

Best New Children's Books of 2017



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presented by Sally Snyder
Nebraska Library Commission



Picture Books

Andros, Camille ***CHARLOTTE THE SCIENTIST IS SQUISHED***

Illus. by Brianne Farley unp. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-78583-0

Charlotte, one of many bunny siblings, is frustrated. Whenever she tries an experiment (following the scientific method), her brothers and sisters get in the way or break her beakers and other things. Her solution? A trip to the moon in a space ship that resembles a carrot (and built by Charlotte). She finally has time to herself and can concentrate on her experiments. But then, something is wrong...she is lonely. She even misses being squished. She returns home to her family and uses her space ship as her laboratory – a space of her own. Includes a two-page spread at the back of the book explaining the steps in the scientific method.

Barnett, Mac ***TRIANGLE***

Illus. by Jon Klassen unp. Candlewick Press 2017 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-9603-0

Triangle walks to visit his friend Square, and to play a trick on him. He goes past some small, medium, and large triangles, then past some squares. He plays his trick and runs home with Square following, then Square plays a trick on Triangle. Contains short sentences and a white background for the art.

Barton, Chris ***MIGHTY TRUCK: Muddymania!***

Illus. by Troy Cummings unp. HarperCollins 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-234479-3

Clarence is an ordinary truck who is often dirty. One day the boss sent him to the truck wash and lightning struck while he was in there. He became Mighty Truck, who regularly saves the day. In this 2nd story Clarence and his truck friend Bruno go to Muddymania to spend time together and cheer for the competitors. It is Bruno who first notices their friend Flo is in trouble, she was exhausted and fell sleep. Now she is rolling faster and faster downhill toward the stands. He needs to protect his identity –they work together to find a way for Clarence to become Mighty Truck and together they save Flo. (Besides, Bruno already knew he was Mighty Truck.)

Bentley, Tadgh ***SAMSON: The Piranha Who Went to Dinner***

Unp. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-233537-1

Samson is a piranha who enjoys fine dining. The problem is, as soon as he arrives at any restaurant, everyone there panics and runs away yelling, “Piranha!” He tries a disguise but his true self is soon revealed. He is discouraged but then realizes the thing to do is to open a restaurant himself. All fearsome looking fish are welcome. Attentive listeners will see a few gentle-looking fish wearing disguises in order to fit in with the usual clientele of the new restaurant. Problem-solving and fun.

Broskol, Vera ***LEAVE ME ALONE!***

Unp. Roaring Brook Press 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-626724419 (pub 9/13/16)

(2017 Caldecott Honor book) Granny just wants to knit sweaters for her grandchildren before the weather turns cold, but they play with the yarn and unwind it until Granny has to go find a quiet place to knit. Shouting “Leave me alone!” she leaves and tries the forest, but bear cubs play with the yarn. She tries going higher and encounters mountain goats. Even higher she climbs from the mountaintop to the moon where little green moon-men bother her. Finally she steps through a wormhole to knit the sweaters in the dark quiet. Leaving through the wormhole she ends up at home, with grandchildren happy to see her, and loving their new sweaters.

Burach, Ross ***I AM NOT A CHAIR!***

Unp. HarperCollins 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-236016-8

A giraffe is puzzled and frustrated when other animals keep assuming he is a chair. Finally he says, “I am speaking up to the next animal I see.” But the next animal... is a lion! What will he do now? At the end of the story the giraffe sits down on what appears to be a stone, but, is it? Clever.

Brill, Calista ***TUGBOAT BILL AND THE RIVER RESCUE***

Illus. by Tad Carpenter unp. HarperCollins 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-236618-4

Bill, a tugboat, and his friend Mabel, a barge, are not new, shiny or fast, but they get the job done. The fancier boats snub them. One day a little kitten falls into the water. None of the other boats seems to care. Bill and Mabel get the kitten out of the water and they are in the paper! Old and small, they can still save the day!

Cornwall, Gaia ***JABARI JUMPS***

Unp. Candlewick Press 2017 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7838-8

Jabari is ready to jump off the high board, or is he? He has passed his swim lessons and it looks easy, until he gets to the ladder. His supportive father lets Jabari set the pace and gives him some good advice. A pivotal moment in childhood is captured with empathy and understanding – kids will be rooting for Jabari.

Dahl, Michael ***GOOD MORNING, SUPERMAN***

Illus. by Omar Lozano unp. Capstone & DC Comics 2017 \$15.95 ISBN 978-1-62370-850-4

A young boy goes through his morning routine, which somewhat mimics what Superman is doing, such as facing his fears. Superman faces kryptonite and the boy faces his similarly green toothbrush and toothpaste. The book has a split illustrations, one side showing the boy and the other section showing Superman. A positive, upbeat story.

Dahl, Michael ***BE A STAR, WONDER WOMAN***

Illus. by Omar Lozano unp. Capstone & DC Comics 2017 \$15.95 ISBN 978-1-62370-875-7

A girl faces new challenges in her day – just like Wonder Woman would. At school she is kind, brave, honest, strong, and never gives up. While the girl faces her challenges at school, on the opposite page Wonder Woman is depicted facing challenges as well. Another positive, upbeat story.

Daywalt, Drew ***THE LEGEND OF ROCK PAPER SCISSORS***

Illus. by Adam Rex unp. Balzer + Bray 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-978-0-06-243889-8

Rock can beat anyone in an instant in the Kingdom of the Backyard – there is no challenge for him, so he leaves to find a worthy opponent. Paper is the smartest in the Empire of Mom’s Home Office, after outwitting the printer and those in the Office Trash Bin, he also leaves seeking a challenge. Scissors, in the Kitchen Realm, battles all, even dinosaur-shaped chicken nuggets, and leaves as well. Each is thrilled, in the Cavern of Two-Car Garage, to find someone who can beat them!

Dewdney, Anna ***LITTLE EXCAVATOR***

Unp. Viking 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-10199920-2

A number of pieces of equipment are working in the empty lot, and Little Excavator has just joined them. But everything he tries to do ends up not working, he is too small. Until the task only Little Excavator can do, cross the new wooden bridge and plant an apple tree on the small island – and he feels big! Satisfying for little readers to see that small can still be helpful.

DiPucchio, Kelly ***ANTOINETTE***

Illus. by Christian Robinson unp. Atheneum (Simon & Schuster) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-5783-5

Sequel to 2017 Golden Sower Picture Book Winner: *Gaston*

Having been raised in a litter of bulldogs, who each have found their special talent, Antoinette wonders what she is good at doing. When Oh-la-la, a puppy from the poodle clan, goes missing, she finds herself following the scent to locate her.

Hall, Michael ***LITTLE i***

Unp. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-238300-6

One day, as the other letters were spelling words, Little I’s dot fell off and went over the cliff into the sea. Now Little i looked like a number one. So off he went in a boat (shaped like a question mark) to find his dot. He found an island that had (not named until the end of the book) an exciting waterfall

(exclamation marks), a tunnel (parentheses), gems in the tunnel (asterisks), a garden of sprouts (commas), a “spine-chilling bridge (hyphen), and at the very end – his dot (period). Now the dot had a different job so Little i left him there and sailed home again. A fun introduction to punctuation.

Henkes, Kevin *EGG*

Unp. Greenwillow Bks (HarperCollins) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-240872-3

There is very little text in this simple story of four eggs, each a different color, what hatched, and the hatchlings' connections to each other. The last egg takes a bit longer to hatch – what do the listeners think might be in there?

Isadora, Rachel *I JUST WANT TO SAY GOOD NIGHT*

Unp. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin Random House) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-399-17384-4

A young girl living in a village on the African plain delays bedtime by saying, “Good night” to many animals, and finally some ants and a rock. The fun for adults and children who are familiar with it is when, now in bed, she wants to say goodnight to her book and the moon. The book is, of course, *Goodnight Moon*. Be prepared to read that title next.

Kang, Anna *I AM (NOT) SCARED*

Illus. by Christopher Weyant unp. Two Lions (Amazon Pub.) \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-503937451

Two bearlike creatures, one large and one smaller, try to be brave while in line for the roller coaster. The smaller one mentions there are much scarier things – like snakes. They list a few other scary things until the coaster cars arrive – with a snake in one! He looks a little stunned but stays in the car, and the two creatures sit in front of him for the next ride. The readers/listeners will enjoy seeing the three zoom up the tracks and then fly around the loop before finally shouting “I am scared!” Then the three ride it again. It is good to admit when you are scared, and roller coasters can be ridden again and again even while still scared.

L'Arronge, Lilli *ME TALL, YOU SMALL*

Unp. Owlkids Books 2017 \$16.95 ISBN 978-177147-194-7

More than an opposites book, it also conveys a parent and child relationship showing love, care, and empathy along with some humor. Some rhyming as well as subtle grammar and language use (“me cool, you cooler”). Simple artwork fits the story and adds to the fun.

Lazar, Tara *7 ATE 9: The Untold Story*

Illus. by Ross MacDonald unp. Disney-Hyperion 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4847-1779-0

The letter I, a Private Eye, is sitting in his office when the number 6 comes running in. He is scared. Rumor was: 7 ate 9 and now 6 is sure he is next. Plenty of plays on words (or numbers) in this “hard-boiled detective” story. When 6 says 7 is after him, “I” says, “well, technically, he’s always after you: there’s 5, then 6, then 7.”

McCutcheon, John ***FLOWERS FOR SARAJEVO***

Illus. by Kristy Caldwell unpub. Peachtree Publishers 2017 \$19.95 ISBN 978-1-56145-943-8

Based on a true incident, Sarajevo in 1992, a boy, Drasko, is manning his father's flower stand while his father is away fighting in a war. Then one morning at 10:00, a mortar hits the bakery just down the street and 22 people were killed. The next day the square is empty, but at 10:00 a.m. one man dressed in a tuxedo comes out of the orchestra's rehearsal hall. He puts down a chair near the bakery and plays beautiful music on his cello, then stands up and leaves. For 22 days he plays the music, one for each of the lives lost. And the people in the square begin to heal. Includes a historical note and an Author's Note at the back of the book.

McMullen, Kate ***I'M SMART!***

Illus. by Jim McMullen unpub. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-244923-8

The story of the duties of a school bus, and the need for people to obey the law. Similar to other titles by the authors. Doesn't quite have the charm of others in the series but will still be a good purchase.

Meade, Rita ***EDWARD GETS MESSY***

Illus. by Olga Stern unpub. Simon & Schuster 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-3777-6

(first recipient of the Anna Dewdney Read Together Award, sponsored by Penguin Young Readers, the Children's Book Council, and Every Child a Reader) Edward, a pig, is extremely tidy and avoids mess. Then one day at school, as he is replacing the paint jars on the shelf, a drop of paint lands on his shirt. Then all the paint jars fall and he is splattered all over. Soon he is reveling in the mess. And now he knows being messy is okay because he can always clean up.

(see: <http://everychildareader.net/anna/>)

Messner, Kate ***OVER AND UNDER THE POND***

Illus. by Christopher Silas Neal unpub. Chronicle Books 2017 \$26.99 ISBN 978-1-4521-4542-6

A gentle and lyrical look at what occurs above the pond and what occurs within the pond – which the book calls “under.” The page often is divided showing both “over and under” at the same time. A paragraph on each of the animals in the book is included at the back.

Follows *Over and Under the Snow*, and *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt*.

Naberhaus, Sarvinder ***BLUE SKY WHITE STARS***

Illus. by Kadir Nelson unpub. Dial Books (Penguin Random House) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3700-6

Beautiful art by Kadir Nelson and spare text celebrates all that is America. Word play is used occasionally, such as an illustration of a colonial woman sewing a US flag with the words “sew together won nation” and on the opposite page is an illustration of many faces with the words “so together one nation” – it is powerful.

Pinkney, Jerry ***THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF***

Unpub. Little, Brown 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-316-34157-8

Another wonderful retelling of a popular folktale with outstanding artwork. The author notes at the back of the book that this story gave him trouble because in many versions the Troll does not have the opportunity to learn his lesson. Mr. Pinkney found a satisfying way for this to happen in his version. I will say it again: It is great that Pinkney is retelling both folktales and fables so children today can continue to hear them.

Reynolds, Aaron ***CREEPY PAIR OF UNDERWEAR***

Illus. by Peter Brown unp. Simon & Schuster 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-0298-0

Jasper Rabbit (from *Creepy Carrots*) is back and is beginning to feel a little more grown up. When his mom takes him to buy new underwear, he asks for one pair of creepy underwear to go with his plain white ones. That night he wore them to bed, but they glowed a “ghoulish green.” He changed to a pair of white ones and put the green ones in the laundry. The next morning he was wearing them again! Try as he might, Jasper cannot lose the creepy underwear, until he goes past Crackenhopper Field, and buries them on Creekhanger Hill. Still, something is wrong, and readers will love the final solution.

Reynolds, Peter H. ***HAPPY DREAMER***

Unp. Orchard Books (Scholastic) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-86501-2

A celebration of creativity, which does not always thrive in the classroom (this is made clear). My favorite page says: “I’m really good at being me. A dreamer – surprising – caring – funny – gentle – smart.” Could use this to ask kids to note their own descriptors.

Richmond, Lori ***PAX AND BLUE***

Unp. Simon & Schuster 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-5132-1

Every day on the way to school, Pax gives the pigeon he named Blue a pinch of his toast. But today his mom is in a hurry and Blue gets nothing. Blue follows them down the stairs and into the subway train where other people over react and try to shoo Blue away. Pax helps Blue off the train by tossing his pinch out the door when it opens. Blue follows and all is well.

Silvestro, Annie ***BUNNY’S BOOK CLUB***

Illus. by Tatjana Mai-Wyss Doubleday (Random House) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-553-53758-1

Bunny loves stories and one night he finds his way into the library – through the book drop. He gathered a stack of books and took them home. Soon he lets his friend Porcupine in on the secret and before long many of his friends joined him at the library until one night the librarian turned on the lights! She carefully explained the rules and gave each of them their own library card.

Smith, Lane ***A PERFECT DAY***

Unp. Roaring Brook Press 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-626725362

Spring. Sunshine. Flowers blooming. At first it appears to be a perfect day for everyone: the cat, the dog, the bird, the squirrel; but it actually turns out to be a perfect day for the just-awakened bear.

Spires, Ashley ***THE THING LOU COULDN'T DO***

Unp. Kids Can Press 2017 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-77138-727-9

Lou can't climb a tree. She is not shy or quiet, but the tree stumps her. She tries hard to avoid the issue but her friends are all in the tree playing pirate. Finally she decides she will eventually manage it. Supportive friends continue to play with her and agree one day she will climb the tree.

Tullet, Hervé ***SAY ZOOP!***

Unp. Chronicle Books 2017 \$15.99 ISBN 978-1-4521-6473-1

This time the author uses dots, lines, and splotches to get the readers to say, "Oh!" and "Ah!" and "Waahoo!" using their fingers to touch colored dots – blue for "Oh!" red for "Ah!" and yellow for "Waahoo!" – with more and more dots on pages, then with sliding lines... lots of fun! Oh, "Zoop" comes at the very end of the book.

Williamson, Sarah ***WHERE ARE YOU?***

Unp. Alfred A. Knopf 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-5247-0063-8

In the park (shown in the front papers) the green worm is trying to find the pink worm – in the grass, on a boat, under a lily pad, and more. Listeners will love finding the pink worm in his many places. Simple text leaves it to the illustrations to carry the story. Other animals and people in the book are oblivious to the worms.

Beginning Readers

Dean, James ***PETE THE CAT AND THE LOST TOOTH***

32p. HarperCollins 2017 \$16.95 ISBN 978-0-06-267519-4

Helping the tooth fairy is thoughtful and considerate, but what if Pete cannot find the tooth under Gus the Platypus's pillow, or in his room? (he has no teeth) Gus just wants to be part of the Tooth Fairy fun, so Pete gives him a coin, and the Tooth Fairy approves.

Gutman, Dan ***MY WEIRD SCHOOL: Class Pet Mess!***

Illus. by Jim Paillot 32p. HarperCollins 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-236747-1; \$3.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-06-236746-4

One of several newer titles in beginning reader format featuring Mr. Cooper's class from the well-known early chapter book series. Alexia hopes the new class pet will be something cool, **not** a bunny. The class vote results in a snake – an eastern hognose. The children take turns bringing their own pets to school and Andrea's poodle barks right by the tank Bob the snake is in, and he rolls over and dies! The children panic but Bob is not dead, he is playing dead. Whew!

Gutman, Dan ***MY WEIRD SCHOOL GOES TO THE MUSEUM***

Illus. by Jim Paillot 32p. HarperCollins 2016 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-236744-0; \$13.53 (PLB) ISBN 978-0606392754; \$3.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-06-236742-6

Andrea and A. J. are going by themselves on a school trip to the museum. Mr. Cooper has warned the museum educator that one of the students might misbehave. It may not be who you expect.

Haas, Jessie ***BRAMBLE AND MAGGIE, SNOW DAY*** (Bramble & Maggie #4)
52p. Candlewick Press 2016 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7364-2

A major winter storm is on the way so Maggie and Bramble, the family and neighbors all prepare: water in the bathtub for Bramble, extra food from the grocery store, covering the hay pile and shutting Bramble in her shed – but the door won't quite latch. The next morning Bramble is free from her shed but Maggie and her family are trapped by snow in the house. A handful of cereal starts Bramble digging for it and clearing the steps. Now to takes some shovels and help their neighbors get out of their homes.

Hale, Bruce ***CLARK THE SHARK AND THE BIG BOOK REPORT***

Illus. by Guy Francis 32p. HarperCollins 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-227913-2; \$3.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-06-227912-5

Clark is ready, tomorrow everyone will give their book reports. Some other students are nervous so their teacher says, "be bold, be smart, and speak from the heart." Clark is not nervous at all, until he stands in front of the class the next day. His mind was blank, the students encourage him, but then his teacher repeats her advice, and his words come back to him. Good encouragement for those nervous about speaking in front of others. Clark's bravado beforehand is typical of students the age of the expected readers.

Harper, Charise Mericle ***THE GOOD FOR NOTHING BUTTON***

53p. Disney Book Group 2017 \$9.99 ISBN 978-1-48472646-4

(Elephant & Piggie Like Reading) Yellow Bird has a button that does nothing. He presses it to show that nothing happens. Blue Bird presses the button and is surprised that it is so easy to press. Then ensues a philosophical discussion – does the button do nothing if it: surprises Blue Bird, does not surprise Red Bird and thus makes him sad, makes Blue Bird and Red Bird happy, makes them all funny. (And gives the worm in the hole of the tree stump a headache.) Also shows good manners as the other birds first ask if they can press the button. Silly fun, with some philosophy.

O'Connor, Jane ***JOJO AND DADDY BAKE A CAKE***

Illus. by Robin Preiss Glasser 32p. HarperCollins 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-237802-6; \$3.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-06-237801-9

Fancy Nancy's younger sister Jojo and her dad are baking a cake. One by one people ask who the cake is for and she says it is a secret. They are careful in the kitchen, let others help, and Dad handles all the dangerous parts. A simple and fun father and daughter story.

Virján, Emma J. **WHAT THIS STORY NEEDS IS A VROOM AND A ZOOM**

Unp. HarperCollins 2017 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-06-241530-1

(5th and final title in series) The Pig in a Wig wakes up just in time to rush to her race car for the beginning of the cross-country race. A spin and a thud land her by the side of the road with a flat tire. Her crew is right there to help. Rhyming text, as expected, tells the story.

Early Chapter Books

Angleberger, Tom **THE GOAT WHO CHEWED TOO MUCH**

Illus. by Cece Bell 101p. Amulet Books (ABRAMS) 2017 \$14.95 ISBN 978-1-4197-0956-2

(Inspector Flytrap, Bk 3) More silly adventures as Inspector Flytrap (a real flytrap plant) works to solve another mystery. It would help if his assistant (the goat) stopped eating clues and evidence.

Blabey, Aaron **THE BAD GUYS**

158p. Scholastic Press 2016 \$16.00 (PLB) ISBN 978-0606400398; \$5.99 (pbk) 978-0-545-91240-2

Hilarious! Mr. Wolf (as in Big Bad) enlists Mr. Snake (The Chicken Swallower), Mr. Piranha (The Butt Biter) and Mr. Shark (Jaws) to join his new Good Guys Club. They are reluctant. First some practice – rescue a kitty stuck in a tree. (oh, the many teeth the kitty sees looking up at him.) Next, rescue 200 dogs from the pound. Should go like clockwork, err, no. Told in graphic novel style with a couple of fart jokes, the cartoon-style artwork really makes the story.

Blabey, Aaron **THE BAD GUYS IN MISSION UNPLUCKABLE**

139p. Scholastic Press 2017 \$5.99 (pbk) 978-0-545-91241-9

(Bk 2) After the TV News reported their rescue of the dogs at the pound as frightening and terrifying for the dogs, Mr. Wolf is determined they be hailed as heroes for their next rescue: 10,000 chickens held in cages at Sunnyside Chicken Farm, a place “impossible to break into.” So they are joined by Legs, a tarantula. Mr. Shark is terrified of Legs. What can go wrong?

Birney, Betty G. **HUMPHREY'S TREASURE HUNT**

Illus. by Priscilla Burris 82p. G. P. Putnam's Sons 2017 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-399-17231-1

(Humphrey's Tiny Tales series, #6) Garth hides a small treasure chest under Humphrey's bedding, it is the prize for the upcoming treasure hunt for his class being held in his backyard. But when it comes time for the prize, it is not there! The riddle clues will grab the readers – and who took the prize will also baffle them. Plenty of illustrations with some all text pages thrown in between them.

Funke, Cornelia **LILLY AND FIN: A Mermaid's Tale**

83p. Random House 2017 \$9.99 ISBN 978-1-5247-0101-7; \$12.99 (PLB) ISBN 978-1-5247-0102-4

Adventurous best friends, mer-children Lilly and Fin sometimes go outside the allowed area near their undersea home. Stories of dangerous krakens and “two-legs” seem more like legends than truth. Fin

is captured by the unscrupulous Snorkels, a human couple who want one of every sea creature for their aquarium, and will stop at nothing to get it. It is up to Lilly to rescue him. Adventure, humor and merpeople will appeal to readers.

Harrison, Paula ***THE STORM DRAGON***

Illus. by Sophy Williams 119p. Aladdin (Simon & Schuster) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-7608-9; \$5.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-4814-7607-2

This series was first published in the U.K. Sophy works as a maid in the castle and is astounded when she overhears the queen and Sir Fitzroy agreeing they should rid the kingdom of all the magical animals that live in the nearby forest. When a little dragon crash lands in the apple orchard, Sophy hides him and is determined to return him to his family. It helps that a magic stone she found allows her to talk with the dragon. A light fantasy that will appeal to magic fans, with illustrations usually on every other two-page spread.

Harrison, Paula ***THE SKY UNICORN***

Illus. by Sophy Williams 107p. Aladdin (Simon & Schuster) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-7611-9; \$5.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-4814-7610-2

Ava and her family live on boats that travel the rivers and with others, perform plays to entertain the people. When Ava realizes a baby sky unicorn has been captured by Sir Fitzroy she knows it is up to her and her new friend Sophy to free it. If you have magical creature fans at your library, the remaining titles in the series (which I have not read) are: *The Baby Firebird* (#3), *The Magic Fox* (#4), *The Star Wolf* (#5), *The Sea Pony* (#6).

Kelly, Jacqueline ***SKUNKED!***

Illus. by Jennifer L. Meyer 106p. Henry Holt & Co. 2016 \$15.99 ISBN 978-1-62779-868-6

First title in a new series: Calpurnia Tate, Girl Vet, aimed at younger readers than the original title, *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*. Fortunately they will follow this story fine without having read the original (Newbery Honor Book of 2010). The series is set in Texas in 1901.

Calpurnia (12) discovers her younger brother (11) has brought home a baby skunk for a pet, since it was abandoned. Complications grow when Travis discovers a runt skunk in the same nest and rescues it too. They have to keep them a secret from their mother, but it is only a matter of time...

Kelly, Jacqueline ***COUNTING SHEEP*** (Calpurnia Tate Girl Vet series, Bk 2)

Illus. by Jennifer L. Meyer 104p. Henry Holt & Co. 2017 \$15.99 ISBN 978-1-62779-870-9

(Calpurnia Tate Girl Vet series, Bk 2) Calpurnia hopes to help a butterfly with a damaged wing. Also, her mother's prize sheep is expecting and while Calpurnia knows she can help, she cannot let her mother know that she reads the books in the veterinarian's office, it is not ladylike. When Snow White has trouble, the vet is not available and it is up to Calpurnia to save the sheep and the lamb. Each title contains science and animal information in a nonintrusive way.

LaReau, Kara ***THE INFAMOUS RATSOS ARE NOT AFRAID***

Illus. by Matt Myers 86p. Candlewick Press 2017 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7637-7

Louie and Ralphie Ratso enjoyed the carnival and decided have their friends join them to clean up a vacant lot to create a carnival for everyone. The lot is next door to the spooky house, though, and Louie doesn't want to go to close to it. Younger brother Ralphie is having his own issue, somehow picking up her pen and giving it back to Stinky Stanko has made everyone think he likes her. Plenty to worry about and deal with, but they can do it!

Nilsson, Ulf *A CASE IN ANY CASE*

Illus. by Gitte Spee 105p. Gecko Press 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-77657-108-6

(Detective Gordon, Bk 3 & final) Retirement was great at first, lots of rest and fishing, but now Detective Gordon is bored so he stops by outside the police station in the middle of the night, just to see if everything is all right. Buffy is doing fine, but she is a bit uncertain about her detecting abilities, and something big is waking her up at night with its "scrabbling at the windowpane." But now two kindergarten children are missing (have run away) and it will take all of Buffy and Gordon's skills to solve the puzzle of where they went.

Vande Velde, Vivian *SQUIRREL IN THE HOUSE*

Illus. by Steve Björkman 72p. Holiday House 2016 \$15.95 ISBN 978-0-8234-3633-0; \$6.99 (pbk)
ISBN 978-0-8234-3877-8

Sequel to *8 Class Pets + 1 Squirrel ÷ 1 Dog = Chaos* but it is not necessary to have read the first title. The squirrel, Twitch, enjoys "educating" the dog, Cuddles, but with snow blowing into his usually comfortable home in the tree, he decides to use the squirrel entrance (the chimney) and visit the warm house. While Twitch believes his welcome is heartfelt and polite, he does not realize he is not welcome at all. Chaos ensues, and after Twitch leaves he finds the younger boy walking away in the snow without any of the usual body covering for outside. He enlists Cuddles help to get the people to follow them to the boy, and kids will love Cuddles trick to get outside. All ends well. The type is a little more dense than most early chapter books, but the numerous illustrations and only 72 pages will draw in readers. Only 1 2-page spread is without even a tiny illustration.

Zemke, Deborah *THE CURSE OF EINSTEIN'S PENCIL*

138p. Dial Books (Penguin Random House) 2017 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-4155-3; \$7.99 (pbk)
ISBN 978-0147513137

(Bk 2 about Bea Garcia - Bk 1 is *My Life in Pictures*) The big geography test is coming and Judith Einstein asked Bea to be her partner, but there is so much memorizing and Bea keeps turning to drawing. She thinks that if she uses Einstein's pencil, the answers will flow out of it, but that doesn't happen. Bea ponders if the act of picking up Einstein's pencil after it fell on the floor is stealing or not, and she is joyful when Judith is eager for Bea to use her drawing in the contest, for extra points.

Nonfiction Picture Books

Alexander, Kwame *ANIMAL ARK: Celebrating our Wild World in Poetry and Pictures*

Photos by Joel Sartore unp. National Geographic 2017 \$15.99 ISBN 978-1-4263-2768-1

Forty photos by Joel Sartore with poetry (in haiku format for the most part) by Kwame Alexander implore young readers and their families to love and care about the amazing variety of animals in our world. Beautiful.

Asim, Jabari ***PREACHING TO THE CHICKENS: The Story of Young John Lewis***

Illus. by E. B. Lewis unp. Nancy Paulsen Books (Penguin Random House) 2016 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-399-16856-7

As a young boy, John Lewis was put in charge of the chickens. The family said, "work hard and put your trust in God." John took very good care of the chickens, and since he planned to be a preacher when he grew up, he practiced preaching to them as well. A good snapshot of the childhood of a man who would become a U. S. Congressman.

Becker, Helaine ***LINES, BARS AND CIRCLES: How William Playfair Invented Graphs***

Illus. by Marie-Éve Tremblay unp. Kids Can Press 2017 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-77138-570-1

A picture book biography of William Playfair and how his ambition for fame and fortune did not happen. How his invention of line, bar, and circle graphs came about (he didn't have enough details to use numbers), and were finally accepted years after his death.

Christelow, Eileen ***ROBINS! HOW THEY GROW UP***

48p. Clarion Books (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-44289-4

A look at two young robins from nest to independence, includes some humor and bits of information young readers will want to know. On the tough side, one egg in their nest is eaten by a squirrel before the parent returns, and later a fledgling brother is picked off by a hawk (with a shriek). While that is part of life, it could be helpful for you to know ahead of time.

Kaner, Etta ***ANIMALS DO, TOO!: How They Behave Just Like You***

Illus. by Marilyn Faucher unp. Kids Can Press 2017 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-77138-569-5

The author asks a question, "Do you like to dance?" The next two-page spread talks about an animal that does it too – in this case the honeybee – and includes a paragraph on why. A brief paragraph of additional information on each animal is included at the back of the book.

Tekavec, Heather ***DIFFERENT? SAME!***

Illus. by Pippa Curnick unp. Kids Can Press 2017 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-77138-565-7

The author looks at a group of animals and mentions one different aspect of each – then says, "Look closer now, they all have ____!" (whiskers, shells, wings, etc.) A challenge to the reader or listener to look at differences and similarities. A two-page spread at the back of the book discusses animal characteristics. You can ask the children to name other animals that have similarities and differences.

Fiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Allen, Crystal ***THE WALL OF FAME GAME***

261p. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-234236-2

Mya (9) is in 4th grade, and not planning to compete in the Wall of FAME game. However, her not-friend Naomi continues to bully and challenges Mya to a bet as to which of them will win the game. Her best friend Connie Tate helps Mya get back on track and realize that the Wall of FAME is special, not something people bet on but something on which to try one's best, for the sense of accomplishment. The F.A.M.E. stands for: "For All My Efforts" and it has been a fourth grade tradition for years.

Angleberger, Tom ***ROCKET AND GROOT: Keep On Truckin'***

267p. Marvel Press (Disney Book Group) 2017 \$13.99 ISBN 978-1-4847-8141-8

(Rocket and Groot, Bk 2) Starts out with black, purple and white but by page 29 the illustrations on every page are full color. They are out of gas and land on a planet called HappyHappyFunFun, but things are not good there. It turns out the safe driving program for the planet was altered after the Central Computer accidentally downloaded a car chase movie marathon instead of the self-driving car program update. All the vehicles now just try to crash into each other and run down anyone outside. And now all the lizard-like aliens are living underground. Rocket and Groot must save the planet in order to get the fuel they need. Silly, crazy, and outrageous. How to draw Groot included in the back.

Arnold, Elana K. ***A BOY CALLED BAT***

Illus. by Charles Santoso 192p. Walden Pond Press 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-244582-7

Bat, Bixby Alexander Tam, is in third grade, and loves animals. On the autism spectrum, he dislikes loud noises and has his own way of organizing his clothes. One day his mom, a veterinarian, was late coming home – because she had a baby skunk with her. Its mother had been accidentally hit on the road and she is going to care for it until it is old enough to go to a wild animal rescue center. But Bat bonds with the kit and is determined to take such good care of him that he will not need to go to the rescue center. A sensitive look at the ins and outs for a boy with autism, this includes good sized type and occasional illustrations.

Avi ***THE PLAYER KING***

195p. Atheneum Books (Simon & Schuster) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-3768-4

Based on a true story: It is 1486 in England, Brother Simonds finds an orphan boy, Lambert Simnel, working in a foul tavern, and takes him away. Now he is to learn how to behave as a king, for he is the lost prince destined to be King Edward the Sixth, of England. Lambert is befuddled and lost, he not only must learn new behaviors but also reading, writing, math, and the history of "his" family. Short chapters and Lambert's growth from tavern boy to king will catch the interest of readers of Avi's other medieval novels.

Bertman, Jennifer Chambliss ***THE UNBREAKABLE CODE***

343p. Henry Holt (Macmillan Pub. Group) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-62779-116-8

Sequel to *Book Scavenger*: Emily and James are worried about Mr. Griswold, he is unusually quiet and reclusive. Their teacher, Mr. Quisling, is acting strangely. When they hear about an Unbreakable Code that has a curse attached to it, they both work hard to solve it. Good puzzles and challenges for readers, with more books likely in the future.

Eliopoulos, Chris ***COSMIC COMMANDOS***

185p. Dial (Penguin Random House) 2017 \$13.99 ISBN 978-1-101-99448-1

Full color graphic novel. Jeremy is irritated by having an identical twin brother, Justin. Justin cleans his room, keeps things in order, does his homework – Jeremy waits until the last minute for everything. Then one morning Jeremy finds a secret decoder ring in the cereal box, and everything changes. When the biggest bully in the school, Cody Smalls (who is smaller than Jeremy), tries to take the ring, he becomes a giant and suddenly Jeremy becomes a real Cosmic Commando – like the characters in their favorite video game. Jeremy then fights a small robot, a bigger robot, a giant jello-like creature and more, all are creatures from the game. When he can, his brother Justin, who has been reading the Cosmic Commander help book, gives him suggestions on what to do. Jeremy continues to refuse to let Justin wear the ring. But Jeremy will need help with the final encounter.

English, Karen ***TROUBLE NEXT DOOR***

Illus. by Laura Freeman 139p. Clarion Books 2016 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-544-28306-0

Fourth book in “The Carver Chronicles” series, they can be read separately. In this title Calvin discovers his elderly neighbors are moving. He will miss playing with their grandchildren when they visit, but worse is that the school bully, Harper, is moving in! Calvin comes up with a quick plan for avoiding being seen by Harper, until his dad invites Harper to join them at the movies. Over time Calvin realizes that Harper is struggling in dealing with many things. He is in foster care and is hoping his mom can come and get him soon. To quote Calvin, re: Harper, p. 106, “sometimes you just don’t know what a person is all about, at all.” There is quite a bit packed into this small novel.

Freeman, Martha ***EFFIE STARR ZOOK HAS ONE MORE QUESTION***

213p. Simon & Schuster 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-7264-7

Effie Starr Zook has been sent to her aunt and uncle’s farm near a small town in Pennsylvania for the summer. Her parents are attempting to fly around the world in a solar airplane. Effie is out of her city element and is confused when the kids from the farm “next door” say they shouldn’t really talk to her since she is a Zook and they are Yoders. Now she is determined to figure out what is going on, no one will explain, but there is definitely a strain between the families. She visits the new bookstore in town, meeting its owner Mr. Obody, the only black person in town, the local museum, and the coffee shop hoping for information. And she asks lots of questions with little result. Readers will be drawn in to the mystery, enjoy the quirky characters, and how people are connected in this off-beat story.

Garlick, Nick ***STORM HORSE***

242p. Chicken House (Scholastic) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN

On Flip's 12th birthday, July 6, 1966 – the police come to his Amsterdam home to tell him his father is dead. His mother left three years ago and Flip must go to live with his strict uncle on Mossum, a remote island. He is at a loss until he rescues a horse in a storm, and now has new responsibilities and a friend. Loss, loneliness, and bullying all come into the story which ends on a hopeful note.

Gutman, Dan ***THE TITANIC MISSION***

218p. HarperCollins 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-223635-7

On their first mission (*The Lincoln Project*) the Flashback Four failed to get the photo Miss Z (Miss Zandergoth) wanted. She tries to fire them but they are certain they can handle the next assignment: she wants a photo of the Titanic sinking. Of course, they encounter problems and end up (fortunately) in 1912 New York, having missed the rendezvous point they needed in order to return. Readers will have to wait for the next book to find out if they are ever able to return to the present. The Titanic plus time travel will have great appeal to readers, this series is on the right track.

Hale, Nathan ***ONE TRICK PONY***

127p. Amulet Books 2017 \$14.95 ISBN 978-1-4197-2128-1

Graphic novel in black, white and yellow tells of caravan members Strata, her older brother Auger and friend Inby (son of the caravan mayor) who are searching for technology to scavenge and save before the aliens get it all. They happen upon a find that has remained hidden for many years. Lots of robots, and one robotic horse. Appears to be a standalone title.

Johnson, Terry Lynn ***SLED DOG SCHOOL***

193p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-544-87331-5

Matt (11) in danger of flunking math, must do an extra credit project to bring up his grade. He must start a business and keep track of profits and costs so he decides to offer lessons in running sled dogs, since it is one of his favorite things to do. He doesn't remember learning, his family has always run sled dogs, so he is overenthusiastic with his only student's first lesson. Fortunately, Tubbs comes back for the next lesson. Two students become friends, can Matt find the needed third student?

Johnson, Terry Lynn ***SURVIVORS DIARIES: Overboard!***

Illus. by Jovan Ukropina 95p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2017 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-544-97010-6

First title in a new series. Travis (11) his older sister and parents are on a whale-watching boat when they are hit by a rogue wave. Travis and the Captain's daughter, Marina Hernandez (12), are the only ones not to make it to the life boats. Floating on a flat piece of wood, they finally make land. Marina is knowledgeable about survival but was injured, maybe a broken wrist, she needs warmth and is not able to help. It is up to Travis to build a shelter, start a fire, and find water – he is not confident in his abilities. Includes tension for their survival and good survival information in the story and in the notes at the back of the book. Bk 2, *Avalanche!*, came out Jan. 2, 2018.

McGhee, Holly M. **MATYLDA, BRIGHT AND TENDER**

210p. Candlewick Press 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-8951-3

Sussy (10) and Guy have been fast friends since kindergarten. When a tragic accident leaves Sussy without Guy, she turns her focus to the leopard gecko they shared as a pet. Sussy feels the gecko Matylida is as desolate as she is since Matylida preferred Guy's attention. When "the stealing girl" inside her begins to convince Sussy to take things from the pet store for Matylida, we see the depth of her grief. Her parents are there for her but unsure how to help. Things come to a head when Sussy injures Matylida during a fit of despair. It is Guy's mother who helps Sussy handle her crisis.

Pilkey, Dav **DOG MAN**

220p. Graphix (Scholastic) 2016 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-545-58160-8

It turns out George and Harold drew another comic before Captain Underpants. It was *Dogman*. Now readers can enjoy this new series about Officer Knight and Greg the police dog who are involved in an explosion. The doctors have only one choice – to put the dog's head on the man's body. Hilarity ensues. Fans of Captain Underpants will find the same humor and lack of decorum in these two titles. Includes "how to draw" some of the characters at the back of the book.

Pilkey, Dav **DOG MAN UNLEASHED**

210p. Graphix (Scholastic) 2017 \$9.99 ISBN 978-0-545-93520-3

See above. Petey, a cat, is the bad guy in both stories and there is more impertinence. The next title in the series is *Dog Man: A Tale of Two Kitties* and it is now available. Book 4, *Dog Man and Cat Kid*, came out on 12/26/17.

Renner, Benjamin **THE BIG BAD FOX**

187p. First Second 2017 \$15.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-62672-331-3

Full-color graphic novel (watercolors). Try as he might, the fox is not scary and cannot catch a chicken (he gets beat up). The wolf gives him the idea to steal some eggs, hatch them, and then eat the chickens after they grow a bit. But the chicks imprint on him and are very cute. When the fox finally tells them he is a fox, they think that means they are foxes too. Clever and funny... and touching.

Sharp, N. L. **KEEPING CAPTAIN**

123p. Prairieland Press 2016 \$9.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-9759829-8-3

Set in Nebraska in the 1960s, it's the first day of summer before 6th grade, Carly and her Quarter Horse, Captain, are ready for some practice before beginning the barrel racing circuit in the area. Her best friend from just down the road, Luke, is also a competitor and they practice together. But now her parents have told her they are selling the farm and Captain, and moving to Lincoln to help her mother's elderly parents. Carly is determined to find a way to save Captain but her ideas are backfiring on her.

*** 2017 NCB, Young Adult Novel Award *** NE author & publisher

Snyder, Laurel **ORPHAN ISLAND**

269p. Walden Press (HarperCollins) 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-244341-0

When the boat comes, maybe once a year, a young child is in it. The oldest child on the island then must get in the boat and leave – for who know where. This year is it Jinny’s turn to care for the youngster, who they call Ess, and teach her how they live on the island. But it is hard, and she keeps thinking and worrying about where she will go when she leaves. What would happen if she didn’t get in the boat? A sequel is planned.

Torres, Jennifer **STEF SOTO, TACO QUEEN**

166p. Little, Brown & Co. 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-316-30686-7

Estefania "Stef " is in seventh grade. Stef wants her overprotective parents to start to trust her a little more. It is embarrassing when her former friend, Julia, calls her “Taco Queen” and hints that Stef smells like tacos because of her father’s food truck. She convinces her father to pick her up a few blocks away from the school, at one of the sites he sets up his truck. But when some new food codes are proposed, Stef wants to step in to defend their truck, Tía Perla. She loves art, sometimes it is easier to draw how she feels than to use words.

Watson, Tom **STICK CAT: Cats in the City**

219p. HarperCollins 2017 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-241102-0

(Stick Cat, Bk 2) This time the two friends must go out Edith’s window on the other side of the building to rescue Hazel, who has fallen into a big vat of bagel dough.

Winick, Judd **THE GREAT BIG BOOM** (HiLo series, Bk 3)

195p. Random House 2017 \$13.99 ISBN 978-0-385-38620-3

A full-color graphic novel. HiLo is a robot from another dimension, and he is working to save our world with the help of his friends – humans DJ and Gina along with some otherworldly beings. They must stop Razorwark who is bent on ruling the universe. Humorous and valiant – bright colors and cartoon-like illustrations will draw in readers. Book 4 is out in spring 2018.

Nonfiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Alexander, Kwame, Chris Colderley and Marjory Wentworth **OUT OF WONDER: Poems**

Celebrating Poets Illus. by Ekua Holmes 47p. Candlewick Press 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-8094-7

Twenty poems, each celebrating the style and content of a well-known poet, from Bashō, born in 1644, to Maya Angelou and current poets. Colorful, eye-catching illustrations add to the celebration. A couple of paragraphs each about the selected poets is included at the back of the book.

Bildner, Phil **MARTINA & CHRISSIE: The Greatest Rivalry in the History of Sports**

Illus. by Brett Helquist unp. Candlewick Press 2017 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7308-6

A brief biography of Chris Evert and her dominance in tennis, and a brief biography of Martina Navratilova, including the fact that the cold war was going strong. Then the author focuses on Martina's efforts to improve her play and how she began to beat Chris. This is notable that, with all the sports in history to choose from, the author believes this rivalry was the greatest. Includes a list of dates at the back and what they each were doing at that time.

Brown, Martin ***LESSER SPOTTED ANIMALS: The Coolest Creatures You've Never Heard Of***
53p. Scholastic 2017 \$18.99 ISBN 978-1-338-08934-9

Introduces 23 lesser known animals to the reader. The author states that most animal books include the same culprits each time: elephants, tigers, etc. It is time for kids to read about the numbat, the dagger-toothed flower bat, as well as the southern right whale dolphin. Each two-page spread includes some known facts, a large illustration, and a quirky fact. Animal lovers will find it fascinating.

Eszterhas, Suzi ***MOTO AND ME: My Year as a Wildcat's Foster Mom***
40p. Owlkids Books 2017 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-77147-242-5

The author is a wildlife photographer and she was spending a few months in Kenya in a tented camp when a ranger came by and asked her to raise a wild serval kitten who had been separated from his parents. This is the photo essay of Suzi and Moto's story. Moto is returned to the wild, as promised, but not before he steals Suzi and the readers' hearts.

Markle, Sandra ***THE SEARCH FOR OLINGUITO: Discovering a New Species***
40p. Millbrook Press 2017 \$30.65 (PLB) ISBN 978-1-5124-1015-0

Recognized as the first "new" carnivore found in the western hemisphere in 35 years, the author tells of what all was involved in realizing there was a separate species and the steps needed to verify its existence.

McCormick, Patricia ***SERGEANT RECKLESS: The True Story of the Little Horse Who Became a Hero*** Illus. by Iacopo Bruno unp. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-229259-9

The front endpapers carry headlines about the outbreak of war in Korea. The story begins with a hungry little horse and the U.S. Marines who fed her. They had a new cannon at the top of the hill, which they had nicknamed "reckless" rifle. The shells were heavy and the men were exhausted from carrying them up the hill. Maybe the little mare could do it. After some training, using an apple, chocolate, a coca cola as rewards, she was ready to go. They named her Private Reckless and she worked hard for them. She also had her quirks that children will love to learn about. The author does a great job of giving a sense of war without being too frightening.

Paquette, Ammi-Joan & Laurie Ann Thompson ***TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE***
176p. Walden Pond Press (HarperCollins) 2017 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-241879-1

Just what the title says. It is divided into categories and three stories are told of plants or animals that fit the category – two are true and one is not. My only disappointment was one category used the tree octopus as its lie – I thought that it was rather well known, maybe I am wrong.

Thornhill, Jan ***THE TRAGIC TALE OF THE GREAT AUK***
44p. Groundwood Books 2016 \$18.95 ISBN 978-1-554988655

Well-written and illustrated, this is the story of the extinction of a sea bird. First giving basic information on how the great auk lived, what its lives were like; the author concludes with the birds' extinction. July of 1844 the last live great auk was seen, and killed.

New Titles in Popular Series

Early Chapter Books

Cronin, Doreen ***DARK SHADOWS: Yes, Another Misadventure*** (The Chicken Squad, Bk 4)
Illus. by Stephen Gilpin 115p. Simon & Schuster 2017 \$12.99 ISBN 978-1-4814-5049-2

Dirt, Sugar, Poppy, & Sweetie, their mother Moosh and J.J. the rescue dog travel to the farm for a family reunion with Moosh's family. When Sweetie sneaks away to the car to get some jellybeans (her favorite) she doesn't have her glasses and a large dark shadow appears asking questions. All Sugar can see is a "large speckled chicken with a wide face, enormous eyes" challenging her. He says he is cousin Befrizzle. The four chicks are soon investigating the mystery of Befrizzle (there is something not quite right about this large cousin) as well as hunting for Poppy's missing shoe. Sugar's request for items to help examine things and the reply that they have none of those things will bring some chuckles. Humor and determination abound.

DiCamillo, Kate ***EUGENIA LINCOLN AND THE UNEXPECTED PACKAGE***
Illus. by Chris Van Dusen 96p. Candlewick Press 2017 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-7881-4

(Tales from Deckawoo Drive, #4) The tough, no-nonsense Eugenia Lincoln receives a package containing an ... accordion! Why? Who sent it? She calls the company to return it but they say she must keep it and will send it back to her if she tries to return it. Coincidentally, a man stops by the house and one of his many skills is to teach people to play the accordion. Baby Lincoln, her sister, suggests she learn a song. Eugenia is completely out of her normal mindset – and finally she gives it a try. (Everyone needs some fun now and then.)

Fiction for Grades 2 – 5 or so:

Vernon, Ursula ***GIANT TROUBLE*** (Hamster Princess, Bk 4)
213p. Dial Books (Penguin) 2017 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-399-18652-3

Another adapted fairy tale as the author has been doing with this series. The one is a play on Jack and the Beanstalk, with magic beans, a goose, Strings: a music-playing hamster-harp (called a harpster), and a giant. Harriet is happy to rescue them all, if she can manage it, with some help from her best

friend Wilbur and her battle quail Mumfrey. Humorous and clever with a couple unexpected turns, and fractions show up occasionally. (p.182) as Harriet is fond of them.



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