Bring Books to Life
TD Canadian
Children’s Book Week 2018

Telling Women’s Stories
Kathy Stinson Wonders... What If?
Opinion: Writing About Amazing Women
Frieda Wishinsky chats with Helaine Becker, Monica Kulling, Elizabeth MacLeod, Shelley Tanaka and Sydell Waxman about why they write about the women they write about.

News Roundup
In Memoriam: Sheila Barry; Marilyn Baillie, Lee Maracle and Michel Noël named to Order of Canada; New YA novel out in 2018 by Sharon E. McKay and Jamal Saeed; New release of Larry Loyie and Vera Manuel plays; Mark your calendars for Smith and Thornhill at the Osborne!; A Farewell; The Canadian Children’s Book Centre selected as Scholastic Reading Champion; Reading Lights Initiative in Vancouver Completed.

Keep Your Eye On... Danielle Daniel
With 31 books to her name and 11 short stories in anthologies, Kathy Stinson talks to Gillian O’Reilly about her writing career and how she’s managed to write in so many different genres.

Beverley A. Brenna, Shuwen Sun and Yina Liu locate, read and analyze all of the Canadian picture books published in two publication years, 2005 and 2015, and then reflect on their findings.

An Interview with Gabrielle Grimard
As the illustrator of this year’s Book Week poster, Gabrielle Grimard tells us about the process she went through to create the image for the poster and a little bit about herself.

Bookmark! Wonder Women
A selection of books that focus on strong and talented girls, teens and women for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Red Leaf Literature
This column features titles chosen by Canadian Children’s Book News’ reviewers. These books are thought to be of the highest quality and signify titles of exceptional calibre.

We Recommend
Reviews of the latest Canadian books for children and teens.

Index of Reviews
THE WORLD AROUND US introduces children to complex cultural, social and environmental issues in a straightforward and accessible way. These illustrated nonfiction titles initiate a conversation about global issues and subjects that are difficult, sad or overwhelming. The Q&A format guides children through understanding these issues in a reassuring and hopeful manner.

Child psychologist Dr. Jillian Roberts covers topics such as:

- poverty and homelessness
- tragedy and disaster
- prejudice and bullying
- body health and safety
- community engagement
- environmental stewardship

These inquiry-based books are an excellent cross-curricular resource encouraging children to explore and discuss important issues and foster their own compassion and empathy.

AGES 5-8 • 32 PAGES • FULL COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS • RESOURCES INCLUDED

www.TheWorldAroundUsSeries.com
Well, here it is 2018, and we are thrilled to share more fabulous titles that have been published in Canada over the last few months. It’s always a thrill to receive the spring titles from the publishers and get a sneak peak at what’s to come. We’ll be featuring as many of those books as we can over the course of 2018. I hope you’ll enjoy them as much as our reviewers and I do.

On the cover of this issue we feature the beautiful poster image created by Gabrielle Grimard for TD Canadian Children’s Book Week 2018. You’ll find an interview with Gabrielle in this issue where, as well as discussing the process she went through to create the image, she tells us about her training and who inspires her, and talks about some of the projects she’s currently working on.

Be sure to read Frieda Wishinsky’s article about amazing women and why she writes about them. And find out why five other female authors also write about strong, talented women. In her interview with Kathy Stinson, Gillian O’Reilly discusses the many genres Kathy has written in and discovers there are not too many topics that Kathy is afraid to tackle in her writing.

We are also happy to share a piece written by Beverley A. Brenna, Shuwen Sun and Yina Liu, who located, read and analyzed all of the Canadian picture books published in two publication years, 2005 and 2015, and then reflected on their findings. It’s interesting to see how trends changed over the 10-year period.

Finally, be sure to read the reviews we’ve included in our “Red Leaf Literature” and “We Recommend” sections. And for more titles about strong and talented girls, teens and women, see our “Bookmark!” column created by CCBC Library Coordinator, Meghan Howe.

Venture into a new book today!

Sandra O’Brien
Why do we write what we write? What draws writers to a person, place or time? Why do we choose a particular theme or topic?

Sometimes, I know the answer to that question as soon as I write the first sentence of a story. Sometimes, I don’t know until I’ve finished the entire manuscript. Sometimes, I only know when the book is published and I begin to share it with readers.

Recently, I’ve written biographies of remarkable yet unsung women and I’ve asked myself why I’m writing about so many women now.

True, I’ve always loved history. I’ve read biographies from the time I was a kid, and, in the past, I’ve written about women like Marie Curie, Rosa Parks, Susan B. Anthony and Nellie McClung.

But, in the last few years, I’ve become disheartened that, despite women’s powerful and long struggle for equal pay and equal rights, they are still paid less than men. They still have to fight to break that ‘glass ceiling’ and head companies or achieve political success. And if it’s difficult today for a woman to be accepted as an equal, imagine what it was like hundreds of years ago.

The more I read about women in the past, the more I felt awed by their fortitude, intelligence and resilience. Despite unbelievable obstacles and prejudice, they still succeeded in accomplishing so much in so many fields. How did they do that? How did they stand up for their rights and insist that their voices be heard? How did they deal with disparaging remarks, patronizing attitudes and little political power? How did they fight for the vote despite so much opposition, and why did it take them so long to achieve that right?

I want kids today to know that change doesn’t happen overnight and the struggle to be treated fairly must continue. I hope that by telling the stories of amazing women I can help inspire the next generation of women to never give up.

Of course, I’m not the only writer for kids telling stories about amazing women. Here’s what five of my gifted colleagues — Monica Kulling (MK), Elizabeth MacLeod (EM), Helaine Becker (HB), Sydell Waxman (SW) and Shelley Tanaka (ST) — say about why they, too, write about women.

Who are the women you’ve written about and what drew you to write about them?

MK: I’m drawn to individuals who remain true to their personal vision no matter how difficult their lives. They may be great leaders, such as Mother Jones; quirky artists, such as Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas and Emily Carr; or someone who overcame great obstacles, such as Harriet Tubman.

EM: My latest book is about Viola Desmond. Viola’s face will be on Canadian $10 bills in November, so it’s important that kids know who she is. She also helped change how people feel about Black Canadians and how they’re treated. I’ve written twice about Marie Curie, Helen Keller and Lucy Maud Montgomery. I’ve also written about Eleanor Roosevelt. It’s vital that girls learn about these amazing role models and that boys learn that there’s no difference in what men and women can accomplish.

I’ve written about a number of famous monarchs, including Grand Duchess Anastasia of the murdered Russian royal family, Cleopatra and Mary Queen of Scots. I think it’s important that kids see women in many roles and realize how necessary women are in society and how much they can do.

HB: I’ve written a picture book biography of Katherine Johnson, the protagonist of the film Hidden Figures, and a picture book biography of Ching Shih, the most powerful pirate the world has ever known. And there are others in the works! I’ve long been interested in writing about women who have done extraordinary things, but whose stories have been suppressed, ignored or forgotten. We need to know that there have been women who have done difficult things and achieved greatness throughout history, even when the deck has been stacked against us. Besides, these are some great stories.

SW: I took a university course called Women’s Studies and discovered that Betty Friedan’s bold, seemingly new ideas had been initiated and fought for by a group of women in the late 1800s. Most importantly, Emily Stowe had led the way. Her courage and strength to fight for what she believed astounded me, especially knowing she struggled at a time when women were not allowed into the University of Toronto.
Helaine Becker is the bestselling author of more than 70 books for children and young adults, including the “enduring Canadian Christmas classic,” A Porcupine in a Pine Tree, and the giggle-inducing Ode to Underwear. She’s also a three-time winner of the Silver Birch Award and a two-time winner of the Lane Anderson Award for Canadian Excellence in Science Writing. Helaine also writes for children’s television and is in high demand as a performer at schools and festivals across North America.

Monica Kulling is the author of over 50 books for children, including the popular Great Idea series, stories of inventors. The third book in the series, In the Bag! Margaret Knight Wraps It Up, was chosen as a Once Upon a World Children’s Book Award Honor Book and the sixth book in the series, Spic-and-Span! Lillian Gilbreth’s Wonder Kitchen, won the Flicker Tale Award. Her most recent book is Mary Anning’s Curiosity.

Elizabeth MacLeod has written more than 60 books for children, including non-fiction, picture books and cookbooks, on subjects ranging from biographies and dinosaurs to stamp collecting and world-changing cats. Liz’s publishing career started as an editor at OWL Magazine and she was also an editor at Kids Can Press, as well as a freelance editor. Recently, her book Canada Year by Year won the Norma Fleck award for Canadian Children’s Non-Fiction.

Shelley Tanaka is the author of two dozen books for young readers, including Amelia Earhart: The Legend of the Lost Aviator, which won the Orbis Pictus Award. She is also a translator, and the fiction editor at Groundwood Books. She teaches at Vermont College of Fine Arts in the MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults.

Sydell Waxman loved visiting the school library as a youngster, but the biography shelf had only one book about a woman. As a writer, she wanted to give young girls strong role models. Her book, Changing the Pattern, won the Toronto Heritage Award of Merit and brought to life the tale of Canada’s first female physician, leader of the suffragist movement and the driving force behind the hospital now called The Toronto Women’s Hospital.
and didn’t even have the right to vote in Canada. I have never forgotten how much I needed a female role model and decided that young people should know about Emily, about the struggles she overcame and how her life was influencing theirs now.

**ST:** I’ve written two books about remarkable women. I wrote *Secrets of Vesuvius*, which was a way in to the Vesuvius eruption through the story of a contemporary archeologist named Sara Bisel.

I have also written a book about Amelia Earhart. I agreed to do it (as I almost always do) before I realized that everything I thought I knew about Amelia was false.

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**How did you conduct your research?**

**MK:** I always begin by checking to see if my subjects have written any books of their own. Reading their writing is like hearing them speak. You learn firsthand about the challenges each of them faced and how they overcame these challenges. I also find books written about my subject by other authors and I draw on the Internet. In researching Mary Anning, I was greatly helped by a webcam that streams views of the town and cliffs of Lyme Regis and Lyme Bay in real time, all the time. The video stream gave me a sense of the coast and harbour, at different times of the day, during different seasons. Setting is a vital element of Mary Anning’s story.

**EM:** I used books, the Internet, newspapers, magazines — anything I could get my hands on. As well, the books in my Snapshot series were also reviewed by experts on the various people. I was really glad to have their input, and they sometimes told me little-known stories that I could add to my books. When I can, I also visit historic sites that were important to the women about whom I’m writing.

**HB:** I interviewed Katherine Johnson and her family, and spent countless hours reading documents and watching videos. For *Pirate Queen*, I had to do lots of digging and cross-checking of ‘facts.’ How I love the Internet. I also went to Guangzhou, where she was from.

**SW:** I searched out primary material at the medical library (since gone) and at the University of Toronto. Reading old newspapers intrigued me.

**ST:** I love research. When I wrote a book about an alpine mummy known as the Iceman and read that a researcher described him as looking like a piece of steak that had been left in the freezer too long, I actually put a steak in the freezer, unwrapped, to see what happened. I read everything I could find, including a book by a woman who said she was the Iceman reincarnated.

Every non-fiction writer I know loves research, loves finding that single detail that will speak to kids (usually this is a detail that writers for adults have overlooked). One of my teaching colleagues at Vermont College once said that if you are the kind of person who loves to ask intrusive questions of people you barely know, then you may well be a non-fiction writer.

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**What were some of the surprising/unusual/amazing facts you learned about the lives and times of the women you wrote about?**

**MK:** You always learn something that captures the imagination when researching. That’s what makes it so much fun! With Margaret Knight, for example, I learned that she had to fight to retain her patent and that the way she defended herself (in a court of law!) was by producing her notebook in which all her drawings clearly showed her process and how well she knew her invention.

When Mother Jones was in her 60s, she put her life and comfort aside for the sake of marching 100 miles with a rag-tag group of kids and adults in an effort to raise awareness about the need to end child labour.

Mary Harris Jones lost everything, not once or even twice, but three times! One of those times was the death of her entire family — husband and four children, in a yellow fever epidemic. She rebuilt her life in Chicago, only to have the Great Chicago Fire destroy her home and dress business. These calamities came after her early life in Ireland, living through the potato famine. Mary Harris Jones was a woman for whom this quote of Winston Churchill’s applies: “If you’re going through hell, keep going.” This is exactly what Mother Jones did time and time again.

I think knowing that life isn’t a bed of roses is an important revelation for kids.

**EM:** Eleanor Roosevelt had such a difficult childhood — her mother called her ‘Granny’ because she didn’t have the good looks that were so prized in females in the late 1800s. Her husband, Franklin, cheated on her with their daughter’s help. Eleanor rose above it all and accomplished great things, not only for the United States but for the world.

I also learned that Marie Curie’s husband courted her not with chocolates and flowers but with a copy of one of his physics papers; Lucy Maud Montgomery had all her teeth pulled because they caused her such pain; Alexander Graham Bell connected Helen Keller with her beloved teacher Annie Sullivan — Helen dedicated her first book to him; Canadian Elizabeth Arden’s real name was Florence Nightingale Graham — I assume her parents wanted her to be a nurse; and Viola Desmond’s court case hinged on the
fact that a movie theatre owner said she'd cheated the Nova Scotia government out of one cent of tax. The colour of her skin was never mentioned.

HB: I learned that computer programming was considered tedious grunt work at the beginning of the computer era and, therefore, the job was given to women for low wages. Later on, when men began coding, wages for the same skills skyrocketed. Women were subsequently shut out of the field, demeaned as temperamentally and intellectually unable to code. We can see the result of this in the technology industry today — women represent a small fraction of the employees and hold very few upper management positions. But women don’t just code; women pioneered coding.

SW: The late 1800s were fascinating years filled with changes on all fronts — ideologically, medically and physically — as inventions changed lives at a rapid pace. Each change was met with opposition. “It will break up marriages, with the wife choosing one political party and the husband another,” was one of the comments against granting women the vote, a privilege that Emily Stowe never lived to see. The most hurtful belief was that women were not suited for higher education and didn’t have the stamina or intelligence to be man’s equal. Even religion challenged these women’s efforts with claims that it was unseemly for a proper Christian woman to sit with men and discuss their bodies. Emily pushed the boundaries of what had become the acceptable spheres in which men and women found their identities.

ST: It was a challenge writing about Amelia Earhart. I was surprised to find out that she was not the pioneer of aviation that I had thought, and that a lot of what she did was not for the greater good, but to satisfy her own personal goals. I was taken aback by her odd marriage. I had to ask myself, as I do with every project, Why is it important for young readers to know about this person? What is the answer to the ‘So what?’ question? “I want to do it because I want to do it” felt out of sync with a meaningful message for kids. And I felt that in large part her fame rested on the fact that her plane went missing, and all the theories about what might have happened to her fed this public curiosity that had little to do with who she was as a person or with her achievements. I wondered whether, if her plane hadn’t disappeared, anyone would care about her. But, in the end, I decided that her great strength was finding something she loved to do, and then devoting herself to doing that thing.

How do you think writing about remarkable women impacts young readers?

MK: It’s extremely important for girls to know that there isn’t a field of study out there that they can’t approach and do well in. Reading about remarkable women gives girls insight into how to achieve their dreams, but also into how to be a better person.

Writing about larger-than-life women is an inspiration for me. I hope reading about them also inspires young readers.

EM: I think it’s great for kids to see how courageous many women have had to be. It’s vital that girls see themselves reflected in what they’re reading. And I’m so glad we’ve gotten away from those textbook illustrations that showed boys doing all the interesting activities and girls hanging back watching!

I introduced kids to Sybil Ludington, a heroine of the American Revolutionary War, who had a midnight ride that was much longer, more dangerous and more successful than Paul Revere’s ride. But Sybil is almost unknown because she was a 16-year-old girl. As well, writing about a groundbreaker like Viola Desmond reminds me that change is possible, but we still have to work hard for it.

HB: Writing these stories is my form of political action. We can only overcome sexism, racism and other ‘isms’ by teaching kids that all people can do all things. How better to show this than by telling real stories, about real people? My hope is that these stories will slide into kids’ consciousness and help undermine the pernicious biases that still run through our society. I like to imagine that one day a little girl will grow up unafraid to dream big, because she knows ambitious dreams can come true for girls like her. And I also like to imagine that little boys will grow up without those rigid ideas that contribute to yet another generation of women who are held back by sexism.

SW: Books about these women give girls role models, enhance their dreams and aspirations and can even influence their own individuality and the courage to reach their full potential. They also present a safe platform on which to discuss current issues in what might otherwise be a contentious debate. Women’s issues still exist, more so in our diverse multicultural schools, but knowing about Emily Stowe’s mock parliament and reversal of roles, well, who knows what seeds that might sow.

ST: Do I think girls need to read about remarkable women? I wish this weren’t the case, but it’s clear that we have not come a long way, baby, and the struggles we thought were over have not necessarily taken hold with our daughters and granddaughters. I think Amelia’s desire, as self-centred as it was, is instructive for girls today. Find something you love to do. Throw everything you have at it. Stand up for yourself. And then live with the consequences.

Frieda Wishinsky is the author of over 70 international award-winning picture books, chapter books, middle grade novels and non-fiction children’s books. She is also a popular speaker and editor.
IN MEMORIAM
Sheila Barry, 1963–2017
Groundwood publisher Sheila Barry passed away on November 15, 2017, at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, due to complications following her treatment for cancer.

Sheila was born in Labrador City and grew up in St. John’s. She obtained a music degree at Memorial University and a Ph.D. in English Literature at York University.

In 2003, Sheila became the editor-in-chief at Kids Can Press. During her time there, she edited the Governor General’s Literary Award-winning novel, The Landing, by John Ibbitson and the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children’s Book Award-winning picture book, A Hen for Izzy Pippik, written by Aubrey Davis and illustrated by Marie Lafrance. She also supported the publication of other much-loved titles, including the Scaredy Squirrel series and the Binky the Space Cat series.

Sheila had been the publisher of Groundwood Books since 2012. During those years, Groundwood received multiple Governor General’s Literary Awards and a Bologna Prize for Best Children’s Publisher of the Year for North America. Four Groundwood books were included on the New York Times Best Illustrated Children’s Books list, including Sidewalk Flowers, written by JonArno Lawson and illustrated by Sydney Smith.

Sheila was adored by her authors, illustrators and colleagues. She empowered us to create beautiful stories for children with her warmth and brilliance. Above all, Sheila had the utmost respect for children and their experiences, and this respect extended to the characters in the books she edited and published.

Sheila was a beloved wife, mother and friend. Her laughter, sparkle and kindness will be deeply missed.

Naseem Hrab

Marilyn Baillie, Lee Maracle and Michel Noël named to Order of Canada
Congratulations to Marilyn Baillie, Lee Maracle and Michel Noël who were named to the Order of Canada on December 29, 2017. Baillie was named for her contributions to children’s literature, education and the arts in Canada; Maracle was named for her contributions to Canada’s literary landscape and for her influential voice in cultural relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Noël was named for his promotion of Indigenous culture as a writer and government official, and for his work to improve cultural exchange in Canada.

New YA novel out in 2018
Sharon E. McKay and Jamal Saeed, a former 12-year political prisoner in Syria, will release their first YA novel in 2018, with Annick Press. The book will be illustrated by Nahid Kazemi. This is the story of a young girl racing through Syria, from Aleppo to Damascus, in search of an uncle she has not seen in years. She must face enemy soldiers, murderous gangs and vicious terrorist groups—all threatening to kill and destroy everything she holds dear. Discover why she must make this desperate journey.

New release of
Larry Loyie and Vera Manuel plays Two Plays About Residential School honours the fearless voices of residential school survivor Larry Loyie (Cree, 1933-2016) and intergenerational survivor Vera Manuel (Secwepemc/Ktunaxa, 1949-2010). In Ora Pro Nobis, Pray for Us, the lively friendship of a group of boys helps them survive their residential school years. And in Vera Manuel’s Strength of Indian Women, four elders prepare for a teen-aged girl’s coming-of-age feast. As they work together, the women reveal the secrets of their time in residential school. With honesty, and often humour, the authors reinforce the voices of survivors. “Two Plays About Residential School is essential reading along the path of truth and reconciliation,” says publisher Jeff Burnham, founder of Indigenous Education Press /www.goodminds.com in Brantford, Ontario.

Mark your calendars for Smith and Thornhill at the Osborne!
Two acclaimed creators will be speaking this fall at Toronto Public Library’s Osborne Collection. Award-winning artist Sydney Smith will give the 12th Annual Sybille Pantazzi Memorial Lecture on Thursday, October 18. TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award winner Jan Thornhill will give the 31st Helen E. Stubbs Memorial Lecture on November 15. Visit www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/osborne for details.

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Annual General Meeting of
The Canadian Children’s Book Centre

Thursday, June 14, 2018 | 6:30pm
Room 200, Northern District Library
40 Orchard View Blvd. (Yonge and Eglinton) Toronto, Ontario M4R 1B9

Members and the public welcome | Reception to follow

For more information, visit www.bookcentre.ca

Guest Speaker: Jim Lorimer
Canada Needs More Canada

A new think tank on publishing and reading has been launched. Join veteran publisher Jim Lorimer as he discusses the reasons for the decline in reading and use of Canadian-authored kids’ books in Canada’s schools and libraries, and the proposed measures to address the situation.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

To all members: The Canadian Children’s Book Centre’s Annual General Meeting is taking place on Thursday, June 14, 2018 in Toronto at 40 Orchard View Boulevard, Room 200, Toronto, ON. 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 any vacancies at the Annual General Meeting. Five openings on the board are available and 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 Charlotte Teeple care of the CCBC (charlotte@bookcentre.ca).

Nominations must be received by May 1, 2018 in order for them to be considered by the nominations committee of the board.

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.

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 are online at bookcentre.ca/agm2018.

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 is available online at bookcentre.ca/agm2018.

*The audited financial statements are available at the CCBC office. Any member may, on request, obtain a copy free of charge either at the office or by prepaid mail.
A Farewell
Camilia Kahrizi, our Marketing and Website Coordinator since the fall of 2013, has left the Book Centre to pursue other career opportunities. Camilia played a key role in the creation of the CCBC’s e-newsletter for teachers and the History Book Bank. We wish Camilia all the very best in her future endeavours.

The Canadian Children’s Book Centre selected as a Scholastic Reading Champion
Scholastic Canada established the Scholastic Reading Champions program in commemoration of their 60th anniversary. Over the course of 2017, they celebrated 60 Canadians who help children discover the pleasure and power of reading. A Reading Champion could be any individual, school, teacher, librarian, non-profit, charity or literacy organization who actively promotes the gift of reading and helps children discover the power of reading. Nominations were made by the public, and each month in 2017, five Reading Champions were selected based on these nominations.

The CCBC was nominated for the month of December by Jo-Anne Naslund, Librarian Emerita at the University of British Columbia. As a Reading Champion, the CCBC receives a certificate of recognition and Scholastic Canada will make a book donation, up to a retail value of $1,000, to an organization chosen by the CCBC. For this honour, the CCBC has selected Club Amick, which brings reading materials to First Nation children in remote Ontario communities, to promote literacy and foster a love of reading.

Reading Lights initiative in Vancouver completed
In January 2018, the final group of plaques of Canadian children’s books were installed as part of the Reading Lights program in Vancouver. Intended to spark an interest in stories and reading, the program features excerpts of books and illustrations on lamp posts across the city for all to enjoy. There are 60 plaques in total that feature the work of many of BC’s authors and illustrators. The program was a collaborative project by the Vancouver Public Library and the Children’s Writers and Illustrators of BC Society. For more information about this program please visit http://pwp.vpl.ca/readinglights/listing/reading-lights/

Tell us about your latest book. Once in a Blue Moon is inspired by the wonders from the natural world that turn an ordinary day into an extraordinary one. There are moments in nature that feel remarkable, like seeing the northern lights or a shooting star, or even finding a four-leaf clover. These experiences are rare and special. They only occur once in a blue moon.

Tell us about your process of writing and/or illustrating a picture book. I dedicated this book to my mom who has always encouraged me to keep my eyes open for magic. Like Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox, this new picture book is comprised of a series of short and accessible poems that highlight several unexpected gifts found outdoors. The acrylic, gouache and pencil illustrations accompany the text with a bright palette set against the dark night or during the day on both land and water. I think it’s perfectly acceptable for a mountain to be purple and a house to be pink. I suppose I prefer such a bright palette because we have snow in Sudbury for almost six months a year.

How did you first get published? My first publishing contract was in 2014, with Sheila Barry from Groundwood Books whom I miss terribly. She encouraged and supported me. I feel so fortunate to have known her and will always be grateful for her kindness and her confidence in my work.

What do you like about writing and/or illustrating picture books? Writing and illustrating picture books has been a way for me to share what I treasure in my daily life. Living in northern Ontario, I am surrounded by lakes, trees and mountains. Just this morning, I saw a white rabbit hopping along the road. My geography deeply inspires my work, and I hope this book will inspire others to spend more time outside, no matter where they live. Magical moments in nature can be found in parks or along the river. They can be found in the smallest patches of grass or in a tree on your way to work or school.

Tell us about authors/illustrators who inspire you. I am greatly inspired by Julie Flett, David A. Robertson, Matt James, Marie-Louise Gay, JonArno Lawson, Josée Bisaillon and countless others. There are so many incredible authors and illustrators in this country. I thank them for setting the bar so high.
CONGRATULATIONS TO JENNIFER MCGRATH AND JOSÉE BISAILLON ON WINNING THE 2017 MARILYN BAILLIE PICTURE BOOK AWARD

THE SNOW KNOWS
JENNIFER MCGRATH & JOSÉE BISAILLON
978-177108-441-3
Picture Book | Ages 3-8 | $22.95

GREAT SPRING BOOKS FROM NIMBUS

BE A CITY NATURE DETECTIVE
PEGGY KOCHANOFF
978-177108-522-4 | April
Non-Fiction | Ages 4-9 | $14.95

EVERYBODY’S DIFFERENT ON EVERYBODY STREET
SHEREE FITCH & EMMA FITZGERALD
978-177108-600-4 | April
Picture Book | Ages 4-7 | $22.95

100 THINGS YOU DON’T KNOW ABOUT ATLANTIC CANADA (FOR KIDS)
SARAH SAWLER
978-177108-567-0 | April
Non-Fiction | Ages 7-12 | $14.95

THE GOODBYE GIRLS
LISA HARRINGTON
978-177108-635-6 | April
YA Fiction | $15.95

AVAILABLE SOON AT BOOKSTORES EVERYWHERE

Follow us online:  facebook  twitter  instagram  tumblr  @nimbuspub or nimbus.ca
After five years as a teacher, a career she had always wanted but found frustrating once she entered it, Stinson left the profession to stay home with her young children. Before she left, she wrote a letter to the staff, thanking people for various things that had contributed to the enjoyable parts of her career. Her colleagues remarked on the quality of her writing. At the same time, she had been working on her university degree. One assignment for a course on The Idea of a Child was to write an essay or a children’s book. Having written enough essays, she opted for the children’s book and created *Jellybean Jumble*, which she had illustrated by a colleague’s daughter before reading it to her class. It was not a book that she would ever submit to a publisher, but the encouragement she got from the project and her colleagues’ comments made her think that, maybe, some day, she could write something worth submitting.

Then a losing argument with her daughter (about what colour stockings would look best with a blue-and-white dress) sparked her first picture book, *Red is Best*. She sent it to three publishers and then three more. In an astonishingly rapid process by today’s standards, the manuscript was accepted by Annick Press in January and published in early fall of that year. It was a hit. It has been in print ever since and has been translated into more than 10 languages. The 25th-anniversary edition is now over 10 years old, and Stinson recently recorded the text for the eBook version.

Is it hard when one’s first book becomes a classic? “It is. And for a number of years, I had a hard time because I continued to write and I started branching out into chapter books with Lorimer and Thistledown, and some YA stuff. Fifteen to 20 years later, I’d still get ‘Oh, I love your book.’ And I didn’t have to ask which one.”

“But, gradually, I came to realize how lucky I was to have written a book that has travelled so well, that has remained in print, that looks like it will remain in print — we are at 35 years now and it’s still going strong. And I’m old and mellow enough to really appreciate that I have that.”

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Having written a book about her daughter, Stinson then wrote *Big or Little?* about her son’s joys and frustration over the process of growing up. As with *Red is Best*, the writing process was very quick. (Most of her early drafts are archived at the Osborne Collection of Toronto Public Library.)

After five picture books, Lorimer approached her to write for older kids and Stinson tried her hand at a middle grade novel for their Blue Kite series. She says the early draft she
submitted of Seven Clues in Pebble Creek was abysmal. "I think they must have thought, What have we done, because we have just given this woman a contract. What are we going to do?"

Fortunately, her editor was Shelley Tanaka, who helped the neophyte novelist make the book the best it could be. "She also taught me how to be an editor. I mean, every editor I've had has... but she was the first one who edited me in a way that totally transformed what I submitted into a neat little book. She never made me feel like I was an idiot. She made comments like 'I could never get over the feeling that these boys were kind of a lot alike.' And I'd start talking about the boys and the way I thought they were so different and she'd say, 'Well that's not really coming across."

After the first Pebble Creek book, Stinson went back to her YA novel, Fish House Secrets (eventually published by This-tedown Press) and more picture books. Ten years after the publication of Red is Best, she had 10 books in print, including a book about writing picture books. The next two decades saw YA novels and short stories that crackled with sexual tension, historical fiction exploring smallpox-ridden Montreal in 1885, contemporary stories for middle grade, horror stories for YA readers, a biography and other non-fiction.

With the Marie-Claire books, part of the middle grade Our Canadian Girl series, Stinson dove into research on a topic that had gripped her imagination some years earlier. "I had already had in the back of my mind an idea that I would write about smallpox in Montreal someday, but I thought it would be a YA book." The story unfolded in her mind as she investigated. The result was that the first draft of the first book was written in a week.

Her venture into biography began when she encountered Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, a groundbreaking and visionary landscape architect and creator of, among other things, parks and playgrounds.

"When I first met Cornelia, I found her and the work she described fascinating. Wanting to know more, I asked if anyone had ever written her biography. 'No,' she said. 'And no one who has written about me has ever quite got me.' Then she turned to me and said, 'Maybe you'll be the one.'"

Stinson's first response was I couldn't, but, of course, the next thought was Why not? Impelled by the challenge, she wrote Love Every Leaf: The Life of Landscape Architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

When she was asked to write her next work of non-fiction,
Highway of Heroes, about the funeral convoy route for fallen soldiers, she took a different approach. While the non-fiction section of the book provides solid information on the Highway of Heroes and Canada's efforts in Afghanistan, the opening fictional section describes a soldier's son, as he and his mother travel the route with his father's coffin. Stinson gets inside the mind of the boy as he wonders about all the people gathered to honour his dad.

That exploration of the child's feeling and that question 'What would it be like?' has driven many of Stinson's books. When an idea comes to her that suggests, "Hmmm, that could make a good story," what's driving her isn't that she knows what the story is. "It's because I have a curiosity about what it would be like to be that person." As soon as that curiosity seizes her, the questions and images start piling up. "What would it be like?" has driven many of Stinson's books.

"What would it be like to be a kid who's been caught in a custody battle and now, after growing up with her mum, has been ordered to go and live with her dad for a year, and then decide where she is going to stay? Those are both situations I heard about — the caretaker who learned to read and the girl who had to make this kind of decision."

Those questions turned into King of the Castle and One Year Commencing. What Happened to Ivy grew out of similar pondering, this time on the complex story of Tracy Latimer, a child with severe disabilities, and her father Robert who was charged with killing her.

"I thought, What would it be like to be that father? And what would it be like to be that girl? What was her life? And what was it like for him?" The book is, in fact, dedicated to "Robert and Tracy whose stories haunt me still" and while it is not the story of the Latimers, it explores similar issues — without judging or indicating what opinions, if any, Stinson holds on the subject.

"It took me a while to get up close to that story. Stinson experimented with different viewpoints — a neighbour, Ivy herself, Ivy's father — until she settled on telling the story solely from the perspective of Ivy's older brother, David, a teen whose feelings for his sister include love, embarrassment and frustration.

If this sounds like a difficult subject to write about, it is true that Stinson doesn't shy away from them. She writes with remarkable honesty, whether it is minor but excruciating embarrassments like boogers or a sanitary pad accidently left where an older brother could see it, or a much more serious and tense encounter like the scene in Becoming Ruby when Ruby is pressured into giving a hand job to her date after a high school dance. "I guess I just shut off the part of my brain that says you could get in trouble for writing this."

"It's funny about the honesty thing," she adds. 'One time I was at a school and did my spiel and then asked if there were any questions. A kid put up his hand and said, 'You're so honest.' That was his question; it was kind of like he was in awe. And I thought, Oh well, I guess I am."

Stinson doesn't consider herself brave when she compares herself to people who have written about controversial topics, like Deborah Ellis and Anne Carter. She is also in awe of Brian Doyle, who approached a scene in Boy O' Boy that may not have been all that different from the unwilling hand-job scene in Becoming Ruby. "And yet he managed to create that horrible, awful sense of unease without spelling everything out quite so graphically. And I think that's real talent."

Over the years, Stinson has occasionally encountered teachers and principals who asked her not to talk about some of her titles (from her picture book about body parts, The Bare Naked Book, to Becoming Ruby), and she has sometimes turned down invitations for that reason. But she praises educators who have trusted both her judgment and their students' capacity for discussing particular topics.

When not writing or touring, Stinson has led workshops in Canada and in Liberia, been a Writer-in-Residence at public libraries and taken on editing projects for several publishers. For over 14 years, she has also been a reader in the CNIB's Talking Books program where she has read everything from cookbooks to contemporary adult books. "Just as reading really, really good fiction helped make me a writer, I think reading fine writers aloud helps me as a writer, too." She adds with a grin, "Plus, I just love reading aloud."

If Red is Best governed Stinson's reputation for many years, her 2013 title, The Man with the Violin (illustrated by Dušan Petričić), has been in the spotlight for the last five years. The book — about a boy who notices things — has garnered multiple awards and accolades and has been translated into seven languages to date. It was recently turned into a multi-media piece (premiering at the Kennedy Center in Washington last spring and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in December 2017). It also sparked a second book from Stinson and Petričić, The Dance of the Violin, also based on an experience of the world-class violinist, Joshua Bell.

Stinson has been working on an adult novel for many years. In a 2010 blog post, she wrote, "How's the novel going? Let's just ignore the fact that I've been working on it since 2004 — granted with a few other projects sprinkled in there — and say that today I think draft #34 is going well!"

Stinson laughs when reminded of this post. "Things get set aside. The novel got set aside a lot of times."

In addition to completing another draft of the novel, she recently signed a contract with Annick Press for a new picture book, The Dog Who Wanted to Fly. She has been working on an idea that combines three of her passions — photography, nature and words — but has set it aside to work on another project that landed in her lap last fall; she was still, at the time of our interview, being mysterious about what it is.

"Sometimes, I've only got one thing in progress. But even when I'm working on one thing, there's something else back there saying, 'What about me? How about me? You could do this.'"

She smiles. "Right now, I have a real wealth of stuff that's clamouring for my attention — which is a good feeling."

Gillian O'Reilly is a Toronto writer and the former editor of Canadian Children's Book News.
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Canadian Picture Books


By Beverley A. Brenna, Shuwen Sun and Yina Liu

Children’s picture books are considered a staple of childhood reading and, increasingly, a rich resource for older children. We occasionally hear about patterns and trends in terms of content, but how do we really know what changes are occurring unless we set out to investigate a comprehensive sample? This was the thinking behind our current project: locating, reading and analyzing all of the Canadian picture books published in two publication years, 2005 and 2015, and then reflecting on our findings. Not a simple task! Through sending queries to 68 Canadian publishers, consulting reviews and awards’ lists and perusing the WorldCat database, we identified a set of 177 titles, 57 published in 2005 and 120 published in 2015. And then the reading began!

In terms of the two groups of books, a number of similarities and differences appeared. In both publication years, the picture books tended to feature human children as protagonists, rather than other characters. Also in both publication years, historical fiction presented comparatively low, at 12% of the 2005 titles and 3% of the 2015 titles. In 2005, the fantasy genre claimed the highest percentage of books, at 34%, with realistic fiction a close second at 28%. In 2015, however, non-fiction took first place, at 34%, up from 16% in 2005; also in 2015, the fantasy genre emerged as a close second, at 31%.

Noteworthy, particularly in the 2015 group of books, are the numbers of books that include glossaries, authors’ informational notes and other additional sections of information to explain and extend concepts presented elsewhere in narrative. It is apparent that authors are considering reading for information as a key goal alongside reading for entertainment.

Numbers of primary male and female characters appeared to be fairly consistent between the two groups of books, although many books involved multiple characters, which at times made our calculations in this regard difficult. Similarly, a more informal count of types of illustration and text fonts demonstrated increased diversity in the 2015 sample, yet with more books to choose from, perhaps this heightened use of varied media and visual cues is to be expected.

Sidewalk Flowers, for example, is a wordless picture book conceptualized by author JonArno Lawson and illustrated by Sydney Smith that builds through bits of colour infusing a black-and-white world. Illustrations and text forward the storyline in every conceivable area of John Crossingham’s Turn Off That Light (illustrated by Steve Wilson), including the dust covers. Italics or bold print for emphasis and varied fonts to differentiate dialogue from narration are commonly seen in the 2015 books, cues that support reading comprehension if used consistently. Italics, in Monica Kulling’s Grant and Tillie Go Walking (illustrated by Sydney Smith) are used to signal onomatopoeia. In Annika Dunklee’s Me, Too (illustrated by Lori Joy Smith), dialogue appears in speech bubbles, comic-book style. Elise Gravel’s Head Lice uses capital letters to set apart important words in each sentence. Maureen Fergus’s picture book, And What If I Won’t (illustrated by Qin Leng), uses different colours to distinguish the real from the imagined. Jillian Roberts’s Where Do Babies Come From? (illustrated by Cindy Revell) utilizes different fonts for asking and answering questions.

One of the most striking findings in the 2015 set involved the inclusion of Indigenous content. While two books from 2005 (3.5%) reflected Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, with one of the two writers presenting an Indigenous background, 12 books from 2015 (10%) were identified as including Indigenous content. These titles included the following: Orca Chief, by First Nations author and artist Roy Henry Vickers,
co-written by Robert Budd, is one in a series of Northwest Coast traditional tales; and Métis author David Bouchard’s *The First Flute: Whowhaoyahyazo Tokhkoya* (illustrated by Don Oelze and told in both English and Dakota) is the story of Dancing Raven, a character who must prove to his village the importance of his song. Carolyn Mallory’s *Painted Skies* (illustrated by Amei Zhao) introduces readers to the northern lights as Leslie, a newcomer to the Arctic, is supported by her new friend, Oolipika, in learning about her new environment; Mi’kmaq artist and storyteller Alan Syliboy’s *The Thundermaker*, with illustrations inspired by Mi’kmaq petroglyphs, relates the tale of Big Thunder teaching his son, Little Thunder, about his important responsibilities; and Rebecca Hainnu’s *A Walk on the Shoreline* (illustrated by Qin Leng) tells the story of a young boy’s annual summer visit to his biological family in Nunavut where he learns about the diverse ecosystem. Hainnu, a teacher, is a graduate of the Nunavut Arctic College Teacher Education Program. Jennifer Noah and Chris Giroux’s *Our First Caribou Hunt* (illustrated by Hwei Lim) narrates the story of two Inuit children and their father planning and executing an Arctic hunt, with particular emphasis on cultural values and tradition; Inuit author Suzie Naypauyok-Short’s *Wild Eggs: A Tale of Artic Egg Collecting* (illustrated by Jonathan Wright) explores traditional teachings from grandparents who understand the importance of respecting the land; and in Mary Wallace’s *An Inuksuk Means Welcome*, readers are given an alphabet acrostic that presents life in the Arctic, with words in both English and Inuktitut, an adaptation of Wallace’s 2009 book. Germaine Arnaktauyok, an Inuit artist, is the illustrator of *Way Back Then*, a collection of Inuit folktales presented by Neil Christopher in both English and Inuktitut; Melanie Florence, a Canadian of Cree and Scottish heritage, is the author of *Missing Nimâmâ* (illustrated by François Thisdale), a riveting story about a missing Cree woman and the young daughter who is raised by her grandmother (Nôhkom); Danielle Daniel’s *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* was inspired by this Métis author’s desire to extend her young son’s understanding and appreciation of his Indigenous roots. This book explores traditions of the Anishinaabe culture, introducing the reader to 12 different totem animals; and Willow Dawson’s *The Wolf-Birds* is a story about the symbiotic relationship between wolves and ravens, based on scientific data and anecdotal reports from Indigenous hunters.

In terms of a wider picture of the authors and illustrators creating these 177 books, incidences of female authoring as well as illustrating occurred across both publication dates more often than male authoring and illustrating, with female authors appearing in 2005 at 67% and in 2015 at 71%, and female illustrating appearing in 2005 at 58% and in 2015 at 62%. Incidences of male authoring appeared, in 2015, more often than male authorship, and the numbers of males who author and illustrate their own books, in both years, are slightly higher than the numbers of females who write and illustrate their own books, although both males and females who write and illustrate appear to be approximately four times greater in number in 2015 than in 2005.

Possible trends to watch over time, in addition to the topics introduced above, include the presence of blended genres, as in our study, while assigning primary genres to each book, we noted a larger percentage of books published in 2015 that displayed multiple genres. These include Cybèle Young’s *The Queen’s Shadow: A Story About How Animals See*, a book that delivers non-fiction material in a fantasy context. Linda Bailey’s imaginative *When Santa Was a Baby* (illustrated by Geneviève Godbout) adopts a detailed non-fiction biographical style while Uma Krishnawami’s *Bright Sky, Starry City* (illustrated by Aimée Sicuro) reads as fiction with non-fiction features. Dušan Petričić’s *My Family Tree and Me* combines autobiographical material with historical fiction, presenting the story in an intriguing format that works from the book’s beginning to its middle, with a second storyline moving from the book’s ending to its middle.

In addition, the appearance of titles in 2015 that were not intended for young children inspired us to wonder whether the general nature of picture books might change further, over time, to reflect a greater potentiality with older audiences. In the course of our study, we noted that the group of 2015 books appeared to consider older readers as a specific target. Eight (6.7%) of the 2015 books were assessed to have content and vocabulary suitable for readers aged 8 and up, versus one book (1.7%) in the 2005 titles clearly intended for older readers.

We recommend readers take a look at Cybèle Young’s (2015) *Some Things I’ve Lost* — an artistic masterpiece, itemizing 12 misplaced objects that, when a facing gatefold opens, morph into striking specimens of underwater life, and consider how this title might reflect a wide readership. In addition, the following other books from 2015 were deemed suitable for older readers, with the first particularly exemplary for young adults and adults: Melanie Florence’s *Missing Nimâmâ* (illustrated by François Thisdale), inspiring readers to care about and reflect upon Canada’s history related to missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls; Carolyn Beck’s *Squelch* (illustrated by François Thisdale), dealing evocatively with grief and loss; Jon Berg’s *Rosie and Rolland in the Legendary Show-And-Tell*, a fantasy-adventure story; and Cybèle Young’s *The Queen’s Shadow: A Story About How Animals See*, informational picture book material blended with an imaginative context. Glen Huser’s *The Golden Touch* (illustrated by Philippe Béha) offers a wry retelling of the classic Greek tale; Jude Isabella’s *The Red Bicycle: The Extraordinary Story of One Ordinary Bicycle* (illustrated by Simone Shin), is about a bicycle donated to a series of recipients in Africa; Shaker N. Paleja’s *Power Up! A Visual Exploration of Energy* (illustrated by Glenda Tse), explains all forms of energy and its uses; and Nathan Jurvetson’s *Junction*, is a fantasy journey in the land of Face Changers.

Further investigation is suggested in relation to the changing content of picture books over time, offering increased awareness for families, teachers, librarians, authors and illustrators, about the nature of this fascinating form, in order to best support audiences of all ages.

Beverley A. Brenna is a Professor in Curriculum Studies, College of Education, at the University of Saskatchewan; she has published many books of fiction for children and young adults. Shuwen Sun and Yina Liu were M.Ed. students at the time of this study; both have successfully completed their degrees.

*Special thanks to the Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Saskatchewan, for funding that supported graduate student research assistantships contributing to this project.*
Gabrielle Grimard
Endless Possibilities

BY SANDRA O’BRIEN

Tell us about your training as an artist and how long you’ve been working as a children’s illustrator.

I have been an illustrator for 16 years now! I started when I had my son. I was a painter, a muralist, and these jobs often took me away from home, or if I was at home the income was uncertain. I got some good advice from illustrator friends like Simon Dupuis and Stéphane Poulin. I got the urge to try it and it worked! And in addition, it was the youth section that interested me the most; I now had a miniature target audience!

What or who inspires the illustrations you create?

Everything around me inspires me — my children, my friends, my life. The infinitely big, but especially the infinitely small! Colours, fabrics, landscapes, travels, the wind... I discovered that I prefer to illustrate the wind! It is my favourite muse! It is present in almost all my illustrations! It’s my poetry.

Tell us about some of the projects you are currently working on.

I have just finished the fourth instalment of Le petit gnouf, written by Dominique Demers, for Dominique et compagnie. And I’m currently illustrating The Magic Boat by Kit Pearson and Katherine Farris for Orca Book Publishers. This summer, I’ll be working on a book for Pajama Press and I hope I’ll have time to write another as I have two or three stories that are knocking on my door.

You participated in the 2016 TD Canadian Children’s Book Week Tour. Tell us a little bit about that experience.

When I participated in the TD Canadian Children’s Book Week tour, I had the chance to go to Nunavut. What a shock! No more trees! Just all that space around me and I was breathing it all in! I learned about Inuit communities. Their world is so different from ours. I had the feeling I was in another country! But kids are beautiful and so free. I truly enjoyed that experience and I only wish I could go back.

The Other Side of Eden by Hugh Brody became my friend on this trip. Reading about something that is happening in one of the most remote villages in Canada, like Pond Inlet, and being there while you are reading it — that was a treasure! I wish everybody could have that chance.

Sandra O’Brien is the editor of Canadian Children’s Book News. Special thanks to Anika Kuhnert for help with translation.
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— Lynn Wisniewski, Manager of Instructional Media, Library Services, Halton District School Board

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**Amazing Heroines**

**PICTURE BOOKS AND NON-FICTION FOR PRESCHOOL TO GRADE 6**

**I Am Not a Number**
written by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer
illustrated by Gillian Newland
(Second Story Press, 2016)

This picture book tells the story of Irene who is taken from her Nipissing First Nation home by an Indian Agent and sent to live in a faraway residential school. Stripped of her name, frightened and homesick, Irene endures, holding on to her mother’s words “Never forget who you are!”

**The Paper Bag Princess**
written by Robert Munsch
illustrated by Michael Martchenko
(Annick Press, 1980)

Tradition gets tweaked when an unglamorous princess outwits an arrogant dragon to rescue an equally arrogant prince in this charming, whimsically illustrated feminist fairy tale.

**Shark Lady: The True Story of How Eugenie Clark Became the Ocean’s Most Fearless Scientist**
written by Jess Keating
illustrated by Marta Álvarez Miguéns
(Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2017)

This is the story of Shark Lady — a woman who dared to dive, defy, discover and inspire. Clark taught the world that sharks were to be admired, not feared, and that women could do anything they set their minds to.

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**Level the Playing Field: The Past, Present, and Future of Women’s Pro Sports**
written by Kristina Rutherford
(Owlkids Books, 2016)

The experience of being a professional athlete is very different for men and women. Many female athletes aren’t valued or recognized equally for their talent. This book explores the state of women’s sport, the pioneers who challenged the status quo and the hurdles that still remain.

**JUNIOR & INTERMEDIATE FICTION AND NON-FICTION FOR GRADES 2-9**

**Because I am a Girl: I Can Change the World**
(Plan Canada International Books)
written by Rosemary McCarney with Jen Albaugh and Plan International
(Second Story Press, 2014)

Remarkable girls from all over the world describe the barriers and dangers that they, and millions of other girls, face daily. Despite the hardships they must overcome, these girls have hope for the future. Another must read in the series is* Every Day is Malala Day.*

**The Breadwinner**
written by Deborah Ellis
(Groundwood Books, 2015 ©2000)

Parvana lives in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. When her father is arrested, conditions grow desperate for her family. Forbidden to earn money as a girl, Parvana must transform herself into a boy and become the breadwinner.

**Justine McKeen, Thermostat Chat**
(Orca Echoes)
written by Sigmund Brouwer
illustrations by Dave Whamond
(Orca Book Publishers, 2017)

Justine McKeen is on a mission to slay vampires! Energy vampires, that is. By unplugging electronics that drain electricity when they aren’t in use, Justine, her friends and Principal Proctor set out to reduce the school’s energy use.

**The Most Magnificent Thing**
written and illustrated by Ashley Spires
(Kids Can Press, 2014)

A charming book about a girl who wants to make the most MAGNIFICENT thing! She knows just how it will look and how it will work. But making her magnificent thing is hard, and everything she builds comes out wrong.
**Girl Mans Up**
written by M-E Girard
(HarperCollins Publishers, 2016)

Why does everyone have a problem with Pen being the kind of girl she’s always been? They think she should quit trying to be something she’s not. Old-world parents, disintegrating friendships and feelings for other girls drive Pen to see the truth.

**Maud: A Novel Inspired by the Life of L.M. Montgomery**
written by Melanie J. Fishbane
(Penguin Teen Canada, 2017)

Lucy Maud Montgomery dreams of going to college and becoming a writer. When she leaves PEI to live with her father and his new wife and daughter in Saskatchewan, her dream seems possible, until Maud discovers her stepmother’s plans.

**Moon at Nine**
written by Deborah Ellis
(Pajama Press, 2014)

Farrin has many secrets, but the day she meets Sadira, her life changes forever. Sadira is wise and outgoing; the two girls become inseparable. But as their friendship deepens into romance, it becomes dangerous.

**The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl Beats Up the Marvel Universe!**
(The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl, Volume 1)
written by Ryan North
illustrated by Erica Henderson
colour by Rico Renzi
(Marvel Entertainment, 2016)

Squirrel Girl eats nuts, kicks butts, talks to squirrels and also punches really well. In this graphic novel, she’ll encounter her most dangerous, most powerful, most unbeatable enemy yet: HERSELF. Specifically, an evil clone.

**Sophie Quire and the Last Storyguard**
(The Continuing Adventures of Peter Nimble, Book 2)
written by Jonathan Auxier
(Puffin Canada, 2016)

Two years ago, Peter Nimble and Sir Tode rescued the kingdom of HazelPort. Now they have been summoned for a new mission: find Sophie Quire — 12-year-old bookmender and Storyguard.

**#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women**
edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale
(Annick Press, 2017)

This stunning collection of essays, poems, interviews and art gives voice to Native girls and women from across North America.

**Bad Girls of Fashion: Style Rebels from Cleopatra to Lady Gaga**
written by Jennifer Croll
illustrated by Ada Buchholc
(Annick Press, 2016)

Female style rebels have used clothes to shake things up and break the rules. With an energetic, appealing writing style, Croll demonstrates how through the ages women have used fashion as a tool, and how their influence continues to shape the way women present themselves today.

**The Valiant**
written by Lesley Livingston

Fallon lives in the shadow of her dead sister’s legendary reputation as a warrior. On the eve of her 17th birthday, Fallon is abducted by slavers and sold to a training school for female gladiators. Now she must survive deadly battles in order to claim her place among the Valiant.
Red Leaf Literature

Red Leaf Literature features titles chosen by Canadian Children’s Book News’ reviewers. These books are thought to be of the highest quality and signify titles of exceptional calibre. Whether you’re a parent, teacher or librarian, our reviewers feel that these books would make an excellent addition to your home, school or library collection.

PICTURE BOOKS FOR PRESCHOOL AND UP

**The Heart’s Song**

*written by Gilles Tibo*

*illustrated by Irene Luxbacher*

*translated by Petra Johannson*

North Winds Press / Scholastic Canada, 2017

978-1-4431-5721-6 (hc) $16.99

for Kindergarten to Grade 3

*Picture Book | Love | Grief | Intergenerational Relationships | Community | Compassion | Friendship*

Each morning, Miss Matilda awakens to the cheerful song of her beloved little canary. Pulling a large suitcase, she then walks to the park, taking her usual spot on the bench near the sandbox. Inside her suitcase is her trusty, perfect toolkit, which she uses to fix the neighbourhood children’s broken toys, mend their socks and repair their worn shoes. But she also fixes broken hearts, lonely souls and melancholy minds with her thoughtful words and melodies.

When Miss Matilda comes to the park one morning with tear-filled eyes, the children and their caregivers learn that her sweet bird will never sing again. Returning to the park at sunset the same day, with their own suitcases in tow, the children gather round their cherished Miss Matilda, showering her with heartfelt songs, beautiful drawings and tender poems.

Luxbacher’s colourful, detailed artwork — rendered in acrylics, charcoal, found papers and graphite — brings Tibo’s quietly moving celebration of community, generosity and healing to life. And by expertly capturing the soulful expression of each child, Luxbacher adds stunning depth to this touching, gentle story.

*The Heart’s Song* is a poignant, inspirational journey of the heart — joy, loss, kindness and the power of the human spirit — all nestled within 32 visually compelling pages. Destined to become a comforting resource for both teachers and families, this endearing intergenerational tale, brimming with emotional connection and truth, will linger with readers long after the final whimsical page has been turned. Tibo says he hopes that “the heart of Miss Matilda will touch the hearts of readers around the world!” Undoubtedly, it already has.

Jennifer D. Foster is a freelance editor and writer, chair of Editors Toronto and administrative director of Rowers Reading Series.

**I Love My Purse**

*written by Belle DeMont*

*illustrated by Sonja Wimmer*

Annick Press, 2017

978-1-55451-954-5 (hc) $21.95

for Kindergarten to Grade 2

*Picture Book | Self-expression | Rejecting Societal Norms | Humour*

Charlie loves the bright red purse his grandma let him have. It holds his sketchbook, his half-eaten apple (*his cup of cocoa, his sea monster?*) and his frog — and it does it all better than his backpack could! Charlie’s not fazed when his dad tells him, “Boys wear sneakers and baseball caps, not bright red purses.” He sees no reason he can’t wear his red purse to school.

In Charlie, Belle DeMont has created an engaging character that accepts people for who they are and simply expects to be accepted in return. As every day passes and each of the characters comes around to Charlie’s way of seeing, they also learn a little more about themselves. It’s fun to find hints in Sonja Wimmer’s colourful illustrations — are those tropical fish on Dad’s towel as he muses about wearing his Hawaiian shirt? Does Sam’s hat make him look chef-like as he wonders about cooking his own food in the cafeteria?

By the end of the story, the impact of Charlie’s attitude comes full circle. Inspired to wear his sparkly blue shoes, the crossing guard reminds Charlie of his blue spotted glasses — and Charlie finally has something else he enjoys wearing.

Charlie’s character — like DeMont’s story itself — refuses to acknowledge restrictive societal norms without needing to make a grandiose statement. Sure, Charlie’s a boy with a bright red purse, but in it you’ll find his frog and a sea monster. In a quiet but affirming way, they both simply say, “Hey, wear your sparkly blue shoes, if you want.”

Lisa Dalrymple is the author of several books for young readers including Jungle Jitters.
In silence, two siblings leave their campsite at dawn with their fishing gear and head out onto the still lake in their red canoe. “I sat in the bow, / my paddle dipping / in and out, / in and out, / You sat in the stern, / your paddle keeping time.” While waiting patiently as the lure trails in the water, they see and hear a myriad of wildlife. The calming reverie is broken by a sudden tug on the fish hook. A brief skirmish ensues and a trout is pulled out of the water, followed by the “best breakfast ever” back at the campsite.

This book is a feast for the senses! Through her free-verse poetry and her strong sense of place, author Jean E. Pendziwol beckons readers to contemplate the beauty and tranquility of the natural world. Her text, so lovely to read aloud, encourages us to slow down and savour the images and the emotions that come forth. We can’t help but immerse ourselves in her sentences: “We heard laughter, / the knock of ax against wood, / smelled coffee and bacon / and smoke from the fire, / saw the others / stretching and yawning / as we beached the red canoe / and jumped ashore.”

By encapsulating quintessential scenes of a summer morning on a lake, Phil transports readers to the rugged beauty of a Canadian landscape in his art. One can almost feel the textures of his subdued illustrations, rendered in acrylic on plywood. The gradation of light, beginning with the cusp of daybreak, is nothing short of masterful. And always... there is the red canoe. Senta Ross is a former elementary teacher and teacher-librarian in Kitchener, Ontario.

Me and You and the Red Canoe
written by Jean E. Pendziwol
illustrated by Phil
Groundwood Books, 2017
978-1-55498-847-1 (hc) $18.95
978-1-55498-848-8 (eBook) $16.95
for Grades 3 and up

Picture Book | Canoeing | Fishing | Camping | Nature | Wildlife | Siblings

Ten Cents a Pound
written by Nhung N. Tran-Davies
illustrated by Josée Bisaillon
Second Story Press, 2018
978-1-77260-056-8 (hc) $18.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 3

Picture Book | Mother-Daughter Relationships | Coffee Labourers | Poverty | Education

Amidst the mountains of an unnamed country, a young girl ponders a significant imminent change in her life while also perceiving the hardships her mother endures labouring in the coffee fields outside their small village. Although she is drawn to the possibilities that await her, the girl is not only reluctant to leave her family and village but is painfully aware of her mother’s “coarsened and scratched” hands, “calloused and blistered” feet, bent and stooped back, and “blurred and strained” eyes. Yet despite her initial intention to stay in the village, she comes to understand both her mother’s own inability to leave and the dreams her mother has for her, an education and experiences that will give the girl a better life — all for the price of 10 cents a pound.

Tran-Davies was inspired to write this book following one of her visits to a village in central Vietnam, as part of her work with a charitable foundation she started. The text is simple, poetic and powerful, the portrayal of the relationship between the nameless girl and mother touching and layered, sure to resonate deeply with readers. Bisaillon’s mixed-media illustrations — pastels, watercolour, charcoal, coloured pencils and cut paper (finalized in Photoshop) — are beautiful and emotionally engaging. In one particularly strong scene, the girl and mother are shown fully together in an illustration for the first time, their backs to the viewer and their faces turned toward an uncertain future that is now full of a shared hope, a hope that “shall be worth more than gold.”

Senta Ross

Ken Kilback is a writer and primary teacher in Vancouver.
The Wolf, the Duck, & the Mouse
written by Mac Barnett
illustrated by Jon Klassen
Candlewick Press, 2017
978-0-7636-7754-1 (hc) $22.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 3
Picture Book | Teamwork | Ingenuity | Courage | Humour

It’s not so bad being swallowed by a wolf!

Ask the mouse, who is gobbled up one morning, only to discover that he is not alone in the depths of the canine’s stomach. A duck that had previously been ingested also occupies this same space and that he is not alone in the depths of the canine’s stomach. A duck string his own unlikely words together — words like ‘savor,’ ‘dream,’ ‘cascading’ and ‘stars’ — it is easy to see how words can be used to paint an image or a feeling.

This book is a fanciful delight from start to finish. Mac Barnett has written a quirky tale about three diverse characters that make the best out of a challenging situation. The domestic arrangement inside the wolf’s stomach almost seems normal: “Where did you get jam?” the mouse asked. “And a tablecloth?” The duck munched a crust. “You’d be surprised what you find inside of a wolf.” When the wolf complains of a severe stomach ache brought on by the enthusiastic movements of his residents, the flamboyant duck shrewdly advises, “Eat a hunk of good cheese. And a flagon of wine! And some beeswax candles.” No wonder wolves howl!

Jon Klassen’s mixed-media illustrations of the intimate domestic situation within the wolf’s stomach are ingenious, right down to the candelabra and elegant wine glasses gracing the dinner table. Although the protagonists are simply delineated, their personalities are well defined by their expressive eyes and their creative choice of clothing. One can’t help but be amused at their substitution of a colander and tablecloth for a helmet and cape as they fearlessly protect their turf from the hunter. And who wouldn’t sympathize with the wolf as it howls at the moon.

Senta Ross

The Word Collector
written and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds
Orchard Books, 2018
978-0-545-86502-9 (hc) $21.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 3
Picture Book | Words | Writing | Poetry | Stories | Communication | Expression

Jerome collects words of all kinds — dreamy words, sad words, scientific words. He writes them down, puts them in labelled boxes and pastes them into notebooks. It is an ordered and carefully kept collection. One day while carrying his collection, Jerome trips and the words go flying! Tossed and jumbled, they are no longer in their proper categories. ‘Turmeric’ lies next to ‘lost’ and ‘silent’ sits beside ‘orchestra.’ Jerome is struck with a realization — words are more interesting when they are strung together. He sets about writing poems, singing songs and using his words to connect with the people around him.

Peter H. Reynolds has produced yet another thought-provoking picture book and has contributed to the ever-expanding collection of books featuring diverse and varied characters. Reynolds has drawn his protagonist as a little black boy with a tuft of purple hair and a matching purple outfit. Jerome is kind, confident and focused. Readers will be inspired by Jerome to express themselves anew, to write poems, songs and stories. When we watch Jerome string his own unlikely words together — words like ‘savor,’ ‘dream,’ ‘cascading’ and ‘stars’ — it is easy to see how words can be used to paint an image or a feeling.

Reynolds’ cartoon-like illustrations are simple and expressive, adding interest without distracting from the words themselves. While this book is a little treasure, to be read and enjoyed for its own sake, it could also be useful in a classroom setting as an introduction to a poetry unit for younger children.

Ildiko Surnegi is a reviewer from Ottawa and the mother of two young readers.

Yak and Dove
written by Kyo Maclear
illustrated by Esmé Shapiro
Tundra Books, 2017
978-1-77049-494-7 (hc) $22.99
978-1-77049-495-4 (eBook) $11.99
for Preschool to Grade 2
Picture Book | Friendship | Animals | Humour

In this wonderful tripartite tale of two unlikely friends, Yak and Dove muse about what life might be like if they were twins, from wearing matching clothes to simultaneously having cold feet. However, their thoughts eventually turn to how they are different in many ways, and soon they become highly critical of one another, until their friendship seems irreversibly broken. When Yak laments about losing a best friend, Marmot holds a talent contest to help Yak find a new one, complete with prizes to attract participants. After the winner tries eating Yak, Dove appears and wins back Yak’s heart, the two friends acknowledging they “are a bit alike… after all.” Yak then plants silence in order to combat a noisy world and the bird has learned a lot through their trials, and so finds a way for love to triumph in their friendship.

The entire story is told in dialogue, with no tag lines but only different font type and size identifying which animal is speaking. Maclear’s text is lyrical and laced with humour, the words demanding to be read aloud, the voices of each character clear and engaging. Shapiro’s illustrations, created with watercolour, gouache and coloured pencils, are not only gorgeous and breathtaking, but are also filled with humour and touching scenes. The relationship between Yak and Dove, as captured in both text and illustrations, is rich and layered. And the garden Yak and Dove create in the end aptly reflects their “very noisy quiet” friendship.

Ken Kilback
“The Landing is geared toward young adults, but just as easily belongs to the Canadian coming-of-age genre occupied by the likes of Alice Munro and Margaret Laurence.”
— The Globe and Mail

Set in Depression-era Muskoka, this evocative and powerful Governor General’s Literary Award–winning novel follows a young musician’s awakening to the possibilities of a world beyond his borders.

PB 978-1-5253-0025-7 • $12.99
The Journey of Little Charlie
written by Christopher Paul Curtis
Scholastic Press, 2018
978-1-4431-4263-2 (hc) $19.99
for Grades 4 to 7
Historical Fiction | Adventure | Racism | Prejudice | Courage | Civil War | Slavery

Being accused of murdering his pa is just the type of bad luck that has followed Little Charlie Bobo and his family for generations. So when Cap'n Buck, the overseer of the neighbouring plantation, demands Little Charlie pay off his pa's supposed debt by accompanying him to Detroit to capture a family of runaway slaves, Little Charlie knows he has no choice. It's just his bad luck.

For a poor 12-year-old white boy in 1858 South Carolina, travelling north is certainly an adventure, and tracking down the Demarest family who, as Little Charlie understands it, also stole money from the plantation owner, seems like the right thing to do. But Charlie becomes suspicious of the captain, and his intentions are confirmed when they try to return to the United States from Ontario after kidnapping Sylvanus, the Demarests' son. At the train station, Little Charlie, Cap’n Buck and Sylvanus are met by the Chatham-Buxton Vigilance Committee; only one of them makes it back to Detroit.

Following the success of Elijah of Buxton and The Madman of Piney Woods, author Christopher Paul Curtis returns to the communities of Chatham and Buxton, real-life Canadian havens for those who escaped slavery in the United States. Told through the eyes of a white preteen travelling with a white overseer, The Journey of Little Charlie is a striking look at racism, ignorance and the human condition, driven home by the juxtaposition of Little Charlie and the well-spoken, well-educated Sylvanus. That the story of Sylvanus Demarest is based on a true incident adds all the more intrigue to this already captivating novel.

Although the dialect is a bit tricky, once Little Charlie’s wide-eyed adventure begins, readers will take little notice. The Journey of Little Charlie shines in portraying dark times in US history — and in reminding us that courage lies within us all.

Lauren steps onto the school bus and sees an unfamiliar bus driver, things begin to go awry. Lauren’s seat on the bus is taken. Her kind advances toward another student are misconstrued. And she misses reading time because she has taken too long trying to tie the bows in her shoelaces evenly. Not all days, however, are slug days. Some days are butterfly days. Those are the days when everything goes right. But even if everything doesn’t go right, making a connection with someone else can transform even the slowest and slimiest of days into something bright and colourful.

Sara Leach has written a book that will help readers see the world from the perspective of someone on the autism spectrum. It is a world filled with details that someone else might miss: the prickly feel of pine needles pressed against your hand, the sensation of “cracker-glue” in your mouth, the calming squishiness of a special ball.

Lauren’s take on things is quite literal. She is observant, and her commentary is refreshingly straightforward and pointed. Readers will notice that while Lauren often misunderstands social cues, she is just as frequently misunderstood herself. For readers who are on the autism spectrum, Leach has offered up a story with which they may identify. Rebecca Bender’s black-and-white illustrations convey Lauren’s rollercoaster of emotions as we follow her through the school week.

This early chapter book is an important contribution toward recognizing and representing the diversity of the human condition in children’s literature.

Ilidiko Surnegi
what we can do. Even a hummingbird dropping beads of water on a raging fire makes a difference, and Alba’s endearing story is sure to change readers as well.

Amy Mathers is a columnist for the CCBC’s e-newsletter for teachers and a YA reviewer for the National Reading Campaign.

**When We Were Shadows**  
(The Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers)  
written by Janet Wees  
Second Story Press, 2018  
978-1-77260-061-2 (pb) $14.95  
for Grades 5 to 8  
Non-fiction | Holocaust | Courage | Family | Survival | Hope

There is no easy way to introduce the Holocaust to younger students, but one approach is to begin with stories about loyalty, courage, acceptance of differences and the struggle for human dignity. Janet Wees has crafted such a story — a poignant first-person narrative of hardship, fear, kindness and courage. Based on a true account, this newest title in the Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers, was written as a gift from a grandfather to his granddaughter — a recounting of his childhood memories, including some of the many letters he wrote to his Oma and others during the years he and his family were on the run from the Nazis.

When Walter was five, his family fled Germany, settling in the Netherlands and what they believed was safety. Just three years later, the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, and Walter’s family was forced into a life of running, hiding and separation. The story unfolds through Walter’s perspective, and his understanding about why his family must move and how it is connected with being Jewish evolves over time. While primarily a story about Walter and his family’s increasingly desperate and dangerous situation, this is also a story about the extraordinary courage of the men and women of the Dutch resistance who risked their lives to keep people such as Walter and his family hidden. The quiet bravery of those Dutch farmers and townsfolk who opened their barns or homes and shared their meager wartime rations must also be remembered.

In the present global climate, it is not enough to simply ‘never forget.’ Kids need stories like these to build connections to the past and understand the implications for their present. Engaging and inspiring, When We Were Shadows speaks to the dangers of oppression, prejudice and hate, but also to the indomitable human spirit and the will to survive.

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

**A Girl Like That**  
written by Tanaz Bhathena  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers, 2018  
978-0-374-30544-4 (hc) $23.50  
for Grades 9 and up  
Fiction | Saudi Arabia | Identity | Self-worth | Love

Allof and seemingly indifferent to the maliciousness of her peers, Zarin Wadia is defiant and determined, unapologetic and unafraid, smart and self-assured. So it seems to the mothers who would never want their sons to marry her, to the girls in her school who gossip about her and taunt her, to her cruel aunt who has raised her since her own mother died. She smokes cigarettes and sneaks off with boys. But Zarin is more than just ‘a girl like that.’ When Porus enters her life, he alone sees her for who she really is. And he loves her. But love can be complicated, and societal norms, culture, religion and one’s own troubled family history can all work together to undermine one’s sense of identity and self-worth, and ultimately one’s ability to love and to accept love. This is a heartbreaking, shocking and beautiful book that explores all of these things and more through the eyes of multiple teens, each with their own secrets and wounds.

In this masterful debut, Bhathena tackles numerous contemporary issues in a story that manages to skilfully avoid feeling didactic or bogged down. The prose is polished and assured, and the narrative is complex and nuanced as it alternates between the points of view of its numerous characters, giving readers keen insights into their minds and hearts, and the world around them. The Saudi Arabian setting is compelling and vividly portrayed, but the characters are this story’s greatest strength. They are fully realized and believably flawed. The author is unsentimental in her depiction of them, evoking sympathy in the reader. Truly eye-opening and packed with emotion, this is a book that gives readers much to ponder.

Lisa Doucet is Co-Manager at Woozles in Halifax.

**Here So Far Away**  
written by Hadley Dyer  
HarperCollins Publishers, 2018  
978-1-44345-121-5 (eBook) $11.99  
978-1-44345-119-2 (hc) $21.99  
for Grades 9 and up  
Fiction | Senior Year | Friendship | Relationships | Small Towns | Depression

It is senior year and George and her friends are ready to rule the roost and make it a year to remember before they head off to college. George can’t wait until she and her best friend, Lisa, can leave their small town behind and start fresh somewhere new. But then George and Lisa have a serious falling-out. Suddenly, she finds herself an outsider, mourning the loss of the comfortable social circle that she’s been a part of for so long. Moreover, things at home are strained, as her policeman father recovers from an accident that could mark the end of his
career. In the midst of all this upheaval, George meets Francis. New to the community and dealing with his own demons, he is more than 10 years her senior and they are irresistibly drawn to one another. Knowing the stakes are high, they keep their relationship secret, but when the unthinkable happens, George has no one to turn to for support.

A thoughtfully crafted tale, Dyer’s first young adult offering has an understated quality that manages to pack a powerful emotional punch. George is a strong and compelling protagonist, imperfect but admirable for being her own person. The relationships between her and her friends are beautifully drawn, and Dyer magnificently captures the dynamics of high-school life in the 90s in a small town. Her depiction of George’s eagerness to get away from the limitations of small-town life is pitch perfect, making it all the more noteworthy when she falls in love with Francis that her dream of getting away fades into the background. The secondary characters are endearing and well rounded, the setting artfully rendered and George’s journey, heartbreaking and unforgettable. The story is elegantly written, leaving room for readers to wonder even while being awed by George’s resilience. A remarkable achievement, this book, like its main character, is quietly self-assured and provocative.

Lisa Doucet

The Marrow Thieves
written by Cherie Dimaline
Dancing Cat Books, 2017
978-1-77086-486-3 (pb) $14.95
978-1-77086-487-0 (eBook) $9.99
for Grades 9 and up
Fiction | Dystopia | First Nations | Environmental Issues | LGBTQ+

In The Marrow Thieves, we follow the story of Frenchie, an Indigenous teen on the run, being hunted for the marrow in his bones. At a time when humans have destroyed the health of our Great Lakes and despair has taken over, only Indigenous people are still dreaming. Hunters are collecting all the dreamers and taking them to facilities to get the marrow they need to dream again... whatever the cost.

Separated from his family, Frenchie meets a group of others on the run and forms a chosen family trying to stay safe and get through each day. The elders in this group teach the younger ones about their culture — from skills to stories to language. The focus is on survival and finding a place where they won’t be hunted anymore. We also learn about the experiences this ragtag group had before they found each other. As they face incredible obstacles, we see their continuous strength and resilience. This story will make you laugh and cry — it will make you uncomfortable, it will inspire you and it will leave you hopeful.

The Marrow Thieves has such a twist at the end (no spoiler alerts here!) that I actually had to go back and re-read the book to see if with my newfound knowledge I would see what was coming. There is no question why this book won the Governor General’s Literary Award for Young People’s Literature — Text. Cherie Dimaline put together an incredible novel that reads quickly but that will stay with you for a long time. A great read for teens and adults alike. This would also be an excellent choice for high-school novel studies.

This is my favourite 2017 release! Indigenous dystopian young adult fiction with underlying dialogues around residential schools and environmental issues, YES PLEASE! Read this. Gift this. Just make sure it’s on your shelf!

Erin Grittani is the Manager at the Glad Day Bookshop.

Tess of the Road
written by Rachel Hartman
Penguin Teen Canada, 2018
978-0-385-68588-7 (hc) $22.99
978-0-385-68589-4 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 9 and up
Fiction | Self-discovery | Personal Growth | Morality

From the time she was small, Tess has always known that she was, somehow, an inherently bad child, a ‘spank magnet’ as she was often called. Unlike her twin sister, Jeanne, and their elder half-sister, Seraphina, Tess just seemed to have a knack for constantly arousing Mama’s wrath. By the age of 17, she is well aware that she is irreparably flawed and is resigned to her fate. But when that fate appears to be spending the rest of her life in a convent, she panics and runs away. As her journey begins, she unexpectedly finds herself reunited with Pasha, her childhood best friend (a subspecies of dragon that more closely resembles a lizard.) Searching for the World Serpent, the two embark on a road trip that is fraught with danger and filled with opportunities for reflection, personal growth and self-discovery.

This companion to Hartman’s earlier novels, Seraphina and Shadow Scale, returns to the kingdom of Goredd and the complex society of this world. However, with Seraphina as a background character, this book easily stands on its own as it delves into Tess’s story. Tess is not always likeable as a protagonist, but readers will quickly recognize how the social, cultural and religious expectations of this society have scarred her and distorted her vision of herself. The sheer act of forcing herself to ‘walk on’ is sometimes all she can manage, but there is hope and healing to be found as she soldiers onward, wrestling with her internal demons. This book is less of an action-packed adventure and more of an interior story that invites the reader, along with Tess, to reflect on the nature of morality, faith, truth and goodness.

Lisa Doucet

Erin Grittani is the Manager at the Glad Day Bookshop.
Financial Literacy for Children

Written by Pamela George
Illustrated by Meredith Luce

ISBN: 978-1-77205-176-6
$12.95
Size: 10”x8”  40 pages
Softcover
Ages: 4 to 7

This unique little book teaches children some lifelong skills about money and how to manage it.

With a bit of guidance, children will take on the responsibility of managing an allowance of any size with a lot of enthusiasm. Three dollars a week and a handy pull-out tracking sheet will give young readers a solid foundation of financial literacy that can improve their lives immeasurably. With the book, children can learn:

• Goal setting and planned spending
• Delayed gratification
• Talking openly about money
• Living within our means

• Giving back
• Keeping track of our expenses
• Separating savings from spending

dc-canada.ca
The Flying Squirrel Stowaways: From Nova Scotia to Boston
written and illustrated by Marijke Simons
Nimbus Publishing, 2017
978-1-77108-550-2 (hc) $22.95
978-1-77108-551-9 (eBook) $8.99
for Preschool to Grade 2

Two flying squirrels end their busy night as a snowy owl searches for prey. Taking refuge in a fine spruce tree, our squirrels sleep, unaware that their sanctuary is about to be felled. Complete with stowaways, the tree will become a Christmas gift to Boston from Nova Scotians, still grateful 100 years later for medical assistance provided after the Halifax explosion. En route, the squirrels play or sleep, lulled by the motion of the truck or the ferry until on Boston Common they find a cozy new home complete with a view of their old one, now gilded with lights.

The author dedicates this endearing picture book to the people of Boston, an effective way to reference the centenary of the Halifax explosion without detailing the tragedy. The book is permeated with gentle gratitude and respect, whether through glimpses of native culture or through references to that long-ago kindness.

The energetic, loveable squirrels behave like squirrels should and are joyfully adaptable regarding their abrupt move to a new country. Numerous injections of sly humour are beguiling, while geographic references and an accompanying map show the tree’s journey, providing further opportunity for reflection.

The artwork is beautiful, the double-page spreads being especially dramatic. Illustrations of large-eyed squirrels, a dazzling snowy owl and wondrous scenery are presented with a wealth of detail and whimsy. In contrast, quiet meditative pictures feature the native tree-cutting ceremony and gentle conversation between grandmother and child. A delightful book, both visually and in the story and ideas it presents.

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

Mr. Mergler, Beethoven, and Me
written by David Gutnick
illustrated by Mathilde Cinq-Mars
Second Story Press, 2018
978-1-77260-059-9 (hc) $18.95
for Grades 2 to 4

Shortly after arriving in Montreal from China, a young girl and her father encounter an elderly gentleman named Daniel Mergler in a local park. They soon learn that Mr. Mergler taught piano lessons for more than 50 years. When the teacher discovers that the little girl has a piano and is teaching herself how to play, he asks her to sing for him. Realizing how musical she is, he offers her music lessons without charge. The girl makes significant progress during her 26 magical lessons with her mentor. Then, sadly, Mr. Mergler becomes gravely ill and can teach no more. Before he dies, he writes his star pupil a letter of encouragement and bequeaths to her a bust of Ludwig van Beethoven.

Inspired by a true story, David Gutnick has written a heartwarming account about how an elderly man’s selfless offer to teach piano to a young girl transforms both their lives. With marked sensitivity, his words describe how the lessons evolved into much more than playing notes correctly: “Mr. Mergler once told me, ‘When you are here, seconds, minutes, and hours are part of the outside world. In this room, we get lost in our music, until time itself stands still.’”

Partnered with Mathilde Cinq-Mars’ ethereal illustrations, rendered in acrylic, pencil, watercolour and Photoshop, Mr. Mergler, Beethoven, and Me serves as a lasting tribute to an inspirational teacher. He not only lives on in the memories of his students, but also can now be celebrated by all who learn about him through this book.

Senta Ross

Once in a Blue Moon
written and illustrated by Danielle Daniel
Groundwood Books, 2017
978-1-55498-975-1 (hc) $17.95
978-1-55498-976-8 (eBook) $14.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

Once in a Blue Moon is a book about appreciating the little things. Each page contains a four-line poem beginning with “Once in a blue moon” and capturing a moment in time or a snippet of nature, be it plants, animals or the night sky itself.
As with Daniel’s Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox, the poems are untitled, allowing the book to be read lyrically or as separate short poems. The poems have simple subject matter and don’t rhyme, so young readers don’t have to be poetry lovers to enjoy the content. Most pages seem to contain tributes to things that can be found near Daniel’s home in Northern Ontario — moose, monarch butterflies, rivers, old maple trees, the northern lights.

Daniel’s illustrations are charming and have a child-like quality likely to inspire young artists. The human figures found throughout the pages have diverse representation, featuring a range of skin tones that include darker and lighter browns.

Ultimately, Once in a Blue Moon is about noticing, and it encourages young children to take in the world around them through various means of observation and engagement. Not only do they watch, see and spot things in their environment, which could appeal to even the most dirt-averse kids, but physical and sensory awareness are encouraged as well — touching a plant or hugging a tree. Once in a Blue Moon gently pushes children toward an appreciation of the natural world.

Tara-Michelle Ziniuk is a writer and editor based in Toronto.

Sakura’s Cherry Blossoms
written by Robert Paul Weston
illustrated by Misa Saburi
Tundra Books, 2018
978-1-338-1874-6 (hc) $21.99
978-1-338-1875-3 (eBook) $11.99
for Preschool to Grade 2

With her name meaning ‘cherry blossom,’ Sakura loves sitting under the tree with “Obaachan/whose voice was warm, like sunshine.” When her father gets a job in America, where there seems no evidence of cherry blossoms, she immediately misses her grandmother “and the whisper of petals” fluttering to the ground. After befriending her neighbour Luke, Sakura discovers that English words no longer nip and snap “on her tongue/like the tang of pickled plums” but now are “limber and quick/with no taste at all.” Sakura travels to Japan when Obaachan becomes very ill, an experience that leaves her so sad upon returning to the US that she is afraid she will forget her grandmother. However, Luke shares a surprise with her in spring, when her new city comes ablaze with cherry blossoms.

Saburi’s illustrations, rendered in Photoshop, are beautiful, displaying some fascinating perspectives and designs. Weston’s lovely story is written as a series of wonderful tanka poems, which have three lines following the haiku pattern (5-7-5) and another two lines with 7 syllables each. Sakura’s relationship to Obaachan is touching, their deep connection prevalent throughout the story. The growth in importance of her friendship with Luke transitions nicely over the course of the book. At the end, Sakura’s times previously spent with Obaachan and now her times spent with Luke come together in a very poignant way, as she reflects on her grandmother’s wisdom that “watching cherry blossoms bloom/is always finest with friends.”

Ken Kilback

You Hold Me Up
written by Monique Gray Smith
illustrated by Danielle Daniel
Orca Book Publishers, 2017
978-1-4598-1447-9 (hc) $19.95
978-1-4598-1449-3 (eBook) $4.99
for Preschool to Grade 2

Laid out like a board book, with illustrations on one side of the page and short lines of text on the other, You Hold Me Up appears simple, but the issues at its core are anything but. Monique Gray Smith (My Heart Fills With Happiness) and Danielle Daniel (Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox) come together to teach the youngest of readers lessons on reconciliation, respect and care.

Lovingly crafted, this picture book begins with the titular words...
“You hold me up” and goes on to list various ways of expressing compassion through learning, listening, laughing together and so on. *You Hold Me Up* joins a growing number of forward-thinking books with Indigenous content for children in Canada and would be well situated as a companion text for preschool- and kindergarten-aged kids who’ve outgrown Richard Van Camp and Julie Flett’s *Little You*, but are not quite ready for David A. Robertson and Flett’s *When We Were Alone*.

*You Hold Me Up* is a welcome addition to the ongoing conversations around healing and rebuilding relationships and one that will hopefully draw in an underserved age group. The lyrical quality and light approach are appropriate for school, library or home settings. And while it provides a way to begin conversations about bigger issues, it also works well as a stand-alone text, reminiscent in style and tone to Taro Gomi’s *My Friends*.

Gentle, relevant and never heavy-handed, this book serves both as a quiet lullaby and a starting point for discussions on empathy, community and wellness.

Tara-Michele Ziniuk

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**Recommended Books**

| Engines of Change: The Epic Story of How Engineers Built the Modern World | Hands up if you are a little hazy on what an engineer does, let alone how many different roles the profession offers. *Engineered!* engagingly and accessibly presents nine different kinds of engineering by telling the stories of problems that had to be solved and how the solutions were found.

The ‘amazing feats’ covered in the book include landing the Mars rover *Curiosity* (aerospace engineering), printing skin (biomedical engineering), inventing alkaline batteries (chemical engineering), designing better racing bikes for *Cervelo* (mechanical engineering), creating integrated circuits (electrical engineering), building an extraordinary viaduct (civil engineering), analyzing an environmental problem (geomatics engineering), inventing the Apple computer (computer engineering) and replacing a leaky and stinky sewer system in Oregon (environmental engineering).

Hunt begins by detailing the step-by-step process engineers use to investigate and solve a problem. Then, she details how this process was followed in each amazing feat, breaking it down into easily digestible sections. With each story, key design steps are flagged — showing where, for example, the engineers defined the problems, where they went back to the drawing board or when they tested and improved their solutions.

Extra information boxes, short bios of important engineers, lively drawings and diagrams help fill out the picture and show how various kinds of engineering overlap. A glossary and index are included.

*Engineered!* is an excellent introduction for both the budding engineer and for a kid who simply wants to understand how we approach problems and find solutions.

Gillian O’Reilly is the co-author (with Cora Lee) of *The Great Number: A Story of Math*.

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**Dragonfly Song**

As the firstborn daughter of the Lady, it is Aissa’s birthright to become a snake singer who helps the sun to rise and light the day. A birth defect derails this destiny, however, as the Lady is convinced an imperfect baby has no place as a singer. When Aissa is cast out and raised by a goat herder’s family, trouble follows her; raiders attack their home, leaving her mute as she heeds her mama’s warning to stay silent until she returns. Deemed to be cursed and treated as such, Aissa struggles to survive, dreaming of the day she can win her island’s freedom by becoming a bull dancer.

Author Wendy Orr gradually reveals Aissa’s awakening to her true destiny and the worth she possesses through unique situations and other characters who aren’t afraid to look past her cursed status. With her mystical gifts and unthinking bravery, Aissa is compelling, living during a time when gods and goddesses decide the fates of their people, and the pageantry of keeping them appeased is legendary.

Without a voice and without a name, once she becomes a servant in the Lady’s home, Aissa’s inner dialogue comes in free verse as she observes the world around her. Being unseen and mostly ignored have their advantages for her, although years of torment have all but convinced Aissa she deserves the poor treatment she receives.

The scope of Aissa’s story drives an adventurous read, captivating readers with a voyage across the sea and the impossibly dangerous task Aissa faces to free her island from the Bull King.

Amy Mathers

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Latest Releases!
Innovation Nation: How Canadian Innovators Made the World Smarter, Smaller, Kinder, Safer, Healthier, Wealthier, Happier
written by David Johnston and Tom Jenkins
adapted by Mary Beth Leatherdale
illustrated by Josh Holinaty
Tundra Books, 2017
978-0-7352-6301-7 (hc) $24.99
978-0-7352-6302-4 (eBook) $12.99
for Grades 4 to 8
Non-fiction | Canadian Innovation | Canadian Inventors | Canadian Technological Innovation

From zippers to life jackets, foghorns to toboggans, Buckley’s mixture to the Canadarm and electric wheelchairs to telesurgery, Canada is responsible for a myriad of innovations that help humanity and are utilized worldwide. This book details 50 of them, each more fascinating than the last. The ideas vary in complexity and impact, but whether related to health, food, science, communication or humanitarianism, all have proven themselves through time.

Written by two giants in their own spheres, this title is adapted for children from Ingenious, a book for adults by the same authors. Its format encourages browsing, and the text is clear and readable. An introduction suggests factors contributing to Canada’s creativity, including diverse geography and climates, and a collaborative approach to problem-solving. Divided into seven intriguing categories — Smarter, Smaller, Kinder, Safer, Healthier, Wealthier and Happier — each section provides a general synopsis, followed by a double-page spread for each innovation. The information provided includes the evolution, application, status and person responsible for each idea.

The accompanying illustrations are casual and light-hearted but are an effective adjunct to the text. A timeline of innovations provides perspective, and specific suggestions encourage readers to become innovators themselves. Despite the apparent simplicity of Innovation Nation, it is informative, entertaining and contains surprising facts — the light bulb was invented by a Canadian!

The book is an excellent resource for educators as well as a thoroughly engrossing read for children and a worthy contribution to Canada’s sesquicentennial. Furthermore, all proceeds from sales will support further Canadian innovation. Proud to be Canadian indeed!

Aileen Wortley

REVIEWS RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Scott Robins is a Children’s Services Specialist at Toronto Public Library and co-author of A Parent’s Guide to the Best Kids’ Comics.

Escape from Syria
Kullab blends fictional narrative with exposition and information about recent events to create an accurate account of the tragedies faced by the citizens of Syria. Her background as a Middle Eastern journalist helps her to convey clearly the events and concepts that led to the collapse of Syria. Detailed endnotes provide further information to enhance readers’ understanding of Syrian and Lebanese culture and events mentioned. Readers will experience the Syrian refugee crisis through Amina’s eyes and will identify with her feelings of fear and unease, her ambition to succeed in school and her horror when her mother suggests she marry at 13. Roche’s artwork is clean and crisp and uses varying background colour palettes throughout the book to convey specific emotions. Roche’s skill at capturing emotion in facial expressions also creates a deep impact. Escape from Syria is an intense but timely read, and can be used by teachers and parents as a tool to discuss war, displacement, racism and tragedy. It is an authentic portrayal of the refugee experience and deeply relevant to Canada’s role in helping displaced Syrians.

Scott Robins is a Children’s Services Specialist at Toronto Public Library and co-author of A Parent’s Guide to the Best Kids’ Comics.

Innovation Nation: How Canadian Innovators Made the World Smarter, Smaller, Kinder, Safer, Healthier, Wealthier, Happier
written by David Johnston and Tom Jenkins
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978-0-7352-6301-7 (hc) $24.99
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for Grades 4 to 8
Non-fiction | Canadian Innovation | Canadian Inventors | Canadian Technological Innovation

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Aileen Wortley
**Mine!**
written by Natalie Hyde
Scholastic Canada, 2017
978-1-4431-4660-9 (pb) $8.99
978-1-4431-4661-6 (eBook) $8.99
for Grades 4 to 8

Fiction | Alcoholism | Family | Friendship | Yukon | Poverty | Homelessness

At the beginning of *Mine!* Chris Dearing, our narrator, finds himself trapped in a tree, covered with moose snot. He then takes us back to the previous week and the dreary apartment he shares with his alcoholic dad. It takes a long road trip and much of the book to get back to the moose, but the journey is pleasurable for the reader, if not for Chris.

Convinced that the Dearing family is cursed, Chris hopes that his grandfather’s old gold claim outside Dawson will turn their luck around. With his father in jail and Family Services on his trail, he sets out for the North in the company of Fiona, a Dawson-born biker who owns the bar his dad frequents. They are soon joined by his worldly-wise friend, Shard, and her muffin-vending uncle. With twists and turns, literally and figuratively, and hopes dashed, raised and dashed again, author Natalie Hyde brings her customary light touch to this adventure. Chris’s story ends with at least a reasonable chance that the Dearing luck has turned around.

Gillian O’Reilly

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**Mort Ziff Is Not Dead**
written by Cary Fagan
Puffin Canada, 2017
978-0-14-319847-5 (hc) $18.99
978-0-14-319849-9 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 4 to 6

Historical Fiction | 1960s | Vacation | Making Friends | Brothers

As the youngest of three boys, Norman is used to bearing the brunt of his older brothers’ teasing and roughhousing. But when all three enter a Doozy Dots contest to guess the number of candies in a jar and Norman wins $1,000, the satisfaction of beating them fills him with joy. Given the freedom to choose how to spend the money (although his parents have practical ideas), Norman generously opts to take his family to Miami Beach, Florida, for a real vacation. Once there, Norman encounters the legendary Mort Ziff, a stand-up comedian struggling to keep up with the changing times.

Children’s author Cary Fagan captures a snapshot in time with his latest middle grade novel. A thousand dollars certainly went a lot further in 1965, so when Norman receives his cheque, the sky’s the limit. His enthusiasm over this unexpected win is contagious, offering readers the chance to imagine what they would do in the same situation.

Paired with the antics of the brothers and a developing rivalry with a trio of sisters also on vacation, Norman’s story is an enjoyable, light-hearted read, certain to tickle funny bones as he makes friends with Amy, the youngest sister, and tries to hide it from the others. Sharing a fondness for Mort’s somewhat awkward and
New Hands, New Life: Robots, Prostheses and Innovation
written by Alex Mihailidis and Jan Andrysek
Firefly Books, 2017
978-1-77085-969-2 (hc) $19.95
978-1-77085-991-3 (pb) $9.95
for Grades 4 to 7
Non-fiction | Disability | Technology | Science | Engineering

New Hands, New Life takes a different approach from most books on disabilities by focusing on scientific and engineering innovations that can improve life for differently abled people. This unique and informative title addresses disability from a technological perspective, exploring the use of machinery and technology to support our bodies when they don’t work properly. The authors, both bio-medical engineers, examine a broad spectrum of assistive technologies, from wheelchairs and prostheses to robotic limbs and mind-control technologies.

The book begins with the basics of how our bodies move, including sections on bones, muscles and the brain. The second chapter, titled “When Things Go Wrong,” illustrates a number of causes of disability, including diseases such as cerebral palsy and spina bifida, strokes, spinal injuries and amputations. After a brief historical overview of assistive technologies, the authors examine how a variety of machines — from wheelchairs and upper- and lower-limb prostheses to robotic limbs and exoskeletons — can help people walk, run, play sports and work.

Using accessible and age-appropriate vocabulary, this book introduces inquisitive kids to the correct terminology and offers clear definitions of important terms. There are plenty of well-labelled diagrams and contemporary colour photographs of a diverse array of active and engaged people, many young, using assistive technologies. Sidebars and fact boxes offer additional interesting information, such as using 3D printing technology to make affordable prostheses and the use of myoelectric sensors in prostheses to control muscle movement.

Offering a distinctive window into disability, this title portrays a positive message about the power of technological innovation to change lives. The authors urge readers to treat all people with respect and encourage kids to explore all aspects of robotics — perhaps inspiring a future generation of biomedical engineers!

Tracey Schindler

The Things Owen Wrote
written by Jessica Scott Kerrin
Groundwood Books, 2017
978-1-77306-029-3 (hc) $14.95
978-1-77306-030-9 (eBook) $12.95
for Grades 4 to 6
Fiction | Dementia | Iceland | Family | Poetry | Perfection | Plagiarism

Owen is the kind of boy who likes to do things well. From his photography to his poetry, everything has to be just so — perfect. While his parents are away, Owen is staying with his grandfather in Alberta, and there are moments when Owen notices that Granddad is not quite himself. When he mistakenly mails Owen’s notebook to the Archives in Iceland, Owen is beside himself — no one must see what he has written inside. He manages to convince Granddad that a quick trip to Iceland would benefit them both. But as the trip progresses, Owen grows concerned as his grandfather’s behaviour becomes increasingly alarming.

Jessica Scott Kerrin uses the true story of Stephan G. Stephansson (1853–1927), an Icelandic-Canadian farmer and poet, to weave together Owen’s physical voyage to Iceland with his journey of understanding and acceptance. Scott Kerrin has written an intriguing and thoughtful treatment of the onset of dementia through one boy’s eyes. While the subject is a sad one, she has wrapped it up gently in a blanket of love — not only Owen’s love for his grandfather, but also the affection of his late grandma and the support network of friendly ladies she left behind, collectively known as The Red Deer River Readers Book Club!

In the end, Granddad helps Owen realize that expecting not to be perfect can be something of a relief. Sometimes we need to own up to our mistakes and accept that life is riddled with imperfections.

Ildiko Sumegi

36 Questions That Changed My Mind About You
written by Vicki Grant
Running Press Teens, 2017
978-0-7624-6319-0 (eBook) $12.99
for Grades 7 and up
Fiction | Love | Romance | Psychology | Personality Traits

Hildy and Paul each have their own reasons for participating in a university psychology study that looks at whether or not love can be engineered. The study consists of 36 questions, ranging from ‘What is your most terrible memory?’ to ‘When did you last sing to yourself?’ By the time they finish the questionnaire, they have laughed, cried and driven each other crazy. They have run away, come back, lied, thrown things and discovered each other’s deepest secrets. But have they fallen in love?

What does it take to fall in love? This is the question that author Vicki Grant examines in her new young adult novel. Based on a real psychology study that examined whether or not answering 36 questions could accelerate love between two strangers, Grant applies the
study to two teenagers, and sparks begin to fly.

At first glance, Hildy comes off as uptight, spoiled and quirky, leading the study’s engineer to write ‘high maintenance’ beside her name. Paul comes from the other side of the proverbial tracks and immediately frustrates Hildy with his seeming inability to take anything, including the study, seriously. But as Hildy and Paul settle in to answer the questions, readers learn that there is more to both of them than meets the eye. Both are dealing with difficult home lives and are coping with challenging emotional issues.

The Q&A is broken up with texts, instant messages and sketches that all work to reveal the deeper lives of the characters and their growing feelings for one another. The banter between them is funny and light, and the author does an excellent job of creating dramatic tension. By the end of the novel, readers will be rooting for these characters to get together; teens will devour the book in a single sitting.

Perfect for fans of oddball romances, this novel examines the human need for connection and encourages readers to look beyond the surface of the people they meet.

Rachel Seigel is the Adult Fiction Specialist at Library Services Centre.

Can Your Smartphone Change the World?
(PopActivism)
written by Erinne Paisley
Orca Book Publishers, 2017
978-1-4598-1304-5 (pb) $14.95
978-1-4598-1305-2 (eBook) $9.99
for Grades 7 to 9
Non-fiction | Activism | Technology | Education | Social Justice | Connection | Make a Difference

Can Your Outfit Change the World?
(PopActivism)
written by Erinne Paisley
Orca Book Publishers, 2018
978-1-4598-1307-6 (pb) $14.95
978-1-4598-1308-3 (eBook) $9.99
for Grades 7 to 9
Non-fiction | Activism | Fashion | Education | Sustainability | Social Justice | Make a Difference

Activist Erinne Paisley, creator of the famous paper prom dress, has created two practical guides for young people who have a passion for social justice but may not know where to start. The first installment in the PopActivism series focuses on how teens — or those who are teens at heart — can change the world with their devices.

Inspired by the actions of Malala Yousafzai, she decided to make her own prom dress, using scissors, ribbon, tape and old math homework in order to donate the money she would have spent on her dress to support malala.org. Embazoned with the phrase “I’ve received my education, not every woman has that right” and with a roll of tape in her purse, she took a stand for gender equality and access to education. Photos of her dress went viral and her message was amplified, mostly as a result of social media.

Besides being a practical guide, the actual text of the series reads
more like a magazine or blog in places. ‘Pop’ quizzes feature every few pages, and chapters prompt the reader to think about how they can apply each topic in their own lives. In addition to accessible education, she talks about taking a stand on marriage equality, bullying, environmental issues, mental health and poverty, to name a few. No matter your passion, there is something to attract nearly every reader. The fact that her readers are connected by technology just amplifies their ability to make meaningful change.

Paisley’s second instalment looks deeper into not just her viral prom prom dress, but the fashion industry as a whole. She discusses the problems with fast fashion, fabrics and their environmental sustainability, the influence of the media and working conditions of those creating these pieces. Although some of her solutions require deeper pockets than those with smartphones may have access to, she also provides more practical examples, such as vintage and thrift shop finds and clothing swaps.

Whether you are social-media savvy or looking to make a small impact with your wallet, Paisley’s two popactivist pieces offer an array of ways to change the world, one click at a time.

Ashley Pamenter writes programming for Girl Guides of Canada — Guides du Canada and is a former elementary teacher in Toronto, Ontario.

**Munro vs. the Coyote**
written by Darren Groth
Orca Book Publishers, 2017
978-1-4598-1411-0 (eBook) $9.99
for Grades 7 and up
*Fiction | Grief | Sharing | Community | Hope | Healing | Friendship | Romance | Down Syndrome | Autism Spectrum | Mental Health | Family*

The recent shocking death of his 13-year-old sister, Evie, who had Down syndrome, has 16-year-old self-aware Munro Maddux in a constant state of simmering rage. His right hand aches incessantly. His chest hurts. His mind’s tormented with vivid flashbacks. And he’s lost his connection to others, except for the daily torture from a caustic, merciless voice he’s labelled ‘the Coyote.’

Even the fact that the Evelyn Maddux Foundation has raised $150,000 for Down syndrome awareness and research brings no comfort to Munro. In an attempt to regain himself and defeat the Coyote, Munro agrees to a student exchange at Sussex State High in Brisbane, Australia, living with a supportive host family. When that doesn’t ease his pain, Munro decides to volunteer at an assisted-living residence called Fair Go Community Village, “where special needs and life purpose come together.” And it is here — as a ‘Living Partner’ among the five lively residents he’s been assigned to and the indelible, life-changing moments they share — that Munro finally begins his much-needed pilgrimage of letting go, finding peace and forever silencing the dreaded beast.

_Munro vs. the Coyote_, written by award-winning author Darren Groth, is an engrossing, uplifting must-read. An insightfully complex cast of characters, engaging dialogue and an original storyline that masterfully tackles weighty subjects such as survivor guilt, loss, love and acceptance make this novel a welcome, highly readable addition to every YA lover’s bookshelf. With its bold use of irreverent first-person narration, heart-wrenching scenes and unexpected plot twists, _Munro vs. the Coyote_ lays bare all the wacky, woeful and wonderful stuff that comprise this thing we call life. And by deftly lending a voice to discrimination and disability while simultaneously weaving a believable tale of grief, family, hope and healing, Groth (a former special education teacher) has penned an emotionally satisfying read.

Jennifer D. Foster

**The Innocence Treatment**
written by Ari Goelman
Roaring Brook Press, 2017
978-1-62672-880-6 (hc) $24.99
for Grades 9 and up
*Science Fiction | Speculative Fiction | Dystopia | Genetic Engineering | Government Secrets*

Lauren is innocent — literally. She has a disorder that causes her to believe that everyone is her friend, and that everything anyone tells her is true. When she gets the opportunity to have a corrective surgery to make her ‘normal,’ she jumps at the chance. But after the surgery, everything is different. Lauren is seeing the world through new eyes, and, suddenly, she sees the truth about what’s really going on. Is she crazy and paranoid, or is she simply seeing the world with clear eyes?

Ari Goelman’s new YA novel offers readers a unique foray into the dystopian genre. In the not-so-distant future, the climate-ravaged US is controlled by the Department of Security, Defence and Well-Being, which is empowered under the Emergency Act to protect the country at all costs. In some ways, Lauren’s innocence seems idyllic. She believes the best of everybody, thinks everybody is her friend, and is generally happy. After the surgery, Lauren is unsure whom to trust or if she’s safe.

The story is told through transcripts of Lauren’s therapy sessions and journal, and annotated by her sister, and readers get a chilling and plausible picture of how the future could look. The timeline jumps back and forth between the past and the present, and the story builds to a chilling conclusion. The book is fast paced and gripping, and the use of different viewpoints helps readers see the big picture. A minor romance between Lauren and the department spy sent to watch her also adds an interesting dimension to the story as readers are left questioning both of their motives. Overall, this is a thought-provoking and engaging thriller that will appeal to fans of _1984_ and other _Big Brother_-type stories.

Rachel Seigel

**Nice Try, Jane Sinner**
written by Lianne Oelke
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018
978-0-54486-785-7 (hc) $24.99
for Grades 9 and up
*Fiction | Reality Television | Suicide | Religion | Resilience*

After a personal crisis that resulted in Jane Sinner dropping out of high school, she reluctantly agrees to sign up for a high school completion program at the community college on the condition that she be allowed to...
move out. Her first action on campus is to sign up for House of Orange — a Big Brother-type reality show filmed on campus. As the show grows from a low-budget web series to a local TV show, Jane will use her fan base and what she learns from Intro to Psychology to prove that she has what it takes to win.

Through a series of her diary entries and internal conversations with her imaginary therapist, Dr. Freudenschade, readers gain insight into Jane’s past and her current struggles. She is blunt and speaks her mind, and, while she knows that she doesn’t always behave well, she is also unapologetic for her sins. Jane is snarky, witty and highly observant and she delivers those observations in a deadpan style that will appeal to teen readers.

As the story unfolds, readers eventually learn of Jane’s suicide attempt and the difficulty she has in reconciling the prominent role of God and religion in her family’s life, versus her own lack of belief. While her parents seem generally well-meaning, Jane’s frustration at their inability to truly see her point of view shapes every aspect of her life. As House of Orange grows more popular, Jane also struggles with being in public view 24/7, and what happens when private and public are no longer separated. This is a story of resilience, and readers will take to heart Jane’s new recognition of her strengths and the kind of future she wants.

Rachel Seigel

Tangled Planet
written by Kate Blair
Dancing Cat Books, 2017
978-1-77086-504-4 (pb) $14.95
978-1-77086-505-1 (eBook) $9.99
for Grades 8 and up

Science Fiction | Earth | Space | Murder | Mystery | Politics | Mourning

After 400 years of life in a space station, terrestrial life takes some getting used to. For 17-year-old Ursa, 400 years wasn’t enough. Reeling from the death of her best friend, Maia, Ursa is hesitant to leave the only home she has ever known, the space station, Ventura. It doesn’t help that the planet they have terraformed literally glows in the dark, and on her first night there she stumbles upon a dead body. Not exactly a great start to the future of humanity. To make matters worse, life on the space station is strained as resources are being sent planet-side. The story continues to twist and turn as Ursa tries to discover who or what is sabotaging the mission. If she doesn’t figure it out soon, they will be left without a home.

Kate Blair weaves an interesting and gripping tale in Tangled Planet. In addition to the murder mystery that underlies the main plot, the reader is also pulled into the debate about whether humanity is ready to leave the stars to return to planet life. The political nuances in this story create a tale that will appeal to a wide variety of readers, and the first-person perspective of Ursa helps to keep the suspense building throughout. Blair creates an accessible narrative style, with a fairy tale-like plot that intermingles politics, science and exploration to draw in even the most seasoned science fiction fan. In addition, the ways in which Ursa learns to deal with her grief are true to life and powerful, regardless of the setting.

Ashley Parmenter
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