

# Best New Children's Books of 2014



NLA/NEMA/MPLA Conference

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presented by Sally Snyder  
Nebraska Library Commission



## Picture Books

Arnold, Tedd *A PET FOR FLY GUY*

Unp. Orchard Books (Scholastic) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-31615-6

The first picture book format of Fly Guy stories I've seen. A series of possible pets are offered or found, and there is a problem with each of them. Then, Fly Guy realizes the best answer!

Austin, Mike *MONSTERS LOVE SCHOOL*

Unp. HarperCollins 2014 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-06-228618-5

The monsters from *Monsters Love Colors* are back. Now all are looking forward to school except for Blue, he's worried. Little Gray reassures him and soon Blue finds that school and learning are fun.

Barton, Bryon *MY BUS*

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-228736-6

A simple story about a bus driver who takes dogs and cats to other, different conveyances (ship, train, plane) around town. A little math is implied: addition as the animals board the bus and subtraction as they depart. Each illustration clearly shows the dogs and cats still on the bus, so counting how many are there is another activity for listeners. A good for toddler story times.

Beaty, Daniel *KNOCK KNOCK: My Dad's Dream for Me*

Illus. by Bryan Collier unp. Little, Brown 2013 \$18.00 ISBN 978-0-316-20917-5

2014 CSK Illustrator Award. The boy in the story and his father had a beloved routine: the father would knock on the bedroom door and the boy would pretend to be asleep. When the father was right next to the bed the boy would jump up into his arms. Then one day, Papa doesn't knock, he is gone. The boy write him a letter with questions he needs answered and one day a letter with answers is on the boy's desk. A heartfelt story with sensitivity and spirit.

Bee, William ***DIGGER DOG***

Illus. by Cecilia Johansson unpub. Nosy Crow (Candlewick) 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6162-5

Digger Dog uses his nose to locate a bone, then uses a shovel, a digger, a bigger digger, and so on until he can really get digging. Two fold out pages at the end of the book. Listeners will love the big reveal at the end, when they see what Digger Dog does not – his “biggest bone” is only a small part of a huge dinosaur skeleton!

Boyle, Bob ***ROSIE & REX: A NOSE FOR FUN!***

Unpub. HarperCollins 2014 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-06-221131-6

Friends Rosie & Rex completely disagree on what would be fun. Rex loves robots and Rosie loves the idea of a princess ballerina tea party. When they find an odd object they speculate what it could be – a vase for flowers or... a cool robot blaster. Then a large robot appears, claims the item as his nose, and finds a compromise for them all. While the boy/girl battle is obvious: pink vs. blue, etc. the fun of guessing the item and finding a compromise makes everyone’s day.

Brown, Peter ***MY TEACHER IS A MONSTER! (No, I am not.)***

Unpub. Little, Brown 7 Co. 2014 \$18.00 ISBN 978-0-316-07029-4

Bobby’s teacher is a monster, in his eyes. Mrs. Kirby catches him misbehaving and keeps him in for recess. Saturday morning he runs into her in the park (and neither of them look too happy about it). Slowly, as they talk and explore, Mrs. Kirby changes from a monster to a woman. A great look at how people can be so different from what we have experienced or expect.

Burningham, John ***PICNIC***

Unpub. Candlewick Press 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6945-4

A simple story of a boy and girl going on a picnic. Their animal friends hide during the story. Listening children will find the animals easily but that is the fun for the younger ones at toddler time.

Dempsey, Kristy ***A DANCE LIKE STARLIGHT***

Illus. by Floyd Cooper unpub. Philomel (Penguin Group) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-25284-6

A young girl in Harlem in the 1950s dreams of becoming a ballerina, but realizes the opportunities for an African American are nil. Her mother works for the ballet school, stitching and cleaning costumes all day. One night they go to the ballet – to see Janet Collins, “the first colored prima ballerina” to dance at the Metropolitan Opera House. And the girl realizes she should not give up!

Dorros, Arthur ***ABUELO***

Illus. by Raúl Colón unpub. HarperCollins 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-168627-6

A boy remembers the adventures he went on with his grandfather, who taught him many things. These memories help him when his family moves to the city. He stands strong, *fuerte*, when a bully jumps

him – like he and his grandfather did against a mountain lion. Wonderful family story with a strong and loving grandfather. Includes occasional Spanish words and phrases that are defined in the text.

Gaiman, Neil ***CHU'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL***

Illus. by Adam Rex unp. HarperCollins 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-222397-5

Chu is nervous about his first day of kindergarten. His teacher has each student tell the others about one special thing they can do. Chu thinks he has nothing special to talk about. The chalk dust in the air brings about Chu's specialty! Reassuring for children getting ready for kindergarten. He illustrations are fun and convey Chu's growing interest in his classmates.

Hale, Bruce ***CLARK THE SHARK DARES TO SHARE***

Illus. by Guy Francis unp. HarperCollins 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-227905-7

Clark is confused, but finally learns the fine distinctions between interrupting, being pushy, "taking and breaking," and actually sharing. The undersea classroom features a variety of fishy classmates for Clark. The second book about him. (Clark is sometimes overenthusiastic but not a bully.)

Hall, Michael ***IT'S AN ORANGE AARDVARK!***

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-225206-7

A crew of carpenter ants is working in a stump when one drills a hole to the outside to see if anything is there. One ant (wearing the orange helmet) devises a more and more convoluted tale of danger as the first ant continues to drill more holes to see what is there. Through a clever use of holes in the pages the readers see the same colors the ants see, and see a visualization of the orange helmeted ant's story, though they may not fall for the tale. Humorous and fun, and a reminder to think for yourself. (but sometimes danger IS out there.) Wonderful demonstration of imagination.

Kaplan, Michael B. ***BETTY BUNNY WANTS A GOAL***

Illus. by Stéphane Jorisch unp. Dial (Penguin Group) 2014 \$16.95 ISBN 978-0-8037-3859-1

Betty predicts making 10 goals for her first soccer game, when she makes zero she decides to quit. Her siblings talk her into trying again, and ultimately her older brother helps her practice (after he made a smart remark). Funny and true for her preschool age group, on the last page Betty shows she has learned her lesson too well. (This is the 4<sup>th</sup> book about her.)

Kohara, Kazuno ***THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY***

Unp. Roaring Brook Press 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-59643-985-6

Great story time choice that starts: "Once there was a library that opened only at night." The girl and three owl assistants help the animal patrons, even the squirrel band that is playing in the reading room while they try to find a good song. She shows them the activity room where they can play as loudly as needed. Sweet story about something for everyone at the library.

Lies, Brian ***BATS IN THE BAND***

Unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 204 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-544-10569-0

After a winter of huddling together in hibernation the bats are hungry for sound! A celebration of all kinds of music and instruments as the bats gather in the theater. Clever illustrations add to the fun, and our old friend, the youngster wearing water wings from the first book, is here too.

Marino, Gianna ***FOLLOWING PAPA'S SONG***

Unp. Viking (Penguin) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-670-01315-9

Little Blue is worried about the migration he and his father will be going on soon. And he is curious about the deep sea below him. His father's reassurance that if he listens, Little Blue will always hear Papa, gives him the courage to explore the deep – and to find his way back.

Meshon, Aaron ***TOOLS RULE!***

Unp. Simon & Shuster 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-9601-9

Tools are scattered around the yard when T-square calls them together to build a tool shed so they have a place to rest. Includes colorful illustrations, some clever word play, and one two-page spread labeling each tool and showing where they are in the yard before they gather together to work. Tool fans will be enthralled.

Morris, Richard T. ***THIS IS A MOOSE***

Illus. by Tom Lichtenheld unp. Little, Brown & Co. 2014 \$18.00 ISBN 978-0-316-21360-8

A movie director has his hands full as he tries to film a moose doing what moose do. This moose, however, wants to be an astronaut. His grandmother, mom and dad, and other animals invade the film, each NOT doing the things a viewer would expect. Silly fun, and listeners will love the director's solution to his problem.

Nichols, Lori ***MAPLE***

Unp. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-16085-1

Maple's parents planted a tree for her before she was born. They grow together and Maple loves playing, sitting, and thinking under her tree. One day another little tree has been planted in the yard – a willow tree...

Raschka, Chris ***DAISY GETS LOST***

Unp. Schwartz & Wade Books 2013 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-449-81741-4

Follow-up to *A Ball for Daisy*, the 2012 Caldecott Medal winner. Daisy runs to catch the ball but then she sees a squirrel on the ground and she chases it here and there. Before long she realizes she doesn't know where she is.

Reynolds, Aaron ***HERE COMES DESTRUCTOSAURUS!***

Illus. by Jeremy Tankard unp. Chronicle Books 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4521-2454-4

Destructosaurus comes out of the sea dragging seaweed and immediately begins toppling buildings. A child having a tantrum, his mother tells him, "Watch your feet, Destructosaurus!" and admonishes him to put down buildings that do not belong to him. (It turns out he was looking for his teddy bear.) Bright, appealing colors convey the havoc he wreaks. Kids will love the large monster charging through the town, and adults will notice the things the mother is saying.

Robinson, Sharon ***UNDER THE SAME SUN***

Illus. by Ag Ford unp. Scholastic Press 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-16672-0

The children of Jackie Robinson and his wife Rachel, this second story tells of Sharon's brother David, who moved to Tanzania and has a family there. Sharon and her mother, Rachel, whom the grandchildren call Bibi, often travel to Tanzania to visit. This story is a fictionalized telling of their trip for Bibi's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. When they part again, Rachel says, "We may be separated by land and sea, but we are always under the same sun."

Solheim, James ***THE ONLY ALEX ADDLESTON IN ALL THESE MOUNTAINS***

Illus. by Jeffrey Ebbeler unp. Carolrhoda Books 2014 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-4677-0346-8

Imagine Alex Addleston's surprise when, on his first day in kindergarten, a girl walks into the room, sees her name on his nametag and sits with him on the one chair. They find that they both love Captain Moonbeam and sharing adventures. Using secret code they devise a special phrase "harp slyamor me zippal fwip" (best friends no matter what). One day the girl Alex leaves with her family to move to Africa. Both spend time thinking and remembering each other. Then six years later they run into each other again. The author lives in Omaha.

Sutton, Sally ***CONSTRUCTION***

Illus. by Brian Lovelock unp. Candlewick Press 2014 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7325-3

The crew from *Roadwork* and *Demolition* are now at work building something. They are using saws, hammers, and big machinery to complete a new... library! The rhyming text and onomatopoeia will capture the story time crew's attention.

Tan, Shaun ***RULES OF SUMMER***

Unp. Arthur A. Levine Books (Scholastic) 2014 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-545-63912-5

A boy shares with a smaller boy the rules he learned last summer. One rule per page, each with an illustration rather out of this world. The rules are simple and expected, such as "Know the way home." The illustrations are outrageous and show why the rule is important. (Larger size book)

Tullet, Hervé ***HELP! WE NEED A TITLE!***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-7636-7021-4

The characters for a book are surprised by the reader's presence and try to get the story going but they don't really have a story yet. When they call the author, he gives them a very short story and they call it so-so. The sometimes scribbly artwork and the scrambling for a story may inspire listeners to create a story too. It also gives some ideas of what is needed to write a picture book.

Underwood, Deborah ***BAD BYE, GOOD BYE***

Illus. by Jonathan Bean unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-547-92852-4

Leaving their former home, everything is bad for the boy: "Bad day, Bad box, Bad mop, Bad blocks..." but slowly as they drive through the countryside and other towns, things begin to be interesting, then better: "New house, new hall, new room, new wall..." and "New kid, good throw, new bugs, good glow..."

van Hout, Mies ***SURPRISE!***

Unp. Lemniscaat USA LLC 2014 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-935954-34-7

Brightly colored illustrations on black backgrounds combine with one word per two-page spread to explore a parent bird anticipating, caring for, and letting go his or her baby bird. This could be used with older readers to challenge them to find a series of "one words" that would convey another story as well as this one does. Also a good opportunity to discuss the words selected – why that word?

Verburg, Bonnie ***THE TREE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT***

Illus. by Mark Teague unp. Orchard Books (Scholastic) 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-439-85338-5

Rhyming text tells of Jack's animal friends and as we watch them chase each other we also see different aspects of the magnificent tree house. (I would still love a tour.) Imaginative fun and listeners are likely to design their own tree house.

Wells, Rosemary ***SOPHIE'S TERRIBLE TWOS***

Unp. Viking (Penguin Group) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-670-78512-4

Getting up on the wrong side of the crib sets the mood for Sophie's second birthday. Nothing is right. But Granny knows what to do; she takes Sophie outside and pushes her stroller-cycle very fast! Granny then buys her a saber-toothed tiger suit to scare people. Home again in time for a Happy Birthday! Listeners will love the scary suit, and relate to Sophie's bad mood, but Granny changes the scenery for her to help the mood change as well. Large illustrations and concise text will appeal to children and parents.

Wells, Rosemary ***STELLA'S STARLINER***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2014 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-1495-9

Stella loves her home, a silver Starliner trailer. Her father comes home each weekend and all three of them have a good time until he has to leave on Sunday to go back to work. One day she hears some

weasels making fun of her home and the words sting. But after they move the trailer to a new place, she finds some good friends.

## **Beginning Readers & Early Chapter Books**

Cronin, Doreen ***THE CHICKEN SQUAD: The First Misadventure***

Illus. by Kevin Cornell 94p. Simon & Schuster 2014 \$12.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-9676-7

Large size type and illustrations on almost every two-page spread will invite readers new to chapter books. The chicks from *The Trouble With Chickens* (a J.J. Tully mystery) are ready to solve mysteries on their own. They believe a UFO is in the yard to take their mother as a pet. Fun and silly, with plenty of illustrations on every two-page spread, readers will have a great time.

Dean, Kimberly & James ***PETE THE CAT: Too Cool for School***

Illus. by James Dean 32p. HarperCollins 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-211076-3

Pete tries to decide what to wear to school. He asks his mom, his brother, his friends, and others. By the time he is done following everyone's advice, he looks...silly! So what does he do?

DiCamillo, Kate ***LEROY NINKER SADDLES UP***

Illus. by Chris Van Dusen 90p. Candlewick Press 2014 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6339-1

Mercy Watson, the pig of Deckawoo Drive, encountered Leroy when he tried to burglarize their house. Now we visit a reformed Leroy who is still hoping to become a cowboy.

Haas, Jessie ***BRAMBLE AND MAGGIE SPOOKY SEASON***

Illus. by Alison Friend 52p. Candlewick Press 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6450-3

The third book about the pair, this one addresses Bramble's tendency to act frightened when she is bored, and what happens when she really IS frightened at Halloween.

Hayes, Geoffrey ***BENNY AND PENNY IN LOST AND FOUND!***

35p. Toon Books (Candlewick Press) 2014 \$12.95 ISBN 978-1-935179-64-1

Benny cannot find his pirate hat and he is in a bad mood. Penny offers to help him look for it even though the fog is swirling around outside. It's a bit scary and before they know it they are lost. They both remember what their mother had told them if they ever became lost and they find their way home to the back step – where Benny's hat awaits him. This series continues to maintain its quality and the story is one children can relate to, told in graphic novel format.

Kessler, Liz ***POPPY THE PIRATE DOG'S NEW SHIPMATE***

Illus. by Mike Phillips 58p. Candlewick Press 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6751-1

Poppy is lonely now that summer is over and everyone either goes to work or school each day. The family decides to get her a new shipmate. Poppy is excited until the shipmate is George, a kitten! Trials are ahead for both Poppy and George. Learning to adjust to changes, and finding the positive are included in this tale.

McDonald, Megan **JESSICA FINCH IN PIG TROUBLE**

Illus. by Erwin Madrid 60p. Candlewick Press 2014 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-5718-5

(Judy Moody and Friends, Bk 1) A new early chapter book series focuses on friends of Judy Moody. Jessica is hoping for a baby potbellied pig for her birthday and asks Judy to snoop to see if she might be getting one. Judy isn't very helpful and Jessica thinks maybe they aren't such good friends. All is well on her birthday when Jessica receives her fondest wish – and Judy hands it to her. Book 2 is out now: *Rocky Zang in The Amazing Mr. Magic* (I haven't read it).

Schaefer, Carole Lexa **MONKEY AND ELEPHANT GO GADDING**

Illus. by Galia Bernstein 42p. Candlewick Press 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6128-1

(Book 3 in the series) Monkey explains what gadding is, “walking along, looking around, finding something fun, stopping awhile, then moving on.” Elephant hopes their gadding will include a surprise – and it does! Silly fun in this beginning reader.

Willems, Mo **MY NEW FRIEND IS SO FUN!**

57p. Hyperion Books for Children 2014 \$8.99 ISBN 978-1-4231-7958-0

Gerald (Elephant) is looking for Piggie when Snake tells him Piggie is playing with his new friend Brian Bat. Gerald goes overboard and takes Snake with him as he fears Piggie and Brian will be new BEST friends leaving Gerald alone. A good look at sharing friendship.

## **Nonfiction Picture Books**

Kalman, Maira **THOMAS JEFFERSON: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Everything**

Unp. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin Group) 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-399-24040-9

A biography and a celebration of the man and all he accomplished. Aside from “He was born in 1743 on a plantation (a very large farm) in Virginia.” his childhood is ignored. Using both text and handwriting the book conveys his interests (everything!) his contributions and a bit about his shortcomings. A great starting place, readers will soon look for more detailed information. Includes notes at the back of the book.

Meltzer, Brad **I AM ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

Illus. by Christopher Eliopoulos unp. Dial 2014 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-4083-0

Short and simple biography of our 16<sup>th</sup> President geared to kindergarten and first grade. At first the adult head on a child's body in the illustrations threw me, but then I remembered children will not care and will recognize the person.

Meltzer, Brad ***I AM AMELIA EARHART***

Illus. by Christopher Eliopoulos unpub. Dial 2014 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-4082-2

Short and simple biography of Amelia Earhart, focusing on her independent spirit and determination. Additional titles in this series are on the way.

Pringle, Laurence ***THE SECRET LIFE OF THE WOOLLY BEAR CATERPILLAR***

Illus. by Joan Paley unpub. Boyds Mills Press 2014 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-62091-000-9

A look at the habitat and life cycle of the woolly bear caterpillar, which disappears in the fall hiding through the winter. She emerges in spring, eats for a few days, then makes a cocoon. Finally changing into an Isabella Tiger Moth. More details are included at the back of the book.

Rosenstock, Barb ***BEN FRANKLIN'S BIG SPLASH: The Mostly True Story of His First Invention***

Illus. by S. D. Schindler unpub. Boyds Mills Press 2014 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-62091-446-5

Ben was an active boy and loved to swim. At age 11 he came up with what is probably his first invention: swim paddles. This is a look at his trial and error work on his invention, and a look at his young life.

## **Fiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)**

Berk, Josh ***SAY IT AIN'T SO***

279p. Alfred A. Knopf 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-375-87009-5

(Lenny & the Mikes Mystery, Bk 2) This mystery involves the Schwenkenfelder middle school baseball team. Now they are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and Mike, who can no longer pitch due to an injury, has made catcher on the team. After a great start their star pitcher is no longer fooling the batters. Lenny suspects someone has been stealing the catcher signals and now he is on the case. Good sports mystery with humor and the issues that come with middle school.

Blackwood, Sage ***JINX'S MAGIC***

389p. HarperCollins 2013 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-212993-2

(Book 2 of the trilogy) In order to save his wizard master and the Urwald forest, with which he has some kind of connection, Jinx must spend time in an alternate desert world, Samara, hoping to find some answers. His skills and knowledge, and his concern for Simon – his mentor, continue to grow during this time.

Bodeen, S. A. **SHIPWRECK ISLAND**

184p. Feiwel & Friends 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-250-02777-1

Sarah, 12, is furious that her father has remarried six years after her mother's death. Her stepmom, Yvonna, brings two boys to the new family, Marco (12) and Nacho (10). They are now embarking on a family honeymoon on a private sailboat for five days. After a terrible storm the skipper has died, the boat has hit rocks just off an island and the family prepares to live on it until rescue. But this island is...different and strange. They will need to work together to survive. Great start to a new series.

Doan, Lisa **JACK THE CASTAWAY**

Illus. by Ivica Stevanovic 143p. Darbycreek (Lerner) 2014 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-4677-1076-3

(Book 1 ) Jack, 11, has enjoyed living with his aunt, but she died and now he must go with his irresponsible parents. Jack is levelheaded and his parents are the get-rich-quick type with no planning and poor follow-through. They go to an island in the Caribbean and soon Jack is stranded on an island with only a parrot for company. A turn-about story where Jack thinks he would prefer to be an orphan and believes it is only a matter of time before his parents accidentally cause his death.

Fry, Michael **THE ODD SQUAD: Zero Tolerance**

240p. Disney • Hyperion 2013 \$12.99 ISBN 978-1-4231-7099-0

(The Odd Squad, Bk 2) The Safety Patrol is back, and they still have issues. New girl, Simone, seems to be stealing Molly away from the team. Nick decides the only way to get her back is to stage a bullying incident. He bullies himself but it backfires and Nick is suspended for bullying, which he doesn't recognize at first. Humorous and silly, it does hit some good points about school rules and tolerance. Line drawings on each page both carry the story forward and illustrate the action.

Gaiman, Neil **FORTUNATELY, THE MILK**

Illus. by Skottie Young 113p. HarperCollins 2013 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-06-222407-1

A wacky story of a father's "quick" trip to the store to buy some milk for his children's breakfast. Upon his return he recounts an incredible story of what happened while he was out. Aliens, a stegosaurus flying a hot air balloon, pirates, the space-time continuum and so much more were involved. "Fortunately, the milk" is usually safe. Lots of black-and-white illustrations are included throughout.

Guerra, Elisa Puricelli **THE ORDER OF THE OWLS**

Illus. by Gabo León Bernstein 154p. Stone Arch Books 2014 \$9.95 ISBN 978-1-62370038-6

(Minerva Mint, Bk 1) Minerva was found in a traveling bag in the waiting room at Victoria Station in London. She now lives in Cornwall with Mrs. Flopps, a good guardian, and Lizard Manor is wonderful, even if it needs more repair than they can handle. Now that she is turning 10 she is determined to find her missing parents. New to town, Ravi, who with his mother moved to Pembrose from Mumbai, and local girl Thomasina are new friends and eager to help Minerva solve the mystery of her missing parents.

Hamilton, Kersten ***THE MESMER MENACE***

Illus. by James Hamilton 132p. Clarion Books (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) 2013 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-547-90568-6

(Gadget and Gears, Bk 1) Wally Kennewickett, 11, an inventor like his parents, and his dachshund Noodles are hard-pressed to stop the Mesmers attempt to achieve world domination while staying at Wally's family's Amazing Automated Inn. Narrated by the dog, we follow them both as they work with the Inn's automaton workers. Frequent illustrations along the edge of pages and larger size type, along with gadgets and evil plots, will appeal to reluctant readers.

Houts, Michelle ***WINTERFROST***

259p. Candlewick Press 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6565-4

Set in Denmark, Bettina (12) must watch over the animals and her baby sister Pia while her parents are away unexpectedly. In the excitement, she forgot to put out the bowl of Christmas rice pudding for the family's nisse, and he gets up to some mischief. Bettina must find a way to set everything right before her parents return; including getting her sister back.

Ibbotson, Eva ***THE ABOMINABLES***

Illus. by Fiona Robinson 272p. Harry N. Abrams 2013 \$16.95 ISBN 978-

Almost a century ago Lady Agatha Farlinghom was captured by a yeti and taken to a hidden valley to raise his children, the mother having disappeared. Now the valley is threatened and Lady Agatha insists Con and Ellen, brother and sister, take the yetis to her estate in England where they will be safe. The children and yetis have quite an adventure on the way to England – and in laying claim to the estate.

Klise, Kate ***THE SHOW MUST GO ON!***

Illus. by Sarah Klise 160p. Algonquin Young Readers 2013 \$15.95 ISBN 978-1-61620-244-6

Three-Ring Rascals, Bk 1) Sir Sidney loves his circus and the performing animals but he is tired and wants to take a week's rest on his peanut farm. He hires Barnabas Bramble to run the circus for that week. Barnabas is rude to the animals and only interested in profit. By the end of the week things are looking bad... Plenty of line drawings add to the story.

Klise, Kate ***THE GREATEST STAR ON EARTH***

Illus. by Sarah Klise 144p. Algonquin Young Readers 2014 \$15.95 ISBN 978-1-61620-245-3

(Three-Ring Rascals, Bk 2) Newspaperwoman Polly Pumpkinseed has announced a contest. One of the performers in Sir Sidney's Circus will be selected by her as the Greatest Star on Earth. They are all good friends but the desire to win the trophy is hard to control and each member of the circus wishes to win. Sir Sidney must have complete rest to get over his worrywart, so Barnabas Bramble will once again be in charge.

Lean, Sarah *A HUNDRED HORSES*

217p. HarperCollins 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-212229-2

Nell (11) must spend the two weeks of Spring Break with her aunt, and cousins she has never met. A rough meeting with neighborhood troublemaker, Angel, leaves her wondering about the girl and what she is up to. A touch of magic realism helps bring the story full circle.

Litwin, Mike *LOST IN BERMOODA*

140p. Albert Whitman & Co. 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-8075-8718-8

(Welcome to Bermooda!, Bk 1) A tropical island with talking cows who greatly fear humans is a risky place for castaway Dakota to land. Fortunately, the first person he encounters is Chuck, about Dakota's age. Chuck disguises Dakota and takes him home where a warm welcome is offered. Soon Dakota and Chuck are working together to foil Wilhelm Wellington's plan to be made ruler of the island. Occasional illustrations will appeal to younger readers. Survival, an orphan, adoption, and working together are all rolled up in this first book of a new series.

Lloyd, Natalie *A SNICKER OF MAGIC*

311p. Scholastic 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-55270-7

Felicity (12) and her sister Frannie Jo (6) have moved frequently with their wandering mother. Now they have returned to their mother's home town, which used to have magic but it is all gone now. Or is it? Felicity thinks it may still have a snicker of magic; and maybe it can be their permanent home, something she longs for. Family, home, friendship all combine in this magical book.

Lord, Cynthia *HALF A CHANCE*

218p. Scholastic 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-03533-0

Lucy (12), her mom & dad move to their new home on a lake in New Hampshire; her father leaves the next day on a photography assignment. Soon Lucy is immersed in life at the lake, spending time with the neighbors and going on "Loon Patrol" to keep track of the family of loons. When she decides to enter the photo contest her dad will judge, she incorporates suggestions he has made to her over the years. But she still wonders if she should enter. Family story (more than one), making friends, ethics, protecting endangered wildlife, finding your own way – there is a lot here in a flowing narrative.

McClure, Wendy *WANDERVILLE*

211p. Razor Bill (Penguin Group) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-595-14700-4

Headed to Kansas on an Orphan Train, Frances (11) and her brother Harold (7) are convinced by Jack (11) to jump off with him before the train arrives at the town. They encounter another boy, Alexander, who was an Orphan Train rider taken in by the awful Pratcher family, who make the children work on their sugar beet farm. Wanderville is the name of Alexander's "town" where children can be free. When Harold is caught by the sheriff and turned over to the Pratchers, the other children plot a way to rescue him, and some others. A sequel: *On Track for Treasure* came out 10/16/14.

Ripken, Cal Jr. & Kevin Cowherd ***SQUEEZE PLAY***

199p. Disney • Hyperion 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4231-7866-8

Cal Ripken, Jr.'s All Stars series, bk 4) The fourth book in the series, this title focuses on center fielder Corey Maduro (12). His is in a hitting slump and Katelyn the right fielder keeps dogging him and insulting him. His biggest problem is his dad. His father gets too excited, yelling at players, the coaches and the umpires. Corey has tried to talk to him about it but that has gone nowhere. Good baseball action with a coach who expects players to try their best, follow the rules, and even have fun. This fills a niche: as *Horn Book* said of the series, "this... follows the Matt Christopher series formula." Previous titles are *Hothead*, *Super Slugger*, and *Wild Pitch*.

Schindler, Holly ***THE JUNCTION OF SUNSHINE AND LUCKY***

230p. Dial Books (Penguin) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3725-9

August "Auggie" Jones (5<sup>th</sup> grade) enjoys accompanying her grandpa to the dump to find things that can be fixed or repurposed. They live in the poorer part of town and soon the city's House Beautification Committee is sending letters to the neighborhood noting things that must be improved. Auggie's idea of beauty is different from the Committee's and they keep falling deeper into trouble. Auggie continues to stand up for her viewpoint and that of her neighbors even while beginning to despair that anything can really improve. It is the scrap metal sculptures Auggie and her grandpa create that will make the difference.

Winkler, Henry & Lin Oliver ***BOOKMARKS ARE PEOPLE TOO!***

Illus. by Scott Garrett 124p. Grossett & Dunlap 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-448-48239-2; \$5.99 (pbk)  
ISBN 978-0-448-47997-2

A note in the front of book states this series is using the font Dyslexie, designed by Christian Boer. It is "designed to make letters more distinct from one another ... and less likely to flip in readers' minds." Hank Zipzer is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, prequels to the first series. Hank's class is going to give a play, and he is worried about reading and remembering his part. But things turn out better than expected, even with a bully on his case. Numerous illustrations help break up the text and add to the enjoyment of the book. Book 2 came out at the same time: *A Short Tale About a Long Dog*.

Woods, Brenda ***THE BLOSSOMING UNIVERSE OF VIOLET DIAMOND***

222p. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin Group) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-25714-8

A biracial child, Violet (11) knows all of her mother's family, grandparents, cousins, etc. But she has never met her father's family. Her father died before she was born. When she first meets her paternal grandmother, everything is awkward. But a visit to spend a week with her African-American side results in some wonderful relationship building and self-discovery. A positive look at family, with some ups and downs.

## **Nonfiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)**

Davis, Kathryn Gibbs **MR. FERRIS AND HIS WHEEL**

Illus. by Gilbert Ford unpub. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-547-95922-1

Basic information on the desire of the U.S. to outdo the Eiffel Tower (of the previous World's Fair) at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair; and the man whose imagination brought it the Monster Wheel, soon renamed the Ferris Wheel for its inventor, George Ferris, Jr. who worked on it with his partner William Gronau. Snippets of facts are also included in a different font on almost every two-page spread.

Huey, Lois Minor **ICK! YUCK! EEW!: Our Gross American History**

48p. Millbrook Press (Lerner Pub.) 2013 \$29.27 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-7613-9091-6

A look at the living conditions in a city in the American colonies of 1770. Animals and plenty of poop in the streets, bugs all over, the medicine of the time, and the grooming habits of the people are all shared. (yuck!) The Author Notes contain the statement that she did not write this book to make fun of early Americans, but rather to let today's readers understand the conditions in which they lived, and understand science and medicine of the time.

Jenkins, Steve **EYE TO EYE: How Animals See the World**

Unpub. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-547-95907-8

With his incredible art, Jenkins shows us the variety of eyes in nature and how different ones are used by animals. Additional information is included at the back of the book.

Kerley, Barbara **A HOME FOR MR. EMERSON**

Illus. by Edwin Fotheringham unpub. Scholastic Press 2014 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-545-35088-4

Focuses on his adult life, his generosity to others and his love of books, writing, and friends. Not much is said of his essay writing though his personal appearances are mentioned. His community's affection for him comes through when the author tells of his home burning down, and how it was rebuilt for him while he was away. A good introduction to an American original. Additional information is at the back of the book.

Muth, Jon J. **HI, KOO!**

Unpub. Scholastic Press 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-16668-3

Koo, nephew of Stillwater the Panda (from *Zen Shorts* & other books) here explores the seasons with two children. The Author's Note at the front explains his departure from the 5, 7, 5 pattern by explaining that haiku as evolved and now "is like an instant captured in words – using sensory images." Whether you agree or not, this is a lovely collection of poetry.

Neri, G. **HELLO, I'M JOHNNY CASH**

Illus. by A. G. Ford unpub. Candlewick Press 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6245-5

Told in free verse poems, this picture book biography contains stories of his childhood and of his efforts to become a recording star. Neri gives us a sense of the “Man in Black” with a look at the hardships and accomplishments of Johnny Cash’s life.

Rockwell, Anne ***HEY, CHARLESTON!: The True Story of the Jenkins Orphanage Band***  
Illus. by Colin Bootman 32p. Carolrhoda Books 2013 \$16.95 ISBN 978- 0-761355656

The subtitle tells it again. The Jenkins Orphanage Band was formed by Reverend Daniel Joseph Jenkins in the late 1800s to earn money to support the orphans. This is how the Charleston dance and the music called “rag” originated, paving the way for more musical changes to come.

Woelfle, Gretchen ***MUMBET’S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE***  
Illus. by Alix Delinois Carolrhoda Books 2014 \$17.95 ISBN 978-0-7613-6589-1

Mumbet was a slave in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. She overheard her owner and other men talking and writing for the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, which stated “All men are born free and equal...”. She used it to gain her own freedom in 1781, and two years later the court declared slavery to be unconstitutional in Massachusetts.

Woolf, Alex ***YOU WOULDN’T WANT TO LIVE WITHOUT BOOKS!***  
Illus. by David Antram 37p. Franklin Watts (Scholastic) 2014 \$29.00 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-531-21220-2; \$9.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-531-21311-7

A new title for this series, it follows history of the written word, starting with cave drawings.

## **New Titles in Popular Series**

### Picture Books:

Dean, James ***PETE THE CAT: Old MacDonald Had a Farm***  
Unp. HarperCollins 2014 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-06-219873-0

Pete has moved into children’s songs. “Watch a video” at:  
<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/feature/petethecat/>

Dean, James ***PETE THE CAT: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star***  
Unp. HarperCollins 2014 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-06-230416-2

There is also a video for this one.

Fiction for Grades 2 – 5 or so:

Klise, Kate ***GREETINGS FROM THE GRAVEYARD*** (Book 6)

Illus. by M. Sarah Klise 144p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2014 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-544-10567-6

(43 Old Cemetery Road, Bk 6)

Following the format of the earlier books in the series, using only letters, newspaper articles, notes and drawings to tell the story, this title maintains the quality of the series. Ignatius B. Grumpley (children's book author), Olive C. Spence (ghost), and Seymour Hope (adopted son) while continuing their serial story, have agreed to also create greeting cards. Things start to go wrong when Iggy's ex-girlfriend comes to town and threatens to publish his love letters to her.

Korman, Gordon ***JACKPOT*** (Book 6)

200p. Scholastic Press 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-56146-4

(Book 6) A \$30 million lottery ticket is still unclaimed and there are only 6 days left to claim it before it expires. Bing and friends first plays a trick on the bully Darren Vader, it backfires and Bing becomes an outcast. Once the team is on the search for the ticket, Bing and Darren team up to find it first. Unsettling things are occurring. Can The Man with The Plan find the ticket, or does he need his team?

O'Connor, Jane ***NANCY CLANCY, SECRET OF THE SILVER KEY*** (Book 4)

Illus. by Robin Preiss Glasser 121p. HarperCollins 2014 ISBN 978-0-06-208299-2

(Book 4) A class assignment for a time capsule gets Nancy and her best friend Bree thinking about the fact that "today" will be in the past tomorrow. When Nancy finds a fancy key in a desk her parents buy at an estate sale, she and Bree have to dust off their sleuthing skills to discover what it opens.

Selfors, Suzanne ***THE RAIN DRAGON RESCUE*** (Book 3)

Illus. by Dan Santat 201p. Litle, Brown & Co. 2014 \$16.00 ISBN 978-0-316-22557-1

(The Imaginary Veterinarian, Bk 3) Ben (10) is sent to spend the summer with his grandfather, and now he and local girl, Pearl spend time helping the worm doctor, who actually is a veterinarian for fantastic creatures such as dragons. Metal objects are disappearing from town, and Ben and Pearl soon learn it is a dragon who uses them to melt into his nest. While cleaning his area an emergency arises -- Ben and Pearl are the only ones available so they venture, for the first time, into the Imaginary World, with the dragon, Metalmouth, as their guide. The Rain Dragon is in desperate condition, but what do Ben and Pearl know about dragons?

Snicket, Lemony ***WHEN DID YOU SEE HER LAST?*** (Book 2)

277p. Little, Brown & Co. 2013 \$16.00 ISBN 978-0-399-12305-1

(All the Wrong Questions, Bk 2) Almost 13, young Lemony Snicket is still in the town of Stain'd-by-the-Sea after losing the statue he tried to recover in the first book. Now Miss Cleo Knight is missing

and Lemony's boss has been hired to find her. That means Lemony must find her. But he asks "All the Wrong Questions."

Watson, Tom *STICK DOG WANTS A HOT DOG* (Book 2)  
220p. HarperCollins 2013 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-211080-0

(Bk 2) Stick Dog and his four friends want to snatch some hot dogs from Peter's Frankfurters, a cart wafting yummy smells across the neighborhood. As usual, some sidetracking occurs and Stick Dog is wondering if his hungry tummy will ever get something to digest. And if the raccoons get there first, there may be nothing left for the dogs!

Watson, Tom *STICK DOG CHASES A PIZZA* (Book 3)  
205p. HarperCollins 2014 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-227805-0

(Bk 3) Stick Dog and friends are looking in the park for a Frisbee™ when one of them finds a round cardboard item with some red and yellow splotches on it. One taste and they are on their way to find the Pizza Palace and some round cardboard for each of them. A kitten to rescue, plans to make, surveillance to undertake, all will be worth it.



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