

Best New Children's Books of 2015



NLA/NSLA Conference

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presented by Sally Snyder
Nebraska Library Commission



Picture Books

Antony, Steve *PLEASE, MR. PANDA*

Unp. Scholastic 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-78892-2

Mr. Panda offers doughnuts to several animals, one at a time, and then says he has changed his mind. Why? The last animal (all of which have been black & white), the lemur, says “May I have a doughnut...PLEASE Mr. Panda?” Didactic and clever. (animals are: a penguin, a skunk, an ostrich, and a killer whale)

Bahk, Jane *JUNA'S JAR*

Unp. Lee & Low 2015 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-60060-853-7

Juna and her best friend Hector take her kimchi jar to the park every day and find things to put in it: a caterpillar, rocks or bugs. But one day Hector and his family have moved away. She then has a series of adventures with the different things she puts in her jar. Her older brother bought her a fish, and Juna swims with it in the ocean that night. The night she rides a cricket she caught, they stop at Hector's new house, and she sees that he is doing fine.

Barton, Byron *MY BIKE*

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-233699-6

Bright colors highlight the tale of a fellow named Tom who rides his bike to work, past typical things like cars and buses (including the bus from his book *My Bus* with a dog, a cat and people on board) but then he rides past monkeys, acrobats, elephants and more. After he puts on his clown “uniform” and makeup, he rides his unicycle for the circus crowd.

Becker, Aaron *QUEST*

Unp. Candlewick Press 2015 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6595-1

The girl and boy of *Journey*, each with their own special crayon, encounter a king who also has a special crayon. He gives them a map and some unusual items before being pulled back through a door.

The children follow and they journey through this land trying to help the king. Beautiful artwork and the solving of a puzzle will appeal to the intended audience of Kindergarten through grade 3.

Child, Lauren ***THE NEW SMALL PERSON***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7810-4

Elmore reacts in typical fashion when a new baby joins the family. Before long “the small person” (as Elmore calls him) is getting into his things and following him around. Eventually “it” moves into his room! But one night Elmore had a bad dream and the small person climbed in with him and shouted the scary away. That was nice. Elmore became better at sharing. A wonderful look at siblings and how families change.

Cronin, Doreen ***SMICK!***

Illus. by Juana Medina unp. Viking (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-670-78578-0

Whimsical line art on a white background carries this story of a dog, Smick, a stick, and a chick. Very brief text, “Good Smick.” The stick is a photograph, and the chick is a colorful leaf with some line markings. Good choice for story time, with action and a friendship theme.

Crum, Shutta ***UH-OH!***

Illus. by Patrice Barton unp. Alfred A. Knopf (Penguin Random House) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-385-75269-5

Two preschoolers, a girl and a boy, go with their moms to the beach. The youngsters have several (mild) adventures while their moms read under the beach umbrella. Contains plenty of “uh-ohs” -- the only text in the book -- as things happen; such as a bird landing on their sand sculpture and a hat being blown away. Could be a fun read-aloud with listeners telling the story of what is happening and joining in with the “uh-oh!”

de la Peña, Matt ***LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET***

Illus. By Christian Robinson unp. G. P. Putnam’s Sons 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-25774-2

A boy and his grandmother ride the bus home after church. The boy wonders why they don’t have a car, why they have to wait in the rain for the bus, why they go to the same place every week after church, he wished he had his own music (iPod) and more. Each time his nana answered with what they DO have. It turns out they are riding the bus to the shelter where they will help serve the meal. Great opportunity to look on the bright side of things, to see the positive, and the value of giving back to others.

Dunrea, Olivier ***GEMMA & GUS***

Unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2015 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-547-86851-6

First Gemma, the big sister, explores and Gus follows. When she gets irked she shouts, “Don’t keep following me!” But then she follows Gus as he explores. Sibling issues are explored and resolved in this small, brief book.

Dunrea, Olivier *GUS*

Unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2015 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-547-86761-8

Gus enjoys exploring, alone until he runs across three eggs. He takes care of them through rain, night, and scampering mice. Once they hatch, he no longer explores on his own. Listeners will see who laid the eggs and will guess what is going to hatch.

Dyckman, Ame *WOLFIE THE BUNNY*

Illus. by Zachariah OHora unp. Little, Brown & Co. 2015 \$17.00 ISBN 978-0-316-22614-1

The Bunny family finds a basket on their doorstep with a wolf cub in it. Mom & Dad are thrilled, daughter, Dot, exclaims, “He’s going to eat us all up!” but the parents continually ignore her. Finally, one day at the market, it looks like her prediction is coming true (by this time Wolfie is wearing a pink bunny suit) but instead it is bear who wants to eat Wolfie. Dot to the rescue. Sibling rivalry, cleverness and courage, and family love are at the heart of this story.

Fleming, Candace *BULLDOZER’S BIG DAY*

Illus. by Eric Rohmann unp. Simon & Schuster 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-0097-8

Bulldozer is so excited about his Big Day he zooms to the other construction machines one at a time, exclaiming “Guess what today is!” Each one replies that it is “scooping day” or “lifting day” etc. depending on the type of work each one does. Bulldozer’s blade gets lower and lower as no one knows what he means. But then—the other machines lift a giant birthday cake off the ground for Bulldozer’s birthday party!

Gaiman, Neil *CHU’S DAY AT THE BEACH*

Illus. by Adam Rex unp. HarperCollins 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-222399-9

Chu’s sneeze at the beach accidentally separated the ocean. Now all the animals want him to sneeze again to fix it, but he can’t. The variety of animals at the beach is great fun in itself; listeners may not know the pangolin or okapi, but most of them will be familiar. The illustrations are fun and hilariously convey the haphazard result of Chu’s first sneeze.

Hall, Michael *RED: A Crayon’s Story*

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-225207-4

His wrapper is red and he is labelled “Red” but all the kids will see that he isn’t. He continuously disappoints others because, try as he might, he cannot do what they ask. His teacher thought he needed more practice, Scarlet asks him to draw a red strawberry, he tried to make an orange with Yellow but it turned out green. His self-portrait was wrong. Finally he met a new friend, Berry, who asked him to make a blue ocean for his boat. Red did a great job!

Henkes, Kevin *WAITING*

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-236843-0

There is no impatience, just waiting. The toy dog, pig, owl, rabbit and bear are on the window sill, each waiting for something different. Sometimes one or another of them would be gone for a while but they would return. A quiet look at the interests of toys and the events during the time they wait on the window ledge. Plenty of discussion opportunities after the story is read.

Jackson, Ellen ***BEASTLY BABIES***

Illus. by Brendan Wenzel unp. Beach Lane Books 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-0834-0

Rhyming text tells of animal parents love for their babies, even when they are naughty!

Long, Ethan ***IN! OVER! AND ON! THE FARM***

Unp. G.P. Putnam's Sons (Penguin Random House) 2015 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-399-16907-6

The author/illustrator of the Geisel Award winner *Up Tall and High* gives us a new title containing 3 stories with a total of one lift the flap and two fold-open pages demonstrating in/out, over/under/around and on/off with the farm animals on the cover. Another fun concept book.

Maloney, Brenna ***READY RABBIT GETS READY***

Unp. Viking (Penguin) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-670-01549-8

Ready Rabbit is supposed to get up and get ready for school. But he is having a wonderful dream... still he gets up and just has to build a spaceship with his Lego blocks, then he must decide what to wear...oh, yeah, rabbits don't wear clothes. He tries to be good but keeps getting distracted by other (more interesting) things. Photos are used for the illustrations with a white background. Ready is stitched from a sock (probably since the author has also written books: *Sock Appeal*, *Sockology*) and his face is made from round pieces of material with expressions drawn on them.

Nelson, Kadir ***IF YOU PLANT A SEED***

Unp. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2015 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-06-229889-8

Bunny and mouse wait for their garden to produce some delectable vegetables, but then a few birds want some too. Nelson starts with the seeds in the garden but soon switches to "if you plant a seed of selfishness..." is the bunny – and oh does he have troubles – after which the mouse "plant[s] a seed of kindness" which also grows and grows; but it grows into good things for everyone. Beautiful art and limited text makes this a winner!

Nichols, Lori ***MAPLE & WILLOW TOGETHER***

Unp. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-16283-1

A follow-up to the first book titled *Maple*, in this one Maple and her younger sister Willow spend every day together. They explore in the yard, read books in the house, and play hide and seek. But one day they disagree and have a fight – both are sent to their rooms. It isn't long before they are missing each other. A quiet story of everyday life with its ups and downs. Good for story time or to share one-on-one.

Nichols, Lori **MAPLE & WILLOW APART**

Unp. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-16753-9

Maple starts school and Willow has to find a way to pass the time until she returns.

Pinkney, Jerry **THE GRASSHOPPER & THE ANTS**

Unp. Little, Brown 201 \$18.00 ISBN 978-0-316-40081-7

A retelling of the Aesop fable. The grasshopper plays the spring, summer, and fall away while the ants busily prepare for the coming winter. Happily for the grasshopper, in Pinkney's version the Ant Queen finally relents and invites the grasshopper into their cozy home.

It is great that Pinkney is retelling both some of Aesop's Fables and some fairy tales so children today can continue to hear them.

Portis, Antoinette **WAIT**

Unp. Roaring Brook Press 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-59643-921-4

Mom is trying to hurry her son down the street to catch the train, but he keeps seeing things worth stopping to take a look. Two words are used throughout the book; "hurry" and "wait." Plenty of muted colors in the cartoon-like illustrations help to carry the story.

Shannon, George **ONE FAMILY**

Illus. by Blanca Gómez unp. Farrar Straus & Giroux 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-374-30003-6

A fascinating look at counting, and what families can be. For example:

"One is two. One pair of shoes. One team of horses. One family." with an illustration including the items and a mother and child.

Shulevitz, Uri **TROTO AND THE TRUCKS**

Unp. Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-374-30080-7

Troto, a happy green car, takes a long drive and stops in a town full of large trucks. They laugh at Troto's size so he challenges them to a race at high noon. The three big trucks zoom off and Troto follows behind them. But the trucks run into problems that the smaller Troto can avoid. The motto: size isn't everything. Also winning and losing with grace. Another good story time choice.

Underwood, Deborah **INTERSTELLAR CINDERELLA**

Illus. by Meg Hunt unp. Chronicle Books 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-452102532-9

A space-age Cinderella, she can fix most any machine but dreams of fixing fancy rockets and space ships. When the Space Parade is announced by the Prince, Cinderella is left behind; her fairy godrobot to the rescue. Fun take on the tale, with Cinderella telling the Prince she is "too young for marriage, but will be his chief mechanic."

Vernick, Audrey ***FIRST GRADE DROPOUT***

Illus. by Matthew Cordell unp. Clarion Books 2015 \$ 16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-12985-6

The most horrible thing happened to the boy at school, and everyone, including his best friend, laughed at him. He thinks about some ways he can fix it, but he will probably have to drop out of school. He remembers laughing when his best friend's turtle costume fell off, but his situation is worse! When he goes to soccer practice Tyler acts like everything is normal – and maybe it is. Good lesson in empathy, accepting mistakes, and accepting others. Oh, his horrible thing: he called the teacher “mommy.”

Waber, Bernard ***ASK ME***

Illus. by Suzy Lee unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-547-73394-4

A walk around the park and neighborhood, full of beautiful fall colors, a father and daughter ask and answer all kinds of questions. Prompted by the daughter at the beginning (her text is in black, her father's text is in light blue or lavender), who says, “Ask me what I like.”

Wonderful opening for discussion with parents and children, or in story time.

Willis, Jeanne ***THE COW TRIPPED OVER THE MOON: A Nursery Rhyme Emergency***

Illus. by Joel Stewart unp. Candlewick Press 2015 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7402-1

Several nursery rhymes require a visit from the rescue squad. Starting with, “Here comes the ambulance! It's on its way. Who's had an accident in Storyland today?” Clever fun, good for story time but the youngsters will need to be familiar with the original nursery rhymes. We visit six rhymes including the cow, Rock-a-Bye Baby (who is fine) and more (yes, Humpty Dumpty is included).

Beginning Readers & Early Chapter Books

Birney, Betty G. ***HUMPHREY'S CREEPY-CRAWLY CAMPING ADVENTURE***

Illus. by Priscilla Burris 86p. G.P. Putnam's Sons (Penguin Random House) \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-399-17227-4

(Book 3 of new series of early chapter books) Humphrey goes home with Heidi for the weekend and she and her friends camp out in the backyard. It's a bit scary, especially when the boys next door pull a trick on them. Humphrey continues to be an astute observer of human behavior, and is willing to admit when he is scared.

Cronin, Doreen ***THE CHICKEN SQUAD: The Case of the Weird Blue Chicken***

Illus. by Kevin Cornell 103p. Atheneum 2014 \$12.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-9679-8

(Book 2)

The chicks, Dirt, Sugar, Poppy, and Sweetie, run a detective agency. When a blue jay asks for help to find his kidnapped bird house, the wacky group is on the case. Silly fun with a mystery.

DiCamillo, Kate ***FRANCINE POULET MEETS THE GHOST RACCOON***

98p. Candlewick Press 2015 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6886-0

Francine is a no-nonsense, solid, afraid of nothing animal control officer who once stared down a bear. But when she encounters a shimmering raccoon who shrieks her name, she scurries off the roof. She

changes jobs and it isn't until a young boy, who has faith in her, reminds her who she is that she faces the ghost raccoon again. Brief appearances from characters in other books about Deckawoo Drive (Mercy Watson the pig) will bring chuckles, along with a hankering for hot buttered toast.

Drummond, Ree ***CHARLIE THE RANCH DOG: Stuck in the Mud***

Illus. by Diane deGroat & HC artists 32p. HarperCollins 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-234775-6

This is at least the third "I Can Read" title about Charlie, but it is the first one I have seen. Charlie goes with the crew out to move the cattle. He is the first one to see the calf Abigail (from the picture book *Charlie and the New Baby*) heading off in the wrong direction. Soon they are both stuck in the mud. Still, Charlie finds a way to save the day (at least **he** thinks so). Kids will love finding the chipmunk on most pages, though it is never acknowledged in the text.

Houran, Lori Haskins ***FLAT STANLEY AND THE VERY BIG COOKIE***

Illus. by Macky Pamintuan 32p. HarperCollins \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-218979-0

Stanley and his brother Arthur visit Mr. Pete's bakery to find him upset. The baker in the next town had a new idea (cake pops) and now Mr. Pete's business is slow. When Stanley trips and falls on a table full of cookie dough – the baker has a great new idea, just in time for the town's Food Fair. Silly fun, and maybe instead of cookies you can use an extra-large paper roll to draw outlines of the kids at story time.

Lin, Grace ***LING & TING: Twice as Silly***

43p. Little, Brown & Co. 2014 \$16.00 ISBN 978-0-316-18402-1

Six new stories about twins Ling & Ting, who still each wear one green and one red shoe (from a previous title). A pun, a joke, and acting silly are part of this third title in the beginning reader series.

Nilsson, Ulf ***DETECTIVE GORDON: The First Case***

Illus. by Gitte Spee 95p. Gecko Press (distributed by Lerner) c2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-927271-49-0

(Detective Gordon, Bk 1) Late on a cold, wintery evening an upset squirrel comes to the station to report a theft to Detective Gordon, a toad; all the nuts are missing from one of his pantries. Detective Gordon goes out to investigate, gets frozen in the snow, and finds a young homeless, nameless mouse who becomes his assistant. He names her Buffy and together they work to solve the crime. Includes an illustration or two on every two-page spread.

Schaefer, Carole Lexa ***MONKEY AND ELEPHANT AND A BIRTHDAY SURPRISE***

Illus. by Galia Bernstein 42p. Candlewick Press 2014 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6131-1

(4th book in the series) Monkey tells Elephant a secret: she doesn't like birthdays, especially her own. Elephant's secret is he can't keep a secret! It is Monkey's birthday and Elephant is desperate to keep it to himself. When Uncle Phump and his friend Clever Rat come on the scene they soon are planning a "It's-Not-My-Birthday, New Hat" party. What will Monkey think? This series continues to give us good friendship stories.

Virján, Emma J. **WHAT THIS STORY NEEDS IS A PIG IN A WIG**

Unp. HarperCollins 2015 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-06-232724-6

Silly antics involve adding rhyming words to tell a story, -- “the pig in a wig” is on “a boat in a moat” “with a frog...” and so on. Then the pig thinks the boat is too crowded so the other animals have to leave one by one. The pig does get lonely and they all end up on a bigger boat! Great rhyming practice and you can have the listeners create their own, similar rhyming story after hearing this one. Another book comes out 1/26/16: *What This Story Needs Is a Hush and a Shush*; and 5/10/16 *What This Story Needs Is a Munch and a Crunch*

Willems, Mo **I WILL TAKE A NAP!**

57p. Hyperion Books 2015 \$9.99 ISBN 978-1-4847-1630-4

Elephant is tired and cranky so he decides to take a nap. Piggie makes it hard to do – not on purpose, just because first she wakes him finding out what he is doing, then she snores loudly when she also takes a nap. There is a bit of a surprise at the end. Kids will love joining in with Piggie’s loud “SNORE.”

Nonfiction Picture Books

Applegate, Katherine **IVAN: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla**

Illus. by G. Brian Karas unp. Clarion Books 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-544-25230-1

A nonfiction picture book that tells the story of Ivan, who was the main character in the author’s Newbery Medal winning title, *The One and Only Ivan*. Here she tells of his capture in Africa and travel to a shopping mall in Tacoma, Washington. Eventually Ivan was put on display at the mall and was there for 27 years until a protest by the people of the area convinced the owner to send Ivan to Zoo Atlanta. There he once again walked on green grass and met other gorillas. A two-page spread at the back of the book tells adults more about Ivan and has a couple of photographs. Included on the Golden Sower 2016-2017 Primary List.

Burleigh, Robert **TRAPPED!: A Whale’s Rescue**

Illus. by Wendell Minor unp. Charlesbridge 2015 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-58089-558-3

Retells the true story of a humpback whale entangled in old crabbing nets and in danger of drowning. A trained rescue crew carefully frees the whale, with cautions of how it is dangerous to do. Wonderful illustrations add to the story. Two pages at the back of the book give more information.

Jenkins, Steve & Robin Page **CREATURE FEATURES: Twenty-Five Animals Explain Why They**

Look the Way They Do unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-544-23351-5

Their newest title looks at 25 animals with unusual features and explains why they have them. For example, the leaf-nosed bat uses its unusual nose to direct sounds to its ears. Art dominates each page with a brief question and answer, readers will be intrigued. The art always shows the animals head and face from the front, and not much of the rest of their bodies. Readers may be curious enough to go looking for complete photos or illustrations of the named creatures.

Roderick, Stacey ***DINOSAURS FROM HEAD TO TAIL***

Illus. by Kwanchai Moriya unpub. Kids Can Press 2015 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-77138-044-7

Preschoolers will enjoy guessing which dinosaur is in the picture: from just a head or a neck or a leg. Then they will learn a bit more about it, and how to pronounce it, after they turn the page. Eight dinosaurs are highlighted, with seven more included on the last two-page spread. The cut paper art makes it not-too-scary for the target audience.

Sayre, April Pulley ***WOODPECKER WHAM!***

Illus. by Stevve Jenkins unpub. Henry Holt & Co. 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-8050-8842-7

Rhyming text gives a look at a variety of woodpeckers in the U.S. and their life cycle with the wonderful collage art by Steve Jenkins. Includes an occasional sampling of onomatopoeia kids will enjoy, such as:

“TAP,TAP, TAP. / Where? Look and see. / CRICK, CRICK, CRACK! / Six chicks break free.”

Walker, Sally M. ***WINNIE: The True Story of the Bear Who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh***

Illus. by Jonathan D. Voss unpub. Henry Holt & Co. 2015 \$19.99 ISBN 978-0-8050-9715-3

Recounts the story of a bear cub rescued by veterinarian Harry Colebourn while still in Canada who then brought her with him to their training camp in England during WWI. When his regiment was sent to France, Harry arranged for Winnie (named for Winnipeg – the hometown of his company) to be taken care of at the London Zoo. That is where Christopher Robin met her.

Waters, John F. ***SHARKS HAVE SIX SENSES***

Illus. by Bob Barner 38p. HarperCollins 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-028140-3

(“Let’s Read and Find Out” series, Level 2) No big teeth or gaping jaws in this introduction to several types of sharks. The author shares the six senses of sharks – their extra one is electroreception, they sense electric fields other fish give off into the sea. Contains good information and uses cut paper collage art with pastels that give a feel for the environment. Includes a brief glossary along with some additional information at the back of the book.

Fiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Avi ***OLD WOLF***

Illus. by Brian Floca 144p. Atheneum 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-9921-8

Case (13) learns that real bow-hunting is very different from bow-hunting in his video game. An old wolf, the pack leader, has ventured closer to people in order to find food for his pack. Case catches a glimpse of the wolf then uses his new birthday present to shoot at a raven, feeling remorse when it falls from the sky. Later the arrow is found and the raven is gone. A bit of magic realism is included in this tale comparing hunting for food with hunting for points. Occasional illustrations enhance the text.

Bertman, Jennifer Chambliss **BOOK SCAVENGER**

Illus. by Sarah Watts 343p. Henry Holt & Co. 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-62779-115-1

Emily (12) is a big fan of the online game, Book Scavenger, invented by Garrison Griswold. When her family moves to San Francisco she hopes she can compete in one of his local games. She finds a copy of The Gold Bug in the BART station where Mr. Griswold was injured during a mugging. It could be the first clue in a new game he was planning, but he is in a coma and may never wake up. Emily and her new friend James try to find the clues while a couple of thugs try to find them.

Bodeen, S. A. **LOST**

137p. Feiwel & Friends 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-250-02779-5

(Shipwreck Island series, Bk 2) The family finds out more about the girl, Cash - 12, they found on the beach at the end of Book 1, but her story seems farfetched. It isn't until the four kids (Cash, Sarah, Marco (all 12), and Nacho 10) go exploring that they begin to realize there is something quite unusual on the island and they may not make it back to the beach.

Bradbury, Kimberly Brubaker **THE WAR THAT SAVED MY LIFE**

316p. Dial Books (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-4081-5

Ada (10 at the beginning of the book, ages to 11) brother Jamie (7 at end of book) are evacuated from London and left with Susan, an older somewhat irritable woman who at first says she does not want them. Ada was abused by her mother because of her club foot, but living in the countryside is glorious. Susan soon comes to love them and when their mother shows up to take them back, Ada again feels unwanted. The slow change over Ada as she begins to realize the freedom she has, and that Susan will never hit her – all is indicated by the title.

DeFelice, Cynthia **FORT**

200p. Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-374-32427-8

Wyatt & his summertime friend Augie decide to build a fort in the nearby woods – with Augie's Uncle Heindal's approval. When they come back the next day after finishing the fort they find it trashed, likely by the slightly older boys who have been bullying them all summer. They invite Gerard, a mentally challenged teen, who has also been bullied, to join them at the fort. They set a plan and Gerard helps frighten the bullies.

Doan, Lisa **JACK AND THE WILD LIFE** (The Berenson Schemes, Bk 2)

Illus. by Ivica Stevanovic 137p. Darbycreek (Lerner) 2014 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-4677-1077-0

(The Berenson Schemes, Bk 2) Jack's extremely irresponsible parents have decided to go to Kenya to provide tourists with a true African experience. During the drive in a jeep, Jack accidentally gets left behind and must survive until his parents return, he hopes they will return. Good survival information along with humor and determination.

Doan, Lisa ***JACK AT THE HELM*** (The Berenson Schemes, Bk 3)

Illus. by Ivica Stevanovic 145p. Darbycreek (Lerner) 2015 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-4677-1078-7

(The Berenson Schemes, Bk 3, & maybe final) Jack's parents have decided to start their own religion and bought a house in Nepal for \$500. Jack and their first disciple, 18-yr-old Harry, are accidentally tossed out of the truck on the side of the road as they travel toward the supposed house and must find their way back to a town, any town. More misadventures but Harry appreciates Jack's calm and intelligent responses to their several dilemmas. Jack also helps Harry find his purpose in life. And maybe, he has also discovered the best career for his parents.

Draper, Sharon M. ***STELLA BY STARLIGHT***

288p. Atheneum Books 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-9497-8

Historical fiction set in 1932 North Carolina with a bold and determined main character. The Ku Klux Klan is reviving in their community and the African-American side of town is cautious in all they do. Still they know it is only a matter of time before something bad happens. Especially after a few men, including Stella's father, go into town to register to vote. Stella often sits out on their front porch at night practicing writing journal articles to prepare for her dream job, until her mother brings her inside to avoid possible danger. When a neighbor's house is burned down, people pull together. But after the fact, it is not only the African-American side of town that responds with help.

Grabenstein, Chris ***THE ISLAND OF DR. LIBRIS***

242p. Random House 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-385-38844-3; \$19.99 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-385-38846-7

Billy (12) worries his parents may divorce. He & his mother are spending the summer in a cabin owned by Dr. Libris. Soon Billy discovers that when he reads from a book in the locked cabinet the characters come alive on the island in the middle of the lake. Readers will enjoy the idea of Robin Hood, Maid Marion and Hercules talking with Tom Sawyer and other book characters. But soon things begin to get complicated, Billy and the neighbor boy Walter have to come up with a plan to rescue Billy's parents from the past and get all the characters back on track...

Hamilton, Kersten ***THE IRE OF IRON CLAW***

Illus. by James Hamilton 165p. Clarion Books (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-22502-2

(Gadget and Gears series, Bk 2) The evil Dr. Mesmer and his mesmerizing bird have returned! Wally Kennewickett, 11, an inventor like his parents, and his dachshund Noodles, along with Wally's parents, Dr. Tesla, and some of their automations, are traveling to Europe to save Wally's aunt and uncle from the Mesmers. Again narrated by Noodles the dog, the frequent illustrations along the edge of pages and larger size type, along with gadgets and evil plots, will appeal to reluctant readers.

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly ***FISH IN A TREE***

266p. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-399-16259-6

Ally (6th grade) struggles to hide her short-comings, and ends up in the principal's office far too often. When a substitute teacher comes in (her teacher is having a baby) things begin to change. Ally

believes she is slow and stupid; she can't read at all and must hide it. But her new teacher recognizes her intelligence and believes she has dyslexia. His comment: if you judge a fish by how well it can climb a tree, everyone will believe it is dull and stupid. Interesting characters, including her older brother Travis, help bring the story to life.

Lawson, Jessica ***NOOKS & CRANNIES***

316p. Simon & Schuster 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-1921-5

Six children are invited to spend the weekend at the isolated home of the Countess Camilla DeMoss as she thinks one might be her long-lost grandchild. Tabitha Crum (11), never loved by her parents, is shocked to find she (along with the other children) was adopted when quite young. Things are odd and getting odder during the weekend: children are disappearing and the Countess is getting less and less agreeable. Tabitha, in the manner of her well-loved Inspector Percival Pensive of novel-fame, is determined to solve the mystery.

Martin, Ann M. ***RAIN REIGN***

226p. Feiwel and Friends (Macmillan) 2014 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-312-64300-3

Rose (in 5th grade) has Asberger's and uses some coping techniques with it, but some things she has trouble letting go of. Her father is often frustrated and yells at her, her uncle is much more understanding. The kids at school think she is weird. When her dog disappears during a thunderstorm, she is relentless in trying to find him. Tender, touching, a glimpse of her life may help others be more understanding. Received the 2015 Schneider Award for middle school age (ages 11-13).

McGhee, Alison ***FIREFLY HOLLOW***

Illus. by Christopher Denise Atheneum (Simon & Schuster) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-2336-7

Firefly is TOO daring, curious and unorthodox, she asks questions and secretly wants to fly to the moon. Cricket doesn't care about the temperature, he wants to be a catcher like Yogi Berra. These two unconventional insects leave home and form a friendship with the "miniature giant," a boy named Peter who is trying to find his way past the sad truth that his best friend is gone (in the final sense of the word). An exploration of friendship, loss, finding your own way and becoming who you were meant to be – are all in this gentle story.

Primavera, Elise ***MS. RAPSCOTT'S GIRLS***

262p. Dial (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3822-5

Whimsical, quirky, magical, humorous... Ms. Rapscott runs the Great Rapscott School for Girls of Busy Parents (in a lighthouse). Ms. Rapscott is kind and firm, reminds the girls that their parents love them very much; it's just that they are quite busy. The corgis, Lewis and Clark, are extremely helpful. Five of her six expected students arrive, but one has become lost. Still, the girls get on with their lessons and also help Ms. Rapscott look for the missing girl, Dahlia. Likely to be a sequel, and we do find out there is also a Mount Everbest Academy for Boys of Busy Parents. Good comradery develops, working together is vital, girl readers will wish they attended this school.

Rhodes, Jewell Parker ***BAYOU MAGIC***

239p. Little, Brown 2015 \$17.00 ISBN 978-0-316-22484-0

Maddy (almost 10) the youngest of 5 sisters finally gets her chance to spend the summer with her grandmother who lives in the Louisiana bayou. Her sisters all tell her she will be bored: no TV, no shops, nothing to do and Grandmère is scary... a witch. But Maddy loves it! She explores the swamp, especially after the neighbor boy called Bear (11) starts coming by to show her the wonders of the bayou. Includes magic and legend – Maddy sees a mermaid in the water, she can call fireflies to her, and there are portents that Maddy will be the one to save the bayou from...something bad that is coming. Grandmère encourages her but also leaves Maddy alone to find her own way and her special strength. Wonderful blend of magic and current events.

Rosen, Michael J. ***THE TALE OF RESCUE***

Illus. by Stan Fellows 103p. Candlewick Press 2015 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7167-9

This short fictional story tells of a family lost in a blizzard, and the determined cattle dog who found them. Will engage children in a discussion – while this is fiction, could a dog really figure it all out? great story.

Sachar, Louis ***FUZZY MUD***

183p. Delacorte Press 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-385-74378-5

Third person narrative, interspersed with transcriptions from U. S. State Senate hearings, tells of the environmental disaster that first threatened children attending a private school.

Scieszka, Jon ed. ***GUYS READ: TERRIFYING TALES***

257p. Walden Pond Press (HarperCollins) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-238558-1

This sixth collection of stories designed to tempt boys to read (girls are welcome too) contains ten scary stories by well-known authors such as Dav Pilkey, Rita Williams-Garcia, and R.L. Stine.

Selznick, Brian ***THE MARVELS***

640p. Scholastic 2015 \$32.99 ISBN 978-0-545-44868-0

Told with illustrations and then text (starting on page 392) the reader visits two different times. First is a shipwreck in 1766, one survivor, who goes on to work backstage at the Royal Theater. His soon, grandson, and more also find a place in the theater. The text portion begins in 1990 where a runaway boy finds the uncle he never met. Another amazing book in the same vein as his Caldecott Medal winner *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* and his Schneider Family Book Award - Middle School Winner *Wonderstruck*.

Smith, Lane ***RETURN TO AUGIE HOBBLE***

283p. Roaring Brook Press 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-62672-054-1

Augie Hobbie (in middle school) is spending the summer working at his father's rather rundown amusement park Fairy Tale Place. He is dealing with bullies, a summer school class, and the belief

that he is turning into a werewolf. Things are off-kilter and readers who enjoy that will love Lane Smith's first novel, which he also illustrated with cartoon-like drawings.

Vernon, Ursula *CASTLE HANGNAIL*

373p. Dial (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-4129-4

Castle Hangnail has been without a master for far too long, and the main caretaker is worried it will be decommissioned. Then Miss Molly, a 12-year-old witch arrives to claim the castle. She does have an invitation (one of many sent out) but she seems so unorthodox, she's nice (usually) and considerate, but she can do some magic. She has four tasks to complete in order to claim the castle, maybe everything will work out. Then, the sorceress who was the actual recipient of the invitation appears at the door; and she is nasty.

Weeks, Sarah *HONEY*

152p. Scholastic Press 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-46557-1

Melody (10) loves her dad and hopes someday he will marry again. Her mom died soon after she was born. She is hopeful when she hears he dad quietly call someone "honey" on the phone, she begins to investigate who it could be. However, she is shocked to discover her dad is secretly getting ready to marry her grumpy teacher, Miss Hogan, how could he possibly love her? Interesting characters with some backstories of their own, including a dog named Mo, readers will feel Melody's concern about her future stepmother, and wonder about a couple of other mysteries presented here.

Nonfiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Armand, Glenda *IRA'S SHAKESPEARE DREAM*

Illus. by Floyd Cooper unpub. Lee & Low 2015 \$18.95 ISBN -978-1-62014-155-7

Ira always dreamed about being a Shakespearean actor, but the reality was that he was "colored" (language of the time). After acting in the African Grove playhouse in 1824 he left for London at the age of 17. Though there was still some prejudice to overcome, he eventually became a distinguished Shakespearean actor in Europe. Includes an afterword with more details of his life.

Kudlinski, Kathleen V. *BOY, WERE WE WRONG ABOUT THE WEATHER!*

Illus. by Sebastià Serra unpub. Dial (Penguin Group) 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3793-8

A quick look at beliefs about the weather starting with early Sumerians believing dancing would appease their weather god Enlil, to ancient Chinese beliefs and others; interspersed with what we know today and how we know it. A final acknowledgement given is that what we know now may also be wrong! Includes a short timeline at the back of the book.

Page, Robin & Steve Jenkins *EGG*

Illus. by Steve Jenkins unpub. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-547-95909-2

Another great look at one aspect of animals' lives. Here we catch a glimpse of the vast variety of eggs laid by animals, how the adults care for them, and how they develop. Two pages of comparisons show the size of the tiny stink bug egg versus several others including an ostrich egg. Two pages at the back of the book give some brief information on each animal included in the book. Fascinating.

Pringle, Laurence ***OCTOPUSES!: Strange and Wonderful***

Illus. by Meryl Henderson 32p. Boyds Mills Press 2015 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-59078-928-5

A good introduction to the life cycle of the octopus; and to their many incredible abilities. Changing color, dropping an arm, releasing ink are addressed as escape mechanisms. A few species and their relative size to each other are also shown on pages 10-11. Good for reports or for browsers.

Rockliff, Mara ***MESMERIZED: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery That Baffled All of France***

45p. Illus. by Jacopo Bruno Candlewick Press 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-6351-3

Upbeat text, dominant illustrations, and playful typefaces show Ben Franklin's astute approach to debunking the claims of Franz Mesmer, an Austrian "curing" the wealthy of Paris through questionable means. Ben uses the Scientific Method, which is explained here in an entertaining way, to prove Mesmer a fake. A great STEM (or STEAM) title.

Stone, Tanya Lee ***THE HOUSE THAT JANE BUILT: A Story About Jane Addams***

Illus. by Kathryn Brown unp. Henry Holt & Co. 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-8050-9049-9

Jane Addams was given a large home (she named Hull House) in a rundown neighborhood in Chicago and she opened it up to all who lived nearby. She began classes to teach children and adults as well as providing the first playground in the city. Jane Addams was the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (1931). This picture book biography gives an overview of who she was and what she accomplished. An author's note at the back of the book provides some more information and includes four photographs of her.

Turner, Ann Warren ***MY NAME IS TRUTH: The Life of Sojourner Truth***

Illus. by James Ransome unp. HarperCollins 2015 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-075898-1; \$18.89 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-06-075899-8

A brief look at her life; as a slave, a free woman, and as a voice telling the truth about slavery and hardship. It includes an author's note at the back of the book which provides more information about her life.

Woolf, Alex ***YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE WITHOUT FIRE!***

Illus. by Mark Bergin 34p. Franklin Watts (Scholastic) 2015 \$29.00 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-531-21364-3; \$9.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-531-21407-7

Woolf, Alex ***YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE WITHOUT MONEY!***

Illus. by David Antram 34p. Franklin Watts (Scholastic) 2015 \$29.00 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-531-21926-3; \$9.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-531-22050-4

Two new titles for this series follow the format of conveying good information combined with goofy jokes and silly art.

New Titles in Popular Series

Fiction for Grades 2 – 5 or so:

Greenwald, Tommy ***CHARLIE JOE JACKSON'S GUIDE TO PLANET GIRL*** (Book 5)
203p. Roaring Brook Press 2015 \$13.99 ISBN 978-1-59643-841-5

Charlie Joe Jackson discovers he is apparently the only boy at Eastport Middle School without a girlfriend. This must change! He happens to find a guidebook in the library which at first he uses to help his friends, but it gets him into trouble with almost everyone. Throughout are some tips from characters in the book to hopefully get Charlie on the right track.

Klise, Kate ***THE LOCH NESS PUNSTER*** (43 Old Cemetery Road, Book 7 & final)
Illus. by M. Sarah Klise 135p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2015 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-544-31337-8

(43 Old Cemetery Road series, Book 7 & final) 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) learn of the death of Iggy's uncle, and the inheritance of his castle on Loch Ness. Seymour and Olive travel to Scotland to claim the property. Iggy stays home to write and soon his uncle is communicating with him on paper. Clever end to the popular series.

Korman, Gordon ***UNLEASHED*** (Swindle, Book 7)
202p. Scholastic Press 2015 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-70935-4

(Swindle series, Book 7) Griffin Bing is caught off guard and ends up in a bet with Darren over which of them will win the Invent-a-Palooza – Griffin wasn't going to enter. Luthor is manically chasing the exterminator's old red, back-firing truck and Melissa invents a machine to stop him, which is quickly stolen by...somebody. Griffin comes up with plan after plan for each – but none of them are working.

Prineas, Sarah ***HOME*** (The Magic Thief, Bk 4 & probably final)
Illus. by Antonio Javier Caparo 396p. HarperCollins 2014 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-220954-2

(The Magic Thief series, Book 4 & probably final) Five years after the third book in the series the two "magics" in Wellmet haven't settled and magic is no longer predictable or dependable. Conn is preparing to work with the magics but first has to help with the theft of a magician's locus magicalicus stone. Soon other magicians' stones are missing. Something is going on and Conn returns as a gutterboy in the Twilight section of the city to discover who is behind everything.

Selfors, Suzanne ***THE ORDER OF THE UNICORN*** (The Imaginary Veterinary, Book 4)
Illus. by Dan Santat 197p. Little, Brown & Co. 2014 \$16.00 ISBN 978-0-316-32339-0

(The Imaginary Veterinary, Bk 4)

Ben and Pearl (both 10) are spending the summer as apprentices to Dr. Woo at her Worm Hospital. Dr Woo is actually a veterinarian for fantastic creatures such as dragons. This time they accompany her to a magical land to try to find a missing unicorn.

Selfors, Suzanne ***THE GRIFFIN'S RIDDLE*** (The Imaginary Veterinary, Book 5)

Illus. by Dan Santat 221p. Little, Brown & Co. 2015 \$17.00 ISBN 978-0-316-28690-9

(The Imaginary Veterinary, Bk 5) Dr. Woo & several others are sick with Troll Tonsillitis, and the only cure comes from a griffin feather. Ben, Pearl and Mr. Tabby must go into the Imaginary World and hope to convince the King of the Imaginary World, a griffin, to give them the needed feather. Too bad things don't go so well.

Watson, Tom ***STICK DOG DREAMS OF ICE CREAM*** (Book 4)

217p. HarperCollins 2015 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-227807-4

It's a hot day and the dogs look for water, find some (kind of) and then discover the colorful little puddles on the street are delicious – it is ice cream the children have been eating from the ice cream truck. Now Stick Dog and his friends need a plan to get more than a few dribbles. Illustrated with (what else?) stick figures.



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