

2024 | The White Ravens

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Ill. Ximo Abadía

Internationale Jugendbibliothek

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PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2024 edition of our annual recommendation list »The White Ravens«.

This year's cover features a white raven perched on a tent in the shape of a book. Inside, a young girl is reading by the light of the moon – completely on her own, sheltered and engrossed in her reading. This evocative image beautifully captures how special, unique and rewarding it can be to read a book. It was created by Ximo Abadía, the illustrator of »Khat. Journal d'un réfugié« (Khat. Diary of a refugee) (Genève: La Joie de lire, 2022), a book selected for the catalogue »The White Ravens 2023«.

We are delighted and grateful that publishers, institutions, and organisations, as well as authors and illustrators, continue to support the International Youth Library with donation and review copies of their new publications. It is only thanks to their support that we are able to present the »The White Ravens« catalogue, the most important annual publication of the International Youth Library. It aims to promote quality in children's book publishing and has become an increasingly useful tool for anyone interested in

looking beyond national borders. »The White Ravens 2024« contains a selection of 216 notable children's and young adult books published in 44 languages from 62 countries.

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

Our library team have long relied on a variety of means to gain a sound overview of the issues, trends, and people involved in current international children's and young adult literature: As well as reading new

publications in the original languages, they attend international book fairs, scout and gather information, and keep in touch with publishers, institutions, organisations, and other experts. They also engage in discussions with the research fellows of the International Youth Library, foreign scholars who have a profound knowledge of the literature of their home countries.

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

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

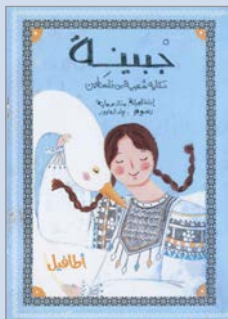
For decades, all the recommended books have been displayed in print at the International Youth Library's booth at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. This tradition allows visitors to the booth to peruse the books at

their leisure, leafing through their pages and exploring the stories and illustrations. We look forward to having this opportunity again and hope to see you in Bologna in 2025.

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

I hope that »The White Ravens 2024« will fall into the hands of many curious readers, and that they will enjoy making new discoveries. May the selected books and their creators receive the international attention they deserve. We hope that our work will contribute to this goal.

Dr. Christiane Raabe
Director of the International Youth Library
October 2024



1

Ṣa'abna, Manāl (Saabni, Manal) (text)
'Āwūr, Barā' (Awoor, Baraa) (illus.)

Jbeneh

(Jbeneh)

Kafr-Qar'a: Dār Aṭāfīl (Atafeal Books), 2023. – 86 p.
ISBN 978-965-7788-20-2

Adventure | Wilderness | Getting lost | Home |
Heritage | Folk tale

Israel ■ ARABIC

»Jbeneh« is a modern reimagining of a beloved Palestinian folk tale, echoing the core themes of the Brothers Grimm's »The Goose Girl«, but deeply rooted in local culture and environment. The story follows Jbeneh, born after twenty years of her parents' marriage. On her tenth birthday, she sets out on a journey with a group of women but gets lost in the wilderness. She finds shelter with an old woman and becomes a goose herder, trying day after day to draw a map to find her way back home. Accompanied by a loyal goose, Jbeneh navigates the challenges of the wilderness, displaying courage and determination. Simultaneously, her parents embark on their own quest to find her, leading to a heart-warming and much-anticipated reunion. This captivating adventure, illustrated beautifully by Baraa Awoor, explores themes such as family, connection to the land, and cultural heritage. »Jbeneh« is an excellent example of modern retelling of traditional stories for today's readers, making it a must-read for children. (Age: 7+) [LW]



2

Naġġār, Taġrīd al- (Najjar, Taghreed) (text)
'Amr, Nadā (Amr, Nada) (illus.)

Abī as-saġīn 118

(My father, prisoner no. 118)

'Ammān: Dār as-Salwā (Al Salwa Books), 2022. – 208 p.
ISBN 978-9957-04-229-5

Father | Investigation | Innocence | Friendship |
Suspense | Crime fiction

Jordan ■ ARABIC

Taghreed Najjar tells an engrossing tale of suspense and determination that follows 16-year-old Hussam after he witnesses his father's arrest for allegedly being involved in a counterfeit money operation. Convinced of his father's innocence, Hussam embarks on a perilous journey to gather evidence to exonerate him. The novel weaves together the narratives of Hussam and his friends – Jaber, Haneen, and Rania – who become amateur detectives in their quest to clear the name of Hussam's father. Taghreed Najjar uses multiple perspectives, alternating between third-person and first-person chapters, heightening the suspense and allowing readers to explore each character's inner thoughts. The personal dynamics among the four young friends add depth to the storyline, with issues such as Rania's jealousy and Haneen's family struggles. Strong female characters, like Hussam's resilient mother and a female lawyer, enhance the narrative. The novel's twists make it an excellent read, offering a blend of suspense, personal growth, and cultural insights. (Age: 12+) [LW]



3

Natīl, Bisān (Nattil, Bissan) (text)
'Abdāllah, Saḥar (Abdallah, Sahar) (illus.)

Lūnā al-mağnūna

(Crazy Luna)

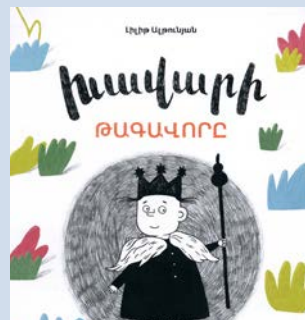
Rāmāllāh: Mu'assasat Tāmir li-'t-ta'lim al-muğtama'i
(Tamer Institute for Community Education), 2023. – [20] p.
ISBN 978-9950-27-083-1

ARABIC

Journey | Imagination | Curiosity | Creativity | Dream |
Picture book

Palestine

»Lūnā al-mağnūna« is a beautifully illustrated picture book that captures the boundless imagination of a curious child. Luna embarks on a fantastical journey, contemplating the infinite possibilities of the future. Her vivid dreams include seeing the entire universe, standing on clouds, meeting aliens, and exploring distant planets. The story's charm lies in its rich, imaginative text and the vibrant illustrations by award-winning Sahar Abdallah, which bring Luna's wild thoughts to life, depicting them as whales. The story encourages readers to embrace their creativity, celebrating curiosity and wonder. The detailed illustrations complement the narrative, creating an engaging reading experience. »Crazy Luna« delves into themes like curiosity, creativity, and the power of dreaming big. It is a delightful and inspiring read, encouraging children to see the world with wonder and imagination. (Age: 4+) [LW]



4

Al't'ownyan, Lilit' (Alt'unyan, Lilit') (text/illus.)

Xavari t'agavorē

(Khavari t'agavorē)

(The king of darkness)

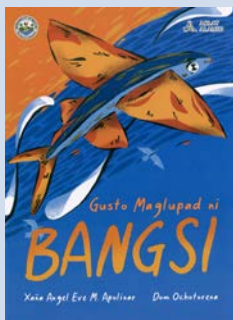
Erevan: Vernatun hratarakč'ut'yun (Vernatun
hratarakch'ut'yun), 2023. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-9939-9301-3-8

ARMENIAN

Coping with fear | Courage | Colour |
Black-and-White | Picture book

Armenia

»The king of darkness« is a small, sympathetic guy who lives a secluded life in his darkened castle, having come to terms with certain adversities in his life. In darkness he can merely guess at the letters in the books he reads. One day he hears a sound behind a door and feels compelled to open it. Venturing outside he is nearly overwhelmed to discover the world's brilliant colours. Ultimately the courage to overcome his fear of the unknown is rewarded. From now on he leads a richer life by bringing both these worlds together. Now he can read books in the light. In this oversize picture book, Lilit' Alt'unyan boldly relies on the opposition of black-and-white and colour. While the first section is dominated by black and grey tones, the colourful illustrations in the second section seem all the more distinctive. The sections are separated by a completely white double-spread, which captures the moment that the king leaves his familiar terrain for the first time. (Age: 3+) [KW]



5

Apolinar, Xaña Angel Eve M. (text)
 Ochotorena, Dom (Ochotorena, John Dominic) (illus.)
 Nebran, Eric Gerard H. (transl.)
Gusto maglupad ni Bangsi = Gustong lumipad ni Bangsi (*Bangsi wants to fly*)
 General Santos City: Aklat Alamid (Alamid Publishing House), 2023. – [32] p. – ISBN 978-621-96531-7-6
 Text in Binisaya (Cebuano), Filipino, and English

Sea | Flying fish | Dream | Courage | Self-realisation |
 Trilingual book | Picture book

■ Bangsi often wonders what is out there beyond the sea's surface. Despite being mocked by his fellow fish, he imitates the movements of birds and manages to glide through the air with his fins spread wide. A tale that encourages one to have high dreams and explore life outside one's comfort zone, Xaña Angel Eve M. Apolinar's debut work won her the grand prize of the 2019 USBONG Children's Story Writing Contest at age seventeen. Spain-based illustrator Dom Ochotorena, who studied Fine Arts in Manila and Design in Barcelona, loves traditional printmaking, etching and rubbercut printing. The changing perspectives and the strong, complementary contrast of bright orange and vibrant blue lend a sense of depth to the two-dimensionality of his dynamic images. With a mission to represent local cultures and languages, the independent publishing house Aklat Alamid takes its name from the endangered Asian palm civet which, like some local Philippine languages, is in danger of becoming extinct. (Age: 4+) [LO]



6

Petev, Todor / Christova, Zornica
 (Khristova, Zornica) (text)
 Zacharieva, Sijana (Zaharieva, Siyana) (illus.)
Ošte edin den v muzeja
 (Oshche edin den v muzeya)
 (*One more day in the museum*)
 [Sofija]: Izdatelstvo Točica [Izdatelstvo Tochitza],
 [2023]. – 58 p.
 ISBN 978-619-7172-38-6

Sofia | Museum | Guidebook | Non-fiction

■ After its first successful museum guidebook for children, the publisher has issued an accomplished sequel, this time covering various museums, galleries and a public park in Sofia. Each attraction is given one chapter, which always includes interactive options, along with informal but informative texts in the form of dialogues, as well as lively illustrations. The guidebook is just as fascinating for those who do not actually visit the museum but merely experience it »in print«. One learns a lot about the useful world of insects and their superpowers (National Natural History Museum) or follows a discussion about the use of weapons and the horrors of war (National War Museum). This is possible through the interactions which clever creatures (animals, objects, children) have with an old bald gentleman, who is forced to revise his antiquated views at each stage of the tour. His stereotypical image of the African continent, for example, is readily debunked in the exhibition room for African art. (Age: 10+) [KW]

7



Stoev, Slavi (text)
 Jordanov-Bosilek, Bojan (Yordanov-Bosilek, Boyan) (illus.)
Mišo v zamaka na car pišman
 (Misho v zamaka na car pišman)
 (*Misho in the castle of King Remorsefull*)
 [Sofija]: Izdatelstvo Marmot, 2023. – 95 p.
 (Series: Klub Täršači na istorii)
 ISBN 978-619-7241-55-6

Remorse | Modesty

BULGARIAN
 Bulgaria

Misho is a brat who demands everyone's exclusive attention. He wants it all – now. Career choice: king. When he wakes up one day in a palace, he believes he's finally close to achieving his goal. But someone else is king, so Misho hires on as a servant in order to become the king's successor one day. However, he is but one of many who want the same thing and are competing for the king's favours. And this ruler continually thinks up degrading tasks for his subordinates, such as dressing up as ugly or eating fish bones. In the palace kitchen Misho finds a place to retreat to. There he gets into conversations with a devil-like cook, who in a clumsy, awkward way explains to Misho what really counts. The next time Misho wakes up, he finds himself at home again and, much to his parents' surprise, has become a distinctively modest child. With irony and briskness, Slavi Stoev relates a tale that amuses itself with its own protagonist, who inadvertently undergoes a major learning experience. (Age: 6+) [KW]

8



Maoshan Connie () (text/illus.)
Tung wong Daai jyu saan dik maan syun soeng
 (*Sea cat sea fog*)
 Hong Kong: Maoshan's Seaside Studio, 2023. – [52] p.
 ISBN 978-988-70324-0-3
 Text in Cantonese and English

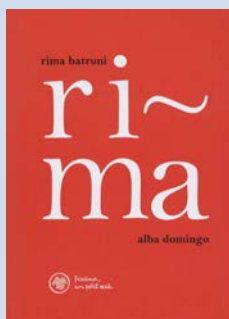
Hong Kong | Ferry | Cat | Sailor | Fog |
 Bilingual book | Picture book

CANTONESE
 Hong Kong (People's Republic of China)

The boat cat Choi Jai lives on a slow boat offering ferry service to Lantau Island. He is grateful to his sailor for saving him after he fell into the sea while chasing rats. As a special birthday present, Choi Jai plans to create the perfect sea fog that will turn the entire harbour into a giant cream cake. He knows the secret recipe: collect the worries and complaints of the ferry's passengers and whip them up in a foam machine. And indeed, the world seems to float in a fluffy cake, while a symphony of fog horns celebrates the sailor's birthday. After studying architecture and earning a master's degree in children's literature, Maoshan Connie has worked as a painter, picture book author and community map artist. Her innocent pencil, crayon and pastel drawings capture daily life on Hong Kong's ferries and offer stunning views of the city and its harbor-scape: a declaration of love for her hometown and a counterweight to the usual, expediently didactic children's books of Hong Kong's fast-paced society. (Age: 4+) [LO]

8

9



Batruni, Rima (Rioné, Joan) (text)

Domingo, Alba (illus.)

Rima

Tarragona: Piscina, un petit oceà, [2023]. – 84 p.

ISBN 978-84-121292-9-8

Coming of age

CATALAN

Spain

Nothing is going right at the moment for Rima, who is just about to graduate from high school. Emotionally she is on a rollercoaster. She is dissatisfied, worried about her parents' separation, lacks drive and simply does not know what she wants. It is only through writing poetry that she finds meaning and a way to sort out her thoughts and get a clearer sense of who she is. In short, loosely connected chapters, the readers gain insight into the life of this young woman. Each chapter casts a spotlight, either on the family, school, the grandmother who has passed away, or childhood memories. Interspersed are poems written by Rima, poems in which the protagonist finds it easiest to express herself. This fast-paced book convinces with its immediate language. The non-linear, fragmentary form matches the content well, as do the illustrations drawn with just a few lines in black and red. (Age: 14+) [JW]

10



Bellmont, Víctor (text/illus.)

I tú, com ho veus?

(And you? How do you see it?)

Barcelona: Zahorí Books, 2023. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-84-19532-99-2

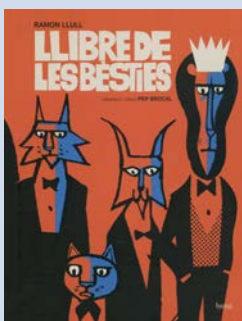
Sense of sight | Sense perception | Picture book

CATALAN

Spain

A large family, from the grandparents to the little cousin Lluç, is sitting around a table. They are all eating the same thing, but do they see it in the same way? On each double-page spread of this entertaining picture book, the table is shown from above, but each time it is different, because people see their surroundings each in their own way. This can be for physical reasons: the narrator is colour-blind, the grandmother has poor eyesight, and, understandably, everything seems very big to the little brother. But feelings and individual preferences also influence how they see the world. To the eyes of the mother, a natural scientist, everything is arranged systematically. The passionate video game player sees everything in pixels, and for the artist, the evening meal resembles an abstract painting. Not to mention what the compound eyes of the fly circling above the table see! Victor Belmont does not explain all this in a non-fiction manner, but demonstrates in this ingenious picture book that there are many different ways of perceiving »reality«. (Age: 5+) [JW]

11



Brocal, Pep (adapt./illus.)

Llull, Ramon (original text)

Llibre de les bèsties

(The book of the beasts)

[Barcelona]: Bang edicions, [2023]. – 140 p.

ISBN 978-84-1371-419-6

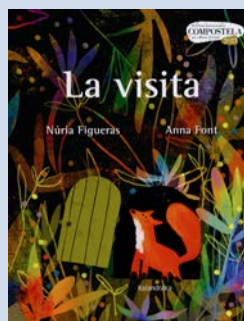
Llull, Ramon (1232-1316) / [The Book of the Beasts](#) |
[Adaptation](#) | [Animals](#) | [Power](#) | [Politics](#) |
[Human condition](#) | [Fable](#) | [Graphic novel](#)

CATALAN

Spain

■ Still today the philosopher, theologian and writer Ramon Llull (1232-1316) is a literary beacon in Catalan. The »Llibre de les bèsties« (Book of Beasts) is a part of his »Llibre de meravelles« (Book of Wonders). Written as an animal fable in which the main protagonists are a lion and a fox, it takes a sharp look at the art of governance, at rulers and their subjects, and at the struggle for power driven on by ambition and intrigue. Pep Brocal's bold new take on the 750-year-old classic is a brilliant achievement. Both the adapted text and the illustrations of this beautifully designed comic version are magnificent, because Brocal has preserved the timeless power of the original while making it accessible to today's readers through a fresh, contemporary diction. The illustrations, in which the characteristics of the figures are well developed, are full of wit, tempo and drama. »Llibre de les bèsties« is a wonderful example of how classics can be reinterpreted. (Age: 14+) [JW]

12



Figueras, Núria (text)

Font, Anna (illus.)

La visita

(The visitor)

Barcelona: Kalandraka Catalunya, 2023. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-84-18558-80-1

[Silence](#) | [Fox](#) | [Friendship](#) | [Picture book](#)

CATALAN

Spain

■ This story begins like a fairy tale: Let no one in while I am away, Mother Fox warns her child. Of course not! But, soon thereafter, when Silence knocks on the door, curiosity is stronger than caution. The little fox is anxious at first, but soon gains trust in this surprising visitor. Together they nibble on blackberries and dance – without music, since that would scare away the guest – to the beat of their own hearts, until the new friend takes leave and disappears into the forest, which is filled with a polyphony of birdsong. Like Núria Figueras's text, Anna Font's luminous pictures are full of warmth: in dominant egg-yolk yellow, fox-fur orange, and many other shades, mainly green tones for the forest's lush vegetation, and the large, almost amorphous shape of Silence, indicated only by a white outline. »La visita« is an enchanting book that makes one understand how marvellous and delightful it can be to enjoy silence and simply listen to one's inner self. (Age: 4+) [JW]

13



Isatisse (Tong, Yan Lok Isabel) (text/illus.)

Zuo zi ji de zhu jiao

(Be your own protagonist)

Hong Kong: San lian shu dian [Xiang gang] you xian gong si (Joint Publishing [Hong Kong] Company Ltd.), 2023. - [183] p.
ISBN 978-962-045-285-7

Self-esteem | Non-conformity | Artist | Biography | Picture book

CHINESE

Hong Kong

Beibei feels lost and lonely because she is unable to live up to social expectations. A fortune-teller takes her into another world where she meets Andy Warhol, Frida Kahlo, Antoni Gaudí, and Yayoi Kusama. Learning about their persistence, she decides to live according to her own convictions. With the help of an augmented reality app and an »Artist improvisational creative card game«, this story can be expanded, recorded and presented to a social media audience. Isabel Tong's first picture book is an art book of a different kind. With copies of photos and iconic works and text quotes from biographies of contemporary artists assembled in her own cheerful pop art style, she presents a humorous take on the hectic everyday life of Hong Kong. Working as a fashion and product designer, Isabel Tong started her own illustration brand ISATISSE, which won the Best Young Property Silver Award of the Hong Kong Licensing Awards 2020, and she was honoured with an Excellent Illustrator Award 2023 by the Japanese Illustrator Association. (Age: 12+) [LO]

14



Kiov (Yan, Shimin) (text/illus.)

Xiao bei, Xiao bei, gen wo lai!

(Xiaobei, Xiaobei, follow me!)

Kuala Lumpur: Jia xuan chu ban she (Jiaxuan Publishing), 2022. - [36] p.
(Series: Jia xuan chu ban she Da ma yuan chuang hui ben xi lie)
ISBN 978-629-97525-0-9

Snow monster | Naivety | Trust | Deception | Kidnapping | Picture book

CHINESE

Malaysia

A Yeti meets Little White Riding Hood, who has gotten lost and asks him to help her find the way home. She claims they can do so if they tie a red rope around their hands. He agrees, and they embark on a perilous journey. They traverse an eerie underwater world, a terrifying dark forest and a hostile desert. They escape giants and the evil mountain snake prince. And in the process a deep friendship seems to develop between them. When they finally arrive at their destination, the Yeti finds himself trapped in a cage. This is the debut work by Kiov, who graduated from Dasein Academy of Art in Kuala Lumpur in 2017. The cute comic style of simple black-and-white drawings with red highlights is misleading: While parents may think that this story explores the evil side of human nature on a deeper level and raises children's awareness of danger, children could very well see a hint of witchcraft in the girl's sewn-up mouth, or read it as an exciting, suspenseful horror story, or as a bad-girl book. (Age: 4+) [LO]

15



Cao, Wenxuan (text)

Zhang, Yunkai / Bei, Lin (illus.)

Shui dai zou le wo ye ye*(Who took my grandpa away?)*

Beijing: Tian tian chu ban she (Daylight Publishing House), 2024. – 289 p.

ISBN 978-7-5016-2277-1

Grandfather | Death | Journey

CHINESE

People's Republic of China

Dahe sets out on a journey all alone to look for Grandpa's urn, which he lost on the way back from the crematorium. His search is accompanied by memories: the pigeons grandpa kept, the lost girl he saved, the desperate man he helped, and everything he taught Dahe. As the boy follows the clues and does what he thinks Grandpa would like him to do, the journey becomes a process of reconciliation with Grandpa's death. When all hope seems lost and Dahe is about to accept the loss, a pigeon Grandpa once kept finds the urn in a field. This children's novel is as poetic and symbolic as the other work by Hans Christian Andersen Award winner Cao Wenxuan. He won many prizes, including the National Award for Outstanding Children's Literature (Quan guo you xiu er tong wen xue jiang) and there are children's literature awards named after him. His books include »Qing tong kui hua« (Bronze and Sunflower), »Cao fang zi« (The grass house), and »Qing ting yan« (Dragonfly eyes). (Age: 10+) [FW, ZX]

16



Jia, Yuqian (text)

Wang, Zumin / Wang, Ying (illus.)

You shen me dong xi wo mai bu lai*(There is nothing I can't bring back)*

Qingdao: Qing dao chu ban she (Qingdao Publishing House), 2023. – 31 p.

(Series: Xiao tong shu)

ISBN 978-7-5736-1096-6

Old age | Market | Family | Love | Picture book

CHINESE

People's Republic of China

An old man and woman live a calm and simple life in a village. One day, the old man sets out to the market with his wife's shopping list firmly in mind and very confident that »there is nothing I can't bring back«. On his way, he meets various people who entrust him with the task of bringing things back for them, too. He delivers the promised goods but forgets what his wife wanted him to buy. He expects blame, but receives only praise from his wife, who is satisfied that at least he hasn't forgotten her. This warm-hearted story about the enduringness of love won the 2024 Wenjin Book Award. The illustrations capture the atmosphere of country life, and the brightness of the pictures is suggestive of light in the heart. Wang Zumin illustrated other award-winning picture books like »Liu shi liu tou niu« (Sixty-six buffalos). His daughter Wang Ying is also the illustrator of »Wo shi lao hu wo pa shui« (I am a tiger afraid of nothing). (Age: 4+) [FW, ZX]

17



Li, Han (text/illus.)

Dian xian gan qu na er le?

(Where has the power pole gone?)

Chengdu: Si chuan shao nian er tong chu ban she (Sichuan Juvenile and Children's Publishing House), 2024. – [34] p.

(Series: Xin yi tu hua shu jiang xi lie)

ISBN 978-7-5728-1451-8

Power pole | Social change | Urbanisation | Picture book

CHINESE

People's Republic of China

■ Narrated through the eyes and voice of a power pole, this picture book provides a vivid record of the process of urbanisation and social change that many villages in China have experienced in the last half century. A remote village receives electricity after the first power pole is erected. Birds perch and sing on it, people gather to chat under it, the village becomes livelier than ever. Gradually, the pole is reinforced to hold more wires, as more buildings for new residents are constructed. When one day it becomes so overloaded that it catches fire, workers dismantle it and lay all the entangled wires underground. The power pole becomes history. Through the unique perspective in both the text and the illustration, a phase of history is memorialized forever. As the pole says, »I disappear, but I remember everything that once was«. Chongqing-based illustrator Li Han got her MA from the University for the Creative Arts. »Dian xian gan qu na er le?« won the first prize of the 14th Hsin-yi Picture Book Award. (Age: 3+) [FW, ZX]

18



Wu, Zhouxing (text)

Yuan, Xiazhen / Wei Li mei tu (illus.)

Xing fu li

(Xingfuli community)

Hefei: An hui shao nian er tong chu ban she (Anhui Juvenile and Children's Publishing House), 2024. – 238 p.
ISBN 978-7-5707-2208-2

Stray cat | Animal welfare | Architecture | Heritage | Growing up

CHINESE

People's Republic of China

■ Five children from An City meet by chance in an old residential quarter, where there is an ancient academy and a »Cat Granny« caring for stray cats. Each having their own troubles to deal with, the children become friends and advocate for the same cause: to help Cat Granny remain in her old family home Xingfuli, which is scheduled to be demolished. In order to clear up a common misunderstanding about the old lady, they inform the whole city about her contributions to animal welfare and manage to save the ancient academy and the nearby family home from demolition. Throughout the process, the children also begin to understand what is happening in their own lives. Wu Zhouxing published her first book while she was a university student and is now a representative of a new generation of Chinese children's literature authors. Her works include »Hong wu xie« (Red dancing shoes) and »Zi yun ying he chang tuan« (Astragalus sinicus choir), which received the 2023 China Book Award (Zhong guo hao shu jiang). (Age: 10+) [FW, ZX]

19



Xiao, Fuxing (text)

Yang, Bo (illus.)

Feng a chui xiang wo men*(The wind blows against us)*

Beijing: Beijing lian he chu ban ji tuan (Beijing United Publishing Co., Ltd), 2024. – 255 p.

ISBN 9787559673480

Beijing | History 1960s | School | Friendship | Teacher

CHINESE

People's Republic of China

This autobiographical novel is based on the author's experiences in Beijing in the 1960s and representative of a trend of the last two decades among both children's and adult novelists to write about childhood memories. The story begins with the narrator becoming a middle-school student, feeling excited and expectant about all the fresh experiences that lie ahead. While memories of old friends remain deep in the heart, stories about new friends and teachers take more room with the passing of each new day. There is a rare sense of frankness and sincerity in the straightforward narration by the teenager, and his use of typical Beijing colloquial expressions is appealing. Xiao Fuxing is a prolific author writing for both adults and children. His children's books include »Hong lian er« (The red face) and »Jin se de cao mao« (The golden straw hat). He has won the China Book Award (Zhong guo hao shu jiang), the Bingxin Essay Award (Bing xin san wen jiang), and the Laoshe Essay Award (Lao she san wen jiang). (Age: 12+) [FW, ZX]

20



Ballboss (Chou, I-hsien) (text/illus.)

Wu yuan de zhu ren*(Wu's Garden)*Taipei: Yu shan she, Xing yue shu fang (Yushan Publishing, Star Moon Study) [et al.], 2023. – 32 p.
ISBN 978-986-294-368-7

Wu Garden | History | Picture book

CHINESE

Taiwan

In a laconic manner, this book recounts the history of the legendary Wu Garden in Tainan. Established in the Dutch colonial period, it changed hands many times, each time being repurposed by the new owners: the Japanese colonial rulers, the government of the Republic of China, the Chinese Nationalist Party Kuomintang, and various enterprising businesspersons. In the process, the garden had to make way for new streets and buildings, so now only the small remnant of a pond remains. It is a matter of interpretation whether those involved were villains, uninvited guests or just greedy individuals. Multi-award-winning artist Ballboss hopes that this story will inspire reflection on questions of re-conciliation and justice. In the tension between the unembellished texts, the unique monochrome black watercolours, and his unerring sense for perspective and detail, Ballboss makes it possible for humour and irony to unfold. In his depiction the history of a garden can be read as the history of Taiwan as a colony under various rulers. (Age: 6+) [LO]

21



Wang, Shu-fen (text)

Nan Jun (illus.)

Zuo zhen ren ye ye, nin ji sui?*(Grandpa Zuo, how old are you?)*

Tai bei shi: Ye shi wen chuang you xian gong si / Ba ba wen hua (Yes Creative Ltd. / Papa Publishing House), 2023. – [41] p.

(Series: Nao xing qiu xi lie; Bi12)

ISBN 978-626-97417-0-0

Taiwan | Prehistory | Fossil | Time | Picture book

Taiwan
CHINESE

■ Prompted by a little girl's questions, a human fossil, the so called »Zuojhen Man«, guides her through Taiwanese prehistory. The text by multi-award-winning children's book author Wang Shu-fen does not go into depth about paleontological research into the fossils and parts of a neolithic human skull discovered in the Tsai-Liao River basin. Instead, it encourages reflection on the fact that humans are just a drop in the river of time. This river flows across page boundaries from the Paleolithic *Rhinos sinensis hayasakai* to the girl's elementary school on the last page. The riverbed is brought to life by illustrator Nan Jun's collages with superimposed translucent and opaque images, suggestive of the layers of sediments, in which the readers can discover fossils and living species during their journey through time and space. This transformation of the river of time into a poetic love letter to Taiwan received the 2023 Good Books for Everyone to Read Award as the Best Children's Book. (Age: 6+) [LO]

22



Junaković, Svjetlan (text/illus.)

Tata u pidžami*(Papa in pyjamas)*

Zagreb: Bodoni, 2022. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-953-8398-10-0

Father | Businessman | Unemployment | Depression | Picture book

Croatia
CROATIAN

■ Suddenly the day comes when Papa, a businessman, no longer follows stock market prices and company balance sheets, but stays at home in his pyjamas. Bit by bit he sinks into himself, has ever less energy, and becomes despondent. Only when his child asks him for help with schoolwork does he find a way out of his lethargy. Svjetlan Junaković has created a marvellous picture book about the virulent aspects of the everyday world of work and daily life that many people face today. The illustrations set up a contrast between the ambitions of yesterday and the disheartenments of today. Junaković employs the colour red in the upward pointing course of the stock market, and also for the guidepost pointing forward on a family hiking trip. When the family frees the father from his gloom and he gives up his manager's job to become a playful, even quite jolly member of the family, Junaković illustrates this with dabs and blobs of red that spread all over the family and their apartment. (Age: 5+) [KW]

23



Rajki, Igor (text)
Habjan, Klasja (illus.)

Tminice

(Darklets)

Zagreb: Mala zvona, 2023. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-953-8313-63-9

Darkness | Magic | Light pollution | Picture book

CROATIAN

Croatia

This black-and-white picture book is a hymn to darkness. In a kind of »school class« the narrative voice describes how darkness descends upon rooms and gently, almost imperceptibly, begins to envelop everything. Different shades of twilight come together: those that come from above and those that creep up from below. They romp about and release small shoots – the eponymous »darklets« – into their surroundings. But this magical game is in danger, because darkness is being pushed off to the edges and out of this world by man-made light pollution. The young Croatian artist Klasja Habjan has found a way to illustrate Igor Rajki's mysterious report with equally mysterious illustrations which give space to a darkness that is, in their portrayal, a vital essence that needs to be preserved. In Croatia »Tminice« received the »Ovca u kutiji« as best picture book of 2023 and was also nominated for the Grigor Vitez Award. (Age: 5+) [KW]

24



Dvořák, Jiří (text)
Olejníková, Daniela (illus.)

Myko. Kompletní zpravodaj ze světa hub

(Myco. The complete reports from the world of mushrooms)

Praha: Baobab, [2023]. – [90] p.

ISBN 978-80-7515-168-1

Mushroom | Mycorrhiza | Non-fiction

CZECH

Czech Republic

Edutainment at its best! With »Myko« Jiří Dvořák has devised a splendid information book for children about fungi in which the presentation of facts and knowledge goes hand in hand with humour and pictorial art. The book presents itself as a kind of magazine that would normally appear in single issues, but here feigns to be a compendium edition. The ten »issues« of the »Myko« magazine, published by a »mushroomy« editor-in-chief, comprise the chapters each with eight pages. Full of encyclopaedic detail and a lot of humour, the issues contain various magazine-like columns (»Q&A«, »Advertisement«, »Photo reportage«), while the »covers« bring snappy topic openers (»Freedom, equality, mycorrhiza«) in a style of psychedelic poster art that is reminiscent of the 1960s. The Slovakian illustrator Daniela Olejníková illustrated each of the »issues« in a colour spectrum of its own – always in bright, fresh neon. (Age: 8+) [KW]

25



Lučanská, Lucie (text/illus.)

Kniha vnímání

(The book of perceptions)

Strakonice: Lux, 2022. – [82] p.

ISBN 978-80-906919-6-4

[Sense organs](#) | [Perception](#) | [Picture book](#)

CZECH
Czech Republic

»Kniha vnímání« is based on Lucie Lučanská's final thesis for her art studies. It was nominated for the Czech children's book prize »Zlatá stuha« and won the award for the most beautiful Czech book of the year. Published by Lux, a small but notable publishing house, the book is a marvellous journey through the world of the senses in five walking tours that focus on seeing, hearing, smelling, touch or taste, respectively. Short, poetic and philosophical sentences point out the colouring of a passing dog, the rustling of paper when a page is turned, or the smell of a compost heap or of mushrooms. The separate chapters are each designed differently to match how each particular sense can be experienced. While »Seeing« is presented with colours, the chapter »Hearing« is in grey-and-black, but highly expressive illustrations. The pages about »Touch« feature, fittingly, relief printing. All this functions amazingly well and makes »Kniha vnímání« a genuinely pleasing reading experience. (Age: 3+) [KW]

26



Stehlíková, Olga (text)

Casková, Michaela (illus.)

Výkladový slovník

(Explanatory dictionary)

Brno: Host, 2023. – [88] p.

ISBN 978-80-275-1762-6

[Dictionary](#) | [Perception](#) | [Picture book](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

CZECH
Czech Republic

The principle behind »Výkladový slovník« is simple: On each double-page spread of this book in landscape format, a concept highlighted in magenta is explained in (half) a sentence and illustrations. The great merit and lovely lyricism of this »dictionary« ensues from the associative, poetically metaphorical, and airy manner of the explanations. Minimalist, linguistically playful, and with nimble water colour drawings, Olga Stehlíková und Michaela Casková present feelings, moods, and (childhood) memories which might be associated with the respective concept. This is bound to spark intriguing conversations and provides food for thought about the meaning of the term, on the one hand, and its role in the world on the other. New light is thus shed on objects that are experienced daily or their relationship to other people. For example, the term »Grandma« is wonderfully depicted by a large piece of cake with berries that wander across the page, forming the sentence »Grandma gives permission«. (Age: 3+) [KW]

27



Filskov, Karen (text/illus.)

Et perfekt insekt. Figurdigte om danske insekter

(A perfect insect. Concrete poems about Danish insects)

[Vordingborg]: Vild Maskine, 2024. – 43 p.
ISBN 978-87-7227-430-0

[Insect](#) | [Concrete poetry](#) | [Picture book](#)

Denmark ■ DANISH

Earwigs, horseflies, clothes moths, head lice, houseflies, and many other insects play the leading roles in Karen Filskov's poems. Here, however, it's not a scurrying, crawling, flapping, and fluttering collection (as one might expect), but a strictly graphic one because Karen Filskov creates poetic silhouettes. For her poems, she fills the contours of the bodies of her six-legged and winged little animals with words. This is concrete poetry supreme – poetry that surprises and amazes, because readers are left wondering how it is possible to make the words take the exact form of an earwig or a clothes moth; but also because the texts are a peculiar mixture. The author sticks to the facts when describing, for example, how the moths or the fleas reproduce. At the same time, the short texts develop a distinctive rhythmic lyricism. Aestheticised in this way, even the creepy-crawlies that we find less attractive become more beautiful. Fascinating! An astonishingly unusual book. (Age: 6+) [IG]

28



Hitz, Anja (text)

Kjærgaard, Anna Margrethe (illus.)

Vores fugl

(Our bird)

[Helsingør]: ABC Forlag, 2024. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-87-7589-102-3

[Alcoholism](#) | [Child neglect](#) | [Imaginary friend](#) | [Loneliness](#) | [Picture book](#)

Denmark ■ DANISH

»Vi er gode til at lade være med at græde. Vi kan godt tænke på noget andet.« (We are good at not crying. We can easily think of something else). Anja Hitz tells the story of growing up with alcoholic parents from a child's perspective: how the kid tries to come to terms with the situation and think positively. Anna Margrethe Kjærgaard's pictures, on the other hand, show the extent to which the child is exposed to massive neglect. Standing in front of an empty fridge, they hold a shrivelled carrot in their hand; in a completely filthy kitchen, they sweep the rubbish aside with a broom. The neighbours do ask if everything is all right, but the child wants to manage on their own. They get help from their green, chubby, kind-eyed imaginary friend. They both wish for a bird – but when it almost dies because of the adults' neglect, they finally accept some help. A touching picture book – symbolic and very real at the same time. (Age: 6+) [IG]

29



Lemire, Sabine (text)

Meisler, Rasmus (illus.)

Historien om en dreng, der (måske) hedder Torben

(The story about a boy who is [maybe] called Torben)

København: Gads Børnebøger, 2023. – 47 p.

ISBN 978-87-627-4291-8

Loneliness | Outsider | Child neglect | Longing | Friendship | Picture book

Denmark ■ DANISH

Danish children's literature has a penchant for enigmatic, parable-like texts such as »Historien om en dreng, der (måske) hedder Torben«. Torben is »anderledes« (different), he (apparently) has no parents, lives alone in a small house, doesn't go to school, and hasn't spoken to anyone in a long time. The boy, who may be called Torben, is what you would call a »foreign child«. Yet, above all, he is a very lonely child. When a letter from school arrives in his letterbox demanding he come to school, he does so, albeit with a very uneasy feeling. True, his unease is not unfounded; but he also meets a girl there who might become a friend. Rasmus Meisler draws the boy with tousled hair and an open gaze, in a variety of picture formats. Variation is also the hallmark of Sabine Lemire's text: She plays with literary topoi and tones in order to negotiate questions of identity and belonging. (Age: 8+) [IG]

30



Strid, Jakob Martin (text/illus.)

Den fantastiske bus (eller hvordan vi kom fra A til B)

(The fantastic bus: or how we got from A to B)

[København]: Gyldendal, 2023. – 202 p.

ISBN 978-8-70215-209-8

Bus | Travelling | Adventure | Utopia | Picture book

Denmark ■ DANISH

What a wondrously-whooping vehicle! The fantastic bus has ten wheels, four engines, three floors, plasma headlights, and foldout wings. It is designed to take Taku, Charlie, Tolstoy, Spir, Silja, little Timo, and many others to the mythical land of Blakanda, where the saffron lily grows. This magical flower cures all diseases. It is the only hope for Timo, who is continually getting worse in the noisy, polluted city. The bus embarks on a fast-paced, dangerous journey over wide plains and high bridges. After one last daring manoeuvre and with a little help from the gods, the bus does actually land beyond the North Pole, in a field of blooming saffron lilies in Blakanda! »Den fantastiske bus« is a picture book in a class of its own, a true brick of 202 pages, weighing no less than 2.5 kilos, which effortlessly blends a verve for crazy storytelling and a fascination with details with hints of socio-criticism and intertextual references to create a unique work of art. Epic and magnificent! (Age: 8+) [IG]

31



Knops, Uus (text)
Bruyn, Sassafras de (illus.)
Het alfabet voor groot verdriet
(The alphabet for great sadness)
Gent: Borgerhoff & Lambrigts, 2023. – 72 p.
ISBN 978-94-6478-849-5

Death | Sadness | Grief | ABC book | Non-fiction

Belgium ■ DUTCH

Everyone copes differently with the loss of a loved one. Sometimes a book can be helpful in talking about it with children. »Het alfabet voor groot verdriet« is a great resource on everything to do with death and grief. The first chapter begins with A for »Afscheid« (farewell). Uus Knops, a psychiatrist and grief expert by profession, has found a particularly clever way of focussing on one concept for each letter, talking about it in a clear and accessible way, and considering the different points of view people have about these matters. She does not even shy away from difficult topics, such as palliative care and suicide. There is no word for just two letters. »Q is for... sometimes there are just no words for it«. And there is also no word that starts with the letter X, but since kisses are often represented by an X, the book suggests: »Kissing helps to soothe your sorrows«. Sassafras de Bruyn has created moving illustrations in soft colours for each chapter of this excellent book. (Age: 11+) [TD]

32



Peeters, Elvis (text)
Doninck, Sebastiaan van (illus.)
Kijk dan toch!
(Take a good look)
Tielt: Lannoo, [2023]. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-94-014-8967-6

Nature | Curiosity | Sunrise | Observation | Picture book

Belgium ■ DUTCH

In a clearing at the edge of a forest, a toad slowly crawls out from under a rotten piece of wood, looks around and hears something difficult to identify. When the toad is completely out from under the wood, it still hears some shuffling. A fat snail is struggling to climb up the piece of wood. Toad asks the snail what is going on. Together the toad and the snail look all around at the silence. Something is about to happen! The story beautifully describes how the day begins as the sun rises. Ants crawl out to look for food in the sand. There is constantly something happening in the natural world! While the toad wonders if it is really interesting, the snail observes everything in great detail. In this way, the picture book is also an ode to wonder. The snail's call to pay attention to nature is reflected in the illustrations, which are dynamically painted in watercolours with a rich palette. (Age 6+) [TD]

33



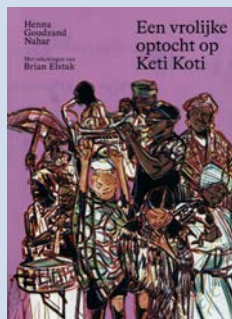
Sax, Aline (text)

Wat ons nog rest*(What's left for us)*Antwerpen: Davidsfonds/Infodok, [2023]. – 239 p.
ISBN 978-90-02-27861-7[Berlin](#) | [World War II \(1939-1945\)](#) | [History 1945](#) | [Refugee](#) | [Verse novel](#) | [Historical fiction](#)

Belgium ■ DUTCH

The Soviet army is about to enter Berlin at the end of the Second World War. Civilians are trying to survive in the ruins, food is running out, and desperation is growing. Seventeen-year-old Henrike hides in a bomb shelter with her mother, younger brother and neighbours. As the fighting gets closer every day and the chaos grows, Henrike decides to flee. She first goes in search of her older brother and then joins the endless stream of refugees heading towards the advancing US army. Aline Sax tells the story from Henrike's perspective, incorporating the questions that the young woman asks herself, thus indirectly revealing the horrible effects of war for readers to reflect on. In this verse novel, the author manages to say a lot with a few words. The rhythm of the text fits well with what is being described and draws the readers into the story. One can feel the bombardments and empathize with the people on the run. This impressive historical novel is unfortunately very topical today. (Age: 13+) [TD]

34



Goudzand Nahar, Henna (text)

Elstak, Brian (illus.)

Een vrolijke optocht op Ketikoti*(A cheerful parade on Ketikoti)*[Amsterdam]: Van Holkema & Warendorf, [2023]. – 85 p.
ISBN 978-90-00-38873-8[Suriname](#) | [Ketikoti](#) | [Slavery](#) | [History](#)

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

Joeme is travelling from the Netherlands to Suriname with her parents and her boyfriend Bas. They take fabric with them for the grandmothers to make bright, colourful clothes for Bigi Spikri, the parade during Ketikoti, Suriname's Emancipation Day. They travel to the village of Galibi to visit relatives of Joeme's mother, Nina. Her family has lived in Suriname for a long time, ever since their ancestors were brought there as slaves from Africa. Uncle Abaisa tells them about his native village and how his family was lucky enough to escape slavery and live freely in the forest among the Maroons. The story also contains a lot of information about Suriname's natural world, such as the large turtles (aykanti) that lay their eggs on the beach, or the stingrays that can be quite painful to encounter. There is also a love story, in which Joeme and Bas manage to bring two people together. This book introduces young readers to contact with aspects of slavery in a sensitive and readable way, without becoming a history lesson. (Age: 9+) [TD]

35



Kroonenberg, Mohana van den (text)
Meezen, Nadia (illus.)

Ik heb mijn zusje kwijtgemaakt

(I lost my sister)

Rijswijk: De Vier Windstreken, [2023]. – 150 p.
ISBN 978-90-5116-952-2

Family | Siblings | Jealousy | Running away

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

Seven-year-old Kos's parents pay most of their attention to each other and to his baby sister, Soof. While playing hide-and-seek in their garden, Kos takes Soof across the street to the park where he hides her deep in the bushes. When he discovers that his sister has disappeared, Kos runs away from home, to avoid being punished by his parents. During his flight, he meets wonderful people like Chuck, a wanderer, a young mother with the same stroller as Soof's, and a refugee. Kos clearly regrets his actions and fears that he will never see Soof again. The story shows Kos's thought processes, even as he remembers unacceptable actions from the past. The author very sensitively describes the boy's fear of how his parents will react to the fact that he has »lost« his sister. The wanderer and the refugee, as characters living on the margins of society, are also beautifully integrated into the story as they befriend and care for Kos. (Age: 9+) [TD]

36



Meinderts, Koos (text)
Fienieg, Annette (illus.)

Zebedeus en het ganzenbord van Wisse

(Zebedee and Wisse's goose game board)

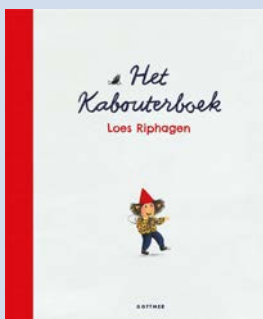
[Hoorn]: Hoogland & Van Klaveren, [2023]. – 157 p.
ISBN 978-90-8967-408-1

Journey | Adventure | Friendship | Meaning of life

Netherlands ■ DUTCH

Zebedee the bear receives a package containing a letter and a goose game. At first glance, it looks like the usual goose game board, but it has a different layout and only one die and one game piece: a snow-white goose with an orange beak. Curious about what the game will entail, Zebedee rolls the die and lands on a picture of a door that looks familiar. It is his own door. When he opens it, a snow-white goose named Wisse is standing there. Zebedee embarks on a journey with the goose and the board game as his tour guide. Their journey can be seen as a journey through life, full of adventures and encounters with all kinds of characters. Koos Meinderts describes the bear's feelings and thoughts in a philosophical way, with empathy and humour. Zebedee encounters many aspects of life, from faith and doubts about faith to biblical references to questions about what art is or what happiness is. The author takes a light-hearted approach to it all. Life, says Zebedee, is a game, but not a competition. »You cannot win, but you cannot lose either. All you can do is play.« (Age: 10+) [TD]

37



Riphagen, Loes (text/illus.)

Het kabouterboek

(The book about gnomes)

Haarlem: Gottmer, [2023]. – [60] p.

ISBN 978-90-257-7745-6

[Gnome](#) | [Fantasy](#) | [Picture book](#)

Netherlands **DUTCH**

Gnome child Kik takes the reader into his world, the world of modern, urban gnomes. Loes Riphagen portrays this world with a sense of humour and in detail. Readers learn about the layout of gnome houses, how they interact with other creatures, and how gnomes fish food scraps out of their babies' hair to serve as salad toppings later on. Young children, but also older children and adults, will enjoy pictures full of jokes and witty ideas: a car made of matchboxes, wallpaper made of candy wrappers, and a glove used as a sleeping bag. We see how gnomes live, how they keep busy all day long, and how they manage to hide so well from humans. From step-by-step instructions on how to make a gnome hat to a cross-section of a gnome's house – the illustrations leave no doubt as to the authenticity of these little creatures. In this beautiful picture book, brimming with creativity, originality and fantasy, the illustrations make the amazing, fantastic world of gnomes as tangible as possible. Readers will discover new things every time they read it. (Age: 4+) [TD]

38



Slegers, Marlies (text)

We moeten je iets vertellen

(We have to tell you something)

Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Luitingh-Sijthoff, [2023]. – 268 p.

ISBN 978-90-210-3179-8

[Divorce](#) | [Friendship](#) | [Autism](#) | [Homosexuality](#) | [Dementia](#)

Netherlands **DUTCH**

Thirteen-year-old Hazel learns that her parents are getting divorced. As a result, the planned family holiday is cancelled. Her sister and brother go away with friends, but Hazel is sent to stay with her very forgetful grandmother, who lives on an island. Angry and full of questions, she tries to convince her parents that they belong together. Although she doesn't want to be on the island, she manages to make new friends there. Then, at her grandmother's house, she finds a packet of unopened letters that reveal a family secret that plays a role in her parents' conflict. With subtlety and precision, Marlies Slegers depicts the feelings of her characters, including a boy with autism and a gay friend. Hazel's changing emotions are described in a tangible and humorous way while her grandmother's symptoms of dementia are sensitively portrayed. This well-constructed story, with its clear built-up of tension, is a moving portrait of an adolescent for whom the world has become a strange and confusing place. (Age: 10+) [TD]

39



Woltz, Anna (text)

De spin en de sleutel*(The spider and the key)*

Amsterdam: Querido, 2023. – 191 p.

ISBN 978-90-451-2965-5

[Internet](#) | [Social media](#) | [Family](#) | [Secret](#) | [Fear](#)

 DUTCH
 ■
 Netherlands

In a video post, thirteen-year-old Elena says that if you're afraid to do something, you should do it to overcome your fear. Things get completely out of hand when her followers follow this advice. None of her friends want to have any more contact with her, or their parents forbid it. Elena goes to stay with her aunt Loes for a while until things calm down. After traveling to the village by train, she meets Atlas, a child of Loes's new boyfriend Ivar. On the isolated farm, she meets Loes's daughter Kennedy, whom she had expected to be a boy because of her name. Elena spends a special month in her life, experiencing the family's daily life and learning why they have no contact with other local people. Anna Woltz knows how to build up suspense in a truly brilliant way that keeps the reader involved in the story. By providing more and more small details about Atlas and Kennedy, the story is put together like a puzzle in which Elena also plays an important role. This is not a novel to be put down, but one to be read in one sitting. (Age: 11+) [TD]

40



Balla, Trace (text/illus.)

Leaf-light

Sydney [et al.]: Allen & Unwin, 2023. – 77 p.

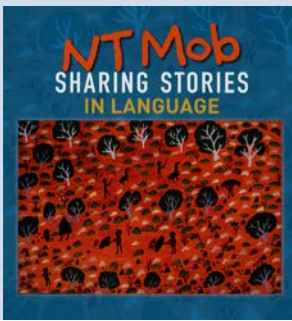
ISBN 978-1-76052-620-7

[Australia](#) | [Aboriginal community](#) | [Nature](#) | [Animals](#) | [Graphic novel](#) | [Picture book](#)

 ENGLISH
 ■
 Australia

Renowned author-illustrator Trace Balla, living on Djaara Country (central Victoria), has created several award-winning graphic-novel-style picture books celebrating the connection between (indigenous) people, nature and identity. In her most recent work, »Leaf-light«, Miri, her mother, and their neighbours – whom readers first met in »Landing with Wings« (2020) – have become fast friends. It's early spring and Wingo's family have taken in a number of orphaned or injured animals – including a little wombat and two kangaroo joeys. Yet the greatest excitement for Miri and Wingo is little Bararamal, the emu chick hatching from an abandoned egg. The digital cartoony illustrations in soft hues, which have an ink-and-watercolour feel, are brimming with informative and atmospheric details. They tell a warm-hearted tale of community bonds, friendship, and the link with the natural world, while also introducing readers to the rich local flora and fauna in English and partly in Djaara language. A special treat for readers of all ages! (Age: 6+) [CS]

41



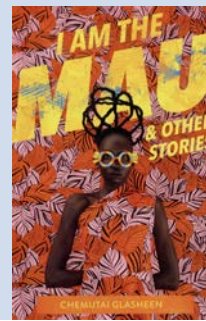
Forshaw, Bill (ed.)
Northern Territory language teams (text/illus./compil.)
NT mob. Sharing stories in language
Sydney: Indigenous Literacy Foundation, 2023. – 103 p.
ISBN 978-1-92259-207-1
Text in Murrinhpatha, Kunwinjku, Djambarrpuyngu, Anindilyakwa, Wubuy, Kriol, Warumungu, Arrernte, and Warlpiri with translations in English

[Australia](#) | [Northern Territories](#) | [Aboriginal community](#) | [Tradition](#) | [Everyday life](#) | [Dreamtime](#) | [Anthology](#)

Australia ■ ENGLISH

There are over 700 indigenous languages spoken across Australia. This varied anthology gathers old and newer stories by Aboriginal communities from the Northern Territories in nine of these languages. Each story is preceded by a map showing the location of the community and a short informative text with background information on the land, the people, the languages, and the respective stories. Put together by Aboriginal educators to preserve tales and traditional knowledge for indigenous children, the insightful texts, accompanied by illustrations in various styles, also provide a compelling read for non-indigenous readers. It features tales like the Wubuy Dreaming story of »The Brolga and the Emu« or the story about mermaid spirits in Kuninjku language. This publication confirms how important the work is that the Indigenous Literacy Foundation in Australia, ALMA winner 2024, is doing for First Nations communities and the celebration of indigenous languages. (Age: 6+) [CS]

42



Glasheen, Chemutai (text)
I am the Mau & other stories
North Fremantle, W.A: Fremantle Press, 2023. – 255 p.
ISBN 978-1-76099-257-6

[Kenya](#) | [Everyday life](#) | [Traditional life](#) | [Modernity](#) | [Short story](#)

Australia ■ ENGLISH

This moving collection of short stories offers young adult readers a glimpse into many different aspects of everyday life in Kenya. Penned by Kenyan-born academic, teacher, and writer Chemutai Glasheen, now based in Western Australia, the eleven tales gathered in this volume feature different teen and young adult protagonists from a variety of backgrounds. They touch upon challenging topics such as school bullying, ruthlessly ambitious politicians, the harmful cultural practice of girl-child beading in Samburu communities, domestic violence, poverty, refugees, the destruction of traditional life styles, etc. In typical short-story manner, each tale starts right in the middle of events, drawing readers in quickly. Despite the disturbing themes and the struggles that many characters face, the stories often end on a somewhat hopeful note and will serve as inspiration to further explore the complex history and rich cultural traditions of this East African Country. A diverse and captivating read! (Age: 14+) [CS]

43



Kanicky, Melanie (text)

The Weaver

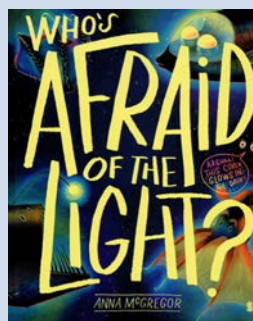
[Adelaide, SA]: MidnightSun, 2023. – 352 p.
ISBN 978-1-922858-28-3

Kingdom | Tyranny | Magic | Evil | Love |
Fantasy fiction

Australia ■ ENGLISH

For weeks – or has it been months already? – young Saatcha has been trying to protect her sick father's blacksmithery, sleeping in its icy cold attic at night. Yet when two thieves break into the shop, kidnap the emaciated girl, and whisk her away from eternal winter into some grand mansion warmed by sunlight, she slowly starts to understand that her world was nothing but a powerful illusion spell. Reality is harsh: The kingdom is under the cruel rule of evil prince Morozko, who slaughters his subjects and burns the villages in an attempt to find his stepbrother Kaverin – her saviour. Melanie Kanicky's debut work is a complex and captivating YA fantasy novel with a fairy-tale atmosphere. Told in the third-person, the tale includes multi-faceted characters, an amusing love-triangle, the fight against a powerful villain, and a personal quest. Shortlisted for the 2023 Aurealis Awards for Best Young Adult Novel, »The Weaver« grips readers from the first page with its believable world-building and peculiar type of magic. (Age: 12+) [CS]

44



McGregor, Anna (text/illus.)

Who's afraid of the light?

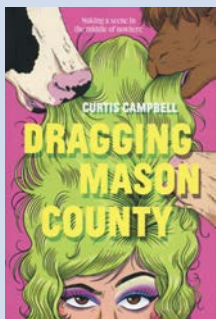
Brunswick, Victoria: Scribble, 2023. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-922585-39-4

Deep sea | Marine animals | Bioluminescence |
Danger | Hiding | Picture book | Non-fiction

Australia ■ ENGLISH

Since there is little to no light in the deepest depths of the oceans, lots of animals create their own light through bioluminescence. When the undisclosed narrator of this spooky picture book descends into this dark realm, they happen across a creature who introduces himself as Fergus. Yet without any light, there is no way to tell what this Fergus-fellow looks like. Weirdly enough, he disappears like a flash whenever another glowing marine animal approaches, and only reappears once the others have vanished. Is he really such a fraidy-fish? Award-winning author-illustrator Anna McGregor has her mysterious protagonist reveal just titbits of information about himself in neon-coloured speech-bubbles against a pitch-black background; the only characters readers get to see are Fergus's supposed enemies – so they're in for a big surprise at the end. The double-page appendix with additional deep-sea details, as well as the witty endpapers and its glow-in-the-dark cover round off the informative and suspenseful story. (Age: 5+) [CS]

45



Campbell, Curtis (text)

Dragging Mason County

Toronto [et al.]: Annick Press, [2023]. – 247 p.

ISBN 978-1-77321-788-8

Small town | LGBTQ+ | Bullying | Homophobia |
Social media | Drag queen | School | Friendship |
Acceptance | Self-acceptance

Canada
ENGLISH

Living in a rural, small-town community has its repercussions if you are a gay teen. While self-confident, outgoing Alan chooses to address conservative backlash with bravado and flamboyancy – even more so when he is in his drag persona Aggie Culture – his best friend Peter attempts to lie low, but is known for acerbic wit when provoked. When one of his unintentionally cruel outbursts against a queer classmate goes viral and he is proclaimed a self-hating gay, he lets himself be dragged [pun intended] into staging the county's first »Drag Extravaganza« ever, to try and clear his name – and win favour with a cute new boy. In his debut YA novel, writer, comedian, and theatre artist Curtis Campbell addresses a number of trying topics. In addition to homophobia, fat-shaming, and peer pressure, the book revolves around the main protagonist's tough way to self-acceptance. The gripping first-person narration, alternating between biting humour and harsh self-doubt, makes Peter's struggles and frustration clearly palpable. (Age: 14+) [CS]

46



Grant, Vicki (text)

A green velvet secret

[Toronto]: Tundra, [2023]. – 240 p.

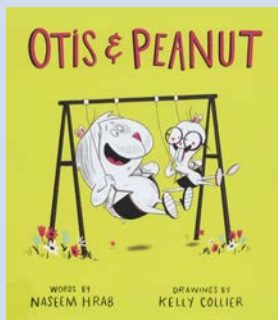
ISBN 978-0-7352-7012-1

Grandmother | Death | Coping with grief |
Reincarnation | Friendship | Secret

Canada
ENGLISH

Yardley and her grandmother Gidge are inseparable. They share everything, especially their love for crafting, sewing, and extravagant fashion. Thus, when Gidge announces to the family that she'll be »starting an exciting new phase of [her] life« – and it turns out that she means dying of cancer – twelve-year-old Yardley is devastated. Good to know that Gidge firmly believes in reincarnation. So when an older lady with green eyes turns up at Over Easy – the vintage clothes shop at which Yardley helps – the tween is convinced this is Gidge, come back from the dead as promised. Writing about death and grief in a moving and sensitive yet, at the same time, fun manner is no mean feat; but renowned author Vicki Grant has created well-rounded, quirky characters and a comical plot with entertaining twists – without making light of the family's grief – that will keep readers chuckling. And when Yardley eventually uncovers a family secret, with the help of annoying busybody Harris, life takes a positive turn for them all. (Age: 10+) [CS]

47



Hrab, Naseem (text)

Collier, Kelly (illus.)

Otis & Peanut

Toronto [et al.]: Owlkids Books, [2023]. – 79 p.

(Series: Otis & Peanut; 1)

ISBN 978-1-77147-496-2

Fear | Grief | Moving house | Friendship | Comic

Canada ENGLISH

Naseem Hrab and Kelly Collier, the team behind the successful »How to Party Like a Snail« (Owl Kids, 2022), are at it again, this time targeting a slightly older readership. First readers will cherish the three gentle and humorous comic-book-style tales included in the first volume of a new series featuring best pals Otis, a very hairy guinea pig, and Peanut, a naked mole rat. The stories revolve around everyday thoughts, worries, and joys. No matter what they go through, the two are always there for each other – be it Otis’s fear of a new haircut, his sadness at missing his friend Pearl, or the challenge of turning his new house into a cosy home. The short, dialogue-driven text alternates between witty and thoughtful moments and is perfect for new readers without ever feeling simplified. The expressive digital drawings, executed in a reduced palette of yellow, pink, and light blue, bring the stories to life – the rodents’ hilarious facial expressions are to die for. Look out for more tales about »Otis & Peanut« soon. (Age 6+) [CS]

48



John-Kehewin, Wanda (text)

Hopeless in Hope

Winnipeg, Manitoba: HighWater Press, [2023]. – 204 p.

ISBN 978-1-77492-083-1

Canada | First Nations | Cree <people> | Poverty | Alcoholism | Foster family | Intergenerational trauma | Racism | Mother | Daughter

Canada ENGLISH

»Hopeless in Hope« is an intense teen novel that tackles the challenging, but very pressing issues of intergenerational trauma, alcoholism, and poverty. Cree teen Eva lives in the shabbiest part of a backwater called Hope, but with being picked on at school, and her alcoholic mother Shirley mostly absent, there is not a lot to feel hopeful about. When her beloved grandmother Nokhum breaks her hip and needs to stay in hospital for weeks, social services whisk Eva away to a group home, whereas her devoted little brother Marcus ends up in a foster family. Frustrated, angry, and anxious, Eva tries to navigate her situation by writing poems – and is more than astonished to learn that her mother, too, used to be a budding writer. In a touching first-person narrative, Cree author Wanda John-Kehewin slowly reveals the family’s back-story, and how discrimination and the racist practice of Canadian residential schools affected, and continues to affect, the lives of many First Nation families. A moving read. (Age: 12+) [CS]

49



Pendziwol, Jean E. (text)

Stewart, Todd (illus.)

Skating wild on an inland sea

Toronto [et al.]: Groundwood Books, House of Anansi Press, 2023. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-77306-704-9

Lake | Winter | Siblings | Ice skating | Morning | Nature | Picture book

Canada ENGLISH

It's early morning. In a snow-covered log cabin, two siblings wake up to the »song of a sea / that lives in the heart / of a continent«. In the dim dawn light, they bundle up in their winter clothes and stomp through the snow towards the banks of Lake Superior. On the way, they spot different animal tracks and listen to birds calling out to them. And then, they finally arrive, lace up their boots, and »slide onto the / surface of Superior, / our skates scoring patterns, hissing and swishing / as we stroke and glide.« Jean E. Pendziwol's poetic text makes readers feel the magic atmosphere of this winter morning and the children's quiet delight at skating across the smooth ice. Todd Stewart's sublime digital pictures in various shades of blue, cream, and yellow, mirror the lyrical atmosphere and expertly capture the changing light of the rising sun from different viewpoints, making each double-spread glow. This stunning picture book is a quiet celebration of nature and the joys of winter. (Age: 4+) [CS]

50



Badoe, Yaba (text)

Avelino, Joelle (illus.)

Man-Man and the tree of memories. A story of dance, magic and liberty!

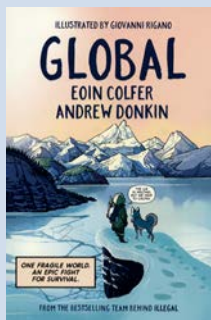
London: Zephyr, 2023. – 178 p.
ISBN 978-1-83793-007-4

Jamaican family | Carnival | Mother | Illness | Time travel | Intergenerational trauma

Great Britain ENGLISH

Set in contemporary London, this fairytale-like children's tale opens with a young Jamaican boy being worried. His beloved mum Trilby is suffering from some mysterious illness. Desperate for her to recover, Man-Man (short for Emmanuel) vows to put all of his efforts into a brilliant performance at the famous street carnival this year to »dance« her better. While twirling and twisting to the music in their elaborate costumes, Man-Man, his older, cynical sister, Pan, and his best friend, Kareem, are suddenly whisked away by the mythical Queen of Revels, who transports them back in time. With the help of the ancient Tree of Memories, the three kids learn about the history of their people in Africa and the trauma of enslavement; they also discover how they can help cure Trilby. The modern story, interwoven with elements from African myth, is told in a combination of engaging narration and lively dialogue in patois. The bright digital illustrations aptly capture the mood: from sombre to joyously magical. (Age: 9+) [CS]

51



Colfer, Eoin / Donkin, Andrew (text)
Rigano, Giovanni (illus.)
Dickey, Chris (lettering)
Global

London: Hodder, 2024. – 128 p.
ISBN 978-1-44495-193-6
(First published by Hodder & Stoughton, 2023)

Bay of Bengal | Arctic | Adventure | Global warming |
Climate change | Flood

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

After the success of their graphic novel »Illegal« (2017), the renowned international team behind it have penned another suspenseful graphic adventure. »Global« recounts the stories of two t(w)eens on almost opposite sides of the globe, whose lives are significantly affected by global warming. In northern Canada, 14-year-old Inuit Yuki is determined to help protect grolar bears – a new polar-grizzly crossbreed. When she sets off into the icy wilderness with her dog and camera to capture evidence of them, a hungry grolar and the melting ice quickly have her tumbling into life-threatening situations. Meanwhile, in the Bay of Bengal, Sami and his grandpa experience a daily fight for survival due to rising sea levels, cyclones, and a rapidly dwindling supply of fish. Both kids' adventures unfold through a succinct, dialogue-driven narrative, embedded in gripping colour illustrations. The tales read like an action movie, seamlessly interwoven with grim background matter about the harrowing effects of climate change. (Age: 10+) [CS]

52



Croucher, Lex (text)
Gwen and Art are not in love

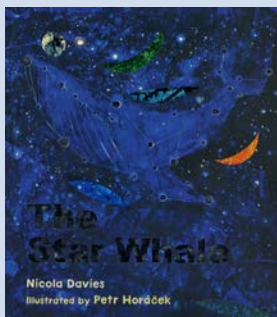
London [et al.]: Bloomsbury, 2023. – 419 p.
ISBN 978-1-5266-5179-2

Camelot | Kingdom | Role expectations | Gender role |
LGBTQ+ | Historical fiction

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

Not only are prim Princess Gwendoline and party-loving Arthur Delacey, the future Lord of Maidvale, not in love. They positively hate each other's guts. Unfortunately, they have been betrothed since birth and – after trying to avoid each other for years – are now forced by their parents to spend the summer together at Camelot. What a disaster! Yet when they discover that they both harbour romantic feelings for same-sex partners (Art falls for Gwen's brother and reluctant future king Gabriel, and Gwen is attracted to Bridget, the kingdom's only female knight), they broker a deal to play lovers while covering for each other's secret romances. Lex Croucher's debut, a hilarious historical novel with a very modern vibe, makes a truly fun read for teens: It has a cast of quirky queer protagonists, entertainingly snarky dialogue, bloody battles, furious friendships, peppy plot twists, rollicking romance, and lots of tongue-in-cheek allusions to the legend of King Arthur. (Age: 13+) [CS]

53



Davies, Nicola (text)
Horáček, Petr (illus.)

The star whale

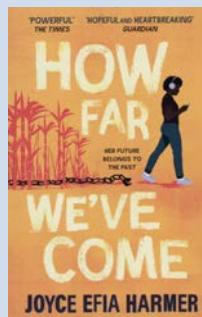
Hereford: Otter-Barry Books, 2023. – [93] p.
ISBN 978-1-915659-09-5

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

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

This magnificent treasure chest of animal poems has quite an unusual creation story: Unlike most illustrated collections, it did not start with a selection of poems; instead, award-winning author Nicola Davies came across hundreds of small images that renowned artist Petr Horáček had scribbled into his many sketchbooks, and she immediately felt a connection. She selected forty of these sketches »that sparked ideas, or seemed to hold a story that [she] wanted to tell« and created wonderfully imaginative, whimsical, moving poems about the natural world and its many real or imaginary inhabitants. There's »The Star Whale«, who »swims, / In the slow gulf stream of galaxies, / Swallowing the glowing plankton of the stars.«; or »The Queen of Fishes«, who »would like to visit the land«. Once the texts were finished, Horáček created large, full-colour illustrations for them based on his initial sketches. The result is a stunning kaleidoscope of creatures, topics, and moods – creative collaboration at its best. (Age: 5+) [CS]

54



Harmer, Joyce Efi (text)

How far we've come

London: Simon & Schuster, 2023. – 317 p.
ISBN 978-1-3985-1099-9

[Barbados](#) | [History 1834](#) | [Slavery](#) | [Rebellion](#) |
[Time travel](#) | [Racism](#) | [Historical fiction](#) | [Fantasy fiction](#)

Great Britain ■ ENGLISH

This disturbing debut novel is an unusual time-travel adventure alternating between Unity Plantation, Barbados, 1834, and Somerset in present-day England. It follows the fate of 16-year-old enslaved Obah. Outwardly obedient and always striving not to displease her mistress, Obah secretly dreams of escaping the cruel life she was born into. When she suddenly encounters a strange white adolescent, who speaks weirdly and treats her kindly, she is convinced he must be a »duppy«, a dead person. She's wrong: Jacob is from the future, and his plan is to rescue her to make amends for his ancestors' wrongdoings. Yet 21st-century England isn't a bed of roses either, and Obah soon realises that she needs to help her friends back home make a stab at changing history. Told in a convincing, authentic first-person narration by Obah, this thought-provoking story makes readers witness the legacy of slavery in our society from an »outsider's« perspective, proving that we still have a long way to go in our fight against racism. (Age:12+) [CS]

55



Jarvis (text/illus.)

Bear and Bird. The picnic and other stories

London: Walker Books, 2024. – 60 p.

(Series: Bear and Bird; 1)

ISBN 978-1-5295-1370-7

[Bear](#) | [Bird](#) | [Friendship](#) | [Everyday life](#)

Great Britain ENGLISH

■ Bear and Bird are the very best of friends, and although they sometimes have vastly different ideas about how stuff should be done, they always agree on one thing: Life is better together! The four short entertaining stories in this slim chapter book – the first volume in a new series about these adorable two creatures – are perfect for newly confident readers, but would also make fun bedtime reads for a younger audience. They present everyday situations, like an afternoon picnic or a comfortable evening snuggling under a comfy blanket, partly inspired by real-life situations. The amusing text features plenty of giggle-inducing dialogue and makes Bear's and Bird's individual quirks and distinct personalities shine. The charming digital illustrations in warm colours skilfully portray the bubbly duo, communicating a kaleidoscope of emotions with minor changes in posture and facial expressions. How lucky for readers that plenty more adventures of the pair are already available. (Age: 4+) [CS]

56



Lewis Jones, Huw (text)

Sanders, Ben (illus.)

Clive Penguin

London: Little Tiger, 2023. – [28] p.

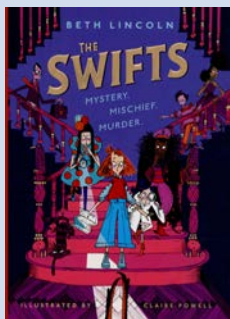
ISBN 978-1-80104-486-8

[Penguin](#) | [Unhappiness](#) | [Adventure](#) | [Picture book](#)

Great Britain ENGLISH

■ »Once upon a time, in a faraway land of ice and snow, [...] there lived a happy penguin...« Well, maybe not quite so happy. To be honest: Penguin Clive is anything but happy. The grumpy fellow is bored by the never changing snow and his uniformly identical companions; and, worst of all, he is freezing. All. The. Time! So one day, he leaves his icy home and embarks on an adventure, searching for »something incredible« – which he soon discovers floating in the sea. Is he content now? Well... In this hilarious picture book, a perennially unhappy aquatic bird expresses his frustration in an irritated tone. The humorous, colloquial text is visualised in uncluttered, witty, graphic digital illustrations in matt colours (plus neon orange) with various amusing details (such as the teapot-wearing seagull strutting around). Young readers will immediately fall in love with the quirky protagonist and his complaints... and older readers might be inspired to start pondering the meaning of happiness – or they might just enjoy the silliness. (Age: 4+) [CS]

57



Lincoln, Beth (text)
Powell, Claire (illus.)

The Swifts: Mystery. Mischief. Murder

London: Puffin, Penguin Random House UK,
2023. – 449 p.
ISBN 978-0-241-61300-9

Name | Fate | Treasure hunt | Murder | Investigation

Great Britain ENGLISH

With a name like Shenanigan, it's no wonder that the youngest of the three Swift sisters has nothing but mischief on her mind and is causing havoc around the clock. At least that's the opinion of Arch-Aunt Schadenfreude, the family matriarch. Yet Shenanigan refuses to be reduced to trouble-maker. She is certain she can trick fate and become a great explorer, or detective. So, when murder and mayhem suddenly reign as the extended Swift clan descend on their ancient family home for a reunion-cum-treasure-hunt, Shenanigan, her middle sister, Phenomena, and their new friend set off on a secret investigation to uncover the treacherous villain(s). Beth Lincoln's debut novel features an eccentric family of weirdly whacky characters with absurd names (and a crazy name-giving method involving a dictionary). The hare-brained goings-on and red-herring leads reminiscent of Agatha-Christie plots make this a hilarious read for all ages. And hurray: The crazy adventures continue in Volume 2 of the series. (Age: 10+) [CS]

58



McGuckin, Isla (text)
Echeverri, Catalina (illus.)

April's garden

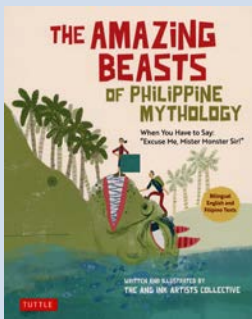
Llangennech, Wales: Graffeg, 2023. – 36 p.
ISBN 978-1-80258-341-0

Homelessness | Frustration | Hope | Picture book

Great Britain ENGLISH

This gentle picture book sensitively portrays the emotional upheaval, frustration, and hopelessness caused by losing your home and starting a new life. When little April and her mother temporarily move into a large house with »lots and lots of closed doors with silent people behind them«, the girl feels uprooted and lonely. The house doesn't feel right, the constant rain just magnifies her sadness, and all her dreams of a colourful garden and happy home seem out of reach. Isla McGuckin's short engaging text is transformed into atmospheric mixed media illustrations in subdued colours by Colombian-born illustrator Catalina Echeverri. Only April's colourful collage pictures, depicting her new dream-home and –garden, exude some cheerfulness. As the mother and daughter finally move to their own place months later, and the seeds that April planted are starting to grow, flowers, joy, and hope return to their lives. This wonderful collaboration offers a touching read that may initiate discussions about a difficult topic. (Age: 5+) [CS]

59



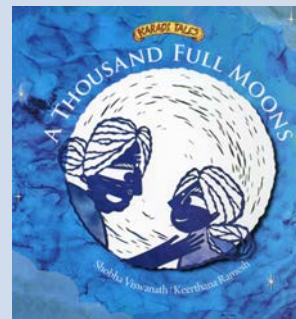
Tobias-Papa, May (text)
 Ang Illustrador ng Kabataan (Ang Ink) (illus.)
 Flores, Liza (art dir.)
The amazing beasts of Philippine mythology
 Hong Kong [et al.]: Tuttle Publishing, an imprint of
 Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd., [2024]. – 128 p.
 Text in English and Filipino
 ISBN 978-0-8048-5667-6

Philippines | Mythical creature | Encyclopaedia

HONG KONG ENGLISH

As its title suggests, this bilingual treasure serves as an introduction to an array of creepy creatures from Philippine mythology. Presented in alphabetical order, with each beast being featured on a double-page spread, the list includes beings such as the child-devouring »Boroka«, the beautiful but deceitful merpeople »Catao«, the corpse-stealing »Ebwa«, the thieving »Siring«, and many more. Whereas May Tobias-Papa's short descriptive texts stick to the most important features, typical behaviour, as well as preferred victims of the mythical lot, the mostly double-page illustrations in different styles and media, ranging from watercolour, paper collage, and plasticine, to digital artwork, give face and form to the demons, ghosts, ogres, werebeasts, etc. This quasi-encyclopaedia is not only a very amusing read for young and old; being created by 29 illustrators, all members of the prestigious Ang INK Artists Collective, it also showcases the crème de la crème of current Philippine illustration. (Age: 8+) [CS]

60



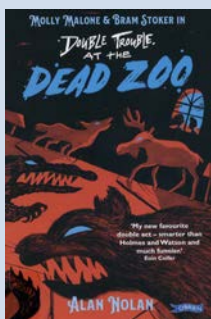
Viswanath, Shobha (text)
 Ramesh, Keerthana (illus.)
A thousand full moons
 Chennai: Karadi Tales Company, [2023]. – [24] p.
 ISBN 978-93-9179-019-6

Hindu culture | Old age | Full moon | Celebration |
 Great-grandmother | Determination | Picture book

INDIA ENGLISH

Amongst Hindus, the day when you have lived for a thousand full moons calls for a pompous celebration. Nila is excited that it's only three more days until her »Muthassi« will celebrate this big day. Then, however, the great-grandmother breaks her hip and is rushed to hospital, where she'll be stuck in bed instead of celebrating. Little Nila is determined to make it up to Muthassi. Shobha Viswanath's gentle tale of family love, a cherished tradition, and a young girl with creative ideas is transformed into a magnificent large square picture book. Keerthana Ramesh assembled her enticing illustrations by carving delicate papercut figures and objects from (mostly) white paper. She then placed them against a radiantly colourful background of photo ink washes, often using several layers or some extra cardboard to create depth. A double page at the end of the book gives additional information about the tradition and even holds a QR code where readers can access a making-of video of the illustrations. (Age: 4+) [CS]

61



Nolan, Alan (text)

Double trouble at the Dead Zoo

Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2023. – 238 p.
 (Series: Molly Malone and Bram Stoker; 2)
 ISBN 978-1-78849-434-2

Dublin | History 1859 | Orphan | Kidnapping |
 Mystery | Detective novel

Ireland ENGLISH

Twelve-year-old middle-class Bram Stoker (yes, the famous future author of »Dracula«) and street-smart orphan Molly Malone are best pals. After saving the Irish Crown jewels in Book 1 of this funny historical detective series, the investigating team gets to solve the case of a combined kidnapping-vandalism in Volume 2: »Double Trouble at the Dead Zoo«. Together with Molly's gang of street kids, »The Sackville Street Spooks«, bookish Bram and adventurous Molly outwit a greedy imposter. The sinister villain had posed as their new friend Sanjit's Uncle Seth (while locking up the real uncle in a dark storeroom) to get at the famous Rajapur Ruby, supposedly hidden in a taxidermic animal at the Natural History Museum. The fast-paced plot and witty elements woven into this series, including fictional characters (such as Molly herself) and historical events like the »Waxies' Dargle« and a performance by »Paul Fanque's Circus Royal«, make this an entertaining read (not only) for young readers. Book 3 and 4 are out already. (Age: 8+) [CS]

62



Calder, Jax (text)

The other brother

Auckland: OneTree House, 2023. – 288 p
 ISBN 978-1-99-003531-9

Siblings | Jealousy | LGBTQ+ | Falling in love |
 Self-confidence

New Zealand ENGLISH

Seventeen-year-old Ryan loves surfing, partying, and making snarky remarks to his two older sisters; and why wouldn't he – Mel and Kate have always made it clear that their other brother, musical prodigy and golden boy Cody, is their favourite. So the relationship between Ryan and Cody – who are not related, they just happen to have the same sisters – has always been strained. Yet when they accidentally spend a few weeks together at a beach house, the two teens suddenly find they actually like each other – a lot. As their romantic attraction grows into something more serious, the question arises of how Ryan's Mum and Cody's Dad – who are on a constant warpath against each other – will take the news. Is there a chance for a happy ending? Best-selling author Jax Calder has a knack for creating witty banter, likeable characters, and sizzling romance. However, this feel-good YA novel has more: Thanks to the family dynamics, it also touches upon more profound issues such as sibling rivalry, toxic relationships, and grief. (Age: 14+) [CS]

63



A. K. Zai (Zainon A. Kadir) (text)

Escape from Bussorah Street

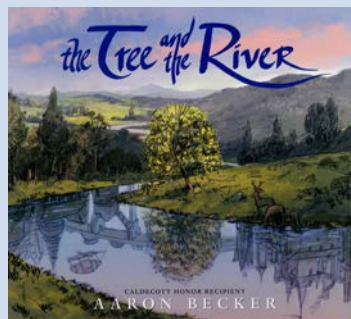
Singapore: Epigram Books, [2023]. – 169 p.
ISBN 978-981-49-8496-6

Singapore | Occupation | History 1941 |
World War II (1939-1945) | Father | Son |
Sepak raga (sport) | Coming of age

Singapore ■ ENGLISH

Twelve-year-old Zak lives on Singapore's Bussorah Street, which, in 1941, is a buzzing hub of activity, with the sounds of different languages, the noise of various trades and the smells of international cuisines. He is at odds with his elderly father, who wants him to join the family tailoring business – although Zak wants nothing more than to become a sepak raga coach – and who insists that Zak undergo the circumcision ritual »to become a man«. But it is his experiences under the wartime occupation that force Zak to grow up. He experiences first love, but also witnesses the death of friends and family, and the disappearance of his beloved uncle during the Japanese occupation. In the authentic voice of a Peranakan Muslim boy, this novel tells how he re-conciles with his father and comes of age in difficult circumstances. »Escape from Bussorah Street«, based in part on A. K. Zai's family history, was shortlisted for the 2024 Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award (HABA) and won the 2024 Singapore Book Award (Best Young Person's Fiction Title). (Age: 9+) [LO]

64



Becker, Aaron (illus.)

The tree and the river

Somerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press,
[2023]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-1-5362-2329-3

Nature | Humans | Civilisation | Cycle of life |
Seasons | Wordless book | Picture book

USA ■ ENGLISH

»The Tree and the River« is a wordless jewel with several layers. On the surface, it's a story about the titular tree, growing on the banks of a winding river, watching the landscape transform over the course of several centuries. The tree witnesses the changes caused by humans, their buildings, and the growing industrialisation. However, through meticulous shifts in the pictures, the book follows not just one story but several life cycles at once: It portrays different times of the day, seasons of the year, generations of people as they settle the land and live through man-made as well as natural catastrophes. Each double-page spread – featuring the same plot of land from the same viewpoint – holds a myriad of details that invite readers to create elaborate background stories for all the tiny characters depicted. In a time-consuming process, award-winning Aaron Becker built a physical model of the landscape and then scanned in photographs and used digital tools to work on the intricate illustrations. Simply stunning. (Age: 5+) [CS]

65



Bow, Erin (text)

Simon sort of says

Los Angeles [et al.]: Disney, Hyperion, 2023. – 305 p.
ISBN 978-1-368-08285-3

[School](#) | [Mass shooting](#) | [Trauma](#) | [Moving house](#) |
[Family secret](#)

USA ■ ENGLISH

Writing an engaging, non-preachy middle grade book about PTSD is a challenge. Creating one that also turns out to be incredibly funny seems impossible – but that's exactly what award-winning author Erin Bow has achieved; and not only that: She has done so, without belittling or mocking the protagonist's struggles or the seriousness of the topic. When Simon's family moves to a small Nebraskan town in »The National Quiet Zone«, the tween is confident that his notoriety as the sole survivor of a brutal school shooting will remain hidden, because mobile phones, internet, and any other devices likely to interfere with the town's radio telescope signals are forbidden. He tries to settle in and keep his head down; but then his new friend Agate (a plucky autistic girl), lures him into a crazy science-prank, and things quickly go awry. »Simon Sort of Says« is a memorable and touching lough-out-loud read about trauma, friendship, living in a funeral home, and astrophysicists with a wonderful cast of peculiar characters. (Age: 10+) [CS]

66



Brown, Karida L. (ed./text/illus.)

Palmer, Charly (ed./text/illus.)

The new Brownies' book.

A love letter to Black families

San Francisco: Chronicle Books, [2023]. – 207 p.
ISBN 978-1-7972-1682-9

[African Americans](#) | [Anthology](#)

USA ■ ENGLISH

In 1920, W.E.B. DuBois co-founded and edited »The Brownies Book. A Monthly Magazine for Children of the Sun« as a public forum to offer joy, beauty, and happiness for Black children. Issues appeared monthly until December 1921. Inspired by this popular and critically renowned publication, Karida Brown and Charly Palmer have put together a large cast of contemporary creators for their »New Brownies' Book«, inviting them to make contributions that celebrate and show love for African American lives. With entries gathered into chapters ranging from focus on »Family Ties« to an »Ode to Langston Hughes« and to considering »Living and Dying«, this book is a potpourri that runs the gamut in its creative offerings. Entries from the original »Brownies« series are sprinkled throughout, amidst the new contributions of poetry, short stories, essays, and art from educators, muralists, playwrights and more. True to the format of an anthology, readers may skip about, cherishing what catches their eye and attention. (Age: 6+) [JY]

67



Cole, Olivia A. (text)

Dear Medusa

New York: Labyrinth Road, [2023]. – 377 p.
ISBN 978-0-593-48573-6

[School](#) | [LGBTQ+](#) | [Sexual abuse](#) | [Victim shaming](#) | [Trauma](#) | [Verse novel](#)

USA ■ ENGLISH

Sixteen-year-old Alicia has bright red hair, a spiky attitude, and a bad reputation. Since her best friend abandoned her, she is left to struggle alone with the mean whispers, open hostility, and slut shaming at school. Yet her slanderers have no idea that sexual abuse by a popular teacher has left her traumatised. The broken teen feels like the mythological Medusa referred to in the title: blamed by everyone instead of being recognised as the victim of assault. Only when she discovers secret messages about another victim and befriends asexual and witty black Deja, do things eventually look up. Author, blogger, and poet Olivia A. Cole's thought-provoking verse novel perfectly captures Alicia's emotional roller-coaster ride of anger, shame, guilt, and desperation in heartfelt verse. The intense text, rife with powerful metaphors, follows the teen's path of reclaiming her life and body, of learning more about her (bi)sexuality, and of finding allies in her fight for feminine power and against sexism and misogyny. (Age: 14+) [CS]

68



Fleming, Candace (text)

The Enigma girls. How ten teenagers broke ciphers, kept secrets, and helped win World War II

New York, NY: Scholastic Focus, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2024. – 371 p.
(Series: True stories in focus)
ISBN 978-1-338-74957-1

[Great Britain](#) | [World War II \(1939-1945\)](#) | [Woman](#) | [Cryptology](#) | [Codebreaking](#) | [Non-fiction](#)

USA ■ ENGLISH

Set against the backdrop of World War II, the world of Bletchley Park (England) and its efforts to break the German codes is seen through a new lens. Ten teenaged girls from different backgrounds and experiences are taken to the heart of the Allied code-breaking operation. There, hundreds of young women help to decipher the secret messages sent via the German Enigma machines. Each woman is sworn to secrecy, told she will never be able to reveal her role in the war. Based on the recollections of ten such women, we follow their painstaking work and experiences, getting to know each one well. Interstitial sections punctuate the text, explaining how to create and crack clues, codes, and cribs. Candace Fleming supplements the text not simply with moments of humanity (as when one woman considers where the blood on a Nazi cipher book came from) but humour as well (including harmless pranks on superior officers). A smartly laid out account of ordinary people in extraordinary times. (Age: 10+) [EB]

69



Levinson, Suzy (text)
 Howdeshell, Kristen / Howdeshell, Kevin (illus.)
Animals in pants
 Petaluma, CA: Cameron Kids / Abrams, 2023. – [32] p.
 ISBN 978-1-951836-62-7

Animals | Clothing | Poetry | Picture book

USA ENGLISH

Levinson's delightful book of poetry describes a variety of animals in every type of pants one could imagine, from pantaloon-clad raccoons to manatees donning dungarees. Creative and comedic, each page features a rhyming poem about an animal whose hindquarters are covered in some manner of cloth or spandex. Block print and collage style illustrations enhance the text, bringing to life each anthropomorphized creature in their chosen bottom coverings. Some animals appear as though they are posing for a portrait, such as the cozy cat lounging in velour. Meanwhile, other animals are presented in action, such as the monkey swinging through the treetops in cargo pants – after all, »they need lots of pockets to hold their bananas.« The first endpaper introduces the book's theme with a child asking »What? You've never seen an animal in pants?« while the final endpaper hints at a possible sequel – animals in hats, anyone? (Age: 4+) [MB]

70



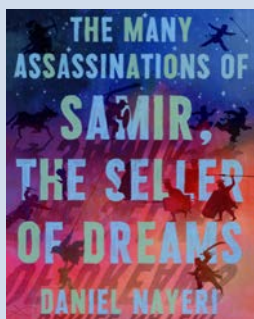
Martín, Pedro (text/illus.)
Mexikid. A graphic memoir
 New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2023. – 309 p. + [7] p.
 ISBN 978-0-59346-228-7 – ISBN 978-0-59346-229-4

Mexico | Road trip | Grandfather | Memories | Siblings | Graphic novel

USA ENGLISH

Set in 1977, this lightly fictionalised graphic novel memoir follows Pedro/Peter Martín, the middle child in a family of eleven. After his parents announce that they will be taking a trip from Watsonville, California, to Pegasus, Mexico, Pedro and family drive two thousand miles down the west coast of Mexico to bring Pedro's grandfather »Abuelito« to the States. Travelling in a motorhome, Pedro encounters a Mexico full of wonders and oddities. He learns what truly happens when Pop Rocks mix with snot, the joys of knock-off superhero toys, and why you should never get a haircut from a man who spits tequila on the back of your neck. Uncertain of his place in the family, Pedro aims to impress his tough grandfather, managing to do so in a most unexpected way. Densely peppered with jokes throughout, Martín's art fills every space with intricate and eclectic illustrations. Comic book enthusiasts will find both humour and serious heart in this Newbery Honour-winning title, which is produced in full-colour. (Age: 9+) [EB]

71



Nayeri, Daniel (text)
Miyares, Daniel (illus.)

The many assassinations of Samir, the seller of dreams

Montclair [et al.]: Levine Querido, 2023. – 216 p.
ISBN 978-1-64614-303-0

Silk Road | Religion | Adventure | Orphan | Assassins |
Storytelling | Historical fiction

USA ■ ENGLISH

A young monk runs for his life. After an unexpected rescue by a fast-talking merchant called Samir, the boy (dubbed »Monkey« by his rescuer) joins his ragtag caravan moving along the medieval Silk Road. Unimpressed by Samir's ability to ceaselessly spin lies and stories, Monkey determines to leave the man's employ the minute he can pay back his life debt six times. Unfortunately, they soon discover that six different assassins have been hired to take out the merchant. With verbal aplomb, Daniel Nayeri deftly spins together the intricate threads of the story and Samir's fond fancies. This wry historical novel contains a multitude of surprises along the way. Its use of twin unreliable narrators (one being Samir and the other, surprisingly, Monkey himself) gives what is otherwise a fun story a twist at the end that will astound young readers. The accompanying illustrations, as brightly coloured and upbeat as the text, complement the storytelling exceedingly well. A Newbery Honor-winning title as deft of tongue as Samir's. (Age: 10+) [EB]

72



Nazemian, Abdi (text)

Only this beautiful moment

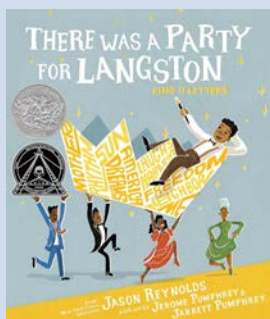
New York: Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, [2023]. – 390 p.
ISBN 978-0-06-303937-7

USA | Iran | Family | History 1939-2019 | LGBTQ+ |
Family conflict | Intergenerational trauma

USA ■ ENGLISH

This heartfelt YA novel follows three young men from Los Angeles to Tehran and back again. In alternating chapters, award-winning author, screenwriter, and producer Abdi Nazemian provides eye-opening insights into the life of an Iranian-American family (and society) during three very different times. Young Bobby's life in 1939 LA is meticulously planned by his overambitious mother, who managed to secure him a contract with the popular MGM film studios. However, this contract comes with lots of restrictions, including the need to hide his homosexuality. Forty years later, in Tehran, Bobby's son Saeed takes part in protests against the Iranian government. For his own safety, he is shipped out of the country by his parents, to live with his estranged grandmother in the US. In 2019, openly gay Moud and his distant Dad, Saeed, travel from LA to Tehran to visit terminally ill Bobby. After years of hurt, family secrets, and trauma, the three finally manage to talk to each other openly, express their love, and start healing. (Age: 14+) [CS]

73



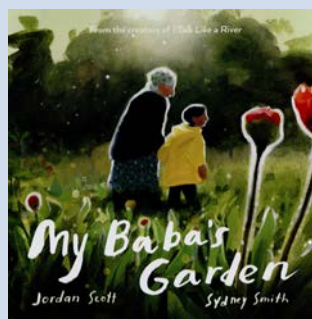
Reynolds, Jason (text)
Humphrey, Jerome / Humphrey, Jarrett (illus.)
There was a party for Langston. King o' letters
New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers,
[2023]. - [54] p.
(A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book)
ISBN 978-1-5344-3944-3

[Hughes, Langston \(1901-1967\) | Biography | African Americans | Picture book](#)

USA ENGLISH

■ Legendary literary genius and »King of Letters« Langston Hughes is celebrated in this picture book that highlights the impact he had on generations of word makers. Set in 1991, the book remembers the party held in the Black poet's honour on the occasion of the grand opening of the Langston Hughes Auditorium at the »Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture« (New York). Vibrant pictures portray how music, dance, and words pulsed throughout the building and beyond. Noted poets Maya Angelou and Amiri Baraka are shown dancing, Martin Luther King delivers a speech, and fifteen great African writers are portrayed on the bookshelves as engaged portraits looking down on the party from the spines of their books. The handmade stamp illustrations skilfully incorporate words that serve to communicate meaning as well as enliven and amplify the viewing experience. BTW: Both the poetic, rhythmic text and the fabulous illustrations in matt colours pointedly note how laughable book banning is as an attempt at blocking freedom. (Age: 8+) [JY]

74



Scott, Jordan (text)
Smith, Sydney (illus.)
My Baba's garden
New York: Neal Porter Books, Holiday House,
[2023]. - [40] p.
ISBN 978-0-8234-5083-1

[Grandmother | Grandson | Gardening | Love | Food | Memories | Picture book](#)

USA ENGLISH

■ After their award-winning collaboration »I Talk Like A River«, poet Jordan Scott and illustrator Sydney Smith, both Canadian, return with another touching picture book based on Scott's childhood. In a heart-warming, lyrical first-person narrative full of similes, he remembers the special relationship he had with his Polish grandmother, Baba, who »lives in a chicken coop beside a highway, / behind a sulphur mill / shaped like an Egyptian pyramid [...]«. Despite the fact that they can't talk to each other much, because of the language barrier, the love the caring older woman and the small boy feel is expressed through the food Baba prepares and their time spent gardening together. Smith's trademark watercolour-and-gouache illustrations focus on the two protagonists, alternating between long shots of the scenes and details to move the story along. The warm colours, soft shapes, and blurred edges perfectly capture the mood – with light and shadow as prominent elements – and create a cosy and tender atmosphere. (Age: 4+) [CS]

75



Weinersmith, Zach (text)

Boulet (illus.)

Bea Wolf

New York, NY: First Second, an imprint of Roaring Brook Press, 2023. – 181 p. + [21] p.

ISBN 978-1-250-77629-7

[Beowulf](#) | [Retelling](#) | [Parody](#) | [Heroine](#) | [Graphic novel](#)

USA ■ ENGLISH

This middle-grade graphic novel reimagines the Old English poem »Beowulf« in truly epic form. Zach Weinersmith's commitment to the alliteration and kenning in the style of the original poem works to hilarious effect in this tale that begs to be read aloud, while Boulet's digital pen-and-ink style illustrations perfectly weave into the text and enhance the story's imagery and drama. It begins with a history of kid kings and queens, heroes spanning generations, who provided an endless cache of candy and toys to their comrades and protected them from bullies. The current king, Roger, completes the suburban kingdom with a treehouse fortress, Treeheart. Life at Treeheart feels peaceful and prosperous, but a monster lurks beneath – Mr. Grindle, who with one spindly touch of a finger, can turn even the wildest child into a mature, boring adult. After two attacks, all seems lost until a brave hero arrives: Bea Wolf. Endnotes provide information for readers to learn about the history and writing style of the original epic. (Age: 8+) [MB]

76



Zsako, Balint (illus.)

Bunny & Tree

New York: Enchanted Lion Books, 2023. – [178] p.

ISBN 978-1-59270-393-7

[Rabbit](#) | [Tree](#) | [Friendship](#) | [Road trip](#) | [Magic](#) | [Wordless book](#) | [Picture book](#)

USA ■ ENGLISH

This gorgeous wordless tome is a magical story of the friendship between a white rabbit and a majestic deciduous tree. Over 178 pages (!), the story of their joint adventure slowly unfolds in a succession of charming, matt single-page and double-page spreads. After their initial meeting, when Bunny tries to escape a ferocious wolf and the tree scares the predator away, the two protagonists quickly bond and set off on an adventure together, searching for the rodent's lost family. Their journey leads them over hills and dales, through water and air – with the versatile tree changing into whichever shape is most needed: a train, boat, airplane, etc. The colourful illustrations, in pen and acrylic inks, portray the eponymous figures placed against glowing backgrounds that exude a warm water-colour-y feel. The heroes communicate through body language, facial expressions (astonishing how the tree's eyes and posture express emotions!) and a witty pictorial language. Balint Zsako's debut picture book is a true masterpiece! (Age: 5+) [CS]

77



Roomets, Lille (text)

Mina ja August. Noorsooromaan*(Me and August. A young adult novel)*

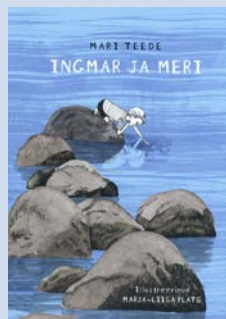
[Tallinn]: Hea Lugu, 2023. – 231 p.

ISBN 978-9916-702-95-6

Estonia | History 1933-1964 | Friendship |
Generational conflict | Verse novelESTONIAN
Estonia

Lille Roomets' book »Mina ja August« is one of Estonia's first verse novels for young adults. It is set in the years 1933-1934, when Estonia was independent but beset by political and economic squabbling. These political events determine the fates of the teenagers Heinrich, August and Elviira. Their friendship, a first romance, or disputes with the older generation are depicted in a timeless manner thanks to the brisk verses and the youthful narrative perspective of Heinrich's diary entries. Unlike August, who is more active and sociable, Heinrich has grown up in harsh circumstances and rather withdrawn. When Heinrich falls in love with Elviira, he is forced to emerge from his shell when he is confronted with the objection that she, a communist, is not the right company for him. Finally, the book jumps to the last journal entry, made in 1964, which summarises the further tragic developments in the lives of all three main characters during the Soviet occupation. (Age: 13+) [KW]

78



Teede, Mari (text)

Plats, Marja-Liisa (illus.)

Ingmar ja meri*(Ingmar and the sea)*

[Tallinn]: Tänapäev, [2023]. – 125 p.

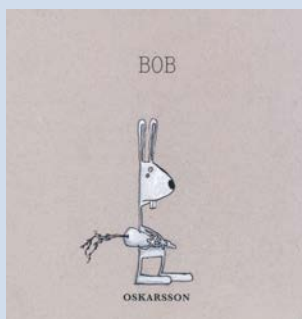
ISBN 978-9916-17-395-4

Living conditions | Change | Adaptation | Family

ESTONIAN
Estonia

When Ingmar's parents separate, the boy moves with his mother from the city of Tallinn to the house of his grandfather at the seaside. Being far removed from his friends and going to a new school make it difficult for him to feel at home. However, Ingmar gingerly finds his way in these new circumstances, with the sea as his constant friend. Mari Teede consistently maintains the focus on her protagonist with a laconic, profound, and beautiful sincerity. Though strikingly little happens in the short chapters, the author sets out small narrative tracks that come together smoothly to form a story. Little details describe the gentle, introverted character of the boy, who takes pleasure in observing seagulls and seashore flotsam but only slowly makes friends with children his own age. The text succinctly shows that it is not easy to make new friends or deal with one's parents' separation. Without excessive drama, the text unfolds a great sense of truth. (Age: 8+) [KW]

79



Oskarsson, Bárður (text/illus.)

Bob

[Tórshavn]: Bókadeild Føroya Lærarafelags (BFL),

2024. – [44] p.

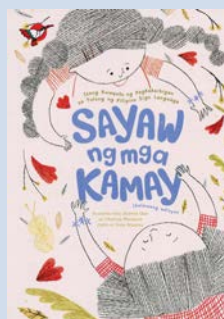
ISBN 978-99972-0-939-9

[Carrot](#) | [Difference](#) | [Substitute](#) | [Philosophy](#) | [Picture book](#)

Faroe Islands ■ FAROESE

■ A new book by Bárður Óskarsson! This time, Bob the rabbit is on the lookout for the perfect carrot, which isn't that easy to find as there are lots of gorgeous specimens on display in the supermarket. After a thorough inspection of the root vegetables, he locates the perfect carrot and takes the bus home. Yet as soon as he gets off, he realises that something is missing. No carrot anywhere! Instead, Hildbert the dog turns up. Bob immediately tells him that his carrot is gone – oh no... Will he ever find another carrot in such a wonderfully light orangey-yellow? But then his gaze falls on Hildbert's and his own feet – well, they do look veery much alike. No wonder then that the two of them set off in search of the perfect but maybe not so unique carrot once more. Bárður Óskarsson is a master of minimal facial expressions and brief sentences. His short tales about Rabbit and Dog always just seem to be simple, when in fact they are twisty, edgy, and full of a philosophical sense of wonder. (Age: 4+) [IG]

80



Que, Joanna / Marquez, Charina (text)

Alvarez, Fran (illus.)

Sayaw ng mga kamay. Isang kuwento ng pagkakaibigan sa tulong ng Filipino Sign Language (*Dancing hands. A story of friendship with the help of Filipino Sign Language*)

Quezon City: Adarna House; Room to Read, 2023. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-971-508-976-0

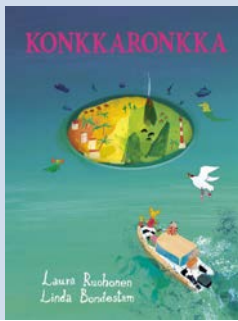
(English ed.: *Dancing hands*. ISBN 978-1-7972-1332-3)

[Hearing](#) | [Impairment](#) | [Friendship](#) | [Picture book](#)

Philippines ■ FILIPINO

■ In this story of two girls who learn to communicate while overcoming language barriers, Sam meets her new neighbour Mai, who does not talk, but whose hands seem to be dancing. As they become closer and Mai teaches Sam some Filipino Sign Language, they are able to share their dreams with one another. Joanna Que was inspired to write this story during a writing workshop with Room to Read, a global nonprofit. Charina Marquez is a sign language instructor and deaf rights advocate. In her graphite and coloured pencil drawings illustrator Fran Alvarez portrays the characters not as disabled, but as two children discovering their friendship. The first version of the book, published in 2020, was revised for this global edition, which includes additional content about different sign languages around the world and an illustrated glossary of some sign language gestures. The English edition, »Dancing Hands«, was chosen as an Ezra Jack Keats Illustrator Honor Book and a Schneider Family Book Award Honor Book in 2024. (Age: 6+) [LO]

81



Ruohonen, Laura (text)
 Bondestam, Linda (illus.)
Konkkaronkka
(The whole shebang)
 Helsinki: Otava, 2023. – [32] p.
 ISBN 978-951-1-47540-8

Imaginary world | Jungle | Journey | Adventure |
 Picture book

FINNISH
 Finland

»At last!« readers will want to shout. At last, Laura Ruohonen, one of the best-known Finnish children's poets, and Linda Bondestam, one of Finland's most famous illustrators, have teamed up to create a picture book together. It tells the story of a motley group of travellers: the whole shebang, aka »Konkkaronkka«. After passing through a fairytale portal, the group and their guide (complete with umbrella) end up in some kind of wonderland: a green jungle, sharp cliffs, bubbling volcanoes, and deserts where the vultures are already lurking. A holiday? Tsk. An adventure! The book's theme and style (including the cut-outs) clearly refer back to Tove Jansson's classic »Hur gick det sen« (What happened next, 1952), in which Moomin and his friends drift through a psychedelically colourful world. Just as bright and effervescent is this reminiscence by Laura Ruohonen and Linda Bondestam – fantastically imaginative in both text and images. (Age 4+) [IG]

82



Vasko, Anne (text/illus.)
Hattu
(The hat)
 Helsinki: Etana Editions, [2023]. – [36] p.
 ISBN: 978-952-7105-95-5

Hat | Animals | Ignorance | Dispute | Picture book

FINNISH
 Finland

The eponymous hat already looms large on the book cover: It is big and bright purple. It has eyes and – wait a minute – eight thin legs? Are the legs part of the hat? Or could other creatures be hiding under the brim? A few pages later, the hat is lifted and the secret revealed: Ants are scurrying around and underneath the purple object. However, they don't realise it's a hat, they think it might be a nest; or could it be something to eat? In addition to the ants, beetles come scurrying up, and then butterflies start fluttering around, too. Suddenly everyone has an opinion about what's up with the hat and, what's more, everyone wants it for themselves. So, naturally, arguments are inevitable... Anne Vasko brings her dynamic story to life in expressive and colourful pictures – eyes are her speciality! Blink, blink, peek, peek! (Age: 3+) [IG]

83



Herbauts, Anne (text/illus.)

Mamie Manga

(Granny Manga)

[Bruxelles] [et al.]: Pastel, [2023] - [78] p.

ISBN 978-2-211-33183-8

[Grandmother](#) | [Tiger](#) | [Everyday life](#) | [Manga](#)

Belgium ■ FRENCH

When little tiger Aya spends time with his grandmother, a friendly human lady, his world alternates between everyday experiences and fantastical ones. After each classical picture book double-spread of illustration and text, Aya glides into superhero-like escapades that are portrayed over several pages. Geometrically laid paving stones lead to one of Grandma's word puzzles, and suddenly he has to conquer a R-H-I-N-O-C-E-R-O S. Anne Herbauts adeptly illustrates the imaginary travels of the little tiger, experimenting with the composition of her images and her dynamic figures in a way that resembles a Japanese manga. And other references also turn up, such as to Tomi Ungerer's »The Three Robbers« or »Puss in Boots«. The free associations of a child at play drive the plot forward in these sequences, making words unnecessary. In the end, T-I-G-E-R and Grandma sit together on the sofa. »Type of cat with five letters?« she asks. Is this perhaps just a child, after all, looking back upon his day as a beastly daredevil? (Age: 6+) [OIS]

84



Pierlout, Mathieu (text)

Vetri, Giulia (illus.)

Le silence de Rouge

(Red's silence)

Bruxelles: Versant Sud, 2023. - [36] p.

ISBN 978-2-930938-75-2

[Wolf](#) | [Girl](#) | [Silence](#) | [Child abuse](#) | [Fairy tale](#) | [Picture book](#)

Belgium ■ FRENCH

Seymour, a wolf, rescues a redheaded girl who has tried to end it all by drowning in the sea. He takes her to his remote hut along the steep cliffs. Through the objects in the little house, which comment on the events like an antique chorus, the reader witnesses the traces of her past abuse. The girl, named Red, remains tenaciously silent. Under Seymour's care she livens up, begins to draw, and collects mushrooms and clams with him. The solicitous wolf accepts her speechlessness and gives her a protective space to overcome her trauma. But Red grows up and finally takes her leave while the aged Seymour is asleep. Both author and illustrator play with the codes of the »Little Red Riding Hood« plot. The metaphorically charged text and poetic images create a fairytale atmosphere, while Giulia Vetri employs a blurriness that can be symbolic of that which remains unspoken. At the end of this touching book, Red returns to the seaside as an adult. She speaks with her son Seymour while looking the reader directly in the eye. (Age: 5+) [OIS]

85



Saille, Marie (text/photos)

Laisse de mer

(Beach wrack)

[Bruxelles]: CotCotCot éditions, [2024]. – [104] p.

(Series: Les baladeurs; 2)

ISBN 978-2-930941-51-6

Sea | Marine biology | Environmental protection |
Photography | Non-fiction

Belgium FRENCH

Non-fiction or art book? The photographer and writer Marie Saille has created such an attractive work that it is difficult to decide. The topic of this postcard-sized book is the beach wrack which is found along the edge of beaches where the tide deposits natural materials as well as man-made garbage. The borderless colour photographs of beaches – the opening and closing double-spread pages of the book – are indeed worthy of an art book. The main section of the book is devoted to the various kinds of debris such as kelp, shellfish and man-made pollution. The visual presentation of each of these objects makes them stand out: they are photographed in black-and-white and isolated against a background of muted colours. The concise, vibrant texts facing the image provide fascinating facts and give a feeling for the interconnectedness of this ecosystem. By combining aesthetics, information and environmental awareness, this book whets »a taste for the sea«! (Age: 10+) [OIS]

86



Alexis, Mc Knoell (text)

La couleur de ma différence

(The colour of my differentness)

Saint-Lambert, Québec: Éditions Héritage jeunesse, [2023]. – 113 p.

(Series: Héritage jeunesse. Unik)

ISBN 978-2-89812-478-5

Racism | Growing up | Identity | School

Canada FRENCH

A young Black boy transfers to a school in a white neighbourhood. Microaggressions, such as mispronouncing his name or attributing racial clichés to him, make his first days difficult. While he hopes to be seen for who he is and treated normally, the colour of his skin is always the first – no matter how »well-intentioned« – and often the sole topic of conversation. Then a racial remark leads to a fist-fight. The other student is forced to apologize, but the first-person narrator is suspended from school for five days. Even though he stood up for himself, he realises that he cannot solve problems with violence. From now on he looks to the future and is proud of what he is. In this autofiction verse novel, Mc Knoell Alexis depicts the ways that daily racism can escalate and allows the reader to feel the constant stress and inner conflicts of the protagonist. This could help one to empathise and avoid unconscious injuries. Creative typesetting and page design serve to reinforce the impact of the author's narrative poetry. (Age: 12+) [OIS]

87



Dupin, Olivier (text/illus.)

Comment ça marche, un conte?

(How does a fairy tale work?)

Montréal (Québec): Les 400 coups, [2023]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-2-89815-231-3

Fairy tale | Narrative form | Picture book

Canada FRENCH

■ In this picture book, the author-illustrator Olivier Dupin performs a special feat. He tells four fairy tales simultaneously while, moreover, conveying to the reader the morphological foundations of this literary form. And he does it in an incredibly amusing manner. In fact, the parallel narrations elucidate their structural similarities. Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White, Tom Thumb, the Ugly Duckling are unusual proper names which make reference to the hero's appearance and give the tales their title. While these principles are explained on the left page, the protagonists are introduced alongside their pictures on the right page and their stories then continue to be told page after page. The stylised illustrations are reminiscent of early computer games. Thus, they break with both the classical style of fairy tale narration and the dialogues, which playfully combine fairy tale vocabulary and very contemporary diction. All in all, we get knowledge with a twist of humour: hats off! (Age: 7+) [OIS]

88



Baer, Julien (text)

Roux, Julien (illus.)

J'ai vu un chien tout nu. 24 poèmes

(I just saw a stark naked dog. 24 poems)

Rouen: L'Étagère du bas, [2023]. – [52] p.
ISBN 978-2-490253-66-1

Everyday life | Poetry

France FRENCH

■ Ostensibly the fabric of Julien Baer's poetry is everyday life, which he observes from a certain poetic height. This idiosyncratic perspective is the starting point for the punch lines, such as when the lyrical subject marvels at the eponymous »naked dog« or the disappearance of Parmesan cheese (it's the spaghetti's fault!). What's more, everything ordinary is enhanced with a dash of absurdity: a master thief steals the sheet music of »Boléro«, or an extraterrestrial being takes off in disappointment after just a brief landing. For the illustrations Julien Roux relies completely on black, white and one spot colour. The figures exude a deep serenity, creating a subtle contrast to occasional jolts in the text. The illustrations employ a small number of clear-cut motifs, so that they can be readily connected to the text. Together text and illustration work dazzlingly well and are quite likely to hit children's anarchic streak of humour on the mark. (Age: 7+) [OIS]

89



Blondel, Jean-Philippe (text)

Passager de l'été

(Summer passenger)

[Arles]: Actes sud jeunesse, [2023]. – 173 p.

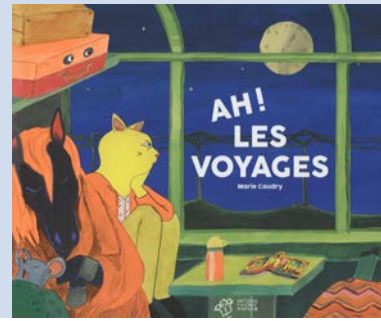
ISBN 978-2-330-18094-2

Journey | Self-confidence | Autonomy | Friendship |
Coming of age

France FRENCH

In a voicemail Samuel's supposedly best friend, Adrien, backs out of their planned trip. Both have just graduated from high school. But while the well-off Adrien is already enjoying his holidays, Samuel has had to work hard to earn enough money for the trip. Angrily Samuel decides to travel throughout Europe on his own. All goes smoothly. At his first stop in Amsterdam, he meets interesting people who give him tips and names to contact at his next stop in Hamburg. And he accomplishes his plan to interview his new friends with a video camera. Jean-Philippe Blondel sympathizes with his novel's protagonist in a credible and empathetic way, portraying the boy's formative encounters along this initiation journey in a thoughtful manner. In the final interview, now with himself, Samuel offers a resumé of how he has been changed. Once a sympathetic tag-along, he has developed into someone who can make his own decisions and desires to make changes. This book is an invitation for open-mindedness and independent thinking. (Age: 15+) [OIS]

90



Caudry, Marie (text/illus.)

Ah! Les voyages

(Oh! To travel)

[Paris]: Éditions Thierry Magnier, [2023]. – [44] p.

ISBN 979-10-352-0615-4

Cat | Anthropomorphism | Journey | Introversion |
Picture book

France FRENCH

How can two such different types be friends? The cat Pénélope likes adventure and wants to discover the world. Tomcat Philéas is a timid and slightly eccentric introvert. During trips they take together, he crawls into a suitcase with peepholes, and at their destination he wants nothing more than to draw the doorknobs inside their hotel room. But Pénélope needs Philéas as a reassuring support and because sharing her new experiences with him makes them richer. Marie Caudry's imaginative, inventively coloured illustrations of this »Grand Tour« are enchanting for their details of plants or trains and the diversity of landscapes. The picture book is inhabited by a motley crew of anthropomorphised animals. For Pénélope und Philéas the degree of similarity to humans even changes according to what the situation calls for. The text's confident narrative voice and extremely lively dialogues are congenially extended by the pictures. The story convincingly portrays cosmopolitanism and inwardness not as contradictory, but as complementary poles. (Age: 4+) [OIS]

91



Foz, Véronique (text)

Barroux (illus.)

Un éléphant dans un chapeau

(An elephant in a hat)

[Caen]: Éditions Møtus, [2023]. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-2-36011-128-2

Magic | Separation | Loss of father | Hope | Siblings

France FRENCH

■ In the life of young Pierrot, the »elephant in the room« is that his father has disappeared, for reasons which remain unknown. In imitation of his father's card tricks, the boy uses all his powers to conjure up his father's reappearance. And indeed, he appears to succeed in conjuring up ever larger animals: a mouse, a cat, a parrot. But to convince his sister, he needs to summon something that could really not materialise by happenstance – an elephant. Véronique Foz endows Pierrot with an authentic voice. She shows how intensely he yearns for his father and how much energy is set free through this wish. With fine, at times purposely scribbly black lines and sparing use of yellow, brown and red tones, Barroux illustrates this child-like universe in a coherent manner. Even though there is ultimately a rational explanation for the elephant, Pierrot's sister now stands firmly at his side. (Age: 4+) [OIS]

92



Gay-Para, Praline (text)

Quentric, Lauranne (illus.)

Elle fait le printemps

(She makes springtime)

Paris: Didier jeunesse, [2023]. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-2-278-12202-8

Gender-neutral language | Everyday life | Picture book

France FRENCH

■ Warning: this picture book undermines the generic grammatical masculine! It takes up an idea of the French poet Jacques Prévert, who in 1946 wrote a poem titled »Il pleut«, in which he poked fun at the fact that French terms for describing weather or time are »toujours Il« (»always he«). It is a point that is certainly open to a feminist interpretation, as proven here by the author Praline Gay-Para and illustrator Lauranne Quentric. Sentences on the right-hand pages of the book consistently use »elle« (»she«) in standard expressions, for example, for daily routines. At first, this has a rather jarring effect, but the accompanying illustrations rule out any doubt, since there is always a girl depicted on the left-hand pages. And her actions give the text a new interpretation: she is always active, independent and positive. This exemplary interplay between text and image demonstrates how picture books can contribute to a change of perspective in a subtle, tongue-in-cheek way. (Age: 5+) [OIS]

93



Gleason, Émilie (text/illus.)

Onomatopie

(Onomatopia)

[Paris]: Grasset jeunesse, [2024]. – [28] p.

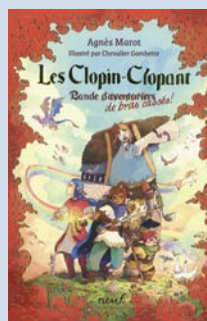
ISBN 978-2-246-83382-6

[Sound](#) | [Noise](#) | [Onomatopoeia](#) | [Picture book](#)

France FRENCH

Whether at the disco or the library, in a school playground or crazy zoo – in this picture book with the title »Onomatopie« sounds are at the centre of every scene. Words that mimic sounds, as used in comic books, dominate the text on the left page in colourful letters, and in the black-and-white illustrations on the right page. However, sounds that are often written in a small font, and hence quietly, within a picture, appear in the text in large font with changing colours. With this visual strategy, the reader is encouraged to look for (further) details, rather like in a wimmelbook. Émilie Gleason's illustrations reveal a wide range of comical and dynamically active people and animals. The various settings are full of situational humour. To create this oversized picture book, the author listened in on many new onomatopoeias and used them with gusto. Entertainment is guaranteed – Sweat! Snort! Giggles! – for both those who read and those being read to. (Age: 3+) [OIS]

94



Marot, Agnès (text)

Gambette, Chevalier (illus.)

Bande de bras cassés

(A gang of no-goods)

Paris: L'École des loisirs, 2024. – 246 p.

(Series: Les Clopin-Clopan / Marot, Agnès; 1) (Neuf)

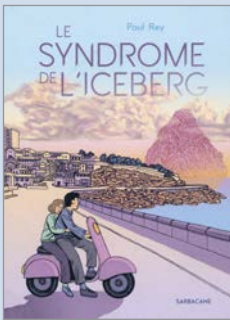
ISBN 978-2-211335-25-6

[Handicap](#) | [Adventure](#) | [Diversity](#) | [Gang](#) | [Fantasy fiction](#)

France FRENCH

In an imaginary world, the four creatures in a gang of adventurers called Clopin-Clopan offer themselves for hire. Though they describe themselves as superheroes, they all have handicaps. The leader and narrator Zoé needs crutches, the strapping Barbar Othar is blind, Grimm the gnome suffers from depression, the elf Fleur is reserved and callous. On behalf of a decadent king, they try to banish Yetis from a castle. But their mission comes to nothing since the Yetis, who live in an ideal community, have nowhere else to go. For the Clopin-Clopan, their handicaps make for a constant ordeal. Ultimately, the battle against their inner demons is their greatest challenge. In this suspenseful fantasy novel, Agnès Marot integrates inclusion and social cohesion. Humour and empathy go hand in hand. She succeeds in creating sensitive portrayals of her protagonists, using a rich vocabulary and cleverly employing flashbacks. The detailed, tastefully coloured illustrations are a brilliant extension of the text. (Age: 9+) [OIS]

95



Rey, Paul (text/illus.)

Le syndrome de l'iceberg

(The iceberg syndrome)

Paris: Sarbacane, 2023. – 187 p.

ISBN 978-2-377-31794-3

Artificial intelligence | Technology | Family | Illness | Quest | Graphic novel

France FRENCH

■ In this multi-layered graphic novel by comic artist Paul Rey set in 2055, a computer programmer named Ezra leaves Silicon Valley to return to his hometown of Marseille. His brother Yan has disappeared and, according to his psychiatrist, is just one more case of the Iceberg Syndrome. Addicted to mobile phones and virtual assistants, and surrounded by virtual realities, more and more people are descending into a bubble controlled by AI. Ezra is asked to program an algorithm to find these people. When his girlfriend and fellow programmer, Daphné, suddenly disappears, he follows her to Japan, where he suspects his brother has also gone. There, people live in a secret community, in fusion with a personalized AI. Is this pathological or a new style of life? In a convincing scenario, narrated in a calm tone, and filled with multifaceted figures, the novel explores the complexities of AI. By showing a near future that still looks a lot like today's world, the author may be hinting that the dangers lie in the minds and behaviour of us humans. (Age: 14+) [OIS]

96



Terral, Anne (text)

Alibeu, Géraldine (illus.)

Tortue, grand roseau et petit clou

(Tortoise, big reed and little nail)

[Montreuil]: Les fourmis rouges, [2024]. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-2-36902-187-2

Death | Coping with grief | Memories | Gift | Music | Animals

France FRENCH

■ At home on an idyllic island Tortoise senses that her life is coming to an end. She gathers her friends Beaver, Otter, and Toad to give them each a farewell gift. Toad's son Pô, who shares an especially close bond with Tortoise, only receives a piece of reed and a nail. In her illustrations, Géraldine Alibeu creates a world with an atmosphere all its own. With her round face and cane, Tortoise resembles an elderly woman, carrying her carapace like a backpack. The other animals are also anthropomorphised, but still recognisable. Anne Terral compassionately describes how Pô finally learns to accept Tortoise's passing, once he understands the meaning of his gifts. With the nail he can turn the reed into a flute. Thanks to their new instruments, the animals make music and dance long into the night. And gazing at the moon, Pô thinks he sees the face of his friend. The writer and artist have succeeded in creating a gentle, reassuring tale about death and mourning. (Age: 6+) [OIS]



97

Victor, Gary (text)
Joseph, Vladimyr (illus.)
Les aventures de Djamina I

(Djamina's adventure I)
Delmas: C3 Éditions, [2023]. – 56 p.
ISBN 978-99935-680-3-2

Girl | Courage | Civil courage | Corruption | Haiti | Caribbean

FRENCH

Haiti

With her unshakeable sense of justice, Djamina confronts all those whose tricks are responsible for the fact that the social infrastructure of her home country, Haiti, no longer functions. The girl begins at the top, with the Prime Minister. Despite his privileges, he is unable to explain what he is doing about the emergency situation in the country. From the leader of a gang that wants to corrupt young people with weapons, Djamina demands teachers instead, and bans him from the neighborhood. But Djamina also shows how children can act better in these circumstances. She convinces a teenager to use headphones instead of a boom box and prevents a neighbour from dumping their chamber pots into the open gutter. Gary Victor, who himself once held a political office, is one of Haiti's most well-known writers. With this simple and strikingly illustrated story, he has created a character who is a symbol of hope and an admonisher: »NO, we children will not allow you to destroy Haiti any further!« May Djamina be heard, not only in Haiti. (Age: 7+) [OIS]



98

Ecornier, Joëlle (text)
Rosamel, Godeleine de (illus.)
La mémorable chute de Xi

(Xi's memorable fall)
[Saint-Denis (Réunion)]: Éditions à la gomme, [2023]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-2-9568874-7-8

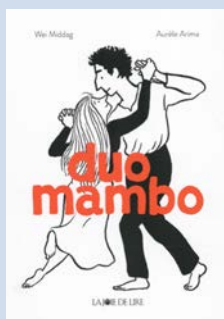
Philosophy | Memories | Humans | Animals | Change | Sustainability | Picture book

FRENCH

Réunion (France)

A plain black silhouette, two white dots for the eyes, a line for the nose, an absent mouth. In this picture book, the protagonist, Xi, represents the human race. In his fast-moving, grey world, Xi stumbles over a gravel stone and lands, after a long descent, in a director's chair. From here he watches colourful images of animals passing by, many of whom are endangered or already extinct. When humans like him suddenly appear, Xi is shocked. Joëlle Ecornier's text is based on the statement attributed to the North American tribal chief Noah Seattle: »What is happening to animals will soon happen to people.« With vibrant colours and collages, Godeleine de Rosamel's pictures evoke Earth's memory, while Xi's hectic day-to-day life is rendered in black-and-white. In the end, Xi has changed. He has »placed his heart in his head.« From a great distance, he sees Earth, small and vulnerable. This book is a plea for pausing and reflecting about the essential things in life. (Age: 9+) [OIS]

99



Arima, Aurèle (text)
Middag, Wei (illus./scenario)

Duo mambo

(Mambo duo)

Genève: Joie de lire, [2023]. – [76] p.

ISBN 978-2-88908-618-4

[Dancing](#) | [Life](#) | [Love](#) | [Relationship](#) | [Picture book](#)

Switzerland ■ FRENCH

In »Duo Mambo« dance is a great metaphor for a couple's relationship. The black-and-white drawings follow a man and a woman from their early adulthood as a (dancing) couple to the death of the old man. Their movements embody various phases of a relationship and periods of life: explorations to start, then passion, crises, the search for new paths, maturity and growing old together. The illustrations masterfully capture the dancers' verve as well as their physical changes. The text, told from the female perspective, begins and ends with »Do you remember?«, giving it the form of a retrospective commentary. After her partner's death, the woman dances alone at first. When this is no longer possible, she hurries back through time and space to the beginning of this life-shaping relationship, symbolised by a red rose. »Duo Mambo« is a moving choreography of togetherness which reminds us of the positive power of human relationships. (Age: 11+) [OIS]

100



Blutch (text/illus.)

Les indomptés

(The untamed)

[Givrins]: Lucky Comics, [2023]. – 46 p.

(Series: Un hommage à Lucky Luke d'après Morris)

ISBN 978-2-884-71493-8

[Orphan](#) | [Search](#) | [Wild West](#) | [Cowboy](#) | [Comic](#)

Switzerland ■ FRENCH

Yee-haw! Lucky Luke must look after the livewire Rose and her traumatised brother Casper, the offspring of gangster parents who have gone lost. The kids are a greater handful for the cowboy than the gang of desperados who are chasing them. At the same time, the story shows the precarious situation of children living outside the norm as well as the opportunism of certain members of a bigoted society. The book is the sixth volume of a Lucky Luke tribute series in which select comic book artists interpret the figure created by Morris and perfected by René Goscinny. Matthieu Bonhomme's brilliant opening is a tribute to the protagonist and to the Western genre. Guillaume Bouzard followed up with a venomous dismantling of the legendary cowboy. Then German artists produced two extremely witty contributions: Ralf Köng had Luke mind the cattle together with a gay companion, and Mawil had him trade in his horse for a bicycle. The French comic book author Blutch uses precise lines and subtle humour to render a rather cool, but determined hero. (Age: 8+) [OIS]

101



Haan, Linda de (text/illus.)

Ik wol in bosk op 'e jierdei

(I want a bunch for my birthday)

Ljouwert: Afûk, 2024. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-94-93318-26-7

(Dutch parallel edition: *Ik wil een bos voor mijn verjaardag*. Amsterdam: Ploegsma)

Birthday | Party | Tree | Forest

FRISIAN

Netherlands

Simke has one big birthday wish: a real tree. Her classmates laugh and shout at her: »That's impossible!« But Simke gets up the courage to write a letter to the mayor. When she wakes up a few days later, the whole street is full of trees. The residents come out and get to know each other. An artist creates the shapes and colours of the leaves and trees. Children build tree houses and play hide and seek. And the mayor even comes to Simke's birthday party, which is celebrated in the new little forest. The next day, the forest continues its journey through the city. This imaginative picture book, inspired by an art project in the city of Ljouwert (Leeuwarden) in 2022, shows how important trees are in our lives. Everyone enjoys them in their own way because they provide peace, relaxation and fun. The story is also about different feelings: longing, anger, joy, disappointment, and happiness. The beautiful and detailed atmospheric drawings in soft colours match the story well. (Age: 4+) [TD]

102



Janisch, Heinz (text)

Bansch, Helga (illus.)

Auf dem Weg

(Along the path)

Wien: Jungbrunnen, 2024. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-3-7026-5989-9

Journey | Friendship | Mouse | Chicken | Poetry | Picture book

GERMAN

Austria

On the book's title page, readers first meet a little mouse inspecting a map; soon after, this rodent cheerfully sets off on its journey. First, some zebras and ostriches cross its path, then the mouse glides past a waterfall in a boat. »Monsterberge« (monster mountains) are followed by »Zauberzwerge« (magic dwarves) and the »Nebelriese« (fog giant) awaits readers after the »Dschungelwiese« (jungle meadow). By now it's obvious: It's a poem! There's but a single word on each page – another proof that Heinz Janisch's verses are poetic condensation extraordinaire (and in rhyme, too!). They open up spaces that Helga Bansch visualises in a magnificent way: detailed but leaving plenty of room for the imagination. The book takes readers on an expedition; they look, marvel, and ponder. Janisch and Bansch have created a number of books together and, just as before, text and image form a perfect symbiosis here. Thus the question begs to be asked: What came first, the poem or the pictures? Or were both conceived together? (Age: 3+) [IG]

103



Bach, Tamara (text)

Von da weg*(Away from there)*

Hamburg: Carlsen, 2024. – 171 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-58543-1

[Woman](#) | [Search for identity](#) | [Freedom](#) | [LGBTQ+](#)GERMAN
Germany

■ Kaija, Ruth, Josepha – daughter, mother, aunt; three generations, recently reunited in Ruth's parents' house. A move to the country, a new beginning, a step into the past: memories, pain, secrets. For Kaija this means being transported into a new life – is that a good or a bad thing? Things didn't work out in the city, but they aren't working out here either; at least not yet. Ruth, however, returns to the place that she once left, full of curiosity, and that she never wanted to return to after a tragic event. Josepha fled from there, too – to escape confinement and social expectations. The three women are connected, some elements repeating themselves, while others are different. Few authors have as keen an eye as Tamara Bach for seemingly minor details: in them, moods condense and, at the same time, they link the lives of the three female protagonists. »Von da weg« is a novel about new beginnings, upheaval, expectations, courage, and freedom; in other words, about the stuff in life that counts. (Age: 14+) [IG]

104



Baltscheit, Martin (text)

Wellmann, Thomas (illus.)

Oma zu verkaufen*(Grandma for sale)*

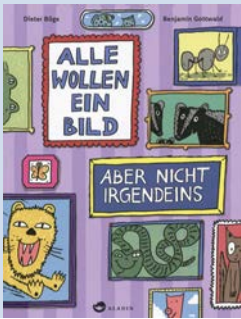
Hamburg: Kibitz, 2023. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-3-948690-28-1

[Deal](#) | [Consumerism](#) | [Family](#) | [Comic](#)GERMAN
Germany

■ »It all started with the street jumble sale: Just putting the old toys on the kerb and earning a bit of money. Somehow, we also sold our little sister, completely by mistake.« Oops! Mum and Dad aren't thrilled – after all, sis was »brand new«! Yet, it really isn't a big deal, we can get a new one from the stall opposite. No sooner said than done – and this new sister is a bomb: sweet as candy floss, polite, and helpful (she even offers to clear her plate away). Of course, such a treasure is expensive, which is why, unfortunately, we'll have to sell grandma. She puts up some resistance, but it can't be helped. And in the end, the brother changes hands, too, because the neighbours are sly negotiators. Completely crazy – that's what you could call this story told by Martin Baltscheit and captured in colourful, trendy pictures by Thomas Wellmann. Amazing how much fun the criticism of consumerism can be (because that's what this is – despite the talk about »passing something on« and »used goods«). (Age: 6+) [IG]

105



Böge, Dieter (text)

Gottwald, Benjamin (illus.)

Alle wollen ein Bild – aber nicht irgendeins

(Everybody wants a picture – but not just any picture)

Stuttgart: Aladin, [2024]. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-3-8489-0223-1

Portrait | Wish | Self-image | Picture book

GERMAN
Germany

»Everybody wants a picture – but not just any picture.« Well, naturally, people (and creatures) are keen to have their picture taken – we do live in an age of limitless self-staging through photography after all. And it's obvious that some careless snapshot won't do. Rather, the aim is to get the best shot imaginable. No wonder that the frog wants to be photographed as a cool guy, and the prissy pig, sitting somewhat uptight at the piano, demands a photo in which it is belting into the microphone next to a bass-playing wild boar rock-star: Maybe Piggy isn't quite so prissy after all? Young kids will have fun with the strikingly colourful pictures and the visions of who each animal could be; while an older audience might get philosophical: What is the real me like? What kind of potential do I have? How do I want to be seen? The collaboration between Dieter Böge and Benjamin Gottwald is characterised by witty ideas and surprises that sometimes require readers to think outside the box. (Age: 4+) [IG]

106



Clausen, Murrel (text)

Leming

(Leming [sic])

Berlin [et al.]: Voland & Quist, [2024]. – 195 p.

ISBN 978-3-86391-401-1

Friendship | Suicide | Road novel

GERMAN
Germany

Reinhold, first-person-narrator Kolja, and Verena are barrelling down the motorway to Hungary in Reinhold's purple Audi (what a bullet!). Their plan is to jump into an extinct volcano there. The three »Leming« (lemmings) met in an internet suicide forum; now they mean to take their leave together in the most dramatic way possible. Although Kolja doesn't actually intend to jump. His mission is to make the other two realise that staying alive might be a good idea after all. They all have some emotional baggage to carry, some smaller, some bigger, but together the load is easier to bear. »Leming« is an intense, sad, and very funny novel that has everything a good book needs: superb characters, an eloquent narrator, depth, quirky ideas, surprising twists, and lots of humour. When asked why the second »m« is missing from the title »Leming«, Reinhold dryly replies: »It has already jumped off the cliff.« This novel definitely has what it takes to be a modern classic like German author Wolfgang Herrndorf's »Tschick«. (Age: 14+) [IG]

107



Duckstein, Stefanie (text/illus.)

**Wölfe in Rudeln kochen Nudeln mit Pudeln.
Würzige Tierreime mit Rätselsalat**

*(Wolves in packs are cooking noodles with poodles.
Spicy animal rhymes with riddle salad)*

München: cbj, 2024. – [52] p.
ISBN 978-3-570-18029-7

Animals | Poetry

GERMANY

Germany

■ This book's first double page already features a magnificent picture: Howling wolves looking perfectly happy, all tucked into oversized penne rigatoni. And it's no surprise, because, as the accompanying poem states: »Wolves want to be sociable and warm, / but not in overcrowded honeycombs like a bee swarm; / nor lonely in a basket, like pink poodles. / That's why wolves like to live in noodles.« Hang on a sec: Do wolves really live in »Nudeln« (noodles)? Quickly open the page and have a look – well, no, they live in »Rudeln« (packs), of course! What a difference a single phoneme can make! So if you substitute the S in »See« (lake) for a T, the frog choir is suddenly croaking in the »Tee« (tea) instead, or the hens prefer »stricken« (knitting) to »picken« (pecking). By swapping consonants, Stefanie Duckstein elicits unexpected combinations from her verses with plenty of potential for smiles and laughter. The vivacious illustrations add another dimension. They are bursting with witty ideas and are simply great fun. (Age: 4+) [IG]

108



Gathen, Katharina von der (text)

Kuhl, Anke (illus.)

Radieschen von unten. Das bunte Buch über den Tod für neugierige Kinder

(Pushing up the daisies. The colourful book about death for curious children)

Leipzig: Klett Kinderbuch, 2023. – 155 p.
ISBN 978-3-95470-285-5

Death | Funeral | Graveyard | Grief | Non-fiction

GERMANY

Germany

■ Katharina von der Gathen and Anke Kuhl have created some excellent non-fiction books together, such as »Das Liebesleben der Tiere« (The animals' love life) and »AnyBody«. As the subtitle states, their latest collaboration is a »colourful book about death«. Talking about dying and death is often a taboo topic, and at the same time, children have many questions (and they are not the only ones): What do you die of? What is it like when you die? What happens afterwards? Katharina von der Gathen's unaffected style and Anke Kuhl's idiosyncratic, humorous drawings lessen the graveness of the subject and the reader's shyness. The two creators approach dying and death in an informative way, with wit but also dignity. The book opens up a very broad perspective, ranging from »practical« to »spiritual« aspects; it offers room for reflection, for sadness, and for amused smiles, too. It is a book for everyone and for (almost) any age. (Age: 6+) [IG]

109



Jäger, Sarah (text)
Maus, Sarah (illus.)

Und die Welt sie fliegt hoch

(And the world, it flies high)

Hamburg: Rotfuchs, 2024. – 272 p.
ISBN 978-3-7571-0007-0

Chat | Friendship | Coming of age | Secret | Dream |
Self-confidence

GERMAN
Germany

Reading this novel feels a bit like watching a tennis match. Why? Because it is written like an online chat. Ava sends voice messages on the right-hand pages and Juri types his texts on the left. Both are stuck in their rooms during the summer holidays – Ava is grounded and Juri doesn't like going outside; in fact, he's kind of afraid to. Years ago, the two went to school together; now Ava has rediscovered Juri's number and sends him a message. Juri is sceptical at first, but replies. This leads to a conversation that quickly gets down to business. Ava, a spirited teen who obviously disregards any inhibitions or taboos, coaxes introvert Juri out of his shell. They chat about wishes, yearnings, embarrassment, and fear – fear of making a fool of oneself, of not being enough, or of simply being »wrong«. With her knack for characters that are far from plain, Sarah Jäger is a true stroke of luck for German youth literature. She lets her protagonists talk in such an unaffected way that readers immediately grow fond of them. (Age 12+) [IG]

110



Johansson, Juri (text)
Hermanowski, Barbara (illus.)

Von Krawattenmännchen, Vielfraßen und Faulpelzinnen. Ein Tag im Zoo

*(About guys-with-ties, gluttons, and lazybones.
A day at the zoo)*

Berlin: Kraus Verlag, 2023. – [26] p.
ISBN 978-3-9823493-3-6

Zoo | Animals | Humans | Topsy-turvy world |
Picture book

GERMAN
Germany

Today the young animals are going on a school trip to the zoo! Er, wait a second? The animal kids – the foxes Falk and Fanny, Crocodile Greta, Pepe, the donkey, and all the others – are going to the zoo? To visit whom exactly? Well, isn't it obvious? The humans! Just like these animal children, young human readers will be amazed and laugh their heads off at tie-wearing-guys busily typing away in their open-plan office; at (over)ambitious sportspeople in the gymnastics enclosure; or at the group of pretentious prats at the posers' grounds – large watches and fat wallets included. Youngsters will look and marvel at the different human sub-species and at Juri Johansson and Barbara Hermanowski's almost inexhaustible and extravagant ideas. Together, the author and illustrator brilliantly stage the concept of the topsy-turvy world. Adult readers in particular will sometimes cringe and blush because the book holds up a mirror to them – albeit in a very charming way. Recognition guaranteed! (Age 4+) [IG]



Kluge, Julia (text/illus.)

Wo dicke Äste wild sich ranken

(Where dense branches are wildly entwined)

Kassel: Rotopol, 2023. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-96451-046-4

Magic | Grandmother | Night | Witch | Poetry |
Picture book

GERMAN
Germany

■ A bit of magic will do just as little harm as a bit of poetry! So we're lucky to have Julia Kluge's picture book »Wo dicke Äste wild sich ranken«. In rhyming couplets, it recounts the story of a very special grandmother, who grows wondrous plants in her garden deep in the forest, knows fantastic creatures, and can talk to trees. When she finds an injured bear, she nurses him back to health, tells him about her adventures, and plays cards with him and a couple of vampires after midnight. An unusual granny through and through. Surely everyone would be happy to have her, especially since she can also bake cakes! Julia Kluge cheerfully gathers ingredients from all kinds of (fairytale) pots and mixes them together to create a magical grandmother-universe cocktail in modern, graphic illustrations in blue, pink, and yellow: Abstract and organic plants, people, animals, and shapes take up the double pages, interacting with and overlapping each other. This book is great fun and offers plenty to discover, too. (Age: 4+) [IG]



Köhler, Karen (text)

Davies, Bea (illus.)

Himmelwärts

(Skywards)

München: Hanser, 2024. – 187 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-27922-3

Cancer | Mother | Death | Longing | Friendship |
Outer space

GERMAN
Germany

■ »Himmelwärts« by Karen Köhler is a superb children's novel. It is humorous and sad and actually points »skywards« beyond itself. In chapters that are numbered in reverse order (like a countdown), Toni recounts the story of how she and her best friend YumYum went out into the garden at night with their home-made cosmic radio to try and contact Toni's mum, who died of cancer. Toni can only bear the »mum-missing« with an armour of ice around her heart. When YumYum and Toni send a message into space, something incredible happens: They get an answer – and the ice melts a little. »Himmelwärts« deals with challenging topics in an original and light-footed way without betraying their seriousness. Karen Köhler has created a clever, brave, and witty narrator whose refreshing language finds its counterpart in the illustrations by Bea Davies; she translates the story into images that are open, yet absolutely to the point. Rating: 12 out of 10! (Not a typo!) (Age: 10+) [IG]

113



Mühle, Jörg (text/illus.)

Morgen bestimme ich!*(Tomorrow, I'll decide!)*Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Verlag, 2024. – [26] p.
ISBN 978-3-89565-457-2

Jealousy | Playing | Friendship | Picture book

GERMAN
Germany

»When the weasel arrived home in the afternoon, the bear was busy. Badger was visiting.« That's how harmlessly this picture book begins. Yet the title already suggests that things will not necessarily remain peaceful. After all, the weasel would like to join in the games of Bear and Badger (and not, as the bear suggests, prepare food for him and his visitor...). Weasel and Bear quickly get into an argument about who is allowed to play with whom and in what way. While the quarrel escalates between the two, Badger entertains himself with his red fire engine, completely unbothered by the shouting match. However, at some point, he has to go home. »Bear and Weasel were utterly surprised. ›What?!‹ they shouted. [...] ›But we're just having so much fun!‹« Naturally, they want to invite him back for the next day – but the badger has other plans... Jörg Mühle is a master of precise observation and on-point timing. The book displays flawless plot development, great dialogue, and astutely mischievous images! (Age: 3+) [IG]

114



Rasmus, Jens (illus.)

Regentag*(Rainy day)*Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, [2024]. – [62] p.
ISBN 978-3-7795-0726-0

Rain | Imaginary world | Fantasy | Playing | Wordless book | Picture book

GERMAN
Germany

In this wordless book, Jens Rasmus proves that you don't need words to transform the world. Two children are looking out of the window, watching the rain fall from the sky in big streaks. Initially, they had planned to play ball, but now they have to come up with something else. At first, one child fiddles around with their mobile phone, while the other one slowly develops an idea. In their imagination, the children venture outside, climb mountains, jump from skyscraper to skyscraper, leap into fountains, and become wild animals. Anything is possible! Jens Rasmus draws a black-and-white vignette here and now in ink, often arranging several small vignettes on one page. The fantasy world, however, is colourful and lush, often a full-page illustration, showing the children in their self-created worlds with cheerful faces and completely immersed in their game. »Regentag« is a tribute to the power of imagination, and it encourages children to look at the pictures again and again and invent their own stories to go with them. (Age: 3+) [IG]

115



Rottmann, Eva (text)

Kurz vor dem Rand*(Right on the brink)*

Berlin: Jacoby & Stuart, [2023]. – 189 p.

ISBN 978-3-96428-188-3

Coming of age | Skateboarding | Friendship |
First love | Mental health

GERMAN
Germany

»My name is Ari, and this is the story of my first love. It doesn't end well though, I'll tell you right away.« Wham! After the very first two sentences, readers realise: Ari is not one for getting all mushy and sentimental; she's tough – and skateboarding is everything to her. She's really, really good at it, too. One day, Tom turns up at the halfpipe and Ari doesn't know what to make of him: He rides like a pro, but he is also pretty arrogant. He quickly hooks up with one of the stylish girls, but Tom and Ari are growing closer, too. The more time they spend together, the more Ari realises that things aren't running smoothly for Tom. Ari is surprised at the emotional roller-coaster she – tough Ari! – is sucked into. For Ari, this feels almost like more of a harsh dare than the crazy skateboard ride down »Feuerberg« mountain. »Kurz vor dem Rand« captivates readers with its unsentimental narrator, who – despite the non-happy ending – realises that it's not necessarily bad to let her hard shell soften a little. (Age 12+) [IG]

116



Schrocke, Kathrin (text)

Weiße Tränen*(White tears)*

München: mixtvision, [2023]. – 219 p.

ISBN 978-3-95854-205-1

Racism | White privilege | School

GERMAN
Germany

When Benjamin joins Lenni and Serkan's class, he causes quite a stir in the leisurely daily life at school. Benjamin is Black, and he is fed up with listening to (more or less) well-meaning comments. So he constantly holds up a mirror to his predominantly white environment, who consider themselves enlightened, empathetic, and free of prejudice. Slowly but surely, the others grow an awareness of the omnipresent (unconscious and structural) everyday racism and of those »white privileges« that Lenni enjoys as a White middle-class boy, while Serkan and Benjamin have completely different experiences. In her novel, Kathrin Schrocke uses her characters to discuss attitudes and thought patterns; however, the book is a far cry from a clumsy educational novel, because the author is a whizz at creating psychological credibility. The many positive reactions to the novel since its publication in summer 2023 show that she has hit a nerve with her book. (Age 12+) [IG]



Stanišić, Saša (text)
Kehn, Regina (illus.)

Wolf

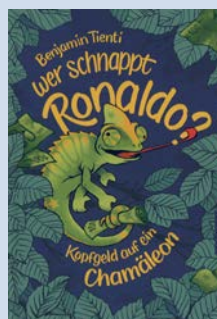
(*Wolf*)

Hamburg: Carlsen, [2023]. – 185 p.
ISBN 978-3-551-65204-1

Forest | Holiday camp | Outsider | Fear | Bullying |
Courage | Freedom

GERMAN
Germany

■ A camp in the forest, exploring nature, being part of a community – that's what Kemi's mother envisions when she sends him to »ADVENTURE FOREST / ADVENTURE HUMAN«. Kemi isn't keen to go, but that doesn't matter; he has to. Right away it's easy to see who the group's kings are and who is going to struggle: i.e. Jörg, »whom the others make out to be extra-weird«. Kemi actually likes the boy, but the group harass Jörg, taunt and bully him. Jörg seems to put up with it stoically. Kemi would like to help, but doesn't know how; the adults don't pay attention – the cook is the only one who notices what's happening. Suddenly, the wolf appears – and Jörg screams out his frustration. Accompanied by Regina Kehn's expressive illustrations, »Wolf« is a great psychological children's novel that deals with toxic group dynamics, fear, courage and stance, as well as inner and outer freedom. Saša Stanišić's honest narrator Kemi is clever, empathetic, and would like to be braver – just like so many of us. An outstanding book. (Age: 10+) [IG]



Tienti, Benjamin (text)
Davies, Bea (illus.)

Wer schnappt Ronaldo? Kopfgeld auf ein Chamäleon

(*Who will catch Ronaldo? Bounty on a chameleon*)

Hamburg: Dressler, [2024]. – 173 p.
ISBN 978-3-7513-0109-1

Kidnapping | Friendship | Garden

GERMAN
Germany

■ Nivin only wants one thing: peace and quiet. Unfortunately, that's not easy when you're part of a large family in a shoebox-sized apartment. They're all piled on top of each other, with everyone chattering and running around; constant high jinks and no privacy. There is the prospect of getting a larger flat, but they would need to pay a 4,000 Euro deposit – duh, money doesn't grow on trees! But then Nivin stumbles across a garden colony and a poster: Chameleon Ronaldo is missing, the finder's fee is 5,000 Euros. That would be the solution! So Nivin sets off in search of the reptile. However, other children are also after Ronaldo, so things get pretty heated. Benjamin Tienti simply knows how to write: original ideas, a fast-paced, colloquial language, a plot with plenty of drive, and a female protagonist who isn't easily discouraged, plus an authentic Berlin atmosphere: »Wer schnappt Ronaldo?« has it all. This novel is great fun – and the opening sentence is hard to beat. Read it for yourselves! (Age: 10+) [IG]

119



Yelin, Barbara (text/illus.)

Emmie Arbel. Die Farbe der Erinnerung

(Emmie Arbel. The colour of memory)

Berlin: Reprodukt, 2023. – 185 p.

ISBN 978-3-95640-396-5

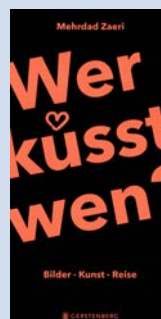
Holocaust | Holocaust survivor | Remembrance | Biography | Graphic novel

GERMAN

Germany

»I am a rebel« – that's what Emmie Arbel says about herself. Born in The Hague in 1937, she is deported to a concentration camp as a little girl, together with her parents and her two brothers. Her parents and grandparents are murdered. The siblings survive and are placed in a foster family after the war, where the foster father abuses Emmie. The whole family emigrates to Israel in 1949, where Emmie still lives today. Carefully and respectfully, Barbara Yelin slowly gets closer to Emmie. Over the course of more than four years, she meets her again and again to draw and write down her story. She uses the possibilities of visual and sequential storytelling with virtuosity to show how the past repeatedly pushes into the present with its dark memories. Yet precisely because the colour of memory is black, Emmie only wants one thing: to live her life well. She refuses to be a victim. The book will not let readers go: They will feel utmost respect for Emmie – for her strength, her vigour, her will to live. (Age: 12+) [IG]

120



Zaeri, Mehrdad (text/illus.)

Wer küsst wen? Bilder, Kunst, Reise

(Who is kissing whom? Pictures, art, journey)

Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2024. – [240] p.

ISBN 978-3-8369-6075-5

Kiss | Relationship | Family | Friendship | Search-and-find picture | Wimmelbook | Picture book

GERMAN

Germany

»Wer küsst wen?« is a seek-and-find wimmelbook in puzzle pieces or rather in memory card format. That's no surprise if you consider that the original version was created on beer mats, as author Mehrdad Zaeri reveals in a short epilogue. So what makes this book so special? The individual square, black-and-white pictures show long shots or sections of pictures; they feature different people – young ones and older ones – whose paths cross or who have some kind of connection: They might be father and daughter, or a couple, or good friends. The pictures tell us what these people like to do, what their passions are, or whom they miss. Finding out where, why, and how exactly they are connected – this takes many attentive (re)readings. On the other hand, maybe it isn't that important to decipher everything. Maybe you can let your creative juices flow and just make up an infinite number of stories about »who is kissing whom«. (Age: 6+) [IG]

121



Fischer, Elena (text)

Paradise Garden

Zürich: Diogenes, [2023]. – 345 p.

ISBN 978-3-257-07250-1

Death | Loss | Grief | Belonging | Road trip |
Coming of age

GERMAN
Switzerland

»The day my mother died, I fell apart. What remained was a string of letters that had once been my name. My mum used to call me Billie.« Billie and her mother are not rolling in money, on the contrary, but they know how to make do with what they have and enjoy their life. Yet when Billie's Hungarian grandmother moves in because she is ill, things start to go awry: It's too crowded, there are too many unanswered questions, too many unsaid things, too many opinions, too many battles. Then the unthinkable happens: During an argument, Billie's mum falls and dies. Just like that. Billie is thrown off course, and so is her grandmother. Soon the teen can't take it anymore. She just has to leave – and go look for her father. She sets out in the old family car and heads for the coast. The destination is clear, but not much else. Sorrow, belonging, origins, not letting life get you down, and giving fate a chance: »Paradise Garden« talks about all of this, oscillating in tone between deeply sad and hilarious. (Age: 12+) [IG]

122



Christodulu, Panos (Christodoulou, Panos) (text)

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

Echō dikaiōma? Echō dikaiōma!*(My rights? My rights!)*

Athēna: Mikrē Selēnē (Mikri Seleni), [2023]. – 43 p.

ISBN 978-618-5689-09-4

Children's rights | Non-fiction

GREEK
Greece

In this excellent book, published in cooperation with the Network for Children's Rights, the rights of children are presented in an innovative and humorous manner. Using examples from different groups of children, it presents the right to identity, family, health, education, recreation, and others. It looks in particular at children who are disadvantaged in different ways. Additional information, such as about housing, schools, types of families or animal rights, give a more detailed picture of the lives of children around the world. Moreover, the book includes portraits of people like Sophie Cruz, Muzoon Almellehan or Iqbal Masih, who are considered role models in the defence of the rights of children. Finally, the book offers interesting games, which Stella Stergiou has illustrated with expressive, comic-like colour illustrations. An appendix contains a list of all children's rights in simplified format, a glossary, an emergency phone number, as well as a QR code linking to the original Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Age: 7+) [TA]

123



Christulias, Petros (Christoulas, Petros) (text/illus.)

Dr Pap. Ē zōē tu prōtoporu giatru

G. N. Papanikolaou

(*Dr. Pap. The life of the innovative doctor*

G. N. Papanikolaou)

Metamorphōsē Attikēs: Papadopulos (Papadopoulos Publishing), 2023. – [80] p.

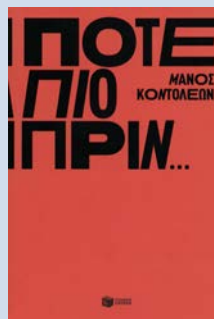
ISBN 978-960-484-881-2

GREEK
Greece

Papanikolaou, Georgios N. (1893-1962) | Medicine | Research | Biography | Non-fiction | Graphic novel

Georgios N. Papanikolaou, the inventor of the life-saving Pap test, is portrayed in this stirring graphic novel as doctor, researcher and private citizen. Born in 1883 in the small town of Kymi as the son of a doctor and parliamentarian, he began his studies already at the age of 15, first in Greece and later in Germany. In 1913 he emigrated to the USA, living from short-term contracts, until he obtained a research position at Cornell University in 1916. Petros Christoulas retells this eventful life like a black-and-white film to faithfully depict the era in a vivid way. The first, symbolic scenes show a sycamore tree – an allusion to the Tree of Hippocrates – that is dedicated to »Dr. Pap« on the Cornell campus. The main narrative is framed by a conversation between two current-day students enrolled at the university, a fitting choice because thanks to the dedication with which Georgios N. Papanikolaou pursued his research, he is still an inspirational role model for young people today. (Age: 11+) [TA]

124



Kontoleōn, Manos (Kontoleon, Manos) (text)

Pote pio prin ...

(*Never before...*)

Athēna: Patakēs (Patakis Publishers), 2023. – 163 p.

(Series: Synchronē logotechnia gia neus)

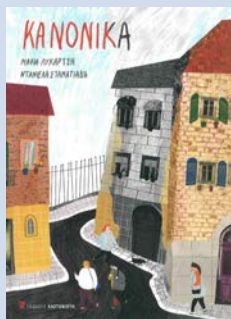
ISBN 978-618-07-0397-9

Human rights | Women's rights | Family | Culture gap | Migration

GREEK
Greece

Together with her father and aunt, motherless fifteen-year-old Anika moves to a country where self-determination is a basic human right, but one that is rigorously denied – especially to women – in her home country. There, the rule of »never before...« requires that women remain »untouched« before marriage. This imperative is linked to a family secret and shapes the moral views of Anika's aunt. While she makes plans to send her niece back to the home country as fast as possible to marry and bear children, Anika's father undergoes an inner struggle over his supposed duties as a father. Meanwhile Anika tries to integrate herself, make friends, overcome problems at school and deal with discrimination. This gripping story reaches a climax when Anika falls in love with a boy. As in his earlier novels, Manos Kontoleon again succeeds in convincingly combining fiction and reality to stimulate critical thinking about social issues among his readers. (Age: 15+) [TA]

125



Lykartsē, Maria (Lykartsis, Maria) (text)
Stamatiadē, Ntaniela (Stamatiadi, Daniela) (illus.)

Kanonika

(Normally)

Athēna: Kastaniōtēs (Kastaniotis Editions), 2023. – 32 p.
ISBN 978-960-03-7113-0

War | Peace | Everyday life | Hope | Optimism |
Picture book

Greece
GREEK

Normally maths is the first subject of the school day. Normally it would be lunch break or time to climb trees. »Normally« is the introductory word of each new section of this child-like monologue about a peaceful life. But already the shadow on the cover of the book suggests a looming threat. And the line that runs through the end papers like a tear heralds the breach that gets larger with every page. The ordinary but important everyday rituals in the life of a child are seen running colourfully and horizontally, while grey fractures appear vertically. In the end everything converges in a full picture of a catastrophe: war. However, a final, intact image of a vibrant birthday party closes the book, as a symbol of hope and a new beginning. Daniela Stamatiadis' illustrations interpret Maria Lykartsis' simple yet meaningful text – which never mentions the war directly – in a masterfully radical and ambiguous way. (Age: 6+) [TA]

126



Michaēlidu-Kadē, Marina (Michaelidou-Kadi, Marina) (text)

Metallēnu, Renia (Metallinou, Renia) (illus.)

Poiēmata gia paidia

(Poems for children)

Athēna: Kalentēs (Kalendis Publishing), [2023]. – [33] p.
ISBN 978-960-594-112-3

Nature | Humanity | Poetry

Greece
GREEK

All ten poems in this beautifully designed book with symbolical illustrations revolve around the topic of beauty in nature and in humanity. People and nature are connected to one another, just as people are connected to each other. By using words of one poem as part of the title of the following poem, they become linked together like the rings of a chain. These rings proceed from gratitude for being alive to life in the mountains, from mountain hiking to hospitality, from forest fires to love of nature, from lonesomeness to community spirit. One poem is dedicated to the mountain, a remote, isolated place, which the author Marina Michaelidou-Kadi sensitively transforms into a warm place of welcome, where local residents and strangers come together in harmony with nature. The book begins with a poem titled »Thanks«, dedicated to a mother, and ends with the poem »Not«, as a reminder that the earth is the mother to all and does not belong to people alone. (Age: 6+) [TA]

127



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

To kotsyphi

(The blackbird)

Athēna: Kaleidoskopio (Kaleidoscope Publications), [2023]. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-960-471-253-3

[Bird](#) | [Blackbird](#) | [Love of animals](#) | [Wordless book](#) | [Picture book](#)

Greece **GREEK**

■ The value of the singular interaction between a child and an animal – through communication that needs no words – is depicted by the renowned artist Photini Stephanidi in this wordless picture book in the form of an intimate friendship between a boy and a blackbird. It begins in February when birdsong awakens the child. Day and night, from the building of the nest until migration, from days at school until the holidays, in a tree, at a window, their lives are bound up with one another. Unlike the almost impassive adults in the book, the reader is moved by the empathy that the protagonist feels through keen observation and interactions with the animal. Calendar pages representing the way humans measure time accompany the sensually appealing illustrations. Parallel to that, the life of the wild bird over the course of the year symbolises a natural rhythm, nature's time. The blackbird's song throughout the year is cleverly visualised as dotted rows of snowflakes, blossoms, stars, or autumn leaves. (Age: 3+) [TA]

128



Gordon Noy, Aya (text/illus.)

Gamtsuts ba-ginah

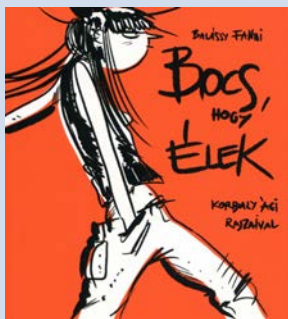
(Morchella in the garden)

Bene-Berak: ha-Ḳibutz ha-me'uhad (Hakibbutz Hameuchad), 2023. – [34] p.
ISBN 978-965-02-1252-0

[Gardening](#) | [Mushroom](#) | [Friendship](#) | [Nature](#) | [Loss](#) | [Growth](#) | [Xenophobia](#) | [Picture book](#)

Israel **HEBREW**

■ This story follows Pitz, a young girl devoted to her vegetable garden. She lovingly tends to her plants, wearing a charming pepper hat and a leafy skirt. One day, she discovers Gamtsuts, a large, mysterious mushroom, and tries various funny ways to get rid of it. Despite all her efforts, Gamtsuts stays, and through their interactions, a friendship blossoms. When Gamtsuts eventually vanishes, Pitz learns about loss and the natural cycles of life. This delightful story explores the growth of (an unexpected) friendship and the rewards of embracing differences. The narrative beautifully illustrates how shared joy and playful interactions can bridge gaps and create lasting connections. The theme of loss – whether of a friend or a life – is addressed against the backdrop of a garden, echoing the natural cycle of birth, growth, life, flowering, decay and death. Aya Gordon Noy's distinctive collage illustrations and warm manner of storytelling make this book an engaging read for young children. (Age: 4+) [LW]



Balássy, Fanni (text)

Korbuly, Ági (illus.)

Bocs, hogy élek

(Sorry that I am alive)

[Budapest]: Tilos az Á Könyvek, 2023. – 105 p. + [15] p.
ISBN 978-963-587-532-0

Coming of age | Feeling | Millennials

HUNGARIAN

Hungary

Always brief, often just one page long, the texts in »Bocs, hogy élek« are all the more intensive in their narrative content: a surge of feelings, ruminations, titbits of thoughts from young adults who are just beginning to adjust to adulthood and to »managing« their daily lives. But that is not all. Fanni Balássy gives a keen description of the emotional melange of the so-called millennials: their difficulties in meeting the overly high expectations of the older generations or in breaking with them, and their efforts to function in an ever more complicated world while always maintaining a self-awareness. Feelings of anger, resignation, being overwhelmed, as well as touches of irony and humour are all interconnected. The intensive and soliloquy-like snippets of text find congenial accompaniment in the dynamic, chaotic drawings by Ági Korbuly. With black lines and reddish highlighting, the purposefully scribbled illustrations give the appearance of something turned inside out. (Age: 14+) [KW]



Simonfalvi, Anca (text)

Agócs, Írisz (illus.)

Ali király karácsonyi vacsorája

(King Ali's Christmas dinner)

Budapest: Pagony, 2023. – 36 p.
ISBN 978-963-587-505-4

Search | Quest | Cleverness | Christmas

HUNGARIAN

Hungary

Christmas is the most magical time of the year. And if not magic, then at least luck, cleverness and courage will be needed for Radó and Maxi to find the magic ladle that has been stolen from their grandfather, King Ali. It is with this ladle that the king cooks his famous Christmas dinner for all the subjects in his kingdom. The two grandchildren set off in a bus on skis through the deepest snow to climb several hills where they might possibly find the ladle thief, whether it is the grumpy hermit, the Yeti, the dragon or the shady fairy who can transform himself into a hairy green beast. With a trick they succeed in recovering the ladle and saving the feast. With her children's book debut Anca Simonfalvi relates a classical Christmas story with modern touches and witty twists and turns. Írisz Agócs has created dynamic, softly inked pictures for the scenes and characters of the story. »Ali király karácsonyi vacsorája« was chosen by IBBY Hungary as the children's book of the year. (Age: 5+) [KW]

131



Ní Chíobháin, Muireann (text)

Fitzgerald, Brian (illus.)

Gealach agus Grian*(Moon and sun)*

Spideal: Futa Fata, 2023. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-1-915684-07-3

Sun | Moon | Friendship | Differentness | Coexistence |
Creation | Picture book

IRISH
Ireland

Once upon a time, the sun and the moon were housemates. Though good friends, the two young planets didn't really get along: »Moon was neat. Sun was not. Moon was quiet. Sun was not. And when Moon was asleep, Sun was awake.« One day, Moon had enough. She packed her bags and set off in search of her own place – but no matter where she went, nothing seemed quite right... This entertaining tale-within-a-tale – the planets' adventure is read to two boisterous siblings, aptly named Sol and Luna, as a bedtime story by their Mom – is a tongue-in-cheek modern creation story as well as a plea for tolerance. The witty and vibrant digital illustrations perfectly capture the two rotund protagonists as polar opposites whose chaotic home life leaves subdued Moon longing for peace and quiet. Eventually, the two find their perfect balance of togetherness and space, when they boldly jump up into the sky. The beautiful endpapers, depicting the view from Luna and Sol's apartment in the morning and at night, neatly tie both stories together. (Age: 4+) [CS]

132



Bonfiglioli, Benedetta (text)

Incorporea*(Incorporeal)*

Torino: Giralangolo, [2024]. – 169 p.

(Series: Dinamo)

ISBN 978-88-5929-218-0

Eating disorder | Anorexia | Coming of age

ITALIAN
Italy

Named after the Beatles' song »Hey Jude«, the protagonist of this moving novel tells about her eight-year battle against anorexia. In the meantime, Jude has become an artist and on the opening day of her first exhibition, she recalls the time her eating disorder began, when she was friends with Jenny, a girl obsessed with her own body. After Jenny's tragic death, Jude's desperate mother sends her to a special clinic. There Jude meets others with the same problems and tries to get her life back on track. Written in an idiosyncratic style of short sentences strung together with commas, Benedetta Bonfiglioli credibly renders the intimate thoughts of a girl whose body and own identity are in danger of disappearing bit by bit. In the postscript, this existential crisis is described in metaphorical terms inspired by T.S. Eliot's poem »The Waste Land«: like a broken cup that is not even suited for drinking. Ultimately, Jude is a survivor who picks up the shards of her life and glues them back together. (Age: 14+) [AB]

133



Carminati, Chiara (text)
Tappari, Massimiliano (illus.)

Cerca cerchi

(Search for circles)

Roma: Lapis, [2023]. – [30] p.
ISBN 978-88-78749-48-1

[Geometry](#) | [Circle](#) | [Poetry](#) | [Riddle](#) | [Photo book](#) |
[Picture book](#)

ITALIAN
Italy

■ In contrast to its square format, there are many circles hidden in this picture book. Circles that are present in everyday life, though we perhaps don't notice them. The artist couple, Chiara Carminati und Massimiliano Tappari, invite readers to look for them, just as they have done in earlier works, with photos and rhymes. Sets of four photos of round objects are each paired with a rhymed riddle that supplies clues for identifying the matching circle. A masterful poet, Chiara Carminati has created riddles that are not immediately obvious, thus encouraging the reader to make accurate observations. And this is exactly what is to be playfully put to practice, according to the author's short introduction. The originality of this picture book, as the pun of the original Italian title suggests, also lies in the way it encourages young children to find other circles in their own surroundings. (Age: 3+) [AB]

134



Gamberini, Rita (text)
Penazzi, Irene (illus.)

Poesie della casetta

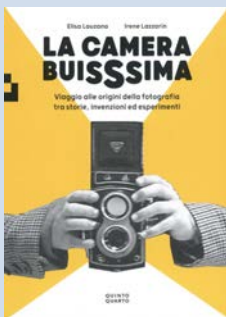
(Poems of the little house)

Milano: Topipittori, [2023]. – 56 p.
(Series: Parola magica)
ISBN 978-88-33701-34-9

[Nature](#) | [Rural life](#) | [Seasons](#) | [Poetry](#)

ITALIAN
Italy

■ The impressions and experiences of Rita Gamberini, who lives in the countryside with her dog in a little house at the edge of a forest, unfold as if one were taking a long stroll. In a simple tone, the author describes animals, plants, changing seasons, people she encounters, and everyday activities or sounds. Irene Penazzi's coloured pencil drawings magnificently render the world before our eyes. Whether in the form of a vignettes or a full-page spread, her attention to detail brings them to life, in perfect harmony with the atmosphere of the poems. The non-rhyming verses, whose narrative tone imitates spoken language, often draw on a rich vocabulary. The changefulness of nature and rural life, to which this lyrical notebook pays particular attention, open the eyes of even the youngest readers to the great universe. (Age: 10+) [AB]



135

Lauzana, Elisa / Lazzarin, Irene (text/illus.)

La camera buissima. Viaggio alle origini della fotografia tra storie, invenzioni ed esperimenti

(The very dark room. Journey to the origins of photography through stories, inventions and experiments)

Faenza: Quinto Quarto, 2023. – 159 p.

(Series: Grande)

ISBN 978-88-8554-652-3

Photography | History | Activities book | Non-fiction

ITALIAN
Italy

Although living in a world flooded with photos, many children do not know how it all began. This book describes the origins of photography since the invention of the camera obscura in the 18th century and its further development until the beginning of the 20th century. Through stories, but above all through experiments that can be tried out at home, the authors make accessible an art that is not only made up of pixels, but also of materials and chemical reactions. One encounters the names of some of the first photographers, their sometimes failed experiments or their strokes of genius. A timeline and glossary at the back of the book facilitates access to the subject. This beautifully designed book by Elisa Lauzana and Irene Lazzarin, the result of a workshop they held for primary school children, promotes visual education for children. It combines the past and the present in a charming manner, always with an emphasis on practical experimentation. (Age: 8+) [AB]



136

LuogoComune (Ghisoni, Jacopo) (text/illus.)

Vulcani

(Volcanoes)

Firenze [et al.]: Ed. Scienza, 2023. – 75 p.

(Series: A tutta scienza)

ISBN 978-88-9393-216-5

Volcano | Geology | Science | Non-fiction

ITALIAN
Italy

How is a volcano formed? What is it made of? What kinds of eruptions and what kinds of lava are there? This book answers all these questions and many more. It explains, for example, what kinds of rocks and crystals can be found in magma, what equipment a volcano explorer needs, and what to look out for when climbing a volcano. Or who were the most important volcanologists in history and which eruptions were the most memorable. There are also myths and legends about volcanoes. Finally, the book offers profiles of some of the most important volcanoes in Italy and elsewhere in the world as well as a glossary explaining the most important terms in volcanology. LuogoComune introduces young readers to the marvellous world of volcanoes in this brief and easily understandable book. Very clear and striking illustrations also help to enchant readers of all ages. (Age: 8+) [AB]

137



Rohrwacher, Alice (text)

Cerri, Mara (illus.)

Gianni Barba

Roma: Orecchio acerbo, [2024]. - [48] p.

(Series: Terremoti)

ISBN 979-12-55070-35-1

Bird | Barn owl | Nature | Siblings | Picture book

ITALIAN
Italy

When a father knocks down a wall, a nest with three lukewarm eggs is suddenly revealed. Although kept warm under a heat lamp, only one egg is pecked open. A strange-looking chick hatches. This is the beginning of an unforgettable summer for two sisters, the protagonists of the story. They become the chick's mothers, feeding it worms at first, then pieces of meat, mice and moles. And slowly this mysterious bird grows up into a gorgeous barn owl – a »barbagianni« in Italian – which they then name Gianni Barba. White, large and sensitive to light, he begins to fly at night in search of prey, returning only at dawn, until, at the end of the summer, he disappears forever. Alice Rohrwacher tells the story of the barn owl slowly growing up and the childlike excitement of the sisters who raise it in precise and vivid words. Mara Cerri accompanies the story with striking, enchanting pictures. (Age: 6+) [AB]

138



Trincia, Pablo (text)

Se non muoio domani. Viaggio di tre ragazzi migranti*(If I don't die tomorrow. Journey of three young migrants)*

Segrate: De Agostini, 2024. - 160 p.

ISBN 979-122-12-1041-5

Migration | Refugee | War

ITALIAN
Italy

The author is a journalist known for his podcasts on interesting crime cases. Here he tells the moving stories of three young people – Fatima, Omar and Sasha – who were forced to leave their home countries of Afghanistan, Gambia and Ukraine and now live in Italy. In all three cases the author describes lives that, despite some differences, are actually very similar to the lives of the readers. By arousing the reader's empathy, the book functions as an appeal to stop talking about migrants in general and to look at their personal fates, treating each of them with respect and consideration. For Fatima, a woman who wants to study, life was very difficult in a country ruled by the Taliban. Omar was saving up for the long journey to Europe in order to try his luck there. Sasha saw her dreams for the future destroyed by the war against her country and had to leave the Ukraine suddenly. Pablo Trincia's precise reportage of three people he met in person is powerful and thought-provoking. (Age: 12+) [AB]

139



Villa, Altea (text)

La compagnia di Cinecittà

(*The Cinecittà Theatre Troupe*)

Cinisello Balsamo: Edizioni San Paolo, [2024]. - 154 p.

(Series: Narrativa San Paolo ragazzi)

ISBN 978-88-9224-456-6

Italy | History 1947 | Post-war era | Refugee camp | Theatre | Historical fiction

ITALIAN
Italy

In the 1930s, a »city of cinema« – the great Cinecittà – was built on the outskirts of Rome. After the Second World War and the German occupation, it served for a time as an international camp for displaced persons. In this novel, four children meet there in 1947 and form a lively clique: the orphaned Ines who lives with her aunt; Bambina who doesn't speak a word and looks to Ines for protection; the tall Ermete and a Jewish boy named Simone, who had found refuge with an old professor during the years of Jewish persecution. The bookish Simone, who carries around a copy of Shakespeare's »The Tempest«, persuades the others to join him in putting on a play. They call themselves the »Cinecittà Theatre Troupe«, and with the help of Bruno, the concierge, two scriptwriters named Tacchini, a Polish art professor and others more, their performances create an unforgettable evening. Altea Villa's novel is meticulously researched, weaving together history and fiction to create a very convincing narrative. (Age: 10+) [AB]

140



Abe, Yui (text/illus.)

Nami no ichinichi

(*A day in the life of a wave*)

Tōkyō: Holp Shuppan, 2022. - [41] p.

ISBN 978-4-593-10307-2

Sea | Wave | Memories | Picture book

JAPANESE
Japan

Yui Abe (b. 1986) is an up-and-coming popular picture book artist. Based on her childhood in a seaside town which was seriously damaged in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, »Nami no ichinichi« depicts a day at the seashore from a charming wave's point of view. The impressive layout of panels, arranged like a sequence of very short films, captures the wave as it wakes the seagulls, plays with children, or carries the boat of a fisherman farther out to sea. With the repeated sound »sa sa sa---n,« the wave consoles a grieving lady and lets an old man recall memories of his loved ones. Stunningly beautiful scenes of light reflected on the water's surface are followed by a nostalgic sunset, and then a bustling nighttime party of ghosts dancing above the sea. Through the nuanced contrast of light and shadow, the sea is portrayed with particularly deep sensitivity as a place where life started ages ago, but many lives were lost as well. (Age: 3+) [RN]

141



Asō, Tomoko (text/illus.)

Natsuyasumi

(*Summer vacation*)

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2023. – 29 p. + [4] p.

ISBN 978-4-8340-8720-8

Summer holiday | Family | Search-and-find picture | Picture book

Japan ■ JAPANESE

Tomoko Asō (b. 1982) is known for creating picture books painted from an aerial view. In »Natsuyasumi«, she depicts one summer day by mixing different viewpoints – both from above and the side in one spread. Gathered in a traditional Japanese home, the family use the swimming pool and watch fireworks at night. At the summer festival, one boy gets lost and other family members desperately search for him. This is most impressively portrayed in the fold-out spread, where stalls are depicted from both sides through the shrine, while people are depicted from high above. There are characters hidden in most of the paintings, but their clothes and belongings cleverly give hints as to where they are. This way of enjoying summer vacation is traditionally Japanese, and somewhat nostalgic, but still appeals to children today.

»Natsuyasumi« received the Art Award of the 71st Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award and was included on the »Amazing Bookshelf« at the 2024 Bologna Children's Book Fair. (Age: 5+) [RN]

142



Dekune, Iku (text/illus.)

Kodomo beya no yoru

(*Night at a children's room*)

Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 2024. – 40 p.

(Series: Iwanami no kodomo no hon)

ISBN 978-4-00-115406-1

Imagination | Night | Playing | Siblings | Picture book

Japan ■ JAPANESE

Iku Dekune (b. 1969), winner of the Grand Prix at the BIB in 2003, has lived in the Czech Republic for over twenty years. »Kodomo beya no yoru«, based on her childhood experiences in Japan, contains three inventive stories about a girl named Icchan. In one story, a child-sized, weirdly realistic angel doll comes to her house. Unlike Icchan, her sisters like the doll, and play a prank by putting it into Icchan's bed. That night, Icchan has a wonderful experience flying in the sky with the angel doll. In another story, the sisters get angry with their parents, who have canceled their seashore holiday, and transform their bunk bed into a ship with room only for children. When they are cast out into the sea by an enormous whale, the angel doll rescues them. In each story, the moon is always above Icchan, even when she imagines horrible things and cannot sleep. In this book, children's fantasy and wild imaginations are beautifully portrayed through many shades of nuanced blue and in the characters' expressions and movements. (Age: 5+) [RN]

143



Iwase, Jōko (text)
Kōhei, Ashino (illus.)
Mahiru no yūreitachi

(*Daytime ghosts*)
Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2023. – 177 p.
ISBN 978-4-03-643250-9

Ghost | Death | Family | Friendship | Short story

Japan JAPANESE

The 2022 and 2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award nominee Jōko Iwase (b. 1950) masterfully portrays the sensitivities of children's feelings. Although all of her work is undoubtedly brilliant, some of it is difficult to publish in other countries, especially outside Asia, because of the nuanced portrayals of subtle emotions that are difficult to understand in other cultural contexts. But »Mahiru no yūreitachi«, a collection of four short stories, can be readily appreciated beyond cultural barriers. In one story, a boy sees an American soldier who died during the Vietnam War. As a ghost, he is looking for his old friends, who have participated in anti-war activities together. The boy listens to his life story and experiences the war through the man's memory. In all the stories, the main protagonist sees ghosts who continue to care for their loved ones. Children's empathy and grief are carefully explored through Iwase's powerful, literary writings, supported by illustrations that lend the stories a gentle touch that soothes the heart. (Age: 10+) [RN]

144



Nakagawa, Chihiro (text/illus.)

Toramaru yama e iku

(*Toramaru goes to the mountain*)
Tōkyō: Tokuma Shoten, 2023. – 63 p.
(Series: Yama no dōbutsu byōin; 2)
ISBN 978-4-19-865738-3

Cat | Doctor | Animals | Mountains | Anthropomorphism

Japan JAPANESE

In »Toramaru yama e iku«, a sequel to »Yama no dōbutsu byōin«, Toramaru, a cat kept by a veterinarian, is an animal doctor himself, although humans don't know that. One day, the veterinarian recalls the morning when he found young Toramaru, all wet, with a high fever and kept warm by a mysterious rabbit. Now the rabbit visits the fully grown Toramaru and asks him to accompany her and give another animal medical assistance. On their way to the mountain top, Toramaru helps a turtle with a cold, a giant flying squirrel with a sprained paw, a wild boar with a stuffy nose, and others more. Finally, he discovers that the one who called for him is a bear expecting twin cubs. The animals tell Toramaru the story of when he was a kitten and almost drowned in the nearby river. Learning that he had been helped by so many others is a lesson in the value of mutual aid, yet his humorously awkward expressions cleverly avoid oversentimentality and didacticism. The author's own charming illustrations match the rhythmical and graceful language of the enjoyable text. (Age: 7+) [RN]

145



Nakawaki, Hatsue (text)

Dengon*(Message)*

Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2023. – 307 p. + [4] p.

ISBN 978-4-06-532533-9

[Japan](#) | [Manchuria](#) | [Occupation](#) | [Colonization](#) | [War](#) | [History 1932-2023](#) | [Historical fiction](#)

Japan ■ JAPANESE

This novel is set in Manchuria, which was colonized by Japan from 1932 to 1945. Then it was the home of Hiromi, a Japanese teenager, who was born and raised there. In a newly built town, Hiromi's family befriends local people whose labour is being exploited by the Japanese government, such as Mr. and Ms. Lee. After World War II, Mr. Lee loses his job and Ms. Lee remains addicted to opium, which was a major source of income for the Japanese army in Manchuria. After returning to Japan in 1946, Hiromi finally realizes that she had blindly accepted Ms Lee's unconditional love and had unknowingly made incendiary balloons in labour services. Based on meticulous research, this excellent, multi-perspective novel is told from the points of view of Hiromi; Ms. Lee; a Japanese soldier conducting germ warfare experiments; and Hiromi's grown-up granddaughter, who is now tormented by the systematic violence in her office. First published for adults, »Dengon« can also be read and discussed by young adults. (Age: 15+) [RN]

146



Tateno, Hiroshi (illus.)

Donguri*(Acorn)*

Tōkyō: Komine Shoten, 2023. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-4-338-36201-6

[Acorn](#) | [Ecosystem](#) | [Life](#) | [Wordless book](#) | [Picture book](#)

Japan ■ JAPANESE

Hiroshi Tateno (b. 1968) is acclaimed for his careful and precise illustrations of nature. In all his work over many years, close observation of objects has led to stunning illustrations. With his wordless picture book »Donguri«, he is breaking new ground. Using mainly dark tones and a limited colour palette, his depiction of the ecosystem around acorns is full of sound and colour, appealing directly to the reader's imagination. The book begins with trees dropping acorns, and as time passes some acorns are eaten by birds and other animals. Others are hollowed out by worms. Only a few acorns survive to grow into plants, and even some of these are eaten by worms and animals. As they see the life that comes from each acorn, young children will be amazed to realize that everything is part of the cycle of life. This book stands out for the dynamic changes of perspective that result from cinematic zooming in and out. The illustrations make evocative use of blank space and appeal directly to the reader's senses. (Age: 4+) [RN]

147



Uno, Kazumi (text)
Iino, Kazuyoshi (illus.)

Achike to ten no jagaimo batake.

Perū no mukashi banashi

(Achiqué and the potato field in the heavens.

A Peruvian folk tale)

Kōbe: BL Shuppan, 2024. – [34] p.

ISBN 978-4-7764-1122-2

Peru | Andes | Achiqué | Mythical creature | Hunger | Folk tale | Picture book

JAPANESE

Japan

The Andean figure of the shaman and witch-like Achiqué is a mixture of indigenous oral tradition and European folk tales. This picture book tells of a hungry sister and brother who follow a bird with a potato flower in its beak to Achiqué's hut. After escaping Achiqué, they are first hidden by a condor and a puma. Later a rope descends from the heavens, and they climb it to find beautiful potato fields spread out before them. Based on her meticulous research into Latin American folk tales, Kazumi Uno (b. 1960), a long-time translator of Spanish-language books, tells a classic adventure story about escaping hunger and other dangers. Kazuyoshi Iino (b. 1947), who grew up in a mountain village, perfectly captures the local atmosphere. The expressive yet humorous illustrations use dynamic changes of perspective. Thoughtful details such as the inclusion of a bird on almost every page and potato illustrations on the endpapers make this book a true treasure that will appeal to young children for a long time to come. (Age: 4+) [RN]

148



Cho, Mi Ja (text/illus.)

Seulpeum e ppajin nareul wihae ttok! ttok!

(Knock! Knock! Knock! For myself lost in sadness)

Chuncheon: Pinggeo (Fingerbook), 2023. – [42] p.

(Series: Pinggeo geurimchaek; 10)

ISBN 979-11-981565-2-5

Emotion | Sadness | Healing | Picture book

KOREAN

Republic of Korea

A child with a gloomy expression withdraws into himself, locks himself into a small dark house, the place for his sadness. Despair strikes like thunder, sorrow pours down like a cloudburst, depression freezes the world over, isolation becomes a deep, cold lake blocking access to his heart. The silence is interrupted by a knock on the door of the child's frozen heart. Trees, clouds, and birds reach out to him, break through his self-imposed isolation, convince him to open the door and let go of his sadness. Author Cho Mi Ja, who has created picture books since 2000 and has dealt with difficult emotions in works such as »Buran« (Anxiety) and »Geokjeong sangja« (Worry box), finds simple yet intense expressions, convincing and easily comprehensible images in clear colours and thick black brushstrokes for the feeling of sadness, which is so difficult to express in words. The story is not about avoiding negative feelings but about embracing them and then letting them go. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

149



Choi, Hyangrang (text/illus.)

Supsok jaebongsa ui otjang*(The forest dressmaker's wardrobe)*

Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 2024. – [38] p.

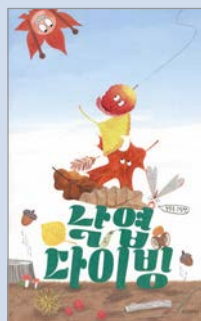
ISBN 978-89-364-2918-8

Forest | Seasons | Plants | Clothing | Picture book

Republic of Korea ■ KOREAN

A seamstress who lives deep in the forest skilfully makes clothes from seasonal plants, flower petals, leafs and seeds and stores them in a wardrobe, one for each season. When the flaps doubling as wardrobe doors are opened and the clothes are on display, various animals visit, dress up to party, have fun and make friends in the forest. With the winter wardrobe emptied, everyone goes into hibernation and waits for the new spring fashion. Choi Hyangrang studied Western painting at Seoul Women's University and won the grand prize of the 7th Changbi »Good Children's Book« manuscript contest for »Yorijori masin neun segye yeohaeng« (Traveling the world, delicious food). She likes collage work using natural materials and home-made coloured paper. The three-dimensional space created in this book by a collage of photographs, pressed flowers and cut-out figures captures the charm of the four seasons and allows a new look at the beauty of native Korean plants. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

150



Kang, Eun-Ok (text/illus.)

Nagyeop daibing*(Falling leaves)*

Seoul: Wijedeom hauseu (Wisdom House), 2023. – [46] p.

(Series: Seukolla changjak geurimchaek; 068)

ISBN 979-11-92655-44-4

Seasons | Autumn | Forest | Skydiving | Picture book

Republic of Korea ■ KOREAN

With the autumn wind blowing, the leaves' skydiving competition begins. The forest is filled with the excited shouts of spectators waiting for the contestants to show their skills. A rabbit, a hedgehog, and a spider are on the judging panel, and a dragonfly broadcasts the competition live. First-time participant dogwood leaf, strong-muscled oak leaf, sharp rotating pine tree leaf and fart-smelling ginkgo leaf participate in the competition. The winner will receive a special gift: the power to grant a wish. Kang Eun-ok majored in animation and studied illustration. She illustrated Yang Jang Bon's »Gonggam ssi neun himi se!« (Empathy is strong, 2017), I Gi Gyu's »Yennal yetjeok japangi« (Once upon a time vending machine, 2018), and I Geun Jeong's »Poktan eul aneun eomma« (Mom with a bomb, 2023). The combination of comic panels with integrated lettering and picture book spreads full of humor and surprising twists is her first work as an author-illustrator. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

151



Moon, Ji-Na (text/illus.)

Wolyoil achim e*(Monday morning)*

Paju: Ungjin junieo (Woongjin Junior), 2024. – [37] p.

(Series: Ungjin modu ui geurimchaek; 63)

ISBN 978-89-01-28277-0

Morning | Family | Breakfast | Imaginary world |
Picture bookKOREAN
Republic of Korea

As a somewhat grumpy, sleepy family gathers for breakfast on a Monday morning they are suddenly drawn into an unpredictable adventure that cheerfully unfolds in a short period of seven minutes, from 8:10 to 8:17. A broken egg turns into a large river, the water that Dad pours into his cup becomes a waterfall, the chunks of dough that Mom drops create a swirl of water that leads into the sea. As the everyday objects fall to the ground, one after another, and the family jumps into the resulting masses of water without hesitation, the imaginary space expands gradually, everyone experiences a refreshing sense of liberation and gains the strength to face the day. The author studied French, Information Broadcasting and Painting. While participating in the KT&G Sangsang Madang Bologna Workshop, she completed her first work, »Goyohan narareul chajaseo« (Finding the land of silence), displaying her bold and free-spirited style in brightly coloured oil pastels. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

152



Yu, Hae-Rin (text/illus.)

Mulgyeoreul dalmanna bwayo*(I guess it resembles a flowing wave)*

Paju: Ungjin junieo (Woongjin Junior), 2024. – [32] p.

(Series: Ungjin uri geurimchaek; 114)

ISBN 978-89-01-28038-7

Time | Cycle of life | Grandmother | Granddaughter |
Picture bookKOREAN
Republic of Korea

While an elderly woman sits knitting, her granddaughter nags her with questions about the life-span of mayflies and cicadas, of rabbits and whales, of clouds, trees and stars... She is told that time, incessantly flowing, rising and falling, cannot be grasped, that each being's time flows at its own pace and shape, that the time allotted to us – like yarn made by multiple intertwining strands of threads – is interwoven with other lives to form various relationships. »I guess it resembles a flowing wave«, the girl concludes. These philosophical reflections on the intangible phenomenon of time, of interlaced life paths and the preciousness of time spent with others, are couched congenially in the tangible vocabulary of a simple but wise knitter. In her debut, Yu Hae-Rin has used dyed yarn like a printing stamp, each undulating, intertwining strand having a unique colour and different length to visualize the relativity of time and the crisscrossing of paths of life. (Age: 4+) [YC, MC, SP]

153



Tilaks, Dzintars (text)

Zlatas ceļš*(Zlata's path)*

Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, [2023]. – 140 p.

ISBN: 978-9934-31-430-8

Ukraine | History 2022 | War | Escape

LATVIAN
Latvia

When the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine begins in 2022, thirteen-year-old Zlata has to flee her home. After losing contact with her father, she finds herself entirely on her own. She decides to make her way to Latvia, to the grandparents she barely knows. Thus begins a difficult and dangerous odyssey across Ukraine. What it means to look for a new shelter every day and to flee across Russian-controlled territory is depicted in Dzintars Tilaks' novel using very direct and precise descriptions. Zlata is clever and learns quickly what to do and what she must not do under any circumstances. She learns how important it is to meet people who can help her. The restlessly and excitingly told episodes lead to a »happy« end for the heroine – to the extent that this is possible to say. The novel arose out of conversations that the author held with Ukrainian families to whom he had granted temporary shelter. (Age: 12+) [KW]

154



Zandere, Inese (text)

Runde, Aleksandra (illus.)

Putni mūs redz*(The birds are watching us)*

[Rīga]: Liels un mazs, [2023]. – 54 p.

ISBN 978-9934-574-80-1

Bird | Poetry | Picture book

LATVIAN
Latvia

How ever does she do it? With her new collection of poems Inese Zandere has once again achieved a great coup. One of the greatest children's poets in Latvia, Zandere has already delved into many topics in her poems, most recently dealing with the widest variety of automobiles. And now: birds. And people. In her inimitably light-footed manner, Zandere unites the world of birds with that of people, blurring the boundaries and creating for both enjoyable situations. At the same time, the poems are playful imitations of birdsong. Supple verses and rhythmical language allow the texts to fly. In this way, cave-like swallow nests on the bluffs quite logically turn into tunnels for a twittering express train. Aleksanda Runde's equally effortless and playful illustrations show seagulls, crows and other birds around rivers, seas or forests. And everywhere there is also a place for humans. The final poem unveils a special truth: not only do people observe birds – the birds too are watching us. (Age: 6+) [KW]

155



Marcinkevičius, Marius / Muschick, Vytenė (text)
Itagaki, Lina (illus.)

Prieš srovę. Sabiha – žuvų draugė

(Against the stream. Sabiha, a friend to fish)

Vilnius: aukso žuvis, 2023. – 57 p.

ISBN 978-609-8120-82-0

[Kasimati, Sabiha \(1912-1951\) | Fish | Science | Courage | Dictatorship | Albania | Biography | Comic](#)

LITHUANIAN
Lithuania

■ Lina Itagaki, one of today's most important Lithuanian illustrators, has received numerous awards for her children's comics. Again and again, she has dealt with the topic of Lithuania's history under Soviet occupation. Her preoccupation with the lives of people living in dictatorships is evidenced once again in this biographical comic about the Albanian ichthyologist Sabiha Kasimati. Her life story is one of a courageous, inquisitive young woman who would not let herself be barred from becoming a scientist. But then she came into conflict with Albania's communist regime under Enver Hoxha, was arrested and executed. Kasimati's particular relationship to fish is taken up in a marvellous way by telling the story from the fishes' perspective and portraying the protagonists as fish-like people with fish eyes and fish mouths. »Prieš srovę« is a magnificent international book project which has also been published in Albania. A glossary and explanatory appendix, as well as historical photos complement the main story. (Age: 8+) [KW]

156



Vilė, Jurga (text)

Černiauskaitė, Valentina (illus.)

Šuo, kuris išeina naktį

(The dog that comes out at night)

Vilnius: 700 Eilučių Leidykla, [2023]. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-609-8288-12-4

[Dog | Night | Experience | Picture book](#)

LITHUANIAN
Lithuania

■ Only at night does the dog named »Moon« go outdoors. His experiences, observations and feelings are told in Jurga Vilė und Valentina Černiauskaitė's prize-winning picture book. From a seemingly simple plot they develop a light-footed and multi-layered story. The sensitive and experienced »Moon« observes other nocturnal animals, so-liloquizes with the real moon, and encounters a homeless person who has hung up old photographs in the park. And »Moon« himself shares the not always happy memories of all that he has experienced, mainly in the daytime, and hence the reason that he feels more comfortable and safe at nighttime. The sense of security is echoed in the black-blue-white colour scheme that exudes an unusual warmth while reflecting the magical mood of the night hours. The panel-like fragmentation of the illustrations and the short narrative sequences fortuitously leave room for the reader's own thoughts and digressions. (Age: 4+) [KW]

157



Vitkus, Zigmantas (text)
Lukošaitis, Mindaugas (illus.)

Akimirka apsi spresiti. Lietuvos žydų gelbėtojų istorijos

(One decisive moment. Stories of how Lithuanians rescued Jews)

Vilnius: Alma littera, 2023. – 183 p.
ISBN 978-609-01-5420-5

[Lithuania](#) | [World War II \(1939-1945\)](#) | [Jews](#) | [Holocaust](#) | [Rescue](#) | [Non-fiction](#) | [Biography](#)

LITHUANIAN

Lithuania

With his 24 short portraits of Lithuanians who hid, assisted, and rescued Jewish men and women during the German occupation of Lithuania during the Second World War, the historian Zigmantas Vitkus sheds light on an important topic that has been underrepresented in Lithuania's youth literature. In each text one of these individuals is given a chance to speak. Less historical than biographical, the portraits show very movingly how many ways there were to come to the aid of others and reveal how and why these men and women protected friends, relatives and even strangers from the Nazis, thereby putting their own lives at risk. Vitkus also has a number of the rescuers point out that other Lithuanians were simultaneously participating in the denunciation and arrest of Jewish citizens. Each portrait contains a section titled »What happened next«, which describes how the rescuers (and the rescued) fared at the end of the German occupation. (Age: 13+) [KW]

158



Simova Klinčarova, Aleksandra (Simova Klincharova, Aleksandra) (text)
Dudeski, Hari (illus.)

Zabranetata soba

(The forbidden room)

Skopje: Čudna šuma (Chudna Shuma), 2023. – 60 p.
ISBN 978-608-5012-11-4

[Horror fiction](#) | [Gothic fiction](#) | [Short story](#)

MACEDONIAN

North Macedonia

An ancestral gallery with living portraits whose eyes follow the visitor, mirrors that look into the past, a forbidden room, mysterious encounters with people who are only alive at night, a secret diary, knocking sounds in the cellar – all of these can be found in the short story collection from the pen of Aleksandra Simova Klinčarova. All nine short stories are written from the perspective of a child or teenager, all are spiked with the usual elements to be found in scary stories of the horror genre. And it feels wonderful to be scared. The stories claim to stem from a long-forgotten era, having been deeply buried in memory. A particular attraction – and one typical for fantastic stories – is the fact that these tales remain unfinished. They give the readers only an inkling of an ending and ultimately leave the question open as to what is behind such uncanny and fantastic phenomena. (Age: 10+) [KW]

159



Aalbu, Ragnar (text/illus.)

Kalde klover

(Cold hooves)

Oslo: Gyldendal, 2023. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-82-05-58950-6

Reindeer | Longing | Flying | Beach life | Picture book

NORWEGIAN

Norway

■ The reindeer is fed up with ice and snow. Whenever the birds fly south for the winter, it longs to go with them. Yet unfortunately, reindeer can't fly. Or can they? What about Rudolf, Santa's reindeer? He flies through the air with the sleigh, doesn't he?! Reindeer is convinced – there must be a trick. So, off he goes to the owl, flying instructor extraordinaire. Not only does she have encouraging wisdom up her sleeve: »Det er lett å fly, i hvert fall når man kan det.« (Flying is easy, at least if you know how to do it), she also practises with the reindeer. At first, it doesn't really work, but then the owl remembers that there is a trick after all – and lo and behold: the reindeer can fly! What is this trick? Good question. Although the owl happily reveals her secret, it remains invisible to the readers: Her stream of words disappears behind a tree trunk. Ragnar Aalbu plays with the book as an object in intricate and surprising ways, lending a wonderful twist to the story. (Age: 4+) [IG]

160



Heivoll, Gaute (text)

Torseter, Øyvind (illus.)

Til slutt blir alle hester. Dikt for barn

(In the end, they all turn into horses. Poems for children)

Bergen: Vigmostad & Bjørke, 2023. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-82-419-6085-7

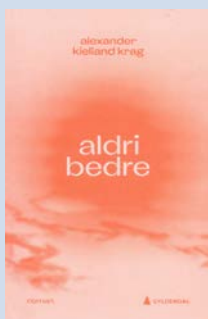
Childhood | Poetry | Picture book

NORWEGIAN

Norway

■ »In the end, they all turn into horses.« This sentence – which was uttered suddenly and with an absoluteness typical for children by Gaute Heivoll's then four-year-old daughter Maria – was the inspiration for this book. In each poem, a Maria-sentence is now the focal point: for example, Maria wonders why the wind can't speak, but is sure that the blackbird is singing a song about her; and she also knows: You can't jump from the peak of a cloud. Gaute Heivoll creates poetic, funny, thought-provoking miniatures based on Maria's unaffected, childish perception, her observations and interpretations of the world. The poems are concrete and commonplace, yet at the same time, they open up a wide range of associations that makes readers smile and marvel. Øyvind Torseter, who illustrated the poems, portrays Maria as a curious, bright girl with pigtails, who is completely herself and happily conquers the world. (Age: 4+) [IG]

161



Krag, Alexander Kielland (text)

Aldri bedre

(Never better)

Oslo: Gyldendal, [2024]. – 203 p.

ISBN 978-82-05-59394-7

Suicide | Loss | Guilt | Grief

NORWEGIAN

Norway

■ Grief. Bewilderment. Guilt. Anger. Powerlessness. These are the feelings of Jakob's best friend Lucas and Jakob's ex-girlfriend Emma after he takes his own life. He was seventeen. Lucas and Emma ask themselves a lot of questions: Why did he do it? Shouldn't they have realised that something was wrong? And what if they forget Jacob? Again and again, their thoughts turn to the hours, days, weeks, and months before the suicide. Lucas and Emma are left behind, somehow continuing to live in the »after« and often losing themselves in the »before«. Jacob's death causes a rupture in their lives. Since his debut »Dette blir mellom oss« (This stays between us, 2020), Alexander Kielland Krag has been one of the most promising voices in Norwegian young adult fiction. With precision and intimacy, yet without being ingratiating, he tackles crises that are often quite apparent. The German edition of »Litt redd, bare«, the author's second novel, has been nominated for the 2024 German Youth Literature Prize. (Age: 14+) [IG]

162



Parr, Maria (text)

Irgens, Åshild (illus.)

Oskar og eg. Alle plassane vi er

(Oskar and I. All the places where we are)

Oslo: Samlaget, 2023. – 196 p.

ISBN 978-82-340-1145-0

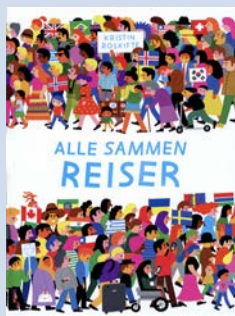
Family | Siblings | Everyday life | Rural life

NORWEGIAN

Norway

■ There is a big red house on the hillside, its windows glowing cosily in the dark. Eight-year-old Ida lives there, and her little brother Oskar, who is five. Ida's lively way of talking about everything that the siblings experience makes readers want to get to know them both straight away. Maria Parr has invented two very imaginative kids who grow up, snug and secure, in a lovable, slightly chaotic family with lots of freedom to discover the world. This trust in children's competence and autonomy is a hallmark of Maria Parr's books. With lightness and charm, she describes both happy and sad moments; moreover, she is a keen observer, with a knack for situation comedy and an ability to highlight the things that make everyday life special. With its short, episodic chapters, the novel perfectly lends itself to being read aloud or to reading it yourself. (Age: 6+) [IG]

163



Roskifte, Kristin (text/illus.)

Alle sammen reiser*(Everybody travels)*

Kolbotn: Magikon Forlag, 2023. – 68 p.

ISBN 978-82-92863-91-6

Travelling | Counting | Diversity | Wimmelbook

NORWEGIAN
Norway

After »Alle sammen teller« (2018), which has been translated into numerous languages, Kristin Roskifte now has created another count-puzzle-philosophise-phantasise wimmelbook: »Alle sammen reiser«. Never change a winning concept: In terms of aesthetics and principle, this book is similar to No. 1. The colours are bright, the shapes are graphical, and readers will meet characters they already know, such as Thomas, the boy with the red jumper and blue trousers. Each picture features more people, some of whom are described in short sentences; however, it is not always immediately clear, who the text is about. Readers have to think, combine, flick back and forth (and occasionally even turn to the answer-section) to find out who the statement might apply to. Sometimes there is more than one possible answer. The book is a true surprise package that readers will enjoy again and again without getting bored, as it contains a cornucopia of stories. If you're allowed to take only one book with you to a desert island, this should be it! (Age: 4+) [IG]

164



Torseter, Øyvind (text/illus.)

Dronefangeren*(The drone catcher)*

Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2023. – [148] p.

ISBN 978-82-02-78602-1

Rat | Invasion | Dictatorship | Revolt | Hero | Graphic novel

NORWEGIAN
Norway

Giant rats take over the city; they're put on boats and are commanded by a sinister figure with a skeletal head and a flute between his lips. In the fifth graphic novel in which the protagonist Muleguttan becomes an involuntary hero, Øyvind Torseter again draws on familiar narrative themes and patterns. This time it's the tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Yet Torseter wouldn't be Torseter, if he didn't add his own idiosyncratic touch to the whole thing. Quirky ideas lend old material a new feel, keep it alive, transport it into the present, and ironise it at the same time. In »Dronefangeren«, the author exaggerates the story to the point where it almost becomes an apocalyptic splatter movie, but then escapes by having Muleguttan stumble into the adventures as a slightly clueless hero, as he always does. Øyvind Torseter draws with precision using a fine black ink pen. He uses colours sparingly and deliberately, and skilfully varies panels, long shots, details and close-ups. (Age: 10+) [IG]

165



Akbarpūr, Aḥmad (Akbarpour, Ahmad) (text)
 Šādiqiyān, Nūšīn (Sadeghian, Noushin) (illus.)

Duhtar-i Dāl

(Dokhtare Daal)

(The Roc Girl)

Tihrān: Tūṭī (Touti Books), 1402 h. sh. [= 2023]. – [40] p.

(Series: Qiṣṣahāy-i Aqwām-i Irān)

ISBN 978-622-7564-85-3

[Love](#) | [Resilience](#) | [Truth](#) | [Folk tale](#)

PERSIAN (FARSI)

Iran

A couple's longing to have a child is fulfilled by a wise man, a Hakim, through the gift of a bird's egg. But when his doubts lead the husband to discard the egg, a giant bird from Persian mythology, a roc, swoops in and under its care a beautiful girl is hatched. Desperate to marry her, a prince enlists the help of a witch, but she instead schemes to make the prince marry her own daughter. The melody of a shepherd's reed pipe carries the cries of the stranded and helpless roc girl to the prince. Left stranded and helpless, the roc girl's crying is conveyed to the prince through the melody of a shepherd's reed pipe. Truth triumphs over deceit and malignant behaviour in this story of magic, nature, resilience, love, destiny, and wisdom. This folk tale, retold by Ahmad Akbarpour, one of the most famous Iranian children's writers, is accompanied by the unique illustrations of the talented illustrator Noushin Sadeghian. The book has received numerous awards, including presentation at the 2022 Bologna Children's Book Fair's Illustration Exhibition, the Sharjah Book Authority exhibition, and the 2023 Chen Bochui Illustration Exhibition. (Age 7+) [RM]

166



Fūlādwānd, Marġān (Fouladvand, Marjan) (text)

Haft-i Ġāwīdān. Bārān-i Ḥākistar

(Haft-e Djavidan. Barane Khakestar)

(The Everlasting Seven. Ash Rain)

Tihrān: Hūpā (Hupa), 2023 (= 1401 h. sh.). – 228 p.

ISBN 978-622-204-489-3

[Nowruz](#) | [Seven Labours \(Haft Khwan\)](#) | [Spring](#) | [Peace](#) | [Myth](#)

PERSIAN (FARSI)

Iran

The ancient Iranian festival Nowruz has gone through many changes over time. »Haft-e Djavidan« is a novel built around the story of its origins. Under a heavy curse, Iran is shrouded in twilight as ash falls from the sky and snakes emerge from the earth. People blame King Jamshid, who, in turn, blames a snake man and traitors. To lift the curse, he undertakes seven trials (Haft Khwan) and eventually realizes that the snake man symbolizes his own arrogance and ambition. Thus, the curse is lifted, spring arrives, and Nowruz can be celebrated. Mardian Fouladvand's novel shows that resolving social crises – i.e., lifting curses – depends not only on heroes but on everyone. Narrated by Jamshid and his wife Paricheher, the story is inspired by mythological tales but »Haft-e Djavidan« is a modern re-telling of ancient themes that reflect on the moral considerations of today's world. Peace and pacifism, the agency of women and children, and animal rights are among its most important themes. (Age: 14+) [RM]

167



Hasan-zāda, Farhād (Hasan-zadeh, Farhad) (text)
Qurbānī, Hālah (Ghorbani, Haleh) (illus.)

Na miṭl-i har rūz

(Na mesle Har-rouz)

(Not like every day)

Tihrān: Kitāb-i Ā (Cheshmeh), [2023]

(= 1401 h. sh.). – [52] p.

ISBN 978-622-7776-70-6

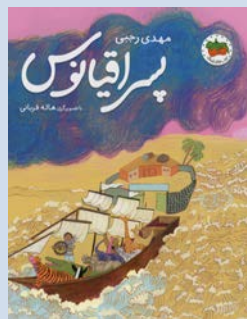
Tehran | City life | Architecture

PERSIAN (FARSI)

Iran

The urban landscape of Tehran is depicted like a character in »Na mesle Har-rouz«. Extensive details of its alleys, streets, bridges and neighborhoods are an important element of the plot. One day, a child who usually goes to kindergarten with his mother is accompanied by his father because his mother is ill. Having already seen part of the city with his mother, he discovers new routes with his father, which also take them home. Descriptive imagery makes up a large part of the narrative, depicting Tehran's neighborhoods – both the new, modern parts and the older, more traditional places – in a unique way. By observing the architectural details of particular places, the reader is able to see Tehran from the point of view of its inhabitants, as part of their identity and daily experience. The illustrations were awarded the 2022 Moscow Picture Book Prize and the 2023 Silver Statue of the Flying Turtle. (Age: 5+) [RM]

168



Rağabī, Mihdī (Rajabi, Mehdi) (text)
Qurbānī, Hālah (Ghorbani, Haleh) (illus.)

Pisar-i uqiyānūs

(Pesare oqiyyanous)

(The ocean's son)

Tihrān: Ufuq, Kitāb-hay-i Fandoq (Ofoq, Ketab-haye

Fandoq), [2023] (= 1402 h. sh.). – [36] p.

ISBN 978-622-332-023-1

Iran | Environmental destruction | Climate change | Flood | Noah's Ark | Picture book

PERSIAN (FARSI)

Iran

Noah isn't just a biblical figure; here Noah is a boy from southern Iran whose village has been flooded. His father's wheat field, their house, the school and roads are all submerged, leaving only small patches of earth above water. In his imagination, these patches become islands, and he sails his toy Ark between them. His family, like many others in southern Iran, relies on farming and raising buffaloes. When their buffalo finally gives birth to a calf that survives, Noah's worries are put to rest, and he sails for »the mainland«. Mehdi Rajabi's concise language, symbols, and signs remind the reader that man's abuse of nature – leading to environmental crises – are affecting the lives and livelihoods of future generations. Hale Ghorbani's paintings artistically render the boy's fantasies while also including details of the climatic conditions of the Khuzestan province. The use of a specific locality and the portrayal of its geographical features in the pictures contribute to the authenticity of the story. (Age: 7+) [RM]

169



Šuġā'ī, Zahrā (Shojaie, Zahra) (text/illus.)

Šuġā'ī, Ḥānīyah (Shojaie, Haniyah) (text/illus.)

Ġahān bi safar mīrawad

(Djahan be safar miravad)

(*Djahan's journey*)

Tihrān: Idāmah, [2023] (=1402 h. sh.). – [40] p.

ISBN 978-622-92617-3-6

Journey | Home | Environment | Recycling

PERSIAN (FARSI)

Iran

Djahan is bored and unhappy with his house and decides to find a new home for himself. During his quest, he sees things that he never noticed before. At the end of his journey, Djahan realizes that the home of each creature is suited to its own needs and that he actually needs a friend, not a new home. »Djahan be safar miravad« is a book about travels, friendship and finding new solutions to old problems. These may already exist, so it only requires looking at things in a different way. The objects in the book's pictures are made from recycled materials and papier-mâché, as a reminder that old things can be seen in new ways, and lovely objects can be created from old materials. In this way, the book takes a fresh approach to environmental concerns. It received the illustration medal of the Sharjah International Children's Book Festival for its appealing and innovative visual style. (Age: 6+) [RM]

170



Combrzyńska-Nogala, Dorota (text)

Odysejki

(*Little Odessas*)

Łódź: Literatura, 2023. – 108 p. + [4] p.

ISBN 978-83-8208-204-3

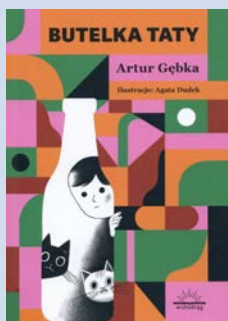
Poland | World War II (1939-1945) | Holocaust | Escape | Helpfulness | Courage

POLISH

Poland

Ryfka Młotek is an all-around talent. She is sharp, self-assured, has a talent for languages and easily gains people's confidence. Ryfka is growing up as a Jew in Warsaw. When the war breaks out, she flees the ghetto with the cook Petronela and soon crosses paths with the Roma Zora. Their escape turns more and more into a fantastical undertaking, making it unclear for the reader exactly what is happening and whether the three will survive. In the third section, which takes place in present-day Poland, the traumatic escape story is linked to that of refugees who are crossing the Belarusian border into Poland. The now grown-up elderly Zora assists them and shelters them. »Odysejki« is a multi-layered, traumatic, calm and succinctly told story about the fates of three strong female characters. The circuitous quest alluded to in the title represents the fate of all those who are fleeing from wars and losing their lives both literally and figuratively. (Age: 12+) [KW]

171



Gębka, Artur (text)
Dudek, Agata (illus.)

Butelka taty

(Papa's bottle)

Piaseczno: Wydawnictwo Widnokrąg,
2023. – 61 p. + [3] p.
ISBN 978-83-965236-9-3

Father | Alcoholism | Family conflict

POLISH
■ Poland

Artur Gębka's book for children depicts in a deft and skilful manner how a father drifts into a dependency on alcohol without ever giving the addiction a name. The book describes how »it« (the bottle of alcohol) appears one day next to his armchair in the family's living room and gradually takes up more and more space – in the true sense of the word. In Agata Dudek's illustrations bottle-green elements and surfaces expand page after page to occupy ever larger areas. Not only the family apartment, but even the story's text is ultimately completely underlaid with a toxic green. The story also relates how the father's character begins to change, how he engages in strange dances with the bottle, and spends more and more time with »it« than with the family. And it tells of the sense of helplessness that the wife and son, Wojtek, feel. However, the novel also underlines that it is possible to overcome addiction, and suggests where one can find help. In Poland »Butelka taty« has received numerous awards. (Age: 6+) [KW]

172



Kaźmierak, Anna (text/illus.)

Gdzie ty jesteś, koguciku?

(Where are you, little rooster?)

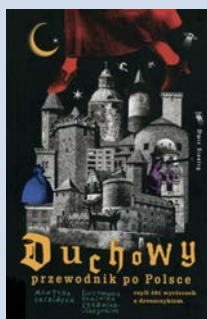
Warszawa: Wytwórnia, 2023. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-83-67032-18-6

Poland | Folklore | Folk art | Rooster | Picture book | Search-and-find picture

POLISH
■ Poland

The title question »Where are you, little rooster?« is repeated on every double-page spread of this picture book. Each of the pages is brimming with colours, folkloric elements such as patterns, blossoms or costumes, and other objects, in the midst of which the rooster is hiding: as a weathervane, a toy, or fabric appliqué. The illustrations are accompanied by catchy four-liners about the rooster's whereabouts that even create a rhythm for turning the page. This work is bursting with joy, colour and childlike fantasy! For her book Anna Kaźmierak travelled throughout Poland to locate the rooster images that are found in various folkloric traditions and brought them together in this brightly coloured and richly detailed search-and-find picture book. At the conclusion of the landscape-shaped book there is a map showing the places in Poland where the original rooster images can be found, for example in Wilża, the city of clay figures, or in Sanniki, the city of papercutting. (Age: 3+) [KW]

173



Skibińska, Martyna (text)
Czerniak-Chojnacka, Dominika (illus.)
Duchowy przewodnik po Polsce.
Czyli 101 wycieczek z dreszczykiem
(*A spiritual guide to Poland. Or 101 tours with a thrill*)
Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Dwie Siostry, 2024. – 364 p.
ISBN: 978-83-8150-382-2

Poland | Spirits | Supernatural | Non-fiction

POLISH
Poland

With this travel guide of a special kind one can set off for the mysterious and mystical places in Poland – fortresses, ruins, museums, churches, synagogues, but also primeval forests and alleged UFO landing sites – to learn about the secrets and supernatural features of these locations. Some of the entries are rather gruesome and even brutal. Numerous spirits, ghosts, and dead souls make an appearance, but their scariness is somewhat mitigated by Martyna Skibińska's witty commentaries. The author reveals the source of the horror stories and explains that people (especially women) were often wrongly branded as witches or evil spirits. The book also takes the reader to natural locations which are seen as spiritual places of the positive kind and refers to the remembrance of the dead as an important aspect of life. The interplay of text and pictures is a real delight. Dominika Czerniak-Chojnacka's magnificent illustrations inhabit the text wonderfully and are perfectly matched to the lovely typography and layout of the book. (Age: 12+) [KW]

174



Fragata, Claudio / Figueiredo, Janaina de (text)
Mafra, Rodrigo (illus.)
Sebastião
Belo Horizonte: Aletria, 2023. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-85-9526-087-0

Flood | Social disparity | Picture book

PORTUGUESE
Brazil

First came the rain and then the flooding, causing the house and the densely urbanized section of the city to wash down the hillside. Retrospectively, a child tells of the catastrophe that has left the family homeless. The grandfather promises that everything will be rebuilt, keeping their hopes alive. It is no coincidence that the tragedy strikes society's weakest members, those living on the wrong side of the highway that divides the city – and the world – into rich and poor. »Sebastião« is an unequivocal depiction of social divisions, showing the people whose forbears lived as fishermen by and from the ocean and who now work as servants in apartment complexes and luxury hotels. Using the example of São Sebastião, a city in the state of São Paulo, the book describes how people in Brazil with indigenous and African roots are marginalized. The colours and ornamental forms of the expressive illustrations are inspired by their cultures and traditions. (Age: 8+) [JW]

175



Franco, Blandina (text)
Lollo, José Carlos (illus.)

Os pombos

(The pigeons)

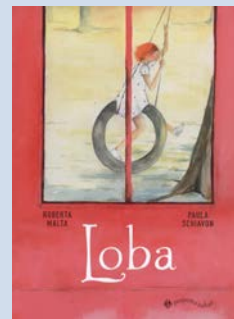
São Paulo: Companhia das Letrinhas, [2023]. – [56] p.
ISBN 978-65-81776-75-6

Migration | Refugee | Prejudice | Exclusion |
Humanity | Picture book

Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

Nobody looks at them. Nobody touches them. People do not speak with them, but they speak with dogs. Some people even pretend they do not exist. They are the pigeons that came to the city at some point. Now people are demanding that they disappear because, they say, pigeons are dirty and dangerous and carriers of diseases. The picture book »Os pombos« by Blandina Franco and José Carlos Lollo is a simple but moving portrayal of the fate of migrants and refugees who are unwelcome in so many parts of the world. In just a few sentences, the themes of prejudice, exclusion, and stigmatisation become clear, as do the inhumane attitudes and behaviour towards others, to the point of denying their humanity. The black ink and watercolour illustrations make it easy to see and understand the pigeons' experiences and feelings. Ignored by the majority of people, they long to be seen for what they are: people like us. (Age: 6+) [JW]

176



Malta, Roberta (text)
Schiavon, Paula (illus.)

Loba

(She-wolf)

Rio de Janeiro: Editora Pequena Zahar, [2023]. – [64] p.
ISBN 978-65-88899-54-0

Freedom | Longing | Trust | Wolf |
Little Red Riding Hood | Adaptation | Picture book

Brazil ■ PORTUGUESE

Although there are innumerable retellings and adaptations of the Little Red Riding Hood tale, authors and illustrators continue to find new approaches to this timeless material. In »Loba« a mother asks her daughter to go into the forest to pick flowers for the grandmother. Unlike the forest of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, this one is not a place of danger, but offers freedom, boundless space, and the possibility to make new discoveries – from the treetops one can enjoy distant horizons. It is a counterpoint to the house, which »sometimes seems so small«. The she-wolf that the girl encounters there does not scare her but becomes instead her soulmate. The two are united in trust and intimacy. The brief text consists of only eight sentences and Roberta Malta needs no more to capture the essence of the story in words. The main role is played by Paula Schiavon's bright, airy and serene watercolour illustrations, which capture very well the feelings and experiences of happiness, longing and freedom. (Age: 6+) [JW]

177



Domingos, Ana Rita (adapt.)

Saiónára, Cinara (illus.)

Quem está?

(Who is there?)

[Porto]: UPA Editora, 2023. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-989-53618-5-4

Animals | Children's rhyme | Picture book

Portugal PORTUGUESE

■ The independent publisher UPA Editora has specialised in picture books for the youngest readers in its catalogue, which currently contains just a few titles. These are characterized by simplicity and original illustrations. In »Quem está?« each double-page spread features a rhyming couplet about an animal and the question »Who is there?« The answer is hidden under a flap that must be lifted to reveal the correct animal – a cat on a roof, a donkey in a vegetable patch or a peacock at the garden gate. The simple, repetitive text form is catchy and invites children (and adults) to follow suit and make up rhymes about other animals and places. What sets this book apart from many others for this age group are the illustrations and the design. The paintings, using a mixed technique of ink and gouache, are delicate, witty and playful. The typography is inventive, and the thick matte paper is pleasantly tactile. Although unassuming at first glance, this is a little gem of a book. (Age: 2+) [JW]

178



Estrela, Joana (text/illus.)

Gato comum

(Common cat)

Carcavelos: Planeta Tangerina, 2024. – [96] p.

(Series: Dois Passos e um Salto)

ISBN 978-989-9061-20-0

Cat | Death | Euthanasia | Ethics | Graphic novel

Portugal PORTUGUESE

■ Even if cats supposedly have more than one life, there comes a time when they, too, have to go. And now it is that time for the tired and sick 17-year-old tomcat Manel. The family – father, mother and the likewise 17-year-old daughter who tells this story – with whom Manel has spent his entire life – now ask themselves what they should do for the moribund animal. With heavy hearts they decide to have him put to sleep. In this graphic novel, Joana Estrela depicts Manel's last days in a reserved and gentle tone, without many words, as a time of letting go, farewells, pain, grief, and taking responsibility. The simple illustrations suit this quiet, serene text perfectly. With just a few fine black lines on a yellow background and a few washes, they are limited to the three people and the animal while the setting is merely hinted at by a few details. The reductive style of the text and illustrations is impressive because it focuses the reader's attention on the essence of the story. (Age: 12+) [JW]

179



Sobral, Catarina (text/illus.)
 Ribeiro, Cláudia (scientific guidance)
Fantasmas, bananas e avestruzes. Lei
(Ghosts, bananas and ostriches. Law)
 Lisboa: Assembleia da República, 2023. – 44 p.
 (Series: Missão democracia; 4)
 ISBN 978-972-556-829-3

Politics | Democracy | Law | Constitution |
 Picture book | Non-fiction

Portugal ■ PORTUGUESE

The strange title of this book would not necessarily suggest that it is about politics. In fact, it is part of a twelve-volume series entitled »Missão Democracia« (Mission Democracy), published for children by the Portuguese parliament. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 1974 revolution – that turned Portugal into a parliamentary democracy – the books explore the foundations and structures of a constitutional democracy. In this volume, the well-known illustrator and writer Catarina Sobral explains what laws and a constitution are, and how they affect social life in a country. The short, trenchant texts address core questions – Who makes the laws? Who do they apply to? How are they changed? etc. – thereby making political and social processes understandable. Catarina Sobral's nimble, witty style is unmistakable in the humorous illustrations. This non-fiction picture book makes a seemingly dry topic both informative and entertaining. (Age: 8+) [JW]

180



Miková, Stanislava (retelling) / Šarközi, Matěj (text)
 Mašková, Zuzana (illus.) / Ryvolová, Karolína (transl.)
Vařená vejce – Tade jandre
(Hard-boiled eggs)
 [Praha]: KHER; Meander, [2024]. – [20] p.
 ISBN 978-80-87780-42-8 (KHER) /
 978-80-7558-258-4 (Meander)
 Text in Romani and Czech

Cleverness | Justice | Bilingual book | Fairy tale |
 Board book | Picture book

Czech Republic ■ ROMANI

At Easter, a Rom who works for a rich farmer travels around the region with other Roma in a music group. They play for the farmer, too, and the Rom requests ten hard-boiled eggs as thanks. The farmer gives him the eggs but demands instead that the Rom work off the debt. When the Rom does not appear to work the next day, the matter goes to court. After all, the ten eggs could have produced ten chickens, which in turn could have laid 100 eggs. The farmer was thus deprived of considerable wealth. Gendarmes are dispatched and find the Rom planting boiled peas so that they will grow into more peas. In this way, the absurdity of the farmer's claims becomes evident, and the Rom is acquitted. Stanislava Miková's retelling of an old fairy tale is illustrated with vibrant linocuts by Zuzana Mašková. The book is an important cooperation project of the publishing houses KHER and Meander, and an excellent example for the intensified production of bilingual children's books (Romani/Czech) in the Czech Republic. (Age: 3+) [KW]

181



Hadârcă, Ionela (text)
Dobrescu, Irina (illus.)

Anunțuri hazlii pentru adulți și copii

(Funny ads for adults and children)

Chișinău: Cartier, 2023. – 61 p.

(Series: Cartier codobelc)

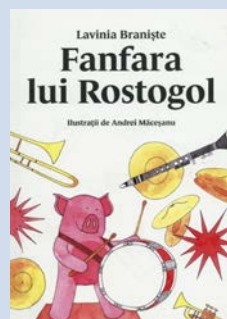
ISBN 978-9975-86-680-4

Nonsense literature | Poetry

Moldova ROMANIAN

■ A tube of toothpaste is waiting for her date with a toothbrush. The clothesline places a wanted ad to find that pair of trousers that had told her – when it once hung on her line – such lovely stories. A speck of dust is having an existential crisis: where is its place in the world, if everyone always wants to get rid of it? The broom no longer wants to be permanently dragged through the dirt – it would much rather fly. The witch, for her part, now offers magic tricks per Zoom. All these creatures, objects, thoughts and ideas have been brought together by Ionela Hadârcă to create a marvellously lyrical panopticon of absurdities. Many of the poems in this volume are written in the style of wanted ads, made all the more entertaining by their appealing touch. Irina Dobrescu has designed multilayered scenarios to accompany them, with at least as much absurdity included as in the texts themselves. With a good portion of surrealism, the illustrations make this a magnificent book for both reading and perusing. (Age: 6+) [KW]

182



Branîște, Lavinia (text)
Măceșanu, Andrei (illus.)

Fanfara lui Rostogol

(Rostogol's brass band)

[București]: Vlad și Cartea cu Genius, [2023]. – 108 p.

(Series: Rostogol; 5)

ISBN 978-630-321-079-7

Community | Honesty | Anthropomorphism

Romania ROMANIAN

■ The introverted little hedgehog Păducel is given a valuable bucium – a traditional Romanian wind instrument – by his wealthy aunt. Păducel is not particularly happy about it. It is much too big for him and in general rather burdensome. But his aunt is the patron of the animals' newly founded music school, where Păducel and other animals in the brass band are rehearsing for the upcoming »Scarecrow Holiday«. Piglet Rostogol, the titular main character in Lavinia Branîște's successful children's book series, is all fired up about it and already planning to sell tickets to several shows. That the band is not especially musical, that there is a ruckus over the missing bucium, and that it is less the concert than the characters and the interactions of piglet, fox, hedgehog and raven who are the highlight of the story, is evident in the short, cleverly interlaced narration of the story, which is spiced with a slight pinch of irony. (Age: 6+) [KW]

183



Russia ■ RUSSIAN

Novochat'ko, Ksenija (Novokhatko, Kseniya) (text)
 Rojzman, Evgenija (Rozzman, Yevgeniya) / Terechova,
 Ol'ga (Terekhova, Olga), Plavinskaja, Polja (Plavinskaya,
 Polya) (illus.)
Andrej Sacharov, čelovek, kotoryj ne bojal'sja
 (Andrey Sakharov, chelovek, kotory ne boyalsya)
 (Andrei Sakharov, who was unafraid)
 Moskva: Samokat, [2022]. – 53 p.
 ISBN 978-5-00167-313-2

Sakharov, Andrei (1921-1989) | Biography | Non-fiction

■ This biography about Andrei Sakharov for young readers is much more than a biography. It gives fascinating insights into the life of the Russian physicist who worked in the Soviet atomic weapons programme and on the development of the hydrogen bomb. In light of the war that Russia is currently conducting against its neighbour, the sections on Sakharov's later years as a dissident and his work as a civil rights activist are of particular significance. The demonstration posters on the cover that read »For your freedom and ours« and »Freedom, Progress, Human Rights« are more topical than ever. The author and the illustrators tell the story of Sakharov's life in great detail from the first-person perspective with fictitious, handwritten notebook entries and memorandums, embedding them – with distinctive typography – in the historical context of the 20th century. In this way the book is an impressive and dramatic testimonial to the Soviet era, in which the fault lines of domestic and foreign policy are clearly evident. (Age: 12+) [KW]

184



Russia ■ RUSSIAN

Zen'kova, Anna (Zenkova, Anna) (text)
 Prankevič, Vol'ha (Prankevich, Volha) (illus.)
Te, kogo ne bylo ...
 (Those who were not there ...)
 Moskva: KompasGid Izdatel'skij Dom, 2023. – 201 p.
 ISBN 978-5-00083-842-6

Experiment | Community | Outsider |
 Coming to terms with the past

■ There is a place where people are brought together to live in a community, although it is unclear who brought them together or why. The special aspect of this »experimental arrangement« is that these »inmates« are people who have been changed by a stroke of fate or an event such as a major loss. This leads to very different kinds of pairs (e.g., child/old man), who chafe at one another but also learn to support each other. The young adult novels of the Belarusian writer Anna Zenkova often deal with traumatic experiences and make it clear that for many people life is not a piece of cake. Again, in this book she precisely details the complex, depth-psychological processes that often give rise to the protagonists' conflicting and unpleasant behaviours. She employs a variety of perspectives and narrative voices to give the events a mosaic-like structure. (Age: 14+) [KW]

185



Jovanović, Aleksandra (text)

Lakićević, Jakša (illus.)

Petra je stvarno otišla

(Petra really went away)

Beograd: Kreativni centar, 2023. – 167 p.

ISBN 978-86-529-1154-7

Friendship | Coming of age | First love

Serbia SERBIAN

■ Milica and Petra are BBF, but their friendship is put to the test when Petra and her family move away. Through text messages and phone calls they keep in touch, sharing everything that is happening in their families, at school, or with boys. The narrative perspective switches back and forth between the two girls. Aleksandra Jovanović describes the mental and emotional confusion of the coming-of-age years in empathetic detail, even though the readers follow only two weeks in the lives of the protagonists, during which very little seems to have happened. Milica and Petra are working, however, intensively on separating themselves from their parents. To do so, they give each other strength and support to keep at it. It is especially fascinating to observe how the spatial distance between them almost imperceptibly and gradually changes their friendship, at times even calling it into question. (Age: 12+) [KW]

186



Tićmi, Stefan (text)

Klječanin, Zorana (illus.)

Guguto Memeto. Bajkolika priča u Selu na rubu razuma, po kojoj je snimljen istoimeni film

(Guguto Memeto. A fairytale-like story about a village on the brink of reason, upon which a film is based)

Beograd: Imprimatur, 2023. – 117 p.

ISBN 978-86-6188-009-4

Life | Death | Clairvoyance

Serbia SERBIAN

■ In »Village on the Brink« highly unusual things happen. The clairvoyant Slutka can foresee who will be the next to die. She writes the name on a slip of paper and sends it to the reclusive Moća, to put the name on a cross. One day, he reads his own name on the slip. What does a person do when his time has run out? The certainty that he will soon die gives Moća the freedom to do the things that he would not have done otherwise. And he takes stock of his life and his past. Only later does Moća learn that the village children had played a trick on him by writing his name on the slip. Stefan Tićmi has created a mystical story about living with death. The text is enigmatic and experimental. Again and again, the text is interspersed with (faintly printed) »mumbled« expressions, deletions, inserted sub-headings and – as in ancient dramas – a chorus of children who comment the events. The style of storytelling is at once spooky, fascinating and entertaining. (Age: 14+) [KW]

187



Balážová, Soňa (adapt./script) / Marcin, Dávid (illus.)

Dozvedela som sa, ... že žiješ.

Adaptácia románu Olivera Rácz

»Dozvedela som sa že žiješ«

(I have found out ... that you are alive. Adaptation of the novel »I have found out that you are alive« by Oliver Rácz)

[Bratislava]: E.J. Publishing, 2023. – 103 p.

ISBN 978-80-99954-21-3

[Košice](#) | [World War II \(1939-1945\)](#) |

[Persecution of Jews](#) | [Rescue](#) | [Comic](#)

Slovakia ■ SLOVAK

This impressive, succinctly told and drawn comic is a prize-winning adaptation of a novel by Oliver Rácz. It is based on real events that took place in the then Hungarian, now Slovakian town of Košice. The hero of the story is the young soldier Tivadar Hernádi, who tries to save a Jewish family from the deportations which began in Košice in 1944. He is able to at least save Judit by taking her to Budapest and hiding her there. With their marriage at the end of the war, there is one small »happy ending«. However, Judit's parents did not survive. The comic builds a bridge into the present: While reading the original novel, the great-grandchild of Tivadar is surprised to realize that it deals with his own great-grandfather. Proudly he spreads the news and wants to create a memorial. To his shock, he discovers that some of his own supposed friends have doubts about the facts of the Holocaust and express antisemitic sentiments. (Age: 11+) [KW]

188



Donau, Han (text/illus.)

Jazero

(The lake)

Bratislava: Artforum, 2023. – [30] p. + 1 foldout

ISBN 978-80-8150-390-0

[Lake](#) | [Cycle of life](#) | [Change](#) | [Leporello](#) |

[Picture book](#)

Slovakia ■ SLOVAK

Tall and narrow is the shape of this marvellous picture book, or perhaps better – art book project by Han Donau. »Jazero« features two narrative and presentation layers. Like a classic book, the Slovakian artist first depicts with minimalistic texts and graphic illustrations the history of an orange-coloured, egg-shaped lake as it grows, changes and vanishes. It has arisen from »mother lakes« and »grandmother lakes«, exposed to various (environmental) influences, above all from the effects of humans. Poetic, philosophical and anything but dry, »Jazero« invites the reader to reflect on the nature of life and coexistence. But that is not all. A further dimension is added through the large foldout which depicts the lake as orange-coloured rain that falls from the heavens, and is taken up by people, animals and the earth to be »reborn«. »Jazero« is not only a book to be read, but a work of art to be plunged into again and again. (Age: 8+) [KW]

189



Duša, Ana (text)
Bartolj, Marta (illus.)
Kot hiša velika žaba
(A frog as large as a house)
Hlebce: Zala 2023. – [38] p.
(Series: Zbirka Mušnica)
ISBN 978-961-7178-17-3

Frog | Rumour | Exaggeration | Picture book

Slovenia ■ SLOVENIAN

Little animal, big effect! With lots of humour, Ana Duša and Marta Bartolj's picture book shows the scale a rumour can achieve. A frog decides to go to the city. News of his impending arrival reaches the city's residents in a variety of forms. A huge monster frog is approaching and is about to devour everyone! People devise a plan and prepare a feast for the expected giant frog so that it eats the banquet and not them. Tensely everyone has their eyes on the city gate, and no one notices that the frog has already hopped past the waiting crowds and disappeared again. Because the inhabitants believe they have escaped a dreadful visitor, they raise a huge monument to honour the giant frog. In her typically reductionist colour scheme with just a few basic tones and coloured highlights, Marta Bartolj sets the stage for her likeable and nimble green protagonist, and mischievously points out the absurdity of certain human practices. (Age: 3+) [KW]

190



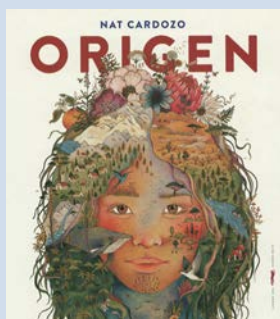
Filipič, Neli K. (text)
Zavadlav, Ana (illus.)
Kdo je kriv, da je zima bela in druge zgodbe
(Who is to blame for winter being white, and other stories)
Maribor: Založba Pivec, 2022. – 55 p.
ISBN 978-961-7164-31-2

Everyday life | Perception | Short story

Slovenia ■ SLOVENIAN

Neli K. Filipič is an attentive storyteller with a keen understanding of a child's view of the world, as her new book brilliantly demonstrates. Chosen for numerous awards in Slovenia, these short stories are told with wit and gentle irony to show in an inimitable way how reality works according to a child's logic. The heroine Eva is a spirited young girl who has her very own way of looking at the world. She compares mathematical word problems with reality and then corrects the tasks as needed, such as when there are more coloured pencils in her pencil case than is stated in the problem. Or she patiently waits for the ocean to wake up so that they can play catch together. And when Eva's parents go to see the ballet »Swan Lake«, she becomes excited to visit the lake and the birds herself. Two other books by Neli K. Filipič in the style of »Who is to blame for...« have already been published and are just as much fun to read. (Age: 5+) [KW]

191



Cardozo, Nat (text/illus.)
Ferrada, María José (ed.)

Origen

(*Origin*)

Buenos Aires [et al.]: Libros del Zorro Rojo, [2023]. – 55 p.
ISBN 978-987-8998-10-7

Indigenous people | Origin | Nature | Non-fiction

Argentina ■ SPANISH

Books about ethnology and anthropology can be challenging because of the danger of exoticizing »the other« as something »foreign«. In »Origen« Nat Cardozo succeeds exemplarily in introducing the reader to 22 ethnic groups from different parts of the globe. By taking the narrative approach of the first-person plural, each ethnic group is able to introduce itself, as it were, rather than being »put on display«. In double-paged chapters about the more well-known peoples, such as the Cherokee or the Tuareg, and lesser-known, such as the Orang Rimba or the Bijagó, the texts do not consist primarily of the usual figures and facts, but rather focus on how closely these peoples – some of whose very existence and cultural integrity are now threatened – are connected to their natural surroundings and what this bond means to them. This is impressively shown in the examples of their languages, rituals or myths. For each chapter, a full-page colour portrait of a child underscores the indivisible unity between man and nature. (Age: 8+) [JW]

192



Tallón, José Sebastián (text)
Elías, Pablo I. (illus.)

Canción de las preguntas

(*Song of questions*)

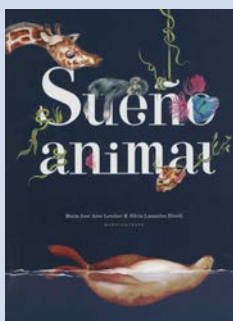
Buenos Aires: Pequeño Editor, [2024]. – [24] p.
(Series: Panzada de letras)
ISBN 978-987-791-102-2

Life | Existence | Question | Poetry | Picture book

Argentina ■ SPANISH

José Sebastián Tallón (1904-1954) is considered the first Argentine poet to write for children. This prose poem is taken from his book »Las torres de Nuremberg« (The towers of Nuremberg), first published in 1927. In 40 verses, the lyrical subject – a child or perhaps the author himself – poses 18 profound and surprising questions based on their own experience and observations of the immediate surroundings. They are about thinking, dreaming, remembering, and things that seem familiar and yet mysterious. »Why can't I remember the moment at which I fall asleep?« »At what altitude does the sky begin?« »Who knows when, where and how the 32 grandparents of their eight great-grandparents lived?« It is a stroke of luck that these timeless, sparkling gems of literature have been brought back to light in this picture book edition. Pablo I. Elías's cheerful colour illustrations depict anthropomorphic animals populating a small town that evokes life in rural Argentina when the poem was written nearly 100 years ago. (Age: 5+) [JW]

193



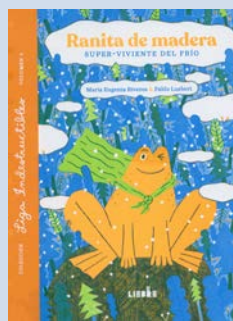
Lazzarino Binelli, Silvia (text)
 Arce Letelier, María José (idea/illus.)
 Villarreal Gil, Paula (text)
Sueño animal
(Animal sleep)
 [Santiago de Chile]: Muñeca de Trapo, 2023. – 49 p.
 (Series: Informativa)
 ISBN 978-956-9829-41-3

Animals | Sleep | Non-fiction

Chile ■ SPANISH

A charming way to show the fascinating diversity of the animal kingdom is to focus on one particular aspect of life that allows interesting comparisons to be made. In this non-fiction book, María José Arce Letelier and Silvia Lazzarino Bonelli have looked at the way animals sleep and grouped them into categories. Some species, such as bats and certain kinds of monkeys, sleep in groups, others sleep in water, and still others sleep in a nest – just like humans. Some sleep in an upright position, while others sleep throughout the entire winter. Short, easy-to-understand texts, specific features of each behaviour are described. It is informative and entertaining – just as a non-fiction book should be. The picturesque colour illustrations lend »Sueño animal« a particularly aesthetic charm. Mini fact sheets of the animals described, a glossary, and bibliographical references round out this attractive volume. (Age: 8+) [JW]

194



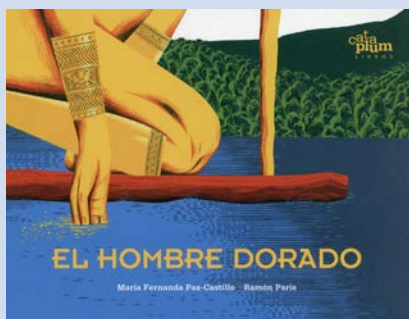
Riveros, María Eugenia (text)
 Luebert, Pablo (illus.)
Ranita de madera. Super-viviente del frío
(Wood frog. A super survivor of the cold)
 [Santiago de Chile]: Ediciones Liebre, 2023. – 37 p.
 (Series: Liga Indestructibles; 1)
 ISBN 978-956-6222-06-4

Frog | Wood frog | Non-fiction

Chile ■ SPANISH

Ediciones Liebre's new non-fiction series »Liga Indestructibles« (League of the Undestructibles) is dedicated to organisms with the amazing ability to survive in most extreme conditions. The first volume's protagonist is the little-known wood frog, which is related to humans – at least »more closely than to a potato chip« – although their last common ancestor lived thousands of millions of years ago. »Ranita de madera« is an example of the dynamic, innovative development that has taken place in the genre of children's non-fiction in recent years. Written by biologist María Eugenia Riveros, the vivid text enables the reader to understand how the superhero wood frog can hibernate in a deep freeze, and often makes entertaining allusions to the world and level of knowledge of the child reader. The text's lively tone has been congenially realized in Pablo Luebert's merry illustrations done in bright, at times fluorescent colours and brimming with witty ideas and humorous details. (Age: 6+) [JW]

195



Paz-Castillo, María Fernanda (text)
París, Ramón (illus.)

El hombre dorado

(The golden man)

Bogotá: Cataplum Libros, 2024. – [36] p.
ISBN 978-628-96020-5-0

Colombia | Muisca <people> | Indigenous people |
Initiation | Gold | Picture book

Colombia ■ SPANISH

■ Anyone who has seen the famous miniature raft made of filigree gold now held in the Museo del Oro in Bogotá knows of the rich culture and craftsmanship that were characteristic of the Muisca, an indigenous people, who once lived in the highlands of present-day Colombia – and of the role gold played there. In a successful combination of cultural and historical facts and fiction María Fernanda Paz-Castillo describes the ceremony in which, after the death of a cacique (ruler), the new young cacique is inaugurated. With his skin dusted in gold and accompanied by priests, he goes out on Lake Guatavita on a raft and dives into the lake to offer this gold to the gods. In just a few sentences Paz-Castillo creates a vivid picture of this ritual. The double-page illustrations by Ramón París are striking and opulent, focusing on the details of clothing and jewellery. They celebrate nature, light and the solemnity of the moment, which is imprinted in the memory of the reader through the predominantly yellow and gold tones. (Age: 7+) [JW]

196



Sanín, Carolina (text)
Guevara, Santiago (illus.)

El libro que imaginas

(The book you imagine)

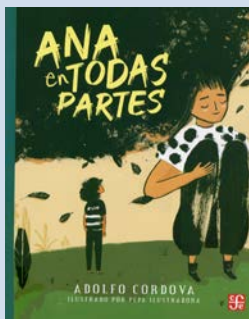
Bogotá: Babel Libros, 2024. – 111 p. + [18] p.
(Series: Frontera X)
ISBN 978-628-7609-20-4

Imagination | Philosophy | Non-fiction

Colombia ■ SPANISH

■ What does it mean to imagine something? In a clever, imaginative way Carolina Sanín delves deeply into this seemingly simple question by asking many further questions. These are meant to shake up the readers, get them thinking and make them look at supposed certainties from different sides. Does imagining something mean coming up with something new? Discovering or inventing something? Where does what we imagine come from and where does it go to? Does it exist outside of our imaginations? Am I all the things that I have imagined? How is it possible to imagine something without knowing what it is called? This highly stimulating book poses brilliant questions without supplying any answers. In their search for answers, readers must dive into fundamental philosophical problems about thought, imagination, perception, being, self, the other and the world. For all of them Santiago Guevara has created black-and-white drawings which perfectly correspond to the open-ended, associative style of the text. (Age: 13+) [JW]

197



Córdova, Adolfo (text)
 Pepa Ilustradora (Mesías, María José) (illus.)
Ana en todas partes
(Ana everywhere)
 México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica,
 2023. – 182 p.
 (Series: A la Orilla del Viento; 260)
 ISBN 978-607-16-8117-1

Falling in love | First love | School

MEXICO SPANISH

■ In Julián's heart there is room for only one: Ana. She has taken it over completely and turned his life upside down. He cannot stop thinking about her. Ana, Ana, ANA. The only problem is that Ana is completely unaware. It seems as if she doesn't even know him, and moreover she is a class ahead of him. Julián wallows in his reverie until one day the unthinkable occurs and Ana speaks to him in the schoolyard: What's up, Julián? Suddenly everything changes and a wonderful story begins. In this novel, narrated by the eleven-year-old protagonist himself, Adolfo Córdova depicts, in all its facets, the topsy-turvy emotional life of someone who is totally in love. Humorous, empathetic, in a rhythmic, fast-paced style that mirrors the changing moods very well, the novel creates a completely believable picture of a childhood on the brink of puberty. It draws a vivid picture not only of the things going on in Julián's head, heart and stomach, but also of details of daily life and the other characters in the story. (Age: 11+) [JW]

198



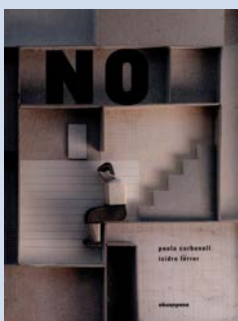
Dellutri, Ezequiel (text)
 Hernández, Israel (illus.)
Ikigai
(The meaning of life)
 Ciudad de México: El Naranjo, 2023. – 153 p.
 (Series: Colección Mar de cuentos. Para jóvenes lectores)
 ISBN 978-607-8807-37-6

Grandfather | Grandson | Intergenerational relationship | Family conflict | Old age | Dementia

MEXICO SPANISH

■ After the death of his beloved grandmother, Bruno is not interested in visiting his grandfather, who has become withdrawn and grumpy. But when it becomes evident that the old man is suffering from dementia, a relationship tentatively begins to develop between the two. The novel portrays how they continue to grow closer, full of nuance and with a sense for the moods and facets of a relationship that is never easy. It also depicts Bruno's day-to-day life, how he falls in love, and his search for a purpose in life («Ikigai»). The other characters – friends, family or the grandfather's caretaker – are also convincingly portrayed. In all these cases, throughout the story, the author deals with the question of how to live, how to get along with each other, how to show understanding for others even in difficult times, and how to end one thing and begin something new. Ezequiel Dellutri has succeeded in creating a realistic novel because family conflicts are not omitted, and the characters are shown with all their faults and scars. (Age: 13+) [JW]

199



Carbonell, Paula (text)
Ferrer, Isidro (illus.)

No

(No)

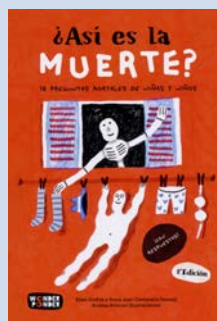
[Mataró]: A buen paso, [2024]. – [48] p.
ISBN 978-84-10016-16-3

War | Picture book

Spain ■ SPANISH

In a few short sentences Paula Carbonell tells the story of a sister and a brother. When they arrive at school one morning, one of their friends' seats remains empty. They are sent home, only to find that their home is no longer there. At first, they hide, but the game of hide-and-seek turns bitterly serious. The train that was supposed to take them to safety leaves without them. The story ends in uncertainty with the words »Putra guerra« (Fucking war). Isidro Ferrer uses photographs of two wooden figures to illustrate the open, elliptical text. The children find themselves on a nearly empty dollhouse-like stage, only part of which is visible, creating a depressingly cramped effect. A dark hole in the floor and a broken ladder symbolise danger and hopelessness. The missing arms of the figures add to the sense of helplessness. Last but not least, the pale colours – a little brown and beige, but otherwise only gray in all its shades – add to the oppressive atmosphere of this disturbing picture book. (Age: 8+) [JW]

200



Duthie, Ellen / Juan Cantavella, Anna (text)
Antinori, Andrea (illus.)

¿Así es la muerte? 38 preguntas mortales de niñas y niños

(Is this what death is like? 38 deadly questions girls and boys ask)

[Madrid]: Wonder Ponder, 2023. – 137 p.
ISBN 978-84-948709-8-9

Death | Non-fiction

Spain ■ SPANISH

This book features 38 questions about death, raised in workshops with children who have obviously explored the subject intensively. The questions are profound and sometimes surprising. Some touch on the metaphysical, while others are quite down-to-earth. Why do we have to die? Does death have a physical manifestation? What is the point of living if we have to die? What will happen to my console when I die? The individual nature of the questions is reflected in the form of the answers. The authors speak to the children in a personal way, as if they were writing them letters. The explanations are informative and factual, both empathetic and respectful, because each question is earnest and deserves a detailed answer. The illustrations in this wise and unusual book take up the questions in an associative and playful manner, but avoid simply replicating the answers. In this way, Andrea Antinori puts himself, with a twinkle in his eye, on the side of inquisitive children. (Age: 8+) [JW]

201



Jiménez, Patricia (text)
Piqueras Fisk, Daniel (illus.)
Carasucia en el mundo redondo
(*Dirty Face in the round world*)
[Madrid]: Narval, 2023. – 180 p.
ISBN 978-84-126857-1-8

Cat | Pet | Adventure | Animal welfare

Spain ■ SPANISH

Carasucia (Dirty Face), a young kitten, grows up in a cage in a pet store. Life behind the storefront window is characterized by curiosity about the »round world« on the other side and longing for the unknown place others call »Home«. At the same time, she lives in constant fear of being separated from her siblings. When Carasucia is finally adopted by a family, she proves to be alert, strong-willed and determined to take her destiny into her own paws. She undertakes adventures, battles a pet kidnapper and searches for her sorely missed siblings. After the final chapter of this entertaining children's novel, one thing is certain: to be continued! Telling the story in the first person, from the point of view of the cat, gives rise to many funny and surprising moments. Looking at the world from the other side, it also means holding up a mirror to humans. It forces the reader to think about how people often treat animals as objects to be used at will. (Age: 9+) [JW]

202



Marsol, Manuel (text/illus.)
Astro
[Logroño]: Fulgencio Pimentel, [2023]. – [56] p.
ISBN 978-84-19737-04-5

Outer space | Astronaut | Extra-terrestrial being | Friendship | Loss | Meaning of life | Picture book

Spain ■ SPANISH

A fantastic dinosaur-like creature tells the story of how the astronaut Astro landed all alone on its planet. The two of them become friends and together they explore the wonders of nature. But one day the narrator is carried away by a giant winged creature and disappears forever. Astro must learn to live alone with this void. Meanwhile his friend continues to observe him from afar. Manuel Masol has written a moving parable about loss, transience, and the meaning of life. The stunning mixed-media illustrations use oil, acrylics, and collaged magazine cut-outs to create an enigmatic world of beauty, mystery, vastness and depth, inhabited by mythical creatures. After some of the pictures were selected for the illustration exhibition at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2014, it took almost ten years for the book to be published. It was worth the wait. »Astro« is an exciting, inspiring book! (Age: 10+) [JW]

203



Pintadera, Fran (text)

Font, Anna (illus.)

La canción del pájaro toc

(The song of the toc bird)

Barcelona: Akiara books, 2024. – [52] p.

(Series: Akipoeta. La belleza de los detalles; 7)

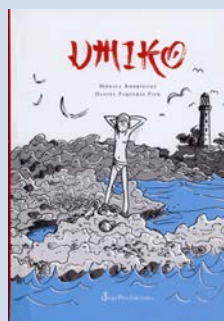
ISBN 978-84-18972-44-7

Bird | Freedom | Poetry | Picture book

Spain ■ SPANISH

What is a toc bird like? Well, that is easy enough: it is a bird that goes toc. Other than that, a toc bird is a bird like any other. It is a creature that loves life and will waste away if locked in a cage. But it is also a creature whose catchy song always finds its way through the bars of the cage, a way to freedom. Fran Pintadera has written twenty poems about the toc bird. They are the reflections and conversations that a lyrical subject has with himself and others about the existential question of a free, self-determined life, whether as a bird or as a human being. The prose poems are reserved and quiet, but at the same time strong in their imagery, and powerful in their message. Anna Font's colour illustrations are a perfect match for the verses, each of which is given plenty of space on a double-page spread. With simple, stylised shapes, only a few elements and an atmosphere that oscillates between sadness and hope, the pictures perfectly match the thoughtful tone of the texts. (Age: 9+) [JW]

204



Rodríguez, Mónica (text)

Piqueras Fisk, Daniel (illus.)

Umiko

Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Diego Pun Ediciones, [2023]. – 282 p.

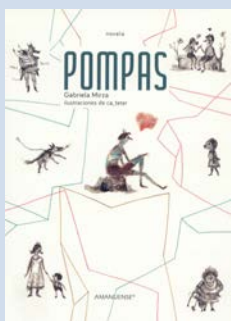
ISBN 978-84-126064-5-4

Japan | Ama | Diving | Tradition | Coming of age | Intergenerational relationship

Spain ■ SPANISH

Mónica Rodríguez is one of the most prominent children's and youth book authors in Spanish and has won several awards for her work. This book is further proof of her masterly storytelling skills, which are characterized by a language rich in register and a multifaceted portrayal of characters. »Umiko« recounts the story of a young woman who, like her mother and grandmother before her, is expected to become an ama diver. These breath-holding divers harvest seafood off the coast of Japan without any technical aids. But Umiko does not want to continue in the family tradition. The book depicts the resulting conflicts between the three generations of women, but also their close relationship, interwoven with the history of this centuries-old profession and a coming-of-age and love story. The expressive and atmospheric illustrations by Daniel Piqueras, which play an important role in understanding the story, perfectly complement the text. (Age: 14+) [JW]

205



Mirza, Gabriela (text)

Ca_teter (illus.)

Pompas*(Bubbles)*

Colonia del Sacramento: Amanuense, 2024. – 69 p.

ISBN 978-9974-883-39-0

Family | Coming of age | Runaway | Love

URUGUAY ■ SPANISH

Stiven, a member of a street gang, has to prove himself by robbing a store. But suddenly he finds himself face-to-face with Ágata – his former friend and first love from his childhood. Ágata, whom he has not seen in years, works here, of all places. Immediately things begin to race through his mind: his mother who is sitting in jail, his godfather who took responsibility for him, the boarding school where Ágata's grandmother worked as a cook and from which he ran away. At this moment, Stiven is at a crossroads and has to make a choice. The bubble that has surrounded him is beginning to dissolve. It has protected him, given him a safe home, but at the same time it has held him captive, in a stalemate. By allowing her 17-year-old protagonist to tell his own story, Gabriela Mirza has created a direct, fast-paced narrative. With its precise emotional descriptions and vivid language, »Pompas« is a credible portrait of a young adult whose pain, loneliness and yearning for a sense of security are immediately palpable. (Age: 14+) [JW]

206



Val, Elena (text/illus.)

El hijo del astronauta*(The son of the astronaut)*

Caracas [et al.]: Ediciones Ekaré, 2024. – [40] p.

ISBN 978-84-128118-0-3

Father | Son | Parental absence | Longing | Picture book

VENEZUELA ■ SPANISH

My father is far away. He is an astronaut travelling through space in service of all mankind. The little boy who tells this story fantasizes about what his father is doing and what will happen when he returns home again one day. Then they will throw a party and play together and go swimming. Behind these thoughts and dreams, one hears longing and loneliness. The huge hole in the boy's life cannot be simply closed up through the power of imagination. But at least his friends can distract him. In this picture book, Elena Val offers a precise and moving portrait of the feelings of a child who idolizes his father, on whom he concentrates all his love. Ultimately it does not matter whether the father is really an astronaut or has perhaps simply disappeared, whether he has deserted the family, died or gone away to find work – situations that countless children experience every day. The expressive illustrations in vibrant colours capture a boy's world oscillating between reality, fantasy and dreams. (Age: 5+) [JW]

207



Kroon, Oskar (text)
Klinthage, Hanna (illus.)
Vitsippor och pissrättor

(Anemones and pissing rats)

Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2023. – 165 p.
ISBN 978-91-29-74304-3

Bullying | Siblings | Revenge

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

Kaj and Krister are brothers. Kaj is the younger one, Krister the older one. Kaj admires and adores his older brother. Krister knows so much about space and which bus to take. Yet lately, Krister has not been himself, he has been depressed and quiet. Kaj realises that Sacke – the filthy rat – is needling, bullying, and threatening Krister. This can't go on! Kaj wants to help Krister, to protect him. Krister refuses to tell the adults, because then it will only get worse. So Kaj decides that they have to help themselves. Together with Naima, he thinks about how they can get back at Sacke... Oskar Kroon has quickly written his way into the top league of Swedish children's book novelists: He tackles the challenges of children's lives at eye level, with sensitivity, a feel for language, and great loyalty. Hanna Klinthage's black-and-white illustrations for »Vitsippor och Pissrattor« reflect these qualities on a visual level and perfectly complement the text. The book was awarded the prestigious August Prize in 2023. (Age: 8+) [IG]

208



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

(Dog owners)

Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, [2023]. – 183 p.
ISBN 978-91-27-18166-3

Equality | Longing | Search for identity | Education | Dog

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

It's the early 20th century: Martin is growing up with a hard-hearted foster father. If only he were with his real dad, all would be well. When Jack, a talking dog who – unlike Martin – can also read, is chased away by the strict farmer for dropping a basket full of fish into the water, Martin joins him. Constantly on their guard against the foster father and other nasty fellows, the two of them head south. »Hundägarna« is both an exciting adventure story reminiscent of famous »animals on the road«-tales, such as the Bremen Town Musicians, and a psychological and socially critical novel. It deals with the desire for belonging and security, with wishes and dreams, and with hurt and betrayal. Loyalty to the weak – whether they be human or animal – and a great sense of justice are typical characteristics of Frida Nilsson's books, and they're definitely present in this multi-layered children's novel. It has already been translated into German together with the second volume, »Kattjägarna« (Cat hunters). (Age: 10+) [IG]

209



Nordqvist, Sven (text/illus.)

Vägen hem*(The way home)*

[Bromma]: Opal, [2023]. - [32] p.

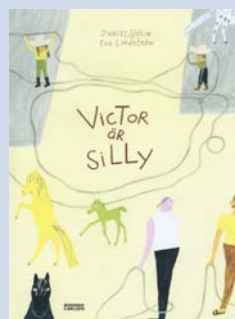
ISBN 978-91-7226-691-9

Imaginary trip | Dream | Wimmelbook | Picture book

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

Sven Nordqvist, grand seigneur of picture books and the father of the »Peterson och Findus« books is still going strong. In »Vägen hem«, he once again demonstrates his exuberant imagination and his penchant for bustling visual worlds with a wealth of details. There is so much to discover that you can literally get lost in them. The little boy in this wimmelbook sets out on a journey of discovery (not entirely voluntarily). Waking up in a summer meadow, he finds himself surrounded by a crowd of tiny people and big bugs. Where is he? And how will he get back home? »The old woman who knows everything« can help: He must follow the »yellow path« over hill and dale, through the forest and across the sea. The boy encounters terrifying trolls and talking dogs, is caught in storms and parachutes down. Will he ever reach his home? Classic topoi, translated into »nordqvist-y« text and pictures – what more could you ask for?! The book has already been translated into several other languages. (Age 4+) [IG]

210



Sjölín, Daniel (text)

Lindström, Eva (illus.)

Victor är silly*(Victor is stupid)*

Stockholm: Bonnier Carlsen, [2024]. - [36] p.

ISBN 978-91-7977-508-7

Jealousy | Siblings | New partner | Picture book

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

»Hållå, gå härifrån. Det är vårt kök faktiskt. Och våra hästar. Och vår mamma!« (Hello, go away. Because this is our kitchen. And our horses. And our mum!) The tone is set: The children are jealous of Victor, their mum's new boyfriend. How can they possibly scare him away? Soon they get their chance, if not to get rid of him, then at least to contain him. They tie him to a tree. Victor doesn't find this particularly amusing, but somehow he manages both to make the kids feel a little sorry for him as he is standing out there in the rain; and to make them stop thinking of him as such a terrible nuisance. Jealousy is a classic motif in children's literature. In »Victor är silly«, it is consistently told from the children's viewpoint in an original and humorous way. It is precisely because of this, that readers can observe how jealousy turns into empathy: Victor isn't so stupid after all. (Age: 4+) [IG]

211



Virke, Emma (text)
Östergren, Emelie (illus.)

Presenten

(The present)

[Stockholm]: Lilla Piratförlaget, [2023]. – [58] p.
ISBN 978-91-7813-502-8

[Birthday](#) | [Metafiction](#) | [Picture book](#)

Sweden ■ SWEDISH

Three books for the price of one! In book No. 1, it's Billy's birthday, and she finds the eponymous present in her room. When she unpacks it, she is disappointed to discover a book inside, called »Klas-Bertil's Birthday«. How boring! But wait – is it really that dull? Maybe she should take a closer look. That's exactly what readers can do, because book No. 2 is literally inside the first book. And because Klas-Bertil also gets a book for his birthday, there's even a third book. From this one, Pim the dog escapes, first to Klas-Bertil, and then they both end up in Billy's room: Boring? Not at all – a journey through space and time surely is the essence of an action adventure. It's only fitting that Billy wears a white rabbit costume... »Presenten« transcends all fictional levels both gallantly and skilfully, rendering this visible through its book-within-a-book-within-a-book structure. In addition, it also shows that stories know no boundaries. What a great plea for the power of imagination! (Age: 6+) [IG]

212



Kozikoğlu, Tülin (text)
Mit, Seda (illus.)

Yedi Yaşıma Girmeden Önce Bilmem Gerekenler

(Things I need to know before I turn seven)

İstanbul: Doğan Çocuk, 2023. – [56] p.
ISBN 978-625-416-181-0

[School](#) | [Bullying](#) | [Deafness](#) | [Sign language](#) | [Siblings](#) | [Seven](#) | [Picture book](#)

Turkey ■ TURKISH

This picture book revolves around the number seven poignantly. The protagonist searches for everything that she needs to learn before turning seven and going to school. In this endeavour, her know-it-all brother is not helpful at all because he teases her in a mocking tone. Tülin Kozikoğlu's story hints that the young girl may be deaf, while exploring her journey of growing up, communicating, and discovering that kindness is perhaps the most important lesson to master before turning seven. Seda Mit has created collage-like illustrations, utilizing high contrast colours, drawings, scribbles, different textures, and abstract cut-out shapes. »Yedi Yaşıma Girmeden ...« subtly incorporates the number seven in various forms, such as the seven notes on the musical scale, the seven art forms, and the seven colours of the rainbow, inviting the reader to explore these connections. Sign language is also woven into the details of the illustrations. (Age: 5+) [IVA]

213



Servi, Hanzade (text)

Eyce, Gözde (illus.)

Hiç küsmeyen arkadaş aranıyor*(Looking for a friend who never sulks)*

İstanbul: İthaki Çocuk, 2024. – 164 p.

ISBN 978-625-6366-66-4

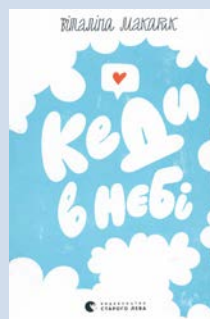
Friendship | Empathy | Communication

■ TURKISH
 Turkey

Compassion, empathy, making up even after years of silence... Çimen reads an ad in the local newspaper that begins: »Looking for a friend who never sulks«. This ad motivates her to think about how she can have a good relationship with her friend, Nil, who constantly breaks off their friendship.

This story focuses on the critical role of friendship, placing emphasis on the art of communication, and the sustainability of relationships across different age groups. Events such as resentments, conflicts and peace-making build the backbone of the story. Friendship is possible, despite individual differences, psychological barriers and hidden obsessions that can inadvertently hinder relationships. Author Hanzade Servi has selected names thoughtfully for the characters and places in this story. They are rich in meaning and chosen to provoke reflection. Gözde Eyce has enriched the book with vignettes at the beginning of each chapter and with fictional newspaper ads that document the characters' quest for true friendship. (Age: 8+) [IVA]

214



Makaryk, Vitalina (text)

Kedy v nebi*(Sneakers in the sky)*

L'viv: Vydavnytstvo Staroho Leva, 2023. – 166 p.

ISBN 978-966-448-201-8

Mother | Suicide | Coping with trauma

■ UKRAINIAN
 Ukraine

When she is in the eighth grade, Lesya loses her mother through suicide. Left completely on her own and with only her aunt to help her, Lesya has to come to terms with these new circumstances and her status as an orphan. Vitalina Makaryk depicts this process in an intensely psychological manner, staying close to the protagonist, whose thoughts gradually unfold before the reader. Lesya asks herself why and whether she is partly to blame. She searches for clues that the death could have been an accident and tries to hold on to certain moments in the life of her mother. In addition, Lesya is the victim of bullying by her schoolmates until she is given support in an unexpected way. Two very popular girls at school give her a pair of red sneakers and meet up with her in an upbeat café. Slowly but surely her feelings of self-worth grow and Lesya realizes that »life goes on«. In Ukraine, »Kedy v nebi« received an award as best debut novel of the year. (Age: 12+) [KW]

215



Zachabura, Valentyna (Zakhabura, Valentyna) (text)
Havrylyuk, Anna (Havrylyuk, Anna) (illus.)

Pancyr, lapy i kryla pani Oksany

(The armour, the paws and the wings of Mrs. Oksana)

Kyiv: Šče Odnu Storinku (Shche Odnu Storinku),
2024. – 61 p.

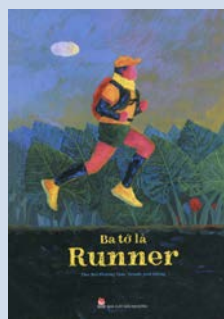
ISBN 978-617-522-268-3

[Animals](#) | [Animal care](#) | [Pandemic](#)

UKRAINIAN
Ukraine

■ Mrs. Oksana heads up a biology work team in her library. As a result, she is the recipient of animals from many sources. In actual fact, her knowledge of things is more theoretical, and furthermore there are other hobbies she would prefer to pursue. At first, a tortoise and two tiny frogs, together with their worm food, take up quarters with her, but then the ostensible paradise for animals reaches its climax when a parrot that constantly repeats itself is added. Pani Oksana now spends much time preventing the new co-habitants from making life hell for each other. To top it all off, a strange pandemic starts to make matters only worse. Valentyna Zakhabura describes the coexistence of people and animals and of animals with other animals in an insanely funny manner, well supported by Anna Havrylyuk's witty illustrations. In addition, the two of them poke fun at the peculiar behaviour of humans during the COVID pandemic. In Ukraine this book was selected by Barabooka as one of the best children's books of 2023. (Age: 8+) [KW]

216



Bùi Phương Tâm (Tam Bui) (text)
Jeet Zdŭng (Nguyễn Tiến Dũng) (illus.)

Ba tó là Runner

(My daddy is a runner)

Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Kim Đồng
(Kim Dong Publishing House), 2023. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-604-2-32846-3

(English ed.: ISBN 978-604-2-32847-0)

[Running](#) | [Competition](#) | [Tenacity](#) | [Resilience](#) | [Father](#) | [Daughter](#) | [Poetry](#) | [Picture book](#)

VIETNAMESE
Vietnam

■ »My dad likes running more than anything« states the narrator, a young girl, and imagines the adventures he has along his route: through surreal woods, accompanied by dinosaurs, across raging rapids with the help of fellow runners, up steep slopes on his own. Though he seems to be constantly running in circles throughout Hanoi, with the cycle of the seasons, in the eternal alternation of day and night, he always comes home in time to read bedtime stories to his daughter. Author Bùi Phương Tâm's poem conveys her reflection on what is important in life: to start somewhere, to try everything, and to keep trying, while finding the balance between one's passion and the needs of one's family. Award-winning illustrator Jeet Zdŭng fuses traditional Vietnamese art with manga, using pencil, watercolour, ink, as well as digital techniques. In his stunning illustrations, he creates a powerful expression of the narrator's emotions through the use of intense colours, strong contrasts and clearly visible brushstrokes. (Age: 4+) [LO]

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IMPRESSUM

The White Ravens 2024

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

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Editorial work: Jochen Weber

Translation: Martha Baker, Claudia Söffner

Copy editing: Dr. Nikola von Merveldt

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Layout: Eva Geck, Ute Konstanzer

Typesetting: Thomas Pleiner mtp-studio

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Stiftung Internationale Jugendbibliothek
International Youth Library Foundation
Schloss Blutenburg
Seldweg 15
81247 Munich, Germany
www.ijb.de

ISSN 1818-6319

Funded by:



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

Bavarian State Ministry of
Science and the Arts



City of Munich
Department of
Arts and Culture

