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Nathalie Dion

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Montreal illustrator Nathalie Dion in her studio with her dog Gédéon.
Read Marylynn Miller Oke's profile of Nathalie Dion on page 4.



4 Profile: Nathalie Dion

Nathalie Dion is known for her whimsical illustrations in picture books such as *I Found Hope in a Cherry Tree* and *The Big Bad Wolf in My House*. In this captivating interview, Nathalie talks about her editorial work for magazines and newspapers and shares what it was like writing her first picture book and why illustrating children's book is her dream job.

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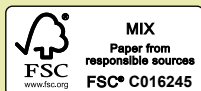


COVER: Cover artwork from *The Dog's Gardener*, written by Patricia Storms and illustrated by Nathalie Dion. Copyright © 2021 Nathalie Dion. Reproduced with permission from Groundwood Books, Toronto. groundwoodbooks.com.

MEDIUM: Hand-painted gouache textures combined with painting using a digital pastel brush.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR: Nathalie Dion is an illustrator living in Montreal who studied Design Arts at Concordia University. Her other children's books include *My Mad Hair Day*, *I Found Hope in a Cherry Tree* by Jean E. Pendziwol and *The Biggest Puddle in the World* by Mark Lee. Nathalie has received a number of awards for her illustration and has exhibited her work in Montreal galleries. For more information, visit nathaliedion.ca.

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FROM THE CCBC ROSE VESPA



Welcome to the Spring edition of *Canadian Children's Book News*! Shannon Barnes, our editor, has done an excellent job of curating articles about a selection of Canada's talented illustrators of children's books and their works. I cast my mind back to pouring over picture books with my daughter reading, admiring, and talking about the illustrations. Little did I know that years later, I would have direct contact with these talented creators.

As this edition highlights, children's art appears not just in picture books but also in graphic novels, fiction, and non-fiction. The role illustrators play in storytelling gives life to characters and ideas, stimulating imagination and creativity. I hope you enjoy the personal stories of these creators and admire their works.

Thank you for your continued support of the Canadian Children's Book Centre. It is a privilege to lead such an amazing team of individuals at the CCBC who work hard to bring you the absolute best programs and services highlighting Canadian creators for children and youth.

You can further support the CCBC and Canadian children's illustrators by browsing the virtual Picture Book Gallery at thepicturebookgallery.com. These beautiful pieces of art would make a wonderful gift for yourself or others. Lastly, I encourage you to scan the QR code below to check out the Canadian Children's Book Centre's Illustrator Demonstrations playlist on our YouTube channel, Bibliovideo.

Sincerely,

Rose Vespa

Executive Director

The Canadian Children's Book Centre

Watch Illustrator Demonstrations on
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Picture books are the perfect blend of story and art. In this issue of *Canadian Children's Book News*, the first of 2022, we celebrate illustrators and the beauty they bring to children's books.

Before becoming a children's book illustrator, Nathalie Dion's illustrations were featured in magazines and newspapers for 15 years. A few years ago, she was noticed by Quebec publisher Éditions D'eux during Inktober and given her first picture book to illustrate. Here, Nathalie shares her journey to becoming a children's book illustrator and what it was like to both write and illustrate her latest book, *My Mad Hair Day*.

The relationship between an author and illustrator is based on creativity and trust. But what happens when you are married to your illustrator? In her fascinating article, Heather Camlot speaks to real-life couples Deanna Kent and Neil Hooson and Nancy and Mike Deas on what it is like to be partners on and off the page.

In November 2021, the Canadian Children's Book Centre launched the virtual Picture Book Gallery where you can purchase magnificent artwork by some of Canada's most talented illustrators. The Picture Book Gallery is a fundraiser supporting Canadian Children's Book Week. Visit thepicturebookgallery.ca today!

This year marks the 45th Canadian Children's Book Week tour. While the tour itself has evolved over the years, its mission remains the same—to connect authors, illustrators and storytellers with young readers across Canada. Read our Book Week article to meet the creators participating in this year's anniversary tour.

Our Bookmark column features books that have been acknowledged for their beautiful illustrations and design. In our Keep Your Eye On column, we introduce you to Ojibwe woodland artist Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley. And, as always, this issue has reviews of over 40 new Canadian books for you to enjoy.

As this issue was going to press, we learned of the passing of Andrea Deakin, who was a children's book reviewer for over 40 years and a passionate supporter of Canadian children's books. One of Andrea's legacies is the Deakin Collection—a library collection of over 6,500 children's books currently housed at the Kelowna campus of Okanagan College in British Columbia. The CCBC is thankful for Andrea and her tireless effort to promote Canada's authors and illustrators to the world. She will be greatly missed.

Happy reading!

Shannon Barnes

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correspond to this issue!
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A Connected Observation of Textures and Contrasts

BY MARYLYNN MILLER OKE



Although consistently recognizable in style, Nathalie Dion's illustrations reveal different stories. A long shadow can depict a playful afternoon in a sun-dappled room or the foreboding outline of a menacing figure. Unruly hair may be the cause of great angst or personal pride. In *Les baleines et nous*, written by India Desjardins and published by Éditions de la Bagnole, Nathalie enhances an ode to the beauty of whales—*fragile giants*.

As a children's book illustrator, she is known for her work on titles such as *The Dog's Gardener* and *The Biggest Puddle in the World*, published by Groundwood Books, as well as *Le grand méchant loup dans ma maison*, published by Les 400 coups. As the life-long bearer of voluminous hair, she took on the competing roles of author and illustrator for *My Mad Hair Day*, also published by Groundwood Books.

Whether bringing children's stories to life or creating captivating artwork for medical magazines, the *Wall St. Journal* or for your wall, the Montreal-based illustrator weaves her distinct style through every project she touches—in and out of children's literature and back again.

A breath of fresh air

Variety colours her work with vibrancy. Nathalie's biography at nathaliedion.ca describes the vitality that emerges as she switches

between long-term children's book adventures to quick overnight newspaper assignments.

"I believe that contrast keeps you fresh," she states. "When working on a picture book, you are kind of in your own world and don't want to be disturbed. It takes me around five to six months to illustrate a book. That's a long time to spend in the same environment, so it's good to go for a walk once in a while. Illustrating an editorial is like going out for a walk!"

On her website, she also describes the connection that she draws between her work in children's books and the editorial pieces, portraits and still life artwork that she creates. "I paint from observation with real gouache on paper, and it nourishes the children's illustrations that nourish the editorial and so on..."

The magical dream is real

Nathalie knew that she always wanted to be an artist. As a child, she was intrigued by Picasso and was fascinated by Kiraz's "Les Parisiennes" in her mother's French magazines. "Like many kids, I didn't realize that picture books were drawn by someone. Those fell under the 'magic' category."

Ensnared on the path toward creating her own magic, she feels that her decision to study visual arts came naturally. Looking back on her memorable time studying Fine Arts in college and Design Arts at Concordia University, she fondly reflects, "Creating all day in all art disciplines was the dream life!"

After deciding to become an illustrator after graduation, she recalls, "It seemed like the best and only way for me to make a living, but I had a long road ahead to make that happen."

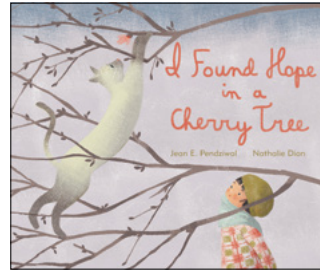
Landed it!

Nathalie took several years to create her portfolio from scratch and to find her style and niche. After a decade of meeting with art directors in Montreal and building her portfolio, she found success.

"I finally found my first real client: a clothing designer who needed someone to illustrate her catalogues from cover to cover! Directed by Dominique Perron from Ma Divine Clémentine, my illustrations gained confidence, humour, and a certain sense of fashion."

For Nathalie, the project led to a monthly illustration for *Elle Québec*. Soon afterward, Anna Goodson recruited her to her illustration agency. For the next 15 years, Nathalie worked predominantly for magazines and newspapers. In turn, she produced editorial artwork for many well-known publications and media ranging from the *Los Angeles Times* to *Flare*, HGTV, *Wedding Bells* and more.

In turn, her work graces publications from the doctor's office to the local newsstand.



Further expanding upon her artistry, she is also a member of Sur ton mur (On Your Wall), an online art gallery that specializes in illustrations and sells limited edition prints and original works by Quebec illustrators.

Finding her favourite

Nathalie's entry into the intriguing world of children's literature began with Inktober, an Instagram challenge that led her to create a series that caught the attention of Quebec publisher Éditions D'eux. They subsequently offered her the opportunity to illustrate *Debout!* written by Michaël Escoffier.

The rest is child's play.

"Now I mainly do picture books and only occasional editorials," she explains. "Illustrating picture books is my favourite. Having the opportunity to create and dive into a world for months is beyond the dream job. And if that weren't enough, knowing that kids will dive in it afterwards is just so rewarding. I feel extremely lucky."

Mixing the reflexes and the palette

As she reads the manuscript on a new children's book project, Nathalie immediately imagines an image of the characters and reflects on who they are. But the creativity doesn't end there.

"I like to question these first reflexes. I realized that I automatically tend to gravitate toward what I know best. With that in mind, I like to remix my first thoughts and give it another try to avoid clichés and stereotypes."

Nathalie depicts the savouring of simple pleasures in the garden in *The Dog's Gardener* by Patricia Storms, and the joys of playing with a furry friend in *I Found Hope in a Cherry Tree* written by Jean E. Pendziwol, both published by Groundwood Books. She helps children persevere through family violence in *The Big Bad Wolf in My House* by Valérie Fontaine or leads them to discover fascinating treasures in *What's in Your Purse?* written by Abigail Samoun and published by Chronicle Books.

"I think that illustrators are like comedians in a way. They can play in many registers while keeping their own flavour. I think expressing different subject matter to different audiences is inherent to the job. I simply address every project like an opportunity to express different facets of my palette."

Nathalie's illustrations accompany text that has been translated into English and French. She brings scenarios of hope, comfort, nature or companionship to life. Her work has been described as delicate, warm and whimsical.

"I just might begin to like this mop of hair."

When it came to illustrating and writing *My Mad Hair Day*, she embarked on a journey that was a lifetime in the making. Like her

own hair, she tossed around many titles, versions and illustrations for years. After she finished *The Biggest Puddle in the World* by Mark Lee, she decided it was time to propose her idea to Groundwood Books.

"*My Mad Hair Day* was inspired by my personal experience as a child. I had ultra-curly hair and was truly convinced that it was the ugliest thing on earth. I spoiled my childhood giving this misconception way too much space. I wasted lots of energy going against my nature and I wish someone would have told me that I was just fine the way I was! So, through *My Mad Hair Day*, I want to tell others that it is okay to be who you are. Embrace it! Life will be much more fun that way."

As a writer on this project, she discovered that she had to take off her illustrator hat for a while and let the wild locks flow alongside the creative ideas.

"Knowing that I was the one illustrating the story made it a little tricky! I found myself avoiding subjects that I don't like to draw, like cars and cities! Whereas if I am illustrating someone else's text, there are no limits. I'll take the challenge, even if it means a few sleepless nights. At times, I had to falsely convince myself that I was not going to be the illustrator on this project!"

They really like it

It seems that her young readers share her enthusiasm for the book. Nathalie has taken the adventures of young Malie, from *My Mad Hair Day*, into the classroom. She shares how her own battle with unruly hair as a child inspired this tale about embracing self-acceptance.

As Malie ensnares everything from pianos to birds to cupcakes during her outing, Nathalie invites students to imagine and create other objects that may become entangled. Students are invited to further immerse themselves into the story by attaching their creations onto a large frieze from the story itself.

By leaving the shelter of her studio, she found that children provided more fun and enthusiastic feedback about *My Mad Hair Day's* impact than monthly sales reports ever could.

"So lately, I finally left my cave to give workshops around *My Mad Hair Day* in elementary schools and the reaction was fantastic. Even though the story is totally farfetched, the students dive right into it. I get 'Ooh!' and 'Ahh!' and it feels amazing to finally reach the goal! We have beautiful discussions around self-acceptance and inspiration."

Diving into intuitive inspiration

When it comes to finding inspiration for a new book project, Nathalie looks to the author's text as an obvious first step. But the immersive, creative process can float to great heights beyond that.

"With every book comes a new theme that requires your full attention," she affirms. "For example, I just finished a book written by Kyo Maclear that will be published next fall by Tundra Books. The main character is a cloud! I used to love clouds, but with this project, I really dove into the subject like never before. I discovered an immense force of nature and an amazing source of appeasement, like the ocean, but accessible from everywhere by everyone! Clouds are too often taken for granted and ignored. Like Kyo, I am considering becoming a member of the Cloud Appreciation Society but, in my heart, I already am one."

It just fits

Nathalie likes to paint with real gouache on paper, which combines pigments mixed with water and a glue-like binding agent. Equipped with her tablet and numeric paintbrushes, she illuminates life's simple pleasures, its awkward realities and some of its most trying moments.

Nathalie enjoys drawing what she sees on television, in still life or in nature, whether that be the beauty of a teacup or the joy of catching snowflakes on a wintery day.

"Drawing from observation is the thread that connects all of my different types of work," reveals Nathalie. "It all ends up connecting somehow in a surreal way in my illustrations later. Like when you do a puzzle, your brain seems to register the pieces without you knowing and out of the blue, you just grab the right piece and put it directly where it goes."

Mixed to perfection

She also enjoys other illustrators' and painters' work that she encounters through books, museums or Instagram. "It gives me a sense of freedom, a reminder to stay flexible. The downside of being a professional artist is that your work can become tense and locked up. Looking at the work of other artists that I admire reminds me to keep all doors open."

As for what she feels makes a great illustration, she looks to their concepts or richness of textures, light or composition. She also considers their strong character design.

"It's often a combination of some of these elements that catches the eye and makes it stay in the viewer's heart or brain," she explains. "I believe a great picture book illustration is one that gives the reader the impression that you are there, in the book. And for that, there is no recipe. As an illustrator, you have to play with the ingredients until you get it just right."

Nathalie believes that there are many great picture books that not only encourage children to read, but also expose them to great art—ultimately transforming kids into lovers of visual art.

"I like to believe that my collection of beautiful books made an impact in the long term."

Playful process

Sharing insight into her process, Nathalie reveals that when she nears the end of illustrating one book, she opens her mind for the next one. She prepares for a new project by collecting information and colour inspiration, borrowing books from the library or sketching while she watches movies.

"Then, when it is possible, I like to leave at least a week between projects. My approach is very intuitive and when I am finally ready to begin, I just dive right in the sketch phase."

While the sketches are undergoing the approval process, she begins preparing palettes and the textures that she will use. In addition to testing and experimenting with new textures and colour palettes, she prepares patterns or elements of nature such as clouds, flowers, plants and trees.

"This is a very playful phase. Then when sketches are approved, it is trial and error for the first four pages until I find the direction I want to take."

And when it comes to her own distinct style, it's all her.

"Even though I look at other artists' work, after I do, I put on blinders and just do my own thing in my own way."

She's all in

Nathalie has received a great deal of professional recognition from various groups in photography, communication and illustration for her creative and editorial work. From food to corporate illustration, her work is appreciated.

Her illustrations in children's books, such as *The Dog's Gardener* by Patricia Storms and *I Found Hope in a Cherry Tree* by Jean E. Pendziwol also earned prestigious recognition from organizations such as the Communication Arts Illustration Annual competition and the 3X3 International Illustration Annual competition. *La grand merchant loup dans ma maison*, by Valérie Fontaine was a finalist for many literary awards including the 2021 Governor General's Literary Award.

Nathalie has also displayed her work, including still life and portraits, at various exhibitions in Montreal, such as the Boutique George Laoun, the Galerie ESPACE and the Espace Pop.

"I am a person who doubts a lot, so I really appreciate the accolades. I find them reassuring. But even though I appreciate them very much, I also take them with a grain of salt. They depend on a series of different factors and some luck, being there with the right project at the right moment. It is good to keep that in perspective."

However, it is her passion for her work that keeps her coming back for more again and again.

"I think I am a little bit like a compulsive gambler. When working on a project, I am totally there, give all I have, and have big expectations. And as I never reach all my goals, I bet again on the next project and so on. It is a perpetual quest. It is a little tiring, but it seems to keep the passion alive!"

Looking ahead, she would love to find the inspiration for a story that would require her observation gouaches. "Otherwise, if I can keep creating, experimenting, and evolving through many picture books until the end, my life will have been a happy one."

Visit nathaliedion.ca or [instagram.com/nathalie_dion/](https://www.instagram.com/nathalie_dion/) for more information on Nathalie Dion and her work. 📍

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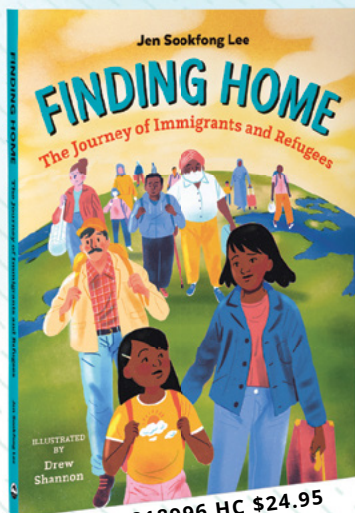
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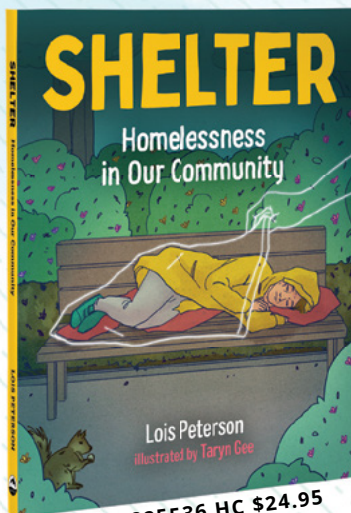


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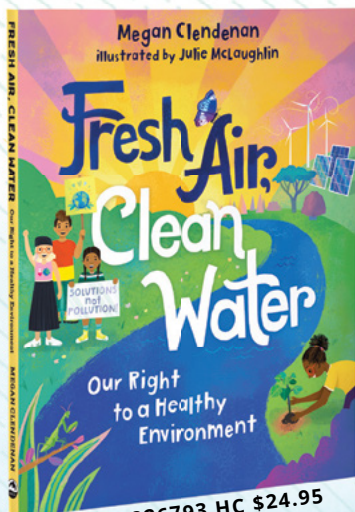
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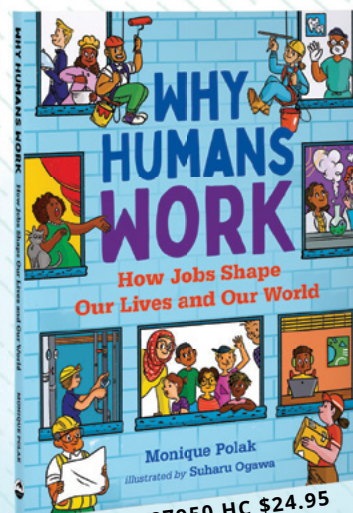
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Keep Your Eye On ...

Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley

INTERVIEW BY SHANNON BARNES

Tell us about your latest book or a project you are working on.

I am currently illustrating a book titled *Amik's Big Day* about two Anishinaabe beaver sisters whose cousins are all visiting from different territories. It teaches us how we are all the same even though we have our differences. It also teaches how the beavers play an important role in their ecosystem; how their resourcefulness and dam building help the other animals who live along the river.

Tell us about your illustrating process.

My process starts with brainstorming ideas. I'll read the manuscript and draw very rough ideas out onto the page. I try to imagine some of the environments in the story and how the characters will interact with each other. I'll then draw out some rough thumbnails and try to capture the pacing and flow of the story and the composition of each page. It's important to get a good variety of angles to shift focus and keep the reader interested. From here I'll get the rough pages illustrated. These are much more detailed but still fairly rough. I'll work out the expressions of the characters and the smaller details in the environments with these. Once the roughs are approved, I'll complete the final illustrations adding colour and shading and cleaning up the linework.

How did you first get published?

I did a Google Doodle in 2019 which was on the Google homepage for a day. The illustration was to celebrate the jingle dress. Jackie Kaiser from Westwood Creative Artists saw this and decided to reach out to me and ask if she could represent me. She said I would be wonderful for children's book illustrations. I was interested and sent her some sample art that she could show potential publishers. The first contract I signed was with HarperCollins for an autobiographical children's book, *Sharice's Big Voice*, written by US congresswoman Sharice Davids, a member of Ho-Chunk nation. Our cultures are close geographically and share a lot of similarities, so my illustration work fit well with her creative vision.

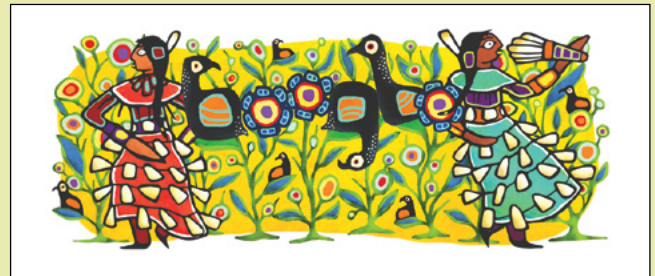
What do you like about illustrating for young people?

I like that the stories I illustrate are inspiring and uplifting. They are full of magic and joy. They all share a wonderful story that teach important life lessons. I like illustrating fun characters and all their expressions, as well as creating the beautiful worlds they live in.

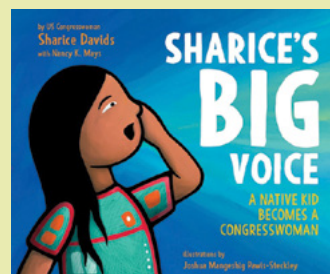
Tell us about illustrators who inspire you.

There is an abundance of talented indigenous illustrators/painters/creators who inspire me daily. Alanah Jewell, Luke Swinson, Chief Lady Bird, Ty Rushnell and Emily Kewageshig to name a few. They are all creating work that is so empowering that makes me proud to be Indigenous.

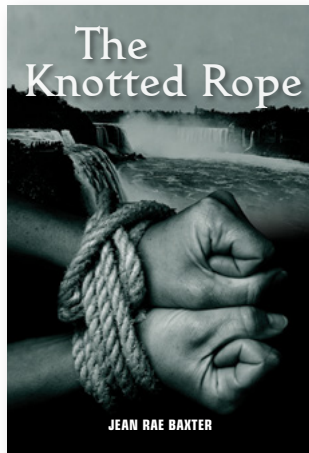
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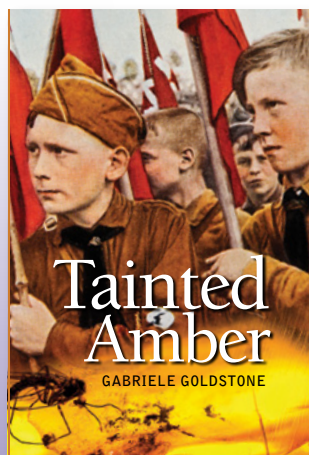
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What's the secret to working with your spouse? The same as marriage: trust and respect.

BY HEATHER CAMLOT

For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, to write and to draw... Okay, working together may not have been mentioned in their wedding vows, but for these two couples, creating books for children together was one more commitment they made to each other in their already busy lives. And they wouldn't change a thing.

Author Nancy Deas and illustrator Mike Deas first met in high school on Salt Spring Island, BC, and reconnected years later. Married for 12 years and with two young children—Annie and Faye—the couple launched the first book in their graphic novel series *Sueño Bay Adventures* with Orca Book Publishers in October of 2019.

Author Deanna Kent and illustrator Neil Hooson met at their children's elementary school and began working for Disney Online Studios' "Club Penguin" in Kelowna, BC, around the same time. Also married for 12 years and with four older children—Sam, Max, Zach and Jake—the couple released the first book in their chapter book series *Snazzy Cat Capers* with Square Fish in 2018 and the first book in their graphic novel series *Glam Prix Racing* with Feiwel & Friends in 2021.

Taking that first step

For Nancy and Mike, working together on a project was a natural progression. Nancy had been helping Mike with the story, dialogue and general editing for his graphic novel *Dalen and Gole: Scandal in Port Anus*, and their ideas complemented each other's well. "The parts of creating a graphic novel that are daunting to me seem to come naturally to Nancy," Mike says. When it came time to move from considering working together to actually doing so, the couple say they had no reservations whatsoever. "I think we were too excited about creating the story. We didn't really worry about any hangups!" Mike says. Adds Nancy: "We mostly focused our concerns on turning out work that readers would respond to."

Deanna and Neil had been discussing the idea of creating a children's book together before they were even in a personal relationship. While at Disney, they already knew they worked well as a team, she as a narrative designer and he as an illustrator. "We came to understand that we both had the same work ethic, the same excitement about making experiences for kids and families, and neither of us had egos that would make it tough to poke holes in ideas," says Deanna. "We're lucky we work in different but complementary disciplines. I don't think it would be much fun to feel 'in competition' with each other."



Nancy Deas



Mike Deas



Deanna Kent



Neil Hooson

Tossing ideas

Time at Disney also taught Neil and Deanna that behind every project, there needs to be a rationale. "It's not enough to create great things," explains Neil. "You have to know the audience, what they want and how to make them feel a certain way. Construction of desired emotional response is a craft, an art and a science." Their original idea was a graphic novel because they wanted a format where words and pictures held equal weight and in which they could both contribute in a big way. But after a spell of rejections and feedback, they turned their antagonist, diva cat burglar Ophelia von Hairball, into the star of a chapter book series with plenty of illustrations and comics mixed in. "It was gratifying to be able to create a hybrid format with full comic pages," says Neil.



Nancy and Mike also took the graphic novel route, something Mike already had a lot of experience in. Along with *Dalen & Gole*, which he wrote and illustrated, he collaborated on the Tank & Fizz series and Graphic Guide Adventure series, both written by Liam O'Donnell and published by Orca Book Publishers. Picking a format was the easy part. So was coming up with the storyline. "We both love the idea of kids solving their own adventures and enjoy reminiscing about our childhoods. It seemed natural to mix that all together and add a little fantasy for intrigue," explains Mike. "We really like how [Studio Ghibli co-founder Hayao] Miyazaki films feel based on reality but can have very magical out-of-this-world elements."

Getting to work

One of the big questions writers receive is, "Are you a plotter or a pantsner?" When working alone, it doesn't much matter which one you are as long as you understand your own process. When working with another person, the way one works could have a serious effect on the other. And yet both couples say that everything has worked out just fine. "I would say I am the erratic idea pantsner, and Mike is the circle-back-to-the-point plotter," says Nancy. "But we have a similar work ethic and both cram. Until the last second, we are tinkering away at little fussy things." Mike adds that their plotter-versus-pantsner nature helps the process rather than hinders it. "Where I would get hung up on keeping the structure in order, Nancy would bring the story to life and create characters that are relatable and lovable."

Deanna and Neil also have similar work ethics, with one exception. "The only issues—and these are ongoing—is if I get an idea at a weird time and feel the need to discuss it immediately... only once in the middle of the night," Deanna says with a laugh. Neil agrees: "She likes to talk through sparks of ideas right when they're fresh. She's not the most patient person, but perhaps the most creative." Neil's strength, says Deanna, is asking questions about those ideas to help define and shape them. And as soon as they settle on some of Deanna's "zany" ideas, as Neil calls them, they begin as they would any project. "We approach working on our own stuff with as much seriousness and careful consideration as we did at our day jobs," he says. "I don't think we ever have a hard time getting started. Our problem is mostly that there are many, many fun ideas!"

Finding the time

Day jobs, kids, pets... There are so many reasons that work can get pushed to the side, and you have to figure out just how you're going to fit in that exciting new project. For both couples, that translates to filling in the cracks of time. "With no exaggeration, I can say that the majority of the Snazzy Cat Capers book series' words were written as I watched practices for swimming, basketball and volleyball in many BC cities," says Deanna. "We made a deal

early on that we wanted to honour the kids' growth and interests before our books, so juggling was often brutal. We literally had to find nooks and crannies of time that didn't interfere with the kids. I remember Neil asking me one late night after rejections were coming in for that earliest graphic novel if it was actually worth it—the time and energy we were expending. I thought it was. We kept going." With three of the four boys now at university, Deanna and Neil have more time for side projects (they both work at the games company Carbon Counts Tech, Deanna as Director of Story and Neil as Art Director), but still wake up early or use the weekends to work on books.

It's a similar story at the Deas home. "We are lucky if we sit together and write for a couple of hours. Our life is busy, and we work in the sneaky cracks," explains Nancy, who has a side project making children's clothing. Mike illustrates full-time. "It's difficult to have the attention for everything at the same time. Finding the time and space to get things done is a challenge. However, the flip side is that the girls are great for bouncing ideas and jokes off of. They have no filter and are brutally honest. Real timesavers!"

Feeding off each other

Both couples work fluidly. They begin by kicking around ideas, usually over coffee, separate to work on their parts of the project, then meet up again. No ideas are bad ideas and conflicts are nil. "We don't tend to have too many disagreements—having kids and other work, there is not really time to," says Mike. "We kind of have a rule not to say no to anything; sometimes an idea that can seem outlandish at the beginning ends up being the strongest part."

Deanna echoes that sentiment when working with Neil: "It's extraordinarily harmonious—probably because we both trust and adore each other very much. And we both enjoy that beautiful, messy stage where things can be grown or thrown."

With a strong understanding of what they want to achieve, together, no one becomes possessive of words or illustrations nor interferes, though they do have input in the other's work. "We very rarely intervene or compete in each other's role as we are experiencing that piece in a different way," explains Nancy. "I hear the story in my head like a conversation, and Mike sees it in images. Mike has a great way of illustrating what I couldn't hope to describe. His art so conveys the feeling and mood we are trying to create." Mike adds that working together is what makes the work better. "At times I'll draw something out, and Nancy will suggest a change to bring the character to life or to help push the story. Other times there will be dialogue that I will suggest we remove and show it in the drawings."

Neil sums up the nature of both working relationships: "It's a lot of back and forth. We respectfully feed into each other's work." That said, when it comes to crunch time, you may just find Deanna, iPad in hand, colouring Neil's inked characters. Mike admits he puts his kids to work doing the same every now and then as well!

Caffeinating and cleaning

Although both deadline-driven, Neil says that because his part depends on Deanna's and vice versa, they each have a break when the other may be in the throes of their craft—and they each can pick up the slack at home. "The most uncomfortable thing for me is if I see that Deanna is busy with a manuscript and I'm not on deadline," Neil says. "My job at that point is to make sure her

caffeine supply is adequate. But it works both ways. Deanna's work is usually upfront and then the illustrations come later. So there's always a tipping point with who is the busiest. These 'offset' times mean that there's always someone to clean the bathrooms," he says with a laugh.

Getting to know you

Moving between personal relationships and work partnerships may be daunting for some, but these couples find the process fun and enlightening. "I definitely learned how much more in tune Nancy is with words, dialogue and character than I am. She will really get into the characters' heads, which helps me understand them in a much stronger way," says Mike. "And working with Nancy is way easier than on my own. The parts that Nancy does on the project I am totally unable to do. Being in the same living space and working together really helps the process. It allows us to be able to throw ideas around and bounce them off each other." The only downside for Mike? "Neither of us are doing the dishes!" he says with a laugh.

While Mike and Nancy take advantage of small research/family trips for new ideas and a change of scenery, Neil and Deanna will go hiking to "clear out the cobwebs." "We try to keep things fresh and keep looking at the world in new ways so we don't swirl the same ideas around," says Deanna. "It's really a comfortable arrangement to work together when you like to work together and when you know how someone works."

Keeping it professional

Knowing how the other works and understanding how to make your own styles compatible are the basis for all types of working relationships. And they shouldn't be discounted when working with a spouse. Collaborating on a book or a series of books is, at the end of the day, a professional undertaking. "No matter what kind of team you work in, you should be aligned on the basics or it won't be very fun, and I could see a lot of fighting the whole way through," says Neil.

Deanna says she drew from specific learning moments at Disney. "One: Teamwork really does make "dreamwork!" People laugh at me for saying this a lot, but I know it as the truth. If amazing people are on your teams in life, then it's pretty tough to lose," she begins. "Two: When ideas and work are rejected, it's okay. You'll find a better one. It's there. And it might even make a future idea stronger. Three: Don't be precious about your creations. Sure, some feedback isn't useful. But if you're working with really smart people with integrity and a different perspective than yours, if your goals are aligned and there is trust, it's very likely they could offer something wonderful."

Mike and Nancy's advice to couples who live and work together can be gleaned from the basic tenets of love and marriage: "We both tend to encourage each other through the process. If anything, we tend to believe in the other one more than ourselves," says Mike. Nancy adds: "Start fresh and find the way that works for you. We all have our own unique approaches. Don't get hung up on other people's strategies."

Succeeding together

Whatever the secret is, it's working for Nancy and Mike as well as Deanna and Neil. The Deas' are currently working on the



fourth and final book in the Sueño Bay Adventures, this one filled with shipwrecks, lighthouses, snowstorms, power outages and mysterious creatures tunnelling through cliffs. The third book in the series, *Hermit Hill*, releases this May.

Deanna and Neil are working on a new graphic novel series called Marshmallow Martians for Penguin Random House, which they pitched as [animated series character] "Bluey meets Sesame Street Martians." The final book in the Glam Prix Racers series, *Fast to the Finish!*, will be available in October.

Despite the trials of family life and other jobs, these couples have succeeded in the children's publishing world—together. When asked if they would do it again and recommend it to others, the answer is a resounding yes. "I really love working with Mike. We have a really fun time and get super excited when things get on a roll," says Nancy. "We are really lucky to have the chance to do it." Neil adds, wrapping up: "When we work together, we get to share in all the excitement of creating books for kids. We know how lucky we are." 🐾

Heather Camlot is the author of *What If Soldiers Fought with Pillows?* and the upcoming *I Can't Do What?* (illustrated by Mike Deas). She is also a freelance journalist, editor and translator.

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Amik
by Sharon King

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building a dam...

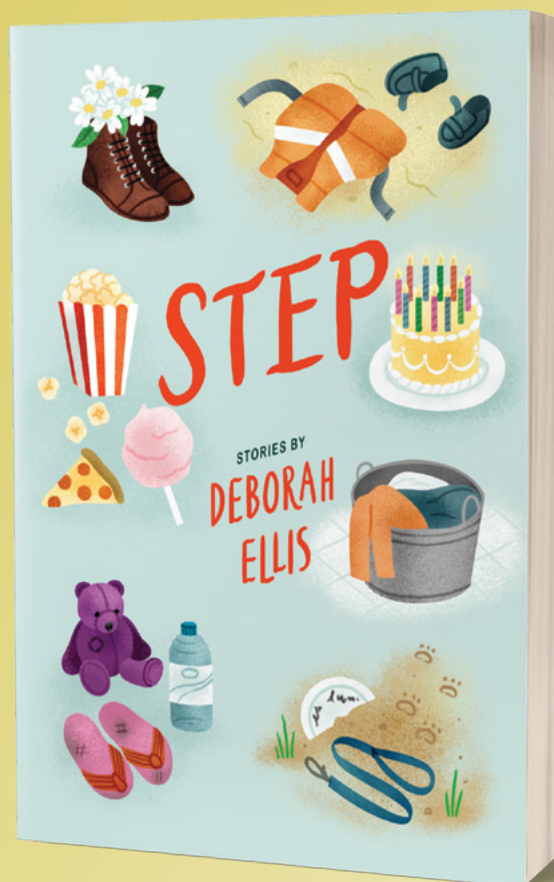
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The Picture Book Gallery Supports Canadian Children's Book Week

On November 19, 2021, the Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) successfully launched the virtual Picture Book Gallery (thepicturebookgallery.com).

Award-winning Canadian illustrators are selling their original art to support the CCBC's annual Canadian Children's Book Week program. Illustrators are donating 60 percent of the value of their original art in support of the CCBC. All funds raised will contribute to connecting authors, illustrators and storytellers with young audiences across Canada, from Labrador to the Yukon.

Canadian Children's Book Week is the single most important national event celebrating Canadian children's books and the importance of reading. Each May, hundreds of readings are given to thousands of children, teens and adults in over 100 communities across the country as we make every possible effort to reach children in more remote regions and communities. The upcoming tour will take place from May 1-7, 2022 and will mark the 45th Canadian Children's Book Week tour.

"As a former children's librarian, I know how a piece of original art can transform a library space," says Rose Vespa, Executive Director of the Canadian Children's Book Centre. "Each artwork in the Picture Book Gallery is a beautiful one-of-a-kind piece of art, perfect for a special gift or for use in a library, school or workplace. We are thankful to all the illustrators for donating a portion of their sales to the CCBC and to our volunteers. These beautiful works of art will not only transform rooms, but they will also help forever change the lives of children all across Canada by allowing them to take part in Canadian Children's Book Week, which has been turning children into readers since 1977." More information about Canadian Children's Book Week and the 2022 tour can be found at bookweek.ca.

Purchases can be made online at thepicturebookgallery.com. Participating illustrators include Barbara Reid, Michael Martchenko, Marie-Louise Gay, Wallace Edwards, Qin Leng, Kevin Sylvester, Gary Clement, François Thisdale, Sue Todd, Debbie Ridpath Ohi, Michele Nidenoff, Anne Villeneuve, Jeremy Tankard and Soyeon Kim, with more to follow.

"We are looking for a sponsor for Book Week," says Rose Vespa. "In the meantime, the Picture Book Gallery has come along at the perfect time. It was born from a brainstorming exercise we did at the Board level on increasing fundraising and reaching more members. A big thank you to Nancy Hartry and Bret Williams for making this project possible."

Nancy Hartry says she's been looking around for years for a way to promote the best in Canadian children's book art. "I have many friends who are illustrators. I'm in a writing group with Loris Lesynski, whose book *Boy Soup*, illustrated by Michael Martchenko, was selected for the TD Grade One Book Giveaway in 2013. Illustrators have boxes of illustrations gathering dust.

Only a handful of these artists show their work in galleries. It just doesn't seem right. A virtual gallery featuring Canada's top artists became our goal, but I needed a crack team to bring it home. Kevin Sylvester, Debbie Ridpath Ohi and Michele Nidenoff were the artist representatives on the committee. Margaret Bryant, Sales Director at Orca Book Publishers and CCBC Board member, and CCBC staff were regular participants."

But it was important to have new people involved. "I asked a young entrepreneur, Bret Williams, to be part of the committee, and she is the hero of the whole project!" Hartry added. Bret Williams is a tech-savvy young entrepreneur with an online business, Huey Lightshop, a handcrafted lighting company. "I first got the creative bug from my grandfather, who was an artist," Williams said. "This platform makes it possible for artists to connect with a larger group while aiding a great cause. I was thrilled to be a part of this project, and I feel the quality of the art speaks for itself."

Bret is far too modest a volunteer.

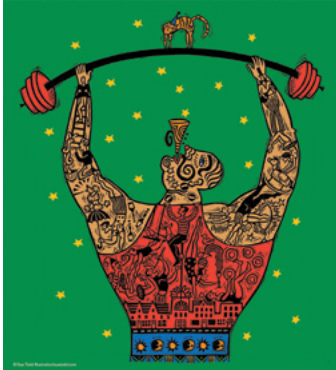
"It was tricky to find a name for the gallery," Hartry says. "We didn't want it to sound as if we were selling art painted by kids. The Picture Book Gallery seemed to have the right ring, and it is uniquely tied to the Canadian Children's Book Centre."

Michele Nidenoff, the Illustrators' Representative for the Canadian Society for Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers (CANSCAIP), coordinated two virtual art shows for the Packaging Your Imagination Conference during COVID-19. It was a short leap to take those lessons and establish a gallery for paying customers.

Sharon Jennings, President of CANSCAIP, says the organization is happy to support The Picture Book Gallery. "Our children's book artists are showcased and given the opportunity to sell their work in an innovative venue. The proceeds donated to the Canadian Children's Book Centre go to support Canadian Children's Book Week, an event that gives young people across Canada the chance to meet our fabulous creators. This project is a win-win all around!"

The Shopify platform is familiar to CCBC staff. It is an easy platform to work with in terms of payment and display of the illustrations. Shipping is free and all the taxes are calculated. When a sale is made, the illustrator is notified, and the work is lovingly packed and shipped by the artist.

Barbara Reid was instrumental in helping the artists price their work. "Most Canadian illustrators undervalue their work even though they are known internationally. I prefer this way of supporting the CCBC to the old auction model because artists are setting the price for their pieces. The artists receive 40 percent of the art sales, and the remainder goes to the CCBC. The CCBC manages



TOPTO BOTTOM — Column 1 Qin Leng, Sue Todd, Michael Martchenko **Column 2** Jeremy Tankard, Barbara Reid, Soyeon Kim, Marie-Louise Gay **Column 3** Debbie Ridpath Ohi, Wallace Edwards, Anne Villeneuve **Column 4** Michele Nidenoff, Gary Clement, Kevin Sylvester, François Thisdale

the website and deals with sales, and the artists are reimbursed for shipping expenses separate from the sale price. I initially showed five pieces and sold four. Everybody wins!"

Hartry thinks she had the best job. "I called all the illustrators to see if they would jump on board. They were so enthusiastic. We invited illustrators from across the country. Deadlines were very tight as we wanted to launch before the holiday season. Everybody pulled together."

At printing, the virtual Picture Book Gallery has received over 4,000 visitors. No bricks and mortar establishment could hope to receive that kind of traffic. Over \$15,000 worth of art has been sold! The Picture Book Gallery was ready for Valentine's Day with more artists and new works added for the season.

Susan Adach, a Toronto writer, says, "When I saw Anne Villeneuve's illustration from *Loula Part pour L'Afrique*, I was taken back to the very day my daughter left for a yearlong internship in Ghana. Like Loula grandly holding her stuffed cat by the ears as she sets off, my daughter launched off with her Bonnie, the stuffed bunny. It was so easy to purchase online, and the giclée print

arrived beautifully packaged. Huge bravo to this fantastic gallery. I'll be back!"

But this is just the beginning. The next phase of the Picture Book Gallery is underway. "We want to add new artists through a juried process. Our goal is to extend the reach of the virtual gallery in a transparent way and retain the exceptional quality of the work. Ultimately, we strive to capture an international market," Hartry says.

Click. Click. Click. Visit the thepicturebookgallery.com today! Purchase a piece of art from a Canadian children's book that is loved by you, by your children and by your grandchildren! 🕊

Visit the Picture Book Gallery!



Sail into Stories

Tournée Lire à tout vent

BY AMANDA HALFPENNY



May 1-7, 2022 marks the 45th anniversary of Canadian Children's Book Week. When the first Book Week occurred in 1977, the goal was to "give children the opportunity to make that vital contact with someone who can transmit the enjoyment of reading." This aligned with the CCBC's mandate to promote the excellent body of Canadian children's books in order to help establish a strong, vital Canadian children's book industry. Much has changed in the past 45 years, including, for the second year, a virtual format and collaborating with Communication-Jeunesse to offer a bilingual tour. Yet, the goal of transmitting to children and youth the enjoyment of reading remains the same.

Here is what the English-language participants have to say about the upcoming tour.

What are you most looking forward to about Canadian Children's Book Week?

Sara Florence Davidson I am interested to learn more about how stories resonate with students who live in different places and have different connections to the land. I also look forward to hearing some of the different connections students make with the stories and hearing them share some of theirs.

Mahtab Narsimhan It is such a joy to share my books with enthusiastic students in provinces other than my own. I always come away from these presentations inspired and energized!

Rowena Rae I'm looking forward to sharing my books and some of my non-fiction writing process. And most of all, I'm excited to meet students who live in different parts of the country from me. I hope they'll find a little bit of inspiration in the things I share with them. I know I'll be inspired by the questions and thoughts they share with me.

Todd Stewart As an illustrator and an author, most of my work is solitary. Especially in recent months, I haven't had much contact with other people. Honestly, just engaging in the simple act of having a conversation and sharing stories with groups of people I don't know, especially children, is what I'm most looking forward to.

How does meeting with young readers inform your creative process?

Kallie George After meeting young readers, I always feel full of inspiration. I am reminded that even though writing stories can be quite solitary, the stories themselves are connectors, bringing readers together and from all over! I love discovering how stories and characters can continue and grow with readers.

Celia Krampien Meeting young readers has been so important to my creative process because, to me, reading is a magical meeting of the minds—the mind of the author and/or illustrator and the mind of the reader. It's always educational to me to watch a young person engage with a book (any book! Not even just mine) because they never fail to surprise and delight me with an interpretation or question I'd never thought of before.

Cory Silverberg Young readers don't just inform my creative process; they ground it and give it power. When I write, I'm drawing on my own experiences as a young person and on the experiences of all the young people in my life. I'm thinking of how the seven- and eight-year-olds in my life think about gender as much as how the 13-year-olds and 20-year-olds in my life think about it. Young people are the ones creating new ways of thinking and being through art and culture, and language. I learn way more talking to young people than I do reading about young people.

Nancy Vo Usually, it is the questions from kids that have me thinking about something I was not aware of in my stories. It's good for me because I realize that everyone has a different takeaway, regardless of the narrative that I think has been constructed in the story. Once, someone said that when the Outlaw decided to make amends, he got fatter. I wasn't aware that had happened in the drawings, but the reader was not wrong.

Ekiuwa Aire I love the Q&A part of the presentations. Kids often ask questions about my characters and books. These questions may influence what I choose to include in my future books.

Rob Malo As a storyteller, it is very important to have not only listeners, but suggestion givers. I have more than one story that has a new ending because of a question or a comment that someone has made after hearing my original version. Stories are meant to change and adapt to the needs of the next generations so they may continue to be relevant. Younger readers and listeners are more apt to be honest and upfront with their criticism. It is a great gift to offer to story creators.

Charis Cotter Children have a bubbling energy filled with curiosity and enthusiasm that fills me up like a delicious, healthy drink. I spend my time imagining myself into the heads of children, but I don't have any around the house anymore, so meeting them at schools is pure delight. I get lots of ideas from just being around them, and if I had my way, I'd be in schools every week.

What is the funniest or most surprising thing that's happened during one of your presentations/workshops with young readers?

Eric Walters I have had fires, power outages, and lockdowns all take place during my presentations. You learn to roll with whatever happens—but make sure you take your computer with you when you leave the building!

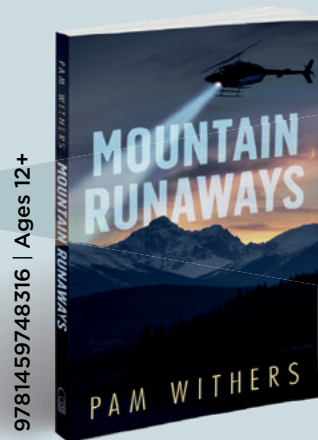
Raziel Reid I presented an award for best story to second and third-grade students during the Windsor Book Fest. This little blond guy couldn't take it anymore and puked all over my red bottoms. He'd been feeling it all day, but his story about a magical dragon had won the prize, and he wanted to receive his award!

Karen Spafford-Fitz When I asked a class where story ideas come from, a Grade 4 student shot his hand into the air: "I don't know about you, miss," he said, "but my story ideas all come from the back right-hand corner of my imagination." (How I wish I'd said that!)

Danica Lorer Stories bring us together. After a presentation in a Toronto school where I had told a story loosely based on family personalities and Saskatchewan fishing adventures, a little boy came up to me and said, "This is true, really true, my grandfather knows your uncles, and they went fishing last week." The story based in my memory and imagination became so real to someone who'd never been to my province. I think it was the same school where someone asked, "Do you have pizza in Saskatchewan?"

Anita Daher I was presenting my first novel, *Flight from Big Tangle*, to students at a school in Yellowknife. It was an aviation-based presentation, and there was one 12-year-old student who impressed me with his knowledge of airplanes and the theory of flight. The bigger surprise was when this student reached out to me on Facebook 20 years later. He remembered my presentation

EPIC ADVENTURE READS FROM CANADIAN AUTHORS



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— Kirkus Reviews



(and I remembered him!), and now works in the aviation industry in Australia.

What advantages have you discovered in giving virtual presentations/workshops compared to in-person?

Lee Edward Fodi I am the type of author who is very visual, which means I rely heavily on brainstorming in my notebook, drawing in my sketchbook, and finding or building props. When I'm physically on tour, I can't bring as much stuff as I'd like to, but in a virtual presentation, I can show so many fun things! For Book Week 2022, I intend to show a lot of brooms, which played an important part in writing *Spell Sweeper*. (Brooms are definitely not easy to pack!)

Ruth Ohi Virtual visits are great for connecting with kids through my Call-and-Response Draw Alongs. Together we create fun characters and stories with everyone having a front-row seat in my home studio. This wouldn't be possible with an in-person visit—my studio is super tiny!

Lois Peterson My greatest fear doing in-person visits is getting lost or arriving late to a school or library. I do like to boast that I have never been late for an important engagement. I hate to waste people's time by having them wait for me. Staying home and visiting remotely means I don't have far to go to my desk, know my way, and have far less reasons—or excuses—for not showing up on time.

Dominique Pelletier Virtual presentations are great because they force me to clean my messy office once in a while! The best part is that I can travel across Canada without even putting on my shoes!

Soyeon Kim I can connect with students and teachers across Canada (and even around the world)! It is also more efficient since travel time is saved, more time is spent for planning, connecting, and catching up!

Isabelle Groc Virtual presentations have allowed me to bring together separate experiences of how children and adults connect to the natural world from wherever they are. We can have rich conversations where we share how we individually relate to nature and wildlife in our local areas and reflect on the universality of these experiences.

Do you have memories of meeting an author/illustrator when you were a kid? Who was it and what impact did that experience have?

Erin Alladin One year, my grandmother took me to a festival in Parry Sound where Jean Little read from her middle-grade novel *The Belonging Place*. Seeing that authors were real people—sometimes real people with guide dogs and glitchy 1990s voice-to-text computer programs—was so powerful for a kid who never stopped scribbling. I devoured all her books and always felt absurdly connected to her by those few minutes in which she signed my book and spoke a few encouraging words.

Emma FitzGerald Growing up, author David Bouchard was my elementary school principal. He would regularly come into our classroom to share his latest book project while it was in process. I was especially fascinated by the work of the illustrators. His enthusiasm for children's literature was infectious, and his career path made it feel like making books could be a possibility for me.

Janice Lynn Mather There was a Bahamian cultural icon when I was growing up, Kayla Lockhart-Edwards, who introduced me to Bahamian oral folktales. Every story began: "Once upon a time was an old, old time, monkey chew tobacco and spit white lime, bullfrog jump from back to bank while mosquito keepin' the time." Every tale concluded, "Wire bend, story end." It was an integral introduction to rhythmic language, to poetry, rhyme, and wordplay, and to the power and persistence of spoken traditions.

Why is a national tour like Canadian Children's Book Week so important?

Angela Misri I know that I spent a lot of my young life believing that I couldn't be a writer because, as a South Asian girl growing up in Calgary, I didn't see myself in the characters or on the author pages of the books I loved. I think showing kids of every background that they can be part of the writing community (and we need them) is vital.

Gillian Sze Canadian literature, in general, is so alive. I'm continually wowed by the literary and artistic talent across the country. It's this beautiful team effort amongst teachers, librarians, organizers, and artists to bring literature closer to the children—and that matters most!

Nhung Tran-Davies A national tour is important because it brings authors from across the country right into the children's classroom. It makes the stories more personal and inspires reflections and connections to important issues. The tour provides children with opportunities to hear stories they would not otherwise read or hear about, hence gaining a greater appreciation of the diverse voices in Canada.

Ginalina It is so valuable to give students a mosaic of positive role models who, in their unique ways, help make the world a more literate, creative, colourful, and compassionate place. After all, who knows how this year's national Book Week tour may inspire a new generation of young Canadian leaders toward a brighter future!? Sometimes all it takes is one drop in the ocean to start a beautiful ripple effect.

Michael Hutchinson My Elders teach me that the lessons of Creation come through the land. Canada is a huge country with many different landscapes, which means many different sets of lessons. Events like Canadian Children's Book Week help young people better understand their whole country. Storytellers build their teachings using the history and resources of their environment, thereby spreading the understandings inherent in the varied landscapes spread from coast to coast to coast. 🌊

Visit bookweek.ca to learn more about Canadian Children's Book Week 2022.

Learn More About
Canadian Children's Book Week



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF

THE CANADIAN CHILDREN'S BOOK CENTRE

Tuesday, June 7, 2022 | 6:00-8:00 pm EDT

Tune in virtually. More information to come.

Members and the public welcome!



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT BOOKCENTRE.CA

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

To all members: The Canadian Children's Book Centre's Annual General Meeting is taking place on Tuesday, June 7, 2022 virtually. In accordance with Section 3.04(b) of our bylaws please accept this notice as a formal call for the nomination of directors. The members will elect new director(s) to the board to fill four vacancies at the Annual General Meeting. We welcome nominations from the general membership.

If you are a member in good standing with the Canadian Children's Book Centre and have someone in mind who you think would be an asset to the CCBC and its mission and goals, please send the name of the person you are nominating along with their mailing address, email address, current telephone number and a short bio to Rose Vespa at rose@bookcentre.ca.

Qualities we are looking for in a potential board member:

- strong belief in and commitment to the mission and goals of the CCBC
- would be interested in people with background in finance, public relations, fundraising, IT or website specialization
- must work well in groups
- although not essential, a plus would be some background in children's literature
- able to commit to giving time and energy to the organization

Once a nomination is received by the nominating committee of the board it will issue to the nominee a form of consent that must be completed by the nominee and returned as soon as reasonably possible and in any event prior to the Annual General Meeting. A nominee shall also meet any other requirements for nomination determined by the board of directors from time to time.

Nominations must be received by May 4, 2022 in order for them to be considered by the nominations committee of the board.

The purpose of the meeting, in addition to electing directors, is for the members to appoint an auditor to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting and to receive the audited financial statements.*



The names of the individuals nominated for election as directors and the name of the auditor being recommended for appointment will be available by May 13, 2022 at bookcentre.ca/agm2022.

Members are reminded that they may appoint a proxy to attend the Annual General Meeting on their behalf. Any such appointment must be evidenced by a document in writing, signed by the member and received by the CCBC prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting. A proxy form will be available online at bookcentre.ca/agm2022 by May 13, 2022.

*The audited financial statements will be available by May 13, 2022. Any member may, on request, obtain a copy.

Beautiful Books

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. But when it comes to children's books, beauty is in the eye of the reader. Canada is home to some of the world's most talented illustrators. These illustrators bring stories to life with watercolours, pen and ink, gouache, acrylic and oil paints, and digital mediums. Meghan Howe, the CCBC's Library Coordinator, has compiled a list of books that have garnered attention for their beautiful illustrations and design. These books are a feast for the eyes and would make great additions to public, school and home libraries.

PICTURE BOOKS FOR PRESCHOOL TO GRADE 7

Africville

written by Shauntay Grant
illustrated by Eva Campbell
Groundwood Books, 2018

At the annual summer Africville Reunion Festival in Halifax, Nova Scotia, a young girl imagines what the vibrant community was once like—from the brightly painted houses nestled into the hillside to the pond where all the kids went rafting. Coming out of her reverie, she visits the present-day park and the sundial where her great-grandmother's name is carved in stone.

The Barnabus Project

written and illustrated by the Fan Brothers
Tundra Books, 2020

Imprisoned in a laboratory deep underneath the Perfect Pets pet store, Barnabus—half mouse, half elephant—is a Failed Project, kept out of sight with all the other Failed Projects. When Barnabus learns that all the Failed Projects are about to be recycled, he and his fellow misfits embark on a perilous adventure to find freedom.

I Talk Like a River

written by Jordan Scott
illustrated by Sydney Smith
Neal Porter Books/Holiday House, 2020

I wake up each morning with the sounds of words all around me. And I can't say them all... When a boy who stutters has a 'bad speech day,' his father takes him on a walk by the river to help him find his voice. The boy is reassured and comforted by his father's love and by finding a connection with the natural world.

On the Trapline

written by David A. Robertson
illustrated by Julie Flett
Tundra Books, 2021

A boy and his Moshom (grandpa) take a trip together into the Northern wilderness, to the trapline where his Moshom grew up. There, the pair fish in the lake and pick berries to eat. Moshom points out places he remembers and tells his grandson what it was like to live on the trapline. A heartfelt story about intergenerational connection.

The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden

written by Heather Smith
illustrated by Rachel Wada
Orca Book Publishers, 2019

Makio lost his father in the tsunami. Everyone in his village lost someone. Silenced by grief, Makio's anger at the ocean grows. Then his neighbour, Mr. Hirota, starts a mysterious project—a phone booth with a disconnected phone. Now the villagers can talk to their loved ones... their words carried on the wind.

Picture the Sky

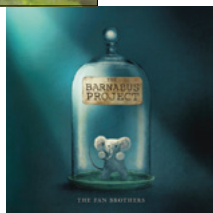
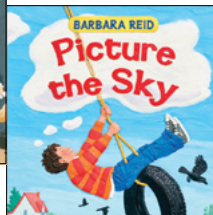
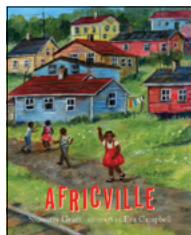
written and illustrated by Barbara Reid
North Winds Press/Scholastic Canada, 2017

The sky tells many stories: in the clouds, in the stars, in the imagination. In lyrical text and brilliantly coloured Plasticine illustrations, renowned artist Barbara Reid brings her unique vision to the sky above us and around us, in all its moods. Picture the sky. How do you feel?

The Three Brothers

written and illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay
Groundwood Books, 2020

Finn and his younger brothers, Leo and Ooley, love reading stories about animals living in forests, on mountains or in the Arctic. And so, one morning, they set out on a snowy expedition to search for wild animals. In their grandfather's time, the forest was full of animals—but today, the forest is quiet. Where have the animals gone?



JUNIOR & INTERMEDIATE FICTION AND NON-FICTION FOR GRADES 3 TO 9

Child Soldier: When Boys and Girls Are Used in War (CitizenKid)

written by Michael Chikwanine and
Jessica Dee Humphreys
illustrated by Claudia Dávila
Kids Can Press, 2015

In 1993, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, five-year-old Michel and his friends were kidnapped by rebel militants and thrust into a terrifying and violent world—forced to become child soldiers. A compelling story of resilience and courage, this book is Michel Chikwanine's account of his time in a rebel militia, his escape and his family's new life in Canada.

Crows: Genius Birds (Science Comics)

written and illustrated by Kyla Vanderklugt
First Second, 2020

Did you know that crows make their own tools, lead complex social lives, and never forget a human face? Scientists are just beginning to unlock the secrets of the crow's brain to discover how these avian Einsteins can be as smart as some primates.

Jane, the Fox & Me

written by Fanny Britt
illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault
translated by Christelle Morelli and Susan Ouriou
Groundwood Books, 2013

Hélène has been inexplicably ostracized by the girls who were once her friends. Her school life is full of whispers and lies. Her loving mother is too tired to be any help. Fortunately, Hélène has Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and on a trip to nature camp, she makes a friend.

Operatic

written by Kyo Maclear
illustrated by Byron Eggenchwiler
Groundwood Books, 2019

Charlie is trying to find her perfect song for a music class assignment. But she's having difficulty concentrating—she can't stop noticing Emile or wondering about Luka. Then, her music teacher plays a recording of opera diva Maria Callas. Charlie is entranced and learns about Maria's musical life. Can Charlie follow the opera diva's example when it comes to her own life?

Shirley & Jamila Save Their Summer (Shirley & Jamila, Book 1)

written and illustrated by Gillian Goerz
Dial Books for Young Readers, 2020

Jamila moves to a new neighbourhood and meets Shirley. Both girls need a plan for the summer, so they might as well become friends. Then a kid begs for Shirley's help finding his stolen pet gecko, and Jamila discovers Shirley's secret: she's the neighbourhood's kid detective!

SENIOR FICTION AND NON-FICTION FOR GRADES 7 AND UP

Betty: The Helen Betty Osborne Story

written by David A. Robertson
illustrated by Scott B. Henderson
HighWater Press, 2015

Following her dream of becoming a teacher, Helen Betty Osborne left her home to attend a residential school in Manitoba. On November 13, 1971, Betty was abducted and brutally murdered by four young men. Initially met with silence and indifference, her tragic murder resonates loudly today.

If I Go Missing

written by Brianna Jonnie with
Nahanni Shingoose
illustrated by Nshannacappo
Lorimer, 2019

In 2016, Ojibwe teen Brianna Jonnie wrote a letter to the Winnipeg Chief of Police asking, "If I go missing, do not treat me like the Indigenous person I am proud to be." This graphic novel brings her powerful letter to life, exposing the injustice and unequal treatment missing Indigenous people receive by police and the media in Canada.

Secret Path

written by Gord Downie
illustrated by Jeff Lemire
Simon & Schuster Canada, 2016

Chanie Wenjack, 12, misnamed Charlie by his teachers, died on October 22, 1966, trying to escape residential school and return to his family. Acknowledging a dark part of Canada's history—the mistreatment of Indigenous children and families by the residential school system—the story of Chanie Wenjack's tragic death compels all Canadians to make peace with the truth of the past. Chanie's story is Canada's story.

SuperMutant Magic Academy

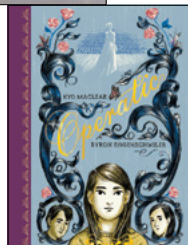
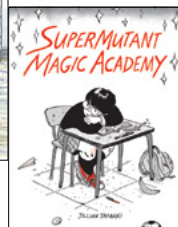
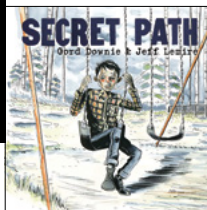
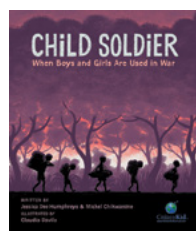
written and illustrated by Jillian Tamaki
Drawn & Quarterly, 2015

The SuperMutant Magic Academy may be a prep school for mutants and witches, but their paranormal abilities take a back seat to everyday teen concerns. Whether the magic is mundane or miraculous, the jokes are precise and devastating.

This Place: 150 Years Retold

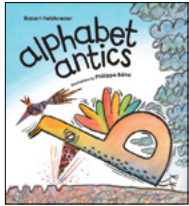
edited by HighWater Press
illustrated by various artists
HighWater Press, 2019

Stories of resistance, stories of overcoming, stories of surviving. Explore the past 150 years through the eyes of Indigenous creators in this ground-breaking graphic novel anthology. Beautifully illustrated, these stories are an emotional and enlightening journey through Indigenous wonderworks, psychic battles, and time travel.



We Recommend

NEW CANADIAN BOOKS FOR TODDLERS TO TEENS



Alphabet Antics

written by Robert Heidbreder
illustrated by Philippe Béha
Tradewind Books, 2022
978-1-926890-38-8 (hc) \$19.95
for Preschool to Kindergarten

Picture Book | Alphabet Books | Stories in Rhyme

What a delightful and surprising book is *Alphabet Antics*! Instead of finding a collection of words beginning with each letter of the alphabet, the letters in this book truly take off in unexpected and adventurous ways. For example, “a” wiggles its hook, right off its back /...” This book focuses on how the small letters look as opposed to how they sound. And sometimes, the letters fool the reader by turning themselves into something else—sometimes another letter! For example:

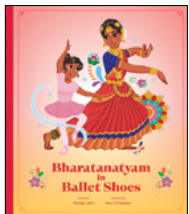
“f tugs off its tie
and throws it away,
flips upside down
and jokes, “I’m a j!”

“g” becomes “o” because of an elephant’s toe, “i” flips to turn into an exclamation point, “t” topples to become an “x,” and “e” turns into a yo-yo—you’ll have to see that for yourself. In other words, mayhem ensues!

In four short rhyming lines, author and poet Robert Heidbreder turns the letters on their heads, and by doing so, the reader begins to see the shape of the letters in new and interesting ways. It’s an unusual concept and completely enchanting.

Illustrator Philippe Béha brings his own brand of mischief to this silliness. Full-bleed double-page spreads capture each absurd situation, whether “k” rests and turns into a bird’s nest or “l” becomes a slide. Each letter has its own distinct personality, with expressive faces. Words and pictures work together beautifully. *Alphabet Antics* is a riotous and joyful book and will enjoy many repeated readings and visual explorations.

Theo Heras is a children’s librarian and author living in Toronto.



Bharatanatyam in Ballet Shoes

written by Mahak Jain
illustrated by Anu Chouhan
Annick Press, 2022
978-1-77321-615-7 (hc) \$22.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 3

Picture Book | Dance | Bharatanatyam | Ballet | Cultural Fusion | Identity | Insecurity | Belonging

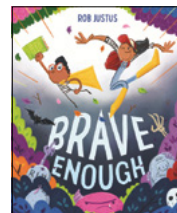
Young Paro believes her background in Bharatanatyam, a form of Indian classical dance she has learned from her mother, will hinder her from learning ballet. Two friendly classmates—Marco, a fan of ballerina Anna Pavlova, and Dana, influenced by breakdancing—welcome Paro to ballet class and are open to learning from and teaching

her. Nevertheless, after difficulty emulating Madame’s ballet moves, Paro concludes that she must stop practicing Bharatanatyam, where the goal is to move like a queen, and practice only ballet, where the goal is to flit like a fairy. Paro’s insecurity gives way to confidence and her beliefs about cultural divisions change when her mother appears as a guest artist and dances both Bharatanatyam and ballet with Madame, inspiring the class and demonstrating cultural fluidity.

Anu Chouhan’s illustrations capture Paro’s cultural divisions by depicting ballet backgrounds in pastel pinks, greys and mauves, while Bharatanatyam backgrounds are fuchsia and the fusion of the two is a warm salmon. Using a visual vocabulary, Chouhan depicts the differences between ballet, with dancers surrounded by twirly movement ribbons and airy stars, and Bharatanatyam, with dancers sprouting mandalas of jewel-coloured flowers and striking vivid boteh (droplet-shaped) motifs from their heels.

An afterword includes information about the origin of Bharatanatyam, its founder Rukmini Devi, and Anna Pavlova, another dancer inspired by foreign traditions. There is an etymological explanation of ballet and Bharatanatyam and craft instructions for ghungroo (bell anklets). This book makes a heartwarming read-aloud for younger children with its message about belonging and cultural fluidity.

Aliki Tryphonopoulos is the parent of a young reader and a former children’s librarian.



Brave Enough

written and illustrated by Rob Justus
Page Street Kids, 2022
978-1-64567-349-1 (hc) \$22.99
for Preschool to Grade 2

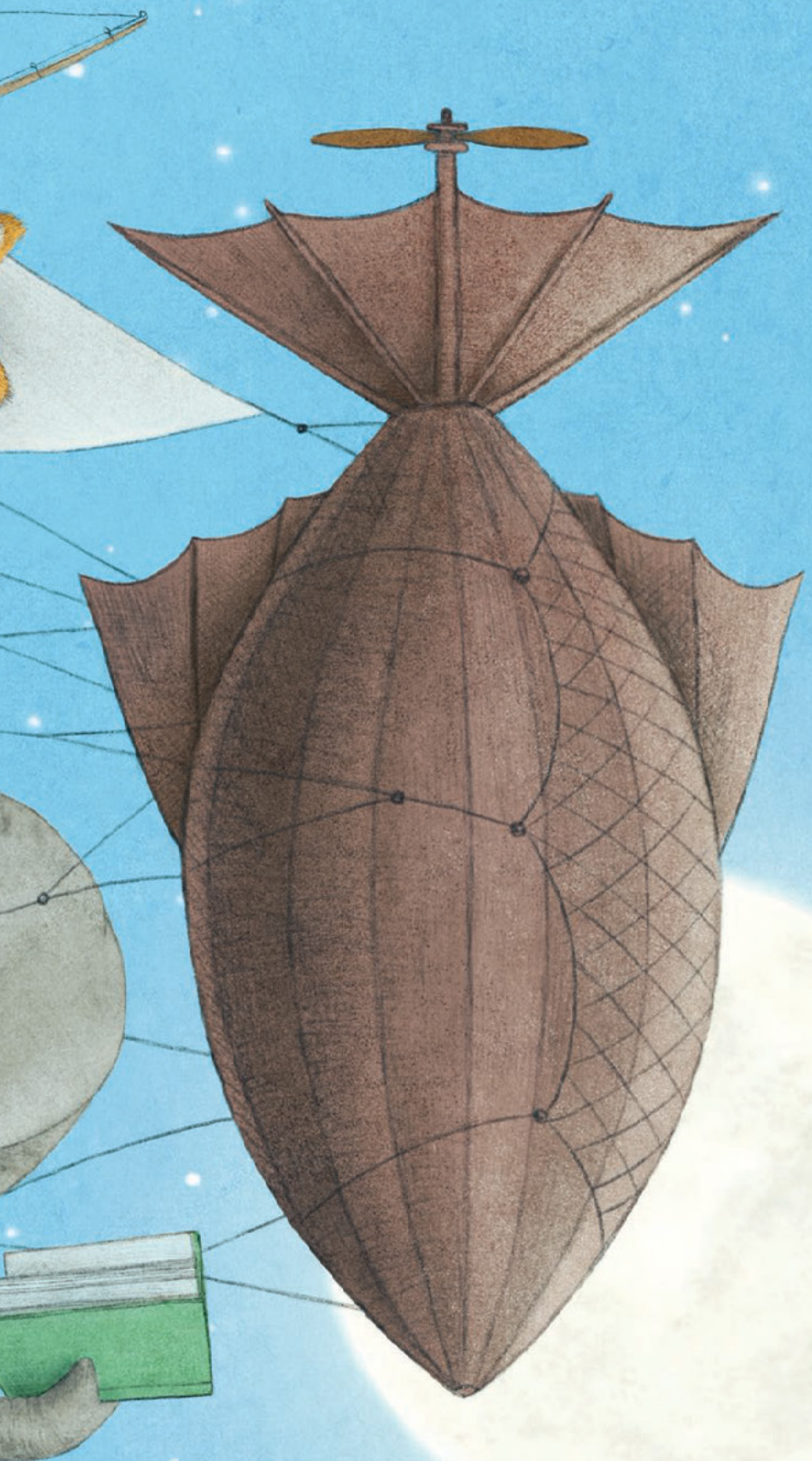
Picture Book | Fiction | Humour | Bravery | Monsters | Sibling Relationships

Scared from seeing monsters everywhere, Little Brother spends hours reading about the creatures to understand them. Big Sister decides it’s time to prove that monsters don’t exist and that Little Brother can be brave just like her. Her attempts to help meet resistance, and even giving him a flashy yellow cape that matches her boots has no success. Instead, accosted by icky bugs, Little Brother trips, dragging his sister down a deep hole, at the bottom of which they meet... a monster! Big Sister is not so brave now, but Little Brother reads his *Monster Hoe-Down* book and knows just what to do. In the end, Big Brother seems unafraid of anything, but Monster and Big Sister can’t say the same thing of vampires, ghosts and, of course, zombies.

Rob Justus’ text is fun and breezy, rollicking along with the brash, bold confidence and arrogance of Big Sister’s narration and bubbling with moments of rhyming, repetition, and alliteration. The characters are engaging, their personalities and fluctuating self-perceived levels of power are relatable to readers, particularly those who find themselves not listened to and underestimated by others. The digital illustrations are bright and full of humour, infusing characters’ faces
Continued on page 27

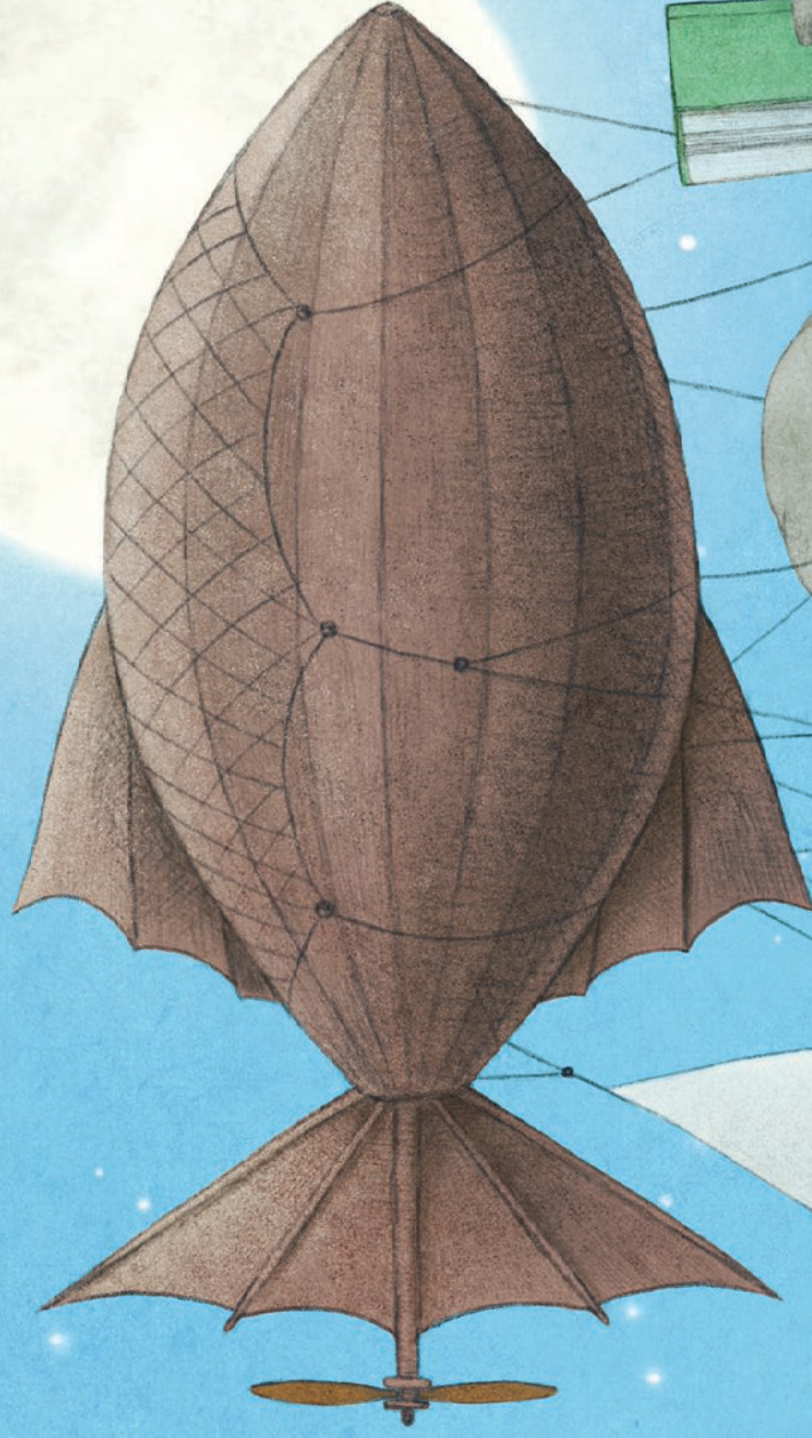
Semaine du livre canadien pour la jeunesse 1^{er} au 7 mai 2022

Lire à tout vent



Canadian Children's Book Week May 1-7, 2022

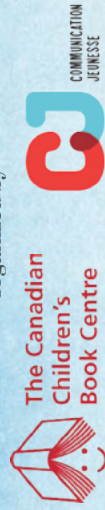
Sail into Stories



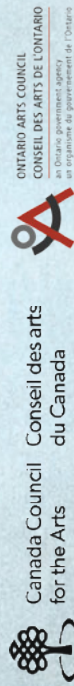


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ILLUSTRATION PAR LES FRÈRES FAN

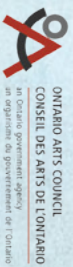
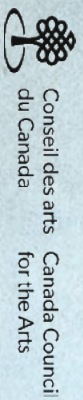
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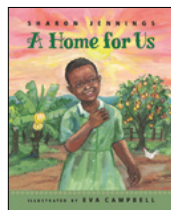


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and body postures with delightful expressiveness and dynamism. Readers will love perusing and comparing the collections of books on the front and back endpapers. And while Big Sister and Monster shiver in fear of other dreadful creatures at the end, a confident Little Brother has better things to do now.

Ken Kilback is a writer and primary teacher in Vancouver.



A Home for Us

written by Sharon Jennings
illustrated by Eva Campbell
Red Deer Press, 2022
978-0-88995-575-2 (hc) \$19.95
for Preschool to Grade 3

Picture Book | Africa | Orphanages | Family

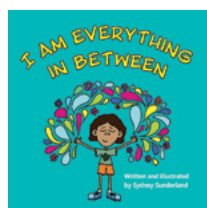
Set in Kikima, Kenya, a young girl is found alone and malnourished. With care and compassion, an orphanage director, “Mum,” nurses the child back to health and brings her home. Yula, who is “maybe four,” learns how to walk and talk at Hope Development Centre. Thriving in this supportive, loving environment, the child begins to fully comprehend the meaning of “us” and embraces being part of a family.

Award-winning author Sharon Jennings bases this moving story on real people and places she visits in Kenya. The distinct narrative voice is compelling and immersive: “She curls up on soft. Not hard. Not dirt. Not ground. ‘Bed,’ says stranger. Will she fall?” As the days’ pass (“Light and dark, light and dark, light and dark”), Yula goes to school and realizes she isn’t alone anymore: “Others are all like Yula. Mothers and fathers are late. Others are all orphans, too.”

Eva Campbell’s realistic acrylic and ink paintings capture many tender scenes between Mum and Yula. When a new little boy arrives, Yula’s range of emotions is palpable, from tear-stained jealousy to anger and insecurity, to resilience and open-armed acceptance.

In true community-building spirit, a portion of the author’s royalties will be donated to support Kenyan children.

Linda Ludke is a librarian in London, Ontario.



I Am Everything in Between

Written and illustrated by Sydney Sunderland
Rebel Mountain Press, 2022
978-1-989996-06-5 (pb) \$13.95
for Preschool to Grade 3

Picture Book | Gender Identity | Gender Roles | Gender Equality | LGBTQ2S+ | Acceptance | Inclusivity

I Am Everything In Between introduces the reader to different children, the things that they love and how those things don’t define their gender. While some children in this picture book are boys and girls who don’t perfectly fit the gender roles typically assigned to them, others were assigned a different gender at birth than the one they now identify with. Some don’t identify as either a boy or a girl at all.

In simple language and with bright art that portrays all sorts of different personalities, this story treats each child with love and shows the reader that they can be anyone they want to be. A great book for starting discussions about gender with young readers and encouraging them to reflect on their own identities, at the heart of *I Am Everything In Between* is the message that we are all amazing.

Emma Hunter is the Marketing and Communications Coordinator at the Canadian Children’s Book Centre. She lives in Toronto with her very fluffy cat.



I Can See You

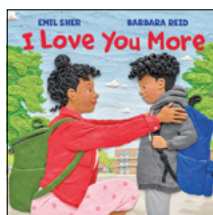
written by Rosemarie Avrana Meyok
illustrated by Michelle Simpson
Inhabit Media, 2022
978-1-77227-420-2 (board book) \$12.95
for Preschool to Kindergarten

Picture Book | Love | Family | Inuit | Indigenous

Within this title, little ones will be immersed in a vibrant landscape showcasing the beauty of the North in every season. The text is loving and expressive, for example: “My little sweetheart, I can smell you. I kunik you with my nose. I can smell your skin.” There is an explanatory note at the beginning that the meaning of kunik (pronounced KOO-nik) is “A kiss given by placing the nose on a person’s face and breathing in.” The book evokes a place of safety and warmth by exploring the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, feel and taste. This demonstrates love in its purest form—the love of a mother and child.

Michelle Simpson’s full-page illustrations are colourful and cheery. Through the artwork, the joy of the text radiates on each page! The culture is on display through the clothing, the mother’s jewelry, tattoos, the beautiful northern landscapes and even the toys. With sunny spring colours, lovely flowers and dogs playing in the distance, the stunning northern lights in the sky, this story is as loving and as cozy as the knitted quilt that the mother and child lay under. Highly recommended for home and public libraries.

Colette Poitras is a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, holds a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science and is the Manager of the Indigenous Public Outreach for Public Library Services Branch, Alberta.



I Love You More

written by Emil Sher
illustrated by Barbara Reid
North Winds Press/Scholastic Canada, 2022
978-1-4431-7580-7 (hc) \$21.99
for all ages

Picture Book | Wordplay | Family | Neighbourhood | Diversity | Love

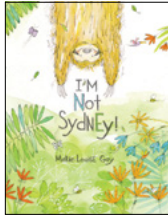
How many ways can one say “I love you”? As we accompany young Des from the moment he wakes in the morning until his bedtime, we are privy to a variety of creative proclamations which arise between him and his mother: “I love you more than flowers love noses.” “I love you more than erasers love mistakes.” As his day ushers him from home to school and home again, we accompany Des through a diverse and active urban neighbourhood where interactions among individuals of all ages, genders and backgrounds emphasize the importance of close connections and relationships.

Inspired by a word game that he played with his daughters, Emil Sher’s lyrical text creates amiable comparisons between pairs of words in a certain order. The second part satisfies the first simply because it feels needed. Suitable for all ages, Sher aptly explains the game at the book’s conclusion.

Barbara Reid’s captivating Plasticine artwork, skillfully photographed by Ian Crysler, introduces readers to an array of individuals, as well as indoor and outdoor settings, made special by the inclusion of the minutest of details. Due to Reid’s ingenuity and uncanny powers of observation, readers will be mesmerized by the seemingly ordinary transformed into the extraordinary. Similar to a game of “I Spy,” there are many surprising delights awaiting discovery, including numerous hearts, often quite hidden, throughout the publication.

What’s not to love?

Senta Ross is a former elementary teacher and teacher-librarian in Kitchener, Ontario.



I'm Not Sydney!

written and illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay
Groundwood Books, 2022
978-1-77306-597-7 (hc) \$19.99
for Preschool to Grade 2

Picture Book | Imagination | Summertime Play | Transformation | Jungle Creatures | Childhood Magic

As he hangs upside down in a tree, young Sydney imagines himself as a slow-moving sloth. "I smile. I sleep. I daydream," he tells his friend, Sami. "My days are full!" Believing sloths to be far too sluggish, Sami scuttles up the same tree and imagines herself to be a spider monkey, all the while chattering, "Fast is fun! Fast is best!" One by one, their friends Edward, Anamaria and Brigitte join in on the fun, transforming themselves into an elephant, an anteater and a bat, respectively. What an adventurous time these children have as they hang, climb, lumber, crawl and fly through their make-believe jungle while adapting seamlessly to their new personas! When their reverie is suddenly interrupted by their parents' calls to come for supper, they race to their homes, though not quite leaving their respective animal idiosyncrasies behind.

Marie-Louise Gay understands children well. As demonstrated in her exquisite writing and enchanting watercolour, pencil and ink illustrations, her depictions of the magic of childhood are masterful in their simplicity and authenticity. One hopes that Sydney and his friends' vivid imaginations and sense of wonder will remain with them for a very long time to come.

Senta Ross



It's Me, Henry!

written by Stéphanie Deslauriers
illustrated by Geneviève Després
translated by Charles Simard
Orca Book Publishers, 2022
978-1-459-83083-7 (hc) \$19.95
for Preschool to Grade 1

Picture Book | Autism Spectrum Disorder | Disabilities and Special Needs | Nature | School | Botany | Friendship | Acceptance

We all grow differently, as Stéphanie Deslauriers and Geneviève Després remind us in the beautiful picture book *It's Me, Henry!* Translated by Charles Simard, this version of the Governor General's Literary Award-nominated title *Laurent, c'est moi!* is a beautiful rendition that leaves readers enamoured with Henry and his love of botany.

Young Henry feels different from the other kids in his class and has trouble fitting in and making friends. With the help of a few caring adults in his life, he finds common ground and builds a friendship through a field trip to a botanical garden.

Each page is a treat for the eyes as Després' watercolour plants fill the spaces with beauty and movement. The reader is left with a feeling of delight as they progress through Deslauriers' and Simard's beautiful tale. The garden metaphors of growing and changing will not be lost on even the youngest readers as they are transported into Henry's world. Deslaurier builds on her experiences with her stepson, who is autistic, to ground the story with a wonderful authenticity. This book creates a wonderful example of acceptance and building understanding through subtle storytelling and is a wonderful tale of seeing the beauty in the people and spaces around you.

Ashley Pamerter works as a Team Lead of Programs at Girl Guides of Canada—Guides du Canada and helps build activities for the youth in Guiding. She is currently the co-chair of the Red Maple Steering Committee and volunteers with the Cobourg Public Library.



A Long Way Home

written by Jean Little
illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard
North Winds Press/Scholastic Canada, 2022
978-1-4431-7091-8 (hc) \$19.99
for Grades 1 to 3

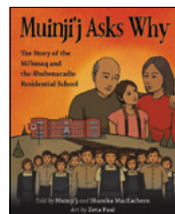
Picture Book | Immigration | Friendship | Migration | Monarch Butterflies | Life Cycle | Endangered Species

Jane and Maya could not be more different. Outgoing and talkative, Jane has lived in her home her entire life, while her quiet neighbour, Maya, is new to this country. A school lesson about endangered animals touches them deeply, and both vow to save monarch butterflies after learning about their many survival challenges. The girls plant milkweed seeds in a sunny section of the garden and then begin to "wait, water, and watch." To their delight, a monarch butterfly, attracted to the new plants, lays an egg underneath a leaf. After witnessing the monarch's life cycle as the egg transforms into a caterpillar, then a chrysalis and finally a newly hatched butterfly, the two friends become concerned about its welfare during its long and dangerous migration to Mexico. Only then does Maya reveal her own family's challenging migration story to find a safe home in Canada.

In her final publication, author Jean Little, who passed away in 2020, has extended a seemingly simple narrative about childhood friendship into a moving story encompassing the broader themes of migration, immigration and obstacles faced by the natural world. The action taken by the two young protagonists to protect a vulnerable species may well provide the inspiration and courage needed for young readers to make a difference. "We won't just wish..." Helpful facts about monarch migration are provided at the book's conclusion.

Gabrielle Grimard's appealing illustrations, rendered in watercolours, gouache and oil, invite readers to experience the wonders, mysteries and perils found in a neighbourhood garden, a place perhaps mirroring the beauty and potential dangers in the world beyond.

Senta Ross



Muinji'j Asks Why: The Story of the Mi'kmaq and the Shubenacadie Residential School

written by Muinji'j (Breighlynn MacEachern) and Shanika MacEachern
illustrated by Zeta Paul
Nimbus Publishing, 2022
978-1-77471-047-0 (pb) \$22.95
for Grades 1 to 4

Picture Book | Residential School | Culture | Nova Scotia | Mi'kmaq | Indigenous

Muinji'j comes home upset from school one day. They are learning about residential schools and the teacher had shared something different from what she heard Nana and Papa say previously. Nana and Papa encourage her to sit down while they tell her the story of the Mi'kmaq. They gently speak to her about their lovely culture, about meeting people different from themselves, about the treaties, the reserve system, assimilation, residential school, and the fact that many children never made it home from residential school.

Zeta Paul's stunning illustrations use warm tones to demonstrate the beauty of Mi'kmaq culture, which contrast with the cooler tones when remembering the times at the residential schools and the harm that they did.

Muinji'j Asks Why includes a content note with a phone number to the Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line. Reading this story is a gentle way to teach children about the complex history of colonization, assimilation, and the tragedy of residential schools. Nana

Daphne's Bees

written by Catherine Dempsey
illustrated by Veselina Tomova

"Beekeepers know the sweetest tasting honey comes fresh from a beehive—this book is honey from the hive! It reminds readers of all ages of the special connection between us and our environment, as well as the importance of family, sharing, and time spent together."

~ Dr. Andrew Byers, Senior Apiculturist & Program Lead,
Atlantic Tech Transfer Team for Apiculture

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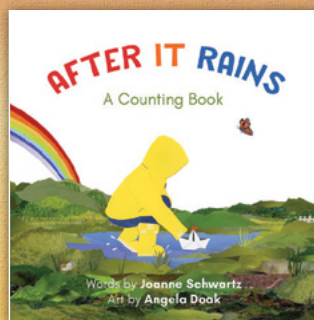
978-1-77471-039-5 | March
\$22.95 | picture book | Ages: 3-7



Over by the Harbour

Counting in Outport Newfoundland and Labrador
Words by Dwayne LaFitte
Art by Thérèse Cilia

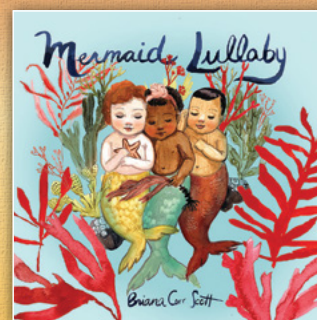
978-1-77471-060-9 | April
\$12.95 | picture book | Ages: 3-7 | illustrations



After It Rains

A Counting Book
Words by Joanne Schwartz
Art by Angela Doak

978-1-77471-037-1 | April
\$13.95 | board book | Ages: 0-3



Mermaid Lullaby

Briana Corr Scott

978-1-77471-038-8 | April
\$12.95 | board book | Ages: 0-3

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tells Muinji'j that now they live by "Etuapmumk," which is Mi'kmaq for "two-eyed seeing." Even though they understand and accept Canadian ways, as L'nu ('The People' in Mi'kmaq) they are also proud and practice their own culture and traditions. It ends on an uplifting and empowering note with Nana and Papa assuring Muinji'j that they are making sure teachers know the true story because they have told Muinji'j the story.

Recommended for home, school and public libraries.

Colette Poiras



My Words Flew Away Like Birds

written by Debora Pearson
 illustrated by Shrija Jain
 Kids Can Press, 2021
 978-1-5253-0318-0 (hc) \$19.99
 978-1-5253-0939-7 (eBook) \$9.99
 for Kindergarten to Grade 3

Picture Book | Immigration Experience | Language Learning | Friendship | Resilience | Kindness | Multiculturalism

A young girl with curly pigtales narrates this story of what it feels like to move to a new country and learn a new language. The sights and smells of her life are brought into tender focus through the words and pictures. She sees "the world from my bedroom window." The accompanying illustration shows a dreamy girl looking out the window in a rainbow T-shirt and overalls. On the opposite page is a divided window in which four scenes depict the girl's daily life.

To prepare for the move, the girl's mother teaches her new words—"Hello," "Thank you," etc.—which "felt strange and lumpy in my mouth." On arriving, these polite phrases are lost in the colloquial expressions like, "Hey! What's up?" and "Whachadoing?" The pigtailed girl is shown tumbling in the confusion of these strange sounds.

A few misunderstandings and incidents occur. Eventually, the girl meets a friend. She is also beginning to make sense of the new language. In the final double-page spread, a window shows happy new images—a lovely little house, a new friend, and a new baby.

Debora Pearson's gentle and sympathetic storytelling is accompanied by Shrija Jain's bold, imaginative, and childlike illustrations. There is a kind of dissonance between the use of bold black hand-lettering and black outlines in the illustrations against the soft digitally-coloured pastels of the scenes that seem to suggest the girl's own mixed-up feelings. *My Words Flew Away Like Birds* is an empathetic and optimistic story about the immigration experience that will resonate with many young readers.

Theo Heras



Olivia Wrapped in Vines

written by Maude Nepveu-Villeneuve
 illustrated by Sandra Dumais
 translated by Charles Simard
 Orca Book Publishers, 2022
 978-1-4598-3103-2 (hc) \$19.95
 for Preschool to Grade 2

Picture Book | Emotions and Feelings | Managing Anxiety | Identifying Stressful Situations | Empathy

On the outside, Olivia appears to be a happy child. She has a bicycle, red shoes decorated with stars and a stuffed toy lion that accompanies her everywhere. What is hidden from view, however, are the 'vines' which seem to grow and surround her when she is feeling overwhelmed by events like seeing spiders, fighting with her

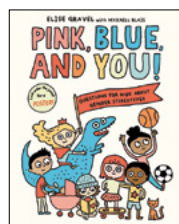
friends, going to the dentist, talking to strangers, "...and sometimes—NOTHING AT ALL!" With the vegetation serving as a metaphor for anxiety, Olivia describes the sensation: "My vines are full of thorns. They grow in my belly, and sometimes they wind all around me... And the worst part is, I'm the only one who can see them." Fortunately, Olivia has a very caring teacher who introduces her to coping strategies to manage stressful situations. "Have you tried our breathing exercises?... Close your eyes. Can you imagine yourself cutting the vines down?"

Narrated in a first-person voice, Maude Nepveu-Villeneuve has introduced the issue of anxiety in this perceptive story, encapsulating the powerful feelings that often seem impossible to overcome. A special message at the story's conclusion encourages children to identify the occasions when they feel worried and how they can manage and live with their emotions.

Sandra Dumais' colourful illustrations, rendered in a combination of inks, watercolours and markers, portray Olivia at home, at school and in the community in both stressful and stress-free situations.

How encouraging it will be for some young readers, who suffer as Olivia does, to know that they are not alone!

Senta Ross



Pink, Blue and You! Questions for Kids About Gender Stereotypes

written by Elise Gravel and Mykaell Blais
 illustrated by Elise Gravel
 Anne Schwartz Books, 2022
 978-0-5931-7864-5 (hc) \$23.99
 978-0-5931-7865-2 (eBook) \$11.99
 for Preschool to Grade 3

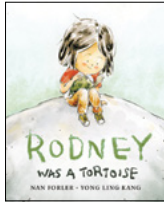
Picture Book | Gender Identity | Gender Roles | Gender Equality | LGBTQ2S+ | Bodies | Stereotypes | Acceptance | Inclusivity

Can boys play with dolls? Can girls wear pants and the colour blue? And who gets to decide whether they can or not? *Pink, Blue and You!* answers these questions and many more as Elise Gravel and Mykaell Blais look at the unwritten rules about gender and how they play a role in all of our lives.

This book is a fun, simple and straightforward introduction for young readers to learn about big issues, such as gender equality, gender identity, pronoun use, gay marriage and other LGBTQ2S+ issues. The authors do an excellent job at portraying these issues in a way that is accessible for young readers while encouraging them to look at themselves, their own gender and what they think about the ways that gender impacts their lives.

Written to prompt discussion and reflection, this book is a great starting point to learn about gender. Filled with facts, colourful art in Gravel's signature style and a message of acceptance, *Pink, Blue and You!* is a great book to help young readers broaden their perception of their own identity.

Emma Hunter



Rodney Was a Tortoise

written by Nan Forler
illustrated by Yong Ling Kang
Tundra Books, 2022
978-0-7352-6662-9 (hc) \$24.99
978-0-7352-6663-6 (eBook) \$11.99
for Preschool to Grade 2

Picture Book | Pets | Friendship | Grief and Loss | Empathy | Kindness

Pets, whether it be a dog or a cat, a hamster or an iguana, offer children unconditional love and acceptance, providing a comforting and constant presence in an ever-changing world. In this reassuring and gently humorous picture book, author Nan Forler introduces readers to Bernadette and her beloved tortoise, Rodney. Rodney is Bernadette's old pal, always there for her—loyal and true. Bernadette falls asleep each night gazing into his tank by her bedside.

But Rodney is very old (practically prehistoric!), and he moves slower and slower until the day he stops moving at all. There is a hole in Bernadette's heart and a hurt deep in her stomach that even ginger ale and crackers can't fix. At school the other kids play and talk as though Rodney never existed. In the schoolyard Bernadette sits apart, withdrawing deeper into her own shell until one day Amar asks her if she is sad about Rodney. His empathy and understanding are a balm to Bernadette's broken heart, and the heartwarming final spread portrays the two of them engrossed in a game of crokinole.

Forler's narrative deftly conveys a story about friendship and loss, grief and remembrance. Illustrator Yong Ling Kang's airy, whimsical pencil and watercolour vignettes are absolutely delightful, capturing both the special relationship between Bernadette and Rodney and Bernadette's profound sadness in the aftermath of Rodney's death.

This picture book is pitch-perfect, tempering the heartache of loss with the warmth of empathy and the joy of new friendships. A wonderful addition to any bookshelf.

Tracey Schindler is a book reviewer and former teacher living in Bethany, Ontario.



Sun in My Tummy

written by Laura Alary
illustrated by Andrea Blinick
Pajama Press, 2022
978-1-77278-241-7 (hc) \$22.95
for Preschool to Grade 2

Picture Book | Nature | Nutrition | Connection | Family | Plants | Farming

The sun is the true star of this charming picture book by Laura Alary and Andrea Blinick. Imagine waking up to the smell of warm oatmeal wafting through your hallway and you will be immediately transported into this lovely tale of how food gets to your table. Alary's free verse style storytelling brings you to the kitchen table of a mother who is teaching her young daughter the story of how her oatmeal came to be. Blinick's playful and rich illustrations, using a variety of mixed media, take the reader from farm to table and back again as the life cycle of plants and animals is explored in gentle ways, all coming back to the role of the sun. Using the sun as the unifier is a wonderful way for readers to immediately connect with the imaginings that fill each page.

Alary's work is quite timely as more and more children become removed from the process of how food makes it to their kitchens. The life cycle of plants, wrapped in beautiful descriptions and illustrations, is told in a tangible and meaningful way that will resonate with readers who often show an interest in the natural world in the early days of elementary school. *Sun in My Tummy* is a great supplement



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to any science lesson or a way to build gratitude and understanding in subtle ways for the role of nature in our lives.

Ashley Pamerter



The Tunnel

written by Sarah Howden
illustrated by Erika Rodriguez Medina
Owlkids Books, 2022
978-1-77147-427-6 (hc) \$19.99
for Preschool to Grade 3

Picture Book | Feelings and Emotions | Healing | Grief

After something bad happens, a young boy takes the time and space he needs to deal with difficult emotions. Not feeling like talking, he decides to dig a tunnel in his bedroom. His metaphoric journey takes him through dark places, but it is where he finds quiet. Unnoticed by the worms, beetles and moles, the child digs deep. Suddenly surfacing in his backyard, he catches a glimpse of his mother in the kitchen window. The familial warmth and love shining through are illuminating: “[S]omething shifts inside me. It nudges me like a dog’s nose. I could disappear forever, yes. But maybe not tonight.”

Light breaks through the darkness in Erika Rodriguez Medina’s striking, limited-palette illustrations. Hazy gray shadows are brightened by the soft glimmer from a glow worm-shaped nightlight. Seeing the familiar from a different perspective, the child regards the full moon as a “spotlight, clear and certain.”

Brilliant moments of clarity and emotional depth are gracefully captured in the spare text that cuts to the heart. When the little boy is ready, he crawls his way out of the tunnel. Feeling newly grounded, his senses are reinvigorated, likening the earthy soil smell to “mud pies and old leaves and basements.” Back home, the child’s mother gently removes a tiny twig from his hair, and this small, loving gesture offers a supportive, unspoken understanding that “we sometimes travel far away. Alone, where we don’t have to talk.”

Powerful and enlightening, *The Tunnel* is a picture book that radiates hope at the end.

Linda Ludke



This is the Boat that Ben Built

written by Jen Lynn Bailey
illustrated by Maggie Zeng
Pajama Press, 2022
978-1-77278-242-4 (hc) \$ 22.95
for Preschool to Grade 2

Picture Book | Exploration | River Ecology | River Animals | Humour | Poetry

After Ben puts the finishing touches on a small boat he has built and collects all the scientific supplies he needs, he slides the boat into the river and begins his journey. As he allows the river to carry him gently downstream, he marvels at everything he can observe in the ecosystem—fish and beaver, loon and goose, black bear and more, who all accompany him on his journey. Human and animal characters alike are all having a wonderfully lazy time when owl suddenly “Hoos on a whim,” startling heron and then setting in motion a successive series of setbacks that end with a fish being flipped out of the water and into Ben’s boat.

Patterned on the familiar “The House That Jack Built” nursery rhyme, Jen Lynn Bailey’s text is fun and easy to read, flowing smoothly with the right cadence that pulls the reader along. Maggie Zeng’s digital illustrations are beautiful and full of detail. Gentle humour infuses the story in both text and illustrations, and readers

will enjoy the sense of wonder always to be found in natural settings. Ben’s adventure takes place on a northern river ecosystem. Nine pages of back matter provide information on the book’s animal characters and further encourage children to explore the river ecosystem. In the back endpaper, we learn what Ben does with the fish that inadvertently lands in his boat, an action that won’t surprise any alert reader who understands Ben’s values.

Ken Kilback



While We Wait

written by Judy Ann Sadler
illustrated by Élodie Duhamneau
Owlkids Books, 2022
978-1-7714-7440-5 (hc) \$19.95
for Preschool to Grade 2

Picture Book | Patience | Anticipation | Relationships | Grandparents | Arts and Crafts | Emotions

Every child who reads *While We Wait*, the latest picture book written by Judy Ann Sadler, will empathize with the young protagonist. Tasked by his grandmother to be patient, he can’t help but be restless because, together, they’re waiting for a special arrival. However, readers don’t know what they’re anticipating until the book’s final pages.

While We Wait is a thoughtful and simple story about how difficult waiting can be. As the hours crawl by, the boy and his grandmother sit, knit and wait. They stretch and sing and find other ways to pass the time, but little helps the boy’s anxiousness. “I want to run around the room!” he says. “I CAN’T just sit, I CAN’T just knit!”

Illustrated by Montreal’s Élodie Duhamneau, the book’s quiet prose is complemented by soft, monochrome pictures with subtle bursts of blues, reds, greens and yellows. Facial expressions that capture joy, concern, love and myriad other emotions will immediately endear readers to the book’s characters.

While We Wait uses uncomplicated and repetitive vocabulary, ensuring that this book will be a bedtime favourite for young readers in the early stages of language acquisition. Despite its quiet tone, tongue twisters like “We tumble and tangle” and “side by side we settle down to sit and knit and wait” are delightful and lyrical.

We all know that waiting can be frustrating. However, *While We Wait* reveals it can be something more. Rather, there is joy in being quiet and there’s pleasure in waiting. Most importantly, it emphasizes that the best way to pass the time is to spend it having fun with someone you love.

Jessica Rose is a writer, reviewer and editor in Hamilton, Ontario.



Bee & Flea and the Compost Caper (Bee & Flea, Book 1)

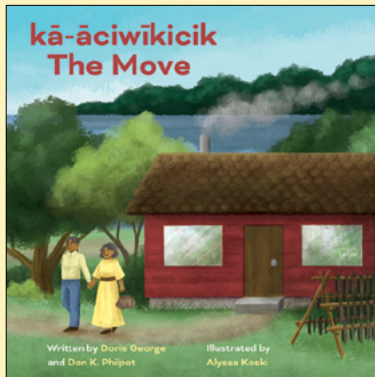
written by Anna Humphrey
illustrated by Mike Deas
Owlkids Books, 2022
978-1-77147-420-7 (hc) \$18.95
for Grades 1 to 4

Fiction | Science | Compost | Biodegradation | Microbiology | Insects | Mystery | Humour | Friendship

Bored with pollination, Bee is easily swept up by the prospect of adventure when loud, self-important Flea, the sole member of the Fenced-in-area Law Enforcement Agency (F.L.E.A.), engages her as a “driver” to fly to the garden’s compost heap where an incident has recently transpired. With Bee as the fastidious, “straight” investigator

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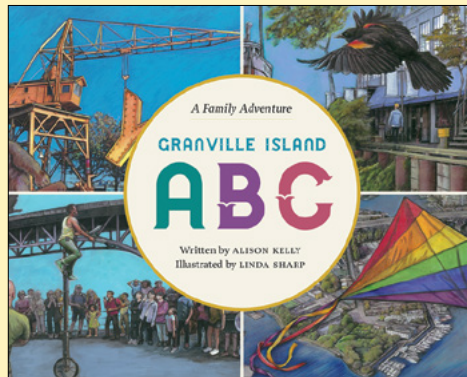
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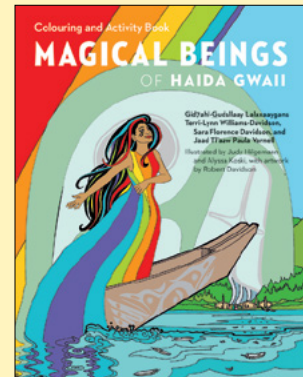


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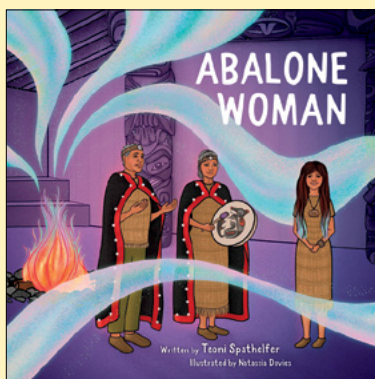


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 PB | 978-1-77203-385-4 | \$16.95



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A vivid dream teaches Little Wolf about courage and acceptance, inspiring her to show her daughters and their classmates how to be proud of their diverse cultural backgrounds.

Ages 4-8, available April
 HC | 978-1-77203-411-0 | \$19.95

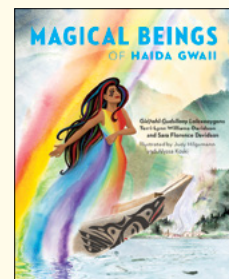
Top Recommended Reads for TD Summer Reading Club 2022



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 PB | 978-1-77203-378-6 | \$12.95



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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Book Fund.

and Flea as the uncouth wiseacre, the comedic duo attempt to solve a mystery by interviewing the various tiny lifeforms that populate the compost: nematodes, rotifers, mites, pot worms and bacteria. Eating, pooping, cannibalizing, and more pooping are all the increasingly scandalized Bee can observe until an accident gives her insight into the value of the compost dwellers, helps her solve the mystery and serves as a catalyst for a newfound friendship with Flea that heralds future ecological adventures.

Anna Humphrey’s fictional approach to teaching the science of compost engages young readers with humour, friendship and mystery. With dramatic dialogue, puns and alliteration, the chapters move quickly, every four pages containing one of Mike Deas’ charming pen and ink illustrations. His skillful compositions move the eye, beginning or ending with the expressive faces of fluffy-headed Bee or flamboyant, pointy-lipped Flea.

To become a F.L.E.A. agent, readers are invited to take a quiz at the end that introduces scientific information about the compost denizens and includes a DIY F.L.E.A. badge. With its ick factor and humour, this early chapter book will appeal to the elementary grades, though the youngest will likely require an adult to read it aloud.

Aliki Tryphonopoulos



**The Weird Sisters:
A Note, a Goat, and a Casserole**

written by Mark David Smith
illustrated by Kari Rust
Owlkids Books, 2022
978-1-77147-456-6 (hc) \$18.95
for Grades 2 to 4

*Fiction | Community | Wordplay | Homonyms |
Neighbours | Mystery | Humour*

When the three weird sisters—Hildegurp, Yuckmina, and Glubbifer—move into the town of Covenly with their cat Graymalkin, they soon become immersed in the mystery of their neighbour Jessica’s missing pet goat. There also happens to be a strange, seemingly threatening note left outside their front door beside an empty glass dish. Where is the goat? And who left the note? As Jessica and the sisters investigate, readers are introduced one by one to a diverse series of townsfolk, each intersecting with the plot in their own peculiar way. A recipe for Hurlyburly Soup can be found at the back of the book, complete with substitutions for hard-to-find ingredients such as gall of goat and sweltered toad venom.

Mark David Smith has organized the story into short, punchy chapters, perfect for emergent chapter book readers. The mystery itself, coupled with its unlikely detectives, will engage young readers with its sense of fun. Kari Rust’s black-and-white illustrations anchor the story, realizing each idiosyncratic character and scene with imaginative whimsy.

Smith has taken a playful approach to writing, immersing his readers in the joys of the homonym. Humorous double meanings, misunderstandings, and word play abound. English teachers will have a hard time resisting the urge to capitalize on such a resource. While this is a light-hearted and lively tale, Smith has tethered it firmly in place with themes of community and connection.

Ildiko Sumegi is a reviewer from Ottawa who blogs about inspirational children’s books at beyondtheglassmountains.com.



Beatrice and Croc Harry

written by Lawrence Hill
HarperCollins Canada, 2022
9781-4434-6336-2 (hc) \$22.99
for Grades 5 to 8

*Fiction | Social Injustice | Racism | Friendship | Identity | Love |
Segregation | Trust*

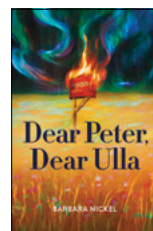
When Beatrice wakes to find herself in a magical forest, she has no recollection of who she is or how she came to be there. She is able to speak with the creatures of the forest, many of whom display an affinity for language that readers will find both amusing and surprisingly contagious. Beatrice spends her days reading, making oatmeal, and engaging in verbal sparring matches with Croc Harry—a fearsome turquoise crocodile who says he just wants to “palaver.” When a speckled rabbit brings his problem to her doorstep, Beatrice begins to connect with events in a way that will hopefully lead her home.

Children will find their interest piqued by the manner in which something more sinister occasionally pierces its way through the humour and breezy wordplay. Beatrice has nightmares. She is hurt. A tall man is knocking, knocking, insisting he be let into her brain. There is a gravity to the situation that we cannot yet fully comprehend.

Lawrence Hill offers up what is sure to become a modern-day classic. He lifts his characters out of their real-life predicaments and places them somewhere else. Who would we be outside the constraints of our respective social settings? What conversations might we have with the turquoise crocodile in our lives? Beatrice’s trip home runs in parallel with her emerging reconnection with her Black identity. Along the way, Hill addresses issues of racism, social injustice, hatred, love, trust, and more. It’s a tall order for one little girl, but Beatrice is certainly no small potatoes!

This remarkably crafted story is layered with psychological and sociological meaning, opening the door for many, many conversations to come. And that can only be a good thing.

Ildiko Sumegi



Dear Peter, Dear Ulla

written by Barbara Nickel
illustrated by Ian Hampton
ThistleDown Press, 2021
978-1-77187-217-1 (pb) \$16.95
for Grades 4 and up

*Historical Fiction | Second World War | Family and Love |
Fear, Courage, Resilience | Prejudice and Racial Violence*

Dear Peter, Dear Ulla, written by award-winning, British Columbia-based children’s author Barbara Nickel and peppered with illustrations by Ian Hampton, is an insightful, affecting historical middle-grade fiction novel about the deep pull of family and friendship, the cataclysmic effects of conflict and racism, and the immeasurable value of courage, hope, loyalty and resilience—all set against the backdrop of the outbreak of the Second World War, in September 1939.

Although they’ve never met, 12-year-old cousins Peter Klassen, a budding piano virtuoso who lives in the rural Mennonite farming community of Blumenfeld, Saskatchewan, and Ulla Janzen, an articulate, sensitive girl who loves bike-riding and drawing, and lives in the Free City of Danzig (now Gdańsk), Poland, have been writing letters to each other since they were seven. Despite being an ocean apart, they are the best of friends, sharing secrets and intimate details of their young lives—until Hitler and his Nazi Germany invade Poland on September 1, 1939, precipitating a world war that disrupts their lives and their written conversations.

In the early months of the war and as it progresses, the cousins' candid, heartfelt letters take on an urgent, pensive tone, with both of them wrestling with the purpose of war and its life-altering repercussions. Quiet and contemplative Peter, whose life is filled with after-school farm chores and his passion for composing music and preparing for his piano exam, must deal with the relentless neighbourhood bully, Bruno Warkentin, also a Mennonite, who uses the war as a chance to create factions between the English and Mennonite boys. Peter must also contend with ongoing sibling rivalry with his four younger sisters and a stern father.

Wise-beyond-her-years Ulla is horrified by the shocking treatment of the Polish people in her city, while her father, a police officer, loses his job at his refusal to join in the Polish suppression. The ever-principled Ulla decides she must help Erwina Barzychowska, her Polish-Jewish friend who is severely burned when the Polish Post Office in which she lives with her family is bombed, risking her parents' and her own safety. And daily, Ulla witnesses family friends and neighbours endear themselves to the Nazi regime, sparking questions about loyalty and friendship. Both cousins grapple with the myriad moral dilemmas of war and its sheer inhumanity. Should Peter, who is of German descent but living in an Allied country, and Ulla, who is also a Mennonite of German descent but living in Poland, consider each other enemies, since Canada and Germany are now at war? What will happen to their families, friends, cities and countries in the future?

Although *Dear Peter, Dear Ulla* is fiction, many people and events are real, such as Ulla, who is based very loosely on the author's mother's late first cousin, Ulla (Janzen) Slowy. She lived in the Free City of Danzig, and her birthday was cancelled on September 1, 1939, with the bombing of the Westerplatte peninsula, where Erwina, who was also a real person, was living in the post office with her Aunt Malgorzata and Uncle Jan and several other families.

The engrossing story unfolds in alternating chapters via the absorbing, ingenuous letters of both cousins (and Ulla's is sprinkled with her creative illustrations), revealing their unique adolescent perspectives on life's daily struggles and giving first-hand accounts of a world now at war. Third-party narration is skillfully woven throughout the correspondence, adding vivid, vital information about Peter and Ulla, their families, the war and the communities involved. Both protagonists are highly relatable and likeable, and Nickel has expertly crafted a richly detailed and believable world full of well-rounded characters and credible events unfolding in the throes of terrifying conflict and raging prejudice.

A must-read for introducing young readers to the nuances and optics of the Second World War and Mennonite history, this richly layered and ultimately life-affirming book is complete with a table of contents and addenda, including multiple postscripts, an author's note, black-and-white illustrations, maps, photos, etchings and two German recipes for food featured in the book: one for Oma's Peppernuts and one for Aunt Malgorzata's Polish Apple Cake with Meringue.

By contrasting two different ways of life—one under the Nazi regime and the other in a free country—*Dear Peter, Dear Ulla* provides readers with a valuable and memorable lens through which to view a critical time in human history. Thought-provoking and well-paced, with much emotional depth and sensitivity, Nickel has created a moving and immersive portrayal of place and time, full of hope and exemplary courage—a must-have addition to any home library and an exceptional resource for classrooms and public libraries everywhere. Very highly recommended.

Jennifer D. Foster is a Toronto-based freelance editor, writer, proofreader and mentor, and her company is Planet Word. She's a regular reviewer for the Whistler Independent Book Awards and has been a judge for the Fred Kerner Book Award.



Eight Days

written by Teresa Toten
Scholastic Canada, 2022
978-1-4431-9002-2 (pb) \$12.99
for Grades 5 to 8

Fiction | Family Dynamics | Alcoholism and Substance Abuse | Grief and Loss | Friendship | Forgiveness

Sami Stanic is shocked when her grandfather, Carl, tells her that her mother has died. Sami thought her mother had died 10 years ago! That was when she came to live with Carl, he quit drinking, and the two of them created a safe and comfortable life together. But if her mother hadn't died then, where has she been all these years, and why didn't she want Sami with her? These are just some of the questions Sami wrestles with as she and Carl and their neighbour Aggie pile into Carl's car and head to Chicago to bring Sami's mama home. Through the course of their journey, Sami learns many new things about her family. And when they get home, she and Carl both discover even more about each other, their friends and neighbours, and themselves.

Bursting with humour and emotional integrity, this book is filled with delightful (and realistically diverse) characters, and with secondary characters that are as believable and well-rendered as the protagonist. Sami's confusion, vulnerability and self-doubt as she wonders about her mother and worries endlessly about Carl make her highly relatable. Her efforts to keep Carl on track with his AA meetings and to make herself irreplaceably useful reveal her tremendous insecurity and fear that—like her mother—Carl too will someday leave her. Teresa Toten beautifully explores the legacy of hurt that her family has endured and the courage it takes both she and Carl to confront that legacy. While Carl learns that he needs to take more responsibility for his battle with alcoholism, Sami begins (with the help of Aggie and other very dear friends) to accept that she has to let him do so and that she too must stand up for her own wants and needs. Thoughtful, perceptive, witty and filled with warmth, this is another fine example of Teresa Toten at her best.

Lisa Doucet is Co-Manager of Wozzles in Halifax.



Escape from Atlantis (Atlantis, Book 1)

written by Kate O'Hearn
Aladdin, 2021
978-1-5344-5691-4 (hc) \$22.99
978-1-5344-5693-8 (eBook) \$11.99
for Grades 4 to 7

Fiction | Fantasy | Myth | Family | Courage | Compassion | Friendship

Riley Evans is spending her spring break on a family sailboat while her father studies whales. She is also joined with her Aunt Mary and annoying cousin Alfie. As they enter the Bermuda Triangle, strange things start to happen around the boat, which eventually capsizes in a storm.

Riley and Alfie find themselves alone on an island surrounded by strange creatures who welcome them to the island of Atlantis. Atlantis seems to be hospitable, and the pair make some new friends amongst the inhabitants. During their stay, they notice some suspicious characters, and Riley gets into a conflict with Mada, the leader of the Red Cloaks. They know they must leave, even if it means escaping through the Forbidden Zone. Time is precious, so Riley must work on a plan that involves the trust of her new friends and rely on Alfie, the only family she has left.

Kate O'Hearn provides the reader with an adventure story that

takes place on the strange and hidden island of Atlantis. The legend of Atlantis provides a background and a frame of reference for the story to develop and pique the audience's interest. O'Hearn is brilliant at developing a strong, brave female lead that can carry a sense of family duty and empathy to all characters. Pre-teen readers will enjoy this novel as it blends dystopian themes and social relationships. *Escape from Atlantis* is an adventure story that is a fun read and will keep you on the edge of your seat.

Christine O'Sullivan is a secondary school teacher-librarian in Brantford, Ontario.



For the Record

written by Monique Polak
Owlkids Books, 2022
978-1-7714-7437-5 (hc) \$19.95
for Grades 4 and up

Fiction | Divorce | Family | Parent Alienation

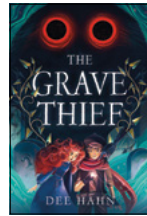
Twelve-year-old Justine faces a lot of pressure to look after her 4-year-old sister, Bea, after their parents' divorce. The sisters split their time between their parent's homes, with their mother having primary custody. Justine loves both her parents and adores her older half-sister from her dad's first marriage but finds herself feeling obligated to follow her mother's beliefs and wants to help her mother win full custody of her and Bea. An opportunity to help her mom results in Justine lying about details of an event that happened while in their dad's care. As her actions form consequences, Justine must decide if she is doing the right thing or if she should tell the truth.

For the Record explores how Justine at first follows her mother's wishes and beliefs without question but comes to realize her actions have consequences. Many children are in the same situation as Justine and Bea, caught in a custody battle where the caregivers cannot agree on what is best for the children involved and might be (perhaps unknowingly) acting on their own feelings.

Justine is a well-developed character, and her thoughts and actions are very realistic for a 12-year-old. She wants to be good, follow the rules, and help her mother, but she is beginning to form her own thoughts and opinions on her situation. The other characters are presented as seen through Justine's perception, and those of her parents especially begin to change as the story progresses, showing the growth Justine is experiencing. As Justine's thoughts become more independent, her views of the people around her begin to change too. Despite being in a very grown-up situation, Justine is still a 12-year-old girl, which is reflected in her character, making her very relatable.

For the Record is a great read to help understand what children experience in a tough custody battle—either recognizing a character facing a similar situation or gaining understanding and compassion for others experiencing it.

Meagan Richards started her library career in public libraries and quickly developed a soft spot for junior and YA literature through collection development and programming. She continues to read YA titles regularly in her spare time.



The Grave Thief

written by Dee Hahn
Puffin Canada, 2022
978-0-735-26944-9 (hc) \$23.99
978-0-735-26944-6 (eBook) \$11.99
for Grades 4 and up

Fiction | Fantasy | Magic | Mystery | Friendship

Twelve-year-old Spade is a grave thief, staying in graveyards at night where no one will notice his limp or torment him. Along with his brother and father, he digs up the recently deceased to steal jewels for trade. Spade is headed for a life of crime. One day his father comes up with a plan for him and his brother to rob the royal Wyndhail Cemetery—a plan that quickly falls apart. Now caught in a royal trap and desperate to win his and his brother's freedom, Spade is tasked with finding the master of the Woegon: a deadly monster that stalks the kingdom at night. Along the way, he meets Ember, the queen's niece, and together they race to unravel the mystery of the magical Deepstones, the Woegon, and a strange pebble Spade found in a grave.

Dee Hahn's work is magical and full of twists and turns, revealing that not everything is what it seems to be—not even a young thief. Written in third-person limited perspective, the story follows the courageous main character who finds strength even when he feels powerless.

This stand-alone fantasy reflects how some magic is buried deep and that sometimes it's best to rely on the magic of friends and family. Full of unexpected developments and friends in odd places, this story focuses on empathy and togetherness to save the day. Anyone who's felt limited by something they can't control, who knows what it's like to want to protect the people they care about or who's looking for a little bit of magic in their lives, will find themselves sharing the adventure in these pages. Written for a middle-grade audience, this book is a reminder that you're never alone in the dark and that sometimes love is the best kind of magic.

Sara Rigotti is a student at the University of Ottawa and a board member of the Writers' Community of Durham Region.



Me Three

written by Susan Juby
Puffin Canada, 2022
978-0-7352-6872-2 (hc) \$22.99
978-0-7352-6873-9 (eBook) \$10.99
for Grades 5 and up

Fiction | Friendship | Family and Parents | Eating Disorders | Media | Family Dysfunction

With his dad in a treatment centre due to some "misunderstandings," Rodney is forced to leave his home in Vegas and start sixth grade at a new school in Stony Butte, Arizona. Most of the kids in his class seem less than welcoming, their temporary new home is nothing like what he is used to, and he misses his best friend Larry, who won't reply to any of his texts or messages. Rodney tries to focus on his dad's "Rules for Living a Lucky Life" as he waits for everything to get sorted out so they can go back to the way things were before. But hearing the horrible things people are saying about his dad is hard, and being confronted with the truth about his father and the things he has done is even harder. How do you live a lucky life when everything has gone so desperately wrong?

With warmth and wit, Susan Juby provides an insightful behind-the-scenes look at how one man's "bad judgement" impacts his entire family. As Rodney tries to process everything that is going on,

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he wants to keep believing in his dad, and he hopes that things will somehow get better. The epistolary format of the novel enables Juby to explore Rodney's confusion, anxiety and hurt, as well as the larger ramifications of his father's actions and the media's role in our perception of events in a way that is earnest and astute while still infusing the narrative with levity and humour.

Rodney is earnest and likeable, and the friends he makes in Stony Butte serve as gentle reminders that many children endure a wide range of challenges in their lives that may not be as visible as Rodney's hardships but are nonetheless painful. Juby has crafted an entertaining story that thoughtfully and sensitively touches on numerous issues.

Lisa Doucet



On the Line

written by Paul Coccia and Eric Walters
Orca Book Publishers, 2022
978-1-459-82713-4 (pb) \$12.95
for Grades 5 to 9

Fiction | Basketball | LGBTQ2S+ | Family Relationships | Divorce | Friendship

Jordan Ryker is 13 years old and a star basketball player. His love of the sport is strongly influenced by his dad, Chris, whose exceptional height and skill made him a strong basketball player. Although he enjoys practicing with his dad and his best friend and teammate, Junior, he is frustrated and overwhelmed by his parents' incessant fighting. Jordan's world is turned upside down when his parents separate, but he is particularly perplexed when he learns his father is gay. As Jordan struggles to come to terms with these life changes, he realizes that there is more to people than what meets the eye, including his best friend, Junior.

On The Line is an engaging first-person narrative that successfully captures the voice of a young teenage boy. Jordan is a likeable character who exhibits empathy throughout the novel, but then has to learn to apply this empathy to those he feels most betrayed by—particularly his father. This story examines issues surrounding divorce, family dynamics, friendship, and LGBTQ2S+.

The story relies heavily upon Jordan's passion for basketball, with much action taking place on the court and off the court with his teammates, making this a novel of interest for sports fans. With a male protagonist and many male characters, the story would appeal to boys. *On the Line* would be a great companion read for lessons on social justice, equity, and perspective-shifting, with the latter evoking reader empathy.

Mellissa Connolly is an English teacher specializing in alternative education.



Revenge of the Bigfoot (The Lunch Club, Book 4)

written and illustrated by Dom Pelletier
translated by Dina Ginzburg
Scholastic Canada, 2022
978-1-4431-9176-0 (pb) \$13.99
for Grades 2 to 5

Graphic Novel | Clubs | Suspense | Robots | Adventure | Camping |

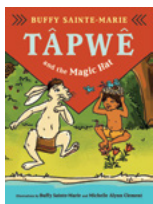
The fourth instalment of the Lunch Club graphic novel series, *Revenge of the Bigfoot*, takes readers on a journey that includes a secret club, a camping adventure, and an elusive creature. Tasked with one important job—take a photograph of the Bigfoot—Tia, Leo and Mr. Peabody, the club’s members, are optimistic. However, when they arrive on site expecting to meet another club of kids, they’re met with a couple of goofy robots.

In this action-packed graphic novel written and illustrated by Quebec’s Dom Pelletier and translated to English by Dina Ginzburg, the Lunch Club’s mission changes quickly when Tia is kidnapped by the Bigfoot. The other club members need to think fast to track down her whereabouts—before she disappears into the woods forever. Readers will enjoy the slapstick humour and plot twists and turns, especially as the characters come face to face with countless obstacles.

Readers of *Revenge of the Bigfoot* will likely benefit from reading previous titles in the series, which are referenced multiple times. Flashbacks may prove challenging for striving readers who benefit from a linear plot; however, visual cues, including facial expressions and animated body language, provided in Pelletier’s illustrations will be helpful.

Above all, *Revenge of the Bigfoot* emphasizes that “things are not as they may appear,” a line spoken by the Bigfoot halfway through the book. Though comical in nature, it provides several positive lessons, most importantly, reminding young readers to be open-minded, especially when meeting someone new.

Jessica Rose



Tâpwê and the Magic Hat

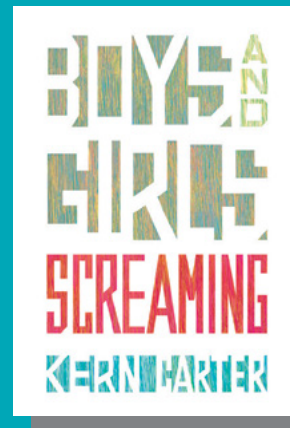
written by Buffy Sainte-Marie
illustrated by Buffy Sainte-Marie and
Michelle Alynn Clement
Greystone Books, 2022
978-1-77164-546-1 (hc) \$22.95
for Grades 3 to 6

Fiction | Indigenous | Storytelling | Culture | Cree | Tricksters

Follow along with the adventures of Tâpwê as he travels to the reserve to visit his cousins. Before he goes, his kohkum (grandma) gifts him a magic hat and tells him some wonderful stories about the hat. She also gives him some advice to “watch out for Tricksters!” While visiting and playing with his cousins, Tâpwê goes to his first powwow and sleeps in a tipi. He learns a lot from his aunties and uncles and from Elders in the community. Most notably, he has experiences with Wâpos (rabbit), who is the local trickster. After all of his adventures, Tâpwê has a summer to remember, and as a reader, I feel lucky to have been able to share in his experiences.

At the end of the book, there is a note to teachers and parents about the stories. A glossary of Cree words is included in the back. There are illustrations throughout the book, which help to engage the young readers.

Tâpwê and the Magic Hat is a wonderful way to spend time reading about Tâpwê and his wondrous adventures with the whimsical trickster, as well as the rich culture and storytelling of Plains Cree



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(nêhiyawak). Overall, Tâpwê and the Magic Hat is an enjoyable read, which should enlighten and entertain readers of all ages.

Highly recommended for home, school and public libraries.

Colette Poitras



The Chandler Legacies

written by Abdi Nazemian
Blazer + Bray, 2022
978-0-06-303932-2 (hc) \$21.99
978-0-06-303934-6 (eBook) \$11.99
for Grades 7 and up

Fiction | Friendship | LGBTQ2S+ | Boarding Schools | Coming of Age | Bullying

Meet this year's Circle from the elite boarding school, Chandler. Beth Kramer, an anxious 'townie' who returns after enduring a year of judgement. Sarah Brunson, who only wants to keep her head down and move forward. Amanda 'Spence' Spencer, a privileged girl who comes to realize how much her name has shielded her. Ramin Golafshar, an Iranian student who came to America to escape the dangers of being gay, only to suffer brutal hazing under the guise of tradition. And Freddy Bello, a senior unsure of his future and forced to choose between standing up for his new friends or staying out of it. These five teens were brought together by the Circle, a writing group where friendships are made and secrets are uncovered. Their professor encourages them to write the truth, but is the truth safe to reveal? And can they change the school's culture of abuse, or will they be forced just to survive instead?

Abdi Nazemian's work is heart-wrenchingly real and uplifting. He doesn't shield his audience from reality but instead seeks to inspire strength in those who feel powerless. Written in multiple dynamic perspectives, this story shows how there is always another side.

This book pulled me in and held me in its clutches as I stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the characters, praying for a happy ending. The story is a reflection of the complicity of power and how, even if it's not right, it's sometimes easier to do nothing and survive than it is to fight. But it's not just a story of suffering. Anyone who has been a victim of someone abusing their power, who's looked for a safe place, or who knows how it feels to want to keep your head down can find hope in these pages. Written for young adults, this story is about how creativity and friendship can heal and even set you free.

Sara Rigotti



In the Serpent's Wake

written by Rachel Hartman
Penguin Teen, 2022
978-0-385-68591-7 (hc) \$24.99
978-0-385-68592-4 (eBook) \$11.99
for Grades 7 and up

Fiction | Fantasy | Dragons | Nautical Adventure | Politics and War

On a southbound ship with her brother-in-law, Jacomo, and the Countess Margarethe, Tess has two missions. One is to confirm the Queen's suspicions that the Ninysh are at war with the Pelaguese. The other is to find the legendary Polar Serpent who will be able to restore the health of her quigutl friend, Pathka. Another ship filled with dragon scholars is also searching for the Polar Serpent. But both polar expeditions encounter numerous setbacks once they reach the Archipelago and become inextricably caught up in political machinations and the complex webs of betrayal and deceit that have been

woven. Tess and her friends and shipmates, Spira and Lord Hamish from the dragon ship, and others they encounter along the way confront the greed, hatred, and narrowmindedness of others and come face to face with their own prejudices and blindness to the sufferings of others.

In this magnificent follow-up to *Tess of the Road*, Rachel Hartman once more creates a sweeping saga of astonishing depth and richness. Tess remains a highly relatable character who is open to seeing herself and those around her with startling clarity. She is at once strong and determined, stout-hearted and true, yet also vulnerable and wounded, and the secondary characters are similarly multifaceted and realistically depicted. The story is complex and intricately plotted, briskly-paced but with plenty of room for thoughtful introspection with deeply resonant themes. Tess and company grapple with profound questions about justice and entitlement and humility; about when to be neutral and when to take a stand for what is right; about embracing truth in others and in oneself; and about the shocking resilience of the human spirit and the capacity of the human heart to learn and to heal.

Lisa Doucet



A Magic Steeped in Poison (The Book of Tea, Volume 1)

written by Judy I. Lin
Feiwel & Friends, 2022
978-1-250-76708-0 (hc) \$24.99
for Grades 9 and up

Fiction | Fantasy | Magic | Tea | Nature | Loyalty | Friendship | Culture

For Ning, losing her mother was almost unbearable, especially knowing that it was her fault, and she unknowingly poured the poisonous tea that killed her. Now, her sister Shu lies dying from the same poison, and there's little she can do. When Ning hears about a competition to find the kingdom's greatest shennong-shi, masters of the ancient and magical art of tea-making, she travels to the palace to compete. The prize is a favour from the princess, which she hopes will save her sister's life. But between the backstabbing, the court politics, and a mysterious boy with a shocking secret, it's Ning who may be in danger of losing her life.

In her debut novel, Judy Lin has created an immersive world full of intrigue, romance, magic, and tea. Readers will be fully drawn into the magic and romance of tea and will appreciate the strong emotional and cultural ties that go with it. The story unfurls much like the petals of the flowers that Ning uses to make tea, with each petal revealing something new. Everybody has a secret, and not everything is as it seems at court. Ning struggles to navigate the complicated politics that surround her, as well as her growing feelings for Kang, the adopted son of the exiled Prince. What are his motivations towards her, and is he working with or against those who would take down the kingdom?

Overall this is a beautifully-written novel that is impossible to put down and will appeal to anyone who enjoys historical fantasy, mystery, and tea.

Rachel Seigel is the Fiction Production Manager (Juvenile to Adult) at the Library Services Centre.



The Red Palace

written by June Hur
Feiwel & Friends, 2022
978-1-250-80055-8 (hc) \$24.99
for Grades 9 and up

Historical Fiction | Parent-Child Relationships | Love | Loyalty | Korean History | Women's Equality

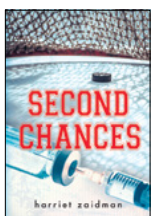
In eighteenth-century Korea, few options are available to illegitimate daughters in the capital, but through hard work, 18-year-old Hyeon has earned a position as a palace nurse. But when someone murders four women in the same night and the suspect is Hyeon's closest friend and mentor, she is drawn into the dangerous world of court politics. In her search for the truth, she encounters a young police officer named Eojin, who is also searching for the killer. The two will have to work together to uncover the palace's secrets before the killer finds them.

In her new young adult novel, June Hur journeys to the Korean kingdom Joseon in 1758. Loosely based on the life of Crown Prince Jangheon, this historical mystery deftly combines issues of class, women's equality, loyalty, and parental relationships with court intrigue and romance.

Hyeon is a likeable and relatable character. Opportunities are limited for young women in her time, especially a low-born, illegitimate girl. She hopes that her father will be impressed by her position at the palace. When she starts investigating the murders, her situation becomes tricky. Evidence suggests that the Crown Prince was involved, and even worse, her father may somehow be connected. The mystery is well-crafted, and Hur does an excellent job of creating suspense. While the reveal felt a bit too expository, the story was well-paced and engaging.

Eojin is a strong and earnest character, and he and Hyeon complement each other, and readers will delight in their slow-burn romance. While some descriptions of graphic violence and torture make this more suitable for older readers, Hur's world-building and storytelling make this a must-read thriller.

Rachel Seigel



Second Chances

written by Harriet Zaidman
Red Deer Press, 2021
978-0-88995-639-1 (pb) \$14.95
for Grades 7 to 10

Historical Fiction | Hockey | Polio | Racism | Romance | Family Relationships

In the spring of Grade 8, hockey-loving Dale finds himself struggling for breath inside an iron lung. The year is 1955, and polio cases have overrun the Winnipeg hospital where Dale is a patient. His normally sensible father doesn't believe in vaccines, and he refuses one for Dale's younger brother, who also ends up in a polio ward. Dale struggles to recover the use of his body and cheer up his brother, and he befriends another young patient, Charlene, who faces racism due to her Métis heritage. As his romance with Charlene grows, Dale becomes aware of the injustices directed at her, and he's inspired to confront the racism and scientific misbeliefs within his own family.

Second Chances is a meticulously researched novel, including fascinating details about the 1950s polio outbreak, the Métis community of Rooster Town in Winnipeg, news reporting, and NHL and local hockey. Dale is a wonderfully flawed yet caring protagonist who learns to stand up for his beliefs and follow his heart. With obvious connections to current events, *Second Chances* will encourage

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conversations about fact versus fiction in relation to vaccines and the impact of historical racism on people of Indigenous and Métis heritage. A detailed teacher's guide offers curriculum connections.

A highly satisfying and timely read.

Karen Krossing is an author for kids and teens.



When You Least Expect It

written by Lorna Schultz Nicholson
Red Deer Press, 2021
978-0-88995-641-4 (pb) \$14.95
for Grades 10 and up

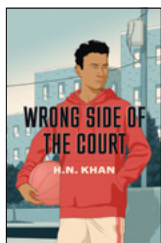
Fiction | Rowing | Coming of Age | Determination | Family

Seventeen-year-old Holly Callahan's dreams are shattered around her. She desperately wants to make the national rowing team, but she is the last rower to be cut. But Holly is not a quitter. Eager to find anything to occupy her time and keep her out of the house and away from her mother's new boyfriend, she takes an unexpected lifeline from a man she meets on the beach. This stranger, Allan, offers to coach her in a single, and for a girl raised without a father, his generosity and strict teachings are a gift. But who is he really? Discovering the answer changes Holly's view and inspires her to push even further out of her comfort zone, both on and out of the water.

Lorna Schultz Nicholson's work is an inspiring reflection of the journey of a young athlete pursuing their dreams through perseverance and self-realization. Through first-person perspective, Nicholson depicts the stress and sacrifice of chasing one's dreams alongside the complications of teenage life.

This riveting story focuses on finding the balance between work and family—and between passion and obsession. It brings insight into the importance of family and surrounding yourself with people who push you forward. Anyone who has chased their dreams despite the setbacks, been forced to adapt to new circumstances, or just wants to know they'll be supported by the people they care about will find inspiration in these pages. Written for a young adult audience, this story tells its reader to live life without regrets, strive for your dreams, and not forget to live along the way.

Sara Rigotti



Wrong Side of the Court

written by H.N. Khan
Penguin Teen, 2022
978-0-7352-7087-9 (hc) \$23.99
978-0-7352-7088-6 (eBook) \$11.99
for Grades 8 and up

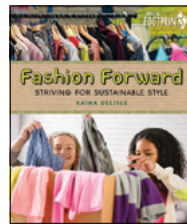
Fiction | Friendship | Growing Up | Immigrants | Family | Racism | Basketball | Bullying | Romance

Fawad Chaudhry has a lot on his plate. He's starting Grade 10 just after the shooting death of his best friend's brother, which he witnessed from his Toronto apartment. His dad died a few years earlier, leaving the immigrant family in precarious circumstances. He lives with his mother and older sister in a decrepit housing project in a rough neighbourhood, and some local bullies are menacing him. The centre of his life is his love for basketball, and he's gotten serious over the summer, training and practicing. Now he wants to make his high school team, get a college scholarship and take the NBA by storm. Fawad works hard to balance basketball, family, friendship and a budding new romance. He is a classic second-generation immigrant (though he came from Pakistan as a young child), struggling to be a

dutiful son while also figuring out who he is and what he wants for himself.

Wrong Side of the Court tackles a host of issues: its Muslim hero lives in an immigrant community where he is exposed to gang violence, racial prejudice and financial insecurity. The novel includes a brutal beating that sends him to the hospital, the awkwardness of his first date, grief around losing his father, trying to thwart an arranged marriage, and the misunderstandings between him and his immigrant mom. This could be overly dramatic, but H.N. Khan creates such a well-rounded character and an animated setting with plenty of nuance and humour to balance out the grittiness. Khan artfully depicts aspects of male adolescence—notably Fawad's fixation on food—and the frank and conversational first-person narration makes the plot feel urgent and keeps the protagonist likeable and relatable.

Kris Rothstein is an editor, cultural critic and literary agent in Vancouver, BC.



**Fashion Forward:
Striving for Sustainable Style
(Orca Footprints)**

written by Raina Delisle
Orca Book Publishers, 2022
978-1-45982-580-2 (hc) \$19.95
978-1-45982-582-6 (eBook) \$14.99
for Grades 4 and up

Non-Fiction | Fashion Industry | Clothing and Dress | Recycling | Environment | Conservation

The latest Orca Footprints title pulls no punches in describing the alarming reality of today's fashion industry. Readers are shown the evolution of clothing from the Stone Age to the present age of consumerism and outsourcing. Fashion has never been cheaper, but dire impacts of irresponsible clothing production range from environmental damage and climate change to unethical treatment of workers and damage to human and animal health. More optimistically, the author details organizations promoting awareness and seeking change and provides practical suggestions so readers can be part of the solution.

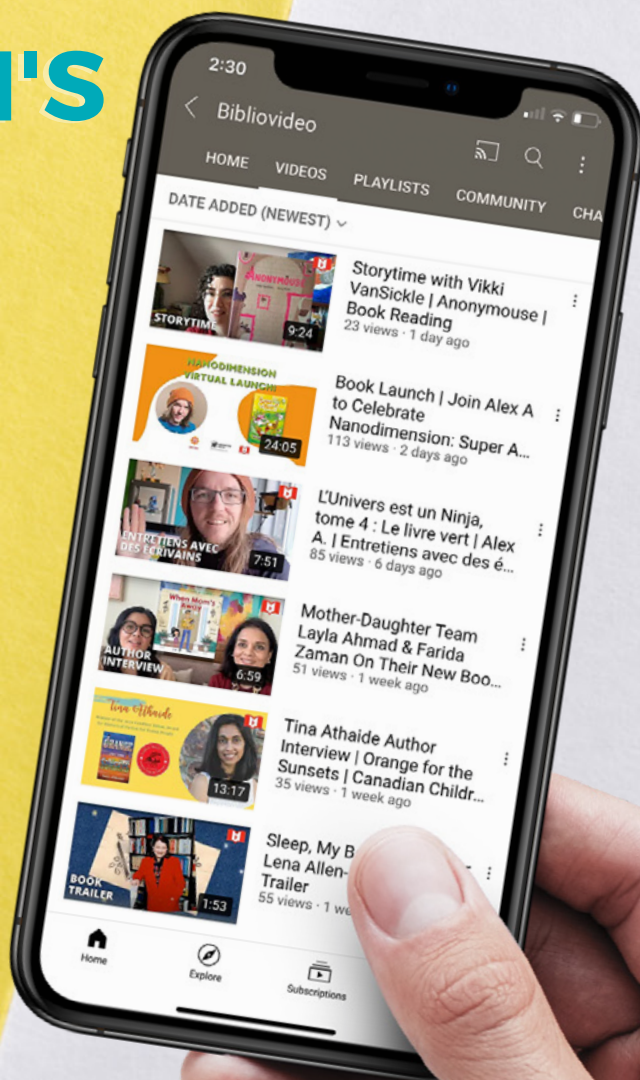
Fashion Forward is an eye-opening book written in a direct and conversational style that describes the issues clearly. Though shocking facts are learned regarding the unscrupulous practices within the industry, the reader is left with hope for the future. Children are encouraged to be aware, think critically and consider their own involvement and how they can apply the Seven R's of ethical fashion: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Research, Repurpose, Repair and Rent. Supporting this is the author's description of her own moratorium on purchasing clothes for a year and explaining her current shopping practices. The title has many well-captioned photographs representing a variety of ethnicities, ages and abilities. A glossary, index and bibliography of print, online and film resources are useful additions.

The fashion industry is responsible for 10 percent of the world's carbon emissions. Carrying the message that every individual can make a difference through ethical fashion choices while still being a 'fashionista,' this is a compelling book for children and adults to share and discuss.

Aileen Wortley is a retired children's librarian from Toronto.

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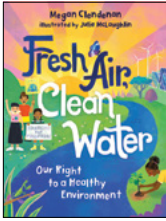
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**Fresh Air, Clean Water:
Our Right to a Healthy Environment**

written by Megan Clendenan
illustrated by Julie McLaughlin
Orca Book Publishers, 2022
978-1-4598-2679-3 (hc) \$24.95
978-1-4598-2681-6 (eBook) \$18.99
for Grades 4 to 7

Non-Fiction | Environmentalism | Social Justice | Human Rights | Youth Activism | Climate Justice

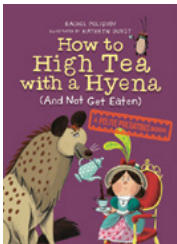
This timely title exploring climate justice and our right to a healthy environment is part of the Orca Think series aimed at middle-grade readers. In *Fresh Air, Clean Water*, author Megan Clendenan tackles some difficult but extremely pertinent questions: Do we have the right to clean water to drink? Safe, nutritious food to eat? Fresh air to breathe? Are environmental rights human rights? If not, what can we do to achieve that right?

Using first-person narrative, Clendenan begins with an overview of why clean air, water and soil are so vital, including examples of pollution and contamination from across the globe, both current and historical. In subsequent chapters, she introduces readers to climate justice, environmental racism, laws enacted around the world to protect the environment, court fights for climate justice, and finally introduces some youth activists, including Greta Thunberg, Licypriya Kangujam from India, and Nova Scotian Stella Bowles.

The book is divided into four chapters—"One Earth to Share," "Words Have Power," "All Rise!" and "Citizens Create Change." By breaking up the large amount of information she presents into shorter subsections, Clendenan creates a layout that is both accessible and engaging. Each two-page spread includes readily digestible chunks of information, colour photographs, full-colour illustrations and information boxes such as It's a Fact, Activists in Action and You Be the Judge.

This comprehensive handbook to environmental and climate justice packs a powerful punch and will resonate with young readers looking to make a difference in their communities and across the globe.

Tracey Schindler



**How to High Tea with a
Hyena (And Not Get Eaten)
(Polite Predators, Book 2)**

written by Rachel Poliquin
illustrated by Kathryn Durst
Tundra Books, 2022
978-0-7352-6660-5 (hc) \$16.99
978-0-7352-6661-2 (eBook) \$10.99
for Grades 2 to 5

Non-Fiction Picture Book | Hyenas | Survival | Humour

Celeste, the classy cockroach hostess whose pastime is encouraging gullible children to accept a social engagement with a hungry wild animal, returns in this second instalment of the Polite Predator series. This time, the predator is a hyena, and the dupe standing in for the reader is a girl who naively tries what Celeste herself celebrates as terrible ideas about how to survive high tea together. Through the hijinks of Celeste's step-by-step tactical instructions, the reader learns about a hyena's anatomy, behaviour, environment, diet and hunting strategies, and, incongruously, the etiquette surrounding high tea.

The 2021 Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver
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Winner

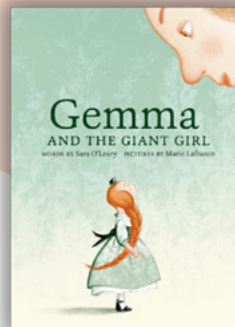


À qui appartiennent les nuages?
illustrations by Gérard DuBois
text by Mario Brassard
Éditions de la Pastèque

"The richness of the interactions between text and images gives a lot of depth to this work and shows how there can be **hope in darkness.**"

—Cleaver Jury

Honour Books



Gemma and the Giant Girl
illustrations by Marie LaFrance
text by Sara O'Leary
Tundra Books



Time is a Flower
illustrations and text by Julie Morstad
Tundra Books



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Rachel Poliquin's writing, set off effectively in Kathryn Durst's hand-drawn typesetting, encourages vocabulary building through Celeste's habit of listing synonyms for words she enjoys, like classy and danger. Alliteration and unusual comparisons, like hyenas weighing as much as 32 chihuahuas, add to the humour children will appreciate. Durst's pencil crayon-based illustrations do justice to Celeste's ludicrous ideas, with crowded chalkboard schematics; meandering, two-page spreads of toy train tracks set up to deliver tea cakes to the predator; and heaps of colourful, detailed, patterned items that reflect the busy, eclectic mind of Celeste herself.

This clever series that blends absurdity and peril teaches zoology, language and culture without readers knowing it. Children will pick it up for the laughs, while primary teachers can use it as a read-aloud in units on animal behaviour and adaptations or just for the fun of it.

Aliki Tryphonopoulos



Journey of the Midnight Sun

written by Shazia Afzal
illustrated by Aliya Ghare
Orca Book Publishers, 2022
978-1-459-82760-8 (hc) \$19.95
978-1-459-82762-2 (eBook) \$14.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

Non-Fiction Picture Book | Community | Mosques | Islam | Inuvik

Based upon a true story, *Journey of the Midnight Sun* tells the tale of the 4,400 kilometre trek of the Midnight Sun Mosque from Winnipeg to Inuvik. The astronomical cost of building in the far north meant that it was more economical to build the mosque in Winnipeg and then transport it over land and by water to reach its final home. Along the way, the team encountered roads that were too narrow, low-hanging power lines, and bridges that needed to be widened. Finally, an 1,800 kilometre sojourn along the Mackenzie River was necessary before the river froze for the winter.

Shazia Afzal's rendition of the adventure speaks to the power of community and what can be accomplished when Canadians of all backgrounds work together to support the aspirations of fellow citizens. The text provides sufficient detail to describe the journey without overwhelming children with complicated elements. Guaranteed, children listening to the story will have questions of their own! Aliya Ghare's artwork provides a wonderful accompaniment to the text. Reminiscent at times of William Kurelek's artwork of his prairie childhood, Aliya's illustrations transition during the journey to demonstrate the changing landscape, as well as the seasonal shifts. The details in the images are abundant and vividly portray the difficulties of the trip. Her artwork demonstrates diversity in gender and skin tone, as well as numerous examples of women in occupations traditionally viewed as male-dominated.

Journey of the Midnight Sun would be a positive asset in the social studies curriculum for primary grades, where students examine their local and global communities and the interrelationships that exist within them. Additionally, abundant online video documentation of the expedition could further bring the story to life.

Robin Ahamed is a library technician living in Ajax, Ontario.

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Meet Mary Ann Shadd (Scholastic Canada Biography)

written by Elizabeth MacLeod
 illustrated by Mike Deas
 Scholastic Canada 2022
 978-1-4431-9130-2 (hc) \$16.99
 for Grades 1 to 4

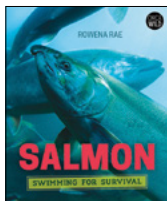
Non-Fiction | Mary Ann Shadd | Activists | Slavery | Racial Equality | Suffrage | Racism

This title in the Scholastic Canada Biography series features the life of the first female newspaper publisher in Canada and the first Black woman publisher in North America. Born in the United States in 1823 as a free person, Mary Ann Shadd knew her parents assisted escaping slaves via the Underground Railway. In 1851 she came to Canada where slavery was abolished and founded *The Provincial Freeman* newspaper. Shadd used it to encourage the abolition of slavery and promote racial equality, the right to vote and Black emigration to Canada. She also recruited Black soldiers to fight for the North against the slave-owning Southern states in the Civil War. Later she became the first Black woman to attend law school in North America.

This engrossing collaboration between author and artist introduces young children to a lesser-known but inspiring personality and highlights the prolonged racial injustices in North America. The text is clear and concise, augmented by bubbles containing whimsical conversational insights spoken by various pictured individuals. The eye-catching animated drawings are replete with character and expression, enriching the textual information. A timeline of major events in Shadd's life is included and contains her only known photo and copies of printed documents she produced.

This book draws much-deserved attention to a woman whose achievements would be considered admirable in any era, but for a Black woman living when she did, they are nothing short of amazing. It is a highly readable, thought-provoking addition to any collection providing many opportunities for discussion.

Aileen Wortley



Salmon: Swimming for Survival (Orca Wild)

written by Rowena Rae
 Orca Book Publishers, 2022
 978-1-45982-653-3 (hc) \$24.95
 for Grades 4 and up

Non-Fiction | Salmon | Animals (Fish) | Environmental Conservation

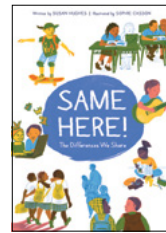
This recent addition to the Orca Wild series provides a comprehensive account of the varieties, history and habitats of Atlantic, Pacific and landlocked salmon. It explains their astonishing and complicated life cycle, their resilience in adapting to fresh and saltwater and their perseverance in ensuring the species' survival. The book also highlights the salmon's vulnerability—explaining threats to its survival from harvesting, climate change, industry, pollution and the development of hatcheries and salmon farming. People working in this area, from biologists, educators, environmentalists and fishermen, are depicted with special emphasis on Indigenous communities and their cultural, economic and spiritual connection to salmon.

The text covers a large amount of often complex information, made accessible via 10 delineated chapters and Rowena Rae's fluid and direct writing style. Recurring features include segments entitled "Go Wild" that describe facts about the habitat and landscape impacting salmon directly or peripherally and "Jumping In,"

highlighting individuals with a passion for salmon protection. There are ample, clearly captioned photographs throughout. An excellent chart summarizes major facts about each type of salmon, and several useful maps are included. A glossary, index, resource list of print, online, and film materials add value, and the book ends with a poignant chapter regarding hopes for the future.

Great for browsing or school projects, this is a title jam-packed with amazing facts about a family of fish that goes back over 100 million years. It also challenges us to consider our own relationship with nature and vulnerable species such as the salmon.

Aileen Wortley



Same Here! The Differences We Share

written by Susan Hughes
 illustrated by Sophie Casson
 Owlkids Books, 2022
 978-1-7714-7307-1 (hc) \$21.95
 for Grades 3 and up

Non-Fiction | Customs | Traditions | Diversity and Inclusion | Similarities and Differences | Around the World

Same Here! The Differences We Share explores how children around the world may live different lives; however, their common needs—including shelter, food, and education—unite them. Told from the perspectives of many children, it begins with a question: "What if a group of children from all around the world met to share stories?"

Written by Susan Hughes, *Same Here!* is an excellent tool for building cultural awareness and fostering a global worldview. Divided into nine sections, each part begins with a simple "We all need" statement. For example, "We all need to feel loved and protected," "We all need to help our families," and "We all need to dream." It encourages readers to make connections between their own lives and the children they're reading about.

The colourful drawings in *Same Here!*, illustrated by Montreal's Sophie Casson, often include labels, giving young readers an extra opportunity to acquire new vocabulary and engage with the text. Whether the illustrations show young people visiting a library, walking to school, or helping out at home or school, readers will see their own experiences reflected.

Same Here! excels in urging readers to learn about the experiences of others around the world without being didactic. Through simple, repetitive text and bright, inviting illustrations, it emphasizes the importance of healthy communities and the role each person plays in one in a highly engaging and enjoyable way. Grounded in research about how children live, play, and learn around the world, *Same Here!* also includes a list of suggested further reading for those who want to read more.

Jessica Rose



West Coast Wild at Low Tide (West Coast Wild)

written by Deborah Hodge
illustrated by Karen Reczuch
Groundwood Books, 2022
978-1-77306-413-0 (hc) \$19.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 4

Non-Fiction | Coastal Animals | Coastal Ecology | Nature

Deborah Hodge's *West Coast Wild at Low Tide* is a rich addition to the abundant genre of animal books for kids. It stands out amongst others in this genre with its focus on intertidal life forms in the Pacific West Coast. Readers discover a rainbow of sea creatures, including giant red sea cucumbers, bat stars, sea lemons, giant green anemones, blue hermit crabs, and purple sea urchins. Each spread focuses on one of 14 creatures and contains a few key facts: where they live, what they eat, and how they survive the tides moving back and forth twice each day along this ever-changing environment. Young readers will encounter new creatures and learn fun, interesting facts. Teachers will appreciate the use of scientific language and accessible explanations.

Karen Reczuch's soft watercolour illustrations bring the creatures to life in their natural environment. Beautiful large spreads capture readers' attention, showing this community of creatures at high or low tide; a few are shown in both conditions. Several creatures are shown blending into their surroundings, giving children a better idea of how to find these intertidal species. Youngsters that visit the seaside will appreciate the tips in the back matter for beachcombers, including the best time to find these awe-inspiring creatures and a list of further resources to explore.

As well, Hodge takes care to tell readers about the interconnectedness and fragility of the intertidal zone and reminds them to explore this biodiverse area with caution. This book is a welcome addition to school and public library collections and also to home libraries, where they will be read over and over again by primary school children.

Krista Jorgensen is a former public librarian currently residing in Calgary, Alberta. She is homeschooling her two children.



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meg.raven@msvu.ca



detail from *I Can See You*
illustrated by Michelle Simpson



from *While We Wait*
illustrated by Élodie Duhaméau



detail from *Bharatanatyam in Ballet Shoes*
illustrated by Anu Chouhan

WE RECOMMEND | PAGES 22 – 47

Alphabet Antics

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Bee & Flea and the Compost Caper (Bee & Flea, Book 1)

Anna Humphrey, Mike Deas

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Barbara Nickel, Ian Hampton

Eight Days

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(Atlantis, Book 1)

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Raina Delisle

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Monique Polak

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The Grave Thief

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(Polite Predators, Book 2)

Rachel Poliquin, Kathryn Durst

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A Long Way Home

Jean Little, Gabrielle Grimard

A Magic Steeped in Poison

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Judy I. Lin

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Me Three

Susan Juby

Muinji'j Asks Why: The Story of the

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Residential School

Muinji'j (Breighlynn MacEachern),

MacEachern, Zeta Paul

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Harriet Zaidman

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Laura Alary, Andrea Blinick

Tāpwê and the Magic Hat

Buffy Sainte-Marie, Michelle Alynn

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The Tunnel

Sarah Howden, Erika Rodriguez Medina

This is the Boat that Ben Built

Jen Lynn Bailey, Maggie Zeng

The Weird Sisters: A Note, a Goat, and a Casserole

Mark David Smith, Kari Rust

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(West Coast Wild)

Deborah Hodge, Karen Reczuch

When You Least Expect It

Lorna Schultz Nicholson

While We Wait

Judy Ann Sadler, Élodie Duhaméau

Wrong Side of the Court

H.N. Khan

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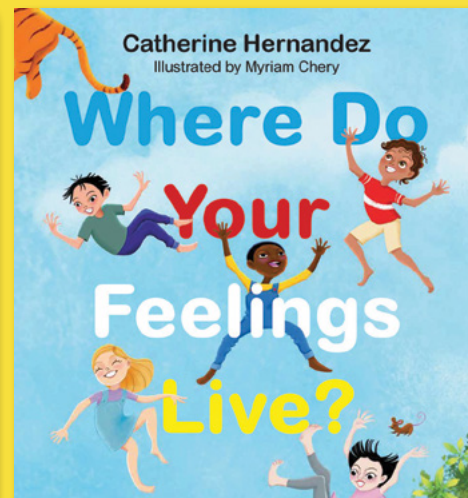
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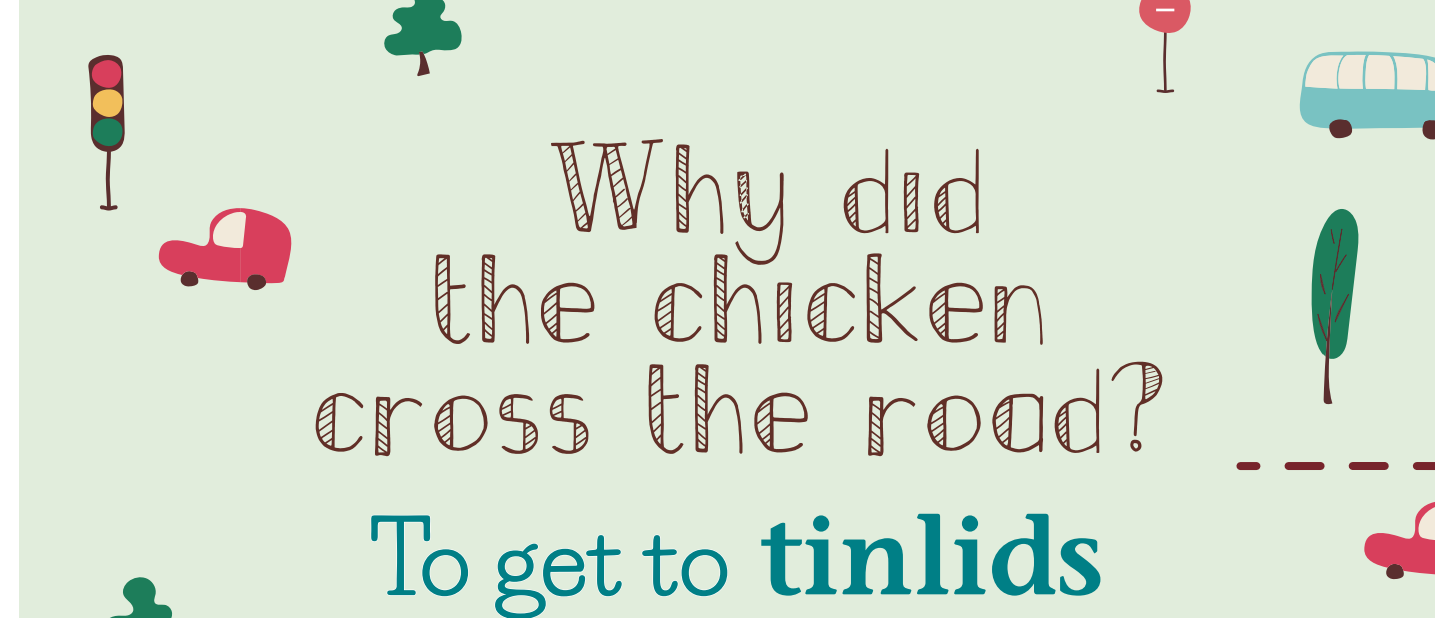
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