earth's surface there are so many things to discover. And what about Earth's very core? What might it look like? The curious and rather vampire-like frog Rene needs to find out. So, he packs together his expedition kit and begins his descent! Passing by the lodgings of the mole, spider and rabbit, sites of numerous skeletons and an extensive kingdom of ants, complete with a queen who grants him an audience, Rene goes ever deeper toward the centre of the Earth. Naturally there are all kinds of dangers (giant voracious worms, boiling lakes of magma) lurking, too. Mikołaj Pasiński and Gosia Herba have created a picture book that contains everything an adventurous explorer story needs. The spooky-scary setting in the underground, with the thrill of eternal darkness, in which a plethora of creepy-crawly creatures live, is perfectly balanced by humorous scenes and a bevy of attractive animal characters – above all, by Rene with his large eyes, giant head and his casual, gangly physique. (Age: 3+) [KW]

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Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

Gil, Gilberto (text)
Kondo, Daniel (illus.)
Refloresta
(Reforestation)
São Paulo: Elo Editora, [2025]. – [46] p.
ISBN 978-65-6142-246-8

Rain forest | Deforestation | Reforestation | Protection of nature | Song | Picture book

At the request of the renowned photographer Sebastião Salgado, the equally famous singer-songwriter Gilberto Gil wrote a song about the destruction of the rainforest. Its message: it is not enough just to save what remains of it – the region must also be reforested to give its animals, plants and people a chance for survival. The lively and dynamic samba is a feisty appeal about the need to win over the people who are destroying nature and prevent the greedy chainsaws and fires from continuing to eat through the rainforest. Daniel Kondo has captured the text in powerful pictures done in intensive, luminous and at times alarming colours. The bold, wood-cut styled illustrations focus on details such as the face of an indigenous person from the forest, or an endangered beetle, or tree rings. The shifts between the greens and blues of the (still) untouched parts of the forest and the garish red, yellow and orange of the destructive flames and machinery reinforce the impact of this impressive picture book. (Age: 8+) [JW]

170

Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

Molinero, Bruno (text)
Mondadori, Cecilia (illus.)
Krishna. Prosopopeia em duas rodas
(Krishna. Prosopopoeia on two wheels)
[São Paulo]: Edições Barbatana, [2025]. – 55 p.
ISBN 978-65-88766-37-8

Metropolis | Courier | Language

TrRRRRRRRR – tRrRrRrRrriiiiiiiii – TrRRRrii-iiii… Set in coloured letters of varied sizes, the sounds on the first double-page spread immediately convey the subject of this book: the metropolis, its fast tempo, its noise and hectic, but also its unique sense of life. Krishna is a »motoboy« in São Paulo, a courier who delivers food to customers all day long. The story begins in reality but ends surreally when Krishna becomes acquainted with an elephant, the doorman at an elite housing compound, who ultimately disappears with his umbrella into the rainy skies from the 175th storey. Bruno Molinero's text takes an unusual form as a long, rhythmical, breathless prose poem with one-word sentences, half sentences, tapeworm-like sentences and euphonic cascades of words: an urban rap that captures the rhythm of the city and would be an ideal contribution at a poetry slam. Cecilia Mondadori's strong-coloured illustrations, which create a jumbled whole out of the many details, bring the text to life beautifully. (Age: 11+) [JW]

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Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

Rios, Fernanda (text)
Tolentino, Marcelo (illus.)
Velho Sertão
(Old Sertão)
Rio de Janeiro: Pequena Zahar, [2026]. – [72] p.
ISBN 978-65-88407-15-8

Power | Injustice | Guilt | Revenge | Coming of age | Picture book

Resembling a duel of the Wild West, this story deals with a timeless, archaic theme. Fernanda Rios's dense, unembellished text, in which every word seems carved from stone, tells the story of a boy living in the sertão, Brazil's semi-arid outback region. He is the one responsible for handing over the milk of his family's few cows every morning. During their long ride home, the boy and his horse always get thirsty. But every time he asks for a sip of water from the old man who lives alone in a house at the top of the hill, his request is denied. Their daily exchange of »I beg you« and »I have none« leads to a bitter but covert power struggle that also signals the end of the protagonist's childhood. The story of power, dominance, right and wrong, lies, guilt and revenge is illustrated in stunning pictures by Marcelo Tolentino. Done in the earthy tones of the pitiless landscape, they capture the essence of the text using cinematic techniques, such as abrupt cuts, changes of perspective, zooming and closeups. (Age: 9+) [JW]

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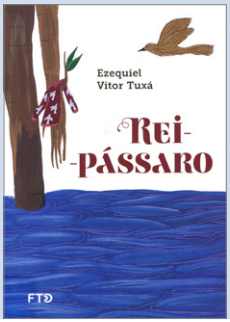

Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

Tuxá, Ezequiel Vitor (text/illus.)
Rei-pássaro
(Bird King)
São Paulo: FTD, [2025]. – 71 p.
ISBN 978-85-96-05919-0

Colonialism | Materialism | Power | Metamorphosis

Since his birth, King Inácio has never put a foot on the ground, because it is believed that this would be the downfall of the world. One day he decides to undertake a journey across the sea to take possession of the »Land of the Parrots« which has been discovered by his subjects and claimed for the crown. This fabulous tale, spiked with numerous references to the mythology and cosmology of indigenous peoples, depicts the gradual transformation of an ignorant, pompous ruler, whose head is literally »in the clouds«, into a humble, »grounded« being. His growing awareness and catharsis take place through conversations with wise, archaic figures, such as a mermaid, a giant turtle, a sea god named Ingi, and a tree spirit. In the end, Inácio becomes a bird, at one with nature, which itself is free from domination and belongs only to itself. In this profound, poetic and symbol-filled story, Ezequiel Vitor Tuxá succeeds in exposing materialism, the hunger for power and colonialist thinking as deeply inhumane. (Age: 9+) [JW]

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Portugal ■ PORTUGUESE

Carvalho, Adélia (text)
Pratt, Pierre (illus.)
O sol à noite não desenha
(At night the sun does not draw)
Porto: Tcharan, 2025. – [26] p.
ISBN 978-989-8743-24-4
(publ. in cooperation with Museu e Bibliotecas do Porto)

Sun | Moon | Light | Darkness | Colour | Picture book

The question which inspired Adélia Carvalho to create the text for this picture book came from a child during a museum workshop: »Why doesn't the sun draw at night?« The author depicts the sun as a large light switch that »turns the day on and the night off.« The story explores the world's colours, which the sun draws during the day, before setting itself down to rest in the evening, quite exhausted. Then the moon takes over. And it draws, too – not as the sun does, but rather more slowly and quietly, so as not to wake up the animals. The text – with the ideas and thoughts of a fictitious, childlike narrator – is a poetic and vivid story of light and darkness, of colourfulness and of the colourlessness of black and white. The magnificent double-page illustrations by Canadian artist Pierre Pratt show the world in all its beauty, contrasts, its warmth and coldness, and its overwhelming vastness. This is a magnificent, imaginative picture book to look at in amazement and contemplation. (Age: 6+) [JW]

174

Portugal ■ PORTUGUESE

Couto, Mia (text)
Monteiro, Susa (illus.)
As sementes do céu
(The seeds of heaven)
Alfragide: Caminho, 2025. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-972-21-3384-5

Forest | Humans | Protection of nature | Grandfather | Grandson | Picture book

Renowned author Mia Couto tells a story of the relationship between a boy and his grandfather. The old man laments the loss of a forest that has been cleared. At the same time, he explains how the forest lives on in every chair, every board, and every other wooden object. During the night the boy witnesses their furniture leaving the house and, together with their »sisters« from the surrounding villages, return to the places where their source trees were once felled. The next day, the grandfather takes his grandson to the nearby forest to share with him the knowledge of many past generations about nature and its ability to renew itself. The boy understands that it is his duty, like his grandfather before him, to grow giant trees from tiny seeds. Mia Couto depicts the close connection of people to nature and how they have a responsibility for it in a quiet language, rich in imagery and metaphor. The glowing illustrations by Susa Monteiro form an impressive bridge between the real and the dreamlike, mythical levels of the story. (Age: 8+) [JW]

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Portugal ■ PORTUGUESE

Serrazina, Pedro (text/illus.)
Estória do gato e da lua
(The story of the cat and the moon)
Matosinhos: Kalandraka Editora Portugal, 2025. – [62] p. + 1 poster
(Series: Arte)
ISBN 978-989-749-204-4

Cat | Moon | Love | Longing | Picture book

Thirty years after the premiere of his same-titled short film, which won multiple awards, Pedro Serrazina now presents the story in a picture book edition. Even without moving images, one is captivated from the cover to the final page. A tomcat tells of his unrequited love for the moon, full of longing and hope that one day his feelings will be returned: »If she always gazes upon me, she certainly must have feelings for me!« But again and again he is disappointed, because the idolized moon always eludes him at the last minute. But the hope of being united someday will live on for the rest of his life. The pictures – done in stark black-and-white contrast, without shades of grey, on satin-finish paper – artfully play with shadows, reflections and perspectives, and the duality of day and night, light and darkness. Several double-pages display excellently composed, film-like sequences which magnificently capture the movements, visual fusion, and melancholy of the story. (Age: 8+) [JW]

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Moldova ■ ROMANIAN

Carroll, Lewis (text)
Dobrescu, Irina (illus.)
Sociu, Dan (transl.)
Alice în Țara Minunilor
(Alice in Wonderland)
Chișinău: Cartier, 2025. – 121 p.
(Series: Cartier Codobelc)
ISBN 978-9975-86-873-0

Imaginary world | Imaginary trip | Growing up

The Romanian illustrator Irina Dobrescu is truly an expert in creating strange, absurd and nonsensical scenarios. What could be more fitting than for her to contribute her artistry to the new Romanian-language translation of »Alice in Wonderland«? With Dobrescu's characteristically subdued colour palette, a uniform flatness and an airy background, she conjures up a Wonderland with the figures of the Queen of Hearts, the White Rabbit, and of course Alice herself. But the illustrations do not make Alice the sole focus. While they include typical scenes such as the tea party or Alice squeezed inside the house of the White Rabbit, marginal characters also make their appearances in this unusual edition of Lewis Carroll's work. In scenes such as the pool of tears, Dobrescu gives an illustrator's nod to the first edition's iconic illustrations by John Tenniel, even while adding a new twist to the scene: without further ado, she turns Alice into a mermaid. (Age: 9+) [KW]

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Romania ■ ROMANIAN

Vișniec, Matei (text)
Visniec, Joèla (illus.)
Consulatul Lunii.
Sau Adelina si crocodilii de mlastina
(The moon's consulate.
Or Adelina and the swamp crocodiles)
București: Humanitas Junior, 2025. – 110 p.
ISBN 978-973-50-8789-0

Dictatorship | Autocracy | Resistance | Poetry

In »Consulatul Lunii«, Matei Vișniec embarks on a search for the insidious mechanisms by which dictatorial regimes arise. And he does this in a thoroughly poetic-philosophical manner. Together with her speaking cat, Sleepy, her family, and other citizens, the protagonist, 13-year-old Adelina, experiences a gradual invasion of marsh crocodiles in their city. Not only do they lay claim to more and more space, but also introduce new laws as well as boss people around, monitoring and limiting their movements. Soon the city is divided into proponents and opponents of the new »government« and its oppressive measures. How did the city rid itself of the crocodiles? Through the power of beautiful words! In the second part of the book, Sleepy tells how, in her classroom, Adelina stands up to one of the large crocodiles by reciting a poem and defeats it with the force of her words. The poem originated within the so-called »Consulate of the Moon« – a symbol of resistance and a kind of spiritual refuge in totalitarian regimes. (Age: 10+) [KW]

178

Russia ■ RUSSIAN

Rudaševskij, Evgenij (Rudashevsky, Yevgeny) (text)
Prankevič, Vol'ha (Prankevich, Volha) (illus.)
Gorit kamyš
(Gorit kamysh)
(The rushes are burning)
Moskva: KompasGid Izdatel'skij dom, 2025. – 179 p.
ISBN 978-5-907957-14-5

Authoritarian regime | Exploitation | Dystopia

Following his youth novel »Zver 44«, Yevgeny Rudashevsky now goes deeper, quite literally, into dystopian scenarios in »Gorit kamysh«. The book is about a fictitious state which seeks protection from a plague by having its inhabitants dig deep pits on its borders. When the father of the brothers Maloy and Andrey returns from the frontlines, they soon recognize that he has changed. He sweats a black sweat, he drinks, cannot sleep, and manically digs little pits in their yard. Rudashevsky takes the reader into the devastating life of the »pit-digger« society, showing not only the protagonists' everyday life, but also sending them on a treasure hunt. Clues lead them to the Diggers' Museum, to a special cemetery, and to a clearing in the forest with specially made coffins for the pit-diggers. With every place and every encounter it becomes clearer that these people are living in an authoritarian horror scenario, subjected to constant, minute controls, unable to free themselves, and not even wanting to. (Age: 14+) [KW]

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Norway ■ SAMI

Buljo, Karen Anne (text)
Påve, Inga-Wiktoria (illus.)
Árrangáttis árrangáddái. Sámi máidnasat
(From fireplace to fireplace. Sámi folktales)
[Kárášjohka] (Karasjok): Davvi girji, 2025. – 127 p.
ISBN 978-82-329-0627-7
(Norw. ed.: Árrangáttis Árrangáddái. Fortellinger fra stjernehimmelen og andre samiske eventyr. Bergen: Vigmostad & Björke, 2025)

Sápmi | Sámi <people> | Folk tale

This volume brings together a collection of Sámi folk tales. They tell stories of trolls and reindeer, of the stars in the sky, of why the bear doesn't have a tail (anymore), and of how the mosquitoes came to Sápmi – as the Sámi call the cultural region they traditionally inhabited. Karen Anne Buljo is a true all-rounder. She writes picture books, radio plays, and song lyrics; besides, she also composes joiks (Sámi songs), thereby keeping this unique oral tradition alive. For this volume, she has selected ten folk tales from the rich treasure trove of stories, which have been illustrated with humour and tenderness by Swedish-Sámi illustrator Inga-Wiktoria Påve. It is very encouraging that Sámi storytelling and visual art have been gaining greater visibility in Norway today. As this book has also been published in Norwegian, the folk tales can be enjoyed even by those who know little or no Sámi.
(Age: 3+) [IG]

180

Serbia ■ SERBIAN

Penevski, Zoran (text)
Kuzmanović, Boris (illus.)
Čudo u Plavoj Šumi
(A miracle in the Blue Forest)
Beograd: Odiseja, 2025. – 31 p.
(Series: Biblioteka Prozna putovanja)
ISBN 978-86-7720-329-0

Animals | Acting | Mockery | Masquerade | Picture book

Cool verses, weird illustrations and a fast-paced narrative – and in a wink, the reader is right in the middle of Zoran Penevski and Boris Kuzmanović's story about the Blue Forest. There, an animal theatre troupe stages a play every day. Many of the other animals find them very entertaining; the performances, however, are full of excessive satire at the expense of some of the audience. As a result, Lion, Bear and Friends eventually get fed up. They forbid any more theatre performances and scare away the main actor, Tom, a skunk. But then, when a few hunters enter the forest, all the animals need to stick together. Thanks to their animal masks and some costumes from the prop department, they perform their best-ever play and thus force the hunters to flee. In rhymes, witty dialogues and illustrations bursting with drollness, this picture book is an enormously funny celebration of the irrepressible joys of theatre and the carnivalesque.
(Age: 4+) [KW]

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Zulović, Olivera (text)
Lakićević, Jakša (illus.)
Sto posto tuđa posla
(100% foreign affairs)
Beograd: Kreativni Centar, 2025. – 178 p.
ISBN 978-86-529-1391-6

Friendship | Outsider | Family

Serbia ■ SERBIAN

The short and shortest chapters, which sometimes consist of only one sentence, and a nonchalant narrative tone contribute to the fabulous rhythm in Olivera Zulović's second book for children and youth. The text, which tells the story of Danilo and Grubor, unfolds as a mosaic of vivid impressions that follow in rapid succession, in a non-chronological order. »Sto posto tuđa posla« is many things at once: a detective story; a story about a friendship with an outsider; a child's perspective on the bewildering life and emotional states of their own parents. And it is about »foreign affairs« that sometimes require interference – because otherwise the injustice of the world would not change – as in Grubor's unstable family constellation, or the mystery of the poisoned cats at the market, which Grubor and Danilo decide to investigate. This book received the 2025 »Dušan Radović Prize« in Serbia. (Age: 11+) [KW]

182

Donau, Han (text/illus.)
Srdce nie je párový orgán
(The heart is not a paired organ)
Bratislava: Artforum, 2025. – [71] p.
ISBN 978-80-8150-474-7

Heart | Being alone | Self-determination | Picture book

Slovakia ■ SLOVAK

The attribute »unique« could not be more fitting for Han Donau's picture book. As unique as the human heart, the subject of the book, so too is the artistic, philosophical, and poetic engagement with this most vitally important organ and its metaphorical meanings. Freely associative illustrations in colours ranging from pastel-like to neon, followed by easily flowing text segments, develop little by little into a fragmented carpet of thoughts and ideas. These revolve around the relationship of an individual (the self) to other people (neighbours, friends, partners), on the one hand, and deal, on the other hand, entirely with a person's own existence and being in tune with one's self. The illustrations and text leave considerable room for interpretation and facilitate the readers' following their own rhythm, heartbeat and feelings, wherever they may lead: to take a journey, to stay at home, or to go into a forest where a techno club and dance beat are waiting. (Age: 14+) [KW]

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Bilban, Tina (text)
Krošelj, Manca (illus.)
Pikapolonica, komar, metuljček
(Ladybird, mosquito, butterfly)
Dob: Miš, 2026. – [17] p.
ISBN 978-961-272-838-0

Wordplay | Homonym | Board book | Picture book

Slovenia ■ SLOVENIAN

Quite simple and also quite ingenious! This book presents homonyms in a playful and quite entertaining way. On each double-spread, the author Tina Bilban sets out six terms that seem to belong together. Under the three words on each right-hand side, there is however, a word with a double meaning. For example, the butterfly in the Slovenian title is, also the word for a bow-tie. This fact is only revealed through the hilarious illustrations by Manca Krošelj. Among the terms for various kinds of fruit, the word »figa« can mean not only fig, but also a bun or chignon. Therefore, the illustration displays a melon and an orange but, in place of the fig, a girl with a hair bun. Thus, the book contains both funny and at first glance confusing scenes that will spark real »aha« moments in young readers, such as when images for six examples of fantastic creatures include, in place of a fire-spewing dragon (zmaj), the picture of a toy kite, matching the word's homonym. (Age: 2+) [KW]

184

Svetina, Peter (text)
Škerl, Peter (illus.)
O dečku, ki je risal kroge
(The boy who drew circles)
Medvode: Malinc, 2025. – [38] p.
ISBN 978-961-7235-12-8

Drawing | Precision | Picture book

Slovenia ■ SLOVENIAN

Peter Svetina and Peter Škerl form an excellent duo. One is a renowned Slovenian children's book author, the other is an equally renowned children's book illustrator. For »O dečku, ki je risal kroge« they join to tell a poetic story about the art of drawing, the preciseness of the line stroke, the connection between landscape and art, and the intergenerational constancy of craftsmanship. The readers encounter the narrator and Reza, the drawing master, in two scenarios: one in a blue-hued city with mosques and minarets overlooking the sea, the other in the countryside amidst rolling fields. The narrator in the city is trying to imitate a drawing technique that Reza had learned as a child in the countryside: For hours at a time, he would draw precise circles in the air with his steady hand, until there was no more trembling or movement to be felt, and the right moment to draw had arrived. (Age: 5+) [KW]

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Slovenia ■ SLOVENIAN

Valič, Nina (text)
Prepo-parki
(Parki prohib)
Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2025. – 200 p.
(Series: Zbirka Odisej)
ISBN 978-961-01-7899-6

Friendship | Family | Loss of mother | Graffiti

Thirteen-year-old Butl and his friend Nonč are trying to track down a mysterious group of skaters and graffiti artists, the SkLJ8, at an abandoned construction site. Since Butl is acquainted with one of its members from playing basketball together, he is able to gain admission to the secret murals and can hardly believe his luck. And because Butl's parents are very loving, tolerant and involved in his life, he shares this exciting news with them. Gradually the reader discovers why Butl is so keen on the quest and what role his mother plays in it. She was the famous graffiti artist known as Robeeda and died in an accident. She now exists for her son only in his memories, and he has taken up drawing to feel closer to her. In »Prepo-parki« Nina Valič combines an easy-going urban lifestyle with a touching story about family, memories and the power of art. Especially impressive is her depiction of the warm-hearted relationship between Butl and his father and the importance of caring friends. (Age: 12+) [KW]

186

Argentina ■ SPANISH

Franco, Marina (text)
Lobato, Pablo (illus.)
La última dictadura. Argentina 1976-1983
(The last dictatorship. Argentina 1976-1983)
Buenos Aires: Pequeño Editor, 2025. – 56 p.
ISBN 978-987-791-132-9

Argentina | History 1976-1983 | Authoritarianism | Military dictatorship | Democracy | Non-fiction

In this non-fiction book for children, award-winning historian Marina Franco offers a well-grounded portrait of the last dictatorship in Argentina. In short, dense chapters she explains how the military came to power through a coup d'état, consolidated its rule and used ideology to justify using state terror against its own people. Details of the fate of the imprisoned, murdered, »disappeared«, and the exiled help young readers to understand the historical context. The book looks moreover at both the perpetrators and those who supported and profited from the last dictatorship. Further topics include, for example, the decades before, shaped by several other authoritarian regimes, as well as the exemplarily legal and societal reckoning that took place after the dictatorship ended. With striking colour combinations of green, orange and black, the bold pictures by illustrator and graphic artist Pablo Lobato contribute significantly to this lively and vivid depiction of history. (Age: 10+) [JW]

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Wittner, Laura (text)
Tellería, María José de (illus.)
Una mosca y un oscam.
Ritmos, risas y runrunes
(A fly and an ylf. Rhythms, laughs and mumblings)
Buenos Aires: Calibroscopio, [2026]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-631-6606-25-9

Wordplay | Nonsense | Sound | Poetry

Argentina ■ SPANISH

In these poems, Laura Wittner fathoms the possibilities of language with relish. Her melodious nonsense poems, that follow in the tradition of classic authors like Lewis Carroll or Christian Morgenstern, come alive with the sounds and rhythm of words. Letters and syllables are switched, twisted and recombined. »Right« words are set against invented ones, which sound like a wondrous, tongue-twisting invented language. The poems, enlivened by the repetition and variety of sounds and syllables, are an invitation to use language creatively and transgress rules. Ideally, they will be read aloud or recited, so that their ring and rhythm can achieve their full effect. María José de Tellería makes use of the great freedom the texts offer. The brightly coloured, imaginative illustrations, with their distorted proportions and twisted perspectives, lend the crazy verses a charming visage. This is a highly original book for everyone who enjoys playing with language in boundless, playful ways. (Age: 4+) [JW]

188

Alcántara, Mariana (text/illus.)
Cero
(Zero)
Santiago de Chile: Editorial Amanuta, 2026. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-956-364-441-8

Zero | Mathematics | Picture book

Chile ■ SPANISH

When a little magician waves his wand, the probably strangest number that we know appears in the air. But is it even a real number or just a phantom? In »Cero« everything revolves around zero, this »round, empty, silent« digit that counts for nothing, but by adding itself to other numbers makes them larger, even unimaginably large. Mariana Alcántara explores zero in an imaginative, playful manner and introduces readers to its fascinating nature. The idea, for instance, that zero is, at once, something and nothing is visualized through quirky comparisons with the holes in cheese or soap bubbles. Of course, the complexity of zero cannot be explained in depth within the scope of a picture book – that is the task of the maths teacher – but in this brief, narrational text with its fresh, imaginative illustrations in bright and cheerful, fluorescent colours the unusualness and the magic of zero are made wonderfully graspable. (Age: 6+) [JW]

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Chile ■ SPANISH

Monsalve Valenzuela, Elisa (text/illus.)
Ortega, Ignacio (text/illus.)
Ocaso
(Dusk)
[Santiago de Chile]: Grafito Ediciones, 2025. – [42] p.
ISBN 978-956-9356-37-7

Dusk | Evening | Darkness | Night | Picture book

This book captures the many facets of dusk and darkness. »When the horizon disappears« and »the sun takes its leave«, the world changes its appearance. In the evening and during the night, when »shadows take up their places bit by bit«, we leave something behind – new ideas evolve, different rules apply. »Ocaso« depicts this special atmosphere – its secrets and threats, its unique beauty and magic – in a most enchanting manner. Every line of the text, which resembles a prose poem, reads like a sparkling verse. Some sentences are descriptive, while others – such as »the small turns into sound / and the large into stillness« – invite readers to give free rein to their imagination. The lyrically luminous text opens up associative spaces and is brilliantly interpreted in the pictures. The double-page illustrations, done in black and purple tones with chamois-coloured accents, make use of the text's freedom and transform it into dreamlike pictures. (Age: 6+) [JW]

190

Colombia ■ SPANISH

Díaz, Carlos Manuel (illus.)
En un río
(Along a river)
Bogotá: Editorial Gato Malo, 2025. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-958-56996-6-3

River | Country | City | Journey | Wordless book | Picture book

Like a peaceful stream, the images of »En un río« quite simply flow along in a long sequence. One needs to take one's time with this wordless book and delve deeply into each scene. Page for page, life on and along the river unfolds: people travelling on boats, merchants shipping their wares, children swimming, houses built on or along the water, villages, cities, capybaras treading through the waters. Each double page tells a different story of water, of what it is or can be, and of the diversity of life. At the end, there is a surprising twist: the river turns out to be an embroidery on a bag. It shrinks away as the »camera« zooms out further and further, showing it in its beauty and as part of something much greater. Carlos Manuel Díaz's lovely picture book in warm, muted colours stands out for its simplicity and its delightful attention to detail. (Age: 3+) [JW]

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Colombia ■ SPANISH

Montaña Ibáñez, Francisco (text)
Montoya, Manu (illus.)
Historia de amor verdadero entre una rana y un cucarrón
(A story of true love between a frog and a beetle)
Bogotá: Cataplum Libros, 2025. – 53 p.
ISBN 978-628-96744-3-9

Frog | Beetle | Love

In a simple, moving and witty manner, this book depicts the love between a frog and a dung beetle. Though at first glance a highly improbable relationship, it develops so naturally that there can be no doubt about the deep love that overcomes all adversities. The two animals first encounter one another at the wagon of an ice cream vendor, who sells only flavours with story beginnings or story endings. When the beetle tries the ice cream named »A Story of True Love«, fate takes its course. The frog no longer feels a desire to eat this beetle. The two get to know each other, move in together, even travel to Egypt, then separate but ultimately reunite and have a heap of children, both frogs and beetles. In Francisco Montaña Ibáñez's story, differences are neither made into problems nor celebrated, but quite simply and charmingly ignored. Love knows no boundaries. The gentle, serene colour illustrations by Manu Montoya perfectly match the tone of the text. (Age: 6+) [JW]

192

Mexico ■ SPANISH

Dipacho (text)
Díaz Consuegra, Carlos (illus.)
Había una casa
(Once there was a house)
Ciudad de México: Leetra, [2025]. – [28] p.
(Series: Había una, dos, tres, cuatro casas; 1)
ISBN 978-607-8689-45-3

House | Change | Picture book

»Había una casa« is the first of four small square picture books presented in a beautiful slipcase. It tells of a random house in a random place and of the people who moved in and out, lived in it and changed it. It is a simple idea. The brief text is purely descriptive, the pictures always show the house from the front. Changing details illustrate how people live and, in this way, tell of time and history, the layers of which gradually build up and overlap. Although the book can stand alone, it is actually not complete without the other three volumes: there once were two, three or four houses, respectively. The other books also convey that a house is much more than a functional building or an empty shell. Houses are sites for communal life, places for love, arguments, farewells, welcoming and much more. With this boxed set, Dipacho and Carlos Díaz Consuegra have created a small jewel that captivates with its conceptual clarity, depth and attention to detail. (Age: 5+) [JW]

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193

Villoro, Juan (text)
Revoluciones por minuto
(Revolutions per minute)
Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2025. – 183 p.
(Series: A través del espejo)
ISBN 978-607-16-9078-4

Coming of age | Father | Self-realisation | Music

Mexico ■ SPANISH

On one single day Federico experiences several surprises. For the first time, he sees snow in his city. For the first time, he speaks a sentence with more than five words to Ximena, with whom he is deeply enamoured. And from his father he receives an old vinyl record, which, when played backwards, reveals a hidden message. Both Federico's and Ximena's fathers struggle with life – one is a former mariner who does not feel at home on solid ground, the other a frustrated employee who wanted to become a musician. The adventures that the two adolescents experience while searching for the key to the secret of the record also lead their fathers to reckon with the dreams they had to give up. Award-winning author Juan Villoro skilfully combines topics such as coming-of-age, love, family, self-realisation and music. Motifs such as the unexpected snow and the titular »revolutions per minute«, which stand for change and new beginnings, make this novel a many-faceted read. (Age: 14+) [JW]

194

Fabregat, Chiki (text)
Tama Puia. Los hijos del volcán
(Tama Puia. The children of the volcano)
Madrid: Siruela, [2026]. – 197 p.
(Series: Las Tres Edades)
ISBN 979-13-87688-75-2

Destiny | Self-determination | Identity | Fantasy fiction

Spain ■ SPANISH

Chen has been alive for more than one thousand years. He is one of the Tama Puia, the immortal Children of Fire, who live undetected alongside mortal human beings, the Children of Water. The two groups are linked with one another through a prophecy. Lomoa, a being of both fire and water, will come to life and save the world if he can come to love another being besides himself. When Chen meets Fayna, secrets gradually come to light which are related to the prophecy. Chiki Fabregat's gripping novel revolves around the search for one's own identity, around friendship, responsibility and love. At its core is, moreover, the question of whether one must accept an apparently predetermined fate. One of this novel's particular strengths is the way it weaves the fantastical world of the Tama Puia into everyday life of the metropolis of Madrid. The special atmosphere of the story arises through the connection between real-life places, which give the story a concrete framework, and an arcane mythology. (Age: 14+) [JW]

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195

Ortega Vesga, Laura (text)
Aparicio Català, Anna (illus.)
Érase una vez ... los récords de cuento
(Once upon a time there were ... fairytale records)
Barcelona: Flamboyant, 2026. – 45 p.
ISBN 979-13-87614-35-5

Fairy tale | Folk tale | Record

Spain ■ SPANISH

Superlatives, such as the most beautiful, the youngest or the strongest, have never been lacking in fairy tales and other fantastic tales. Thus, it makes perfect sense to explore such »records« more closely. In this original, fairytale-like encyclopaedia the record-holders are introduced and celebrated at a grand gala organised by an agency named Once Upon a Record. Who has the most bloated belly? The longest nose? The most beds per square metre? The most edible house? The most honest mirror? Whether the Wolf, Pinocchio, the Seven Dwarves, the Witch or Snow White – there follows one amazing »achievement« after the other. The amusing »encyclopaedic entries« are accompanied by humorous interviews – such as with the oldest of the Three Little Pigs or with Puss in Boots – as well as further information about the fairy tales and their protagonists on the last pages. The colourful illustrations, with many amusing details, also make this book a delightful read and enable new discoveries at each further reading. (Age: 7+) [JW]

196

Ortiz Ávalos, Adalberto (text)
Pacheco, Gabriel (illus.)
Juan el inconstante
(Juan the inconstant)
Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Diego Pun Ediciones, [2026]. – [44] p.
ISBN 979-13-991578-4-0

Inconstancy | Inattentiveness | Picture book

Spain ■ SPANISH

Juan, a friend of the first-person narrator, is interested in ants, detectives, spies, history, the environment and much more. Juan is endearing and has a clever mind, but he suffers from »inconstancy«. Often, he is unable to complete what he started because parts of his body suddenly disappear, again and again, for a time: a leg, his head, etc.… One day Juan stops coming to school. Why, no one knows. And thus, the boy remains a riddle – for both the narrator and the readers. Its open-endedness and indeterminacy make this story especially appealing. Adalbert Ortiz Ávalos does not explain why Juan is the way he is, leaving it up to readers to come up with their own ideas and interpretations. Gabriel Pacheco's illustrations in pale green and blue tones form their own narrative level and make an integral contribution to the book's enigmatic atmosphere. They combine everyday life with the surreal and depict vague, open spaces that offer no foothold and radiate melancholy and vulnerability. (Age: 8+) [JW]

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197

Pintadera, Fran (text)
Catalina, Raquel (illus.)
Ingrávida
(Weightless)
[Madrid]: Bookolia, 2025. – [34] p.
(Series: Crizal)
ISBN 979-13-87702-04-5

Sea | Swimming | Freedom | Disability | Picture book

Spain ■ SPANISH

»Ingrávida« tells the story of a girl who travels to the seashore. Everything there is familiar to her and when she dives into the waves, her body becomes light and feels as if she were a »mountain of salt dissolving in the water«. She becomes one with the water and perceives the sea as a space of unlimited freedom and peacefulness. With few words, Fran Pintadera creates a dense, poetic atmosphere, focussing on the first-person narrator's sensual impressions: the light, the scent of the wind and the feel of salt water on the skin. In Raquel Catalina's paintings, done in watercolour and pencil, the blue and green of the sea predominate, along with the bright colours of summer. Both the gentle, tranquil moments and the more dynamic ones – in the water and out of it – are captured very well. In the final picture, the story takes a surprising twist. After her swim in the sea, one sees the girl sitting in a wheelchair. And now the reader can really understand what the feeling of weightlessness means to her. (Age: 6+) [JW]

198

Rodríguez, Mónica (text)
Nara
Zaragoza: Edelvives, [2026]. – 160 p.
(Series: Alandar; 189)
ISBN 978-84-140-7274-5

Spain | Civil war | History 1938 | War | Violence | Solidarity | Nature

Spain ■ SPANISH

In the summer of 1938, during the Spanish Civil War's long and brutally waged Battle of the Ebro, young Nara sets out to find her brother Nil, who has been recruited as a soldier. As she travels through the war-torn landscape, she encounters the wounded Joan and finds a copy of a poetry book by writer Federico García Lorca, who had been murdered in 1936 by the fascist militia. Her search for her brother turns into a story about history, loss and survival, solidarity and hope. The forest plays a central role, more than a mere backdrop. For Nara it becomes a refuge, the antithesis to violence and a force that counteracts the destructive conduct of humankind. Animals, plants and sounds determine Nara's awareness and accompany her inner development. The novel is literarily striking for its vivid language and its calm, atmospheric narrative style. The interweaving with Federico Garcia Lorca's poems opens up a further literary dimension. (Age: 14+) [JW]

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199

Squilloni, Arianna (text)
Chamorro, Marco (illus.)
Cara de Hollín
(Soot Face)
[Barcelona]: A buen paso, [2025]. – 47 p.
ISBN 978-84-10016-40-8

Siblings | Outsider | Hero | Strength | Perseverance | Legend

Spain ■ SPANISH

Arianna Squilloni retells a legend from the Tsimshian, an Indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada. Because he is considered dirty and lazy, a young man is scorned by his older brothers and called Cara de Hollín (Soot Face). With the support of loons, however, he secretly acquires tremendous strength and ultimately descends into the interior of the earth to undertake a superhuman, heroic task: Soot Face literally becomes the »Strong Man Who Holds up the World« – until the end of time. The author skilfully captures the tone and rhythm of orally transmitted myths and legends. The language is vivid and rich in imagery. Marco Chamorro's two-colour linocut illustrations – in orange and black on white – contribute substantially to the impact of the story. Using bold shapes, sharp contours and stark contrasts, they have an archaic and expressive quality. Supplemental pages at the end of the book elucidate the story's key motifs and symbols and enable a clearer understanding of their source and meanings. (Age: 9+) [JW]

200

Hernández, Felisberto (text)
Bianki, Diego (illus.)
La pelota
(The ball)
[San Carlos]: Morisqueta, 2025. – [54] p.
ISBN 978-9915-9449-3-7

Wish | Disappointment | Comfort | Grandmother | Grandson | Picture book

Uruguay ■ SPANISH

Within the literary oeuvre of Felisberto Hernández (1902-1964), »La pelota« is a small gem. The publishing house Morisqueta has now issued it in this lovely edition with pictures by renowned Argentinian illustrator Diego Bianki. The semi-autobiographical story tells of the fervent wish of an eight-year-old boy to own a colourful ball. However, his grandmother, with whom he lives in modest circumstances, simply cannot afford it. Being creative, she instead sews a ball from colourful rags – which he brusquely refuses. In just a few words, Felisberto Hernández describes the boy's intensive feelings of anger and disappointment, and how, in the end, he is comforted by his strict, but loving grandmother. The illustrations, which resemble a scenery made up of multicoloured wooden toys, aptly capture the nostalgia of childhood memories, the form and texture of the ball, and the relationship between the two protagonists. (Age: 5+) [JW]

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Venezuela ■ SPANISH

Losada, Elena (text)
Mijangos, Amanda (illus.)
La mujer multiplicada (o dividida)
(The woman who was multiplied [or divided])
Caracas: Ediciones Ekaré, 2025. – [30] p.
ISBN 979-13-990368-4-8

Woman | Stress | Burnout | Gender role | Picture book

An energetic, ever helpful woman always makes her best effort but finds herself increasingly worn out. In order to cope with her daily tasks, she believes she needs to multiply herself. In this creative depiction of a state of overload, author Elena Losada takes this figurative speech literally. When the woman wishes to become two people, her wish is fulfilled. From then on, she is able to do twice as many tasks, but instead of the work becoming less, it only increases, because the demands and expectations that both she and others place on her grow commensurately. As a result, she wishes to divide herself by four, eight, sixteen, etc. Since during the process of division the »copies« have become ever smaller and the woman herself is in danger of disappearing, she has to put all of the meanwhile 128 clones back together – into a woman who is now strong enough to say no. Amanda Mijangos renders the text cleverly and creatively into expressive pictures, which, despite the seriousness of the topic, are characterised by a great, imaginative lightness. (Age: 8+) [JW]

202

Finland ■ SWEDISH

Kivelä, Malin (text)
Serup, Martin Glaz (text)
Bondestam, Linda (illus.)
Om du möter en silverfisk
(When you meet a silverfish)
Helsingfors: Förlaget, 2026. – [39] p.
ISBN 978-952-333-691-9

Silverfish | Insect | Home | Non-fiction | Picture book

This non-fiction picture book is a tribute to the silverfish! These tiny, nimble insects don't have the best reputation, but in this book, they finally set the record straight: Yes, there are loads of them, and yes, they exist all over the world – and have existed for ages, or to be precise, for over 400 million years! Yet they're harmless creatures who don't carry any diseases. Silverfish thrive on washing powder and dandruff, old chewing gum, or clipped nails, but they can survive a whole year (!) without food. Nevertheless, they're incredibly fast and can scurry half a metre per second. This book features witty and charming texts penned by Malin Kivelä and Martin Glaz Serup. They're complemented by illustrations in Linda Bondestam's unmistakable scribbly, humorous style. When the silverfish look at you so boldly, with mischief in their eyes and a cheeky grin, you can't help but warm to them! (Age: 4+) [IG]

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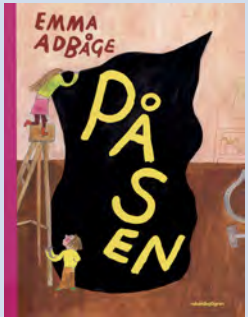

AdBåge, Emma (text/illus.)
Påsen
(The bag)
Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2025. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-91-29-74851-2

Tidying up | Family | Everyday life | Picture book

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

The daughters get suspicious when they enter their family's tidied-up flat: »Vad har ni slängt?« (What have you thrown away?) they ask. Even though their parents claim they haven't cleared out anything, they do blush a little. And isn't there a large, black bin bag in the hall…? Better have a look. And best to tip everything back out again! What turns up are: pens that no longer write (but hold the greatest sentimental value), lids without matching containers (you still need them anyway) and finally – »ÄR NI INTE KLOKA?« (Have you lost your minds?) – a wooden log called »Kussivrä«, which the girls looked after devotedly last summer. Honestly! A witty text, tongue-in-cheek illustrations, self-assured children: Emma AdBåge is an observer par excellence and, like very few others, knows how to weave witty stories from small details, perfectly capturing many of the absurdities of everyday life. Brilliant! (Age: 5+) [IG]

204

Jönsson, Maya (text/illus.)
Hissen
(The lift)
Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2026. – [33] p.
ISBN 978-91-27-18972-0

Animals | Elevator | Overcrowding | Picture book

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

This book is teeming with funny animal characters. Among those wanting a ride in the lift are a rabbit with a yellow balloon, a moose with a green tie, an owl, as well as a bear carrying blueberry juice, a hedgehog, a crow, and an ant. And then a fox, a frog, a snake, and a ladybird turn up, too – and finally there's just enough room for a little mouse. It's definitely getting cramped in here! They all jostle and pile on top of one another; the button is pressed with great difficulty, but before the lift sets off, the hedgehog sneezes so hard that the door flies open, the animal Tetris falls apart, and Bear & Co. decide to just take the stairs after all; everyone, that is, except for the mouse and the rabbit. Yet Rabbit just can't reach the button! What now? Perhaps readers could come up with a solution using mouse and balloon? In her illustrations, Maya Jönsson leaves plenty of room to explore, and she has perfectly timed the story's dramatic build-up to the moment of the page turn. Super! (Age: 3+) [IG]

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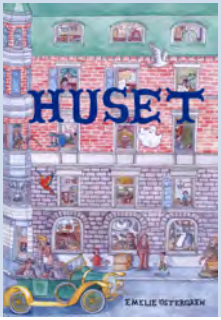

Östergren, Emelie (text/illus.)
Huset
(The house)
Stockholm: Lilla Piratförlaget, [2025]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-91-7813-603-2

House | Time | Change | Picture book

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

A townhouse through the ages: Around 1890, it is still brand new – nine families live there. The women wear long skirts and aprons; the men hats and moustaches. There aren't any cars on the streets yet, only horse-drawn carriages. And under the roof, next to the laundry room, you can actually see a little dragon! The creature remains part of the house, whilst other things change over the decades. Between the pages of bustling illustrations, which offer a cross-section of the house and its inhabitants, double-page spreads are inserted that highlight a selection of typical or new events or features from the respective time period: in 1963, for example, Barbie arrived in Sweden. In this picture book, Emelie Östergren combines real-life elements with imaginative touches to create an original visual treat, which readers will be keen to look at again and again: Time travelling as an exciting pastime. (Age: 3+) [IG]

206

Rangström, Tuvalisa (text)
Various artists (illus.)
Tidsmaskinen
(The time machine)
Bromma: Bokförlaget Opal, 2025. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-91-7226-863-0

Time travel | Wimmelbook | Picture book

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

This large-format picture book takes its readers on a variety of journeys through time: You can travel 3,000 years back to the Nile to visit the pharaohs, or to Pompeii in the year 79 AD – shortly before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. You could also choose the year 894 and the Viking trading town of Birka, or London in 1881. There is so much to discover in every detailed illustration. The scenes depict people going about their daily lives – working in the fields, crafting objects, or trading. Whilst many of these activities are still familiar today, the shapes of the houses, the writing systems, and the clothing, amongst other things, reveal how times have changed. Each illustration has been created by a different artist, which adds another special twist to the book, as it allows you to see a wide variety of approaches and styles. An appendix with brief descriptions contextualising what can be seen in each illustration complements the book. (Age: 5+) [IG]

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207

Schöier, Isa (text)
Nattfolket
(The night folk)
Stockholm: Bonnier Carlsen, 2026. – 215 p.
ISBN 978-91-7981-193-8

Classism | Social disparity | Friendship | Dystopia

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

»Lyssna Sonya, det är nånting jag måste be dig om. Bli inte arg nu. Det är ingen stor sak. Men du måste börja dela.« (Listen, Sonya, there's something I need to ask of you. Don't get angry now. It's no big deal. But from now on, you'll have to share.) »Sharing« means making one's own bed available during the day to someone from the »night folk«. Nobody does this voluntarily, but sometimes it's necessary. The lives of day people and night people are strictly separated. The former live in a clean, yet strictly monitored world; the latter do the dirty work and remain invisible. Sonya now shares her bed with Aki. At first, she resists, but eventually the two cautiously begin to interact, even though it is forbidden. Yet they ignore the impending consequences. With its radical top-to-bottom hierarchy and a surveillance state, this novel sketches a future and social scenario that doesn't seem all that far-fetched or implausible. (Age: 10+) [IG]

208

Wallenius, Mark (text)
Landahl, Aron (illus.)
Buren
(The cage)
Stockholm: Alfabeta, [2025]. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-91-501-2278-7

Freedom | Longing | Picture book

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

The first-person narrator – a boy with a bowl cut and brown trousers – accompanies his mother on a visit to her friend Biggan, who is keeping a fox captive in her garden. »How you've grown!«, the adults comment, patting the boy on his head. Maj is there too – a girl who is supposedly shy and fearful, and there are many things she doesn't understand. However, that isn't true. Maj sees right through the adults but prefers to fly under their radar. The boy and Maj wander through the garden, losing themselves between fantasy and reality, and wish they could set the fox free. Aron Landahl's extraordinary illustrations and Mark Wallenius's concise, ethereal text form a perfect pairing. The illustrations feature distorted proportions and scenes that resemble almost static tableaus, and they are imbued with a subversive, grotesque atmosphere. Their colour palette and style, in particular, are reminiscent of Italian Renaissance paintings. (Age: 5+) [IG]

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Krisana Kanjanapa (text)
Vachirawan Tapsua (illus.)
Bāntǭmai kap čhao mǣontǭi
(Tree-Stump House and Little Black Cat)
Bangkok: Saanaksorn, 2025. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-616-370-081-0

Grandfather | Death | Memories | Grief | Comfort | Picture book

Thailand ■ THAI

Upon learning of its opening, Little Black Cat visits the renovated »Tree Stump House«, where he overhears someone reading aloud from the very same book his late grandfather used to read to him. A flashback reveals this house was once Grandpa's workshop. Although saddened by his loss, Little Black Cat is delighted to see the house beautifully restored and glad his new friends are taking very good care of it. He comes to realize that saying goodbye is a natural part of life and that he and others can help heal one another. Happiness found in food, play, and friendship can soothe the ache of longing. The final page reveals this venue actually exists in Bangkok – as a community bakery, café, and playground. It was developed parallel to the book's prequel, forming a bridge between reality and imagination. Award-winning artist duo Krisana Kanjanapa and Vachirawan Tapsua from Littleblackoz Studio hope to create small moments of happiness through their books. This work received an honourable mention at the OBEC Outstanding Book Awards 2026. (Age: 3+) [LO]

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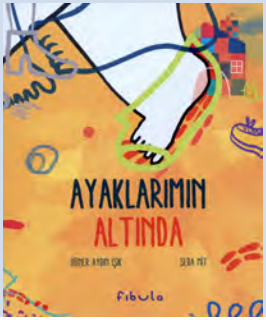

Aydın Işık, Hüner (text)
Mit, Seda (illus.)
Ayaklarımın altında
(Beneath my feet)
Üsküdar/İstanbul: Fibula, 2025. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-625-96568-2-3

Foot | Communication | Emotion | Sensory perception | Picture book

Turkey ■ TURKISH

Every child feels and perceives the world through their feet and moves with them. They launch the imagination, trigger the senses, and feed us information with every step. This picture book explores the capacity of feet for making sense of the world through tactile experiences. Stepping on grass can bring joy, worry feels like sinking into a muddy swamp, and tranquility comes with the gentle touch of the sea on the shore. Every page celebrates the body's multisensory power to extract meaning from the space around it. Not only does each step transmit its own embodied narrative, but different shoes leave distinct footprints, imprinting our movement and presence on earth. Seda Mit's childlike illustrations are both bold and expressive, offering early readers room for creative thinking. Patterns and abstractions structure each page with spontaneity. Exaggerated figures and close-up feet are captured in motion against gridded floors, grassy fields, and woven textiles, giving each page a lively sense of movement and space. (Age: 3+) [IVA]

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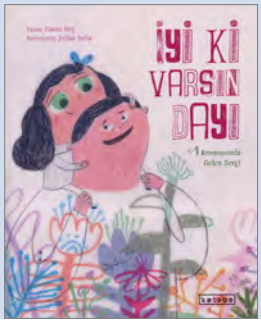

Turkey ■ TURKISH

İrey, Cansu (text)
Ariza, Julian (illus.)
İyi ki varsın dayı. +1 kromozomla gelen sevgi
(Glad to have you, uncle. Love that comes with an extra chromosome)
İstanbul: Ketebe, 2025. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-625-5888-48-8

Down syndrome | Uncle | Love | Empathy | Picture book

This picture book explores a child's heartwarming bond with her uncle, who has Down syndrome. Full of love, humour, and playfulness, the uncle is like a mountain or a steadfast pillar to lean on. He also loves to eat, sing and spend time with his nephew. Yet beyond all that, he is exceptionally sensitive and easily feels heartbroken. Through the protagonist's daily experiences, readers gain an understanding of the uncle's genetic condition and learn that it is caused by an extra chromosome that was first identified by John Langdon Down. The book celebrates the power of empathy and kindness, which lies at the heart of joyful relationships with others, regardless of any special needs. Julian Ariza's expressive illustrations with a pastel colour palette are both playful and poetic, allowing readers to appreciate the value of sharing moments with a loved one. The transparent surface of the pages invites them to heighten their visual and narrative perception by glimpsing everyday moments of togetherness. (Age: 4+) [IVA]

212

Ukraine ■ UKRAINIAN

Kovalenko, Oleksij (Kovalenko, Oleksiy) (text)
Filippova, Darija (Filippova, Dariya) (illus.)
Chto taki chyži roslyny?
(Khto taki khyzhi roslyny?)
(What are carnivorous plants?)
L'viv: Vydavnyctvo Staroho Leva, 2026. – 62 p.
ISBN 978-966-448-634-4

Carnivorous plants | Non-fiction

There is certainly a rather eerie feeling to Oleksiy Kovalenko and Dariya Filippova's non-fiction book for children about carnivorous plants. But it is in any case fascinating and, above all, full of facts and insights! Through a well-calibrated balance between text and images, the book conveys fascinating facts about the surprisingly large variety of plants on Earth that eat other living creatures. It gives an overview of the different techniques the plants use to attract, catch and devour their prey. Along with short digressions into the history of explorers and discoverers (e.g., Charles Darwin), »Khto taki khyzhi roslyny?« offers a wide range of detailed portraits of individual plants. Naturally these include species such as the well-known Drosera, commonly known as the sundews, and the Venus flytrap, but also the bladderworts that catch their prey in ponds and rivers, or the Nepenthes, or tropical pitcher plants, which lure victims into large tube-shaped cups that serve as a pit trap. (Age: 9+) [KW]

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Ukraine ■ UKRAINIAN

Povch, Anna (Povkh, Anna) (text)
Hajduš, Ol'ha (Haydush, Olha) (illus.)
Ce divčača sprava! 36 istorij, jaki zvil'njat' tebe vid stereotypiv (Ce divchacha sprava! 36 istoriy, yaki zvilnyat tebe vid stereotypiv)
(These are girls' rights! 36 stories about freeing yourself from stereotypes)
Charkiv (Kharkiv): Vydavnyctvo Ranok, 2025. – 191 p.
ISBN 978-617-09-9068-6

Gender role | Stereotype | Self-confidence | Non-fiction

How does one deal in an open-minded, friendly and at the same time poised and self-confident manner with gender stereotypes coded as female? In the six chapters of her sweeping non-fiction work, Anna Povkh succeeds magnificently in this endeavour. In each section, a woman relates the story of how she has been confronted with a particular stereotype. This can involve personal appearance, character traits, relationships, career fields, among other things. Subsequently, the author analyses the stereotype, describing its origins, background and mechanisms, then offers the readers tips for how to deal with it. Enhanced with bright, uplifting illustrations, this book aims to be encouraging and build up self-confidence, so that many girls (but also boys and non-binary teenagers) will not grow up with the (mistaken) belief that something about themselves is not right, just because they and the world they live in do not meet the usual clichés. (Age: 11+) [KW]

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Ukraine ■ UKRAINIAN

Vojcechivs'ka, Saša (Voycekhivska, Sasha) (text)
Rebdelo, Ol'ha (illus.)
Svjatkove bingo
(Svyatkove bingo)
(Holiday bingo)
Kyïv: Murkit, 2025. – [23] p.
ISBN 978-617-8610-02-9

St. Nicholas | Tooth fairy | Rivalry | Quarrel | Picture book

This wasn't quite what St. Nicholas, who always brings gifts on December 6, had in mind: just as he is about to enter little Viktoriya's bedroom and fulfil her dearest wish, he unexpectedly comes face-to-face with a competitor. The tooth fairy is also there and about to place a small gift in exchange for Viktoriya's lost tooth under the girl's pillow. Their ensuing dispute is unavoidable, as they must find out who has the greater right to deliver a present and which celebration is the more important event. In the end, Viktoriya and a kind of »holiday bingo« help defuse the situation. Sasha Voycekhivska and Ol'ha Rebdelo narrate their thoroughly entertaining story with enormously funny situational humour in a slightly ironic tone. The illustrations highlight several comical moments, such as when the tooth fairy shows off her impressive collection of teeth, in which every tooth is archived under its own glass dome, thus resembling a treasured museum piece. (Age: 5+) [KW]

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Vietnam ■ VIETNAMESE

Quỳnh Lê (Lê Thu Phương Quỳnh) (text)
Quyên Thái (illus.)
Hẹn mùa Tết ngọt. Bốn mùa lễ hội
(The promise of a sweet Tết. A Festival of four seasons)
Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Hà Nội (Hanoi Publishing House); Crabit Kidbooks, 2025. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-604-44-7748-0

Tết Festival | New Year | Country | Family | Migrant worker | Poetry | Picture book

On the final day of the Tết festival, a young boy bids farewell to his parents as they set off for their distant jobs as migrant workers. When he asks his grandmother, »Where does Tết come from?« her answer is a poetic journey across the seasons, revealing that Tết grows from tender spring buds and from summer sunshine; it ripens alongside bananas and vegetables and spreads its fragrance in the winter nights. The year's entire harvest will be transformed into candied treats by the time the parents return. Tết is not a mere date, but the emotional reward for a whole year filled with love and patience. The poem breaks with classic Vietnamese rhyming schemes by combining internal and end rhymes and simulating enjambments to lead fluidly into the next stanza or page. The resulting gentle, swaying rhythm evokes Vietnamese lullabies and children's rhymes. For author Quỳnh Lê, Tết is a promise slowly unfolding across all four seasons, while for illustrator Quyên Thái, it is linked to a sense of nostalgia for rural Central Vietnam. (Age: 4+) [LO]

216

Australia ■ WESTERN ARRARNTA

Williams, Marjorie (text/illus.)
Roennfeldt, David (transl.)
Imanka nurna laakinha nitjaarta = Old days
Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books, 2025. – 26 p.
ISBN 978-1-922777-85-0
Text in Western Arrarnta and English

Central Australia | Indigenous people | Childhood | Memories | Picture book | Bilingual book

In this atmospheric bilingual picture book, senior Western Arrarnta woman Marjorie »Nunga« Williams shares a number of childhood memories of growing up on Country in Central Australia. Her colourful full-page acrylic pictures executed in her idiosyncratic style of figurative landscape painting with exaggerated proportions are brimming with details. They depict the various sceneries with their rich flora and fauna, but also highlight the people around her and the hustle and bustle of their daily activities. Her recollections include scenes of going fishing with rods made from sticks, rags, and safety pins; of playing house with friends by the creek; and of families driving »way out bush« for picnics. Each picture is accompanied by a short description in Western Arrarnta and in English, and readers are invited to look for a different detail in every scene. A language introduction at the front of the book gives examples of Western Arrarnta words and of the correct pronunciation of some letters in this Indigenous language. (Age: 5+) [CS]

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