

2021 | The White Ravens

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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Stiftung
Internationale Jugendbibliothek

IMPRESSUM

The White Ravens 2021

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#ravenoftheday #wrlist2021

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PREFACE

With great pleasure, we present to you the 2021 edition of our annual catalogue »The White Ravens«.

This year's cover features a versatile raven, whose open wings provide plenty of space for a flock of young readers to enjoy their books.

This picture was created by Nahid Kazemi. She is the illustrator of »Over the Rooftops, Under the Moon«, a book that was selected for the »White Ravens 2020«.

We are delighted and grateful that publishers, institutions, and organisations, as well as authors and illustrators, have found ways – despite the pandemic-related adversities of the past one-and-a-half years – to continue supporting the International Youth Library with donation and review copies of their new publications.

Thanks to their support, we are able to present the 2021 edition of the »White Ravens« catalogue, the most important annual publication of the International Youth Library. It aims to promote quality in children's book publishing and has become an increasingly useful tool for anyone interested in looking beyond national borders. This year, the »White Ravens« contain a selection of 200 notable children's and young adult books from 54 countries published in 38 languages.

Selecting the books for the »White Ravens« list is one of the tasks of our language and children's book specialists. Throughout the year, they set aside new publications that catch their attention and strike them as being noteworthy. Some of these works are then selected for recommendation to an international audience. Books are chosen for the list based on the universal relevance of the themes they address, their literary and pictorial qualities, or their innovative approaches or design.

Our library staff have long relied on various means to acquire a well-grounded overview of the topics, trends, and people involved in current international children's and young adult literature: They read new publications in the original languages, visit important international book fairs, scout and gather information, maintain contact with publishing houses, institutions, organisations, and other experts. In addition, they also engage in conversation with the research fellows at the International Youth Library, foreign scholars who have a profound knowledge of the literature of their home countries.

The library's in-house staff members in Munich cover many literary regions, and freelance readers and advisors are charged with monitoring and tending to further languages and countries. The »White Ravens« catalogue thus presents a unique

selection of 200 books that cover a highly diverse range of voices. Its international nature results from the efforts of approximately twenty children's and young adult book experts, who are tasked with sifting through the thousands of books received annually by the International Youth Library.

As usual, we publish the »White Ravens« prior to the Frankfurt Book Fair, which after last year's interruption, can fortunately take place on site in 2021. The International Youth Library will once again have its own booth there to present its many activities and – last but not least – this new edition of the »White Ravens«.

In addition to the printed catalogue which you can pick up in Frankfurt or order directly from us in Munich, we also offer a digital version which can be downloaded as a PDF file from our website.

In addition to being featured in the catalogue, the reviews, bibliographical data, and book covers are also available in the »White Ravens« database on whiteravens.ijb.de/list.

For decades now, all recommended books have been put on display in hard copy at the International Youth Library's booth at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. This tradition allows booth visitors to

peruse the books at leisure, leafing through their pages and exploring their stories and illustrations. We look forward to having this opportunity again and hope to see you in Bologna in 2022.

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

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

Dr. Christiane Raabe
Director of the International Youth Library
September 2021

1



Muḥaīdalī, Nabīha (Mheidly, Nabiha) (text)
Zahr-ad-Dīn, Ḥassān (Zahreddine, Hassan) (illus.)
al- Mauḡa allatī ra'at al-baḥr
(al-mawjat alati ra'at al-bahr)
(*The wave that saw the sea*)
Bairūt: Dār al-Ḥadā'iq (Al-Hadaek), 2020. – [38] p.
ISBN 978-614-439-189-1

Sea | Wave | Non-conformism |
Meaning of life | Zest for life | Picture book

A small wave in the middle of the ocean has had enough of staying in sync with the other waves, always drifting along in their monotone swaying and surging. But its wish to rebel and break away remains unfulfilled, until one day something completely new and unexpected happens. Driven on by the wind, the little wave moves faster and faster, rising ever higher, until at last it rushes up to the beach, spuming and splashing across the sand, where a little girl laughs delightedly at its cooling wetness. To accompany the story by the renowned writer Nabiha Mheidly about a nonconformist little hero who wants to break with convention and go its own way, the illustrator Hassan Zahreddine – who is known for his artful graphic work – has created highly aesthetic woodcuts reduced to the bare essentials. They sit upon a sand-coloured background, sparingly coloured with pale blue watercolours. This harmonious triad goes very well with the equally gentle and lyrical tone of the imaginative story. (Age: 5+) [AH]

2



Hapeeva, Vol'ha (Hapeyeva, Volha) (text)
Ivanova, Nasta (illus.)
Адна шкарпэтка і іншыя гісторыі
(Adna shkarpetka i inshya historyi)
(*A sock – and other stories*)
Minsk: Halijafy 2020. – 73 p.
ISBN 978-985-7209-66-8

Philosophy | Existence | Society | Social norms |
Short story

A snail decides to become a yogi and wonders how it can achieve this – thanks to, or despite, its own state of mind. A young girl goes to battle with the clock and shows, with her own idiosyncratic interpretation of clock-time, just how creative mathematics can be. A sock asks itself whether rules and traditions must always remain constant, and whether, along with the usual pair-of-socks model, there might just be one for single socks. The well-known Belarusian writer, poet, and translator Volha Hapeyeva tells these short, sparkling philosophical tales with open endings and endows both animals and inanimate objects with very human sensibilities. Funny and tragic at once, they highlight the eccentricity of social conventions and the wonderful quirkiness of some character traits. The mischievous spirit inherent in Hapeyeva's stories is aptly emphasized in the illustrations by Nasta Ivanova. (Age: 5+) [KW]

3



Aleksandrova, Petja (Alexandrova, Petya) (text)
Angelova, Nevena (illus.)

Koj pripka za ribka

(Koy pripka za ribka)

(Who'll rush out for the fish)

[Sofija]: Izdatelstvo Ina, 2020. – [17] p.

ISBN 978-954-9328-51-6

[Animals](#) | [Helpfulness](#) | [Fishing](#) | [Friendship](#) | [Picture book](#)

Susana the Cat is hungry! She goes to the pantry, but it is nearly bare: nothing but lentils, soup, noodles ... What she wouldn't do for a delicious fish! And it's much too far and too dangerous to go down to the river alone. How lucky that Charlie the Dog comes along and offers to bring her a fish from the river. Once there, though, he needs the assistance of an otter; and soon Charlie has a pile of fish, but he needs the help of Mama Goose and her goslings to carry them back to Susi. Together all the new friends enjoy a meal fit for a king. Petya Alexandrova relates this small and subtle story as a rhymed chain narrative in which each character depends upon the help of others in order to resolve the problem with the fish. The story is depicted in appealing illustrations by Nevena Angelova, combining elements of collage and water-colours. The picture book was nominated for the Bulgarian children's literature prize, »Magical Pearls,« which is awarded by a jury of children. (Age: 3+) [KW]

4



Canev, Javor (Canev, Yavor) (text)

Silvăr i vampirite

(Silver and the vampire)

Ruse: Gaiana, 2020. – 156 p.

ISBN 978-619-7354-93-5

[Cat](#) | [Vampire](#) | [Defense](#) | [Fantasy fiction](#)

Maja and Alex have adopted Silver, a cat from their grandmother's village. When they return to the village with Silver on holiday, strange things begin to happen. At first wolves are suspected of being in the area, but soon it becomes clear there are real vampires about. When the vampires gather in the grandmother's garden, Silver wards off their attacks, causing them to burn up. Silver is one of that region's silver cats whose fur contains silver threads that are mighty weapons against vampires. With an incredibly exciting build-up of narrative tension that keeps the young reader in the dark about what is really happening in the village, Yavor Canev creates a wonderful fantasy story for children. Just a few plot elements suffice to create a thrilling effect. Occasionally the short chapters offer flashbacks that relate the sinister events from different perspectives, including that of Silver. In the end, the cat remains behind in the village to protect the inhabitants from further mischief. (Age: 9+) [KW]

5



Crusellas, Quim (text)
Gubianas, Valentí (illus.)

Els gegants

(The giants)

Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat (PAM), 2020. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-84-9191-105-0

Giant | Picture book

It's well known that dinosaurs disappeared from the Earth in part due to their large size. But who knows that giants faced a similar fate? In times long past they were gawked at yet also feared, because they caused literally giant problems for the much smaller-scaled world of human beings. Every double page of this picture book introduces a different kind of giant. For example, the Minuet Giant loved to dance, but reliably trampled on people's feet in the process. The Sleep Giant's tired body sometimes squashed people's houses. The Giant of the Quiet Winds spread panic as her flatulence fogged up the better part of a village. The funny mini-portraits Quim Crusellas has created are effectively paired with Valentí Gubianas's very colourful, lively pictures. One can see how unbelievably space-consuming and clumsy the giants were and that it is perhaps better they only live on in people's stories. »Els gegants« is a very fun picture book to read out loud and to inspire inventing more giants! (Age: 4+) [JW]

6



Vera, Ivan (text)

Àunia. L'anhel de llibertat d'una noia ibèrica

(Àunia. An Iberian girl's desire for freedom)

Barcelona: Akiara books, 2021. – 359 p.

ISBN 978-84-17440-86-2

Iberians <people> | Gender role | Emancipation | Freedom | Self-determination | History 3rd century BC

Little is known about the history of the Iberians, who were a tribal group inhabiting the East and South of the Iberian Peninsula in prehistoric and early historic times. Young author Ivan Vera (b. 1998) builds the foundations for his novel on established facts about the era, such as the Second Punic War between the Romans and the Carthaginians, or the Greek colonial settlements on the Mediterranean coast, as well as on his own scientific research. Enriched with elements and motifs from Greek mythology and Tolkienesque fantasy universes, this is a rewarding literary work about self-determination and heteronomy. The protagonist of this lively and gripping book is Àunia, a brave, enterprising, adventurous young huntress and bowwoman. Àunia resists the role she is expected to play as a woman and fights not only for her individual freedom, but also for the freedom of her people, who are threatened from external powers and influences. (Age: 12+) [JW]

7



Gao, Peicong (Ko, Adeline) (text/illus.)

Sheng ri kuai le

(Happy birthday)

Hong Kong: Zheng xiang pin ge jiao yu guan (Sowgood! Positive Education Centre), 2020. – [34] p.

(Series: Zheng xiang pin ge jiao yu guan; 01)
ISBN 978-988-13909-5-0

[Hong Kong | Wan Chai district |](#)
[Birthday present | Picture book |](#) [Wimmelbook](#)

On her birthday, Yuanyuan goes out with her Mom to buy a cake. She is looking forward to her Dad coming home from work early, but he says he has to work overtime. The reader, however, can discover Dad in the cleverly arranged details of each »wimmel picture«: he is close by, shopping for birthday presents. Their different routes serve as a pretext for introducing Wan Chai, the oldest but rapidly changing district of Hong Kong, with its famous streets, historic buildings, and unique atmosphere. Meanwhile a different father can be discovered on his way home: a house painter living in the same building. In the end, this story of two fathers holds a nice birthday surprise for Yuanyuan, a less pleasant surprise for her parents, and a riddle for the attentive reader to solve. Adeline Ko, a picture book author, illustrator, and publisher, received outstanding recognition at the 5th Feng Zikai Chinese Children's Picture Book Awards and a Hong Kong Picture Book Award for her picture books with a special Hong Kong flavour. (Age: 4+) [LO]

8



Chen, Shige (text)

Li, Qingyue (illus.)

Yi ge mi lu shi cai yu jian de guo jia he yi qun qing xing shi zuo meng de meng xiang jia

(A country one will only find by getting lost and a group of dreamers who only dream when sober)

Nanchang: Er shi yi shi ji chu ban she ji tuan (21st Century Publ. Group), 2020. – 266 p.
ISBN 978-7-5568-5214-7

[Country | Dream | Philosophy](#)

Born in the 1980s, young poet and writer Chen Shige offers his readers a feast of creativity and inspiration with this new book. Readers follow the story's narrator on his journey to marvelous, non-existent places, such as the invisible country, the potato country, the grass country, or the windwheel country. However, for the author they are not non-existent at all, since he believes that »every fairy tale is true« and that they point toward a new way of explaining and understanding the world and one's own self. In one of the episodes in this book, an old man believes so completely in the world he constructs in his mind that he goes out to look for it. For Chen Shige, each fairy tale is also a philosophical metaphor, because everyone is king/queen of his/her own country. Chen is the talented author of books such as »Feng ju zhu de jie dao« (The street where wind lives) and »Tong hua zhi shu« (The book of fairy tales). He is a winner of the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature and other children's books prizes. (Age: 8+) [FW, ZX]

9



Fang, Weiping (ed.)
Gao, Jing (illus.)
Shi guang de zhong bai. Gei hai zi de 100 shou tong shi
(*A pendulum of time. 100 poems for children*)
Hefei: An hui shao nian er tong chu ban she
(Anhui Juvenile & Children's Publishing House),
2020. – 184 p.
ISBN 978-7-5707-0610-5

Poetry | Anthology

The spirit of this anthology of 100 poems by 46 well-known contemporary Chinese authors, upcoming talents, and children, is expressed in one of its poems: »Lend me a book that will always amaze me... give me a childhood that will not wither«. In the preface, the editor directly addresses the »young reader« and encourages reflection on the wonder of poetic language and its power to discover the world anew. The chapters, arranged according to topics, are headed by poetic titles and mottos: »The poetry of the earth: The products of the earth provide nourishment to our body, the poetry of the earth gives us a dwelling for our souls.« Adults are only expected to »share moments« of their children's reading adventure at the end of each chapter, where professional guidance for selected poems is offered. Compiled by Fang Weiping, one of China's most distinguished and productive children's literature researchers and critics, this is the best collection of Chinese children's poetry in recent years. (Age: 3+) [LO]

10



Mu Ye (text)
Kan jian lu
(*To see the deer*)
Beijing: Jie li chu ban she (Jieli Publishing House),
2020. – 203 p.
ISBN 978-7-5448-6623-1

Deer | Nature | Life | Short story

Mr. Deer sets off on a journey with a tall hat on his head, carrying just a small suitcase. On the way, he not only sees fantastic things and happenings, but also becomes part of a fantastic world himself. He witnesses the beauty of flowers, leaves, birds and clouds. He helps save an orphan fox's name from being forgotten. He works a miracle for a little pebble who wants to believe that it can be more than a pebble. He encounters a sorrowful chair who learns that its dreams can never come true, a baby elephant whose birthday wish is to never grow tusks. Mr. Deer's journey takes readers back to the time when in the eyes and hearts of the people everything in the world was still alive and every name was cherished. This collection of short stories has a charming flavour due to its idiosyncratic combination of prose and poetry, joyfulness and sentimentality. Mu Ye is the pseudonym of 1985-born writer and translator Huang Danping. She is the author of »Fei niao wu yu« (The book of flying birds). (Age: 6+) [FW, ZX]



11

Ye, Guangqin (text)

Tu gou lao hei chuang huo le

(That black dog stirs up trouble)

Beijing: Beijing shao nian er tong chu ban she
(Beijing Juvenile and Children's Publ. House),
2020. – 252 p.

(Series: Hao zi Ya ya de gu shi)

ISBN 978-7-5301-6025-1

[Dog](#) | [Girl](#) | [Growing up](#) | [History 1950s](#)

After »Hao zi da ye qi wan le« (Master Rat gets up late) and »Hua mao san ya shang fang le« (The cat Sanya climbed onto the roof), also the third children's book of well-known writer Ye Guangqin is characterized by the literary language and an authentic perspective on childhood. Little Yaya continues her mischief and explorations in this new semi-autobiographical story, in which we see and feel ordinary day-to-day life in mid-twentieth century Beijing from her perspective. There is that black dog, Laohei, in Yaya's house, who keeps on stirring up trouble through his innocent vivaciousness, not unlike the little girl herself. When Yaya starts primary school, she finds herself stepping into a wider world. But Laohei has to be sent back to its rural home when it grows bigger and becomes unfit for urban life, and so, Yaya has to say goodbye to a phase of her childhood, too. Before writing books for children, Ye was renowned for her novels and essays that captured the flavour of Beijing. (Age: 7+) [FW, ZX]



12

Zhang, Qiusheng (text)

momolu (illus.)

Kong long ma ma fu dan

(Mummy Dinosaur broods)

Beijing: Zhong guo shao nian er tong chu ban she
(China Children's Press & Publ. Group), 2020. –
147 p.

(Series: Ming jia xin zuo, Xiao ba zhang tong hua shi)

ISBN 978-7-5148-5858-7

[Animals](#) | [Nature](#) | [Poetry](#)

This is a collection of 1939-born writer Zhang Qiusheng's »little-palm« poems for children (xiao ba zhang tong shi). About four decades ago, Zhang first created his »little-palm« stories (xiao ba zhang tong hua) and the style has since become a well-known trademark of the renowned writer. These works are named for their small size, no bigger than a child's palm. Most of them are about animals, nature, and children's everyday life, usually filled with gentle and heart-warming humour. In this collection, readers can find some of the writer's best poems for children alongside beautiful illustrations. In the preface, Zhang says that his stories and poems influence each other, because poetic rhymes go into his stories and story-like plots become part of his poems. Shanghai-based Zhang is the author of many children's books such as »Xiao ba zhang tong hua« (Little-palm fairy tales) and »Zhuo mu niao fen dui« (The »Woodpecker Squad«). He is a winner of the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature and many other children's book prizes. (Age: 4+) [FW, ZX]

13



You, Peiyun (Yu, Pei-yun) (text)
Zhou, Xianxin (Chou, Chien-hsin) (illus.)
Ai du ce de shao nian
(*The boy who loves reading books*)
Taipei: Man gong wen hua shi ye you xian gong si
(slowwork), 2020. – 161 p. | (Series: Lai zi Qing shui de
hai zi/Son of Formosa | ISBN 978-986-98573-0-7
Text Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, and Minnan

Taiwan | History 1930-1950 | Tsai Kun-lin
(b.1930) | Biography | Graphic novel

This biography of publisher Tsai Kun-lin simultaneously tells Taiwan's history from Japanese colonization to modern-day democracy. Tsai's childhood in the 1930s under Japanese rule, his experiences in World War II as a boy recruit, and the arrival of the Kuomintang are narrated from a child's guileless perspective in carefully composed dialogues by Yu Pei-yun, professor at National Taitung University's Graduate Institute of Children's Literature. The unpretentious pencil drawings by up-and-coming illustrator Chou Chien-hsin bring the atmosphere of those years to life. This volume ends with the year 1950, when Tsai finds himself sentenced to ten years in jail for attending a high school book club. The next three volumes of the series – illustrated in different techniques, styles, and colours – deal with Tsai's internment as a political prisoner, the era of his famous children's magazine »Prince«, and his activities in support of human rights. The book won the Children's and Youth Literature Award at the 2021 Taipei Book Fair. (Age: 12+) [LO]

14



Končić Trlek, Elizabeta (text)
Čižmek, Vanda (illus.)
Pošta za Li
(*Mail for Li*)
Zagreb: Hrvatsko društvo književnika za djecu i
mlade, 2020. – 144 p.
(Series: Biblioteka mala; Klub prvih pisaca)
ISBN 978-953-7190-99-6

Outsider | Being overburdened | Special needs |
Chaos | Thinking

An orphan named Li tries to cope with her life as an outsider. She lives with her adopted aunt, Nada, at the edge of a town in a former administrative building. She has a learning disability and travels to a distant school only to sit for exams. Other children bully Li because she wears her aunt's cast-off clothing. But the greatest problem is the confusion in her head. She can hardly keep her thoughts straight, and finds little room for new ones. Her aunt is preoccupied with her own neurotic thoughts and offers Li nothing but platitudes in the form of aphorisms she pins to the wall. Li finds Mr Sugartin at the grocery store or Ms Gabriela at the post office much more supportive. They each encourage Li to find an outlet for her inner life by expressing herself in pictures and stories. Elisabeth Končić Trlek succeeds in creating a moving portrait of a young woman. With great symbolic power she depicts how difficult it is to get along in the world when one's life setting and one's own mind create only obstructions. (Age: 12+) [KW]



15

Pongračić, Alma (text)

Vrca, Hana (illus.)

Mi (ni)smo sami

(We are [not] alone)

Zagreb: Kreativna Mreža, 2020. – 23 p.

ISBN 978-953-8244-25-4

[Dog](#) | [Animal shelter](#) | [Search](#) | [Home](#) | [Zest for life](#) | [Picture book](#)

«We are not alone» – says the title of this picture book. The dogs in this book can indeed lay claim to this truth for themselves, even though the slogan offers little more than words of encouragement and perseverance. In fact, they all live in an animal shelter, each waiting for the day when they will be taken home by a visitor. »We are not alone« is, at the same time, a nod to us humans. All around us there are many creatures who are hoping for a better life that we could make happen – one in which they are petted, played with, and taken for a walk. The illustrator Hana Vrca (b. 1990) has composed her persuasive picture book with just a few lines and spacious imagery. She makes use of a reduced spectrum of grey and black-and-white, setting small red and petrol highlights. Even the text by Alma Pongračić is minimalist and limits itself to short striking sentences. (Age: 3+) [KW]



16

Komára (i.e. Ilona Komárková) (text/illus.)

Králík je taky jenom člověk!!!

(A rabbit is also just a human!!!)

Praha: Euromedia Group, 2020. – [63] p.

(Series: Pikola)

ISBN 978-80-242-6444-8

[Rabbit](#) | [Pet](#) | [Humans](#) | [Perspective](#) | [Picture book](#)

In this highly entertaining picture book, a rabbit confidently and laconically recounts the story of its life: how it was raised by a dotty old rabbit breeder, to be given then one day to a pair of humans, and how it kept the household on its toes while it chased the vacuum cleaner around its zigzag course. The rabbit also tells of major events in its life such as moving house with the humans and their new offspring, and how it was given its own rabbit-sized gravestone at the end of its days. While the short, breezy text holds strictly to the nonchalant rabbit's perspective on the events, the illustrations offer, by contrast, a most amusing version of what really happened, as seen from the point of view of the humans. The illustrator Komára succeeds in teasing out the comedy found in ordinary situations of daily life in order to bring a smile to the faces of young and older readers alike. (Age: 4+) [KW]

CROATIAN
CZECH

Croatia
Czech Republic

17



Kudrnová, Jana K. (text)
Tomášková, Petra (illus.)
Jedna dvě v lese. Základy matematiky levou zadní
(*One, two in the woods. The basics of mathematics made easy-peasy*)
Brno: Host, 2020. – 77 p.
ISBN 978-80-275-0352-0

Mathematics | Forest | Non-fiction

Mathematics can be quite enjoyable, especially when it becomes apparent, as in this lovely children's book, where and when it can be helpful in any situation. For example, in the woods: for counting leaves, acorns and little animals; to measure the length of a branch or the length of a snail slime trail; for recognizing geometric shapes formed in a forked branch or spaces elsewhere. The book's seven chapters offer numerous suggestions for the playful use of mathematical elements such as repetition, order, numbers, arithmetic, geometry, or measurements. Included are problems and riddles, which children can solve in the outdoors or at home. For adults, there are additional tips at the end of each chapter on how to discover the basic principles of mathematics together with children. The many tiny illustrations of hedgehogs, birds, plants, trees, etc. that are strewn through the book's pages inspire and encourage the reader to count, measure and look a little more closely. (Age: 5+) [KW]

18



Nikkarin (i.e. Michal Menšík) (text/illus.)
Super Spellword Sága. Legenda o nekonečnu
(*Saga of the super-magical sword. The legend of eternity*)
Praha: Labyrint, 2019. – [126] p.
(Series: Labyrint komiks; 17)
ISBN 978-80-87260-79-1

Superhero | Saving the world | Fantasy fiction | Parody | Comic

A doughnut with a miserable stardust karma, a vain hipster magician, a tough barbarian warrior-woman, a magician's clever apprentice and a crazy quest to eliminate the doughnut and thus save the world from further adversity – all of these can be found in the »Super Spellword Sága« by Czech comic book artist Nikkarin. A magnificent parody of the fantasy genre, it exaggerates the genre's overloaded pathos where, as a rule, at least one of a multitude of worlds has to be saved and an end put to ugly undead, beasts, or mutants. Nikkarin upends the stereotypical fantasy plots – as found in books, films and computer games – by creating a hilariously slapstick yet thrilling parody that brings on a full arsenal of pop-culture allusions. With »Super Spellword Sága« younger comic fans can finally have their own Nikkarin book, one that is gloriously full of colour and glittering with magical stardust. (Age: 11+) [KW]



Tichý, František (text)
 Setinský, Stanislav (illus.)
Labyrint nedokončených setkání
(The labyrinth of interrupted encounters)
 Praha: Baobab, 2020. – 179 p.
 ISBN 978-80-7515-109-4

Adolescence | Homosexuality |
 Emotional burden | Suicide | Terezín | Ghetto |
 Concentration camp

Already in many previous books for young adults František Tichý has dealt with the lives of children in the Terezín ghetto and concentration camp. In »Labyrint nedokončených setkání« he now narrates polyphonically and along two different timelines the story of Pavel Lion, who lived in Terezín with his brother, and participants in a scouting programme in modern-day Prague. Two of the scouts are Marek, a Roma who lives in a home for boys and has thus experienced prejudice first-hand; and Filip, who has come out as homosexual to his friends and family and whose massive emotional burden is depicted here with harrowing intensity. When Marek finds Pavel's diary during an excursion to Terezín, the two timelines intersect, allowing the life experiences of all the boys to overlap. The »Labyrint« is dedicated to the real-life figures of Pavel Lion (1930-1944), who died at the hands of the National Socialists, and Filip Havlíček (1999-2014), who committed suicide out of shame and fear of discrimination as a homosexual. (Age: 13+) [KW]



Aakeson, Kim Fupz (adapt.)
 Grimm, Jacob / Grimm, Wilhelm (text)
 Andersen, Hans Christian (text)
 Various artists (illus.)
Der er engang. 7 eventyr i tiden
(Once upon now. 7 folk tales in the here and now)
 [København]: Gyldendal, 2020. – 93 p.
 ISBN 978-87-02-31503-5

Folk tale | Fairy tale | Adaptation

Kim Fupz Aakeson is a very prolific, if not »the« most prolific, author in Denmark. And he is a jack-of-all-trades. In »Der er engang«, he chooses seven Grimm and Andersen tales – of course seven, it has to be a fairy-tale number – and gives them a modern makeover. All the tales are accompanied by one illustration, each created by a different first-rate Danish illustrator. The pictures are as hip as the texts. Cinderella, for example, is no longer an unloved stepdaughter, but an au pair from the Philippines, who constantly gets dissed by the two children she looks after. Excuse the slang, but Kim Fupz Aakeson's Cinderella is full of teen jargon, which surprisingly enough does not sound forced. The book brings the tales into the present time and even allows readers to compare Kim Fupz Aakeson's modern version and the »original« Grimm and Andersen tales, because they, too, are included in this volume, accompanied by old illustrations. (Age 6+) [IG]

21



Filskov, Karen (text/illus.)

Det sner med fjer. Figurdigte om fugle
(*It's snowing with feathers. Concrete poems about birds*)

[Vordingborg]: Vild Maskine, 2020. – 34 p.
ISBN 978-87-7227-021-0

[Bird](#) | [Poetry](#) | [Picture book](#)

»Det sner med fjer« offers concrete poetry at its best. With her words, Karen Filskov sculpts a peregrine falcon and a swallow, a kiwi and a toucan, as well as a hoopoe and an emperor penguin. The texts describe the birds, accentuate their uniqueness and their beauty, but don't shy away from including behaviour that may disturb people – such as their hunting instincts. The images are graphical and uncluttered, the language precise and, at the same time, very poetic thanks to unusual metaphors and comparisons, as in the following verses: »Starling / you grow up together with your siblings in a nest-box / protected like a delicate instrument«. The design of the endpapers emphasises that words work like feathers: On the front endpapers, all the birds are depicted as mere silhouettes in darker blue on a light blue background; while on the back endpapers, they are adorned with their plumage. The peacock fans its green-purple tail, the flamingo is pink, and the swan wears a dazzling white coat. (Age: 6+) [IG]

22



Hegnhøj, Mette (text)

Espersen, Klara (illus.)

Ud og stjæle erantis

(*Being outside and stealing winter aconites*)

Frederiksberg: Dansk Lærerforeningens Forlag, 2020. – 55 p.

(Series: Min historie)

ISBN 978-87-7211-162-9

[Childhood memories](#) | [Growing up](#) | [Autobiography](#)

For many years, Dansk Lærerforening, the publishing house of the Danish Teachers' Association, has been developing innovative book formats, always collaborating with high-class artists. Besides the great »Billedroman« series, there is the »Min historie« series: autobiographical memories of childhood and youth. In »Ud og stjæle erantis« Mette Hegnhøj, whose poetic voice has been enriching Danish children's literature for more than ten years now, describes growing up in Thisted or digging up winter aconites, she talks about her family holidays, and her first trip alone to Copenhagen. In an associative way, she depicts her childhood as a cosy and safe time, yet also a time that held disappointments, experiences of loss, and feelings of estrangement – especially on the threshold to adulthood. The outstanding book has great aesthetic appeal with a very personal note by using photos, snippets, and drawings. At the same time, it offers a journey back in time to the 1980s, and reflects universal childhood experiences. (Age: 10+) [IG]

23



DeLange, Ellen (text)
Snoek, Connie (illus.)
De muur van meneer Mo
(*The wall of Mr. Mo*)
Hasselt [et al.]: Clavis, [2020]. – [26] p.
ISBN 978-90-448-3808-4

[Animals](#) | [Architecture](#) | [Diversity](#) | [Variety](#) |
[Creativity](#) | [Colour](#) | [Picture book](#)

Little Rhino Ella waves goodbye to her father, who heads to the village with a thick stack of design drawings and colour samples. Mr. Mo builds houses, but the grown-ups always choose a boring, grey-hued design, while children prefer all kind of colours. It makes Mr. Mo so sad that he stays home for a while, until one day he starts to build a wall – behind which he'll create an astonishing building with towers and arches. The children, who are all kinds of different animals, go help him paint it in bright colours. This artistic picture book celebrates the joy of bright colours. Many of the illustrations – true works of art – marvellously incorporate construction drawings, some even including measurements. Mr. Mo's facial expressions clearly show his emotional state. The book's words, images and design convincingly convey the message that the world is so much more beautiful when colour is used – and also that children are more sensitive to this truth and much more creative than adults! (Age: 5+) [TD]

24



De Leeuw, Mattias (text/illus.)
Een touw in de lucht
(*A rope in the air*)
Tielt: Lannoo, [2020]. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-94-014-6958-6

[Rope](#) | [Flying](#) | [Wordless book](#) | [Picture book](#)

In this wordless picture book, the readers follow a rope floating through the air and a dog on the ground following the rope. A swimmer on a high diving board grabs the end of the rope and takes off into the air. Superman also quickly grabs the rope so that now two people are hanging on it. They are not the last ones: a crane worker, a monkey and even a crook join them. Meanwhile, the chaos on the ground continues to grow. Several people and animals follow the rope, either on foot or in a vehicle. The rope flies over the city and over the zoo and even passes a fire. After much adventure, all people and animals are safely back on the ground. Mattias De Leeuw has a graceful, agile illustration style and his use of colour is highly creative. Large swaths of vivid colour show the environment, with details hinted at using a limited number of lines. The main story line is easy to follow, but there is still a lot to discover in the details. »Een touw in de lucht« is a charming and playful chain tale. (Age: 4+) [TD]

DUTCH

Belgium

25



Teirlinck, Nathalie (text)
Godon, Ingrid (illus.)
Strandjongen
(*Beach boy*)
Gent: miniMer, 2020. – 61 p.
ISBN 978-94-6393-162-5

Amnesia | Differentness | Friendship | Beach |
Memories

One day, early in the morning, a boy wakes up on the beach. He has lost his memory and does not know how he ended up there. An old man who is metal detecting on the beach invites him along. The boy joins the man, helps him search and gets a tent to spend the night on the beach. The next morning, the beach is packed with guests. The boy meets a girl who is playing with a ball on a rubber band. After some ne'er-do-wells destroy his makeshift house, he ultimately takes off with the old man on a bulldozer and both disappear into the night. This very successful story is based on a Flemish theatre performance. The questions that the boy asks the old man, and the relationship they develop, make »Strandjongen« a philosophical book addressing themes such as security and having a home, but also being different and the meaning of friendship. Ingrid Godon's illustrations in sober earth tones, including four folding pages, are true works of art. (Age: 7+) [TD]

26



Gladdines, Tim (text)
Koning Valentijn
(*King Valentine*)
Baarn: Marmer, 2020. – 217 p.
ISBN 978-94-6068-444-9

Brother | Siblings | Jealousy | Rivalry | Bullying |
Homosexuality | Suicide attempt

Benjamin is on vacation with his mother, his brother Valentine and his sister Nicolien. Valentine is three years older than Benjamin and very popular. Benjamin – not very socially adept – wants to be just like him. At Easter, the musical »Jesus Christ Superstar« is to be performed at school. Valentine auditions and gets the part of Jesus. Benjamin also participates in a second round of auditions and is given the role of Judas. But then, everything changes and Benjamin has to take the place of his brother. »Koning Valentijn« is a truly outstanding young adult novel that uses touching dialogue and a lot of humour to describe the special relationship between two brothers in a literary, sparkling way. The plot and lyrics of »Jesus Christ Superstar« are organically woven into the novel's plot, as the complex relationship between Jesus and Judas is projected onto that of the siblings. At the same time, the novel deals with the two boys' search for identity, their sexual orientation and the impact it has on their lives. (Age: 12+) [TD]

27



Heuvel, Pieter van den (text/illus.)

De verhuisdieren

(Animals on the move)

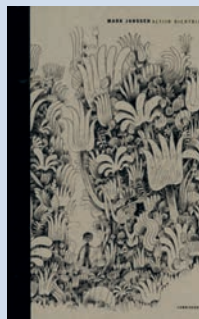
Haarlem: Gottmer, 2020. – [27] p.

ISBN 978-90-257-7205-5

[Animals](#) | [Moving house](#) | [Leporello](#) | [Picture book](#)

In this four-metre-long leporello, the pictures can be looked at individually or opened up to reveal a long procession of animals with all their belongings on their way to a new home. The animals take a leisurely stroll from a countryside setting to an urban area. We see a giraffe in spotty boots carrying a cat in its mouth and a moose with a piano on its back upon which a sloth slumbers. The drily dark-humoured conclusion places an exclamation mark at the end of the story: the monstrous foot of a much bigger animal threatens to stomp on all the animals. There is a lot of humour in the illustrations, drawn in dark pencil and coloured with watercolour. The rhyming sentences swirl across the pages. »De verhuisdieren« is Pieter van den Heuvel's children's book debut, a spectacular picture book full of detailed illustrations and funny things to discover that guarantees hours of viewing pleasure. (Age: 3+) [TD]

28



Janssen, Mark (text/illus.)

Altijd dichtbij

(Always nearby)

Rotterdam: Lemniscaat, [2020]. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-90-477-1264-0

[Grandmother](#) | [Death](#) | [Coping with grief](#) | [Nature](#) | [Nepal](#) | [Picture book](#)

The boy Babu is very sad and mourns his deceased grandmother. She told him that she would always be near him. He finds signs that give him hope of continued contact with her. He keeps discovering that a person you love is never completely gone. The picture book tells an evocative yet gentle story about bereavement, about Babu's great love for his grandmother and also that he misses her enormously. Focusing especially on experiences with the natural world, the book wonderfully explores the many ways you can experience a person's enduring love, even after they have passed away. The story is told in a literary way with an appealing, apt choice of words. The text is brief, yet more words are not necessary because the illustrations add another dimension. A trip he made to Nepal inspired Mark Janssen's detailed black-and-white pencil drawings. This is a warm and comforting story about dealing with the loss of a loved one. (Age: 5+) [TD]

29



Noort, Selma (text)

Koningskind*(King Solomon's daughter)*

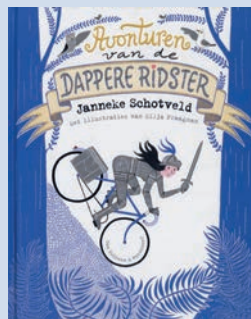
Amsterdam: Leopold, 2020. – 251 p.

ISBN 978-90-258-7948-8

Solomon <King> | Judgement | Justice

Fifteen-year-old Lydia gives birth to a girl, Zissel, fathered by King Solomon who is not only a wise but also a brutal ruler. Soon after, Lydia meets an old stonemason and decides to marry him. He dies, however, before their child, a boy, is born. At that moment, there are soldiers accompanying a noblewoman through the small settlement. She is also pregnant, but gives birth to a premature child who perishes. Without Lydia knowing it, it is decided that the two babies will be switched. The novel is well structured, with necessary time compressions, working towards the judgment that King Solomon will give as the noblewoman and Lydia both insist that they are the mother of the living child. By choosing not King Solomon but Zissel, his illegitimate daughter, as the protagonist, Selma Noort turns the spotlight on an ordinary girl. With its psychologically well-rounded characters and a thrilling, chilling plot, this unsettling story blends the atmosphere of a historical novel and a fairy-tale. (Age: 10+) [TD]

30



Schotveld, Janneke (text)

Praagman, Milja (illus.)

Avonturen van de dappere ridster*(The adventures of brave Ms. Knight)*

[Houten]: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 2021. – 87 p.

ISBN 978-90-00-37193-8

Fairy-tale character | Knight | Role expectations | Diversity

Ms Knight is brave, heroic and clever. Fearless and stubborn, she has stood up for others in the past. It quickly became clear that a special future lay ahead of her, as the bravest knight in the land. She accompanies a lion back to the zoo, brings an amorous baker and bicycle repairman together, and helps a bullied girl. Her strength lies in her uninhibited courage and the fact that she does not mince her words. This book of stories is packed with great wordplay and fun allusions. Every sentence sings. The contagious contemporary humour always has the upper hand. The stories are modern and medieval, contemporary and timeless: the protagonist has a sword and a mobile phone, and a modern bike instead of a horse. And when the lion escapes, she tells the police officer: »First talk and then shoot. When will you guys ever learn?« In this book with fresh and distinctive graphic-style illustrations, the author plays a brilliantly relaxed game with all conceivable conventions. (Age: 8+) [TD]

31



Vendel, Edward van de (text)
De Leeuw, Mattias (illus.)
Het bamboemeisje
(*The bamboo girl*)
Amsterdam: Querido, 2021. – 249 p.
ISBN 978-90-214-1483-6

Love | Secret | Parents | Inconstancy |
Fairy tale | Adaptation

An old bamboo cutter finds a little girl in the bamboo grove and takes her in with his wife, caring for her as if she were their own child. Jie, who is called Nayotake no Kaguya-hime, grows up with them and eventually is old enough to get married. She comes up with impossible assignments for the men who come to court her, so that she can reject all of them. But then she meets a boy who turns out to be the Emperor's son. She falls in love with him but cannot marry him because she has a secret she cannot reveal. For this book, Edward van de Vendel was inspired by a Japanese fairy tale from the ninth century. The story is told in a poetic, visual language, using striking comparisons. The feelings of Jie and her foster parents are vividly expressed. Mattias De Leeuw's many illustrations take their cue from old Japanese prints and calligraphy. Once again, author and illustrator show they are a remarkably attuned duo. Their words and images create an enchanting story about love. (Age: 10+) [TD]

32



Asphyxia (text/illus.)
Future girl
Sydney, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2020. – 371 p.
ISBN 978-1-76029-437-3

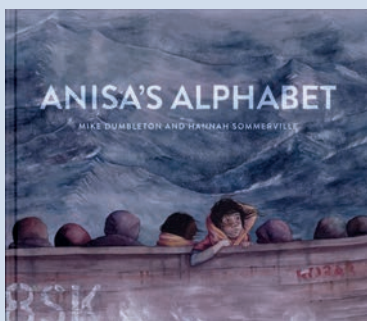
Deafness | Communication | Sign language |
Coming-of-age | Self-confidence | Diary |
Food shortage | Community gardening

Piper McBride, a talented artist, has been deaf since age three, but grew up oral, i.e. wearing a hearing aid, lip-reading, and speaking. When she meets Marley and his mother Robbie, a completely new world opens up for her. She is warmly welcomed into the Deaf community, learns Australian sign language, and starts to realise that her mother's insistence on Piper passing as »normal«, has hindered rather than helped her. Robbie also introduces the inquisitive teen to community gardening and growing wild food – activities that have been declared illegal. Piper is hooked. This powerful dystopian coming-of-age novel, set in a futuristic Melbourne during an environmental crisis, comes in the form of an exquisite art journal. Adorned with drawings, collages, splashes of paint, etc., the journal entries chronicle Piper's life and emotions as well as the goings-on in society. Through her creative use of language, Deaf author and activist Asphyxia makes Piper's experiences palpable and gives readers an eye-opening insight into the Deaf community. (Age: 12+) [CS]

DUTCH
ENGLISH

Netherlands
Australia

33



Dumbleton, Mike (text)
Sommerville, Hannah (illus.)

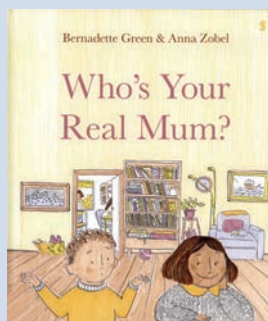
Anisa's alphabet

Rundle Mall, S.A.: MidnightSun Publishing,
2020. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-925227-57-4

War | Flight | Fear | Refugee camp | Poetry |
ABC book | Picture book

When war comes to their hometown, Anisa and her family have no choice but to grab everything they can carry and flee. Their perilous journey and hardships are presented in the form of an alphabet book. Much like in classic alphabet books, Anisa's travels unfold from A to Z in a sparse, rhythmical poem; yet unlike in those books, the events portrayed here are definitely not comical, but heart-breaking. Subdued shades of blue, grey, and brown dominate the enthralling watercolour illustrations. The artist tells the visual story partly through sequences of small pictures in graphic-novel style, and partly by focusing on a single moment captured in an oppressive double-spread image, such as the one showing Anisa and her mum lying squashed together in the bottom of a boat with dozens of other people. The corresponding text reads: »R is for ragged refugee, something I never wanted to be.« Even though this moving book makes readers feel the terror of war and flight, it ends on a hopeful note. (Age: 6+) [CS]

34



Green, Bernadette (text)
Zobel, Anna (illus.)

Who's your real mum?

Brunswick, Victoria: Scribble, 2020. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-925849-49-3

LGBTQ+ | Family | Same-sex parents |
Curiosity | Imagination | Picture book

When Nicholas comes over to Elvi's house for a play date, he has one pressing question for his friend: »[...] which one's your real mum?« He doesn't accept Elvi's reply »They're both my real mum« as a valid answer, so the cheeky brown-skinned girl starts coming up with ingenious clues that leave the boy increasingly annoyed. The more outlandish her explanations become – »she's the one who can pull a car with her teeth« or she »can clip a dragon's toenails while she's standing on her head...« – the more these imaginary scenarios enter the witty ink-and-marker illustrations. While Anna Zobel depicts the real-life world mostly in shades of yellow, brown, and grey, the fantasy elements are rendered in monochromatic bright blue hues and so clearly stand out. Both the absurd replies and the comical pictures make readers realise how pointless Nicholas's insistence on a clear-cut answer is. The imaginative book champions the love between a girl and her parents that (one wishes) is present in all families regardless of their structure. (Age: 4+) [CS]



35

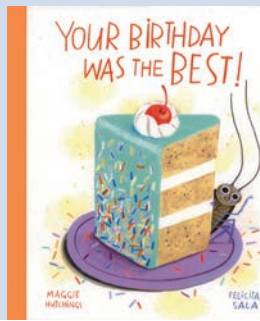
Hartley, Dave / Murray, Kirsty (text)
Leffler, Dub (illus.)

Strangers on country

Canberra, A.C.T.: NLA Publishing,
[2020]. – VII p. + 116 p.
ISBN 978-0-642-27955-2

[Australia](#) | [History 1800-1880](#) | [Europeans](#) |
[Shipwreck](#) | [Indigenous people](#) | [Rescue](#)

Traditional history books mostly present past events from the dominant culture's viewpoint. This carefully researched book, however, pays heed to the common saying »There are always two sides to every story«. It provides a moving account of six Europeans, either shipwrecks or runaway convicts, who were taken in and cared for by indigenous Australians during the 19th century. Each of the five chapters consists of two fictionalised narrations of the same event: one from the point of view of the indigenous person, written by Dave Hartley, a descendant of the Barunggam people, and the second from the European's perspective, penned by white Australian Kirsty Murray. The engaging texts and the evocative illustrations by Dub Leffler, a descendant of the Bigambul people, make the historical characters come alive for young readers. The third part of each chapter is a non-fiction section detailing the known facts of the stories accompanied by informative historical illustrations and photos. A fascinating read. (Age: 10+) [CS]



36

Hutchings, Maggie (text)
Sala, Felicitia (illus.)

Your birthday was the best!

South Melbourne: Affirm Press, 2020. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-925972-53-5

[Birthday party](#) | [Cockroach](#) | [Gatecrasher](#) |
[Picture book](#)

Birthday parties are great! There is laughter, party games, and – best of all – food; lots of food. So naturally, the tiny narrator of this entertaining story is excited to join in the fun. Unfortunately, the birthday boy is less than pleased to discover that an uninvited guest has fallen asleep on top of his yummy cake. The boy screams, the terrified guests hide – and then Dad comes to the rescue with the vacuum cleaner. The six-legged gatecrasher gets sucked in and thrown into the outside bin. Maggie Hutchings delivers the exhilarating story of an untroubled little cockroach's adventures as a matter-of-fact first-creature narration. Felicitia Sala clearly had a feast interpreting and adding to the sparse text with vibrant double-page spreads that sport an array of funny details. Her signature mixed-media style, combining energetic colour-pencil lines and scribbles with matt watercolour planes, perfectly captures the protagonist's bubbly personality and the mayhem she/he creates. (Age: 4+) [CS]

37



Sutherland, Krystal (text)

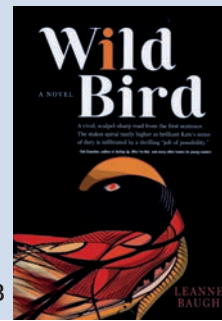
House of Hollow

[Melbourne, Victoria]: Penguin Australia, [2021]. – 292 p.
ISBN 978-0-14-379699-2

Siblings | Disappearance | Mystery |
Otherworld | Death | Fantasy fiction |
Horror fiction

Black-eyed and white-haired Iris, Vivi, and Grey possess an uncanny ability to influence people. Ten years earlier, the three young siblings mysteriously disappeared on New Year's Eve – and returned seemingly unharmed a month later with no memories of what happened to them. Despite the aura of »weirdness« that surrounds them, seventeen-year-old Iris has been trying to lead a normal life and blend in at school for years. Yet, when her oldest sister Grey suddenly disappears, a decomposing body falls out of an overhead air vent, and a man with a bull head mask stalks Iris and Vivi, it seems that dark forces from their past are out to claim them. Best-selling author Krystal Sutherland's third novel for young adults is a riveting mix of modern fairy tale, urban fantasy, and horror novel. In a gripping first-person narrative rife with graphic descriptions and gory details, told from Iris's perspective, the story offers many a surprising revelation and unexpected twist, keeping readers enthralled until the very last page. (Age: 14+) [CS]

38



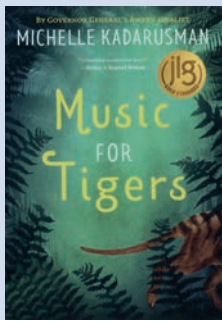
Baugh, Leanne (text)

Wild bird

Markham, Ontario: Red Deer Press, [2021]. – 336 p.
ISBN 978-0-88995-636-0

Canada | History 1861 | Settler | Epidemic |
Indigenous people | Prejudice | Gender role

It is 1861 and the choices for middle class girls in the colonial settlement of Victoria on Vancouver Island are fairly limited: find a husband and have children. Yet, well-read, inquisitive Kate Harding abhors the idea of being married off to save her family from getting deeper into financial dept. As she becomes friends with their indigenous maid and starts questioning gender restrictions as well as the severe prejudice that the Native Songish people face from the settler community, Kate wonders if there might be a way to follow her dream of studying medicine after all. In this carefully researched historical novel, Leanne Baugh reveals to young readers some distressing realities about life in British Columbia during the 19th century. The book tackles issues such as societal expectations and the devastating effect of alcohol, disease, and racism to indigenous communities. The tightly narrated story full of hardship and grief proves that the quest for a meaningful life was as relevant then as it is today. (Age: 14+) [CS]



39

Kadarusman, Michelle (text)

Music for tigers

Toronto, Ontario: Pajama Press,
[2020]. – 189 p.
ISBN 978-1-77278-054-3

Tasmania | Rain forest | Tasmanian tiger |
Animal extinction | Sanctuary | Environmental
destruction

Australian-Indonesian writer Michelle Kadarusman, who is based in Canada, has a knack for crafting stories with resourceful and courageous female protagonists. In her latest middle grade novel, »Music for Tigers«, young Louisa is shipped from Canada to Tasmania to spend her summer holidays at a remote camp in the rainforest. Although the ambitious violinist is initially unenthusiastic about the prospect of battling creepy crawlies with only her weirdo maternal uncle as company, she soon becomes fascinated by her family's history while reading parts of her great-grandmother Eleanor's diary. If there really is a Tasmanian tiger still alive and roaming around the sanctuary Eleanor started, Louisa is determined to save this supposedly extinct species. Conjuring up a lush rainforest-y world that radiates an almost magical atmosphere, the author successfully combines historical facts with an engaging tale about topical issues, such as the threat to the Australian flora and fauna by mining and logging companies. (Age: 10+) [CS]



40

Lappano, Jon-Erik (text)

Hatanaka, Kellen (illus.)

Maggie's treasure

Toronto[et al.]: Groundwood Books, House of
Anansi Press, 2020. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-77306-237-2

Rubbish | Creativity | Picture book

Jon-Erik Lappano and Kellen Hatanaka are the team behind the award-winning »Tokyo Digs a Garden« (Groundwood Books, 2016), a modern fable about humanity, nature, and the environment. For their latest collaboration, they cleverly combine a witty and exaggerated story about a young »hoarder« with allusions to environmental protection. The smoothly flowing rhythmic text tells of a little girl who sees »the sparkle in everything«. Any discarded object, from button and feathers to bike wheels and horseshoes, finds its way into her »collection«. Yet when her house starts to overflow with (what other people consider) trash and her parents put a stop to her obsession, Maggie taps into her creative vein and fashions sparkling new objects that everyone loves, inspiring people to see »trash« with new eyes. The vibrant illustrations with their angular, distorted shapes and matt planes of colour are brimming with details and quirky side stories. This is an enchanting, tongue-in-cheek book about »upcycling« and the power of creativity. (Age: 4+) [CS]



41

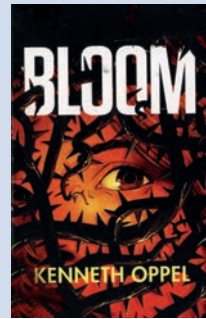
Moulite, Maika / Moulite, Maritza (text)

One of the good ones

Toronto, Ontario: Inkyard Press, [2021]. – 335 p.
ISBN 978-1-335-14580-2

[Social activism](#) | [Racism](#) | [Social media](#) | [Grief](#) | [Kidnapping](#) | [Road trip](#)

In »Dear Haiti, Love Alaine«, their celebrated debut novel, sisters Maika and Maritza Moulite dug deep into the history of Haiti, their ancestors' home country. In their second collaboration, they are tackling structural racism, police brutality, and social activism in the US. The narration deftly alternates between the voices of four different characters and moves back and forth in time and between places. The central event binding the chapters together is »The Day of the Arrest« of young black social media activist Kezi Smith. After she gets carted off to the police station at a social justice rally and dies under mysterious circumstances, her family is devastated. To honour her memory, her sisters Happi and Genny embark on a journey that Kezi had planned, with an old copy of »The Negro Motorist Green Book« as their main guide. This complex book features a cast of strong characters, combines elements of road trip novel, historical novel, and thriller, and offers a riveting read with an unexpected twist at the end. (Age: 14+) [CS]



42

Oppel, Kenneth (text)

Bloom

Toronto, Ontario: HarperCollins, [2020]. – 313 p.
(The Bloom trilogy; 1)
ISBN 978-1-4434-5031-7

[Island](#) | [Environmental destruction](#) | [Carnivorous plants](#) | [Alien](#) | [Dystopia](#) | [Science fiction](#)

Kenneth Oppel's breathtaking »Overthrow« trilogy consists of the volumes »Bloom« (2020), »Hatch« (2020) and »Thrive« (2021), in which the award-winning author introduces an intelligent and threatening new species to Earth. It all begins when, after an unusually heavy rain, black thorny grass sprouts everywhere on Salt Spring Island. No one can explain the origin of these plants. They choke fields, invade entire cities all over the world, release toxic pollen – and eventually start attacking people. Only Anaya, Seth, and Petra, who develop special powers as their bodies suddenly change in terrifying ways, seem to be immune to the plant poison. Together the three teens set out on a dangerous expedition to find an antidote to the man-eating plants. This suspenseful science-fiction adventure with horror elements is not merely a thrilling read; the books also inspire more profound discussions of highly explosive topics such as climate catastrophe, food shortages, and – inadvertently but timely – pandemics. (Age: 12+) [CS]



43

Stinson, Kathy (text)
Lafrance, Marie (illus.)

The lady with the books. A story inspired by the remarkable work of Jella Lepman

Toronto: Kids Can Press, [2020]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-5253-0154-4

Germany | History 1946 | Post-war era |
Lepman, Jella (1891-1970) |
Children's literature | Exhibition | Picture book

Jella Lepman (1891-1970) was a remarkable woman. The Jewish-German journalist and author firmly believed that high-quality literature would help children from different countries »feel connected to each other« and might even prevent another war. Inspired by her story, renowned author Kathy Stinson has invented a touching tale of two German children trudging through the rubble in war-torn Munich in 1946. As they are searching for something to eat, they stumble across food of a different kind. Entering a huge hall, Anneliese and Peter find themselves standing amongst shelves upon shelves of children's books; books in various languages with fascinating stories from around the world – and they meet Jella Lepman herself. Drawn with delicate lines in soft, subdued colours, Marie Lafrance's pictures with slightly stylized characters create a warm, dream-like atmosphere. An informative appendix offers some background information on Lepman's life, the »Traveling Book Exhibit« she initiated, and the International Youth Library. (Age: 5+) [CS]



44

Atinuke (text)
Feddag, Mouni (illus.)

Africa, amazing Africa. Country by country

London: Walker Books and Subsidiaries, 2020. – 77 p.
ISBN 978-1-4063-7658-6

Africa | Diversity | Non-fiction

Africa is a »most amazing continent« with dozens of countries, lots of different cultures, languages, and landscapes, and more than a billion inhabitants. Unfortunately, non-Africans often see it as a unitised »land« defined by heat, poverty, and wild animals. Through her entertaining and informative short texts, Nigerian-British author Atinuke successfully challenges this notion as she highlights the diversity of the fifty-five African countries she introduces. Mouni Feddag's bright, quirky illustrations sparkle with vivacity. Even though the introductory map of Africa and some smaller pictures perpetuate existing clichés, the renditions of traffic jams in Lagos (Nigeria) and skyscrapers in Luanda (Angola) clearly dispute them by attesting to modern city life. Far from claiming to be a comprehensive encyclopaedia of Africa (if such a thing were even possible), this book offers a kaleidoscope of snapshots, curious details, and personal impressions that will arouse readers' curiosity and inspire them to start searching for more. (Age: 6+) [CS]



45

Attah, Ayesha Harruna (text)

The deep blue between

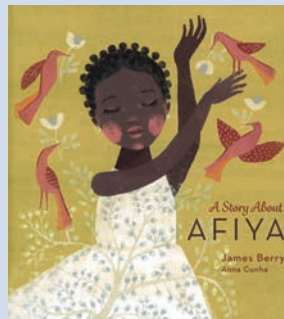
London: Pushkin Press, 2020. – 252 p.

(A Sarah Odedina book)

ISBN 978-1-78269-266-9

West Africa | History 1890-1900 | Slavery |
Twins | Separation | Religion | Tradition |
Feminism

In her highly praised adult novel »The hundred wells of Salaga«, set in Ghana at the end of the 19th century, Ghanaian author Ayesha Harruna Attah, who lives in Senegal, provides an unusual view of slavery through the experiences of two young women: Aminah and Wurche. »The deep blue between«, the author's first teenage novel, focuses on the fate of Aminah's little sisters, Hassana and Husseinah. After being forcefully separated when they flee their destroyed home village, the ten-year-old twins are both sold as slaves, but lead very different lives, ending up in Accra and Lagos then Bahia, Brazil respectively. While Hassana feels the loss of her twin strongly and constantly searches for Husseinah, the younger twin has conflicted feelings about a reunion. Nevertheless, they remain connected through their dreams for years. This moving historical coming-of-age novel touches upon issues such as the slave trade, racism, traditional belief, and religion in West Africa and Brazil, seen through the eyes of two brave girls. (Age: 13+) [CS]



46

Berry, James (text)

Cunha, Anna (illus.)

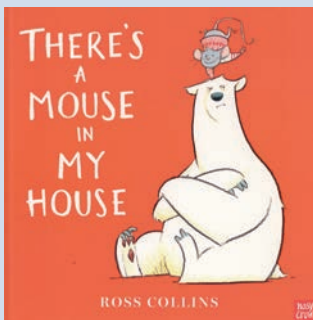
A story about Afiya

London: Lantana Publ., 2020. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-1-911373-33-9

Dress | Memories | Magic | Poetry |
Picture book

In addition to his poetry anthologies for adults, award-winning Jamaican poet James Berry (1924-2017) also created many books for young readers. His atmospheric 1991 poem, »A story about Afiya«, features a black girl who dances through her world with grace and joy. Her white summer dress magically collects visual memories of her days' adventures – red roses one day, petals and butterflies the next, and even two tigers from her trip to the zoo another day. During the night, the images always vanish to leave a clean slate for the next outing. Brazilian illustrator Anna Cunha has transformed the surreal verses into dream-like double-spread pictures. In her entrancing matt illustrations, Afiya's world glows in soft shades of rose pink, mustardy yellow, and blue green, mirroring the fantastical tone of the text and offering a visual wonderland for readers' eyes. What a perfect celebration of childhood and imagination! (Age: 3+) [CS]



47

Collins, Ross (text/illus.)

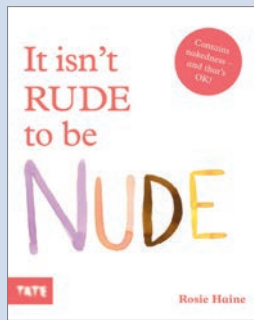
There's a mouse in my house

London: Nosy Crow, 2020. – [27] p.

ISBN 978-1-78800-825-9

Mouse | Bear | Intruder | Boldness | Irritation |
Picture book

In the award-winning picture book »There's a bear on my chair« (2016), a smug polar bear hogs little Mouse's favourite – and only – chair and doesn't budge, no matter what Mouse tries. In this hilarious sequel, Bear tastes a sip of his own medicine, when the cheeky little rodent settles comfortably in Bear's abode – much to his chagrin. Nothing can tempt the annoying chap to leave Bear alone nor vanish from his home. He munches all the food, »dances to and fro / to soft rock on his stereo«, and even makes the bathtub overflow. Bear is at his wit's end. Ross Collins's ingenious and laugh-out-loud verses, with rhymes all ending in the sound »o«, are accompanied by his expressive, comical illustrations with bold outlines that have the two protagonists bouncing around on the pages. The clever depiction of Mouse and Bear on the back endpaper may not come as a huge surprise to youngsters familiar with the first book, but it will probably inspire them to demand an encore and another one. (Age: 3+) [CS]



48

Haine, Rosie (text/illus.)

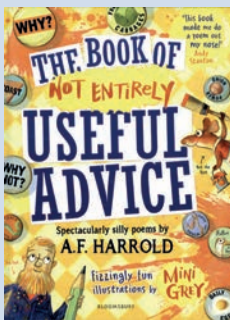
It isn't rude to be nude

London: Tate Publ., 2020. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-84976-700-2

Nudity | Diversity | Body positivity |
Self-confidence | Picture book

In many societies around the world, nudity is frowned upon, and running around naked is something that is only acceptable when you are a tiny toddler or somewhere that nobody can see you. In her debut picture book, author-illustrator Rosie Haine shouts out to the world: »It isn't rude to be nude.« With her sparse and straightforward, yet playful text that stresses: »Everyone has a bum. Nipples are normal«, she invites her audience to celebrate and love their own bodies. Her energetic ink-and-pencil illustrations were created by painting the different figures and shapes on paper, scanning them in, and assembling them on the white background via Photoshop. The double-spread pages sport human body parts as well as entire people in any size, skin colour, age, state of fitness, and shape imaginable, with and without disabilities, spots, and markings. In a society where even children are striving for »perfect« bodies, this entertaining book reminds readers that we are all different and we are all beautiful. (Age: 4+) [CS]



49

Harrold, A. F. (text)
Grey, Mini (illus.)

The book of not entirely useful advice

London [et al.]: Bloomsbury Children's Books,
2020. – 121 p.
ISBN 978-1-5266-1801-6

Advice | Poetry | Nonsense literature

As its title suggests, this hilarious poetry book is chock-full of »useful advice« that will help readers survive in today's dangerous and confusing world – or maybe not. Most likely not. To be honest: not at all. In his collection of »spectacular silly poems«, popular writer, poet, and performer A. F. Harrold dishes out suggestions and information about any topic imaginable, ranging from anthills and gravy to sausages and zombies; from how to tell the difference between »Blackbirds and Bananas« to »How to Avoid a Giant Who Has Escaped from a Nearby Fairytale«. The »fizzingly fun illustrations« by award-winning Mini Grey highlight key elements in the poems, provide a visual commentary on the texts' nonsensical nature, and add lots of vibrant colour and quirkiness to this volume. Readers of all ages will love the absurd topics, the whacky wordplay, and the occasionally slightly gory descriptions. (Age: 5+) [CS]



50

Hofmeyr, Dianne (text)
Grobler, Piet (illus.)

Paris Cat

London: Tiny Owl, 2020. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-910328-59-0

Cat | Poverty | Talent | Ambition | Fame |
Picture book

Paris Cat is a special cat. Born in a »smelly alleyway« and having to fight her many siblings and relatives for fish scraps to survive, she has always had higher ambitions. So she starts exploring the wider world and isn't shy to display her many talents. After some initial setback – how strange that the café guests didn't seem to appreciate her beautiful singing voice when she joined in with Edith Piaf – she finds her calling. Clad in fanciful self-designed outfits, Cat dances the night away on stage together with famous Josephine Baker and her cheetah Chiquita. Yet her career ambitions don't stop there. This sparkling collaboration between renowned South African creators Dianne Hofmeyr and Piet Grobler, presents a fun and fantastical story enriched with vibrant collage illustrations. The pictures in different sizes perfectly capture the city atmosphere during the mid-twentieth century as well as Cat's bubbling personality. This story about courage and tenacity shouts out to kids: Anything is possible! (Age: 4+) [CS]

51



Kenny, Pádraig (text)
Bettison, Edward (illus.)

The monsters of Rookhaven

London: Macmillan Children's Books, 2020. – 337 p.
ISBN 978-1-5290-5470-5

Monster | Parallel world | Prejudice | Villain | Danger | Friendship | Gothic novel

Rookhaven mansion is hidden away from the human world by a powerful shield of magic called the »glamour«, and the family living there are weird – monster-weird. A truce, signed generations before, ensures that the monsters are safe from the humans and vice versa. However, one night, when human orphans Tom and Jem stumble through a tear in the glamour and are taken in by kind-hearted Mirabelle and her eccentric »relatives«, things are set in motion: a dangerous creature is set free, a shocking secret revealed, and a villain from outside threatens the peace. Pádraig Kenny's spooky gothic tale is peopled with a truly original cast of shape-shifting monsters, ranging from fascinating to frightening. The third-person narration alternates between Mirabelle, Jem, village boy Freddie, and mysterious monster »Piglet«, drawing readers deep into this strange world. Edward Bettison's eerie black-and-white illustrations add to the creepy atmosphere of this intense and suspenseful novel about good and evil, prejudice, and acceptance. (Age: 10+) [CS]

52



Vayeda, Mayur / Vayeda, Tushar (oral narrative/illus.)
Wolf, Arun / Wolf, Gita (text)

The deep

Chennai: Tara Books, [2020]. – [14] p.
ISBN 978-81-939841-8-5

India | Warli <people> | Indigenous people | Warli art | Journey | Water | Picture book

The art of Mayur and Tushar Vayeda is rooted in the Warli style of painting, which originates from their indigenous community in a village in Maharashtra, Western India. Fashioning new symbols and meaning, the young artists have developed an amazingly unique blend of Warli art and other influences, enabling them to renew the traditional style and depict elements and topics outside their home environment. »The deep« is a reflection on the brothers' journey from their village to the city of Mumbai and the Japanese island of Awashima for an artists' residency. At the same time, it alludes to a philosophical journey that bridges different countries, cultures, and creatures to remind readers how everything on Earth is connected through water. The exquisitely designed and silkscreen-printed picture book with its Japanese binding opens up horizontally. Layer by layer, it reveals the stunning, detailed black-white-and-blue illustrations on recycled paper in various shades of blue. A true visual feast for readers of all ages. (Age: 8+) [CS]



53

Close, Helena (text)

The gone book

Dublin: Little Island Books, 2020. – 300 p.
ISBN 978-1-912417-44-5

Mother | Disappearance | Son | Grief |
Anger | Violence | Drug abuse

Helena Close has been writing full time for adults and teenagers for over twenty years. Her latest offering is a gritty fast-paced young adult novel set in Limerick, exploring the emotional effects on three young boys (and their father) when their mother just walks out on the family one day. Matt, the middle sibling and first-person narrator of the book, vents his grief, anger, hope, and desperation by writing letter after letter to his vanished mother in the notebook he names »The Gone Book« – without ever posting any of the letters of course. All the while, his older brother Jamie's life spirals completely out of control. His grades plummet, he starts using drugs, and frequently resorts to violence. Five years later, their mother suddenly turns up again, with a new family in tow. The raw, edgy narration with lots of colloquialisms and swear words, sucks readers into an emotional roller coaster ride that ends in a shattering showdown. An engrossing read that isn't for the faint-hearted. (Age: 14+) [CS]



54

King, Jonathan (text/illus.)

The Inkberg enigma

Wellington: Gecko Press, 2020. – 125 p.
ISBN 978-1-776572-66-3

Mystery | Research | Monster | Conspiracy |
Graphic novel

Miro is a book nerd. He's not just obsessed with reading every book he can get his hands on, he also needs to own them. Zia prefers to be out and about, observing the world through the lense of her camera. When the two tweens witness a weird emergency involving a fisherman and some mysterious sea creature, they are immediately intrigued; all the more so because the sinister-looking mayor threatens them and tries to keep them away. As they sneak around to find out more, Miro and Zia stumble head over heels into a real-life adventure. Jonathan King, renowned New Zealand filmmaker and comics author, has created a suspenseful, cinematic graphic novel set in a small coastal fishing town. The timeless mystery, which is reminiscent of popular children's classics such as »Emil and the Detectives« and the »Tintin« comic books, plays with elements of horror and historical fiction. It provides a fast-paced read with a diverse cast of characters and two plucky protagonists who manage to outwit the town baddies. (Age: 9+) [CS]



55

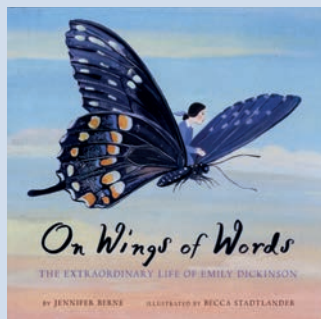
Low, Joo Hong (text/illus.)

Lemonade sky

Singapore: Epigram, 2021. – [44] p.
ISBN 978-981-49-0122-2

[Rule](#) | [Social norms](#) | [Overprotection](#) | [City](#) | [Night](#) | [Imaginary trip](#) | [Emancipation](#) | [Picture book](#)

Tired of rules and regulations, a boy takes his toy friends along on a journey in search of the »lemonade sky« – a place where he believes he can be free. Dreamlike paintings in rich colours and bold brushstrokes and short and profound texts form an enigmatic narrative in the familiar yet magical setting of a nocturnal city. Passing through spaces full of instructions and prohibitions, the friends encounter animals that are actually reflections of the boy's feelings: a brooding orang-utan, a howling wolf, a python curled up on a crosswalk, a menacing frogfish. At the break of dawn, the sky turns lemonade-yellow, sending them all back to the boy's room, where coloured pencils are waiting for him to paint the world as he would like it to be. Low Joo Hong was inspired to write this story when he witnessed a little girl being criticized for colouring the sky in her painting yellow. He is currently pursuing a PhD in art and has received several awards for both his English- and Chinese-language picture books. And yes, the sky can indeed be yellow! (Age: 6+) [LO]



56

Berne, Jennifer (text)

Stadlander, Becca (illus.)

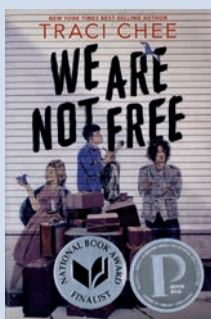
On wings of words. The extraordinary life of Emily Dickinson

San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2020. – [46] p.
ISBN 978-1-4521-4297-5

[Dickinson, Emily \(1830-1886\)](#) | [Poetry](#) | [Nature](#) | [Biography](#) | [Picture book](#)

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson, born in 1830, was a highly curious, intelligent, and sensitive girl, but she was also a little strange – or so the people in her hometown thought. Keenly interested in the world around her, Emily loved to explore and felt a deep connection to nature. Although, as an adult, she led a quiet reclusive life and seldom left her home, she pondered complex issues and expressed her thoughts and feelings in hundreds of letters and about 1800 poems – almost all of which were published posthumously. This evocative picture book biography provides snapshots of her life, while introducing young readers to her magnificent oeuvre. The short text, itself written in a simple, associative style emulating Emily's poetry, is interspersed with hand-lettered snippets of the famous American poet's contemplative verses. The gouache-and-watercolour illustrations in warm, matt shades are reminiscent of naïve style paintings, but also veer into the field of surrealism to allude to Emily's vivid imagination. (Age: 6+) [CS]

57



Chee, Traci (text)

We are not free

Boston [et al.]: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, [2020]. – 384 p.
ISBN 978-0-358-13143-4

World War II (1939-1945) | Japanese American | Internment camp | Discrimination | Prejudice | Identity | Historical fiction

Fourteen Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) teens who grew up together in Japantown, San Francisco, are united by their forced relocation during World War II yet narrate their experiences from vastly different perspectives. Sent from their homes to live in quickly refashioned horse stables, each family is assigned to a single stall until the internment camps in the desert are ready for occupation. The literary device of multiple narrators gives honest and intimate first-person accounts of how the teens manage and make critical personal decisions based on the circumstances of their families and the temperament of each character. The nuanced voices depict complex struggles within individuals, families, and the communities in which they live. Tragedy, love, loyalty, and more unfold through the intensity of teen emotions as each character manages family and peer relationships all while having their civil liberties taken away, despite the fact that they are American born and, therefore, citizens of the United States. (Age: 13+) [JY]

58



Cole, Henry (illus.)

One little bag. An amazing journey

New York: Scholastic Press, 2020. – [43] p.
ISBN 978-1-338-35997-8

Paper bag | Environmental awareness | Father | Son | Wordless book | Picture book

Between the covers of this wordless book, readers will encounter two interconnected stories. On the first ten pages, illustrations in different sizes chronicle a special tree's kind-of-factual journey – story number one – from tree to paper bag, from the forest to a shop via sawmill and paper factory. And then: Oops, comes the book's title page – and the beginning of the second story. A boy receives this very same brown paper bag at a shop. On his very first school day, he uses it to carry his lunch. Rather than just throwing it away, he reuses the bag day after day. Over the years, it serves as a container for tools, sheet music, treats, etc... and is even passed on to the next generation. The atmospheric black-and-white ink illustrations, with lots of hatching for depth and texture, have the tree-turned-bag stand out as the only object coloured light brown. Inspired by his own memories of the first Earth Day in the 1970s, Henry Cole has crafted a thoughtful and touching story about family, love, and environmental awareness. (Age: 3+) [CS]



59

Fipps, Lisa (text)

Starfish

New York: Nancy Paulsen Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House, [2021]. – 244 p. ISBN 978-1-9848-1450-0

Body image | Fat shaming | Bullying | Peer pressure | Self-confidence | Therapy | Verse novel

Taunted for making a big splash in the pool when she was five years old (and thereafter nicknamed »Splash«), Ellie is constantly pressured by her mother to control her weight. So Ellie creates »Fat Girl Rules« to help ensure that her weight will be less conspicuous: Don't eat in public; don't move fast because your fat will jiggle; and more. The one place she can relax is in a pool, where she can do the opposite of making herself seem small – she can spread out like a starfish, float, and feel weightless. Her father, her therapist, and a new friend give her the support she needs to recognize and value her identity beyond her body image. Through humorous moments and amidst heartbreaking pain, readers root for a preteen girl as she resolves how she feels about her self-worth. The verse novel format hones in on the most essential way to communicate the story. Ellie comes full circle through her time in the pool, from sinking after the tight cannonball dive that starts the bullying to floating in the wide starfish pose that gives her solace. (Age: 10+) [JY]



60

Lindstrom, Carole (text)

Goade, Michaela (illus.)

We are water protectors

New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2020. – [40] p. ISBN 978-1-250-20355-7

Oil pipeline | Environmental destruction | Indigenous people | Environmental protection | Activism | Picture book

Carole Lindstrom and Michaela Goade are the Native American author-and-illustrator team behind this award-winning picture book about environmental protection. The story was inspired by the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline protests, a movement that was joined by hundreds of Indigenous nations worldwide who fought against the building of an oil pipeline on Native lands. The tale's narrator, a passionate Ojibwe girl, warns readers about the »black snake« and its »venom« that will have devastating effects for humans and animals. In lyrical, stirring words, the young activist reflects on the importance of water for every creature because »we come from water« and are all connected through it. This rallying cry to protect our water is translated into luminous watercolour pictures with flowing planes of blue, turquoise, purple, and pink. The illustrations, adorned with symbols and elements from Ojibwe and Tlingit cultures, beautifully portray the brave protagonist, her community, and the natural world they are determined to save. (Age: 5+) [CS]

61



Little Badger, Darcie (text)
Cai, Rovina (illus.)

Elatsoe

Montclair: Levine Querido, 2020. – 360 p.
(Arthur A. Levine book)
ISBN 978-1-64614-005-3

[Indigenous people](#) | [Tradition](#) | [Secret](#) |
[Revenge](#) | [Death](#) | [Magic](#) | [Fantasy fiction](#)

Darcie Little Badger's critically acclaimed debut novel is a murder mystery interspersed with magical elements, indigenous mythology, and supernatural beings. This makes for a well-crafted story in which waves of tension alternate with matter-of-fact calm. *Elatsoe*, »Ellie,« is a seventeen-year-old Lipan Apache who aspires to become a Paranormal Investigator. The asexual teen has powers to communicate with the deceased, and thus knows that her cousin's seemingly accidental death was actually murder. She sets about righting the balance of life and death in the alternate universe that is presented as a natural mix of realism and the supernatural. Readers are drawn into this unknown world because of its consistent adherence to its own rules and believable yet spectacular elements. The feelings of loss, grief, and longing for the deceased is mediated through post-death communication; in fact, that Ellie has the continued companionship of Kirby, her now ghost dog, is a soothing idea which may resonate with many readers. (Age: 13+) [JY]

62



Mabry, Samantha (text)

Tigers, not daughters

Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Young Readers, 2020. – 280 p.
ISBN 978-1-61620-896-7

[Siblings](#) | [Grief](#) | [Loneliness](#) | [Father](#) | [Ghost](#) |
[Freedom](#)

The four Torres sisters used to be a tight-knit bundle. Yet when Ana, the oldest sister, falls to her death as she tries to sneak out of the house one night, grief hits the remaining siblings hard. Each girl struggles in her own way: Jessica tries to become Ana by dating her abusive boyfriend, Iridian retreats into herself, obsessively reading Ana's romance novels and scribbling into her notebook, and Rosa feels a calling to help small creatures who are suffering. And then Ana's ghost starts haunting their home. The narration of this gripping family story alternates between each of the girls' points of view and that of a neighbourhood boy secretly spying on the Torres girls. The lyrical prose creates a haunting atmosphere, fitting for a novel steeped in magical realism; at the same time, it also provides fascinating character studies of three teen girls who drift apart, but find their way back together, to free themselves from their overpowering, grieving father and the toxic masculinity in their society. (Age: 14+) [CS]



63

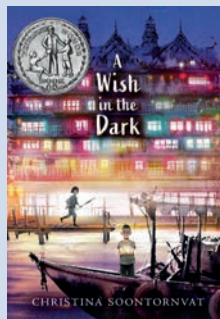
Singer, Marilyn (text)
Priceman, Marjorie (illus.)

Follow the recipe. Poems about imagination, celebration, & cake

New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, [2020]. – [44] p.
ISBN 978-0-7352-2790-3

[Recipe](#) | [Poetry](#) | [Picture book](#)

In »Follow the Recipe«, Marilyn Singer, the renowned author of more than 100 books, dishes up a delicious plate of poems, all of them in the form of a recipe. Yet, even if these recipes talk about ingredients, measurements, and – quite often – food, they do not contribute to an ordinary cookbook. Instead, the poet skilfully cooks up texts, both in rhyme and free verse, about a variety of themes. Ranging from straightforward ideas, such as »recipe for a good recipe« or »recipe for a poem« to more complex, abstract topics, as in »recipe for endurance«, the poems serve up fun advice for life. Award-winning illustrator Marjorie Priceman artfully arranges her ebullient mixed-media illustrations with bold gouache brushstrokes, yummy block prints, and a generous dose of collage elements on the plate – ahem page – to give this anthology the feel of a well-loved scrapbook. This is a feast for all the senses with »something right for me and you« – a poem or two for everyone! (Age: 6+) [CS]



64

Soontornvat, Christina (text)

A wish in the dark

Somerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 2021. – 375 p.
ISBN 978-1-5362-2297-5

[Poverty](#) | [Oppression](#) | [Child prisoner](#) | [Escape](#) | [Justice](#)

Christina Soontornvat's favourite read in high school was Victor Hugo's monumental 1862 novel »Les Misérables«. So much so, that she decided to take some of the book's key elements and weave them into her own novel for children. Set in a world inspired by her father's childhood Thailand but infused with some magic, the story follows two protagonists: Pong, a poor boy born in Namwon prison, yearning for freedom, and Nok, the law-abiding daughter of the prison warden. By pure luck, Pong manages to escape and realises that the outside world, ruled by a fierce governor with the power to create magic lamps, holds just as much danger and injustice as life inside the prison walls. What's worse: Nok is hell-bent on scenting him out and returning him to captivity in order to restore her beloved father's good name; at least until she uncovers some uncomfortable secrets and starts to question her view of the world. In turn suspenseful, thought-provoking, and funny, this captivating book raises questions about justice, prejudice, and oppression. (Age: 10+) [CS]

65



Zoboi, Ibi / Salaam, Yusef (text)
Pasha, Omar T. (illus.)

Punching the air

New York, NY: Balzer + Bray, [2020]. – 386 p.
ISBN 978-0-06-299648-0

African Americans | Fight | Prison | Prejudice |
Racism | Verse novel

»Punching the air« is a gripping verse novel created by renowned author Ibi Zoboi in collaboration with noted educator and activist Yusef Salaam. Inspired by Yusef Salaam's own story as a wrongly convicted black teenager in the infamous »Central Park jogger« case, this book, written in powerful first-person poems, tells the fictional story of sixteen-year-old Amal Shahid, a budding artist and poet. One night, he gets drawn into a neighbourhood fight in which a white teen is badly injured. When Amal is immediately arrested and ends up in prison, all his dreams for a bright future evaporate, because as a Black Muslim teen with a reputation for being angry, he doesn't stand much of a chance for being released any time soon. Despite cruel guards, violent inmates, and a prejudiced system, which all work against him, Amal uses his creativity to hold on to his humanity and the hope for justice. A moving, beautifully crafted rallying cry against prejudice and racism. (Age: 14+) [CS]

66



Laan, Triinu (text)
Plats, Marja-Liisa (illus.)

Luukere Juhani juhtumised

(*Skeleton Juhan's comings and goings*)
[Saeu]: Päike ja Pilv, 2020. – 58 p.
ISBN 978-9916-9512-2-4

Skeleton | Family life | Life | Death | Anecdote |
Picture book

Upon leaving his employment in the biology lab at a school, Juhan, a skeleton, is no longer an object of study. Though he has retired, his life has not become quieter. When he moves in with Granny and Grandpa, they experience all sorts of new things. For example, Juhan is »employed« by the grandchildren to sleep under their beds and scare away other monsters. There is even talk of later burying the two best friends, Juhan and Grandpa, together in one coffin. However, Granny is the first to pass away, and Juhan not only has to comfort Grandpa, but also act as an intermediary when Granny returns to »pay a visit«. With considerable warmth and wry wit, Triinu Laan and Marja-Liisa Plats have created a wonderful children's story in short episodes. Along with the curious figure of a skeleton and some well-captured episodes of the story, the illustrations let bright pink and pencil grey collide with one another to create an especially charming book. (Age: 5+) [KW]

67



Püttsepp, Juhani (text)
Muzikante, Gundega (illus.)
On kuu kui kuldne laev
(*The moon is a golden ship*)
[Tallinn]: Tänapäev, [2020]. – 133 p.
ISBN 978-9949-85-886-6

Childhood | World War II (1939-1945) |
History 1944 | War | Escape |
Childhood memories

This is an important book, and there was hardly another that received as much attention in Estonia in 2020 nor won as many prizes. »On kuu kui kuldne laev« is a story of flight and escape told from the perspective of the child protagonist Keete. The novel follows her, her family and other Estonians who flee to Sweden in a boat in 1944. At times everything seems like an adventure for the young girl, but the author Juhani Püttsepp manages to add menacing undertones to the narrative when Keete asks herself why her parents are afraid of the Red Army and what they mean by »deportation«. In the end, as an adult, Keete looks back with hindsight and knows that war must never occur again. The illustrations by the Latvian artist Gundega Muzikante are of great symbolic power. Working with muted brown and green colours that convey a sense of yellowed paper and old photographs, her illustrations give the impression of a veil over long past events that is being lifted by the reader. (Age: 8+) [KW]

68



Saar, Anti (text)
Pikkov, Anne (illus.)
Anni asjad
(*Anni's things*)
[Tartu]: Kolm Elu, 2020. – 80 p.
ISBN 978-9949-01-995-3

Childhood | First experience | Family

Like almost no other author, Anti Saar is able to see into the minds of children and read their thoughts and feelings. And, above all, he is able to skilfully transform these insights into stories. With considerable intuition for the way a child experiences the world and for the parent-child relationship, Saar – in this collaboration with the illustrator Anne Pikkov – once again portrays a vivacious, feisty protagonist and her family in »Anni asjad«. In short, but amusing and touching episodes, Anni asks herself, for example, how it is possible that she »has« Granny's hair and her Mom »has« Granny's nose, even though Granny is already dead. And she nearly drives her parents crazy by asking them to read the invitation to her first real birthday party over and over and over again. Or Anni experiences the incredible joy of sharing someone's secret, but also the difficulty of really keeping it to herself. Many children (and parents) will see themselves reflected in Anni's marvellous stories. (Age: 4+) [KW]

69



Monzon, Harry (illus.)

Pagkatapos ng Unos

(After the storm)

Quezon City: Philippine Board on Books for Young People (PBBY), 2020. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-621-962-930-0

Philippines | Typhoon | Flood | Loss |
History 2009 | Wordless book | Picture book

This book won the first Wordless Book Prize awarded by the Philippine section of the International Board on Books for Young People in 2018. Its beautifully drawn pictures tell a story that is captivating to readers, even without any background knowledge of Typhoon Ondoy, which devastated the Philippines in 2009 and left the author's family uncertain how their lives would continue. In this story, a man fills his boat with all his belongings when his house becomes flooded. With his oars, he rescues a little dog floating alone in a dipper from imminent attack by a crocodile. Then his oars are lost, and he has to paddle with his hands while casting off his remaining possessions. After saving a mangrove sapling, he finds a large branch attached to it and can row to a small island, where he plants the little tree – a cliché, as Monzon admits, but a symbol for the will to piece a life back together after calamity. This is a story about climate change, and about how much people are willing to sacrifice in order to help others. (Age: 7+) [LO]

70



Schneider, Marine (text/illus.)

Tu t'appelleras Lapin

(Your name shall be Rabbit)

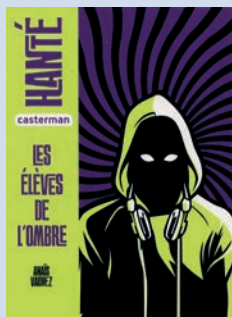
Bruxelles: Versant Sud, [2020]. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-2-930938-24-0

Forest | Rabbit | Fear | Picture book

One morning, eleven-year-old Belette discovers the contours of a giant rabbit, whose body covers her whole village's surroundings. The news sets the whole neighbourhood into turmoil – the adults are especially rattled. Is the gigantic animal dangerous? How can they get rid of it? While the adults' elaborate strategies fail miserably, the children adopt the inert rabbit and integrate it into their games. The adults have no choice but to accept its presence until further notice. But as suddenly as it appeared, the giant beast vanishes. This picture book keeps entirely to white, brown and green hues. In an apt and timely comparison, young Belgian author and illustrator Marine Schneider explores what happens when the unknown and unplanned interrupt normal life and how we can learn to live with open questions we can neither totally grasp nor solve. (Age: 4+) [SW]

71



Vachez, Anaïs (text)

Les élèves de l'ombre*(The shadow students)*

Bruxelles: Casterman, [2020]. – 112 p.

(Series: Hanté – pire que vos pires cauchemars)

ISBN 978-2-203-20879-7

School | Teacher | Evil | Punishment | Fear |
 Magic | Horror fiction

It's only the start of seventh grade, but Jade is already harbouring a terrifying suspicion: her new home-room teacher is a miserable mix of psychopath and tyrant, who takes out his control issues and bad moods on the students every class period. Secretly, Jade worries that he has access to far more diabolical powers. Every time the teacher condemns one of Jade's classmates to detention, the student comes back utterly changed. Their expressionless voices, empty eyes and jerky movements make them seem like zombies. Left totally on her own, Jade prepares for the worst. Young director and scriptwriter Anaïs Vachez won the Prix Polar Jeunesse 2021 with her literary debut. The fast-paced book is part of a collection launched in March 2020 by the publisher Casterman, which draws inspiration from masterpieces of horror for young readers by authors like Neil Gaiman and H. P. Lovecraft. (Age: 10+) [SW]

72



Croft, Esther (text)

Exit l'innocence. Nouvelles*(Exit from innocence. Stories)*

Montréal, Québec: Québec Amérique,

[2021]. – 108 p.

(Series: Titan)

ISBN 978-2-7644-4136-7

Adolescence | Coming of age | Short story

In this book, Esther Croft, journalist and author of short stories and novellas, portrays adolescence as a time of upheaval and crisis. In seven stories and one dialogue, she sketches a process where familiar key structures suddenly dissolve, role models shrink to normal size (or reveal their inconsistencies), friendships change or break. Transformations erupt into trusted everyday life, which may lead to serious reformulations of the teenage protagonists' life worlds. For instance, a family vacation in Normandy triggers an escalating and enduring parental fight, which the children experience as helpless bystanders and which ends with the sudden parental wish for separation and divorce. Esther Croft describes the exit from childhood as a painful incision, but also as a search, an open-ended upheaval, an access point to a complex reality. (Age: 11+) [SW]

FRENCH

Belgium
Canada

73



O'Bomsawin, Nicole (text)
Rivard, Sylvain (illus.)
8tlokaw8ganal. Légendes

(Legends)

Wendake, Québec: Éditions Hanneørak,
[2020]. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-2-923926-50-6

[Abenaki <people>](#) | [Folk tale](#) | [Legend](#) | [Myth](#) | [Animals](#)

Many legends of the Abenaki people describe a legendary primordial time when the earth was populated by mysterious heroes, mythic primordial beasts and magical beings. Nicole O'Bomsawin, Abenaki representative, anthropologist and long-time museum director, has dedicated her first children's book to these legends. She has a pair of grandparents tell their grandchildren of a mythical hero who shrinks enormous and foolish stone-beings to the size of an acorn leaf in his hands. The stories are also about the great excitement and transformation triggered by the unexpected appearance of human beings, both among the mythical beings, but also in the real animal world. Delicate collages by multi-faceted artist Sylvain Rivard, a glossary and a phonetic pronunciation guide for the Abenaki words in the text enhance this original children's book, which appeared with the French-Canadian First Nation publisher Hanneørak. (Age: 5+) [SW]

74



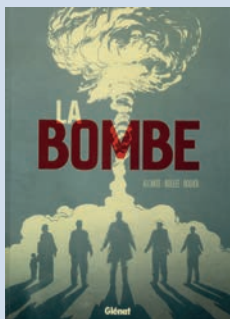
Renaud, Christine (text) / Various artists (illus.)
Effrontées. L'histoire pas plate de 21 québécoises audacieuses

(Brazen. The fascinating story of 21 audacious women from Québec)

Montréal (Québec): Les éditions les Malins,
[2021]. – 248 p. ISBN 978-2-89810-264-6

[Québec](#) | [Woman](#) | [Role model](#) | [Feminism](#) | [Emancipation](#) | [Diversity](#) | [History 20th - 21st centuries](#) | [Biography](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

»In Québec there's need for some catching-up in respect to women's history« insists author and entrepreneur Christine Renaud. For this reason, she has collaborated with ten female Québec illustrators and compiled an interesting anthology of twenty-one extraordinary contemporary Québécois women. The book thrives in the diversity of the women portrayed, from their different ages, cultural and social 'origins' to their different sexual orientations. Christine Renaud succinctly expresses the key moments when these women had to surmount challenges to pursue their life projects or when those projects were most at risk. How were they able to »stick with it«? How is their »success« expressed? Among these female role models are a researcher, an illustrator, athletes (with and without disabilities), a singer, an entrepreneur, a doctor, an author, an engineer, a lawyer, and more. Only at the conclusion of each portrait is the actual person identified. (Age: 10+) [SW]



75

Alcante / Bollée, Laurent-Frédéric (text)
Rodier, Denis (illus.)

La bombe

(The bomb)

Grenoble: Glénat, [2020]. – 432 p. + [39] p.

(Series: Collection 1000 feuilles)

ISBN 978-2-344-02063-0

[World War II \(1939-1945\)](#) | [Hiroshima](#) | [Atomic bomb](#) | [Nuclear weapon](#) | [Science](#) | [Graphic novel](#)

The first atomic bomb fell on August 6, 1945 over Hiroshima. The devastating consequences are known. In this graphic novel published 75 years later, the three comic artists Didier Alcante, Laurent-Frédéric Bollée and Denis Rodier strikingly capture a part of that event's pre-history. The book traces a chronological arc from the initial idea for the bomb through its development until the terrible destruction wreaked when it was dropped. The trio researched, wrote and illustrated this impressive 470-page-long documentation over the course of four years. They work multi-perspectively, but especially focus on the scientific discussions and political decisions occurring behind the scenes – in important offices and laboratories. What were the decisive strategic and wartime-psychological reasons to build the bomb? The unsettling final part of the book shows – mostly without text – the destruction left by the bomb. Never again! (Age: 16+) [SW]



76

Baru (text/illus.)

Bella ciao. (Uno)

(Bella ciao. [One])

[Paris]: Futuropolis, [2020]. – 129 p.

ISBN 978-2-7548-1169-9

[Italy](#) | [France](#) | [Migration](#) | [History 1800-2000](#) | [Fascism](#) | [Resistance](#) | [Identity](#) | [Culture](#) | [Music](#)

»Bella Ciao« is the first part of a comic trilogy. Comic artist Baru dedicates this Italo-French migration epic to his father, who died early, and to his grandfather. It is also an homage to their respective generations, whose hard labour in the steel plants of Lorraine or the saltworks of Camargue, for instance, made the later socio-economic rise of their family possible. The first story tells of the massacre of Italian workers in Aigues-Mortes (1893): a brawl between Italian and French workers in the saltworks escalates to a lynch mob and the murder of ten Italian workers, while the authorities stand by. The second story tells of how the worker's song »Bella Ciao« became a folk song – sung by women workers in the Po Valley's rice fields to resistance fighters. Baru wonderfully re-stages everyday situations both in their tragic dimension as well as with their situational comedy. His knowledge of the everyday life of labourer families is apparent in every detail. (Age: 14+) [SW]

77



Baussier, Sylvie (text)
Gonoh (illus.)

Résistance. 40 figures contre le nazisme

(Resistance. 40 figures against Nazism)

Paris: Gallimard jeunesse, [2020]. – [85] p.

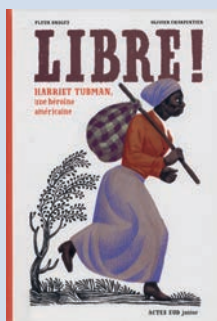
(Series: BAM!)

ISBN 978-2-07-513361-6

World War II (1939-1945) | History 1900-2000 | Fascism | Résistance | Role model | Biography | Non-fiction

They brought light in times of darkness, and their lives are their most important legacy. This outstanding volume devotes itself to the topic of resistance against the National Socialist reign of violence. In an exemplary way, author Sylvie Baussier and graphic artist Gonoh present forty portraits that show the resourceful actions of women and men from France, Poland, Norway, Italy, the UK, the USA, Belgium, Hungary, and also Germany. The significance of female resistance fighters is often underestimated, so it is worth noting that this selection features twenty women. Every portrait appears on a double-page spread with biographical information and honours the specific contributions of each of these courageous people – from issuing publications or committing acts of espionage or sabotage, to serving as messengers, convoys, purveyors or armed resistance. Even though it omits some important figures such as Addi Bâ, this book reveals the diverse membership of the Resistance, while also noting its internal inconsistencies and conflicts. (Age: 10+) [SW]

78



Daugey, Fleur (text)
Charpentier, Olivier (illus.)

Libre! Harriet Tubman, une héroïne américaine

(Free! Harriet Tubman, an American heroine)

Arles: Actes Sud junior, [2020]. – [41] p.

ISBN 978-2-330-13690-1

USA | Tubman, Harriet (1820-1913) | Slavery | Resistance | Freedom | Underground Railroad | Non-fiction

The so-called »Underground Railroad« existed as an informal »human smuggling network« from 1780 to about 1850. Its agents moved enslaved African Americans by secret routes and hideaways from the Southern States to the (»safer«) Northern States of the USA. The African American woman Harriet Tubman is likely the best-known member of that organization. She freed herself from slavery at twenty-nine years of age. She returned to the Southern States about twenty times, conveying 300 people to freedom at great risk. Illustrated by Olivier Charpentier, Fleur Daugey's book »Libre!« portrays this successful resistance through the lens of Tubman's life as well as some of her comrades, such as Frederick Douglas. The author also provides details on the meaning and consequences of slavery in America and beyond. The book ends with a look at other forms of this system of domination and »business model« that has been used the world over. France's role is touched on rather too briefly in that respect. (Age: 9+) [SW]



79

Doucey, Bruno (text)

Ne pleure pas sur la Grèce

(Do not cry for Greece)

Paris: Editions Bruno Doucey, [2021]. – 229 p.

(Series: Sur le fil)

ISBN 978-2-36229-343-6

Ritsos, Yiannis (1909-1990) | Writer | Greece | History 1967-1974 | Dictatorship | Resistance

Bruno Doucey remembers a dark chapter in Greek history with this dense all-ages novel: the military dictatorship that subjugated the country from 1967 to 1974. One of the central characters in the novel is well-known poet Yiannis Ritsos, who was one of the first to be arrested in April 1967 and spent cruel years on the prison islands of Jaros and Leros, among others. But good poetry outlasts every despotism. Placing hope in this idea, Ritsos secretly writes many of his famous poems, which are smuggled out of his prison. Many people the world over protest the harsh sentence of the seriously ill poet. Among these is French journalist Antoine, who visits Ritsos in the prison compound. But Antoine is also pursuing a secret goal: he is actually searching for his young Greek girlfriend, a student who seemingly disappeared at the start of the dictatorship. (Age: 16+) [SW]



80

Kriegk, Jean-Samuel (text)

L'art du manga

(The art of manga)

[Paris]: Palette, 2021. – 76 p.

(Series: Reference)

ISBN 978-2-35832-298-0

Japan | Manga | Culture | Art | Non-fiction

France is the country that reads the most manga outside of Japan. About sixteen million manga are sold in France every year. Forty per cent of comics bought in France come from Japan. What makes manga so fascinating to the public? What makes it special? How is a manga drawn and produced? With his well-researched and richly illustrated non-fiction book, journalist Jean-Samuel Kriegk gets to the bottom of these questions. He explains the special aesthetic of manga and its codes. He shows how French comic artists and Japanese manga artists influence each other. Kriegk explains the connections of manga to old Japanese drawing tradition and presents the work of the most important contemporary Japanese manga-masters. Last but not least, the book takes on commonly expressed prejudices, such as the claim that manga is unartistic, violent or vulgar. (Age: 14+) [SW]

81



Les canailles (text/illus.)

Le grand atelier

(*The great artist's workshop*)

[Paris]: Éditions Arola, [2021]. – [68] p.

(Series: Dada)

ISBN 978-2-35880-137-9

Art | Artist | Studio | Art history |
Non-fiction | Picture book

What does one need to make art? One needs, among other things, a place that lights one's creative spark. For most artists, that's their studio, which serves as a planning and production site as well as a retreat and sale room. What do artists' workshops reveal about their respective users? What could we learn about the techniques, tools and creations of famous graphic artists, painters, architects and sculptors by imagining what their studios were like? These are the kinds of questions posed by artist duo »Les canailles« (Diane Marissal and Jérémie Leblanc-Barbedienne) in their large-format non-fiction book. Les canailles stage sixteen imaginary studio workshops from different eras – from the building of the pyramids to the modern age. This creates a playful introduction to art history that especially engages readers by means of vividly coloured compositions cleverly arranged in geometric relation to each other. (Age: 6+) [SW]

82



Morin-Rotureau, Évelyne (text)

Gisèle Halimi. Contre toutes les injustices

(*Gisèle Halimi. Against all injustice*)

Paris: Oskar éditeur, 2020. – 143 p.

(Series: Elles ont osé)

ISBN 979-10-214-0729-9

Halimi, Gisèle (1927-2020) | Lawyer | Women's emancipation | Human rights | France | History 20th century | Biography | Non-fiction

Historian Évelyne Morin-Rotureau honours with this engaging biography the life and work of the Franco-Tunisian lawyer Gisèle Halimi, who died in 2020. She knowledgeably shows how the intelligent, passionate and industrious woman carved her path to becoming a lawyer, starting from very modest circumstances, and how, through her courageous work, she became internationally known not only as an inspiration for the anti-colonialist movement, but also for the women's rights and human rights movements. From the start, Halimi took extremely difficult, even »hopeless« cases. Her legal representation of twenty-four-year-old Algerian FLN-fighter Djamilia Boupacha, who was tortured and raped by members of the French army, made her instantly famous. This volume in the series »Elles ont osé!« sheds light on Halimi's most important cases – the ones that made history and led to new laws, such as the criminalization of rape and the right to have an abortion. (Age: 11+) [SW]



83

Rousseau, Élise (text)
Robbert (illus.)

Tous écolos!

(Everyone go green!)

Paris: De la Martinière jeunesse, [2021]. – 111 p.
ISBN 978-2-7324-9295-7

Environmental awareness | Environmentalism |
Consumption | Non-fiction

How can we still stop man-made climate change, animal and plant extinctions and looming ecological collapse? Many young people have understood the seriousness of the situation. They know how much is at stake for coming generations and demand resolute rethinking and lasting action. Even though children are often more aware of the environment than their parents, in discussions with adults they often lack access to important arguments or truly practical suggestions for integrating important ecological issues, like consumption, water use or species protection, into everyday life. This book by French journalist Élise Rousseau helps children stand up for a fair, eco-minded society. It features practical tips and tricks, as well as short and precise explanations, to take on the outdated ideas and unsubstantiated pessimism of many adults in regard to ecological topics – and to offer something new in their stead. (Age: 10+) [SW]



84

Condé, Nicolas (text) / Condé Irina (illus.)

Il était une fois ... la forêt sacrée

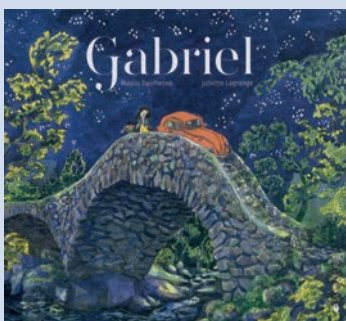
(There once was... in the sacred forest)

Conakry: Editions Ganndal, [2020]. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-2-35045-100-8

(Co-published with Éd. Ruisseaux d'Afrique,
Éd. Éburnie, Graines de Pensées, Éd. Ntsame,
Éd. Élonjia)

Nature | Forest | Animals | Initiation |
Coming of age | Folk tale

Eleven-year-old Koné and his same-aged friends are preparing to enter the sacred forest to undergo an initiation ritual that marks the transition into young adulthood. The goal of this rite-of-passage is to find the animal that will be one's future life companion and protector. Koné is afraid of the dark forest and he is anxious about the high expectations his parents have of him. Will he do the right thing? What animal will he return with? This folk tale is about finding one's place as a human being within the order and laws of nature, to rediscover kinship with other animals and to heal the disrupted balance of nature. Featuring text by Nicolas Condé and illustrations by Irina Condé, this picture book has been made accessible to young readers in six francophone African countries thanks to a collective publication effort by six African publishers under the direction of the International Alliance of Independent Publishers. (Age: 6+) [SW]



85

Daufresne, Maylis (text)
Lagrange, Juliette (illus.)

Gabriel

Genève: La Joie de lire, [2021]. – [26] p.
ISBN 978-2-88908-517-0

City life | Rural life | Grandfather | Grandson |
Nature | Trip | Picture book

Friday evening at last! After a clamorous week at school, seven-year-old Gabriel longs for peace. At the school gate, his mother waits impatiently for him in her car, wanting to escape the tumult of the Parisian metropolis. As they drive, just as in a film, the bank of the Seine river and the Parisian sea of houses flow by. From his comfortable position as observer, Gabriel even experiences a sudden downpour as a magical intermezzo. But how did they arrive so suddenly on this winding country road, surrounded by shrubs growing rampant and oak trees?! Not much farther now to Grandpa's, who is already waiting for him. Unlike all the up-tempo adults, his grandfather will allow him to just dream – or he'll show Gabriel the sky at night. With her succinct, poetic text and Juliette Lagrange's radiant watercolour pictures, French author Maylis Daufresne succeeds in creating a magical book about little weekend escapes to the countryside. (Age: 4+) [SW]



86

Voisard, Lisa (text/illus.)

Ornithorama. Découvre et observe le monde merveilleux des oiseaux

(*Ornithorama. Discover and observe the wonderful world of birds*)

Lausanne: Helvetiq, 2020. – 201 p.
ISBN 978-2-940673-05-6

Bird | Observation of nature | Non-fiction

Birds are fascinating, and »birding« is becoming ever more popular. This book for young bird fans supports young readers' first steps to becoming passionate bird watchers. Organized according to the habitat of the animals, this volume introduces eighty European bird species that you just might be able to spot in your own surroundings – with a little luck and know-how. Every ornithological portrait is realistically illustrated and demonstrates the characteristics of each bird and its way of life – from the size and colour of its eggs to its food and migration habits. An accompanying primer on observation systematically shows how to identify and name individual birds by noticing their overall appearance, beak, posture and body shape, movement pattern and habits. Swiss graphic artist and musician Lisa Voisard skilfully gets to the heart of the matter with carefully executed, beautiful illustrations. Her »Ornithorama« shows how to competently access the world of birds close to home. (Age: 8+) [SW]

87



Dijkstra, Lida (text)
 Straaten, Harmen van (illus.)
Sipke fynt in ljipaai = Sipke vindt een kievitsei
(Sipke finds a peewit's egg)
 Ljouwert: Afûk / Amsterdam: Rubinstein, 2020. –
 [30] p.
 ISBN 978-90-476-2803-3
 Text Frisian and Dutch

Friesland | Tradition | Bird | Bilingual book |
 Picture book

In springtime, the little shrew Sipke goes out to look for the first peewit egg with his grandfather. They walk through the Frisian meadows, jump over ditches and then they find it: the first peewit egg! Sipke makes sure that nothing happens to the clutch. In simple words and smooth rhymes (abcb), the egg-hunting ritual is woven into the story – from searching for the egg and offering it to the king's commissioner to protecting the nest until the young birds hatch. Beautiful watercolour and pen drawings accompany the text. Love for nature is central. As Grandpa says, »Whoever has an eye and a heart for nature, is a treasure of heaven!« This is the third book in a series of small picture books with text in Frisian (printed in green) and Dutch (printed in black), about traditions of the province of Fryslân (Friesland). The first books of the Sipke series were about the famous skating competition »Alvestêdetocht/ Elfstedentocht« (Eleven cities tour) and a sailing trip. (Age: 4+) [TD]

88



Chao, Ignacio (text)
 Sánchez, Eva (illus.)
Ninguén coma min. (Autobiografía dun tirano)
(No one like me. [Autobiography of a tyrant])
 Pontevedra: Kalandraka, 2020. – [30] p.
 (Series: MareMar)
 ISBN 978-84-8464-834-5

Pig | Tyrant | Hubris | Imagination | Loneliness |
 Picture book

The tone of this »autobiographical« text is bombastic and hymn-like: a single ode to oneself and one's own greatness and specialness. Who's talking? A pig without an inkling of self-doubt who, surrounded and courted by lackeys, is in love with himself, posing majestically as if in a painting. His ignorance and unerring narcissism recall certain notorious rulers of our day. On top of this, he is obviously a well-read pig, for the despotic boar Napoleon from Orwell's »Animal Farm« surely serves him as prime role model. The illustrations in this unusual, bewildering picture book are splendid studies of the protagonist's character, feelings and moods. Over and above the difficult-to-stomach hubris lies a shroud that turns the colours milky-white. In the end, that shroud is lifted to reveal a surprising twist: The supposed tyrant is in reality a lonely, day-dreaming pig – the boar Khanzir, who lived in the Kabul Zoo for a few years and achieved sad international notoriety as the single representative of his species in Afghanistan. (Age: 9+) [JW]

FRISIAN
 GALICIAN

Netherlands
 Spain

89



Fraga, Antonio M. (text)

Santoamaro

Vigo: Xerais, 2021. – 123 p.

(Series: Fóra de xogo; 194)

ISBN 978-84-9121-847-0

Coming of age | Friendship | Betrayal | Violence

This story is a kind of chamber drama whose »stage« is clearly demarcated. A dozen youths meet up at Santoamaro beach every Saturday for a whole summer. It's a time of limbo for everyone. The last school year is over, while the anticipated but uncertain future hasn't yet begun. School, friendship, music, parties, drugs, love, night swimming in the sea – the summer weeks centre around these things. When it surfaces that one of the girls was raped, friendships are championed, tested, or broken. Conflicts emerge and are endured. Fear, violence, betrayal and loyalty leave lasting impressions. In the short, incisive chapters of »Santoamaro«, Antonio M. Fraga presents believable characters and aptly captures their tone and emotional register. Nothing is sugar-coated, nothing is unnecessarily drawn out or commented by a narrative voice. The brief, direct language is amplified using WhatsApp chats at the start of each chapter. (Age: 14+) [JW]

90



Hochleitner, Verena (text/illus.)

Der Schneeleopard*(The snow leopard)*

Wien: Luftschacht, 2021. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-3-903081-89-5

Spring | Park | Cat | Father | Daughter |
Imagination | Picture book

Spring is finally here and Maresa goes to the park with her dad. Whom does she encounter there? A real snow leopard wearing a black top hat! Where the sandpit used to be, the feline creature is having a good stretch. Of course, Maresa has to try a few tricks with him: somersaults, jumping through hoops, and the tower, too – what a brave girl! »Der Schneeleopard« celebrates the imagination of children and the great potential of picture books. Verena Hochleitner's pictures are steeped in saturated colours – after a long winter, the meadow is not muddy brown, but almost bright orange – and the pages are designed with lots of variation. Some double-page spreads are teeming with details, others are divided up into individual scenes like a sequential story, and speech bubbles are used to create a comic-book feel. The artist also makes clever use of both endpapers to present a tableau of all the characters that appear in the story. Readers can flip back and forth and will enjoy all the wonderful things to discover. (Age: 3+) [IG]



91

ATAK (text/illus.)

Piraten im Garten*(Pirates in the garden)*

München: Antje Kunstmann, 2021 – [44] p.

ISBN 978-3-95614-393-9

Imagination | Chaos | Pirate | Intertextuality |
Picture book

This picture book blows readers away – not just because the pirates in the garden are naturally equipped with all kinds of revolvers and guns. No, ATAK is and always will be ATAK, and this means: the more the better; more colour, more fun, more playfulness, and on top of it all: more than enough visual quotes from images in high culture and popular culture; he cites works of art, books, heroines. For knowledgeable readers, there is plenty to discover. Those who are not (yet) so well versed still won't feel bored, because, while Emil is playing with his pirate figures inside the house, the seven real villains are wreaking havoc outside. As they are sneaking through the garden, they step on a balloon, and when it bursts – Bang! – EVERYTHING gets mixed up. Which way is up and which is down? What is inside and what is outside? And where is the pirate treasure? Heeelp! Emil, however, remains calm, puts things right, and chases the pirates out of the garden. Simply fab! (Age: 4+) [IG]



92

Bach, Tamara (text)

Sankt Irgendwas*(Saint Something)*

Hamburg: Carlsen, [2020]. – 123 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-58430-4

School trip | Solidarity | Rumour |
Communication | Conflict

Every novel Tamara Bach writes has it: this distinctive Bach sound – reduced, pointed, rhythmic. Other ever-present characteristics are the author's sensibility for different moods, her subtle humour, and her unwavering loyalty to her characters. Despite these common features, each book is unique and explores the possibilities of language anew: »Sankt Irgendwas« tells the story of a school trip during which something goes wrong. What, and the whys and wherefores, remain in the dark. There are various voices and rumours, but nobody knows nothing for sure. Tamara Bach combines different text types and narrative perspectives, leaving many gaps. What actually happened is never revealed. And even if team spirit and solidarity are important themes, the book also touches upon the problem of how things gain momentum, how assumptions and presumptions take on a life of their own; and it broaches the subject of miscommunication and constant escalation. (Age: 12+) [IG]



93

Blix, Ella (text)

Wild. Sie hören dich denken*(Wild. They can hear you think)*

Würzburg: Arena, 2020. – 372 p.

ISBN 978-3-401-60510-4

Forest | Nature | Animals | Transformation |
Metamorphosis

Where is the line separating humans from animals? Is it fixed? Or fluid? Are humans more animal than they care to admit? And do animals have human traits? These are some of the questions that this novel revolves around. In the lonely forest camp »Feel Nature«, city kids Noomi, Flix, Olympe, and Ryan are doing community service. The counselors treat them harshly, the work is exhausting; and on top of it all, increasingly strange things start happening. It seems as if the animals of the forest are trying to communicate with the teens to let them in on a secret. Ella Blix – the pen name of author duo Antje Wagner and Tania Witte – create a gripping story. The book presents the voices of the four very different camp participants, as well as that of a mysterious figure X. Together, these voices create a suggestive, fast-paced, wacky, but coherent plot. The way in which »Wild« uses the relationship between humans and animals to illuminate a current topic, without being an explicitly one-dimensional Covid novel, seems almost clairvoyant-like. (Age: 12+) [IG]



94

Boie, Kirsten (text)

Dunkelnacht*(Darknight)*

Hamburg: Oetinger, [2021]. – 127 p.

ISBN 978-3-7512-0053-0

World War II (1939-1945) | Fanaticism |
Murder | Conscience | History 1945

April 1945: American troops are merely a stone's throw from the small Bavarian town of Penzberg. The end of the war is near. Many people in the town are relieved, but they remain on their guard. You can't trust anyone, especially not the steadfast supporters of the National Socialist regime who still believe in victory or fear revenge actions; they are capable of anything. That night, a mob of soldiers and members of the special »Werewolf« unit hunts down alleged »traitors« and »resistance fighters«, and murders sixteen men and women. Kirsten Boie addresses a little-known true event in German history. She talks about the so-called Murder Night of Penzberg (»Penzberger Mordnacht«) in restrained language, short paratactic sentences, and with meticulous accuracy. Employing an omniscient narrator, she strictly adheres to proven facts. However, she adds three fictional young people – Gustl, Schorsch and Marie – who give a human face to hatred, blindness, and stubbornness, but also to hope and conscience. What happened that night is inexcusable. (Age: 14+) [IG]

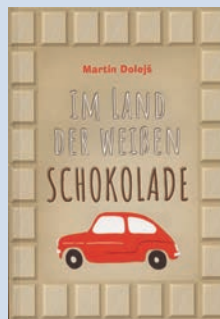


95

Damm, Antje (text/illus.)

Füchslein in der Kiste*(Little fox in the box)*Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Verlag, 2020. – [26] p.
ISBN 978-3-89565-399-5Fox | Rabbit | Old age | Death | Mourning |
Memories | Picture book

The fact that Antje Damm studied architecture is quite apparent in »Füchslein in der Kiste«. In this book – just like in her previous picture books – she works with three-dimensional sets. Upon closer look at the forest she designed as a backdrop, readers will realise it is a cemetery, because there are gravestones. Naturally, the eponymous fox and his box are present, and then there are the rabbits. They regard the fox with suspicion, because they are afraid he will eat them. Yet the old fox slurps nothing but tomato soup; he can no longer chew rabbits. So both sides become friends, and the fox teaches the rabbits some fox-skills: e.g. how to stalk prey. One day, however, the last can of tomato soup is empty and the fox is so tired that he lies down to sleep – for all eternity. Antje Damm tells a touching and soothing story about a creature's last days and makes death a little less intimidating, without trivialising it. (Age: 4+) [IG]



96

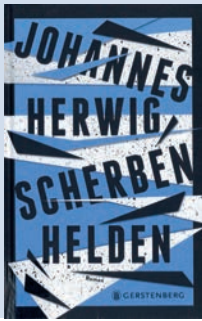
Dolejš, Martin (text)

Im Land der weißen Schokolade*(In the land of white chocolate)*Bamberg: Magellan, 2021. – 253 p.
ISBN 978-3-7348-5054-7

Czechoslovakia | History 1980s | Escape

The »golden« West is actually white, because that's where you can find it: white chocolate. Martin's friends can hardly believe it, and neither can his teacher, Comrade Romanova. Not even the Soviet Union has anything like it! Martin lives in a small Czechoslovakian town in the early 1980s. Since he has a huge crush on Ivanka, the leader of »The Pioneers«, he eagerly joins this communist youth organisation. His parents, however, are less than enthusiastic about communism. They are eager to get to the »land of white chocolate«. Once they arrive in Western Germany, Martin ends up in the Swabian countryside, where people speak with a strange accent and loud voices, and where they eat »Spätzle mit Linsen« (a type of pasta with lentils). Everything is confusing. Martin Dolejš's children's book, which was influenced by his own childhood experiences, navigates the peaks and pitfalls of insecurity and inferiority complexes with linguistic wit and self-irony and talks about people's tenacity and bounceback-ability. (Age: 12+) [IG]

97



Herwig, Johannes (text)

Scherbenhelden

(*Shattered heroes*)

Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2020. – 269 p.

ISBN 978-3-8369-6059-5

Leipzig | History 1990s | Punk | Rebellion | Love

Nino is a punker, the full monty: loud music, lots of booze, a mohawk, hole-riddled jeans, and safety pins. With his mates and Zombie, on whom he has a crush, he hangs out in parks, fights with Nazis, and runs away from the police. Life at home with his father is so-so, his mother is in the West of Germany, and the parents of his former best friend Max have forbidden their son any contact with Nino. »Bad influence« and all that. Still, beneath Nino's rough exterior hides a sensitive boy, a boy who constantly ponders over himself and others, who is overwhelmed by the crumbling world around him and at the same time completely euphoric by all that seems possible. In the novel »Scherbenhelden«, Johannes Herwig presents a credible protagonist and aptly captures the atmosphere of glittering consumer temptations and industrial wastelands, of shattered dreams and disorientation in post-reunification Leipzig in the early 1990s. (Age: 12+) [IG]

98



Initiative Perspektivwechsel (ed.)

Djoko, H. / Lipowsky, K. / Maestracci, B. (concept)

Mindjy, F. / Assako, D. (illus.)

Widerstand. Drei Generationen anticolonialer Proteste in Kamerun (*Resistance. Three generations of anticolonial protest in Cameroon*)

Berlin: Initiative Perspektivwechsel, 2020. – 146 p.

no ISBN

Cameroon | Colonialism | Anticolonialism | Resistance | History 1880s-2020

To many Germans, the German colonial history is largely unknown. Yet this blind spot gets more attention these days in a debate that is long overdue, one that includes political, social, and cultural aspects. Cameroon became a German colony in 1884. After Germany had lost its colonies after the First World War, it was »administered« by France and Great Britain. It wasn't until 1960 and 1961 respectively, that Cameroon became an independent state. The slim comic book »Widerstand« covers three phases of the Cameroonians' protest against the colonial powers and introduces some of the central actors: Duala Manga Bell, the women of the Anlu Rebellion, and André Blaise Essama. In different ways, all of them resisted, or are still resisting, oppression, exploitation, and contempt for humanity. The book offers a different visual language for each generation (partly in black-and-white, partly in colour) and complements the visual stories with contextualisation and interviews. Readers get extensive information that won't overwhelm them. Well done! (Age: 14+) [IG]



99

Keßler, Verena (text)

Die Gespenster von Demmin

(The ghosts of Demmin)

Berlin: Hanser Berlin, 2020. – 237 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-26784-8

Family | Suicide | Coping with grief | Memories | Germany | History 1945

Career ambition: war reporter. Larry keeps training for this job every day, for example by hanging upside down from the apple tree. Old Ms. Dohlberg, who often stands at the window lost in thought, watches her. Larry and Ms Dohlberg live in Demmin, a place full of shadows. It's a town where, at the end of World War II, a large number of women drowned their children and themselves in the river Peene, including Ms Dohlberg's mother and her little sister. Decades later, Larry's brother died in an accident and his memory has been haunting the family ever since. Verena Keßler lets Larry and Ms Dohlberg tell their stories and cleverly links past and present, while placing the characters' individual experiences within a larger framework. While Ms Dohlberg sinks deeper and deeper into her memories, Larry fights for her right to a future. Undaunted and tough, she confronts her ghosts. Therefore, despite the fact that death is omnipresent in Verena Keßler's book, it is a very vibrant novel. (Age: 14+) [IG]



100

Krusche, Lisa (text)

Das Universum ist verdammt groß und supermystisch

(The universe is darn big and super mystical)

Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, 2021. – 191 p.

ISBN 978-3-407-75600-8

Father | Search | Trip | Friendship | Circus

Getting out and about is always a good thing, especially when you want to find your father, whom you've never seen before. Gustav is really lucky to meet Charles: being both fearless and relaxed, she (yep, Charles is a girl) devises a plan with Gustav's grandpa, an old circus magician, to track down said father. No sooner said than done. Off they go! Along the way, all sorts of things happen – secrets are revealed, mistakes confessed, and eerie, heartfelt and – obviously – super-mystical encounters happen. Moreover, Gustav speaks again (he had given up on that for a while), and grandpa reencounters some old friends and even rediscovers his circus rabbit. And Gustav's dad, what about him? Sorry, no spoilers! Lovable, stubborn, and imperfect characters and a journey full of surprises – Lisa Krusche has written a wonderful road trip novel for children. Read it! PS: In »Unsere anarchistischen Herzen« (Our anarchistic hearts – published by Fischer Verlag) Charles and Gustav reappear, a few years older, tougher and very special. (Age: 8+) [IG]

101



Poznanski, Ursula (text)

Cryptos

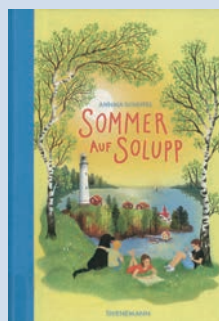
Bindlach: Loewe, 2020. – 443 p.

ISBN 978-3-7432-0050-0

Environmental destruction | Virtual reality |
Reality | Dystopia | Thriller

In the not too distant future, the world is an inhospitable place: droughts, storms, floods. That's why world designers construct »alternative realities«, such as landscapes populated by dinosaurs, life at court in the Middle Ages, and surfing and chilling out on a beach. People can switch between these worlds at will and, when they die there, they are not truly dead; instead, they merely return to the »real world« – same as at night when they sleep. Then they are reunited with their body, which is lying inside a capsule. In »Cryptos«, Ursula Poznanski pulls out all the stops of storytelling: She embeds numerous references to human and intellectual history in an action-packed and extremely suspenseful thriller plot. In the process, she raises central existential and ontological questions that result from the interplay between the real and the virtual worlds. This complex dystopian novel is narrated in such an enjoyable way that readers will hardly notice their brains going into overdrive as they devour it. (Age: 12+) [IG]

102



Scheffel, Annika (text)

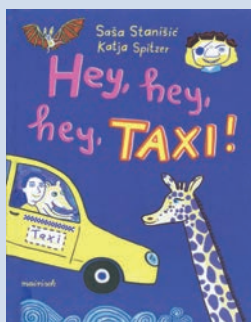
Sommer auf Solupp*(Summer on Solupp)*

Stuttgart: Thienemann, 2021. – 318 p.

ISBN 978-3-522-18571-4

Island | Summer | Holidays | Adventure |
Secret | Treasure

Mari is less than thrilled when her mother decides that the family is to spend the summer holidays on Solupp – an island so tiny, it isn't shown on any map. She really wants to go to football camp! Solupp, however, turns out to be simply perfect: In no time at all, Mari makes friends with Ema and Joon, there are waffles and »solberry« ice cream galore; and there are mystical inhabitants, a boy who emerges from the sea, dark secrets, and a lost treasure. »Sommer auf Solupp« creates a childhood idyll, a place where children can do whatever they like. The novel plays with classic topoi from children's literature, and calls to mind children's classics such as Astrid Lindgren's »Seacrow Island«. Moreover, the narrative voice and the unique landscape descriptions, tangible and magical at the same time, are impressive. A true summer read that can be enjoyed all year round. (Age: 10+) [IG]



Stanišić, Saša (text)

Spitzer, Katja (illus.)

Hey, hey, hey, Taxi!

Hamburg: mairisch Verlag, 2021. – 98 p.

ISBN 978-3-948722-05-0

Imagination | Storytelling | Short story

Get into a taxi, start talking, and make the acquaintance of ... a sad giraffe with a short neck, a Riesling (i.e. a very small giant) or a taxi driver who says nothing but »Odjo-odjo«; how convenient, because »Odjo-odjo« is also his name. At times, the taxi passenger rides to the harbor, where pirate ships drop anchor; another time, the taxi zooms straight to the Middle Ages, and after that, it zips through a city of metal. Too metallic? Well, the following ride takes the taxi through a city of vegetable traffic lights! Saša Stanišić's short stories are delightfully quirky and anarchic – just like Katja Spitzer's colourful, bubbling pictures. Without a doubt: little ones will laugh themselves silly when they hear the crazy stories from »Hey, hey, hey, Taxi!« And they will certainly want to invent their own taxi stories. Maybe stories featuring auratic ants or five-legged fly-fish? Why not – anything is possible! (Age: 3+) [IG]



Steinhöfel, Andreas (text)

Schössow, Peter (illus.)

Rico, Oskar und das Mistverständnis

(Rico, Oskar, and the mistunderstanding)

Hamburg: Carlsen, [2020]. – 331 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-55783-4

Friendship | Conflict | Mystery | Berlin

In the fifth and (yes, indeed, the very) last »Rico and Oskar«-volume, things get pretty heated as usual: Not only do Rico, Oskar, and their gang have to save their playground from nasty real estate speculators; on top, there is also a lot of friction between the two friends, and in the end things blow up completely. Oh boy. It might be better to take a break from each other. Thus, Rico sets off on an adventurous holiday in the countryside, and Oskar (yep, Oskar!) becomes the hero of »Oskar's grand adventures«, composed by Rico in the style of »Hedwig Kurzmaler« (i.e. Hedwig Courts-Mahler [1867-1950], a German author of popular romance novels). With this novel-within-a-novel, set in Berlin in the 1920s, Andreas Steinhöfel boldly overcomes narrative illogicalities: How can a first-person narrator tell of his friend's adventures, when he is somewhere else entirely? This feature, as well as the intertextual fireworks he sets off, and the many linguistic balls he juggles, make this a truly entertaining read. (Age: 10+) [IG]

105



Wildner, Martina (text)

Der Himmel über dem Platz*(The sky above the field)*

Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, [2021]. – 219 p.

ISBN 978-3-407-75848-4

Football | Gender role | Emancipation

Martina Wildner is a sports buff: In 2014, she was awarded the German Children's Literature Award for her novel »Königin des Sprungturms« (Queen of the diving platform), which focuses on high diving. Her new novel is about football: Jo switches to a boys' team to become a better football player. She is really tough and talented, but the boys make her life difficult. Hello self-doubt! Yet Jo is tenacious, and isn't discouraged that easily, especially since a few people come to her rescue quite unexpectedly – her strange neighbour Kubitschek, for example. Bye-bye self-doubt! And bye-bye gender clichés! Martina Wildner draws a wonderful portrait of her main character and mixes some surreal sequences into the story – just like she did in her book »Das schaurige Haus« (The creepy house). This is cool, and it makes »Der Himmel über dem Platz« a novel that is so much more than overtly intentional football literature. (Age: 10+) [IG]

106



Wirbeleit, Patrick / Matthews, Andrew (text)

Heidschötter, Uwe (illus.)

Das unsichtbare Raumschiff*(The invisible spaceship)*

Berlin: Kibitz Verlag, 2021. – 69 p.

ISBN 978-3-948690-05-2

Space | Spaceship | Danger | Science fiction | Parody | Comic

A comic with almost no pictures? Are you serious? What an unusual idea. Yet it works, and it works very well! As with any other comic strip, there are panels and speech bubbles. They are printed in different colours to indicate who is speaking. Everything else is black, though; no wonder, as both spaceship and crew are invisible and merge with the blackness of outer space. Where are they navigating to? Where are the correct buttons and gear levers? Well ... This gem is a sci-fi parody with quirky and occasionally slightly doltish characters. The book is great fun, precisely because it is a kind of visual podcast. Since everything is told through dialogue, linguistic wit plays a huge role. Kibitz Verlag has been around since 2020. You can easily tell that it was founded by true comic-book enthusiasts: Their entire list is as fascinating as »Das unsichtbare Raumschiff«! (Age: 8+) [IG]



107

Zeise, Lena (text/illus.)

Das wahre Leben der Bauernhof-tiere

(The true life of farm animals)

Leipzig: Klett Kinderbuch, 2020. – 37 p.

ISBN 978-3-95470-240-4

Farm animals | Food production | Non-fiction | Picture book

This non-fiction picture book has a mission, as the title clearly indicates: Its aim is to show how animals live on a farm. They are kept there to be useful to us humans – with their milk, their eggs, their meat. The endpapers, which show butter and sausage, yoghurt and wine gums, reveal that food production is the book's focus. Lena Zeise contrasts conventional – aka industrial – and organic livestock farming. The text doesn't sugarcoat matters, nor do the illustrations show farm life through rose-coloured glasses. Instead, the book provides photo-realistic pictures from the barn and the slaughterhouse. This is honest and, apart from kindling the readers' respect and empathy for animals, it may also disturb and perhaps overwhelm the younger audience. However, in the end this is less due to the way of depiction than the reality behind it. (Age: 8+) [IG]



108

Gugger, Rebecca (text/illus.)

Röthlisberger, Simon (text/illus.)

Der Berg

(The mountain)

Zürich: NordSüd Verlag, 2021. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-3-314-10562-3

Vision | Point of view | Reality | Being right | Animals | Picture book

All the animals know what the mountain looks like: It's green and woody (according to Bear), wet with lots of fish (Octopus), flowery and meadowy (Sheep), steep and stony (Chamois). Each protagonist is convinced that their idea of the mountain is the only correct one, and they aren't shy to loudly proclaim: »The others have no idea! They're so wrong!« However, none of them has ever seen the mountain. So they are delighted to accept the bird's invitation to climb it, because, naturally, each animal wants to prove that she/he is right... Once they reach the summit, surprising perspectives open up to everyone – including the readers. Rebecca Gugger and Simon Röthlisberger's picture book stands out for its astonishing animal personnel (Octopus!), its enthralling page layout, its varied picture compositions that perfectly portray the animals' visions of the mountain, as well as its witty dramatic structure. That's the way to re-stage a well-worn picture book topic. Brilliant! (Age: 4+) [IG]

GERMAN

Germany
Switzerland

109



Wells, Benedict (text)

Hard Land

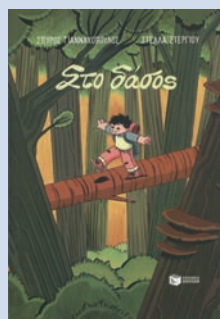
Zürich: Diogenes, [2021]. – 345 p.

ISBN 978-3-257-07148-1

Summer | Coming of age | Friendship | Love |
Death | Loss

»During that summer, I fell in love and my mother died.« This is the beginning of »Hard Land« – and if the saying is true that all good stories are about love and/or death, then there is nothing more to say. Benedict Wells has written a great coming-of-age novel. It's 1985 somewhere in Missouri, the summer holidays are starting, and fifteen-year-old Sam describes a time when everything changes, a time when he is finding his place in the world. He tackles all the big issues, as well as the small ones, in a truthful and serious manner, but also with the lightness of a sleep-walker. Sam narrates with the sort of wisdom unique to teenagers. His view of the world is clear, but not cold. And even though the story is about life and death, about love and betrayal, it never turns kitschy. (Age: 12+) [IG]

110

Giannakopoulos, Spyros (Giannakopoulos, Spyros)
(text)

Stergiou, Stella (Stergiou, Stella) (illus.)

Sto dásos*(In the forest)*

Athēna: Patakēs (Patakis), 2020. – 84 p.

ISBN 978-960-16-8371-3

Forest | Puberty | Adventure | Quest |
Fairy tale | Intertextuality | Graphic novel

A farm boy gets lost in an eerie forest. He is found by the mountain dwarves but is kidnapped and deceived by a mean witch. He then vanquishes the witch with the help of a knight and his frog princess, a giant and the dwarves. This strengthens and emboldens the farm boy so that his early homesickness gives way to an appetite for more adventures. This graphic novel cleverly and eccentrically combines comic and fairy-tale elements, ancient myths and the present day. It captures the tumultuous, unsettling time of transition during puberty. The close dialogue between renowned author Spyros Giannakopoulos's text and the pictures of architect, designer and well-known comic artist Stella Stergiou create both suspense and wit. Stella Stergiou's illustrations are full of intertextual allusions and whimsical contemporary details. »Sto dásos« received the 2020 Chaniartoon Award of the International Comic & Animation Festival for »Best Script« and »Best Comic«. (Age: 10+) [TA]

111



Kyritopoulos, Alexēs (Kyritopoulos, Alexis)
(text/illus.)

Kuragio

(*Courage*)

Athēna: Kedros, 2020. – [50] p.

ISBN 978-960-04-5074-3

Lion | Courage | Resignation | Zest for life |
Altruism | Picture book

An old circus lion loses his courage and then loses his job. Not even brave firemen or fearless window cleaners can help him revive his courage. Even Don Quijote wanders by and is easily able to defeat him. When the lion meets refugees at the harbour, he becomes homesick and makes his way back to his home in the wild... but fails miserably. Hunters bring him to the zoo, where he lives peacefully until a fire breaks out and he rescues a baby lion. The lions return to the jungle together, and the young one is now king of the jungle. The lion carries a family portrait with him throughout this picture book. It serves as a recurring symbol of love's power over alienation. The pictures of renowned illustrator, author and set designer Alexis Kyritopoulos offer a colourful fireworks display of collage and mixed media other techniques, insightfully expressing the protagonists' emotions. (Age: 4+) [TA]

112



Palaiologu, Nikos (Paleologou, Nikos) (text)
Sōtērakos, Kōstēs (Sotirakos, Kostis) (illus.)

Ē gata tu Choselito Perdon

(*The cat of Joselito Perdón*)

Athēna: Key Books, [2020]. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-618-5265-29-8

Cat | Humanity | Respect | Diversity |
Interculturalism | Picture book

Cats are choosy, but we could learn much from their ways of building trust. In this – true – story, a cat helps shed light on two people, two neighbours, two worlds in a high-rise apartment building in the diverse Athenian neighbourhood of Kypseli. The cat couldn't care less about the neighbours' origins; their kindness, however, inspires it to casually jump back and forth over the balcony fence that separates the two apartments – no passport needed. The cat may belong to Joselito, but his neighbour Kostas tends to the cat with just as much care and leisure. In his picture book debut, author Nikos Paleologou perceptively writes about love, the sense of family and diversity. The text is boldly set in hand-written lettering. Paired with Kostis Sotirakos's expressive graphic illustrations, text and image form a successful aesthetic unity. The book received an honourable mention for the EBΓE (Greek Graphic Design & Illustration Awards). (Age: 3+) [TA]

113



Pipinē, Argyrō (Pipini, Argyro) (text)
Samartzē, Iris (Samartzi, Iris) (illus.)

Όταν ο ήλιος πάει για ύπνο

When the sun goes to sleep

Athēna: Martēs (Martis), 2020. – [40] p.
ISBN 978-618-84312-7-0

Night | Sleep | Dream | Imagination |
Imaginary trip | Poetry

When the sun and Sleep meet, Sleep mutters some magic to create dream-carpets so that it can go on journeys with you. Floating over the jungle school, you listen as the animals there read and do math. In India, you hear an elephant choir sing. Thanks to sleep, you can be amazed at the cat party happening on the roof and you can spot fantastical bridges in the North. The atmospheric and sonorous verses of renowned author Argyro Pipini move effortlessly between familiar domesticity and far-off foreign places. They seduce the reader into sleep worlds and inspire cosy goodnight conversations. In this wonderful 2.5-metre-long leporello, illustrator Iris Samartzis, nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award 2022 and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2021, lays out the nightshirt of personified sleep like a giant stage upon which the text-enhancing utopian landscapes burst like fireworks. The reverse side unfolds like a giant patchwork blanket and reveals further lively details. (Age: 3+) [TA]

114



Priobolu, Elenē (Priovolou, Eleni) (text)

Φως σε μαύρο ουρανό

(Light in a black sky)

Athēna: Kastaniōtēs (Kastaniotis), 2020. – 152 p.
ISBN 978-960-03-6706-5

Family | Violence | Unemployment | Poverty |
Xenophobia | Homelessness | Solidarity |
Humanity | Coming of age

Sixteen-year-old Ntinos's family was once well off but now finds itself in poverty, oppressed by his father's violent outbreaks of domestic and xenophobic violence. Ntinos finds refuge with outsiders who are persecuted by people like his father. He stays in school thanks to his teacher who steadfastly encourages Ntinos's aptitude for math. Music, math and his friendship with Dori help the young man survive. Dori procures work for him, and arranges for him, his mother and his sister to live in her handicapped mother's solidarity kitchen. Ntinos in return helps Dori with successfully graduating from school. An old ice manufacturing plant becomes a residence and community space for everyone, including several homeless people and refugees they've befriended. Everyone can regain their sense of dignity there. In a gripping way, Eleni Priovolou shows that even in the bleakest moments of social crisis there is space to practice ideals like humanity and solidarity. (Age: 14+) [TA]



Stephanidē, Phōteinē (Stephanidi, Photini) (text/illus.)

Papuusia me luraki

(Strap shoes)

Athēna: Kaleidoskopio (Kaleidoscope),

[2020]. – 60 p.

ISBN 978-960-471-216-8

Shoe | Zest for life | Creativity | Father |
Daughter | Dictatorship | Greece |
History 1967-1974

A pair of strap shoes carry a girl through her childhood into puberty – scuffed up during play, shiny on special days, at other times they stand inquisitively at courtyard walls or shuffle shyly near first crushes. The girl and her strap shoes stop to admire her father's artwork on his easel. He is being monitored by the dictatorship. The shoes send the girl careening through her mother's flower bed, pair with her light-blue school uniform, or join her as she skips class so she can build a little house made of clay. Last but not least, the shoes ally with her to resist the grim times. Across twenty-one autobiographical episodes, Photini Stephanidi portrays the process of growing up and shows a child's capacity to discover the magic of life even in the hardest of times. The accompanying illustrations aptly capture the lyrical mood of the text. Photini Stephanidi's outstanding oeuvre encompasses numerous award-winning books and illustration work. »Papuusia me luraki« received the 2021 young adult book prize from IBBY Greece. (Age: 13+) [TA]



Takács, Mari (text/illus.)

Bingaminga és a babkák

(Bingaminga and the Little Beans)

Budapest: Csimota, 2020. – 98 p.

ISBN 978-615-5649-59-2

Magic | Fantasy world | Fantasy fiction

For this fast-paced children's book, the excellent illustrator Marit Takács not only created a new style of illustration but also wrote the story herself. Her children's book debut has a lot to offer: a famous magician who grows ever younger over the course of the story; clever child-like helpers; strange tools and invisible magical beans that spread only good thoughts and are responsible for maintaining balance in the world. But that is exactly where the problems start: the beans have gotten out of control! Bingaminga and his little helpers have to travel over hill and valley, along dangerous paths, to break the rotten spell that has fallen upon the world's bean-producing machinery. And then Bingaminga needs to save himself from the process of steady rejuvenation. For this he seeks out Morfió, his former friend and now enemy. But that is a story for the second volume of the series, »Bingaminga és Morfió«. (Age: 6+) [KW]

117



Various authors (text)
Bölec, Lilla (illus.)
Nagy, Boldizsár (ed.)

Meseország mindenkié

(*Wonderland is for everyone*)

Budapest: Labrisz Leszibikus Egyesület, 2020. –
179 p.
ISBN 978-615-00-8928-7

Diversity | Self-determination | Self-discovery |
Fairy tale | Adaptation

In a forest a rabbit is born with three ears. A girl named Margaret wants to be a heroic warrior instead of being confined to the kitchen. A young roe buck comes to accept that he cannot grow antlers. A prince is soon to get married, but finds the brother of his potential bride much more attractive... These and many other tales are included in this book. They are all adaptations of well-known fairy tales, freshly interpreted by seventeen Hungarian authors as part of the diversity project organised by the Labrisz Lesbian Association. In a multitude of ways, they show how all living creatures are different in the way they are made, what they prefer, what they wish for; and that some need to stand up for themselves and fight very hard for what they want. Happily, this can turn out quite well in fairy tales: the rabbit becomes a guardian of the forest because he can hear so much better. Margaret becomes the heroic slayer of giants. The roe buck receives antlers made of tree branches, and the prince's dream of true love comes true. (Age: 6+) [KW]

118



Zepf, Máire (text)
Donnelly, Paddy (illus.)

Míp

(*Meep*)

An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe: Futa Futa,
[2020]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-910945-86-5

Space robot | Mars | Exploration | Alien |
Survival | Picture book

Inspired by the story of real-life US space robot Opportunity, which spent fourteen years on Mars before a sandstorm destroyed it, this picture book details fictional space robot Míp's mission on the »Red Planet«. The smart, rotund creature, with her three spidery legs and spindly arms, is the scientists' pride and glory. Once she arrives at her destination, she immediately starts her job analysing rocks, foraging the landscape for water, and snapping pictures to send home to Earth. Her mission is a great success, except for one minor flaw: There is no sign whatsoever of alien life on Mars – or so everybody thinks. Máire Zepf's playful text radiates joy, excitement, and suspense. The repeated assertion that »no aliens« can be found is cheekily undermined by Paddy Donnelly's sparky digital illustrations. The pictures prove that there clearly are small, pear-shaped, three-eyed Mars-inhabitants hiding behind rocks and below the surface – and the kind creatures eventually come to Míp's rescue when disaster strikes. (Age: 3+) [CS]

119



Antinori, Andrea (text/illus.)

L'arancio

(The orange tree)

Mantova: Maurizio Corraini, [2021]. – [44] p.
ISBN 978-8-8757-0945-7

[Orange tree](#) | [Harassment](#) | [Revenge](#) |
[Persecution](#) | [Flight](#) | [Picture book](#)

This is a finely drawn and perfectly coloured picture book with a minimal layout. Its protagonist, an orange tree, is depicted from its beginnings as a slender but viable young tree through all its phases of growth. Green leaves soon guard its delicious fruit, when suddenly one day all sorts of hectic activity break out. Greedy birds alight on its branches, a caterpillar devours its leaves, and a farmer appears with an enormous pair of shears that bode no good. And last but not least, a dog pees on its trunk. This is all too much for the orange tree that wants nothing more than to grow in peace and enjoy the passing of time. To realise this wish, it embarks on a daring escape that takes it aboard various forms of transport to reach a distant island. The delicate pictures and onomatopoeic text are by Andrea Antinori, one of the most noteworthy writer/illustrators of Italian children's literature today. (Age: 3+) [SO]

120



Assandri, Giuseppe (text)

La rosa bianca di Sophie

(Sophie's White Rose)

Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, [2020]. – 159 p.
(Series: Narrativa San Paolo ragazzi)
ISBN 978-88-922-2339-4

[Scholl, Sophie \(1921-1943\)](#) | [White Rose](#) |
[Resistance](#) | [National Socialism](#) | [Germany](#) |
[History 1921-1943](#)

Sophie Scholl was raised in an open-minded family that was attuned to injustices and encouraged independent-minded action. This approach to life formed the basis of Sophie's later decisions. At the age of twenty-one she happily joined her brother Hans in Munich to take up studies in biology and philosophy. Soon she joined in the secret activities of the White Rose, a group formed by Hans and his friends to engage in peaceful resistance the National Socialist dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. But Sophie's desire and struggle for justice and freedom ended abruptly in February 1943. Her arrest was quickly followed by a sham trial and the death penalty. The voices of Sophie, Hans and other group members were brutally, but only temporarily silenced, because their ideas have continued to spread. »Despite everything, their spirit lives on.« This powerful biographical novel tells a moving story, which will remain with the reader for a long time. (Age: 11+) [SO]

121



Orecchio, Davide (text)
Cerri, Mara (illus.)

L' isola di Kalief

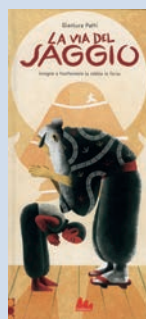
(Kalief's island)

Roma: Orecchio acerbo, [2021]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-88-320-7058-3

[New York City](#) | [History 2010s](#) | [Browder, Kalief \(1993-2015\)](#) | [African Americans](#) | [Racism](#) | [Discrimination](#) | [Injustice](#) | [Imprisonment](#) | [Picture book](#)

The announcement in 2019 that New York City had decided to close its jail on Rikers Island made top headlines. The jail is one of the largest correctional institutions in the world, notoriously known for cases of abuse and official misconduct. This picture book relates the bitter and dramatic story of Kalief Browder, an underage African-American boy, who was wrongly accused of stealing a backpack filled with valuables. He was held for years without trial, repeatedly in solitary confinement, on Rikers Island and committed suicide two years after his release. The story of his criminal charges and the need for changes to the penal system and greater respect for human rights are depicted very impressively in pictures by the talented illustrator Mara Cerri and in the clearly written text by historian Davide Orecchio. »L' isola di Kalief« also conveys the dream that even in a place where so much suffering occurred, it will be possible one day for young people to grow up full of hope for the future, without forgetting the past. (Age: 8+) [SO]

122



Patti, Gianluca (text/illus.)

La via del saggio insegna a trasformare la rabbia in forza

(The path of the wise teaches how to change anger into power)

Roma: Gallucci, 2021. – [24] p.
ISBN 978-88-3624-211-5

[Rage](#) | [Wisdom](#) | [Self-control](#) | [Legend](#) | [Picture book](#)

Gianluca Patti is a writer, illustrator and cartoon filmmaker whose life took him from Sicily to Urbino and then to Barcelona. His picture book is set in a faraway place and takes up a Japanese legend that has been told in many variations. It is a story of Kintarō, a child born on a stormy night to the stroke of lightning. He grows up alone on a mountain top far removed from the world. Cared for by a mountain witch, the boy comes to know every type of animal, but has no contact with other humans. Kintarō is endowed with immense strength and an uncontrollable rage. These can only be transformed for good when he encounters the old, wise warrior in the village. Once feared by all in the village, he then learns to harness his own powers. Then, at last, the village's inhabitants no longer regard Kintarō as a monster, but as a young warrior who will mature through reflection and action. Thanks to the harmonious interplay between text and illustrations this book about respecting differences will appeal to both young and old. (Age: 6+) [SO]



123

Piano, Carlo / Piano, Renzo (text)
 Vidus Rosin, Tommaso (illus.)
Alla ricerca di Atlantide. Viaggio nell'architettura per ragazzi sognatori
(Looking for Atlantis. An architectural journey for young dreamers)
 Milano: Feltrinelli, 2021. – 155 p.
 ISBN 978-88-07-92336-4

Piano, Renzo (b. 1937) | [Architecture](#) | [History](#)
 1971-2020 | [Ship voyage](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

The sunken city of Atlantis is a very old legend. To discover its secrets, explorers, adventurers, scientists, scholars, and other zealots have again and again set out to discover the unattainable. The imagined and fictionalised Atlantis is also the starting point for this book. Elsa, the first-person narrator, travels around the world with her grandfather – the renowned architect Renzo Piano – to help people better understand architecture. The book presents not only buildings and landscapes but also people. Their journey takes them to the harbour of Genoa, as an example of Renzo Piano's genial architectural work, to the airport on a man-made island off Osaka, or to contemporary examples of architectural design that have become city landmarks, such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the pulsating district around Potsdamer Platz in the new, post-wall capital city of Berlin, or the Niarchos Foundation cultural centre in Athens. »Alla ricerca di Atlantide« is a highly recommendable information book for young readers. (Age: 10+) [SO]



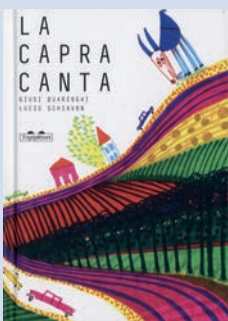
124

Punzi, Arianna (adapt.)
 Guicciardini, Desideria (illus.)
La Divina Commedia
(Divine Comedy)
 Roma: Lapis edizioni, [2021]. – 257 p.
 ISBN 978-88-7874-821-7

[Dante Alighieri / Divina Commedia](#) | [Adaptation](#)

In commemoration of the 700th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's death in 1321, an adaptation of his »Divine Comedy« for young people has been published in Italy. Young readers encounter the famous author, who has lost his way along his journey through the afterlife. In the shadowy wings of the underworld he finds his master, Virgil, the most famous Roman poet. Together with this uniquely suited guide, Dante discovers the courage to face the unknown and overcome his fears. The path he follows takes him out of the flames and the darkness of hell to the purification of purgatory, and then to the heights of paradise, where he sees, in shining light, his beloved Beatrice again. Arianna Punzi, a philologist of Romance languages, describes, in a cultivated Italian, the depths of feeling, the power of emotions, and many wondrous, unexpected encounters and exciting stories of the men and women Dante encounters along the way. The thoroughly varied colourfulness of the illustrations by Desideria Guicciardini will astonish the viewer again and again. (Age: 9+) [SO]

125



Quarenghi, Giusi (text)
Schiavon, Lucio (illus.)

La capra canta

(The goat is singing)

Milano: Topipittori, [2021]. – 77 p.

(Series: Parola magica)

ISBN 978-88-33700-69-4

Poetry

Quotations from Anne Sexton, Antonio Porta and Franz Kafka preface this lovely book in which the poems by Giusi Quarenghi, one of Italy's most important modern-day poets, are set off against the starkly coloured illustrations of Lucio Schiavon. The illustrations reflect the verses, emphasize them, interpret them, and expound upon their meaning. In this way the reader discovers that a goat can sing not only upon and under a bench, but also quite without one – contradicting the famous Italian tongue-twister, which claims that a goat sings above a bench, but dies below it. The thirty-six poems are distinguished by a language that is both restrained and cultivated as well as suggestive, powerful, and sometimes magical. They offer thirty-six times the opportunity to encounter emotions, daytime or night time, relationships, the world of children or humanity at large. Suitable for both adults and children, this volume is a hymn to life to be read together at home, in the out-of-doors, at school and in libraries, but also in peaceful solitude. (Age: 5+) [SO]

126



Sgardoli, Guido (text)

Scomparso

(Missing)

San Dorligo della Valle (Trieste): Einaudi Ragazzi, [2021]. – 279 p.

ISBN 978-88-6656-655-7

Murder | Detective | Role-playing |
Computer game | Memories | Crime fiction

Guido Sgardoli, winner of the Premio Strega Ragazze e Ragazzi and known for his excellent plots, has now written an exciting and fast-paced crime story. He immediately takes the reader to the scene of the crime, to the corpse of the former chief of police Tony Malden and to a boy who was found quite nearby in an obvious state of confusion. All that the investigators can learn from him is his name, Adam. The rest is a mystery. But there is one particular person whom Adam encountered before the crime occurred: Jupiter. This socially awkward eleven-year-old boy plays computer games with a passion and has extraordinary powers of concentration. While the police have no further leads, Jupiter continues to develop a special computer game that is the key to finding out what happened. The truth emerges from clouded memories, a story full of pain and violence. This new knowledge leads the head inspector to see the case with different eyes. (Age: 13+) [SO]

127



Abe, Kaita (text/illus.)
Boku ga fue o fuitara

(When I play the flute)

Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 2020. – [33] p.
 ISBN 978-4-00-112695-2

Music | Sound | Animals | Picture book

Kaita Abe (b. 1986) is a Japanese illustrator, who studied in Germany and Mexico. His debut work, »Michi« (Road), was based on his experience of the vast wilderness in Latin-American countries. »Boku ga fue o fuitara« won the Nippon ehon shō (Japan Picture Book Award) and also depicts a wilderness that calls forth mythical images. In this picture book, animals appear at the horizon when a boy begins playing the flute. A monkey drums logs, »ta-ta, ta-ta, ta-ta, ta-ta,« with the sound of falling rain and the accompanying image of monkeys jumping from branches in the forest. A gazelle plucks a string, »bi-n, bi-n, bi-n, bi-n,« like the buzzing of insects. Primitive rhythms, the pleasure of losing oneself in the musical pulse, and the subsequent concluding silence are vividly depicted using a dazzling neon palette. The oil-painted illustrations are breathtakingly imaginative; the scene in which the boy and animals blend in harmony recalls Marc Chagall's paintings. (Age: 3+) [RN]

128



Andō, Mikie (text)
Yashajingawa

(The Demon-god River)

Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2021. – 235 p.
 ISBN 978-4-06-521852-5

Life | Horror | Humans | Short story

Yashajingawa, the Demon-god River, is a fictional place in Japan. In one of five short stories of this collection, »Yashajingawa,« the protagonist goes fishing at the river with his friend who enjoys killing animals, and then sees his friend attacked by the fish-like monster. Most of the other stories are also set near Yashajingawa. Dramas of life and death happen there. One protagonist visits her friend, Koto, who has been absent from school for months, and sees Koto trap her hateful classmate in a magic goldfish bowl. In another story, a boy visits Iriomote Island, where people of another island were deported by Japanese soldiers during World War II and suffered from malaria. When the boy sees his younger brother playing with invisible children, he realizes they are the ghosts of people who died there during the war. Focusing on the darker side of the human psyche, this book follows protagonists who are haunted by the darkness they see in others or in themselves, realizing the reality of human brutality, loneliness, obsession and greed. (Age: 13+) [RN]

129



Junaida (text/illus.)

Kaibutsuen*(Monsterium)*

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2020. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-4-8340-8586-0

Monster | Imagination | Picture book

Junaida (b. 1978) is a popular artist whose activities range from department store decorations to picture books like »Michi« (Road) and »no« (of), where imaginative images unfold in surprising ways. In »Kaibutsuen«, where the boundary between the real and the fantastic is not evident, monsters escape their moving castle, Monsterium, and crowd the city. Inside a house, three bored children pretend a cardboard box is a bus to embark on an adventure. A potted plant becomes the world's tallest tree, a bus turns into a balloon, and a yacht crosses a leafy sea. As the children follow whispers that may be imagined or real, they find the escaped monsters and send them back to the Monsterium. The next morning, the children go outside to find that all the monsters have gone. In one scene, frightened people stay at home for days, recalling the COVID-19 pandemic. The humorous monsters' silhouettes are vaguely traced on the dreamlike endpapers and linger in the reader's mind long after putting down the book. (Age: 5+) [RN]

130



Maki, Atsuko (text)

Furiya, Nana (illus.)

Vodonīku no mizu no yakata. Cheko no mukashibanashi*(Vodník's water house. A Czech folk tale)*

Kōbe: BL Shuppan, 2021. – [34] p.

(Series: Sekai no mukashibanashi)

ISBN 978-4-7764-0929-8

Water spirit | Life | Death | Folk tale | Picture book

As an illustrator who has been living in Slovakia for almost thirty years, Nana Furiya (b. 1961) has been fascinated with a Czech and Slovakian folk tale of a girl who frees souls trapped in pots by the water nix Vodník. In »Vodoniku no mizu no yakata,« Vodník saves the life of a poor girl trying to drown herself in a river and takes her to his house. The tension between life and death is portrayed through the nuanced contrast of light and shadow and with a dynamic change of viewpoints, as the girl unwittingly frees her drowned brother's soul and then intentionally frees the other souls in Vodník's home. In the illustrations, the underwater world is beautifully dreamlike and Vodník's house interior design is charming; some of the details are humorous. This folktale was originally published in a German edition in Prague in 1863 and almost 150 years later there finally is an edition in the Czech language. The girl's journey from despair to hope makes this naïve story appealing to today's readers, too. (Age: 5+) [RN]

131



Nakazawa, Shōko (text)

Sasameya, Yuki (illus.)

Watashigoto. Jūyonsai no Hiroshima*(Memory-passing, my own matter.**Fourteen-year-olds in Hiroshima)*

Tōkyō: Chōbunsha, 2020. – 127 p.

ISBN 978-4-8113-2727-3

Japan | History 1945 | Hiroshima |
Atomic bomb | Museum | Victim |
Empathy | Short story

»Watashigoto« depicts the Hiroshima Memorial Museum's collection of objects found after the atomic bombing in 1945. In this book of five short stories, junior high school students visit Hiroshima on a school trip. In one story, a boy tosses his lunch box on the kitchen floor, angry at his usually neglectful mother. Returning home later that day, he sees ants swarming all over the mess. At the museum, trudging along the dark, suffocating space, he draws a parallel to trying to flee his hateful home, when he notices a bomb-blackened lunch box in a showcase. It reminds him of his ant-covered lunch box and the conflict with his mother. In another story, a boy who is obsessed with stones conducts an experiment with some classmates where roof tiles are set on fire in imitation of the atomic blast. Through this experience, he realizes that not only stones but also human beings were burned by the bombing in 1945. The students come to feel the tragic loss of life in different ways, but in the process connect today's world with wartime memories. (Age: 13+) [RN]

132



Uchida, Rintarō (text)

Ueda, Makoto (illus.)

Hibari ni*(To a skylark)*

Tōkyō: Arisukan, 2021. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-4-7520-0947-4

Japan | History 2011 | Tsunami | Sorrow |
Poetry | Picture book

The text of this impressive picture book was written a year after the earthquake and the tsunami in north-eastern Japan in 2011. When the author, Rintarō Uchida (b. 1941), was asked to write a poem to encourage survivor children, he thought he couldn't because it would be arrogant. Instead, he might be able to write »that he cannot write.« The poem begins with »I have no words« and continues with »No words to give you. / I just sit with you, your head hanging. / No, I'll be a dandelion, which blooms beside you. / No, dandelion fluff, which you blow off. / Like a postman to deliver your words. / As I fly away, I'll tell a skylark that you looked up and blew me into the sky.« [...] The illustrations feature an almost empty landscape with just a few buildings drawn in dark tones with a limited colour palette that recalls the disaster-stricken area at the seaside. A girl's movement as well as the carefully nuanced design of plants at the bottom of each page beautifully capture her feelings. (Age: 4+) [RN]



133

Yatsuka, Sumiko (text)

Danchi no kotori*(Kotori at the apartment)*

Tōkyō: Popura sha (Poplar-sha), 2020. – 207 p.

(Series: Teen's best selections; 54)

ISBN 978-4-591-16724-3

Welfare | Empathy | Family | Club activities | Volleyball

»Danchi no kotori« addresses the Japanese social problem of children who have no social identification and who don't receive any public support, and who can't go to school or to the hospital. The protagonist, Miduki, sees a mysterious person in the apartment of her neighbour Shibata-san and later finds a girl, Hina, there. Before Miduki and Hina met, the old man Shibata-san kindly offered shelter to Hina and her mother, who had spent years moving to many different places. Shibata-san, who had been unsociable since his wife's death, is affectionate to young Hina. When he develops subarachnoid bleeding around his brain and is hospitalized, Hina and her seriously sick mother are left all by themselves. After Hina's mother dies, Miduki's family and Shibata-san decide to support Hina. Humorous talk of Miduki's pet parakeet lightens the mood of this novel that takes on the challenging theme of human welfare and empathy. (Age: 13+) [RN]



134

Yatsuo, Keiji (text/illus.)

Yato no ie*(The house in the valley among hills)*

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2020. – 40 p.

ISBN 978-4-03-437900-4

Japan | History 1868-2019 | Suburb | House | Life | Non-fiction | Picture book

In the Tama Hills of Japan, there are areas called Yato, small valleys, where people cultivated rice and barley and burned charcoal. »Yato no ie« depicts the 150-year history of the Japanese traditional farmhouse there. The natural settings and the people's lifestyle change throughout the seasons and over the years; they are observed from the point of view of sixteen Buddha Arhat statues known as Rakan-san, which line a thatch-roofed house. They watch air raids in the far-away city during wartime as well as family events and local festivals, the development of the suburban surroundings, and the house finally being torn down and a new one built. The explanatory texts at the end of the picture book give detailed information, including about local customs and farming tools. Inspired by V. L. Burton's »The Little House« and J. Patrick and R. Innocenti's »The House,« Keiji Yatsuo's carefully researched debut still is a truly original work that conveys people's universal wish for a peaceful life. (68th Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award; 2021) (Age: 9+) [RN]



135

Hwang, Seon Mi (Hwang, Sun-Mi) (text)
 I, Myeong Ae (Lee, Myung-Ae) (illus.)
Chodae badeun aideul
(The children who are invited)
 Seoul: Imaju (Imazu), 2020. – 76 p.
 (Series: Imaju changjak donghwa)
 ISBN 979-11-89044-29-9

School | Student | Birthday party | Exclusion |
 Self-esteem | Recognition | Friendship

Min-Seo is a quiet student who keeps a rather low profile and doesn't often engage with others. Conversely, Seong-Mo is the centre of the whole class's attention and very popular. Min-Seo wants to be his friend, too, but he finds no chance to speak with him. Then he learns that Seong-Mo's birthday is approaching. If only Min-Seo were invited to the party, he would give Seong-Mo several sketches he has made of him. However, in contrast to his classmates, he hasn't been invited yet. Finally, on the day of the party, he receives an invitation card. But is it really from Seong-Mo? Hwang Sun-mi has become one of the most influential writers and children's book authors in South Korea since her debut in 1995. She revised this popular story, first published in 2001, in order to capture the realities of today's primary-school children who are experiencing difficulties in getting along with their peers and in recognizing true friends. Illustrator Lee Myung-ae already won several awards for her first children's book »Peullaseutik seom« (Plastic Island). (Age: 8+) [YC, MC, SP]



136

Gim, Sang Geun (Kim, Sang-Keun) (text/illus.)
Donggul an e mwoya?
(What's in the cave?)
 Seoul: Hallim chulpansa (Hollym), 2020. – [41] p.
 ISBN 978-89-7094-789-1

Frog | Curiosity | Courage | Discovery |
 Perception | Illusion | Picture book

The frog siblings wonder about the mysterious light shining from a cave. Their mom's warning about horrible monsters in there only piques their curiosity. Inquisitively, they enter the unknown world to find their own answers. The glittering lights on the cave's ceiling aren't the evil eyes of bats, are they? The strange glow doesn't come from dragons lurking in the dark, does it? That isn't a monster tracking them through the narrow passages, is it? Upon returning from their adventure, they proudly tell Mom about their discovery: the mysterious glow was emitted by a swarm of fireflies. Meanwhile, a baby dragon's mom warns him that outside the cave, in that dangerously bright place, there are monsters! Who is the monster? Who is more terrified? Who is being demonized? Kim Sang-Keun's cinematic narrative makes different things visible to the readers, the frogs and the »monsters,« thus letting them perceive different realities, depending on their preconceived ideas. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

137



I, So Yeong (Lee, So-Young) (text/illus.)

Yeoreum

(Summer)

Seoul: Geulloyeon (Gloyeon), 2020. – [42] p.

(Series: Geulloyeon geurimchaek; 17)

ISBN 978-89-92704-76-2

Seasons | Summer | Heat | Colour | Shape |
Picture book

With the last spring blossoms falling, summer heralds itself with a hint of heat. Colour and shape being a main element of this book's narrative, heat is depicted in red shapes. Initially, small droplets become a sticky amorphous mass, a heavy sweltering load, a monstrous malignant swelling. As whole pages are soaked in fiery red, shapes get dissolved in heat waves, people feel exhausted. However, by changing the perspective it is possible to perceive the sounds of summer, the chirping, twittering, chattering of birds, insects, and humans, or discern the green of the meadows and shadows of trees. Readers can observe people slowing down, relaxing, becoming playful and sociable, soaking up the pleasant sensations of summer in their sun-burned bodies while the heat drifts off, and tasting summer in the sweetness of ripe peaches. If summer can be given a shape, a colour, a sound, and a taste, this book does it marvelously. Lee So-Young, a PhD student in fine arts, has received several awards for her picture books. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

138



Luri (text/illus.)

Gingin bam

(Long, long night!)

Seoul: Munhak dongne (Munhakdongne Publ.),

2021. – 144 p.

(Series: Boreumdal mungo; 83)

ISBN 978-89-546-7715-8

Rhinoceros | Penguin | Sea travel | Loneliness |
Solidarity | Love | Independence | Death |
Extinction | Survival

Nodeun, the last Northern white rhinoceros, and a penguin born from an abandoned egg need to find the sea, so that the penguin can meet others of its kind and survive. Their nights are dark and long, especially for Nodeun, who is only kept alive by the wish to fulfil a friend's final request to help the chick survive. During their perilous journey, their solidarity is like »a star reflected in a dirty puddle,« propelling them onwards. In their last long night together, Nodeun tells his life story and encourages the penguin to take the final steps to his goal by himself. An epilogue shows the landscape that Nodeun would have walked through if he had stayed alive. This story is about the love and independence that are essential for anybody to survive the »long night« of an inconsolable existence. The interplay of graphic illustration and bold composition contributes to the dramatic power of this tale, which won the Grand Prize of the 21st Munhakdongne Children's Literature Award. (Age: 10+) [YC, MC, SP]

139



Seo, Ji Hyeon (Seo, Ji-hyun) (text/illus.)

Gyuri

(*My dear Tangerine*)

Seoul: Chaek ingneun gom (Bear Books Co.), 2021. – [42] p.

(Series: Geurim chaegi cham joa; 77)

ISBN 979-11-5836230-0

Jeju Island | Tangerine | Cat | Homelessness | Trust | Home | Humanity | Respect | Picture book

»I was lost and kept wandering, only to find myself in a village near the sea,« explains a stray orange tabby cat to let us know how it ends up in a strange environment with its unfamiliar smell. In the volcanic, agricultural landscape, ubiquitous stone walls and famous female divers, the »Haenyeo«, readers can recognize Korea's subtropical Jeju Island. The cat is scared of humans, though; these villagers are strange, they keep approaching it, talking to it, and even offering it food. Gradually, it learns to trust its new neighbours, who have decided that »Gyuri« (Tangerine) is the appropriate name for their new village pet, because its colour is similar to the island's most popular fruit. This is a comforting and motivational story for those who do not have a home or are struggling to find their place in life. Author and illustrator Seo Ji-hyun's book encourages readers to be friendly neighbours to the many »Tangerines« living on the streets and to reach out to those who need attention and consideration. (Age: 3+) [YC, MC, SP]

140



Žolude, Inga (text)

Salmanis, Krišs (illus.)

Pirmo reizi uz Zemes

(*First time on Earth*)

Rīga: Liels un mazs, [2020]. – 93 p.

ISBN 978-9934-574-57-3

Extra-terrestrial being | Earth | Humans | Friendship | Being

Human beings have something called »friendship«. This is a phenomenon that encompasses more than being part of a constellation of stars, as Julius, an extra-terrestrial visitor, soon discovers. With his parents – for extra-terrestrials also live, as humans do, in »family« units – he has just moved to Earth and is attending school. Here he develops relationships with his fellow students Krī and Hektor, only to find that humans often react differently than described in his handbooks and guidelines. By adopting an alienating point of view, this children's book debut by Inga Žolude (b. 1984) succeeds in putting a fresh perspective on seemingly specific human behaviour and ways of life and thereby raises the reader's awareness of them. When Julius explores everyday life in the human world it results in scenes that are equally humorous, and enlightening. The story of these three friends is accompanied by curious collages with carrot-like rockets and washing machine portholes that resemble space capsule windows. (Age: 8+) [KW]

KOREAN
LATVIAN

Republic of Korea
Latvia

141



Ganc, Diana (text)

Lota

Vilnius: Dominicus Lituanius, 2020. – 117 p.
ISBN 978-609-8227-17-8

Death | Loss of parent | Withdrawal |
Coping with grief

Diana Ganc's debut novel relates a tale of the teenager Lota's great pain and grief upon losing her mother. A profound book about mourning, the story enables the reader to empathise deeply with the protagonist. Lota's father, a long-distance truck driver, is not only of no help, but also on the road most of the time. Lota's friend offers not much support either, having her own problems and expecting Lota to be there for her. There is nothing left for Lota but to withdraw completely into self-isolation. Like a Hikikomori, she no longer leaves the house. Until, at last, there seems to be another way out. In a gripping narrative, all the news and communication with the outside world – with her father and friends – is described through the perceptual prism of Lota's internal point of view. In this way »Lota« documents the intense grieving, traces the complex and ever recurring mind loops, and grants insight into an exceptional state of emotional distress. (Age: 12+) [KW]

142



Zylė, Kotryna (text/illus.)

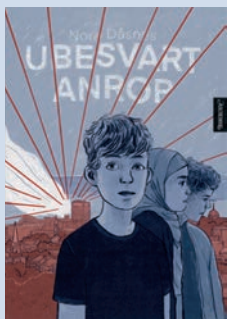
Mažas kaip vabalėlis*(Small as a bug)*

[Vilnius]: Dvi Tylos, [2020]. – [16] p.
ISBN 978-609-8232-18-9

Beetle | Size | World | Meaning | Perspective |
Board book | Picture book

What a staggering realization it is to discover how large the world is, and how small one's own. And, also, that tiny stories can hold a great depth of understanding, as demonstrated by the picture board book »Mažas kaip vabalėlis« by the author-illustrator Kotryna Zylė. By and by, a little bug discovers that its world – an acorn – is not all there is. First, it encounters a squirrel's nest, then the forest, and finally it is able to see the sky above. Each time that the view of its surroundings expands and its perspective shifts, the bug actually »sees the light«. This »coming-to-light« is visualised through the use of cut-outs which lead to the next page of the book, challenging both the bug and the reader to follow the light through the peephole into the unknown. This prize-winning philosophical journey of a bug was published with the small publishing house Dvi Tylos. (Age: 2+) [KW]

143



Dåsnes, Nora (text/illus.)

Ubessvart anrop

(Unanswered call)

Oslo: Aschehoug, 2021. – 283 p.

ISBN 978-82-03-36615-4

Norway | Oslo | Terrorist attack | Fear | Loneliness | Trauma | History 2011 | Graphic novel

2021 marks the tenth anniversary of the right-wing terrorist attacks in Oslo and Utøya. In her graphic novel, Nora Dåsnes relates these events, and how they throw teenage protagonist Rebekka off course. She is about sixteen, the same age as the author was, when the murderous attacks take place on 22 July. The pictures of Utøya and Oslo are broadcast again and again, and Rebekka soaks everything up like a sponge. Even when the country gradually tries to return to normal life, she continues to agonize over questions and (media-influenced) memories, and suffers from vague feelings of guilt and fear. She is shaken up and feels increasingly disconnected and lost. Nora Dåsnes's focus is less on what happened on 22 July; instead, she depicts the consequences of these events for individual people and for the society at large. By consistently using the aesthetic means of visual storytelling, she creates a sensitive portrait of her protagonist and at the same time reveals a lot about Norway. (Age: 12+) [IG]

144



Grytten, Frode (text)

Johnsen, Mari Kanstad (illus.)

Leggetid

(Bedtime)

[Oslo]: Det Norske Samlaget, [2020]. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-8-23400-080-5

Bedtime story | Father | Child | Storytelling | Intertextuality | Picture book

It's time for bedtime stories. The child, clad in striped pyjamas, stands in front of a well-stocked bookshelf bursting with classics as well as modern books, big ones, small ones, fat ones, slim ones. Yet the young one isn't content: »Dad, I want someone to write a book about me. [...] It's unfair that there isn't a single story about me.« Things definitely cannot stay this way, so father and child start contemplating what kind of book this could be. Maybe one with slimy monsters?! The collaboration between Frode Grytten and Mari Kanstad Johnsen is a true success. The illustrator has created impressive pictures in her characteristic style: flowing and humorous, with crooked proportions and flat planes of colour. The text – exclusively a dialogue between father and child – allows readers to be live witnesses to the process of spinning a yarn, while at the same time opening up a meta-level about storytelling. (Age: 3+) [IG]



145

Krag, Alexander Kielland (text)

Dette blir mellom oss

(That stays between us)

Oslo: Gyldendal, 2020. – 211 p.

ISBN 978-82-05-53326-4

[Love](#) | [Homosexuality](#) | [Coming of age](#) | [Self-discovery](#)

»I don't know anything about your feelings or what you think about boys or girls. I'm standing in an unfamiliar landscape without a map or a compass. How am I supposed to find my way?« On his first day at his new school, Felix falls in love with Nicolai. »Dette blir mellom oss« describes furtive glances and assertive physicality, doubts, longings, and the courage that it takes for a boy to say: »I like boys«, even in an open-minded, liberal society like Norway's. The narration in Alexander Kielland Krag's novel in diary form is associative and dense. This makes the story particularly suitable for an experiment: It was not only published in book form, it was also posted on Instagram under #dbmo_2020. This social media mission was a big success. (Age: 12+) [IG]



146

Mathismoen, Ole (text)

Jordal, Jenny (text/illus.)

Ville greier – om dyr og natur og sånt

(Wild stuff – about animals and nature and the like)

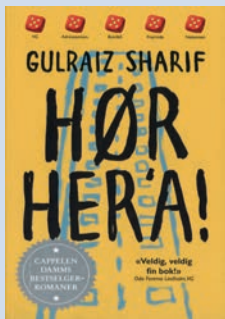
Bergen: Ena / Vigmogstad & Bjørke, 2020. – 141 p.

(Series: Aftenposten Junior. Grønne greier)

ISBN 978-82-419-5116-9

[Environment](#) | [Environmental protection](#) | [Climate](#) | [Nature](#) | [Comic](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

»Grønne greier« (Green stuff) was Ole Mathismoen and Jenny Jordal's first successful book, based on their column of the same name in the children's edition of the Norwegian daily paper »Aftenposten«. »Ville greier« is now following in its wake. This book is postmodern edutainment at its best. The comic strips with their original style strike a chord with the audience. The two authors explore and explain the wildlife in different habitats and address environmental and climate issues. They don't shy away from complex topics and thus manage to capture their readers' attention, because the book is funny and often bursting with amazing factual information that is well researched. No wonder: the two authors definitely know what they are doing. Ole Mathismoen has already written several natural history books, Jenny Jordal illustrates successful comic books on non-fiction topics, such as »Kvinner i kamp« (Women in battle) about women's rights. (Age: 8+) [IG]



147

Sharif, Gulraiz (text)

Hør her'a!*(Listen!)*

Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2020. – 173 p.

ISBN 978-82-02-64812-1

Coming of age | Brother | Family | Migration | LGBTQ+ | Transgender

Gulraiz Sharif has written almost his entire debut novel on his mobile phone. No wonder that the novel comes across as vibrant and casual – and so does the narrator. In »Hør her'a«, fifteen-year-old Mahmoud describes a crazy summer: When Uncle Ji arrives for a two-month visit from Pakistan, Mahmoud shows him the bustling city life in Oslo. Immediately, Ji wants to apply for asylum, but, well, in Norway in 2020, it isn't that easy anymore... And then there is Mahmoud's little brother, who one night confides in Mahmoud that he would rather be a girl. At first, Mahmoud does his best to keep the whole matter secret – which of course doesn't work. The family is thrown into turmoil, but they try to come to terms with the new situation. Even though readers may feel that the family accepts their child's new identity a little too quickly, the smooth »crisis management« also imbues Gulraiz Sharif's novel with a large dose of optimism. (Age: 12+) [IG]



148

Gulšan, 'Alī (Golshan, Ali) (text)

Pistāndāran-i Īrān. Ĥirshā wa dīgar gūšthārān*(Pestandarane Iran. Jeld Sevom. Khersha va digar Goushtkharan) (The mammals of Iran. Vol. 3. Bears and other carnivores)*

Tihrān: Kānūn-i Parwarīš-i Fikrī Kūdākān wa Nūḡa-wānān (Kanoon), [2020] (= 1399 h. sh.). – 217 p. ISBN 978-600-01-0730-7

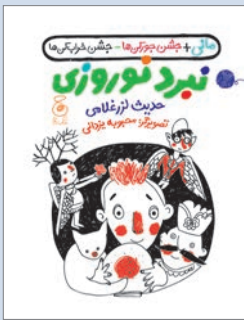
Iran | Mammals | Bear | Carnivores | Non-fiction

This outstanding non-fiction book tells a fascinating story about Iran's nature and takes the readers on a magnificent journey during which they explore the habitat of bears and other earthbound carnivores native to Iran. What makes this book very special and distinguishes it from many other works of non-fiction is the author's use of cross-references and embellishments, including the introduction of folk tales, proverbs, works of art about these animals in Iranian culture, as well as a history of their relationship with humans and their occasional presence in human societies. Most of the photos in the book were taken by professional wildlife photographers specifically for this project. Species presented in this book include the brown bear, which is considered the largest carnivorous mammal in Iran, the Asiatic black bear, raccoons, and also the weasel and mon-goose families, which are newcomers that have been observed in natural regions of Iran in the past few years. (Age: 14+) [RM]

NORWEGIAN
PERSIAN (FARSI)

Norway
Iran

149

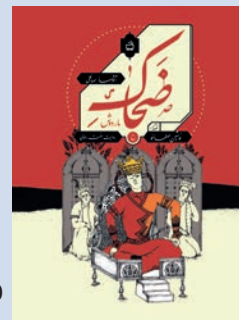


Lazar-Ġulāmī, Ḥadiṭ (Lazar-Gholami, Hadith) (text)
 Yazdānī, Maḥbūbah (Yazdani, Mahboubeh) (illus.)
**Nabard-i Nawruzī. Mānī + Ğašn-ğūrkon-hā
 + Ğašn-ğarābhun-hā**
*(Nabarde Nowruzi. Mani + Jashn-jourkonha +
 Jashn-kharabkonha) (The battle of Nowruz. Mani
 + festival-makers + festival-spoilers)*
 Tihṙān: Ćišmah Kitāb-i ĉ (Cheshmeh), [2020] (= 1399 h. sh.). – 252 p. | ISBN 978-622-6839-38-9

Nowruz | Festival | New Year | Celebration

Nowruz, or Persian New Year, is the most important national festival in Iran. It has Iranian and Zoroastrian origins and has been celebrated by diverse communities for more than 3,000 years in Iran and other parts of Asia. Many beautiful traditions are part of the Nowruz celebrations. Throughout her story, Hadith Lazar-Gholami mentions them in order to remind her young audience of the history of this celebration and how important Nowruz can be, both for Iranians and many other peoples, especially as it celebrates the beginning of spring and the renewal of nature. The story begins when a group, which is usually in charge of performing the Nowruz ceremony, discovers that something has gone wrong. To solve the problem and stop the festival-spoilers from destroying everything, they are helped by an eight-year-old boy. This is a charming book whose text makes use of fine humor, excitement, and insight into the world of today's children, in creative combination with Mahboubeh Yazdani's superb illustrations. (Age: 8+) [RM]

150



Šāliḥī, Ātūsā (Salehi, Atousa) (text)
 Šafāḥū, Nūšin (Safakhou, Nooshin) (illus.)
Ďaḥāk-i Mārdūš. Riwāyat-i haft rāwī
*(Zahhake Mardoush. Revayate haft ravi)
 (Zahhak the Snake Shoulder. A story with seven
 narrators)*
 Tihṙān: Madrasah, [2020] (= 1399 h. sh.). – 75 p.
 ISBN 978-964-0820-32-2

Ferdowsi / Shahnameh | Adaptation | Evil | Tyrant

The epic poem »Shahnameh« (The Book of Kings) by Ferdowsi (940 - ca. 1020) depicts the dynastic lineage of ancient Iran and tells the story of the common ancestors of all the inhabitants on earth. »Zahhak«, one of the first stories of the »Shahnameh«, portrays a good-natured human being who falls into the trap of the devil and becomes an evil-doer and a tyrant himself. »Zahhak« is one of the rare myths in which the hero is not always heroic, but makes mistakes like ordinary people. At the same time, one can find ordinary people doing heroic deeds. The well-known writer and poet Atousa Salehi, who has dealt with the story of Zahhak before, now retells the story in a simple, understandable prose from the point of view of different characters, including Zahhak the Devil, and others. The illustrations by Nooshin Safakhou are a mixture of Persian miniature painting and contemporary illustration. She has illustrated many »Shahnameh« stories and garnered praise at international festivals and art exhibitions. (Age: 12+) [RM]



151

Siyid 'Alī Akbar, Nawīd (Seyed Ali-Akbar, Navid) (text)
Muḥammadi, Nardjīs (Mohammadi, Nardjes) (illus.)
Bārli Badkunak furūš wa žinirālhāy-i kūtūlah
(*Barli Badkunak-foroush va general-haye koutouleh*)
(*Barli, the balloon seller, and the dwarf generals*)
Tih-rān: Širkat-i Intišārāt-i 'Ilmī-Farhangī, Kitābhāy-i
Parandah-i Ābī Elmi wa Farhangi [et al.], [2020]
(= 1399 h. sh.). – [34] p. | ISBN 978-600-436-882-7

War | Peace | Totalitarianism | Homelessness |
Picture book

Peace, tolerance, and the prevention of violence are some of the important concepts that can be explained to children through literature. »Barli Badkunak-foroush va general-haye koutouleh« is a story condemning violence, totalitarianism, and war. Little Barli is a homeless girl, who sleeps under a bridge at night and sells balloons on the same bridge during the day. She finds a way to confront the despotic dwarf generals who rule the country and tries to restore peace and tranquility to her community. The story reminds us that wars do come to an end, ruins can be rebuilt, and dictators are left behind, becoming more and more lonely with each day. The book is particularly outstanding because of the marvelous pictures by Nardjes Mohammadi. In accompaniment to the excellent prose and unique ideas of author Seyed Ali-Akbar, her work contains its own narrative, portraying dozens of unspoken stories along with the main story. This book is part of a series published in ten volumes under the title of »Stories of Peace and Friendship«. (Age: 6+) [RM]



152

Ša'bānī, Asadallāh (Sha'bani, Asadullah) (text)
Ša'bānī, Mahkāmah (Sha'bani, Mahkameh) (illus.)
Dokhtar-i Nārang-u Turanğ
(*Dokhtare Narenj-o Toranj*) (*The orange girl*)
Tih-rān: Fāḡimī Tūḡī (Fatemi, Touti), [2020]
(= 1399 h. sh.). – [36] p.
(Series: Qiṣṣahāy-i az adabīāt-i šifāhī-i Iran)
ISBN 978-622-6630-33-7

Quest | Love | Jealousy | Magic spell |
Folk tale | Picture book

»Dokhtare Narenj-o Toranj« (The orange girl) is one of the oldest Iranian folk tales. There are many variations on this story in Iranian oral literature. The version told here is based on the retelling by Sobhi Mohtadi, whose role in Iranian folk literature can be compared to that of the Brothers Grimm. A king dreams of having a son and after many years his dream comes true. The son becomes big and strong and nobody is a match for him in horse riding and archery. But when he shoots and breaks an old woman's oil bottle, she says to him: »I hope you fall in love with the orange girl!« Thus begins the prince's quest to find that girl. But after finding her, he falls ill due to the spell of a different, very jealous girl. The story has many similarities to the Grimm's tale »The goose girl«. Asadullah Sha'bani is one of the pioneers of new poetry for children and adolescents in Iran and has specialised in rewriting classics and folk literature. Mahkameh Sha'bani's fascinating images deepen the fantasy aspect of the tale, creating an even more imaginative interpretation. (Age: 6+) [RM]

153

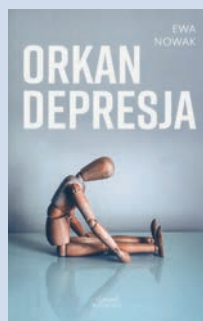


Mizielińska, Aleksandra (text/illus.)
 Mizieliński, Daniel (text/illus.)
Którędy do Yellowstone? Dzika podróż po parkach narodowych
(Which road leads to Yellowstone? A wild journey through the national parks)
 Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Dwie Siostry, 2020. – 123 p. + [1] p. | ISBN 978-83-8150-062-3

[National park](#) | [Animals](#) | [Plants](#) | [Nature](#) | [Environment](#) | [Non-fiction](#) | [Picture book](#)

This oversize children's book was an international success that no one could overlook in 2020. Its story takes the reader once around the entire world. A story in a non-fiction book? Yes! The author-illustrators Aleksandra Mizielińska and Daniel Mizieliński skilfully present information about national parks on five continents in funny comic-style stories revolving around Ula, a squirrel, Kuba, a bison, and Filip, a pigeon. From their home in Poland's national park Białowiecki, the three animals set off to meet Kuba's relative, Dakota, a buffalo cow, in Yellowstone National Park. Unsurprised to find she is away on a journey, the three of them follow her trail and thus visit many other national parks. In each park they discover new and fascinating animals and plants, which Ula records for the reader in her notebook. In addition, the book provides, in passing, concise, beautifully designed details about ecological systems, geological ages, environmental impact, endangerments, and the diversity of life on planet Earth. (Age: 6+) [KW]

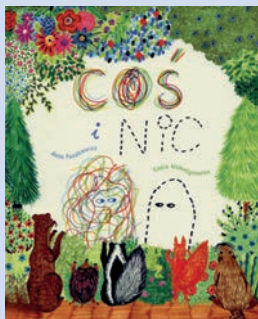
154



Nowak, Ewa (text)
Orkan depresja
(Orkan Depression)
 Warszawa: Egmont Polska, 2020. – 303 p.
 ISBN 978-83-281-4438-5

[Depression](#) | [Suicide attempt](#)

Borys Orkan, age sixteen, finds himself suddenly confronted with a previously unknown sense of sadness. When he is diagnosed with depression, his mother is too embarrassed to admit her son is ill. Borys's friends cannot get through to him, but he has the feeling that they do not understand him or have even turned away from him. For his part, he is no longer able to share his thoughts and feelings with others. A toxic friendship develops between him and Misza, who is fascinated with the idea of suicide and implants himself into Borys's life. His attempt to escape into a »relationship« with a girl ends in failure. When it all seems too much to bear, he attempts to commit suicide and just barely survives. In »Orkan depresja« Ewa Nowak dares to take on the important, virulent and often taboo topic of depression among adolescents. In this novel she creates a multilayered portrait of the complex problems associated with depression, showing how the illness expresses itself, the whirling thoughts in the mind of the afflicted, and the social stereotypes they are confronted with. (Age: 15+) [KW]



155

Paszkiewicz, Anna (text)
Walentynowicz, Kasia (illus.)

Coś i Nic

(Something and Nothing)

Piaseczno: Wydawnictwo Widnokrąg, 2020. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-83-957320-4-1

Language | Word | Symbolism | Meaning |
Picture book

»Something« and »Nothing« are an unequal couple. »Something« is popular, important, treasured. »Nothing«, conversely, is exactly that: nothing. Until one day an event in the park changes everything. With a breezy and colourful touch, the author Anna Paszkiewicz and illustrator Kasia Walentynowicz deal with the power of language and how quickly perspectives can be changed through words. The two »protagonists« are introduced by showing their power to play with meanings and change things to their own advantage: to have something / to have nothing, or something terrible / nothing terrible. The story of »Something and Nothing« is skilfully staged in lush, detailed felt-tip illustrations, bringing the picture book its nomination by the Polish section of IBBY for »Book of the Year« in 2020. In the same year it was awarded the prize »Przecinek i Kropka« as best children's book for six- to eight-year-olds. (Age: 5+) [KW]



156

Solarz, Ewa (ed./text)
Szafraniec, Karol / Miśkowiec, Małgorzata (text)
Various artists (illus.)

Elementarz polskiej kultury

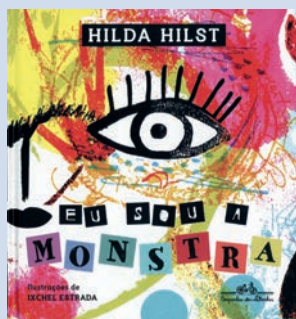
(Elementary book of Polish culture)

Warszawa: Wytwórnia, 2020. – 115 p.
ISBN 978-83-64011-82-5

Poland | Culture | History 1918-2020 |
Non-fiction

This beautiful enactment of Poland's most recent cultural history is designed with an impressively clear structure. In each of eleven areas of the arts, ranging from architecture to theatre to pop culture, four outstanding representatives are featured, and their most prominent works created in the period between 1918 and 2020 are presented and put into context within Polish culture. Each profile is accompanied by a full-page illustration, which holds an abundance of allusions to the oeuvre of the artist being portrayed. These »illustrative characterisations« were designed by eleven graphic artists, who have thereby ensconced themselves in Poland's world of art. An »elementary« or introductory work can never be more than an excerpt. Nevertheless, this volume is a »reference work« in the best sense of the term, and hence a magnificent, aesthetically appealing invitation to everyone who wants to learn more about developments in Polish culture throughout the last 100 years. (Age: 14+) [KW]

157



Hilst, Hilda (text)
Estrada, Ixchel (illus.)

Eu sou a monstra

(I am the monstress)

São Paulo: Companhia das Letrinhas,
2021. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-85-7406-940-1

Monster | Imagination | Creativity | Poetry |
Picture book

Hilda Hilst (1930-2004), an important name of contemporary Brazilian literature, wrote no texts for children other than this 1988 poem for Daniel, the son of a friend. This superbly illustrated edition offers an opportunity to get to know these verses. They explore the realm of the mysterious, typical for Hilst's work, where the real and the imagined mingle. A »monstress« invites Daniel to draw her. What could she look like? A witch in the forest, or a grilled, fat pig on a platter? Or shall she be long and thin like a worm? Everything is possible since such a creature can be anything at all, from rose bush or metal scrap, to queen, crow, or astronaut – but only ever by the power of the imagination of the one creating her. These verses on the freedom of the imagination are interpreted by Mexican illustrator Ixchel Estrada with expressive, boisterous pictures. With a free, unfettered play of colours, shapes and lines, they show enigmatic portraits of a scintillating, multi-layered fantastic character. (Age: 7+) [JW]

158



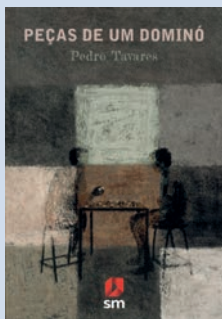
Miranda, André (text)
Goes, Gabriel (illus.)

Mapinguari

São Paulo: FTD, 2021. – 159 p.
ISBN 978-65-5742-209-0

Amazon rainforest | Nature | Environmental
destruction | Mythical creature | Graphic novel

The Mapinguari is a creature of the rich mythological world transmitted through the indigenous peoples of the Brazilian rain forest. It is hairy from head to toe, only has one eye, and usually is portrayed as a human-eating ogre. In this book it is, however, the fearsome protector of nature, which must be shielded from human-caused destruction. José, the protagonist, comes from a family of rubber tree tappers that is at home in the rain forest. José now lives in the big city, though, where he works at a company that is exploiting the rain forest. Told in a gripping way, the graphic novel addresses issues such as progress, conservation, education and respect for nature, as well as José's personal conflict and the collision of diverging, irreconcilable social, economic and cultural interests. The pictures are almost totally in muted, sombre and shadowy tones and make the intense, pressing atmosphere of the plot and the location quite palpable. (Age: 14+) [JW]



159

Tavares, Pedro (text)
Peças de um dominó
 (Dominoes)

São Paulo: Ed. SM, 2020. – 146 p.
 ISBN 978-65-5744-027-8

Father | Son | Illness | Cancer | Death |
 Coming of age

Young author Pedro Tavares's YA fiction debut is about a student whose life changes dramatically when his father becomes ill with a brain tumour. The nameless protagonist retrospectively describes the way he handles his father and the new familial situation. In nuanced prose that features a good amount of dialogue, he portrays how hard it is for him to accept that his father's condition is constantly changing and that he is dying. He recalls many moments, some of which reach back to childhood. In talking through everyday events – football, for instance, or the domino game his father loves, or the spontaneous »field trips« his father regularly takes his son on – a sense of their difficult father-son relationship emerges. The protagonist sees his father as an opposing figure to contend with, but he also recognises himself in his father. A coming-of-age novel worth reading, »Peças de um dominó« is about a young man who grows and matures because of his father's illness and their complex relationship. (Age: 15+) [JW]



160

Ferreira, Susana Cardoso (text)
 Costa, Raquel (illus.)
Noa

Alfragide: Oficina do livro, 2020. – 123 p.
 ISBN 978-989-660-869-9

Death | Coping with grief | Granddaughter |
 Grandfather

Noa hasn't talked since the day she lost her parents. She lives with her grandfather Lineu now, whose secluded house and beautiful garden are quiet, secretive, and not accessible to anyone else initially. Noa's only connection with the outside world is through a raven, whom she visits everyday. The girl and the old man are united in their grief, but emotionally distant because they can't communicate about it. It's her private tutor, Henriqueta Pia, and Henriqueta's »borrowed granddaughter« Paz who finally bring change and an unaccustomed, almost forgotten ease into the lives of Noa and Lineu. The cheerful, garrulous Paz is a total contrast to Noa, and it takes a while for the two girls to get used to and understand one another. Susana Cardoso Ferreira tells this story about loss and overcoming grief with finely wrought, richly figurative language. Silence and speech, sadness, cheerfulness and humorous passages stand in well-balanced relation to one another. (Age: 8+) [JW]



161

PARA QUE SERVE?

Mendes, José Maria Vieira (text)

Matoso, Madalena (illus.)

Para que serve?

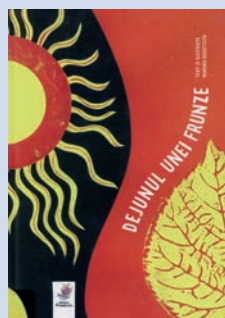
(What is this for?)

Carcavelos: Planeta Tangerina, 2020. – [60] p.

ISBN 978-989-8145-98-7

Function | Non-fiction | Picture book

This is an unusual and quite brilliant book – simple, intelligent, surprising, playful and deft in bringing its basic idea to readers. »What is this for?« is a question whose meaning and use few people probably ever reflect on – but it's the focus here. Some things one just knows how to use, like a pair of scissors or a key. In other cases, something's name reveals its purpose, such as a corkscrew or a toothbrush. A cell phone is one of those things that has many functions. And then there are things that serve many unexpected functions, as well as others whose function seems so self-evident no one would care or dare to ask: a human being, a rhinoceros, or sleep, for instance. This entertaining book inspires one to think about objects, functions, and language. Its idea and text bring it to life along with vibrant, brightly-coloured illustrations that entice readers to leaf through the pages again and again. (Age: 7+) [JW]



162

Debattista, Marina (text/illus.)

Dejunul unei frunze

(A leaf's lunch)

București: Editura Frontiera, 2020. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-606-8986-23-4

Science | Poetry | Wordplay | Nonsense
literature | Picture book

This picture book by Marina Debattista demonstrates how charming, refreshing and entertaining it can be to observe scientific phenomena when they are incorporated into children's poetry. In this case the author-illustrator with a doctorate in physics finds illuminating imagery, whether to describe photosynthesis or the solar system. Leaves of plants become creatures with a multitude of mouths that delight in devouring light-beam steaks. The Moon, Mars, and Jupiter each receive their necessary repairs and become refurbished. Another poem recalls the vanished natural richness of a garden that had to make way for a street. The volume also includes many poems that go beyond the sciences. They contain astonishing wordplay, in which birds, couples, blackberries, or cherries come together in strange ways. Reflecting the complexity of the poems, the spacious, playful illustrations by the author combine collage, linocut, and other printing techniques. (Age: 8+) [KW]

163



Charebova, Vlada (Kharebova, Vlada) (text)
Charebov, Valan (Kharebov, Valan) (illus.)
Stranica odin. Povest' o gorode, kotorogo net
(Page one. The story of a city that does not exist)
Moskva: Abrikobuks, 2020 – 715 p.
ISBN 978-5-6043489-2-5

[Soviet Union](#) | [History 1980s](#) | [Tskhinvali](#) |
[Multicultural society](#) | [Everyday life](#)

Soviet Union, end of the 1980s: the city of Tskhinvali in the Caucasus region is both multicultural and polyglot. Ossetians, Georgians, and Russians live here side by side and life in the Russian-Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim communities flourishes. All this is clearly shown in Vlada Kharebova's multi-layered portrait of the city and, in particular, of the Gagloev family. In this 715-paged work, adolescent and adult readers accompany the paths of family members, and especially that of the self-confident twelve-year-old Aniko. School, love stories, friendships, religious faith, town legends and everyday Soviet life are described in great detail, creating a picture of a past era that has received little attention in Russian YA literature. Those years were also marked by the background noise of an emerging Georgian-Ossetian conflict, which would throw the multicultural coexistence in Tskhinvali off-balance and saw the nascent period of upheavals which led to the end of the Soviet Union. (Age: 14+) [KW]

164



Evdokimova, Natal'ja (Evdokimova, Natalya) (text)
Gavrilova, Irina (illus.)
Tropinki Nikity
(Nikita's paths)
Moskva: Knižnyj Dom Anastasii Orlovoj (Knizhny dom Anastasii Orlovoy), 2020. – 27 p.
(Series: Strochka za strochkoy i dochkoy)
ISBN 978-5-6043455-7-3

[Childhood](#) | [Old age](#) | [Intergenerational relationship](#) | [Picture book](#)

Nikita loves to go for walks. Every day he goes out with his mother, discovering new backyards and different paths through the city. One day he encounters a grandfatherly man and from that time onwards, his walk always takes him to the bench where the grandfather stands, waiting to give him an apple. But when the boy falls ill for a time, and later begins to ride a bicycle, their paths diverge and the two no longer meet. Only after his bicycle breaks down and Nikita sets off again on foot, does he see the old man again. As before, he is given an apple, but now it has become shriveled. Natalya Evdokimova packs a lot into this brief story. With great symbolism she tells of being a child and of being old, of the tender relationship between the two protagonists. The book follows two parallel narratives, which present, on the one hand, an agile young boy, and on the other hand, the heaviness, slowness, and calmness of an old man, up until their paths cross and then separate again. (Age: 4+) [KW]

165



Kravčenko, Asja (Kravchenko, Asya) (text)
Jakovleva, Varja (Yakovleva, Varya) (illus.)

Лучше лети! Проект N.19

(Luchshe leti! Proekt N.19)

(Fly instead! Project No. 19)

Moskva: Samokat, [2020]. – 140 p.

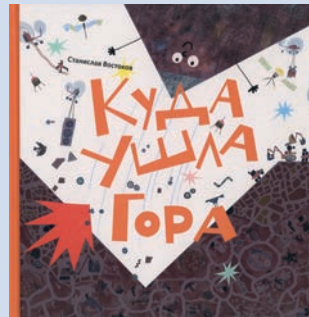
(Series: Luchshaya novaya knizhka)

ISBN 978-5-00167-009-4

Childhood | Friendship | Family | Invention | Optimism

Mitya has a project: he wants to build a flying machine so that his best friend, Egor, who is confined to a wheelchair, can enjoy more freedom. He takes a job to earn enough money to buy the parts and thus gets to know Shusha. Just like Mitya, she also has problems at home. While Mitya's father has lost his job and his parents are considering divorce, Shusha is supposed to give away her pet dog. The two decide to run away. They hide in a building still under construction and try to get by as best they can. Unexpectedly, they receive help from a homeless man and some of the construction workers, who take Mitya's project seriously. In the end Mitya is actually able to complete a test flight over a short distance. Asya Kravchenko has an eye for childlike sensibilities and writes from a child's perspective. In her warm-hearted, witty manner she takes the cares and the dreams of her protagonists very seriously, thereby showing that adults should take a sincere interest in them. (Age: 10+) [KW]

166



Vostokov, Stanislav (text)
Pokalëv, Maksim (Pokalyov, Maxim) (illus.)

Куда ушла гора

(Kuda ushla gora)

(Where the mountain went)

Moskva: Izdatel'stvo »Melik-Pašaeв«, 2021. – 51 p.

ISBN 978-5-00041-405-7

Mountain | Nature | Exploitation | Humans | Picture book

Again and again Mountain has been forced to give up its place on Earth. Each time its peace and tranquillity are disturbed by humans. They come and build a town, or arrive in droves to climb all over it and stick their flagpoles into it. When Mountain tries to hide in an abandoned diamond mine, new miners appear again. Hence, Mountain moves on and dives down to join the icebergs in the ocean, but of course an icebreaker soon rushes in. Its next home, a desert, turns out to be a battleground between different groups of humans. Then a bomb explodes, and Mountain is catapulted into space. Finally, it has found a quiet place to be itself. It is the seemingly innocent text by Stanislav Vostokov, paired with the trenchant illustrations by Maxim Polaryov, and the parable-like story about the eternal search for one's place in life that makes this gorgeous picture book about nature, the Earth and the dubious forms of its (mis)appropriation by mankind so thought-provoking. (Age: 6+) [KW]



167

Jovanović, Aleksandra (text)

Crna ptica

(The black bird)

Beograd: Kreativni centar, 2020. – 142 p.

ISBN 978-86-529-0815-8

Loss of parent | Grief | Withdrawal | Afterworld |
Fantasy fiction

Twelve-year old Želja is in mourning over her beloved father, who died in an accident. Because she believes her mother and her aunt cannot understand her feelings, she withdraws into herself and spends more and more time at the cemetery. There she thinks she can sense her father's violin music and soon encounters a strange young man, Vuk. He turns out to be a ghostly creature who is able to guide Želja into the world beyond. That world has the appearance of an amusement park, but for Želja it becomes a horror trip that she can barely escape from. In her debut children's book Aleksandra Jovanović (b. 1996) succeeds in tracing the grief of a young girl and the rejection she experiences from family and friends. By letting the realistic plot slide into a suspenseful fantastic setting, she marks out a moment of healing for the main character. In 2020 »Crna ptica« was awarded Serbia's Politikin Zabavnik Literary Prize for Young Readers. (Age: 10+) [KW]



168

Tićmi, Stefan (text)

Živković, Dobroslav Bob (illus.)

Kaput od mahovine

(Coat of moss)

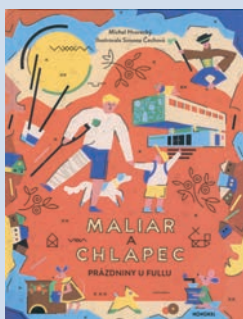
Beograd: Laguna, 2020. – 156 p.

ISBN 978-86-521-3636-0

Self-discovery | Human nature | Existence |
Art | Philosophy

In eloquent words and images »Kaput od mahovine« tells the story of Naidan, bearer of a coat of moss. As twigs and branches begin to sprout on his back, Najdan gradually turns into a hybrid creature. He withdraws from the human world into the natural world and becomes a sad and melancholy hermit on a mountain, surrounded only by flora and fauna. When, after a long while, two of his former friends visit him in order to initiate an art project, Najdan is himself drawn back into the human world. Or perhaps it is the other way around: People come to him, the man-tree, and to nature, recognizing a long-lost truth. Writing from multiple perspectives, in flashbacks and with metafiction, Stefan Tićmi creates a poetic, (nature) philosophical, and metaphorical narrative about the struggle to find one's identity and to recognize one's own nature. This highly unusual novel will inspire multiple re-readings. (Age: 14+) [KW]

169



Hvorecký, Michal (text)
Čechová, Simona (illus.)

Maliar a chlapec. Prázdniny u Fullu

(The painter and the boy. On holiday with Fulla)

[Bratislava]: Monokel, 2019. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-80-973386-2-6

Fulla, L'udovit (1902-1980) | Illustration |
Imaginary trip | Picture book

What bad luck for the boy. Summer holiday are here, but he and his family cannot travel because his father has broken his leg. Instead, the boy embarks on another kind of trip – a phantastic journey exploring the worlds drawn by L'udovit Fulla (1902-1980). In Slovakia generations of children have grown up with Fulla's picture book illustrations. Together with the main character, the viewer becomes immersed in familiar subjects that have been recomposed in a picture book by the Slovakian illustrator Simona Čechová (b. 1988) and the author and translator Michal Hvorecký (b. 1976). Čechová emulates Fulla's various illustration styles, employing linocut as well as computer graphics. In addition, she orients her work around the typical colour scheme found in Fulla's works. »Maliar a chlapec« pays homage to the likely most important artist of modern-day Slovakia in such an excellent manner that one will want to discover Fulla's original works all over again. (Age: 5+) [KW]

170



Kompaníková, Monika (text)
Klímová, Veronika (illus.)

Koniec sveta a čo je za ním

(The end of the world and what comes after it)

Bratislava: Artforum, 2019. – 155 p.

ISBN 978-80-8150-264-4

Single-parent family | High-rise housing |
Trip | Animal world

Photographer and hobby entomologist Adam is pretty much the opposite of everything Ema and Timi have ever known. He is a world traveller, a teller of stories full of fascinating facts about the animal world, while the children are confined to their dismal high-rise residential quarter and its bus-stop called »End of the world«. The three run into each other when Adam sets up camp in the utility room of the building's elevator to track down a rare insect, thereby occupying Ema and Timi's secret hide-out. The children also use this place to stay in contact through light-signals with their mother, a single parent who works at night as a cleaner in another high-rise building. Slowly they get to know Adam better, and when their mother's signals stop, they all go in search of her. Hopeful, poetic, but also full of clarity, neither euphemistic nor pointed, Monika Kompaníková tells the story of children growing up in difficult circumstances, and how small escapades and great discoveries sometimes exist side by side. (Age: 10+) [KW]



171

Možetič, Brane (text)
Šarič, Ana Lucija (illus.)

Rožnate zgodbe. Iz neheteronormativne zgodovine (za mladino)

Pink stories. From the non-heteronormative history [for young people]

Ljubljana: Škuc, 2020. – 115 p.

(Series: Lambda; 149)

ISBN 978-961-6983-52-5

[LGBTQ+ | Sexual identity | History 5000 BC-2001](#)

In this chronologically arranged young adult book Brane Možetič casts a spotlight on historical persons whose life decisions and identities have led them to live outside today's expectations of heteronormativity, thus representing the conceptions of LGBTQI+. He brings to light many hidden stories, beginning with examples from ancient cultures, such as from Egypt (Pharaoh Hatshepsut), classical Greece and the Roman Empire. Quotations and stories from Sappho's poetry and the legendary tales of Gilgamesh are followed by stories about kings and queens, such as Kristina of Sweden or Ludwig II of Bavaria; the persecution of homosexuals during the time of National Socialism; and lesbian couples in the 20th century. The book ends with an overview of the rise of the pride movement in Slovenia. There are many illuminating examples and unknown facts to be found in the eight chapters of »Pink stories«. Taken together they form a complex mosaic that is the history of queer life. (Age: 15+) [KW]



172

Šinigoj, Damijan (text)

Kjer veter spi

(Where the wind sleeps)

Dob pri Domžalah: Miš, 2020. – 205 p.

(Series: Zbirka Srečanja)

ISBN 978-961-272-385-9

[Cave | Adventure | Danger | Flirtation](#)

Shy but clever Blaž, a cave rescuer-in-training, and the bold in-girl Irena have become buried in a cave just when they were trying to build up Blaž's self-confidence. How can Blaž prove himself to be wise, brave, and self-confident in this predicament, and what will become of their teenager flirtation in these dangerous circumstances? These questions make up the plot of Damijan Šinigoj's prize-winning youth book. There are two storylines that are told in alternating chapters, thus building up enormous tension. In rich detail and precise descriptive passages, the novel depicts, on the one hand, the rescue efforts to locate a missing person, and on the other hand, the sizzling energy between two teenagers at the start of their excursion. The author succeeds in showing the huge fascination, but also the dangers associated with cave systems, while also portraying the first stage of a teenage romance with considerable humour. (Age: 14+) [KW]

173



Tašner, Veronika (idea) / Ugrinović, Ana (ed.)
Various authors (text) / Various artists (illus.)
Nepozabne. Ženske, ki so premikale meje našega sveta
(Unforgotten. Women who have shifted the boundaries of our world)
Ljubljana: Mladinska Knjiga, 2020. – 240 p.
ISBN 978-961-01-5772-4

Slovenia | History 19th - 20th century | Woman | Historical person | Biography | Non-fiction

The cover of this book was cause for some debate in Slovenia: just before publication the original version was withdrawn, and the book appeared in a modified version. But even without a bicycle as a symbol for female emancipation on the cover, the book's content radiates with fifty short biographies of important Slovenian women. Twenty authors and ten prominent illustrators bring back into the spotlight the lives of notable women who lived in the 19th and 20th centuries, depicting the fascinating and often complicated paths their lives took. Readers will encounter lawyers, scientists, artists, politicians, teachers, and nurses whose life stories were often marked by rebellion, perseverance, and determined advancement. Even though the courses of their lives may resemble one another at one juncture or another, these fifty portraits depict very individual paths, which, in turn have inspired the lives of many others. (Age: 13+) [KW]

174



Calvo, Gloria A. / Lynn, Camila / Mileo, Agostina (text)
Trach, Martina (illus.)
Pubertad en marcha
(Puberty in progress)
Buenos Aires: Iamiqué, 2021. – 64 p.
(Series: Sin vueltas)
ISBN 978-987-4444-45-5

Puberty | Sexuality | Sex education | Gender | Non-fiction

»Pubertad en marcha«, published by Iamiqué, long known as a creative non-fiction publisher, offers a fresh take on puberty and sexuality. Relaxed and not shy about naming and explaining the many facets of puberty, the three female authors don't limit themselves to biological aspects, although of course topics like bodily change, menstruation, body odour and masturbation occupy notable space. At least as important, though, are puberty's social and psychological dimensions. This is expressed by the fact that the book isn't directed just at girls or at boys, but at everyone. It also draws on the concept of gender instead of the traditionally binary concept of sex and foregrounds questions of gender identity, gender roles and expectations, sexual self-determination and the astonishing diversity of human bodies and sexualities. This is all conveyed in a clear, compelling, and lively way in the pairing of a well-founded, very readable text and Martina Trach's easy-going colour illustrations. (Age: 11+) [JW]

175



De Santis, Pablo (text)
Turdera, Cristian (illus.)

El alumno nuevo

(The new classmate)

Buenos Aires: CalibroscoPIO, 2021. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-987-3967-49-8

(Text first published in »Trasnoche«, Buenos Aires:
Loqueleo Ed. Santillana, 2016)

School | Automaton | Android | Perfection |
Picture book

Pablo De Santis is known for stories and novels that combine fantasy, mystery and horror. Here, too, the author lets the creepy sneak into the normal and the everyday. A new student joins the class of the first-person narrator. Well-behaved, flawless, immaculately dressed, reticent and unapproachable, he seems at once attractive and repellent. The narrator accidentally discovers her new classmate is a cleverly constructed robot made by his »father«. Soon thereafter the boy vanishes, only resurfacing many years later – as a student in the protagonist’s class, now herself a teacher. Only now does she learn of the tragic existence of this perfect student who had to learn how not to be perfect so he wouldn’t stand out among human beings. The story, surely a reference to Olympia the doll in E. T. A Hoffmann’s »The Sandman«, is congenially illustrated by Cristian Turdera. The lifeless, constructed artificiality of the characters and spaces recall puppet theatre and mechanical toys. (Age: 8+) [JW]

176



Aguilera, Claudio (text)
Lyon, Gabriela (illus.)

9 kilómetros

(9 kilometres)

Santiago de Chile: Ekaré Sur, 2020. – 49 p.
ISBN 978-956-6070-16-0

School | School route | Chile | Nature |
Picture book

»9 kilometres are almost 15,000 steps. Maybe more, since there are days when 9 kilometres feel like a rock in a worn-out shoe. But on other days they are as sweet as a handful of blackberries or a ripe apple, and they flit by as fast as a shadow«. This picture book accompanies a boy on his daily school route somewhere in southern Chile, from the pre-dawn morning, through forests, under fences, along cow pastures, across a river, come rain or shine. The walk is long and tiring, but it also offers time and space to enjoy nature’s lushness – butterflies in the air, birds in the branches, animal tracks on the ground, the play of light and shadow as the sun rises. With a brief, picturesque, memorable text and calm, atmospheric landscape pictures, this book is also an homage to children in the most remote regions of the world who pursue their right to an education by treading many steps daily. (Age: 7+) [JW]

177



Kalawski, Andrés (text)
Cociña, Joaquín (illus.)

Beso de buenas noches

(*Good night kiss*)

Santiago: Claraboya Ediciones, 2020. – [50] p.

(Series: Colección Catalejo)

ISBN 978-956-9825-07-1

Princess | Frog | Kiss | Metamorphosis | Magic |
Wish | Imagination | Picture book

We all know the part about the princess kissing the frog and his turning into a prince. But this picture book sticks with the princess who suddenly realizes her kisses can transform any imaginable creature or thing. She gets started right away! A fish becomes a bird, a stone becomes a fish, a bicycle becomes a dog whose bark sounds like a bike bell. Walls change their colour, the queen's hairstyle changes, an old tree transforms into a young octopus, and the princess's pillow becomes a good night story, as she falls into bed exhausted after all that kissing. This entertaining picture book by Andrés Kalawski and Joaquín Cociña starts at the most stupefying point in the Grimmian fairy-tale and runs with it. The many examples of transformation and the sparingly coloured, somewhat enigmatic black-and-white illustrations invoke the story's magic and dream-like character, offering readers an invitation to come up with more metamorphoses. (Age: 5+) [JW]

178



Buitrago, Jairo (text)
Barrón, Israel (illus.)

Viendo el fuego desde la terraza

(*Seeing the fire from the terrace*)

Bogotá: Panamericana, 2020. – 106 p.

ISBN 978-958-30-6095-3

Colombia | History 1985 | Violence |
Everyday life | First love

The 6th of November, 1985 starts like any other day for Gabriel and his brother Sergio, until the school principal sends all students home at mid-day. Militants from the guerrilla organization M-19 have taken over the Palace of Justice in Bogotá and are holding hostages. The military will later end the hostage situation, but dozens of people are killed and others disappear without a trace during this operation. This day, burned deep into the collective memory of Colombia, is portrayed from the perspective of the young protagonist. With Sergio and Manuela, his secret crush, Gabriel tries to get back home safely. In this novel, Jairo Buitrago develops the contrast between the experiences of the adolescents and the dramatic events whose import they only partly understand. The portrayal of the parallelism between the very different levels is gripping. While the political events come thick and fast, the teens' lives in a sense continue on as usual, centred on things like love and music, as banal as these may seem at such a time. (Age: 12+) [JW]

179



Undurraga, Sol (text/illus.)

El zorro Chuleta

(The fox named Chop)

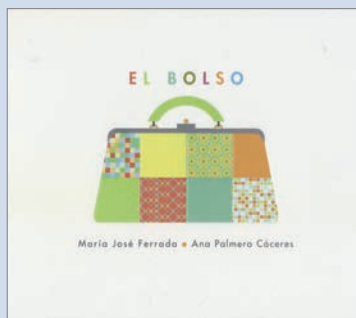
Bogotá: Cataplum Libros, 2020. – [46] p.

ISBN 978-958-52412-6-8

[Fox](#) | [Vegetarianism](#) | [Self-realisation](#) | [Diversity](#) | [Tolerance](#) | [Respect](#) | [Picture book](#)

Life isn't easy for a vegetarian fox, especially if you're named Chuleta (Chop) and your favourite food is watermelon. Even though Chuleta wouldn't hurt a fly, the rabbits eye him warily. So he heads out in search of the paradisiacal »Valley of Vegetarians«, where the most marvellous parties supposedly happen. When he finds the utopian place, Chuleta is anxious about being let in and constructs elaborate costumes to mask that he's a fox. Even fantastically dressed as a watermelon, though, he's quickly identified. Fortunately, Chuleta had gone to needless lengths, because everyone is welcome on the raft of the animals in the Valley of Vegetarians. This picture book inspires a happy mood. The text is witty, on-point, and wonderfully visualized by multicoloured illustrations. In particular, the sumptuous celebration at which everyone does what makes them happy, is a turbulent, cheerful enactment of the motto »live and let live«. (Age: 4+) [JW]

180



Ferrada, María José (text)

Palmero Cáceres, Ana (illus.)

El bolso

(The bag)

[Ciudad de México]: Alboroto Ediciones, 2021. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-607-99277-4-5

[Bag](#) | [Braille](#) | [Picture book](#)

In many of her books, María José Ferrada achieves an artlessly assured balance between prose and poetry. Her texts live in the natural, incidental flow of words and sentences, while artfully compacting language, giving it a lyrical, rhythmic tone. The boundary between reality and imagination dissolves, too – as happens here, with »my Mum's« bag that »everything fits into«. This everyday object becomes a magical place that has the potential of carrying everything in it: a cell phone and keys lie next to »three flower blossoms from last spring«, a cat the size of a coin, and a train ticket along with the train and its passengers. The inventive illustrations by Ana Palmero Cáceres are also delightful, as they gracefully play with geometric shapes and ornaments. The show-stopper in this elaborately designed and produced book is that the text (in print and Braille type) and illustrations (partly in relief) can be read and observed with both the eyes and the fingers. (Age: 4+) [JW]

SPANISH

Colombia
Mexico

181



Malpica, Tõno (text)
Quijano, Sara (illus.)

Canción sobre un niño perdido en la nieve

(A carol about a child lost in the snow)

México: Ed. El Naranjo, 2020. – 221 p.

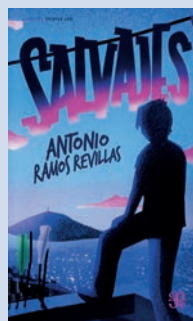
(Series: Ecos de tinta)

ISBN 978-607-8442-95-9

Dickens, Charles / A Christmas Carol |
Christmas | Social disparity | Bitterness |
Reconciliation | Humanity

Tõno (Antonio) Malpica makes one of the nameless children of the Cratchit family in Charles Dickens's »Christmas Carol« into the protagonist for his novel, which plays out fifteen years after Dickens's story. William (Billie) Cratchit has broken off contact with his family. A bookkeeper who doesn't earn enough to marry the love of his life, he seeks embittered revenge on his boss on Christmas Eve. A cleverly constructed story unfolds from that premise, offering up a scintillating mix of Gothic novel, fantasy, mystery, and moral lesson with reader misdirection and surprising twists and turns. Is Ebenezer Scrooge of the »Christmas Carol« still alive or is he dead? Is he a ghost or a hallucination in Billie Cratchit's head? Is Billie really going to go through with his plan? Or is he only dreaming and in reality a respected, well-off lawyer and family man? Only at the end do the threads come untangled in this masterfully told story about destiny, personal responsibility, and forgiveness. (Age: 12+) [JW]

182



Ramos Revillas, Antonio (text)

Salvajes

(Wild ones)

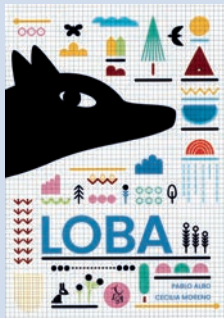
México: Fondo de Cultura Económica,
2021. – 151 p.

(Series: A través del espejo)

ISBN 978-607-16-6977-3

City | Poverty | Violence | Social disparity |
Justice

In the hills over the city of Monterrey, where the streets gradually worsen, the houses become shabbier, and eventually there's no way forward, Efraín lives with his mother and his brothers. Their mother is arrested during one of the innumerable raids in the neighbourhood, which marks the start of a long battle for the boy and his brothers, as they try to free their mother from the clutches of the state authorities. No one lobbies for Efraín and his family, and no one respects them, because fundamentally they are seen as good-for-nothings or criminals. Gripping, unflinching and fast-paced, Antonio Ramos Revillas's novel portrays this life at the margins where human individuals count for almost nothing. The book also describes the desire and the striving to make the most of a life that holds no perspectives. »Salvajes« is persuasively written because the story names things as they are, yet doesn't voyeuristically parade the characters. Instead, it gives them a voice. (Age: 12+) [JW]



183

Albo, Pablo (text)
Moreno, Cecilia (illus.)

Loba

(She-wolf)

Aguadulce, Almería: Libre Albedrío, 2021. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-84-122392-6-3

[Wolf](#) | [Picture book](#)

Pablo Albo's text is extraordinary. Short, concise sentences string themselves together; no word is too much. The rhythm of the words and sentences, the repetitions, pauses and ellipses create a magic and astonishing pull, even though the text seems sparse and nothing spectacular happens in the story. A she-wolf trots through the forest, rain drops fall one after the other, an ant runs up a tree and back down again, timid rabbits are watchful, the wind blows, the evening breaks, stars shine in the night-time sky. The minimalist, carefully structured, repetitive, purely descriptive and somewhat hermetic text is congenially echoed in Cecilia Moreno's pictures. Monochrome shapes, lines, dots merge at times into geometric patterns. The sense of order is reinforced by the background of chequered paper. »Loba« is an original picture book, with brilliantly composed text and illustrations. A true discovery.

(Age: 5+) [JW]



184

Colella, Alfredo (text)
González, Jorge (illus.)
Gómez Navarro, Héctor (transl.)

La belleza del final

(The beauty of the end)

[Mataró, Barcelona]: A buen paso, [2020]. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-84-1755529-0

[End](#) | [Finiteness](#) | [Transience](#) | [Meaning of life](#) | [Picture book](#)

Even the life of a 100-year-old tortoise named Nina is finite. Restive and curious, she heads out on the last leg of her long journey to understand what »the end« means. She receives many answers to this seemingly simple question. The end is waning food supplies, says the ant. The caterpillar meanwhile longs for the end as it brings a new beginning. For a swallow, the end is the right moment to change direction. Or, as the snake explains, the end is part of a circle and thus always also a beginning, because circles never end. The episodes in this picture book are pearls, describing Nina's encounters with other animals that cause her as well as readers to reflect. The striking pictures are also wonderful. In them, the flowing shapes and colours of the dense forest proliferate – mossy green, warm, earthy brown, flaming red, radiant sky blue, stony grey. Darkness gradually seeps in, announcing the end.

(Age: 6+) [JW]

185



Montenegro, Christian (illus.)
Metrópolis. Homenaje a la película de Fritz Lang 1927. Novela gráfica
(Metropolis. Homage to the film by Fritz Lang 1927. Graphic novel)
 Barcelona [et al.]: Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2021. – 126 p. | (Series: Illustrata)
 ISBN 978-84-122293-6-3

Lang, Fritz / Metropolis | Adaptation | Dystopia | Class society | Social disparity | Graphic novel

It is daring to adapt a well-known artwork and to interpret it in one's own way. To do so without casting aside or overshadowing the original is difficult, yet Argentinian illustrator Christian Montenegro meets this challenge to a remarkable degree. His »homage« to »Metropolis«, director Fritz Lang's 1927 premiered masterpiece based on a novel by Thea von Harbou, is entrancing eye candy. Without copying the film, Montenegro's graphic illustrations, accompanied by the silent movie's intertitles, excellently capture its futuristic sceneries, the hype of the big city juggernaut, people's fast-paced lives that imitate machine rhythms, and the stark social differences between the ruling class and the enslaved masses. Montenegro adopts the black-and-white aesthetic of the film, masterfully uses light and shadow effects, and works with strong contrasts. In this way, he confidently and imaginatively »translates« the film into the static pictures of the printed graphic novel medium. (Age: 12+) [JW]

186



Romero Mariño, Soledad (text)
 Blasco, Julio Antonio (illus.)
Robos de leyenda
(Legendary burglaries)
 Barcelona: Zahorí Books, 2020. – 61 p.
 ISBN 978-84-17374-73-0

Burglary | Robbery | History 1911-2005 | Non-fiction

It's remarkable how non-fiction authors are able to continually discover new, eccentric topics to write about. In this case, »Robos de leyenda« describes nine spectacular burglaries and thefts from the past 100 years. All have achieved a degree of notoriety and are unusual in that they were executed with finesse, but without using any violence. The book introduces the perpetrators, the often elaborate planning of their deeds, and the various methods the burglars used to achieve their ends. The specifics and highlights of the each theft are explained in a precise, clear, and entertaining way – from the legendary theft of the »Mona Lisa« from the Louvre in Paris to a computer hacker's ambush on Citibank. But it's not just the topic that makes the book, with its many story-telling elements, so attractive. Its illustrations, its layout in the style of old newspapers and »Wanted« posters, its pages' colour palette and its typography are also very well done and make reading the book a genuine pleasure. (Age: 9+) [JW]

187



Ca. teter (illus.)

La gran carrera*(The great race)*[Montevideo]: Alter Ediciones, 2020. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-9974-8771-3-9

Life | Race (Competition) | Wordless book |
Picture book

This book's endpaper is already enigmatic – who are they, the Coluchi brothers, the lady »from below«, the detective inspector's horse, the Siberians, and all the other characters? And what »great race« will unfold in the book's pages? Is it a metaphor for life? The ups and downs, the rushed and calm periods, the pursuit of success alongside outdoor picnics, social gatherings, baby strollers and campfires at night – all expressing the fullness of life, until it ends and perhaps begins anew. Much is shown but nothing explained in this wordless book's pictures, so »La gran carrera« allows for many ways of reading. The sketch-like black and white pictures with their nervous, filigreed line and numerous and sometimes tiny details inspire readers to flip the pages back and forth, to gaze in amazement and to reflect. Ca. teter's picture book debut is fascinating in its courage to leave everything open and to give everyone total freedom to see what they would like to see or believes to see in the pictures. (Age: 9+) [JW]

188



Montañés, Mónica (text)

Sánchez Gómez, Eva (illus.)

Los distintos*(The different ones)*Caracas [et al.]: Ediciones Ekaré, 2020. – 48 p.
ISBN 978-84-121636-1-2

Spanish Civil War | Fascism | Exclusion |
Political persecution | Migration |
History 1935-1958

Told in just under fifty pages, this is the story of a family that is alienated and ostracized in their own country and eventually seeks a new start elsewhere. The father is first to leave the country during the Spanish Civil War because he opposes the victorious fascists and needs to get himself to safety. A decade later, his wife and two children join him to Venezuela. What happens in the interim is described in short episodes told from the perspectives of siblings Paco and Socorro in alternating sequence. As the book title implies, the story is about being »Othered«, being excluded and facing open rejection in even the smallest matters. The unglamorous yet still stirring portrayal of everyday experiences – the withholding of a ration book, the oppressive feeling of needing to make oneself small and invisible, or the longing to belong – lend this touching story a deeply human, universal character. (Age: 9+) [JW]

SPANISH

Uruguay
Venezuela

189



Bondestam, Linda (text/illus.)

Mitt bottenliv. Av en ensam axolotl*(My life at the bottom. Told by a lonely axolotl)*

Helsingfors: Förlaget; Stockholm: Berghs,

2020. – [41] p.

ISBN 978-952-333-296-6

[Axolotl](#) | [Ocean](#) | [Environmental destruction](#) | [Loneliness](#) | [Picture book](#)

»Once the world was completely newborn«, that's how this picture book opens. Yet all of a sudden, there are skyscrapers, flashing advertisements, and people eating out of cardboard boxes; and there is rubbish all over the place, including the oceans, of course. On the flipside, rusty cans serve as a table and a bed for the axolotl who tells the story, while a discarded iPhone provides entertainment for him. The book, executed in brightly coloured collages, opens up an suspenseful and conflicting field of discussion: Although the destruction of the environment is obvious, the axolotl has become accustomed to the waste and even recycles it to a certain extent. The rubbish doesn't bother him half as much as his loneliness, because he believes that he is the only specimen of his kind in the world. However, after an environmental disaster, he of all creatures finds an axolotl girlfriend and starts a family with her – in a completely rubbish-free place! This is certainly not a »bottenliv«, but rather »ett topliv« (a life at the top)! (Age: 4+) [IG]

190



Borell, Sanna (text/illus.)

Sagan*(The fairy tale)*

[Bromma]: Opal, [2020]. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-91-7226-215-7

[Little Red Riding Hood](#) | [Fairy tale](#) | [Carroll, Lewis](#) / [Alice's Adventures in Wonderland](#) | [Adaptation](#)

The first characters to appear in this story are: a girl in a red dress and a wolf. Does that ring a bell? Yep. »Sagan«, of course, alludes to »Little Red Riding Hood« and turns it into a »meta fairy tale«. Sanna Borell doesn't merely retell the story, but employs a narrator who constantly comments on it. For example, when Little Red Riding Hood meets the wolf, the narrator chimes in with: »Oh boy, she encounters a problem«. Since the wolf keeps troubling Little Red Riding Hood, a saviour is sorely needed: »The hero appears! Just in time.« Yet, is this hero – a small white rabbit – really a hero, or at least as harmless as it looks? Well, something sounds suspiciously like that tale of »Alice in Wonderland«...? Sanna Borell puts a new, very funny twist on two classic stories. Text and images are arranged in a complementary way, the language is laconic and pointed, and thanks to countless turning points and surprises, the story is very dynamic. (Age: 6+) [IG]

191



Hillström, Ylva (text)
Eklund, Karin (illus.)
Hilma af Klint. Kartor över osynligheten
(*Hilma af Klint. Mapping the invisible*)
Stockholm: Afbeta, 2020. – [64] p.
(Series: Moderna Museet)
ISBN 978-9-15012-111-7

[Klint, Hilma af \(1862-1944\) | Painting | Abstract art | Theosophy | Cosmos | Biography | Non-fiction](#)

When a girl is born in 1862, the stars predict a life full of magic and mysticism for her. And the predictions come true. Hilma af Klint has an artist's soul, she is intelligent, sensitive, spiritual. From an early age, she starts drawing. Later she is one of the first women to study at the Royal Academy of Liberal Arts and becomes interested in theosophy and anthroposophy. In 1906, she paints the first abstract pictures – even before Wassily Kandinsky does. Her paintings are beautiful, enigmatic and an expression of that which cannot be seen: »osynligheten« (the invisible), as it is called in Swedish. For a long time, Hilma af Klint was known only to art enthusiasts, but now she is receiving the recognition she deserves, and Ylva Hillström and Karin Eklund contribute to this with their non-fiction book. Not only do they convey »Hilma essentials« in a very vivid way, but they have also included an array of paintings whose aesthetic power is palpable, even though they are mere reproductions on the page. (Age: 10+) [IG]

192



Höglund, Anna (text/illus.)
Barnet som inte kunde blunda.
Efter en idé av Elon Höglund
(*The child who could not close its eyes.*
Based on an idea by Elon Höglund)
Stockholm: Lilla Pirat Förlaget, [2020]. – [44] p.
ISBN 978-91-7813-146-4

[Foreignness | Forlornness | Loneliness | Picture book](#)

Every time readers receive a book by Anna Höglund, they'll be confused, delighted, bewildered, helpless, overwhelmed... because they are never sure what exactly they are holding in their hands. Then they start turning the pages and read. It is the same with »Barnet som inte kunde blunda«. The story features a child who is abandoned on a rubbish dump, then discovered and taken care of by a blind dog. The child is unable to close its eyes. It constantly witnesses all of the world's misery, and so it accepts a job in the sewer system to escape from it all. Down there, it meets an octopus, who is longing to be seen... Anna Höglund's pictures emphasize the outsider status of all the characters – not just the child's – as well as their vulnerability. This is an enigmatic, parable-like, open-ended story with pictures that open up a lot of room for interpretation. It is a picture book that is different and weird – in a good way. (Age: 8+) [IG]

193



Nilsson, Frida (text)
Jansson, Alexander (illus.)

Lindormars land

(Lindworm land)

Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, [2020]. – 415 p.
ISBN 978-91-27-16508-3

[Lindworm](#) | [Siblings](#) | [Adoption](#) | [Humans](#) | [Animals](#) | [Power](#) | [Urge](#)

Frida Nilsson's new novel has a fairy-tale- and legend-like feel to it. Peppered with intertextual references, it raises ethical, existential, and philosophical questions. »Lindormars land« consistently follows and logically extends the award-winning author's previous work. This novel, too, is about loneliness and damaged childhoods, about wishes and longings, and about how far one is allowed to go to fulfil them. The book centres around reflections on the relationship and the difference between humans and animals, inextricably linked to the question of »good« and »evil«. This may sound like »a bit too much«, but Frida Nilsson conjures up words for essential questions of existence, and at the same time creates a very exciting, dramaturgically sophisticated story with a strong plot and multi-layered characters who have the readers hope and suffer with them. In short: »Lindormars land« is a children's novel that can't be praised highly enough! (Age: 10+) [IG]

194



Nord, Malin Skogberg (text/illus.)

Nikki

Sköldinge: Syster Förlag, 2020. – 147 p.
ISBN 978-91-984018-2-0

[Self-discovery](#) | [Emancipation](#) | [LGBTQ+](#) | [Coming of age](#) | [Graphic novel](#)

The book's first pencil drawing depicts a girl floating in the water on her back: Nikki feels out of place and not at all comfortable in her skin. It is the last day of the holidays and she is dreading school, because her mother and the school nurse think she really needs to lose weight and constantly harass her. Although Nikki has three friends, she sometimes feels completely lost: All the girls talk about boys – but is she actually into boys? After transferring to high school (after grade nine), she befriends Lo, who sees herself as non-binary, and eventually the two become an item. This graphic novel tells a coming-of-age story: The protagonist, initially full of self-doubt and self-loathing, gradually frees herself from other people's expectations and social conventions. She accepts her body and her sexuality and often finds herself pondering the way in which private issues are political and political matters severely affect private ones. (Age: 12+) [IG]

195



Thörn, Alma (text/illus.)

Alltid hejdå*(Always bye)*

Stockholm: Galago, [2020]. – 317 p.

ISBN 978-91-7775-101-4

Divorce | Coming of age | Loneliness |
Mother | Daughter | Graphic novel

»Gråt inte gråt inte gråt inte« (Don't cry don't cry don't cry) – that's what Alma keeps telling herself. Yet it isn't easy when you're on a plane from Umeå to Stockholm because you »have to« spend your summer holidays with Dad instead of staying with your Mum and your best friend. Sure, Alma likes her dad, but she feels uprooted and alone, weighed down by other people's expectations and torn apart by conflicts of loyalty. In the graphic novel »Alltid hejdå«, young illustrator Alma Thörn tells her own story in pictures tinted in black-white-grey. In a sensitive way, she explores the emotional melange of loneliness and anger. In addition, she also narrates the story of her mother Johanna, who experienced something very similar thirty years earlier. She, too, was the child of divorced parents; she was constantly asked to position herself and »choose« between her parents, and she also had to say »bye« so often that she never really felt at home anywhere. (Age: 10+) [IG]

196



Ermeydan, Meryem (text)

Atılğan, Merve (illus.)

Geri Dönüşüm Ülkesi*(The Land of Recycling)*

İstanbul: Uçan Fil, Epsilon Yayınevi, 2021. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-625-7662-00-0

Environmental destruction | Oil | Recycling |
Environmental awareness | Picture book

The brightness of golden tones against a gray and almost achromatic background is a visual hint of the potential impact of oil on the environment. The pollution created by cooking oil or fossil fuels and the possible solutions are the focus of this picture book. The story wends a winding road from the Land of Shopping to the Land of Recycling, addressing the issues of consumption and waste before discussing the need to counteract the damage done. The protagonist is an personification of »oil« named Aykız, described as bright as the sun and as clear as water when brand-new. However, after use, she turns into waste and does not know where to go. Both the earth and the river reject her to protect the living organisms. The tale begins when Aykız meets a wise man who instructs her how to fully recycle herself. The illustrations rely on faded shades to depict scenes of polluted nature. This is complemented by cut-outs in the shapes of plants and animals that give a feeling of living with potential threats and perils in this environment. (Age: 5+) [IVA]

SWEDISH
TURKISH

Sweden
Turkey

197



Özdamar, Gaye G. (text)
Ünal, Şeyda (illus.)

Benim adım Sıkıntı

(My name is Boredom)

İstanbul: Nesin Yayınevi, 2021. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-605-278-067-1

Boredom | Monotony | Creativity |
Time management | Picture book

The muted colours from pale pink to light blue give this picture book a melancholic palette that evokes monotony, the feeling of time dragging, apathy, and a sense of aimlessness. Boredom is a discernible entity, a scribbled black cloud that expands and thrives on a child's exasperated crossed arms or indifferent shrug but shrinks and even disappears when the child overcomes the boredom. As the book's protagonist, Boredom is fun to listen to as it talks throughout the book and offers tips about itself. Onomatopoeic words such as »puff«, »offf« or »yaa« emphasize its presence as it metamorphoses according to its owner's embodied actions, words and exclamations. The book suggests activities that make the best use of idle hours and banish discontent. It also demonstrates that the doldrums can be a springboard to creativity and extemporaneous ideas. The text and the drypoint-like illustrations gracefully blend typography and graphic design to create a whole that throws into relief the features of ennui that we sometimes all experience. (Age: 4+) [IVA]

198



Dvornyc'kyj, Stanislav (Dvornytskiy, Stanislav) (text)
Michalicyna, Kateryna (Mikhalitsyna, Kateryna) (text)
Studio »seri/graph« (illus.)

Реактори не вибухнуть. Коротка історія Чорнобильської катастрофи (Reaktory ne vybuchayut. Korotka istoriya Chornobylskoy katastrofy) (Reactors do not explode. A short history of the Chernobyl disaster)

Kyiv: Portal, 2020. – 135 p. | ISBN 978-617-7925-17-9

Chernobyl | Nuclear accident | Non-fiction

This non-fiction book for young adults is so good and important that it deserves an especially strong recommendation. In an objective but deeply moving manner, with the thrill of a dramatic documentary, Kateryna Mikhalitsyna and Stanislav Dvornytskiy present the complex history of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, and its nuclear accident in 1986. Beginning with a visit to today's site, they portray it as a time capsule. They describe why Chernobyl was planned, built, and put into operation, explore its political, ideological, and economic background, and point out the immense impact and aftermath of the radioactive cloud that affected large parts of Europe and Central Asia, including their ecological systems. In addition, the book, with its large-size square format, attractive layout, and illustrations done in grey, yellow and orange tones, provides precise definitions of key concepts such as »atom« and »radioactivity« or the process of nuclear fission. (Age: 12+) [KW]

199



Romanyšyn, Romana (Romanyshyn, Romana) /
Lesiv, Andrij (Lesiv, Andriy) (text/illus.)

Kudy i zvidky

(Where to and where from)

L'viv: Vydavnytvo Staroho Leva, 2020. – [54] p.
ISBN 978-617-679-821-7

[Movement](#) | [Locomotion](#) | [Journey](#) | [Migration](#) |
[Non-fiction](#) | [Picture book](#)

The all-around mastery of Romana Romanyshyn und Andriy Lesiv, a Ukrainian team of graphic designers, is inimitably and unbelievably well demonstrated in «Kudy i zvidky». While their picture books «Holosno, tykho, poshepyk» and «Ya tak bachu» panoptically presented the human senses of hearing and sight, this book is a grand tour of movement and motion. The dynamics of getting ready, setting into motion, and hitting the road are visible everywhere. Humans, animals, and vehicles are constantly moving from left to right over the pages of this landscape-format book. With its characteristically striking colour spectrum and iconographic visual language, the book takes readers along a tour from Mount Everest to the Mariana Trench; to people who are fleeing, migrating, travelling, or just pausing; to migrating animal herds, across maps and borders; moving sometimes fast, sometimes slowly. Even movements of the elements are featured in this multiple award-winning book. It goes to show: the whole world is in motion! (Age: 5+) [KW]

200



Huỳnh, Mai Liên (text)

Xuân, Lan (illus.)

Mẹ yêu ai nhất?

(Whom do you love the most?)

Hà Nội: Nhã nam (Nha Nam Publishing);
Nhà Xuất Bản Hội Nhà Văn (Writers' Association
Publ. House), 2019. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-604-53-5872-6

[Family](#) | [Motherly love](#) | [Siblings](#) | [Jealousy](#) |
[Picture book](#)

Two squirrel siblings constantly quarrel and compete for their mother's love. «Whom do you love most?» they keep asking her. The classical answers that she loves them both despite their shortcomings and misconduct, that she may take more care of the youngest or weakest, and that love cannot be measured, are only to be expected from Mama Squirrel. In between each question and answer, a wonderfully funny and cleverly staged story unfolds on different narrative levels – in the text, in the complementary illustrations, and in the speech bubbles, which provide a counterpoint. When asked in return which of them loves Mama the most, brother and sister outbid each other with expressions of affection, lists of their achievements, and spiteful remarks about one another. This love battle is illustrator Xuân Lan's and journalist Huỳnh Mai Liên's first picture book. In view of the thousands of picture books imported from abroad, their idea is to tell a story set in today's Vietnam that goes beyond clichés and exoticism. (Age: 4+) [LO]

UKRAINIAN
VIETNAMESE

Ukraine
Vietnam

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