Graphic Novels: A Booming Business

Faith Erin Hicks and her Diverse Collection of Work

Bookmark! Give the Gift of Reading this Holiday Season

Reviews of 35+ books by
Kallie George & Geneviève Godbout,
Naseem Hrab & Josh Holinaty,
Wab Kinew & Joe Morse
Books Matter.
Winter 2018 Volume 41 No.4

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This informative magazine published quarterly by the Canadian Children’s Book Centre is available by yearly subscription.
Single subscription – $24.95 plus sales tax (includes 2 issues of Best Books for Kids & Teens)
Contact the CCBC for bulk subscriptions and for US or overseas subscription rates.

Winter 2018 (December 2018)
Canadian Publication Mail Product Sales Agreement 40010217
Published by the Canadian Children’s Book Centre
ISSN 1705 – 7809

For change of address, subscriptions, or return of undeliverable copies, contact:
The Canadian Children’s Book Centre
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or to Sandra O’Brien c/o the above address.

For advertising information, contact: Michael Wile at ads@reviewcanada.ca or 647.677.7948

Printed in Canada.


Medium: Artwork rendered in pastels and coloured pencils.

About the Illustrator: Geneviève Godbout was born and raised in Quebec. She studied traditional animation at the Cégep du Vieux-Montréal followed by another degree at the prestigious school of Gobelins in Paris. She then fell in love with London where she worked and lived for seven years. In 2013 she moved back to Montreal to become a full-time illustrator. Her clients include The Walt Disney Company, Chronicle Books, Tundra Books, Penguin Random House, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, les éditions Milan, Comme des Géants and La Pastèque.

Contents this issue

4 Tribute to Charlotte Teeple
Friends and colleagues pay tribute to Charlotte Teeple, the CCBC’s executive director for the last 24 years.

7 News Roundup
In Memoriam: Barbara Hehner, 1947-2018; TD Canadian Children’s Book Week 2019; The Tour Roster; Celebrating 10 Magical Years of Telling Tales; Woozles Celebrates 40 years

8 Keep Your Eye On... Wendy Mcleod MacKnight

10 Opinion: Graphic Novels
Naseem Hrab talks about the benefits of introducing and reading graphic novels to kids.

14 Profile: Faith Erin Hicks
Having always been attracted to comics as a storytelling medium, Faith Erin Hicks has become an award-winning author/illustrator with a diverse collection of work in the field of graphic novels. Get to know Faith better as she chats with Marylynn Miller Oke about her career and future endeavours.

17 Focus: Classic Books Reissued
Having a book reissued is an author’s dream come true. Rachel Seigel asks Vicki Grant, Shane Peacock and Richard Scrimger about their books that were reissued this year and how they feel about their being introduced to a whole new generation of readers.

20 Bookmark!
Indie Bookseller Picks for 2018
A gift-giving guide for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12

22 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.

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

40 Index of Reviews

Tribute to Charlotte Teeple

Burlington author Lana Button reads from her new book, My Teacher’s Not Here!, during a beautiful summer day at the 10th Annual Telling Tales Festival.
2018 AWARD WINNERS FROM GROUNDWOOD BOOKS

GOVERNOR GENERAL’S LITERARY AWARD FOR YOUNG PEOPLE’S LITERATURE — ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

THEY SAY BLUE
Written & illustrated by Jillian Tamaki

GOVERNOR GENERAL’S LITERARY AWARD FOR YOUNG PEOPLE’S LITERATURE — ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

TD CANADIAN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE AWARD

TOWN IS BY THE SEA
Written by Joanne Schwartz
Illustrated by Sydney Smith

GNDWDOBOOKS.COM
More and more graphic novels seem to be coming across my desk lately and I’ve got to say, I’m gaining a whole new appreciation for this genre of storytelling. From stories for the very young to pieces that deal with mature and difficult subjects, authors, illustrators and publishers seem to be embracing this format more and more. Naseem Hrab, author of Ira Crumb Makes a Pretty Good Friend and Ira Crumb Feels the Feelings, shares her story about her love of comics as a kid and discusses some fabulous titles that have been released of late. Be sure to read Naseem’s piece to learn more about the world of graphic novels and see if you can find a title that will appeal to a young reader in your life.

Charlotte Teeple, executive director of the Canadian Children’s Book Centre for the past 24 years, will be retiring in January 2019. A few of Charlotte’s friends and colleagues have written tributes to her in a special section in this issue. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Charlotte all the best and thank her for her dedication to promoting Canadian children’s literature over the years.

Faith Erin Hicks, a well-known Canadian graphic novel artist and writer, has been working in the field for the last 20 years. Marylynn Miller Oke chatted with Faith about her web comics, graphic novels and collaborations and asked her for advice for young artists trying to find their way into the business. Faith creates comics and graphic novels for pre-teen and teenage audiences and has a hard time keeping up with all the deadlines she has to meet.

This year, we saw the re-release of The Dylan Maples series, the Norbert books and Quid Pro Quo. Shane Peacock, Richard Scrimger and Vicki Grant were kind enough to chat with Rachel Seigel about the experience of having their books introduced to a whole new generation of readers and what that means to them.

As we have for the past two years, we’ve included a list of Canadian booksellers’ favourite titles to help you with gift-giving ideas, so be sure to check out your local indie bookstore to find these books. We’ve also included the list of authors, illustrators and storytellers going out on the 2019 TD Canadian Children’s Book Week tour and the winners from this year’s TD Canadian Children’s Literature Awards. In our “Keep Your Eye On...” column you’ll meet Wendy McLeod MacKnight, author of It’s a Mystery, Pigface! and The Frame-Up, who is very excited to be joining the TD Canadian Children’s Book Week tour in May 2019. And please enjoy the reviews our fabulous cast of reviewers have written in our “Red Leaf Literature” and “We Recommend” columns.

Wishing you all the best in 2019!

Sandra O’Brien

Your feedback is important!
EMAIL COMMENTS TO SANDRA@BOOKCENTRE.CA

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As I reflected on the years that Charlotte Teeple has been my friend and professional associate, I tried to think of the things that make her a great champion for children’s reading. One of the most important of these is a sense of humour coupled with both a sense of purpose and collaboration. When I first stepped into the role of my predecessor, I had very big shoes to fill as a programme sponsor. At my first meeting with Charlotte, I sat across the table from her, excited about the projects we were working on together. Unable to hide my enthusiasm of wanting to put my own and an increased corporate signature on a CCBC initiative, Charlotte said, “Not to worry Alan, I have everything under control, how about we work together to get a few more dollars for the program and... could you speed up the issuance of the bank’s cheque, please?” With my marching orders received, we were off and running on what I remember as a very rich 12-year period in my career.

A good advocate in children’s reading is one that can influence others at all levels. This includes possessing the ability to influence those that think they already know it all. I know there have been a number of children’s publishers, reading, literacy and literary advocates (and some ‘recovering bankers’) whose existence in the field makes us all experts. I’ve learned this warm group of folks can also be a tough crowd when it comes to successfully navigating advocacy in the children’s book world. Many of us walking this path would agree that Charlotte provided the right mix of encouragement, cajoling, and, at times, the necessary amount of autocracy to provide us all with the direction to get the job done.

It is a rare advocate of children’s reading who has a sense of humour, an ability to influence others, enthusiasm, full personal knowledge of the sector, and a sense of obligation. I and many others have benefited from Charlotte’s actions over many years. It is with great respect that I again say thank you to someone who has made such a difference in my personal and professional life.

— Alan Convery
A retirement offers opportunities for memories and reflection. A warm, sunny August day in 2016 found me chauffeuring Charlotte to Altona, Manitoba, a community a little more than an hour’s drive from Winnipeg. Why Altona? Well, Friesens, a leading printing company in North America and one of the CCBC’s major sponsors, had invited Charlotte to tour their production facility so that she could get a first-hand look at how books are printed and bound. And, as it turned out, it was not just any book, but that year’s TD Grade One Book Giveaway, Ashley Spires’s Small Saul.

The year previously, Friesens had installed a new press, one capable of printing up to 64 pages, both sides, in eight colours and in just a single pass. After Charlotte and I climbed the seven steps to the walkway that extended the length of this huge press, we could look down and watch the paper flowing beneath us as, colour by colour, Small Saul took form. Over the next few hours while we visited the rest of the plant, hundreds of thousands of copies of the giveaway book rolled off the press, the first step on their journey to ownership by some half-million Canadian children entering grade one in 2016. And, for me, one of those children had a face and a name, Cara, my then-grade-one granddaughter.

During her more-than-two-decade tenure at the CCBC, Charlotte has initiated and administered numerous programs, including the TD Grade One Book Giveaway, Ashley Spires’s Small Saul. The year previously, Friesens had installed a new press, one capable of printing up to 64 pages, both sides, in eight colours and in just a single pass. After Charlotte and I climbed the seven steps to the walkway that extended the length of this huge press, we could look down and watch the paper flowing beneath us as, colour by colour, Small Saul took form. Over the next few hours while we visited the rest of the plant, hundreds of thousands of copies of the giveaway book rolled off the press, the first step on their journey to ownership by some half-million Canadian children entering grade one in 2016. And, for me, one of those children had a face and a name, Cara, my then-grade-one granddaughter.

At Southern Ontario Library Service, among other things, I was responsible for the Lieutenant Governor’s Club Amick, an initiative to bring books to children in remote fly-in communities, and for all services to First Nation public libraries. Over the years, the connection between the organizations strengthened as Club Amick distributed the TD Grade One Book Giveaway in the far north, CCBC made books available for First Nation public libraries, and often featured First Nation Communities Read titles.

I was delighted to join the CCBC board and sit for two terms, during which two years were as vice-president and three as president. Of course, Charlotte and I worked very closely together during that period. As a board and as an organization we had our ups and downs, but luckily far more ups! Charlotte always addressed issues with incredible calm, but at the same time made things happen.

I reflect on all that Charlotte has accomplished for CCBC over her 24 years, and how much I shall miss her personally. She will be a tough act to follow!

— Daryl Novak

“Charlotte always addressed issues with incredible calm, but at the same time made things happen.”

What I see as Charlotte’s real legacy is the CCBC’s program of awards. When Charlotte arrived at the CCBC, we had only the $1,000 Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People. Within five years, we saw the addition of the Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children’s Non-Fiction (first presented in 1999), followed by the TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award (2004) and building from there. The CCBC now manages eight awards, none with prizes less than $5,000.

Over the years, the announcement of each new award has been greeted with pleasure and excitement by the Canadian children’s book community, but also with pride. We felt proud that the richness of our literature now merited the establishment of such prizes. And we felt proud that the generous sponsors of these awards were ready to celebrate our literature with us.

Building this wonderful program of honours took persistence and vision. Thank you, Charlotte.

— Gillian O’Reilly
In late March of 2002, I was sitting at my booth on the first morning of the Bologna Children’s Book Fair when Charlotte stopped by. As she has done every year since, she asked me what books I was most focusing on at the fair. I told her briefly about a new title that was forthcoming later in the spring. I loved it myself, but the fair was just beginning so I had no real sense of what the response by foreign publishers might be. At that point, she asked if I might spare a copy, which I gave her and didn’t think more of it.

I can’t remember if Charlotte returned that day or early the next morning. She sat herself down, handed the book back to me and, speaking very carefully, she added something like, “This is one of the best books I’ve read in a very long time. It’s going to be a big hit.” I think her excitement about the book stayed with me throughout the fair, where many foreign colleagues in fact did buy rights to the book.

Charlotte’s enthusiasm and words of encouragement gave me one of the first great moments in Hana’s Suitcase history. She has never stopped being of great support to me and Second Story Press.

— Margie Wolfe

I first became acquainted with Charlotte from afar when she delivered messages at the Annual General Meetings for the Canadian Children’s Book Centre or was introduced at the book award galas. A few years ago, I was honoured to be a juror for a number of TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award panels and sat alongside Charlotte during meetings and meals as the team shared and negotiated their views about ‘great’ books. From these conversations, I recognized Charlotte to be not only an expert in the field but also a top-notch leader, negotiator and problem solver. More recently, I have become better connected with Charlotte and we, of course, continue to chat about good books (for young people and older folks), but also exchange views about movies, travels and shopping. Charlotte is a great storyteller, eager to recount her entertaining and informative life experiences.

It’s no secret that Charlotte and I (along with Mary Macchiusi) have recently been meeting over omelettes or bagels and peanut butter, and I am pleased that I can now call Charlotte a fine friend.

— Larry Swartz

In 1994, when the publishing community in Canada learned that a new executive director of the CCBC had been chosen, many were surprised. The choice was not someone from the publishing, literary, library or teaching communities, but rather someone who had worked for social agencies like Open Door, a Toronto homeless day shelter. Some members vocally disagreed with the choice. Without a solid background in Canadian publishing history they were skeptical of her ability to adequately represent all groups under the CCBC mandate; they were also deeply concerned about her lack of knowledge of the literature. “She doesn’t even know the books!” was a repeated refrain.

Fortunately for the CCBC and the Canadian publishing community, Charlotte was more than up for the challenge. In the early days of her stewardship, she set a course to acquaint herself intimately with the books that tell the stories of our country and its people. She was tireless in getting to know the authors, illustrators and publishers who created them, and ultimately the booksellers, librarians and even the readers who consumed them. In the end, we got to know her as an avid reader, a passionate Canadian and a fierce advocate for the arts and storytellers of every persuasion in every part of the literary community. Her innate and abiding empathy for all people, wherever they came from, whatever their race or religion, gender or politics, motivated her professionally and personally. The CCBC was blessed and enriched by her humanity and feisty spirit to fight for what she believed was right, the causes she believed in, and to spread the word about Canadian books for young people at home and internationally. As a colleague and friend, I was blessed, too.

Salut, Charlotte, on a job well done!

— Ian Wallace

“She was tireless in getting to know the authors, illustrators and publishers who created them, and ultimately the booksellers, librarians and even the readers who consumed them.”

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— Margie Wolfe

Alan Convery, Erin Bow, winner of the 2011 TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award, and Charlotte.
IN MEMORIAM
Barbara Hehner, 1947-2018
It is with deep sadness that we announce that Canadian children’s author Barbara Hehner passed away in August of this year. Barbara was the author of many children’s books, including The Spirit of Canada: Canada’s Story in Legends, Fiction, Poems and the Ice Age Animals series. She began writing over 30 years ago, entering into a partnership with David Suzuki. Together they wrote six children’s science and activity books, starting with Looking at Plants.
Our condolences go out to Barbara’s family and friends.

TD Canadian Children’s Book Week 2019 | The Tour Roster
The next TD Canadian Children’s Book Week will take place from May 4 to 11, 2019. Twenty-nine authors, illustrators and storytellers will visit schools, libraries and bookstores in communities across Canada to share a love of reading, stories and books.
To find out who will be visiting your province or territory, visit bookweek.ca.
Applications to host a reading are open.

Alison Acheson, author
Vancouver, BC
Ashley Barron, author/illustrator
Toronto, ON
Helaine Becker, author
Toronto, ON
Shelly Becker, author
Toronto, ON
Beverley Brenna, author
Saskatoon, SK
Kristin Butcher, author
Campbell River, BC
Jodi Carmichael, author
Winnipeg, MB
Marty Chan, author
Edmonton, AB
Tony Cliff, author/illustrator
Vancouver, BC
Emma FitzGerald, author/illustrator
Halifax, NS
Lee Edward Födi, author/illustrator
Vancouver, BC
Manon Gauthier, illustrator
Montreal, QC
Kallie George, author
Vancouver, BC
Sara Gillingham, author/illustrator
Vancouver, BC
Jacqueline Guest, author
Bragg Creek, AB
Nadia Hohn, author
Toronto, ON
Naseem Hrab, author
Toronto, ON
Bernice Hune, storyteller
Toronto, ON
Leigh-Anne Kehr, storyteller
Tiny, ON
Tanya Lloyd Kyi, author
Vancouver, BC
Sara Leach, author
Whistler, BC
Wendy McLeod MacKnight, author
Hanwell, NB
Michelle Mulder, author
Victoria, BC
Rachel Muller, storyteller
Ladysmith, BC
Susin Nielsen, author
Vancouver, BC
Nancy Rose, author/illustrator
Bedford, NS
Heather Smith, author
Waterloo, ON
Patrick Weekes, author
Edmonton, AB

Celebrating 10 Magical Years of Telling Tales
The 10th Annual Telling Tales Festival took place on September 16, 2018, at Westfield Heritage Village in Rockton, Ontario. Families, teens, children and book lovers listened to inspiring words from authors and illustrators, danced to music and experienced stories through the magic of storytelling and imagination.
“Dreams really do come true,” says Susan Jasper, Telling Tales Executive Director. “Together we have built an extraordinary community dedicated to inspiring a love of reading in children and youth. Looking to the future, it is our hope the children of today return to Telling Tales to introduce their children to this enchanting world where adventure, magic and stories rule.”

SHOWCASING THE BEST OF CANADIAN CHILDREN’S PUBLISHING
There is no better way to celebrate 10 years of Telling Tales than with over 35 Canadian literary superheroes. Dennis Lee shared his memorable poems and rhymes, signed autographs and posed for pictures with fans of all ages. Gifted storyteller David Bouchard shared personal stories through his books, tattoos and special flutes. Sarah Mlynowski wowed her fans with why she loves writing fractured fairy tales and introduced us to magical creatures, plus she launched her new book, Upside-Down Magic: Weather or Not.
Kevin Sylvester turned into the not-so-super hero, Mucus Man, right in front of our eyes to launch his latest book, The Almost Epic Squad: Mucus Mayhem. Eric Walters presented his 100th book, Elephant Secret, and shared inspirational stories and insight into his books. And Kenneth
Oppel and Sydney Smith did a tag-team presentation to launch their entertaining latest middle-grade novel, Inklings.

TEEN TALES
The first Telling Tales Teen Tales happened on September 23 at the Hamilton Public Library.

Teens were treated to an engaging program of presentations and hands-on workshops with top YA authors and performers, including Melanie Florence, Hamilton Youth Poets, Heather Smith, Richard Scrimger and Vikki VanSickle.

“It is so important to engage with teens and provide relevant programs that help them discover their own storytelling powers,” explains Jasper. “Our presenters were able to make real connections, infused with much humour, as they explained their process for creating entertaining characters and plot. Teens left eager to get started telling their own tales.”

Woozles Celebrates 40 Years
On a quiet side street in the heart of downtown Halifax sits a bright yellow house with a jaunty green door. This house hasn’t always been yellow, but it has, for the last 40 years, been the home of Woozles, Canada’s oldest children’s bookstore. And on Saturday, October 13, 2018, the day before the actual birthday, hundreds of people of all ages gathered to help celebrate this momentous occasion. Shrieks of joy and laughter rang out as Curious George, Clifford the Big Red Dog and Bell Hopscotch Rabbit made special guest appearances, visitors lined up for face painting, party games and the legendary Woozles fishpond and patrons happily shared their stories of what Woozles has meant to them over the years. There were so many heartwarming stories of generations of readers for whom Woozles has been a special, sacred place. So many poignant, lovely, inspiring stories of how one wee bookstore has touched the hearts of so many people in so many ways. Woozles will continue to mark this impressive milestone in various ways, including contests and the release of assorted ‘40 Favourites...’ book lists as well as a very special project that owner Liz Crocker has undertaken: the publication of the two winning entries from the most recent Woozles Writes writing contest. May Woozles continue to delight, encourage and inspire readers and writers for many more years to come!

Lisa Doucet
Celebrate With Us!

Diwali on November 7, 2018

“Singh brings the vibrancy of the festival of lights to the page.”
—CM Magazine

9781459819085

Christmas on December 25, 2018

“As delightful and jovial as Santa Claus himself.”
—Kirkus Reviews

9781459813557

Chinese New Year on February 5, 2019

“Crisp and clean, well suited to attracting a baby’s attention.”
—Booklist

9781459819023

Holi on March 20–21, 2019

“A joyful hybrid of concept book, holiday title, and portrait of familial love.”
—Publishers Weekly

9781459818491

“Uniquely personal stories make this book stand out.”
—Booklist

978145981263
Hey, I need to tell you something:

I’ve never been much of a reader. I mean, I went through this phase in the summer before I started grade four where I read a ton of middle grade novels, but that was because we had just moved to Toronto and I didn’t have any friends. I also ended up reading a lot of novels in university because I studied English literature and, well, I didn’t have any friends. (I’m sensing a theme here that wasn’t apparent to me until now. Yikes.)

Y’know, I’m so glad that we can finally talk about this — it’s good to air out your secrets. (Not the part about having no friends, the part about not reading — I’m saving the no-friends revelation for a piece for *Canadian Children’s Book Blues.*)

I know what you’re thinking: But, Naseem, you have an undergraduate degree in English literature, you earned a masters in library science, you’ve worked in children’s publishing for over 10 years and you’re a published author of (nearly) three picture books. What do you mean you’re not a big reader? How. Is. That. Possible?

Long story short... I dunno. I’ve just never been much of a reader. But one thing I have read throughout my life (whether or not I had friends) is comics.

I first started reading reading comics in newspapers when I was in grade two. There was nothing I looked forward to more than reading the Saturday comics section. Pages and pages of *Ziggy*, *Family Circus*, *Cathy*. I read the weekend comics section like it was my job. I spent hours poring over every single panel. Reading my least favourite comics first (*Beetle Bailey*, *Mother Goose and Grimm*) and then savouring my favourites (*For Better or For Worse* and *Garfield*). And then reading all of them over and over again.

As I got older, I went on to read longer comic books featuring my favourite characters: Heathcliff, Garfield, LuAnn and Archie and the gang. It was certainly not what my mom wanted me to be reading, but let’s just say that things didn’t quite work out when she tried to force-read me *Treasure Island* during the summer of grade five. For the record, I’ve still never read *Treasure Island*.

For those of us who are reluctant readers, a novel can feel like an insurmountable mountain to climb. You might see a glorious page filled with wordy delights, but we see a page with too many words. The words feel like this dense vegetation that we’re just pushing out of our way as we try to climb to the summit. A page of words doesn’t feel like it has any footholds to instantly grab our attention, so we can end up re-reading the same paragraph over and over without retaining anything. Sliding down the mountain again and again. And reluctant readers who read more slowly basically feel like they’ll never even make it to the base of the mountain. They’re just stuck on the path leading up to it.

Unlike novels, comics offer a perfect balance of words and pictures for reluctant readers. The illustrations are what grab our attention right away. Good comics have a theatrical quality to them — they move fast and can make us feel like we’re watching a movie. As in good picture books, each illustration and panel in a comic adds something to the story that the words can’t. The illustrations are what give us the footholds we need to help us find our way into the text... and out of it. They let the words breathe.

Also, because words are contained only in caption boxes to let us know what’s happening, speech bubbles to let us know what the characters are saying (or thinking) and sound effects spelled out for added drama — we rarely feel
overwhelmed by the number of words on the page. Plus, the limited amount of words found in comics can really help slower readers feel like they’re zooming through a book. What better way to make a reluctant reader feel more confident? What better way to make a reluctant reader feel more like a reader?

Good comics can make reading feel manageable for reluctant readers and help them to come to appreciate both words and art. And also, good comics are just plain good.

When I was a kid, my options for good comics were kind of limited. (I mean, I was reading Ziggy, guys. ZIGGY.) Today’s readers have a myriad of options of good — nay, great — comics.

(But before we can begin, can we clarify something, dear reader, and both be on the side of thinking graphic novels are just book-length comics? Cool? Cool.)

Over the last several years, we’ve seen tons of incredible comics for kids and young adults come out of Canada in a variety of genres: The Max Finder series by Liam O’Donnell and Michael Cho; The Three Thieves series by Scott Chantler; Ashley Spires’s Binky the Space Cat series; War Brothers written by Sharon E. McKay and illustrated by Daniel Lafrance; This One Summer by Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki; Dog Night at the Story Zoo by Dan Bar-El and illustrated by Vicky Nerino; Child Soldier written by Michel Chikwanine and Jessica Dee Humphreys and illustrated by Claudia Dávila, and more. And thankfully, we continue to see more and more wonderful comics being published in a variety of formats (picture books, early readers and graphic novels) for kids and young adults. Let’s go on a short tour of some fantastic newer comics for kids.

Whether the young people in your life are interested in spooky witches, hunting for mushrooms or retellings of traditional Indigenous stories — there’s a comic out there for every reader (reluctant or not).

In terms of comics for younger readers, I love that we’re seeing more and more picture books that weave comic elements into their narratives — speech bubbles, asides, sound effects, wordless panels.

The fifth addition to the super funny Buddy and Earl picture book series by Maureen Fergus and illustrated by Carey Sookocheff features simple, exquisitely rendered illustrated comic panels. This fusion of comics and traditional narratives can help to introduce young readers to both formats at the same time. In the fantastic Buddy and Earl Meet the Neighbors, Buddy and Earl play superheroes — Wonder Buddy and Super Earl — and must save the city (a.k.a. garden) from a villain (a.k.a. Mister the bulldog). Hijinks and hilarity ensue!

One of my other favourite picture book series that uses comic elements is Kelly Collier’s A Horse Named Steve and Team Steve. These two books feature an entertaining, self-absorbed horse and play on the story of Narcissus and The Tortoise and the Hare, respectively. In this series, the speech bubbles mix up the more traditional narrative with side-splitting results. The series is super fun, especially for one-on-one read-alouds.

Elise Gravel’s wonderfully whimsical picture book, The Mushroom Fan Club, also plays with comic elements like speech bubbles. This book takes young readers on a fun, fact-filled mushroom-hunting journey through the woods and features colourful, chatty mushrooms. It also includes instructions on how to make prints out of spores! Gravel’s illustrations are playful and irresistible. The marketing director at Drawn & Quarterly mentioned that The Mushroom Fan Club has the BEST endpapers and she was totally right — they are truly the cutest endpapers ever! And Elise’s passion for mushrooms makes her seem like a fungil (See what I did there???)

I’d like to shift in tone for a moment. A Bubble is a devastatingly heart-wrenching board book that uses speech bubbles. The late Genevieve Castrée wrote and illustrated this book as she was dying of pancreatic cancer at the age of 35. It was created as a last gift for her then-one-year-old daughter. It’s both an impossible book and an important book for any child whose parent is ill.

The Gnawer of Rocks by Louise Flaherty and illustrated by Jim Nelson retells a bone-chilling traditional Inuit story from the Clyde River area of Nunavut. While this story is told in a picture book format, it is intended for readers aged 12 and over. This book introduces readers to the terrifying legend of Mangittatuarjuk — the Gnawer of Rocks — a creature who has never known kindness and preys on unsuspecting children. This darkly beautiful story and its terrifying illustrations work in perfect tandem and guarantee nightmares! If you’re looking for something scary (but not too scary) for younger readers, John Martz’s Evie and the Truth About Witches is a cross between an early reader and a wordless graphic novel. Remember being a kid and wanting to be scared, but not too scared? Martz uses a grey-toned palette with dashes of red to tell the story of a little girl who, well, really, really wants to be scared and finds a book that just
Qalupalik! by Roselynn Akulukjuk and Danny Christopher are two brightly coloured graphic novels for kids from five to seven. The series follows two siblings who live in a small Inuit community on Arviq Bay just north of the Arctic Circle. In Putuguq & Kublu, Putuguq and Kublu pull pranks on each other until their grandfather stops them and talks to them about inuksuit — rock formations with practical and spiritual importance to their ancestors and to the Tuniit people, who predated the Inuit. In Putuguq & Kublu and the Qalupalik!, Putuguq and Kublu are up to their usual fun near the shoreline when their grandfather stops them to warn them about the qalupalik — a mythical creature that snatches children from under the ice. These two titles wonderfully balance light-hearted fun and thoughtful teaching moments.

Poppy & Sam and the Leaf Thief by Cathon is a graphic novel for younger readers that follows a little girl and her panda friend on an adventure in the garden. Poppy and Sam try to solve the mystery of who is eating Basil’s leaves by interviewing all of the garden’s inhabitants from Ms. Honeybee to Ladybug to Mr. Bumblebee. Will they get to the bottom of this madcap, delightful whodunit? This sweet story of friendship and community features some of the most endearing illustrations ever.

Finally, Manuelito by Elisa Amado and illustrated by Abraham Urias tells the story of 13-year-old Manuelito — a young boy living with his family in a tiny village in the Guatemalan countryside. Through dramatic black-and-white illustrations, this graphic novel details Manuelito’s dangerous journey to Mexico, then the United States, in search of asylum from his village that is overrun with drug gangs among other terrors. From the crooked ‘coyote’ — or human smuggler — to whom his parents have entrusted Manuelito, to his encounter with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency once he reaches America, Manuelito strikingly captures the desperation, fear and hope of the experiences of so many young refugees.

As you can see, from comics that tell fun and light-hearted stories to comics that help young readers explore world issues, there is no shortage of brilliant Canadian comics for kids. Whether the children in your life are reluctant readers or not, comics have the unique ability to provide kids with a visual reading experience unlike any other.
**ERIC WALTERS**

**BY THE NUMBERS**

100 BOOKS PUBLISHED (INCLUDING THESE!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>12 books about ANIMALS</strong></th>
<th><strong>12 BASKETBALL books</strong></th>
<th><strong>9 PICTURE books</strong></th>
<th><strong>6 books about CAMP X</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 books set in or about AFRICA</td>
<td>30 COUNTRIES visited</td>
<td>400+ KENYAN CHILDREN supported by Creation of Hope charity</td>
<td>4 WATER PROJECTS funded by Creation of Hope</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Order of CANADA</td>
<td>10 Books CO-WRITTEN with other authors</td>
<td>400+ PRESENTATIONS in one year</td>
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<td>2 minimum PAGES WRITTEN PER DAY</td>
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Visit Eric online at [www.ericwalters.net](http://www.ericwalters.net)

Eric’s 100th book is **THE ELEPHANT SECRET**, available in August 2018 from Puffin Canada!
Faith Erin Hicks Seizes the Big Picture

BY MARYLYNN MILLER OKE

Known widely for her graphic novels and web comics, Faith Erin Hicks blends her talents as an artist and writer on many canvases. Whether flying solo or playing a collaborative role, she delves deeper under the surface of the funnies. Her work is as adaptable as she is herself.

“I’ve always been attracted to comics as a storytelling medium. As a kid I loved reading Tintin and Asterix, so I grew up with a love and appreciation of comics.”

Now living in Vancouver with her partner, animator Tim Larade, her long-time affinity transformed into an enduring, award-winning career that has spawned a diverse collection of work, including Zombies Calling, Friends With Boys, The Adventures of Superhero Girl, Freaks & Geeks of the high-profile series, Buffy: The High School Years, and recently, The Nameless City trilogy.

Faith’s natural-born passion for combining words and pictures brings combative cheerleaders, ancient warriors, Bigfoot boys and more into vibrant, living colour for pre-teen and teenage audiences.

Putting it out there

For creative types, exposing their work can be more nerve-wracking than any zombie encounter. As a Sheridan College student nearly 20 years ago, back in the early days of online publishing, Faith began posting her comics. In this new, digital world, she discovered publishing freedom, a wide audience and the launch of her career.

“As a teenager in the late 90s, I saw lots of other eager, young artists putting their work online and building reader- ships. I thought, I can do that, too. The best thing about the Internet was no one said, ‘No, this isn’t good enough to be published.’ I could just draw comics pages and post them on my website. Astonishingly, there were people out there willing to read my stories.”

Two decades later, she still encourages newcomers to just get their work out there.

Planning creativity

Since posting Demonology 101, her very first web comic, back in 1999, she has drawn thousands of illustrations. Her talent flourished and her process became more deliberate and refined.

“I didn’t really know what I was doing when I was drawing Demonology 101. I just made the story up as I went. Now I plan out story and character arcs and write a script before I
sit down to draw a single page. It makes a huge difference in the quality of the writing!”

Her strategy and persistence paid off. The enduring web comic went on to win several Web Cartoonists Choice Awards in 2003 and 2004.

“Eventually, my web comics got good enough that publishers noticed, and I started working with them in the graphic-novel format.”

Subsequently, her graphic novels were celebrated with several awards. In 2008, she earned a Joe Shuster Award for Zombies Calling. In 2014, The Adventures of Superhero Girl won the Will Eisner Comic Industry Award in the Best Publication for Kids category.

Weaving words and pics
“As for bringing together writing and illustrating, to be honest, that’s just how my brain works. When I think of a new story, it comes to me in pictures. I see the characters, I hear their voices, and it’s just a matter of me putting that down on paper. I love seeing characters come to life as I draw them.”

In graphic novels and comics, the illustrations of characters, actions and settings can speak as clearly as the dialogue. Whether working as an author, artist or collaborator, Faith strikes a balance between written words and accompanying artwork to reveal the story.

Reflecting reality and dreaming up fantasy
Many of Faith’s stories indulge the reader’s imagination in faraway lands or with out-of-this-world characters. In other scenarios, she has to stay closer to script. When writing about things nearer to home, she takes a more personal approach.

“The Nameless City is a fantasy series, but the setting is based in China in the 13th century. I literally spent years collecting reference material, so I could draw a world that hopefully authentically resembled this real-life place.”

In contrast, when approached by Dark Horse Comics to contribute to the well-established Buffy: The High School Years series, Faith collaborated with illustrator Yishan Li to create Freaks & Geeks. Faith describes the book as a lost episode of seasons one and two of the famous show.

However, when she wrote the realistic Friends With Boys, the process seemed to unfold on its own.

“Friends With Boys was set in the real world, so it didn’t require a lot of world building. It was also a little bit based on my own life, my experiences of being home-schooled and then going into public high school for the first time. So, I only had to draw on my own experiences, and it didn’t require a lot of research.”

Busy, busy, busy
From scriptwriting to final artwork, it takes Faith approximately a year of long hours and late nights to complete a graphic novel.

“Right now, I’d say the most difficult aspect of my job is the deadlines. I have too many deadlines!”

Over the technicolour spectrum of her career, Faith has illustrated scenes for the George of the Jungle animated series and found her comics in daily newspapers. She also creates original artwork and is a mentor to many who follow her work frame by frame.

Despite her hectic production schedule, she shares her experiences of working in the comics industry and demonstrates tricks of the trade through seminars, online blogs and workshops. She speaks at many events, from large-scale Wondercon conventions to bookfairs, and is happy to sign autographs for fans while she’s there.

When her schedule does allow, she welcomes collaboration with other established writers and artists. In addition to current projects, she has worked with talented colleagues, including authors Susan Kim, Laurence Klavan, Neil Druckmann and Prudence Shen, and illustrator J. Torres.

Bust to boom
“Right now, there’s a boom of amazing comics made by skilled creators, which are specifically aimed at children. I absolutely think those comics are incredibly appealing to kids. You look at a book like Smile by Raina Telgemeier, and how could any kid not love that book? It’s inviting and charming and so relatable.”

Although sales of comics and graphic novels contribute over $1 billion to the North American economy, Faith feels there was a time when the popularity of kids’ comics was on a downward spiral.

“For years before this kids’ comics boom, the number of kids reading comics had dropped drastically because publishers weren’t producing comics that were appealing to children. I’m not sure if the medium itself is appealing to kids, but rather the specific, individual work.”

Visual attraction
When it comes to the classroom, Faith explains why some kids might be drawn to graphic novels.

“I’m not an educator. Anecdotally, I hear from lots of teachers that reluctant readers enjoy graphic novels, even when they don’t enjoy prose reading. It could be because kids are more visually literate at a young age, so the visual storytelling aspect of comics is something that feels very natural to them.”

Inspired perspective
“It’s kind of a cliche to say that everything inspires me, but really, it’s the truth! I’m inspired by friends, real-life events
and by stories written by other creators. I like themes of friendship, but also of personal conflict. I like when characters are in opposition to each other and have to struggle to see eye to eye.*

However, no matter the setting, Faith takes careful consideration when incorporating heavy elements and serious themes into her work.

“As a white, cisgender woman I have a lot of privilege in society as it currently is. I try my best to listen to my friends who are queer or people of colour and get their perspective on struggles they have to face. Hopefully, I can confront issues of social justice and power imbalances in my fictional work and confront them in a way that is nuanced and sympathetic. I think it’s important for authors to do their research when writing about these issues, and listen to people who’ve had their lives affected by the inequalities of the world we live in.*

**Perhaps a superhero girl?**
As for being a female in the comics industry, she doesn’t really consider her sex to be a big deal. However, others seem to think so.

“I hope just by being visible and producing good work I’ll inspire other creators like myself. Sometimes, women approach me and say that I was the first female cartoonist they became aware of. I always find that very strange. Then I worry that I’m not a good enough role model, or that my work doesn’t break enough boundaries. I don’t really think about my gender until someone points it out. I’m just a cartoonist trying to make the best comics she can.”

Growing up in Canada, home of Superman, the ultimate comic icon, creators like Faith understand the influential power of the legend-making medium.

As for the direct impact that her work has on her fans, Faith reveals, “I hope it inspires them to think about other people and have empathy. I hope my comics make them want to write and draw comics of their own.”

**New works**
Faith is currently illustrating *Pumpkinheads*, a graphic novel written by Rainbow Rowell. She recently wrote the first book of *Avatar: The Last Airbender — Imbalance* series alongside illustrator Peter Wartman, in collaboration with original creators Michael Dante Dimartino and Bryan Konietzko. She also wrote and illustrated *The Divided Earth*, the final instalment of The Nameless City 700-page trilogy. Both titles were released this fall.

To learn more about Faith’s books, illustrations, comics and more:
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twitter.com/FaithErinHicks
instagram.com/faitherinhicks
faitherinhicks.tumblr.com

Marylynn Miller Oke is a freelance writer. With experience in broadcast and public relations, she writes frequently for the academic and non-profit sectors.

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To learn more about Faith’s books, illustrations, comics and more:
faitherinhicks.com
twitter.com/FaithErinHicks
instagram.com/faitherinhicks
faitherinhicks.tumblr.com

Marylynn Miller Oke is a freelance writer. With experience in broadcast and public relations, she writes frequently for the academic and non-profit sectors.
New Life for Classic Books by Three Canadian Authors

BY RACHEL SEIGEL

Vicki Grant (VG)
Former TV scriptwriter and advertising copywriter Vicki Grant has been called “a superb storyteller” (CCBC) and “one of the funniest writers working today” (Vancouver Sun). Her books have won the Red Maple Award, the Arthur Ellis Award and Young Canada Reads awards and have been shortlisted for the Edgar, the CLA Children’s Book of the Year Award and many Forest of Reading awards. Her latest YA novel is 36 Questions That Changed My Mind About You.

Shane Peacock (SP)
Shane Peacock is a novelist, playwright, journalist and documentary screenwriter. His young adult novels include the best-selling series, The Boy Sherlock Holmes, published in 12 languages, honoured with 60 nominations and awards, including finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award, the TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award, and six times a Junior Library Guild of America Premier Selection. His latest works are his picture book, The Artist and Me, and the horror trilogy, The Dark Missions of Edgar Brim.

Richard Scrimger (RS)
Richard Scrimger has written more than 20 books for children and adults, been translated into a dozen languages and won a few awards. He teaches a bit and talks a lot. Recent novels feature an upside-down world, the back of Laura Secord’s cow and a superpower that makes our hero — briefly and disastrously — irresistible. Confusion is Richard’s natural state. Just ask his children. He has four of them — no, wait, they have him. Visit him at www.scrimger.ca or follow @richardscrimger

One of the biggest hopes an author has is for their book to be still in print and enjoyed forever — or at least for a good long time. If an author is that fortunate, a new cover or some updated text can help introduce the book to a new generation of readers. When a book goes out of print, a publishing house might decide that the time is right to reissue a title that may have fallen by the wayside, subsequently giving it a brand-new chance to be read. This year, Vicki Grant, Richard Scrimger and Shane Peacock are all celebrating the re-release of popular titles, and they were kind enough to sit down with us and talk about their experiences.

All three of you are celebrating new editions and in some cases milestone anniversaries for your books. Can you talk a bit about what prompted the reissues/anniversary editions? Were you involved in the discussion or was it a publisher choice? Are there plans to update the other titles in these series in the future?

SP: The Dylan Maples Adventures had been out of print for a number of years, but they had sold well and gained many accolades, and I had frequently received requests from schools for all the novels in the series, so I asked Nimbus Publishing in Halifax if they would be interested in reissuing them and their response was immediate and positive. I had been impressed with how this publishing house had grown and had heard glowing reports about them from other authors. We are reissuing and updating all four novels, and publishing a brand new Dylan Maples Adventure, entitled Phantom of Fire, in July 2019.

VG: The reissue of Quid Pro Quo came as a complete, and happy, surprise to me. It’s never been out of print, which is good, but also means I’ve had to look at that terrible cover for 15 years. I’m thrilled to see the bobble-headed models retired. (My apology to the original designer who I hope knows that all authors hate their covers and won’t take my comments too personally.)

RS: The reissue comes as a total surprise to me. Tara Walker talked about it a few years ago and I promptly forgot. When I saw the roughs for the new cover, I went, “Ohhhh yeah, right.”

Other than fresh covers, were any other changes made to the books, or was the original content left intact? If not, given the opportunity, would you make any updates/changes to your book?
SP: The stories are intact, but the original novels were published from 1999 to 2003, and we discovered that there were places where they needed to be updated, mostly due to interim advances in technology. (Dylan was running around with a ‘compact disc player’ in the originals!) Though cellphones were certainly in use in those days, not everyone had one. Now, people look at you as if you have three ears if you don’t have a cellphone. So, I had to either get one into Dylan’s hands (and not one half the size of a toaster) or find plausible ways for him NOT to have one at key moments.

VG: Technology had to be updated, of course — a pivotal moment in the original revolved around an ancient piece of equipment known as a car phone — but I also took the opportunity to pare down the legal explanations. The whole premise of Quid Pro Quo is that a teenage boy uses his legal knowledge to save his mother’s life, so it’s important I got the law right. That said, there were points in the original book where it sounded like I was preparing readers to take the LSAT. I cut out a few of the more long-winded explanations and limited my discussion to the pertinent issues (I feel like I should end that sentence with ‘Your Honour.’)

RS: No changes to text. Maybe they think it’s perfect. I remember giving readings and thinking, “I could have written that better.” But on the whole I don’t mind. Most of the pop culture references date well: kd lang may be older, but she’s still pretty darn cool.

3 Being that all of your books are now over 10 years old, why do you think they hold up so well with time, and do you think they will still hold up in another 10 or 20 years?

SP: I was pleasantly surprised at how well they held up. I hadn’t, of course, read them for a very long while. I remember thinking, as I re-read, “Hey, that’s not too bad!” I think that is because, if I may say so, they work well as stories, just simply that, and have well-drawn characters, good plots and just the right amount of meaning and subtext. That never goes out of style. It is true that my writing has gotten a good deal darker over time, but I think the characters, plots and even the language remain ageless.

VG: Kirkus just reviewed the new edition and said Quid Pro Quo was “Fast-paced and funny with brief but crucial hiccups of legal learning.” I think that does a pretty good job of summing up what’s made it popular. (Kids love hiccups — and burps, for that matter.)

RS: Alan Dingwall’s problems — home life, school life, love life — are universal. All kids deal with them. And his discovery of power within himself is everyone’s childhood quest. Whether Norbert the alien is real or imagined, and his help literal or metaphorical, don’t matter, the truths of the story will always resonate with readers.

4 What, if any, promotional/publicity is planned around the reissues of the books? If not on a publisher end, do you have any plans? (i.e., touring, social media, bookmarks, etc…)

SP: Nimbus has been very good about promoting the books already. I signed copies of the first in the series, The Mystery of Ireland’s Eye, at Book Expo America in New York in early June 2018, within weeks of the book’s official reappearance with its wonderful new cover. I also did an interview on CBC Radio New Brunswick (the new novel in the series is set there) in July. The series was also announced in Quill and Quire, and we will continue with other promotion, though we will concentrate on trying to make the bigger splash when the new novel in the series comes out in mid 2019.

VG: Quid Pro Quo has been sent out for reviews and I presented it (and my new teen novel, 36 Questions That Changed My Mind About You) at Telling Tales Festival in Hamilton in September.

RS: As far as I know, no promotion/publicity/tour is planned. Of course, I may have forgotten about it. I will continue to use the Norbert novels in presentations because they illustrate useful storytelling techniques.

Do any of you have any plans to revisit these series and write another book? If so, what challenges do you anticipate coming back to a previously completed series? If not, why not?

SP: As mentioned, there will be a new one, Phantom of Fire, appearing in July 2019. I have already written it and it was a joy to return to the character. Dylan Maples is a very Canadian series and it was fun to go back to a Canadian setting, this time in New Brunswick. It was also fascinating to re-inhabit one of my old creations and I re-discovered how much I like the character. I was surprised at how easy it was to get re-acquainted with him. He is a little older in the new book and a little darker, so it was intriguing to mature him a little.

VG: No, but I’ve roughly — very roughly — plotted out my first adult novel, which is also a thriller revolving around a non-lawyer put in a position of having to get to the bottom of a legal mess. The outsider storyline is a natural for me. All my siblings and my husband are lawyers. I’ve tried my best to tune them out, but clearly they’ve had an influence on me. (But is it ‘undue influence’ i.e., ‘influence by which a person is induced to act otherwise than by their own free will or without adequate attention to the consequences’? I’ll have to consult my lawyer.)

RS: I am in the process of writing a fifth Norbert novel. It’s as much for me as for Tundra — I want to get Alan home from Jupiter and to link up the Norbert books and the Peeler books. I’m not the same writer I was 20 years ago, but it’s fun to think myself back into that headspace. If the reissue sells well, maybe they’ll publish it. Here’s hoping!

Richard and Vicki, your books have remained in print since their publication, but, Shane, the Dylan Maples adventures have been out of print for a while. Do you hope/anticipate that new editions will introduce a new group of readers to your work?

SP: Yes, I hope and actually anticipate that new readers will be drawn to the Dylan Maples stories. They have to be, since the kids who read the original novels are now adults! I have had all sorts of positive response from teachers and librarians who really liked the series and are anxious to introduce it to their students in 2018/19 onward.
VG: Yes. I’m a big fan of new groups of readers! (For this and all my books, actually.)

RS: The great thing about kid lit is that a whole new generation of readers comes along every few years. Adult writers have a more rigid readership. The Beverley Cleary generation of readers comes along every few years. Adult writers have a more rigid readership. The Beverley Cleary collection was reissued a few years ago and found lots of brand new fans. We all want the same for our books.

If you could pick any of your other titles to get an update, which one would it be and why?

SP: I don’t think any of my works need updating at this point. The Boy Sherlock Holmes series keeps doing very well, quite a few years after they first began to appear. I’m amazed at its continuing popularity. The Dark Missions of Edgar Brim series is new and my novels in the Seven series cycles are still relatively recent as well. Having said that, it would be great to see my very first book, The Great Farini, written for adults, back in print, since it tells the tale of the man who I think is THE most amazing Canadian in our history. There has been interest in a film version of that book lately, so perhaps it will see the light of day again. I suppose we could also update Unusual Heroes, my book about the prime ministers (and how strange they all are!) since we’ve had a few new PMs since that book first came out, but I have too many other new projects upcoming to devote any time to that.

VG: I have a special fondness for Not Suitable for Family Viewing. It’s a YA mystery that came out in 2010 (or so). It won the Red Maple Award and is still in print, but it could use the boost of a new cover, too, maybe even a new title. ‘Not Suitable for Family Viewing’ makes it sound much raunchier than it is. Much of the book takes place in the TV industry, and there’s also a family secret involved, so I thought the title was brilliant. Unfortunately, some parents and teachers took it (and the naked legs on the cover) at face value and decided it really was ‘not suitable’. It’s actually classic ‘clean teen’ reading — and perhaps my favourite book.

RS: Of course, I’d like ALL my books to get new covers and a promotional push. Forget the newer, hotter, better-selling authors. Concentrate on me!

Going back and reading what you wrote 10 to 20 years ago, can you tell us how you’ve changed as an author? What have you learned and how has your writing changed in that time period?

SP: My writing has become darker and, I think, if I may say so, deeper. The subtext in The Boy Sherlock, Edgar Brim, even in my picture book, The Artist and Me, just tends to be a bit heavier and more international, too, in terms of setting and scope. Having said that, it was interesting, to see the somewhat simpler way of storytelling that I was doing in Dylan Maples and how that, in its own way, can be just as effective. As I mentioned, I can see the seeds of what developed later in my writing. It makes me think about perhaps lightening up a bit in the future!

VG: A lot of my learning came not from writing the books so much as reading the books in schools. A library full of kids provides the world’s best focus group. Fire up the squirm-o-meter and watch it rise and fall as you read. You quickly see the difference between what you find funny and what they do. Wiggling spikes when your story is too complicated, your social references too obscure or your language dated. Kids are harsh but fair critics, and I’ve tried to incorporate their ‘suggestions’ into my writing.

RS: My writing has got simpler. I still have my old flaws, but I am onto myself now. When I try to say too much too fast, when I get too clever, when I start a plot line, I take myself to task.

After going through this process, is it something you would encourage others to do? Why or why not? Did you have any reservations about doing it?

SP: I would absolutely encourage other authors to reissue their older work. I don’t have any reservations at all. It was fun, intriguing, I learned a great deal about my writing past and present, and it makes good business sense, too. Why not bring your older works back to life?

VG: Absolutely. It’s way easier than writing a whole other book and it’s a great chance to expunge some of the lines/scenes/bad jokes that you’ve been dying to do ever since the original came out.

RS: Getting a book reissued is always worth doing. It means your publisher cares. Who’s going to turn that down? I’ll take all the help, all the love, I can get.

If you could pick one book to see back in print/reissued (other than your own) which one would it be and why?

SP: Pretty well every book I admire is still in print, even the mountains of Victorian English novels I love. However, The Great Farini himself wrote several books, including one about his exploration of the Kalahari Desert. It would be pretty cool to see that back in print!

VG: I’m sorry this isn’t Canadian, but the book that comes to mind is called Donna Onesheuch Was Chased by Some Cows. It’s a very funny picture book that my kids and I loved. I’ve searched high and low for our battered copy, but can’t find it anywhere. And why should it be reissued? Because there aren’t enough funny picture books. As a parent of three, all of whom needed to be read to before bed, I required books that entertained me as much as them. So many books were twee or drippy or didactic or boring. (I used to silently refer to Pat the Bunny as “Shoot the Bunny.”) Donna Onesheuch always entertained us and, to this day, we all know how important it is “to give good head pats.” You have to read it.

RS: The first author I devoured was Enid Blyton. Sadly, her books are not well written and full of racist clichés. So NOT them. (E. Nesbit, on the other hand, even older, bears up well.) But if I have to name a single book I’d love to see again, it is Russell Hoban’s How Tom Beat Captain Najork and His Hired Sportsmen. Great characters, powerful message and the best description of made-up games I have ever read.

Rachel Seigel is the Adult Fiction Specialist at Library Services Centre.
For our winter Bookmark! column we have once again asked booksellers across Canada to recommend books they thought were exceptional choices for holiday gift giving. Thanks go to Nicole Abi-Najem, Lisa Doucet, Kirsten Larmon, Serah-Marie McMahon and Sabrina Simmonds for taking the time to recommend such fabulous titles.

Bookseller Recommendations

Nicole Abi-Najem of Mable’s Fables, Toronto, Ontario

**Fox and Raccoon**
(Juniper Hollow)
written and illustrated by Lesley-Anne Green
Tundra Books, 2018

Meet Fox and Raccoon. They are best friends and they spend every day together. Except for today! Fox is so busy she doesn’t have time to play. But never fear — Raccoon is here to help! But Fox is STILL busy. Will she ever have time to stop and play with him?

**Megabat**
(Megabat, Book 1)
written by Anna Humphrey
illustrated by Kass Reich
Tundra Books, 2018

Daniel Misumi has just moved to a new house. It’s big and old and far away from his friends and his life before. AND it’s haunted… or is it? Daniel realizes it’s not a ghost. It’s a bat. And he can talk. And he’s actually kind of cute.

**Body Swap**
written by Sylvia McNicoll
Dundurn, 2018

When Hallie, 15, gets knocked flying by an SUV, her life ends without her ever having kissed a boy. At an otherworldly carnival, she meets and argues with the 82-year-old driver, Susan. Both return to life, but there’s a catch — they’ve swapped bodies.

Lisa Doucet of Woozles in Halifax, Nova Scotia

**EveryBody’s Different on EveryBody Street**
written by Sheree Fitch,
illustrated by Emma Fitzgerald
Nimbus Publishing, 2018

“If ever you go travelling / On EveryBody Street / You’ll see EveryBody’s Different / Than EveryOne you meet...” Sheree Fitch’s playful words invite readers to celebrate our gifts, our weaknesses, our differences and our sameness.

**Inkling**
written by Kenneth Oppel
illustrated by Sydney Smith
HarperCollins Publishers, 2018

The Rylance family is stuck. Dad’s got writer’s block. Ethan promised to illustrate a group project at school — even though he can’t draw. Sarah’s still pining for a puppy. And they all miss Mom. Enter Inkling. The Rylance family’s lives are about to change...

**Here So Far Away**
written by Hadley Dyer
HarperCollins Publishers, 2018

Between an irreparable fight with her best friend and financial problems at home, George’s senior year at high school is not what she had envisioned. Then she meets an older guy, Francis, and falls hard and recklessly in love… until she nearly loses everything.
Ocean Meets Sky
written and illustrated by Terry Fan and Eric Fan
Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2018
Finn remembers the stories his grandfather told him about a place where the ocean meets the sky — where whales soar and castles float. Now that his grandfather is gone, Finn decides to honour him by building his own ship and sailing out to find this magical place!

Family of Spies
written by Jodi Carmichael
Yellow Dog, 2018
When cousins Ford, Ellie and Gavin discover their great-grandfather was a rogue WWII spymaster, they must outrun MI6 and the CIA through the streets of Paris, relying on their wits and Ford’s newfound clairvoyant skills to unlock Great-Granddad’s spy secrets buried in the past.

Sadie
written by Courtney Summers
St. Martin’s Press, 2018
When her sister is found dead, Sadie’s entire world crumbles. Determined to bring her sister’s killer to justice Sadie hits the road following a few meagre clues to find him. When West McCray, a radio personality, overhears Sadie’s story, he becomes obsessed with finding the missing girl. He starts his own podcast as he tracks Sadie’s journey.

Serah-Marie McMahon
of Type Books, Toronto, Ontario
Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein
written by Linda Bailey
illustrated by Júlia Sardà
Tundra Books, 2018
How does a story begin? Sometimes it begins with a dream, and a dreamer. Mary is one such dreamer. A riveting and atmospheric picture book about the young woman who wrote one of the greatest horror novels ever written, and one of the first works of science fiction.

Krista Kim-Bap
written by Angela Ahn
Second Story Press, 2018
Krista’s fifth grade class is busy preparing for Heritage Month and Krista has mixed feelings about being her school’s ‘Korean Ambassador.’ Should she ask her intimidating grandma to teach the class how to make traditional Korean kimbap?

Almost Invisible
written by Maureen Garvie
Groundwood Books, 2018
Maya’s classmate is on the run from an abusive home situation and secretly living in the school. Should Maya tell? Or can she help her friend on her own?

Chaotic Good
written by Whitney Gardner
Alfred A. Knopf, 2018
Cameron’s cosplay creations are finally starting to earn her attention. But after she wins a major competition, she sets off a firestorm of angry online comments. In an attempt to complete her portfolio for college, she is forced to disguise herself as a guy to infiltrate the nerdy inner sanctum of the local comic shop.

No Fixed Address
written by Susin Nielsen
Tundra Books, 2018
Felix Knutsson, 12, is an endearing kid with an incredible brain for trivia. His mom Astrid is loving but unreliable. When they lose their apartment, they move into a camper van. Felix must keep ‘home’ a secret. When he gets to compete on a national quiz show, Felix is determined to win — the cash prize will get them a home.
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 AND NON-FICTION PICTURE BOOKS FOR PRESCHOOL AND UP

**At the Pond**
written and illustrated by Werner Zimmermann
North Winds Press/Scholastic Canada, 2018
978-1-4431-4287-8 (hc) $19.99
for Preschool to Kindergarten
*Picture Book | Counting | Numeracy | Pond Ecology*

Werner Zimmermann’s *At the Pond* engages young children and encourages them to practise their 123s while counting goldfish at a backyard pond. The book portrays the sights a child might see while observing a pond from morning to late afternoon. As the sunlight moves across the water, a mourning dove, frogs, water striders, dragonflies and a salamander visit the pond. All while bright goldfish swim around, drawing the eyes of children and daring them to practise counting and one-to-one correspondence skills. As the day draws to a close, a blue heron flies over the pond and all the creatures hide. The final spread shows several creatures emerging from their hiding places while the text challenges readers to “count them all over again,” encouraging kids to progress beyond the number 10.

Zimmermann has added the feel of a story to this concept book by adding a new creature on each page and changing the positioning of the goldfish in beautiful large-spread illustrations. The watercolours are skilfully rendered in a soft palette of greens, yellows and orange, imparting a gentle, harmonious look reminiscent of impressionist paintings. Teachers, parents and curious youngsters will appreciate the back-matter page following the story about the flora and fauna found at the pond. This book is meant to be shared with preschool- and kindergarten-aged children and will bring readers back to summer days spent by the water.

Krista Jorgensen is a former public librarian currently residing in Scarborough, Ontario.

**Counting on Katherine:**
*How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13*
written by Helaine Becker
illustrated by Dow Phumiruk
Henry Holt and Company, 2018
978-1-250-13752-4 (hc) $23.50
978-1-250-20805-7 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 2 to 4
*Non-fiction Picture Book | Math | Aerospace | Biography | Diversity | Empowerment*

As a narrative biography of accomplished NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson, this picture book not only addresses her time as a 1950s ‘computer’ who calculated the flight path of missions to send the first American astronauts into space and to the moon, but it also focuses on young Katherine as a star in the making. Becker’s simple and clear text captures Katherine’s early love of counting, her curiosity and her desire to learn “about the universe — about everything!” It also chronicles how Katherine stepped around small-minded, sexist and racist thinking to reach the stars in spite of obstacles. Young readers will relate to Katherine’s early years, while her contributions to aerospace and the empowerment of women of colour will inspire them.

Phumiruk’s stunning artwork emphasizes movement and expansive space — from showcasing young Katherine solving equations at a chalkboard to an adult Katherine contemplating flight paths around the moon. It also emphasizes Katherine’s mathematical view of the world by incorporating equations and formulas into the illustrations. Created digitally and incorporating acrylic and watercolour scans for texture, Phumiruk’s scenes are vivid and varied with expressive characterization.

This exceptional biography will encourage readers of all ages to reach for the stars.

Karen Krossing is a Toronto author and MFA student.
Congratulations
TO THE WINNERS OF
THE 2018 CCBC BOOK AWARDS!

Town Is by the Sea
Written by Joanne Schwartz
Illustrated by Sydney Smith
Groundwood Books
Winner of the TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award

Le chemin de la montagne
Written and illustrated by Marianne Dubuc
Comme des géants
Winner of the Prix TD de littérature canadienne pour l’enfance et la jeunesse
and the Prix Harry Black de l’album jeunesse

When the Moon Comes
Written by Paul Harbridge
Illustrated by Matt James
Tundra Books
Winner of the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award

The Canadian Children’s Book Centre

The Assassin’s Curse
(Blackthorn Key, Book 3)
Written by Kevin Sands
Aladdin
Winner of the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People

The Hanging Girl
Written by Eileen Cook
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Winner of the John Spray Mystery Award

#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women
Edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale
Annick Press
Winner of the Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children’s Non-Fiction

The Marrow Thieves
Written by Cherie Dimaline
DCB
Winner of the Amy Mathers Teen Book Award

For more information, visit www.bookcentre.ca
Jules and Jim are born on the same day, Jules arriving two minutes behind Jim, setting a pattern that marks the lives of these close friends. They enlist in the army in 1914, without truly understanding what’s happening. At the front lines, their prior imaginings “of epic battles and glorious charges” are replaced by muddy trenches and the harsh realities of war. After the armistice is signed, the war continues for another few hours, long enough for Jules and Jim to be ordered to attack shortly before the official cease-fire. As always, Jim attacks first, but this time he’s shot and dies at 10:58 a.m. while being held in Jules’ arms. Back home, Jules becomes a watchmaker, whose watches all run two minutes slow.

Goldstyn weaves together a powerful and poignant story of friendship, war, loss and remembrance. The spare text combined with the use of fine black-inked lines and watercolour illustrations portrays a pointed look at war. From the murder of the archduke, to armies shelling and shooting one another, to Jules kneeling by Jim’s grave even as his unit starts for home, Goldstyn never shies away from the horrible reality of death in war, yet he presents it with sensitivity and an awareness of age appropriateness for younger readers. It’s a touching moment when we realize that Jules’ shop faces a cenotaph across the street, its position as much for him to always remember the war as his friendship with Jim.

Ken Kilback is a writer and primary teacher in Vancouver.

The Eleventh Hour
written and illustrated by Jacques Goldstyn
translated by Anne Louise Mahoney
Owlkids Books, 2018
978-1-77147-348-4 (hc) $19.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 4

Picture Book | Friendship | War | World War I | Loss | Remembrance

Jules and Jim are born on the same day, Jules arriving two minutes behind Jim, setting a pattern that marks the lives of these close friends. They enlist in the army in 1914, without truly understanding what’s happening. At the front lines, their prior imaginings “of epic battles and glorious charges” are replaced by muddy trenches and the harsh realities of war. After the armistice is signed, the war continues for another few hours, long enough for Jules and Jim to be ordered to attack shortly before the official cease-fire. As always, Jim attacks first, but this time he’s shot and dies at 10:58 a.m. while being held in Jules’ arms. Back home, Jules becomes a watchmaker, whose watches all run two minutes slow.

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Ken Kilback is a writer and primary teacher in Vancouver.
Go Show the World: A Celebration of Indigenous Heroes
written by Wab Kinew
illustrated by Joe Morse
Tundra Books, 2018
978-0-7352-6292-8 (hc) $21.99
978-0-7352-6293-5 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 1 to 5

Non-fiction Picture Book | Indigenous | Heroes | Empowerment

Go Show the World celebrates Indigenous heroes from across North America. Wab Kinew highlights both historic and contemporary individuals, such as the guide Sacagawea, Chief Crazy Horse, athlete Jim Thorpe, soldier Francis Pegahmagabow, hockey player Carey Price and many more. Even though they all have diverse challenges, backgrounds and stories, they all share a tie to the land and a belief in themselves.

Wab Kinew transfers the lyrics of what was originally a rap song into this beautiful book format, which creates a visual way to showcase these Indigenous heroes. It also encourages and empowers young people to believe in themselves and urges them to “go show the world what a person who matters can do.” Included at the end is an author note and a short biography of all 14 of the Indigenous heroes highlighted.

Within each two-page spread, Joe Morse masterfully highlights the spirit and culture of one of these heroes and their connection to the land.

This book is inspiring for all children in showing us how these heroes have triumphed over adversity, and is highly recommended to have at home and in the library.

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

Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein
written by Linda Bailey
illustrated by Júlia Sardà
Tundra Books, 2018
978-1-77049-559-3 (hc) $22.99
978-1-77049-561-6 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 2 to 4

Non-fiction Picture Book | Biography | Science Fiction | Women Writers | Horror | Gothic

This biographical picture book tells the story of famed author Mary Shelley. It is an excellent introduction to classic literature for young readers, and they will be entranced by Júlia Sardà’s illustrations. With the muted palette of grey, maroon and burnt orange, one feels transported into a world of gothic intrigue where ghosts can roam amongst us. While Dr. Frankenstein and his creature will go down in history for their iconography, the true focus of this tale is an 18-year-old girl who delved into the monstrous souls of men.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was the daughter of pioneering feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft, and the wife of Romantic poet Percy Shelley, but she proved to be a fascinating figure in her own right due to her creation of the first science-fiction novel. Bailey begins her tale by describing how a young Mary invested in her imagination to create “castles in the air.” After a difficult child-

hood dealing with a cruel stepmother and distant father, a teenage Mary elopes with her future husband, Percy, and her step-sister Claire. Accompanied by fellow Gothic writers, like John Polidori and Lord Byron, the young aristocrats travel throughout Europe in search of adventure. But it is upon a dark and stormy night that the most wondrous opportunity strikes. As wind and rain attack their vacation house, Lord Byron suggests a contest to see who can write the best horror story. Here, Mary is inspired to write a tale of a man who brought the dead to life. No one believed a young girl such as Mary could fathom such a spine-chilling tale, yet we as readers know the truth. Mary Shelley was simply a writer — with the power of dreams and imagination.

Kayla O’Brien is studying English and Gender Studies at Queen’s University in Kingston.

My Heart Fills with Happiness/ Ni Såkaskineh Miyawâten Nîteh Ochî
written by Monique Gray Smith
illustrated by Julie Flett
translated by Mary Cardinal Collins
Orca Book Publishers, 2018
978-1-4598-2018-0 (pb) $6.95
978-1-4598-2020-3 (eBook) $4.99
for Preschool to Grade 1

Picture Book | Happiness | Gratitude | Plains Cree

Now available in paperback, Monique Gray Smith’s My Heart Fills With Happiness is a celebration of the simple pleasures in life that bring joy to children and adults alike, such as seeing “the face of someone I love” and smelling “bannock baking in the oven.” The lyrical prose is written in both English and Plains Cree (Y dialect), and as a read-aloud or as a beginning reader, it is a wonderful way to introduce another language into a child’s life. This is one of many titles that Orca has available in dual-language form.

Julie Flett’s warm and muted illustrations reflect the happiness written about on the opposite pages. Whether it is a child dancing in the sun, or many children gathered listening to Kookum’s (Grandmother’s) stories, we are able to see the radiant joy expressed on their faces. Written from an Indigenous perspective, but with universal appeal, this is a beautiful picture book of people doing everyday things with a sense of gratitude.

Colette Poitras

Ocean Meets Sky
written and illustrated by Terry Fan and Eric Fan
Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2018
978-1-4814-7038-4 (eBook) $14.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 3

Picture Book | Ocean Voyages | Fantasy | Intergenerational Relationships

“Finn lived by the sea, and the sea lived by him.” So begins a most wondrous tale about a young boy who thinks about his deceased grandfather on what would have been the elderly man’s 90th birthday. Recalling the magnificent stories Grandpa shared with
Poetree
written by Caroline Pignat
illustrated by François Thisdale
Red Deer Press, 2018
978-0-88995-492-2 (hc) $19.95
for Grades 1 to 4

Poetry | Seasons | Nature | Farm Life

The evocative cover says it all — a majestic green leafy tree stands at the centre with its underground roots shaped like the nib of a pen. Open the cover and the endpapers seamlessly present the seasons — spring and summer at the front, autumn and winter at the back — one following the other in sepia tones. Turn the page and spring begins in full-bleed colour illustrations.

Author Caroline Pignat introduces each season with rhyming couplets. From there she presents acrostic poetry celebrating the seasons' special qualities and events. The poems are clever, dynamic, rich and as fertile as the earth from which germinating seeds make their way upward. Pignat opens wide the natural world for readers to see it in both the poems themselves and the first letters of each line that form words. Summer's first poem, about a sapling beginning to grow, spells out BREEZE, SUNSHINE, RAIN — three verses and three elements that coax the seedling out of the ground.

Pignat's poetry is perfectly matched by François Thisdale's soft, tender illustrations, traditionally drawn and digitally rendered. The passage of time — the passage of many seasons — is caught in the image of a farmer in the background, beginning as a boy and ending as an old man, tending his fields while the sapling grows, too, and ultimately bears an abundance of apples. A squirrel buries seeds. Winter comes. Even as the last leaves drift away and snow covers the earth, life goes on, season after season, cycle after cycle. Poetree is a thoughtful and inventive collection of poems that capture the beauty and rhythm of nature.

Theo Heras was a children's librarian whose latest book is Our New Kittens.

Inking
written by Kenneth Oppel
illustrated by Sydney Smith
HarperCollins Publishers, 2018
978-1-44345-028-7 (hc) $17.99
978-1-44345-030-0 (eBook) $11.99
for Grades 4 to 8

Fiction | Mourning | Expectations | Family Relationships | Deception | Drawing

“No one was awake to see it happen, except Rickman.” And what Rickman, the Rylance family’s cat, witnesses is an ink splotch from Mr. Rylance’s sketchbook, wrestling its way off the page and into the world. As the inky creature consumes books, magazines and comics, his consciousness takes shape and he begins to note his new home is filled with sadness and anxiety. Ethan, his dad and sister all continue to mourn the recent loss of Ethan’s mom. Mr. Rylance, a renowned graphic novelist, has been struggling with writer’s block and his publisher is getting impatient. Meanwhile, Ethan can’t bear

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historical fiction
Ages 7–10

Senta Ross is a former elementary teacher and teacher-librarian in Kitchener, Ontario.
THE STORY OF MY FACE
by Leanne Baugh

Some scars just can’t be ignored.

“A poignant and inspiring character portrait, Abby’s story will resonate with anyone who has survived a traumatic event.”
—Booklist

230 pages
September 2018
ISBN: 978-1-7726006-70-4

www.secondstorypress.ca
to admit to his friends that he can’t draw, and he’s now expected to illustrate a group project. If only his father would help him. But when Ethan befriends Inkling, he thinks his troubles are over. Maybe Inkling can even bring his dad out of his slump. Ultimately, Inkling helps the family in unanticipated ways.

Full of humour and heart, Kenneth Oppel’s latest middle-grade masterpiece features winsome and relatable characters, a propulsive plot and vibrant, boldly expressive illustrations that are filled with energy and motion. Ethan’s despair as he tries to live up to others’ expectations, his frustration with his father, his loneliness and his palpable relief when he finds a friend in Inkling, all render him as a highly sympathetic protagonist. Inkling is equally delightful as he comes into his own and emerges as a thoughtful, kindhearted character. Oppel treats Ethan, his father and their intricate family dynamic with sensitivity and creates realistic and well-rounded secondary characters, including Ethan’s nemesis, Vika. Sydney Smith’s artwork adds a richness to this story with the dark solidity of his lines alongside the loose, free-flowing sketchiness of many of the illustrations. A magnificent pairing, this book is heartwarming and lovely.

Lisa Doucet is Co-Manager of Wozzles in Halifax.

**No Fixed Address**
written by Susin Nielsen
Tundra Books, 2018
978-0-7352-6275-1 (hc) $21.99  
978-0-7352-6276-8 (eBook) $9.99  
for Grades 5 to 8

Fiction | Homelessness | Poverty | Depression | Mother-Son Relationships

When Felix and his mom, Astrid, fall on hard times, she cheerily announces that they’ll live in her ex-boyfriend’s van for a while. Felix tries to make the best of it, even as time passes with no new living arrangements in sight. Felix loves his mother, and while he recognizes that she isn’t the best parent, he also knows that she truly loves him and wants to get back on her feet. He desperately fears that if anyone finds out about their situation, he will be taken away from her. So, he keeps their troubles a secret. As Astrid increasingly falls into her ‘slumps,’ Felix is forced to do things that make him feel embarrassed and ashamed. Then, against all odds, Felix is chosen to compete in a national trivia show. If he wins, the prize money might just be enough to save them!

Nielsen’s absolute mastery of middle-grade fiction is on full display here! Poignant and powerful without ever feeling overwrought, the topic of homelessness is treated in a way that invites thoughtful reflection. Felix is an earnest, likeable and ordinary adolescent boy who is burdened with far more than any child should have to bear. His anxiety and guilt when he witnesses his mother telling lies and stealing things for them to eat, and when he himself is forced to do the same, is believable and heart-rending. His astute observations about his parents make him seem wise beyond his years. Astrid’s bouts of depression and their impact on Felix are also handled with candour and compassion. The relationships in the book are realistically complex and the characters feel genuine. Humour and heart abound in this extraordinary offering.

Lisa Doucet

**Swallow’s Dance**
written by Wendy Orr
Pajama Press, 2018
978-1-77278-062-8 (hc) $19.95  
for Grades 5 to 8

Historical Fiction | Family | Coming of Age | Natural Disasters | Bronze Age | Crete

*Swallow’s Dance* is a coming-of-age story, centred on the female protagonist, Leira. The story begins with her initiation as a priestess; however, Leira’s ceremony is cut short when a violent earthquake suddenly destroys her town and leaves her home and family in pieces. Left to take care of her severely injured mother and elderly nurse maid, Leira is forced to flee to Crete. Unfortunately, instead of Crete providing sanctuary, a war erupts between the gods, resulting in a volcanic eruption and a terrible tsunami that leaves the entire world in darkness. Leira must find the strength and courage to lead her family to safety.

Orr’s attention to character development is extremely well done. Throughout the story, Leira undergoes significant change.
In the beginning, she is preparing for her ceremony to celebrate her transition from adolescence to womanhood, and as the story evolves, Leira is forced to play the role of caretaker. *Swallow’s Dance* is uniquely written as Orr switches from narrative to prose and poetry to vividly describe the emotions that Leira experiences. This beautifully written story left me wanting more. It revolves around the importance of family values and the strength one must have to survive unexpected challenges. *Swallow’s Dance* could be used in conjunction with the grades-five-to-eight Language Arts or Social Studies curriculum and would be great to teach students how to incorporate symbolism and imagery through free verse and poetry. In addition, *Swallow’s Dance* could also be used to teach students about family, culture, history and the importance of the role of women in society. A fantastic novel to use as a read-aloud or novel study!

Michelle Snowden is a teacher and learning coach at St. Catherine Catholic Elementary/Junior High School in Edmonton.

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**Sweep: The Story of a Girl and Her Monster**

written by Jonathan Auxier

Puffin Canada, 2018

978-0-7352-6435-9 (hc) $21.99

978-0-7352-6436-6 (eBook) $10.99

for Grades 5 to 8

Fiction | Fantasy | Magic | Victorian England | Chimney Sweeps | Friendship | Prejudice

In Victorian England, chimney sweeps known as climbing boys were responsible for cleaning flues and protecting homes from fire. The work was difficult and extremely dangerous, but Nan was happy living with the Sweep, a fatherly figure who adopted her when she was abandoned as a baby. When he disappeared, he left her with only his hat and an oddly shaped lump of charcoal. Now under the control of an abusive master, from whom nobody ever escapes, she manages to survive by using her wits and by being possibly the best climber ever.

After being trapped in a chimney fire, she awakens to discover that her lump of coal has become a golem, whom she names Charlie, and that he is responsible for saving her life. How he has come to life is a mystery, but she recognizes that they are both outcasts trying to survive in a brutal time and place and become each other’s family.

In his new historical fantasy, Jonathan Auxier explores themes of love, loss, prejudice and class. Auxier’s London is as bleak and dangerous as the London Dickens describes in his works, and child labourers, especially the climbing boys, are essentially invisible and without protection. What separates Auxier from Dickens, however, is hope. As Nan and Charlie strive to protect each other, they meet other characters along the way who form an unusual family. Readers are encouraged to consider what makes a monster, and to challenge their own perceptions of anyone/anything that’s different. The blend of myth, magic and history will keep kids turning the pages and leave them sorry when it’s over.

Rachel Seigel
McCray’s small-town profile soon turns into a missing-person case, and Sadie, who knows exactly who killed her sister and sets out on a quest to find the killer and bring him to justice.

Kylene Danner’s father has been convicted of a crime she knows he didn’t commit, but even though he warns her to stay out of it, Kylene can’t. She is, after all, her FBI-detective father’s daughter, and her guiding principles of justice, curiosity and the belief that she can fix things others cannot stems directly from their tight bond. Although finding a way to prove her father’s innocence is at the forefront of her mind during her senior year, it isn’t long before Kylene gets entangled in a dangerous web of manipulation, covert detective work and lies that somehow connect to a scandal she lived through as a freshman. With the help of her two best friends and an irritatingly handsome young FBI agent, she tries to unravel the corruption in her town, but it soon becomes clear she might be in over her head — the people she’s up against are playing for keeps, and Ky has made herself a liability.

With fast-paced plotting and a sassy, spot-on adolescent protagonist, this book hooked me from the first page. If Veronica Mars had lived somewhere in the Midwest and been deprived of her dad’s guidance, her adventures might mirror Ky’s. If you’re looking for a contemporary story with grit, heart-pounding twists and very real bad guys, look no further than this novel.

Jen McConnel is a teacher and graduate student with an MA in Children’s Literature.

Sadie
written by Courtney Summers
St. Martin’s Press, 2018
978-1-250-10571-4 (hc) $21.99
978-1-250-10572-1 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 9 and up

Fiction | Mystery | Murder | Drugs | Journalism

When Sadie’s drug-addicted mother abandons her and her sister, 13-year-old Mattie latches on to a postcard sent by their mother from L.A. and is last seen hitching a ride to Chicago. Mattie is murdered, everything falls apart. An incompetent or indifferent police department fails to resolve the case, and Sadie is determined to avenge her sister’s death. The story alternates between the voice of West McCray, a journalist assigned to profile forgotten small towns, and Sadie, who knows exactly who killed her sister and sets out on a quest to find the killer and bring him to justice.

McCray’s small-town profile soon turns into a missing-person hunt when he overhears Sadie’s story at a local gas station. Through the podcasts and McCray’s own commentary, Summers slowly unravels the mystery of where Sadie went and what she was doing. Sadie’s chapters are always one step ahead of McCray, and her thoughts reveal information that he isn’t privy to. Like fitting puzzle pieces together, both voices draw out crucial backstory that creates a fuller picture of what happened to both Mattie and Sadie.

The writing is taut and suspenseful, and McCray’s chapters mirror popular true-crime podcasts while still managing to present a very human picture. Sadie’s voice is anguished, determined and powerful. While readers do ultimately learn the fate of Sadie’s target, the author never reveals Sadie’s final fate, leaving readers wondering about how she ended up. This is a dark, disturbing and wholly captivating novel that will be enjoyed by teen and adult readers alike.

Rachel Seigel

Speak: The Graphic Novel
written by Laurie Halse Anderson
illustrated by Emily Carroll
Farrar, Straus & Giroux Books for Young Readers, 2018
978-0-374-30028-9 (hc) $25.99
978-1-4668-9787-8 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 9 and up

Graphic Novel | Sexual Assault | Depression | Healing

This painfully relevant text takes Laurie Halse Anderson’s 1999 novel Speak and adapts it to a graphic novel, with striking illustrations by Emily Carroll. It follows high-school student Melinda as she enters her freshman year at Merryweather High. After calling the cops on a barn party during the summer break, Melinda has been dropped by her friends and struggles with her new label as an outcast. Everyone blames her for being a snitch, but no one knows the true reason she called the cops was to report a traumatic incident that she cannot force herself to even think about. Melinda feels like a modern Hester Prynne, with the substitution of a scarlet ‘S’ to represent her shameful silence.

Part of Melinda’s journey toward healing involves her embracing her artistic outlets, allowing her projects to visually depict her mental distress when words fail. This suffering that cannot be conveyed through words is depicted in Carroll’s illustrations throughout the novel as well, starkly drawn in black and white to depict the light slowly creeping back into Melinda’s life. In the age of the #MeToo movement, this story beautifully and sensitively introduces the painful realities of sexual assault to young adult readers. While the topic weighs heavily, the graphic-novel medium creates an accessible platform to depict Melinda’s path to recovery.

Kayla O’Brien
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We Recommend
NEW AND NOTED BOOKS FOR TODDLERS TO TEENS

The Big Bed
written by Bunmi Laditan
illustrated by Tom Knight
Farrar, Straus & Giroux Books for Young Readers, 2018
978-0-374-30123-1 (hc) $22.50
978-1-466-89784-7 (eBook) $10.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

With a feisty young narrator and colourful illustrations, this story chronicles one kiddo’s quest to establish once and for all that Mommy belongs to her, not to Daddy. Through hyperbolic logic that will be familiar to anyone raising little ones, the narrator lays out her case to convince her father that he should give up his spot in the big bed on her behalf. The illustrations are charmingly expressive, adding more personality to an already precocious protagonist.

For this adult reader, it was worth a chuckle or two to see the creative persuasion techniques the main character employs in order to sell her dad on the idea that he should sleep on a cot “like an honorary park ranger,” but a co-sleeping child (or parent) might miss the satire. I suppose older children who do not have aspirations of taking over their parents’ beds may enjoy this title, but the topic and narrative hyperbole made it hard to figure out the intended audience: the topic seems suited to preschool readers, while the humour reads a bit older.

Jen McConnel

Earthrise: Apollo 8 and the Photo That Changed the World
written by James Gladstone
illustrated by Christy Lundy
Owlkids Books, 2018
978-1-77147-316-3 (hc) $19.95
for Grades 2 to 4

The year 1968 was one of conflict and unrest, but also of hope. It was in this year that astronauts Bill Anders, Frank Borman and Jim Lovell made history aboard the Apollo 8 spacecraft — the first mission to the moon. James Gladstone uses simple text to describe the anticipation, the launch and the wonder of what humanity had accomplished. The astronauts orbited the moon three times, taking pictures of the surface before their return trip home. This remarkable moment in human history was captured by Bill Anders in one full-colour photograph of the earth rising above the grey surface of the moon. An afterword provides further information and reflection.

The style and colour scheme of Christy Lundy’s illustrations give the entire picture book a retro 1960s feel. She successfully conveys the fascination with which the event was observed. Lundy helps connect young readers to the story by beginning and ending with the image of a young girl who is obviously following events closely as they unfold.

Gladstone offers us a snapshot of a moment in time (quite literally). The photograph known as “Earthrise” helped to create a shift in perspective. It gave a socially and politically fractured humanity a glimpse of our common heritage — the beautiful and life-sustaining planet Earth. This book could be used in a classroom setting to introduce a unit on environmental stewardship or social responsibility. It is a book that should inspire discussion about what it means to be the inhabitants of this tiny planet.

Ildiko Sumegi

Flow, Spin, Grow: Looking for Patterns in Nature
written by Patchen Barss
illustrated by Todd Stewart
Owlkids Books, 2018
978-1-77147-287-6 (hc) $19.95
for Grades 1 to 5

Flow, Spin, Grow is Barss’s exhortation to young readers to explore the natural world by finding patterns and asking how those patterns have shaped their surroundings and themselves. Readers learn that branching in trees, roots, lungs and water is caused by the flow of materials. Spinning, whether it be our galaxy, subatomic particles or two children clasping hands, is caused by two moving bodies acting on each other. Spiralling, the final pattern explored in the book, signals that something is growing, like a snail shell, or shrinking, like a waning storm system. The story ends with more intriguing questions about pattern relationships, but Barss is not as interested in supplying answers as igniting children’s curiosity to find their own.

The structure of the book is clever, though not seamless, with a poem like a jump-rope song introducing all of the elements of story within the first page. Each subsequent page explains and expands on one element from the poem, e.g., look, climb, dig, flow. Stewart’s detailed, earth-tone illustrations follow the text’s structure by introducing an overall picture of children playing in nature,
Goodnight, Anne
written by Kallie George
illustrated by Geneviève Godbout
Tundra Books, 2018
978-1-77049-926-3 (hc) $21.99
978-1-77049-927-0 (eBook) $10.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 2
Picture Book | Bedtime Stories | Anne of Green Gables | Gratitude

It’s time for Anne Shirley (of Green Gables) to go to bed, but not before she issues a goodnight wish to everyone and everything she holds dear. She begins by acknowledging individuals who are important to her: “Goodnight Matthew, shy and sweet. Thank you so much for the dress with real puffed sleeves. Goodnight, Diana, my bosom friend. We were kindred spirits the moment we met.” Anne next highlights the places she loves: “Goodnight, Lake of Shining Waters. Oh, it always seems to be smiling at me! Goodnight, Avonlea. Goodnight, Island. Goodnight to this whole dear old world.” She concludes with “Goodnight, Anne, with an e.”

Relying markedly on L.M. Montgomery’s Anne of Green Gables, author Kallie George revisits the Avonlea characters and landmarks of this well-loved novel. With her fanciful remarks, Anne expresses appreciation for her loving home and devoted friends before she goes to sleep. This is a story about gratitude and kindred spirits. Geneviève Godbout’s detailed illustrations, rendered in pastels and coloured pencils, return us to a perhaps gentler era of pinafores and puffed sleeves. The butterflies found on each page wing young readers toward a glimpse of Canadian rural life in the early 1900s.

Senta Ross

I’m Sad
(The I’m Books)
written by Michael Ian Black
illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi
Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2018
978-1-4814-7627-0 (hc) $21.99
978-1-4814-7628-7 (eBook) $14.99
for Preschool to Grade 3
Picture Book | Emotions | Humour | Friendship

From the dynamic author-illustrator team who created I’m Bored comes this sequel about Flamingo, who feels sad, and the girl and Potato, who try to cheer him up. “Everybody feels sad sometimes,” says Potato, “even astronauts.” Although ice cream cheers up the
girl and dirt brightens Potato’s mood, Flamingo remains sad. When Flamingo asks his friends if they will still like him if he’s sad again tomorrow, Potato jokes, “I don’t even like you now.” The three explode into laughter, showing how we can laugh but still feel sad. Flamingo then feels “a little bit sad” but also “a little bit better.”

How do you make a conversation about sadness touching yet fun? Black and Ohi combine a unique cast of characters who are honest, caring and offbeat. Black’s dialogue strikes a balance between authenticity, when the characters express their difficult emotions, and playfulness, when they explore what cheers them up. Ohi’s illustrations pack an emotional punch that ranges from true melancholy to the joy of eating ice cream or revelling in dirt. Her digital art is bright and expressive, and her woodcut-etching technique adds a sense of movement and nuance.

This engaging picture book is all about feelings, and young readers will have ‘all the feels’ for it.

Karen Krossing

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**Ira Crumb Feels the Feelings**

*Ira Crumb, Book 2*

written by Naseem Hrab

illustrated by Josh Holinaty

Owlkids Books, 2018

978-1-77147-298-2 (hc) $19.95

for Kindergarten to Grade 2

*Ira Crumb Feels the Feelings*

Ira Crumb and Malcolm Cake are the best of friends — and not just because both their last names sound delicious. Ira and Malcolm spend their days telling jokes, sharing their extra pickles and playing games. But one day, the two best friends cannot decide upon which game to play. Ira suggests hide-and-seek, but Malcolm wants to play tag. When the rest of their friends become intrigued by Malcolm’s game of tag, they carry him off and abandon poor Ira. Suddenly, Ira is all by himself. What is he to do when his tummy starts to hurt, his chin begins to wobble and his eyes start to leak. Is Ira feeling sadness? Not even a dance-a-thon can bring a smile to his face. Ira gets frustrated when people keep trying to cheer him up, until Malcolm returns and offers to be sad with Ira. No longer alone with his feelings, Ira learns that everyone feels sad sometimes, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have happy times ahead of us. While the boys embrace their sadness, they find joy in fart puns and pickle sandwiches. And no one can resist a smile when Roy von Poot is cutting the cheese!

Naseem Hrab follows up her first picture book, *Ira Crumb Makes a Pretty Good Friend*, with an equally charming sequel. Our protagonist, Ira Crumb, returns to the scene with a new tale of friendship, sadness and lessons on how to embrace our feelings. Josh Holinaty again provides the darling illustrations that feel freshly sprung from the imagination of a child, making Ira relatable to both young and old readers. This tale inspires children to practise empathy and compassion, and reminds us that we need not fight our feelings.

Kayla O’Brien

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**Santa Never Brings Me a Banjo**

written by David Myles

illustrated by Murray Bain

Nimbus Publishing, 2018

978-1-77108-627-1 (hc) $22.95

for Preschool to Grade 2

*Santa Never Brings Me a Banjo*

Every year, young David writes a letter to Santa, asking him to bring him a banjo, which he will practise every day and play so LOUD! But every Christmas morning, David is left disappointed, receiving gifts that look like banjos, but, when unwrapped, end up being anything but.

Santa *Never Brings Me a Banjo* is based on a holiday song by Halifax-based musician David Myles, and it’s as delightful to read as it is to hear him sing. The book features illustrations from the animation studio that created the song’s well-loved music video, the original sheet music and a special holiday message from David.

Fortunate enough to attend Nimbus Publishing’s 40th Anniversary Kitchen Party at the International Festival of Authors this fall in Toronto, I got to hear David sing the song and fell in love with its catchy tune and upbeat tempo. If you get the chance, watch the YouTube video, but be warned, the tune will stick in your head all day. And be sure to add this light-hearted, fun read to your holiday collection.

Sandra O’Brien is the editor of *Canadian Children’s Book News* and a new David Myles fan.

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**The Night the Forest Came to Town**

written by Charles Ghigna

illustrated by Annie Wilkinson

Orca Book Publishers, 2018

978-1-4598-1650-3 (hc) $19.95

for Preschool to Grade 3

*The Night the Forest Came to Town*

What would happen to the cities around us if the forest decided to move in one night? Told in lilting, rhythmic stanzas, this charming story presents a night of magic when seeds and forest creatures follow the green wind into the city, taking root and changing the space into something a little wilder. The next morning, when the children see what has been happening, their laughter helps the greenery to continue to spread, for “everywhere the children played the city grew… and grew.”

I enjoyed this charming picture book, the whimsical illustrations by Annie Wilkinson of Vancouver, British Columbia, are perfectly suited to the text. Moving from a blue monochrome palette to one infused with green and, eventually, a rainbow of colours and light, the pictures follow the flowing pace of the forest as it begins to take over the city. I particularly want to sink roots into the colourful, friendly city presented on the final two-page spread of the storybook. Wilkinson’s art and Ghigna’s rhyming words offer a vision of city life filled with flowers and laughter.

Jen McConnel
**Sun Dog**

written by Deborah Kerbel
illustrated by Suzanne Del Rizzo
Pajama Press, 2018
978-1-77278-038-3 (hc) $19.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

*Picture Book | Arctic Circle | Tundra | Courage | Sled Dogs | Midnight Sun*

Living in the Arctic Circle provides many adventures for the aspiring sled puppy, Juno, especially now that it’s summer and the sun never sets. Although there is nothing she loves more than playing with her young owner, Juno yearns to be older and stronger just like the dogs next door that already pull sleds. “Juno might be little, but there’s a big dog inside her.” One night, finding it challenging to sleep because of the midnight sun, Juno sneaks away from the sleeping boy to set out on a solo exploration of the surrounding tundra. A snowy owl on the hunt, hungry for its next meal, frightens the pup so much that she runs home, only to come face to face with a prowling polar bear that poses a distinct danger to her boy and his family. Arousing the big dog within, Juno makes a bold move to save her devoted companion’s life, thereby earning the respect of the neighbouring sled dogs.

Author Deborah Kerbel leads readers on an engaging journey to the Arctic, where she effectively intersperses facts about the flora, fauna and the sun cycle with a sensitive story about a puppy who courageously establishes her rightful place in her community.

Suzanne Del Rizzo’s vibrant polymer clay and acrylic illustrations, depicting arresting panoramas from a variety of perspectives, add enriching and tactile dimensions to the text. One won’t soon forget the beautiful flowers scattered across the tundra, the variety of wildlife found on land and sea, and the formation of a ‘sun dog’, a natural optical illusion, which appears in the wildly colourful sky, coinciding with the very moment Juno displays her mettle.

Senta Ross

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**A Whale’s World**

*My Great Bear Rainforest*

written by Nicholas Read
photographs by Ian McAllister
Orca Book Publishers, 2018
978-1-4598-1273-5 (hc) $19.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 3

*Non-fiction Picture Book | Great Bear Rainforest | British Columbia | Temperate Rainforest Ecology*

Nicholas Read’s *A Whale’s World* is the fourth title in the My Great Bear Rainforest series and an appealing nature book for young children. Through a story format, readers learn about the creatures a pod of hungry orcas might encounter while hunting for seals and sea lions in the Great Bear Sea.

Children selecting this book may imagine it will focus on orcas; although whales are not the main topic, the story is told through the eyes of an orca. During the hunt, the orcas observe and introduce readers to bears, wolves, blue sharks, salmon, eagles, puffins, octopus, sea stars, dolphins and more. Several themes, including life cycles, survival strategies, the food chain and environmental adaptations are discussed throughout. The narrative is carefully constructed to ensure the youngest readers understand the size of creatures through comparisons with cars, buses and other vehicles. Curiously, there is no reference to where the Great Bear Sea is located, but inquisitive youth will investigate tangents to further their learning.

Ian McAllister’s striking photographs of creatures in their natural habitats will capture the delight of readers. Large-spread photographs and smaller vignettes are mostly consistent with the text. Some youngsters may feel misled by a photograph and text explaining that the hungry orcas “also hunt Steller sea lions” only to turn the page and find “there are no sea lions around.”

Overall, this would be a good addition to school and public library collections.

Krista Jorgensen

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**Threads**

*(National Film Board of Canada Collection)*

written and illustrated by Torill Kove
Firefly Books, 2018
978-0-228-10081-2 (hc) $19.95
for Preschool to Grade 3

*Picture Book | Relationships | Love | Mother-child Relationships | Growing Up*

A young woman stands amongst a group of other people, looking up at the interminable number of threads dangling from the sky, searching for one that will help her “to find purpose... to discover love.” When she chooses a special-looking one, the thread pulls her up over the city and countryside to a secluded spot where a very young girl awaits her — her child. The thread binds the woman and child together and grows longer as the child grows older. One day, though, the child, now a young woman herself, must find her own purpose and reach for her own thread.

Adapting it from her own National Film Board short, award-winning animator Kove shares a moving story about the wonder and complexity of relationships. The text is spare and the illustrations are beautiful and moving. Even as the red thread connects mother and child, a black line also encircles the two, stretching and changing shape as much by their shared experiences as by the extent of the child’s perception of and growth in the world. It’s a poignant moment when the grown child breaks through that black line in order to embrace her future. In addition, the red thread must now be broken in half, the pieces rolled up and placed in their hearts, reminding them of their continuing love for one another and reminding us of the importance of the relationships that connect us.

Ken Kilback

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**Temperate Rainforest Ecology**

written and illustrated by Ken Kilback
Firefly Books, 2018
978-1-77278-036-9 (hc) $19.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 3

*Non-fiction Picture Book | Temperate Rainforest Ecology*

Krista Jorgensen
How can a child make the world a better place? A series of simple, yet meaningful, questions, posed by the editors of Pajama Press, ask children how they can demonstrate empathy and kindness toward others. Questions such as “Will you help someone younger... or older?”, “Will you be a friend to someone new?” or “Are you gentle with animals big... and small?” serve to open up meaningful discussions about how children can make a positive difference as they interact with others, whether they be human or animal. The accompanying artwork, encompassing a wide variety of styles, mediums and emotions, is by Tara Anderson, Rebecca Bender, Brian Deines, Suzanne Del Rizzo, Wallace Edwards, Kim La Fave, Manon Gauthier, Dean Griffiths and François Thisdale, many of whom have donated their images.

Royalties from this publication's proceeds will be given to Think Kindness, an organization that encourages acts of caring in schools and communities throughout the world.

Senta Ross

Elephant Secret
written by Eric Walters
Puffin Canada, 2018
978-0-7352-6281-2 (hc) $21.99
978-0-7352-6282-9 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 4 to 8
Fiction | Elephants | Elephant Behaviour |
Family | Cloning | Mammoths | Relationships |
Love | Wildlife Conservation

Fourteen-year-old Samantha lives with her father on a North American elephant sanctuary. She is one with the herd, able to read the emotions and needs of her beloved elephant family. Financial difficulties have forced Samantha's father to take on a mysterious backer who injects funds into the sanctuary on the condition that they participate in an elephant-breeding program. When a baby elephant is born one day with way more hair than an elephant should have, life on the sanctuary is thrown out of its quiet routine and readers might wonder if they have stumbled through the door of science fiction.

Eric Walters has written a work of fiction, but there is a wealth of fact woven into the storyline. Samantha's intimate knowledge of elephant behaviour soon becomes our own as we, too, become part of the herd. Genome sequencing, cloning and the paleontology of the woolly mammoth are all subjects presented to us through Samantha's story. For animal lovers and young naturalists, there is much to be gleaned from this well-researched novel.

Children navigating sensitive family situations may also connect with the arc of the story. Samantha's sometimes difficult relationships with her deceased mother, her father and her father's girlfriend are all played out through her connections with various members of the herd as well as through the elephants’ relationships with each other. A family is there to support and nurture, and even when the members of that family are not biologically related, deep and meaningful attachments can still take place.

We would like to congratulate Eric, on this, his 100th book!

Ildiko Sumegi

The Ruined City (The Golden Mask, Book 1)
written by John Wilson
Orca Book Publishers, 2018
978-1-4598-1970-2 (pb) $10.95
978-1-4598-1971-9 (eBook) $8.99
for Grades 4 to 8
Fiction | Fantasy | Ancient China | Friendship |
History | Mythology | H.P. Lovecraft

Howard Peter Lawson is having a tough time. His father is a resident of the local mental asylum, and his mother babies him too much. Filled with angst and fear, the grade 10 student is plagued by terrible nightmares about a world he doesn't recognize or understand. With his new friend, Cate, providing incentive, Howard confronts the ‘impossible’ while travelling between different times and dimensions. The terrifying link between the magical realm of R’lyeh and Howard’s hometown is bridged as Howard and Cate attempt to restore the Golden Mask to its rightful place in the ancient kingdom of Sanxingdui, China.

Wilson’s skill as an author is evident through the fantastically rich descriptions he uses to illustrate the multiple settings in The Ruined City. These range from the abandoned Escherian-like city of R’lyeh, to the historic Sanxingdui, to the modern fictitious port city of Aylford. The author’s admiration for the horror-fiction writer, H.P. Lovecraft, is demonstrated through many subtle acknowledgements of Lovecraft’s life and written works. Although Howard’s vocabulary does not seem authentic for a typical adolescent male, his desire to fit in with his peers and to develop friendships is a familiar sentiment for many young adults.

The Ruined City will appeal to fantasy lovers with a passion for lengthy, involved stories. The outcome of the battle between good and evil is uncertain, thus leading to an edge-of-your-seat ending for the reluctant hero. This reader cannot wait for the sequel.

Robin Ahamedi is a library-technician living in Ajax, Ontario.
Running Through Sprinklers
written by Michelle Kim
Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2018
978-1-4814-9530-1 (eBook) $11.99
for Grades 5 to 8
Fiction | Friendship | Love | Loss | Longing | Family | Self-discovery | Adolescence

In Michelle Kim’s debut novel, Running Through Sprinklers, we meet seemingly inseparable pre-teen besties Sara and Nadine. Flitting between each other’s homes for countless sleepovers and meals, as well as hide-and-seek and tag with siblings and friends in the nearby Green Timbers Forest, the girls are enjoying a typical carefree summer in their Surrey, British Columbia, neighbourhood.

That is, until a few days before school, when overachieving Nadine shares a secret with Sara, bringing their friendship to a crushing halt. Needing to be challenged, Nadine confesses she’s skipping grade seven and going straight to high school. Devastated, Sara spends the next year grappling with the loss of her best friend, desperate to be smarter and more mature. Sara plots to get back at Nadine by befriending Jen (one of Nadine’s younger sisters) and trying to convince her principal she also needs to skip grade seven.

Sara’s voice is direct and heartfelt as she tells her story in the first person. Kim, a former journalist for the BBC in London, masterfully showcases her fine-tuned narrative skills, drawing readers into Sara and Nadine’s lives with myriad descriptive details about their families’ foods and traditions, and the sights, sounds and smells of their surroundings.

Running Through Sprinklers, with its short chapters, flawed, yet achingly real, characters and punchy dialogue, adeptly explores the angst and bittersweet joys of adolescence. But where Kim shines most is in capturing the range of emotions (from anger to heartbreak to acceptance) experienced by this insightful 12-year-old girl, offering a timeless, memorable snapshot of friends growing up and apart.

Jennifer D. Foster is a freelance editor, writer and mentor; chair of Editors Toronto, administrative director of the Rowers Reading Series and an advisor for the Toronto branch of the Canadian Authors’ Association.

Confessions of a Teenage Leper
written by Ashley Little
Penguin Teen Canada, 2018
978-0-7352-6261-4 (hc) $21.99
978-0-7352-6262-1 (eBook) $10.99
for Grades 8 and up
Fiction | Friendship | Self-discovery | Illness | Family | LGBTQ+

Abby Furlowe has the perfect life: she’s a blonde, beautiful cheerleader in her senior year, on track to become the Prom Queen and win a scholarship to attend university in Los Angeles. Correction—Abby Furlowe had the perfect life. Before she started noticing red spots on her body… before her hands and feet grew increasingly numb. After months of speculation and uncertainty, Abby finds herself diagnosed with Hansen’s disease, the modern term for leprosy. Abby struggles to come to terms with the altering of her physical appearance, the abandonment by those she thought were her best friends and the end of her cheerleading career. With her physical beauty diminished, she must reflect upon whether she has any inner beauty left to shine through.

Throughout the novel, readers come to recognize that while Abby might not have been the nicest person when she was at high school, she is undeniably human. Ashley Little gives us a protagonist who is far from perfect, but sheds light on one’s ability to learn acceptance no matter what their past. During her stay at a Hansen’s disease treatment centre, Abby forms unique friendships with her fellow patients, people whom she would have mocked in a former life. Her unwanted stay at the centre also provides Abby with lifelong friends, a burgeoning romance and an honest relationship with her family.

Kayla O’Brien

Finding Grace
written by Daphne Greer
Nimbus Publishing, 2018
978-1-77108-691-2 (pb) $14.95
for Grades 8 to 10
Fiction | Family | Relationships | Secrets | Abuse | Coming of Age | Special Needs

Abandoned on the steps of a Belgian convent, Grace becomes the sole caregiver of her sister Dotty who has Down’s syndrome. After Dotty dies, and Grace is feeling especially isolated in her grief, with only her photo album to comfort her, she meets a new friend named Fran. Through this friendship, Grace begins to deal with her grief and to ask questions about her family.

As Fran and Grace complete their project on the history of the convent, Grace searches her personal history to find out who left her there so many years ago. The girls also learn about the troubled past of the convent and the horrible events that took place in the surrounding village during the Nazi occupation.

When Grace finds a diary hidden in the book stacks at the library, she discovers a tragic story that connects to her past and leaves her with many unanswered questions.

Finding Grace is based on the author’s experiences and provides the reader with insight into the conditions at the convent from the 1940s to the 1970s. Using her personal experiences, Greer is able to weave a tangled narrative about the cycle of abuse that took place in the convent during and after the Nazi occupation. She masterfully explores the relationship between Grace and Dotty, which is both heart wrenching and beautiful. This book reminds us about the resilience of the human spirit and that good can come from tragedy. You’ll find yourself thinking about Grace and her story long after you finish.

Christine O’Sullivan is a secondary teacher-librarian in Brantford, Ontario.
The Girl You Thought I Was
written by Rebecca Phillips
HarperTeen, 2018
978-0-06-269689-2 (eBook) $9.99
978-0-06-269687-8 (hc) $21.99
Fiction | Shoplifting | Addiction | Family Issues | Guilt

As the summer before senior year begins, Morgan Kemper is juggling many things. When she is caught shoplifting, she is assigned to do community service and must face her father's disappointment and her own guilt and shame. She finds herself working at a local thrift shop run by a quirky but kindhearted woman who believes in giving people second chances. There she meets Eli, and what starts out as a lighthearted summer romance blossoms into something more. Morgan knows that she can't keep hiding the truth from Eli and her friends. Yet how can she expect them to feel the same way about her when she is struggling to forgive herself?

Phillips delivers yet another outstanding contemporary teen family drama here. Morgan is keenly aware of how wrong her shoplifting habit is. She is struggling to come to terms with her mother's recent betrayal of their family, and she recognizes how the shoplifting is a reaction to that situation. In Morgan, Phillips has created a complex and sympathetic character through whom readers can see how shoplifting can function in the same way as any other addiction. The author creates equally nuanced and believable secondary characters, and the relationships between Morgan and the significant people in her life are finely drawn. Morgan's exceptional self-awareness and her ability to see how her own desire to be forgiven for her misdeeds is not so different from her mother's plea for forgiveness may feel somewhat convenient, but they enable the story to pack a powerful punch. Her friends' and family's reactions are realistic, and ultimately Morgan's story is hopeful and redemptive.

Lisa Doucet

The Light Between Worlds
written by Laura E. Weymouth
HarperTeen, 2018
978-0-06-269687-8 (hc) $21.99
978-0-06-269689-2 (eBook) $9.99
Historical Fiction | Fantasy | Fairy Tale | War | Family | Sisters

As three siblings stumble into an air raid shelter in war-ravaged London, young Evelyn wishes that they were “anywhere but here.” Thus Evelyn, her brother and her sister are transported to the Woodlands, a magical realm that is breathtakingly beautiful and populated with mythical beings. However, the Woodlanders are also on the brink of war, and the three children are swept up in the political machinations of this other world. Five years later, when the time comes for them to return to their home in London, Evelyn does not want to leave. She believes that hers is truly a Woodlands' heart and that this is where she truly belongs. As her siblings resume their former lives, Evelyn struggles to readjust. Philippa tries to protect and guide her beloved sister. But can Evelyn find herself in a world that isn’t where she yearns to be?

With exquisite prose, Weymouth weaves a tale that is equal parts fairy tale and historical fiction mixed with family drama. The first half of the story is told from Evelyn’s perspective and then it switches to Philippa’s, giving readers the opportunity to see first-hand the depths of Evelyn’s misery. The author creates fully realized characters in both girls, and the story’s greatest strength lies in its portrayal of their complex bond of sisterly love, and in the depiction of each girl’s anguish. While the Woodlands is a central element of the plot, the story is less of a fantasy and more a finely crafted character study, a poetic meditation on the complexities of love and loss, of searching for and finding one’s way, of home and heart. Slow-paced but elegant and lyrical, this book will find its way into the hearts of readers who are drawn to more character-driven works.

Lisa Doucet

Lost Boy
written by Shelley Hrdlitschka
Orca Book Publishers, 2018
978-1-4598-1639-8 (eBook) $9.99
978-1-4598-1637-4 (pb) $14.95
Fiction | Coming of Age | Making Choices | Drugs | Sexuality

Brought up in the polygamist community known as 'Unity,' Jon already has questions about the beliefs and lifestyle he is raised in. When he is caught kissing Celeste, the girl he's been secretly seeing, he is forced to make the only decision afforded to him — run. His move is made possible by Abigail, a grown woman who had to leave her children behind in Unity to escape her oppressed existence. Abigail takes in boys fleeing the polygamist life and who, like Jon, want something different for their futures. She has simple, set rules to follow — stay in school and pull your weight. As Jon navigates his way through this new life, he learns that Abigail's rules are a lot harder than he thought.

Lost Boy is a compelling coming-of-age novel that offers some insight into the polygamous lifestyle. Hrdlitschka provides relatable, intriguing conflict. In a string of events that leads the protagonist in a downward spiral, readers can't help but be mindful of how the choices we make affect more than just ourselves; they also impact those we care most about.

Though Unity represents an atypical experience, the lessons the protagonist learns are universal. Jon must take ownership for his choices rather than play victim to the past. Lost Boy also provides very real examples of loving kindness from strangers who help Jon along his path; we see exemplary behaviour pitted against self-destructive attitudes for a coming-of-age story that will appeal to both males and females.

Melissa Connolly is a literacy consultant in Brantford, Ontario.
Shelby Black is a young high school student with an unconventional occupation — an exorcist-in-training. While battling all the hardships that come with high school, Shelby must also battle your everyday human-possessing demons — piece of cake! Shelby is forced to navigate the struggle of having a crush on her friend Spencer, demon-hunter-training with her Great Uncle Roy and handling the sudden disappearance of her mother, all while trying to maintain a semi-decent GPA. But through all of these challenges, Shelby is able to prove her strength, not only as an exorcist but also as an incredible friend and an even more incredible daughter.

Jennifer Honeybourn manages to perfectly capture the emotions and thought processes of a 16-year-old girl in her characterization of Shelby. It is difficult not to relate to Shelby, even though she's as frustrating as she is charming. Whether it's her constant over thinking, her struggle with responsibility or her intense love for her friends and family, there is an aspect of her that can be understood by everyone, making her a likeable but realistic character.

Despite the over-arching plot of demon-fighting action, Honeybourn presents a story that explores common and difficult emotions. It expresses the true struggle of guilt, as well as different forms of love, and further shows how far these emotions can make you go. Shelby is a great character and a strong female lead. Any young girl who struggles with insecurity will be able to empathize with Shelby and take comfort in her triumphs. The combination of fantasy and real-life problems and emotions makes this a fun read for young adults.

Jada Parada-Hemmings is studying English literature at McGill University in Montreal.
22
RED LEAF LITERATURE

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Werner Zimmermann

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Helaine Becker, Dow Phumiruk

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Caroline Pignat, François Thisdale

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Courtney Summers

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Laurie Halse Anderson, Emily Carroll

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Wendy Orr

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Jonathan Auxier

32
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Kallie George, Geneviève Godbout

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(Ira Crumb, Book 2)
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Shelley Hrditschka

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