

# The Review Crew



## Early Elementary Fiction

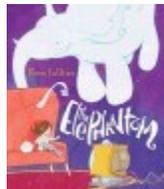
### The Elephantom

Written and illus. by: Ross Collins

Templar Books, 2015

ISBN: 9780763675912

*Curriculum: Ghosts; Fantasy*



Ross Collins' skilled brush and eccentric sense of humor combine in an off-beat tale of a spectral and uninvited house pet who hogs the peanut butter, throws wild parties, and rides his motor scooter up and down the stairs. One girl alone can see his hijinks and she gets all the blame for the aftermath. Lucky for her, Grandma keeps ghost pets herself and steers the girl to a clever solution. *Elephantom* was immensely popular in Great Britain, even before it inspired a popular and critically-acclaimed production by the National Theatre. Join the fun!

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley

Cheltenham Elem.

### Pet to School Day

By: Hillary Robinson

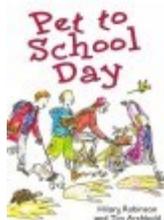
Illus. by: Tim Archbold

ReadZone Books Limited, 2014

ISBN: 9781783224715

*Curriculum: Emergent readers*

From the United Kingdom comes ReadZone, a leveled series for emergent readers. If *Pet*



*to School Day* is their typical offering, rejoice. In a little over 140 words, Hillary Robinson relates a charming story of an arachnophobic school teacher who claims to be a dinosaur hunter. His incredulous students challenge his story and spring a tarantula on him. What next? That would be telling. The illustrations by Tim Archbold, clearly reminiscent of Roald Dahl's, double the fun. Grab a kindie and giggle!

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley

Cheltenham Elem.

### What James Said

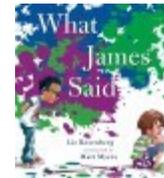
By: Liz Rosenberg

Illus. by: Matt Myers

Roaring Brook Press, 2015

ISBN: 1596439085

*Curriculum: Friendship; Misunderstandings; Communication*



James and the girl in the story were best friends. He told all of his friends that she thinks she is perfect. She took what he said the wrong way. So she and James are having a fight, although he doesn't know it. She tries to avoid him all day, and James keeps asking her why. Instead of the two of them talking about it, things just get worse. When her class went to the art show, her picture took first place. James had said that her picture was perfect! It was all a misunderstanding. The two friends learn that it is important to talk and work out any problems. The story is told in first person so we never learn the girl's name. The illustrations are cleverly done and show her confusion. This would be a good read aloud and be a discussion starter on communica-

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Volume 12 Number 5

January 2016

### Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.

### What we do!

- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least twelve recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

tions with friends.

Reviewed by Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

### Red, Blue, Peekaboo!

Written and illus. by: Georgia Birkett Campbell, 2014



ISBN: 9781447260998

*Curriculum: Hide-and-Seek; Colors*

Children will delight in this board book which introduces colors through a fun hide-and-seek story. Felt swatches that lift reveal hiding children playing the hiding game. Illustrations in primary colors cover every page, making for fun reading.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer South H.S.

### The Cow Tripped Over the Moon

By: Jeanne Willis  
Illus. by: Joel Stewart  
Candlewick Press, 2015  
ISBN: 9780763674021



*Curriculum: Nursery rhymes; Emergency services*

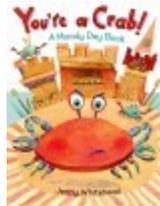
The Storyland Ambulance Crew has plenty of work rushing from one nursery rhyme mishap to the next. Oversized bandages are prescribed for the cow that jumped over the moon, Humpty Dumpty is patched up with jam sandwiches, and a flattened Little Boy Blue gets help straightening out his horn. Finally, there is an attempted rescue of a balloon-borne weasel who goes POP and falls into the arms of the waiting crowd. Many other familiar characters wander through the pages with their humorous watercolor illustrations. Let students identify the rhymes in this

cheerful and amusing book told in verse.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert Alumni

### You're a Crab! A Moody Day Book

By: Jenny Whitehead  
Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2015  
ISBN: 9780805093612



*Curriculum: Feelings; Emotions; Behavior*

Are you a jellyfish? An eel? A turtle? Or are you a crab? This wonderfully illustrated children's book touches on how we all have different feelings at one time or another. Some days we are a silly jellyfish that dances. Some days we are a mad eel that zaps. Some days we are a frustrated turtle that snaps. And some days we are crabby crabs. An addition that school psychologists and social workers would value having available in their school library, *You're a Crab!* is a book that helps students learn the vocabulary to describe and deal with their emotions, knowing that good friends will be waiting until they feel better.

Reviewed by: Emily Hungerford Barnum Elem.

### One Word from Sophia

By: Jim Averbeck and Yameen Ismail  
Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2015  
ISBN: 9781481405140



*Curriculum: Diversity; Persuasive writing*

In this adorable fiction story by Averbeck and Ismail we read the common tale of a young girl wanting a ridiculous birthday gift with a twist. Sophia has a diverse family of

a lawyer, businessman, and politician and must convince them of the worthiness of her ask. Each time she tries to give a family member reasoning behind her birthday gift, and each time they require her to speak less, convince more. By the end of this story we have a solution. This book was a lovely showing of a diverse family that felt representative of many of our families. Additionally, the vocabulary used was a wonderful way to expose students to ways to communicate with new words, plus, there is a glossary on the back inside cover to assist as necessary.

Reviewed by: Emily Hungerford Barnum Elem.

### Mouse and the Moon made of Cheese

By: Dean Russell  
Illus. by: Chloe Elliott  
Far Far Away Books, 2013



ISBN: 9781908786708

*Curriculum: Dreams; Cooperation; Moon*

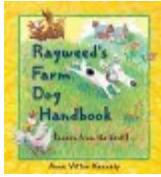
Written in simple rhyme, Russell tells the story of Mouse and his journey to reach the moon and prove it is made of cheese. Full of warm colors and simple drawings, Elliott's illustrations enhance this light-hearted tale of wonder, determination, and support. Although filled with dispiriting words such as "NO!" and "I give up!", what could have turned out to be a dismal tale of crushing one's spirit is instead full of hope and encouragement with phrases: "I don't know if it can, but I believe in you" and "I know someone else who could give it a try." Perfect for discussing working beyond obstacles, believing in one's dreams, and working with others.

Reviewed by: Dawn Lewallen Skinner M.S.

**Ragweed's Farm Dog Handbook:  
Learned from the Best!!**

Written and Illustrated by: Anne Vitur Kennedy

Candlewick Press,  
2015



ISBN: 9780763674175

*Curriculum: Farms; Farm Animals*

This hilarious yarn about the inner workings of a farm dog's job is told with the use of repetitive phrasing. "That's his job. That's not your job" and "You will really, really want to ..." this farm dog provides insight into what various animals on the farm do (i.e., the rooster wakes the farmer, the chickens lay eggs, the cows provide milk) as well as the responsibilities of the farm dog, which, according to him, is basically do things to get yummy biscuits. One can't help but chuckle at the dog's antics which are beautifully illustrated through colorful acrylic paintings.

Reviewed by: Dawn Lewallen  
Skinner M.S.

**Peep and Ducky  
Rainy Day**

By: David Martin

Illus. by: David Walker  
Candlewick, 2015



ISBN: 9780763668846

*Curriculum: Friends; Play*

Peep and Ducky are going to spend the day with each other... lucky, lucky, lucky! They play and bicker together as good friends do. They have tents and pillow fights on the inside, splashing and floating in the pool on the outside. This adorable picture book is written in rhyme. The illustrations are a perfect match for the light-hearted story of two friends.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Early College

**Please Mr. Panda**

Written and illus. by:  
Steve Antony

Scholastic, 2014



ISBN:  
9780545788922

*Curriculum: Manners*

Mr. Panda has a beautiful box of delicious looking donuts. He offers them to many animals but changes his mind before giving them away. At long last an animal asks him for a donut and adds the magic word - please! Mr. Panda is happy to give him the entire box of donuts. Simple illustrations and a colorful box of donuts will attract young readers to this book.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Early College

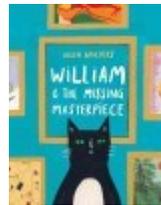
**Upper Elementary  
Fiction**

**William & The**

**Missing Masterpiece**

Written and illus. by:  
Helen Hancocks

Templar Books, 2014



ISBN: 9780763675967

*Curriculum: Puns; Cats; Artworks*

When the famed Mona Cheesa goes missing in Paris, only William, international cat of mystery, has the savoir-faire to recover the chef-d'oeuvre. While other investigators remain clueless, William spots a tiny piece of red yarn. Nobody's going to pull the wool over this cat's eyes! At the Homage to Fromage

Gala, William unmasks the scoundrels, a gang of mouseter criminals. Their inevitable escape threatens to turn this pun story into a series. If you took Art History 101, you'll recognize many of the works gracing the walls in Hancock's illustrations—but were there so many cats? Wait a minute! These paintings are pretty cheesy, too!

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley  
Cheltenham Elem.

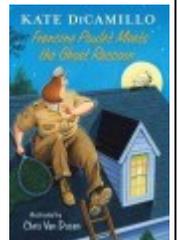
**Francine Poulet Meets the Ghost  
Raccoon**

By: Kate DiCamillo

Illus. by: Chris Van Dusen

Candlewick Press, 2015

ISBN: 9780763668860



*Curriculum: Animal Control Officers; Raccoons; Self Confidence*

Francine Poulet is the animal control officer in Gizzford County. Francine is always in control and is never scared. One day a lady called to ask her to catch a raccoon. It was a very special raccoon that glowed and screamed. Francine climbed the ladder and stepped on the roof to look for the raccoon. When she saw it glowing, screaming and running straight toward her, Francine panicked and fell off the roof. When she recovered from her broken leg, she quit her job and went to work at a store. One day, a boy came in. His name was Frank and talked Francine into trying to catch the raccoon one more time. She finally agreed, and although she was afraid climbing up on that roof, she faced her fear. Francine caught the raccoon, got her job back and hired Frank as an apprentice. Even better, she regained her self-confidence with the help of Frank and her other friends.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### Turning Trash to Treasure

By: Ada Pearson

JLS Co. Ltd., 2014

ISBN:

97888966290628

*Curriculum: Business;  
Student enterprise*



Shannon needs an idea to impress her friends and help her succeed at the Business Fair being run at the Youth Center but cannot come up with a good idea. Thankfully, her family reminds her that she has great ideas and will come up with one. With their help she is able to come up with an ingenious idea that will help her, the community, and the environment. Most of the Caramel Tree books have been duds, but this one is a great addition to any school or classroom library. Pearson writes about how Shannon is helped by her family, and sets a great example that students can reproduce on their own.

Reviewed by: Emily Hungerford  
Barnum Elem.

### Two for Joy

By: Gigi Amateau

Illus. by: Abigail Marble

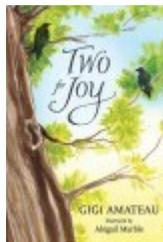
Candlewick Press, 2015

ISBN:

9780857983039

*Curriculum: Family*

A lovely tale of two households meshing into one. Jenna's spontaneous, energetic, life-loving great-aunt has fallen and hurt herself, leading Jenna's mom to the decision that it's time for Aunt Tannie to come and live with them. Reluctant at first, Tannie finally acquiesces and leaves the farm and home she loves. Struggles ensue as the three work to determine what



their "new places" are in the family dynamics, culminating in a family discussion filled with honesty, decisions, and healthy compromises. Told through Jenna's perspective, the reader receives a loving view into the grand figure of Tannie as well as the fears and pains a child may have when someone "new" joins the family. Albeit a bit "rambling" at first, this warm-hearted story would be a welcome addition to one's collection.

Reviewed by: Dawn Lewallen  
Skinner M.S.

### Lucky Thamu

By: Cheryl Kickett-Tucker and Jaylon Tucker

Freemantle Press, 2014

ISBN: 9781925161304

*Curriculum: Geography;  
Australia; Indigenous people*

"Lucky Thamu" is a bush story of about Eli, who lives in Perth (Australia) with his parents. He is described as a Noogar-Wongi kid of indigenous heritage. This short story is about Eli's adventures with his grandfather and uncle as they go on a prospecting trip. The short narrative is filled with cultural details about the indigenous folks of Australia and would be a good read-aloud. Teaching notes are available on a given website.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing  
Carson Elem.



### Saurus Street: A Plesiosaur Broke

#### My Bathtub

By: Nick Falk and Tony Flowers

Random House Australia, 2013

ISBN: 9780857981820

*Curriculum: Dinosaurs;  
Prehistoric life*

Thomas looks forward to his weekend overnights with his grandparents in their ramshackle house on Saurus Street, except for one thing. There's no indoor bathroom. His greatest fear is falling into the bottomless pit that is the toilet. One evening,

Thomas falls in. All's not lost; he is astounded to find a tunnel that leads to the lake at the bottom of the pit. Even stranger, Thomas thinks he sees an Elamosaurus in the lake. His friend Molly names the Elamosaurus "Ellie". When the rich neighbors learn about Ellie, they hatch a plot to buy all the houses on Saurus street in order to build a resort. Dinosaur facts are included in this lively tale.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing  
Carson Elem.

### Marilyn's Monster

By: Michelle Knudsen

Illus. by: Matt Phelan

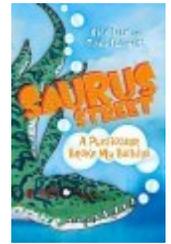
Candlewick, 2015

ISBN:

9780763660116

*Curriculum: Monsters*

Marilyn is waiting for her monster to find her. All of her friends' monsters have found them. Marilyn is trying to be patient. She is extra kind. She takes extra time on her hair and clothes. She is trying to be the perfect girl for her monster. Her monster just doesn't come. So one day Marilyn gives up on waiting for her



monster to find her and sets off to find her monster. Gentle, non-scary monsters populate the pages of this wonderful book.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

CEC Early College

## Upper Elementary Nonfiction

### The Boy Who Fell off the Mayflower or John Howland's Good Fortune

Written and illus. by:  
P.J. Lynch

Candlewick Press,  
2015

ISBN:  
9780763665845

*Curriculum: Mayflower; Pilgrims; Thanksgiving*

The voyage of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower is told as a riveting story from the perspective of a young boy seeking adventure. Readers will sense the danger of the trip as the pilgrims face discrimination, poverty, and disease and continue to suffer even after they arrive in the New World. Beautiful water-color illustrations adorn each page. At first glance, this appears to be a picture book, but reads at a higher grade level. This is a wonderful addition to any library.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
South H.S.

## Snow Man Joke

**Q: What do you call an old snowman?**

**A: Water**

## Middle School Fiction

### Dead Jed: Dawn of the Jed

By: Scott Craven  
Month9Books, LLC, 2014  
ISBN: 9781939765482

*Curriculum: Human rights*

In book two of the *Dead Jed* series, we catch up with 7th grader, Jed. He has typical teenage problems, such as trying to convince his parents into getting him a dog and the hassle of being picked on by the class bully. However, Jed is no ordinary teenager. His body parts fall off; he oozes instead of bleeds. In fact, he's one of the undead. The opening scene finds Jed losing a leg in a wrestling match. He immediately wonders if he has enough duct-tape to patch it up until his ooze repairs it. This humorous series follows popular Zombie culture, even to the point of mentioning "The Walking Dead". In this series, Jed fights against zombie stereotypes, but also teenage outsider stereotypes. Any middle-schooler can relate to the bullying plot.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing  
Carson Elem.



### **Dust of Snow**

**Robert Frost**

The way a crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart  
A change of mood  
And saved some part  
Of a day I had rued.

## Review Crew Staff

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**Antonio Nicotera**

**Sudi Stodola**

# High School Fiction

## Silver in the Blood

By: Jessica Day George  
Bloomsbury, 2015

ISBN: 9781619634312

*Curriculum: Monsters; Romania; Family relationships*

American cousins Dacia and Lou are best friends, and their Romanian mothers are supposedly sending them on a trip to Eastern Europe in 1897 to meet relatives, but they discover there is a more sinister reason for the journey. The Fortescu family are shapeshifters, allied to the dreaded Dracula clan, and one of the girls is expected to marry Prince Mihai Dracula, a pretender to the Romanian throne. As Dacia becomes the Claw, a wolf, and Lou is transformed into the Smoke, a mysterious mist, they must fight their vicious grandmother to save themselves from a terrible fate. Their loving relationship and the help of two romantic gentlemen allow them to overcome in this well written and thrilling fantasy.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Alumni



## Bone Gap

By: Laura Ruby  
Balzer + Bray, 2015

ISBN:  
9780062317605

*Curriculum: Bullying; Brothers; Face perception; Kidnapping; Relationships*

Finn is a strange boy, even for the quirky small town of Bone Gap. He avoids eye contact and is easily distracted. But people don't mind, after all his brother Sean is the hero para-



medic of the town. Then one night, the mysterious, beautiful Roza suddenly appeared in their barn and changed the brothers' lives. Just as suddenly, she disappeared. Finn insisted Roza was abducted. No one believed his story, but quietly blamed him for her disappearance. With the help of the beekeeper's daughter, Finn begins a quest to bring Roza home. Unique and quirky, Bone Gap is a magical coming of age romance. The focus on beauty and perception will leave much for readers to ponder.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.

## The Sin Eater's Daughter

By: Melinda Salisbury  
Scholastic Press, 2015

ISBN: 9780545810623

*Curriculum: Poison; Executioners; Bodyguards; Royalty*

Destined to become a Sin Eater like her mother, Twylla's path is altered by royal intervention. She now lives in the castle, destined to marry the prince. Twylla is also the royal executioner - able to kill those convicted of treason with a simple touch. Twylla's role leaves her isolated and bereft of human contact, until she is befriended by a new guard. Twylla's growing friendship with Lief opens her eyes to the queen's cruelty. But what can one girl, unable to touch without taking life, do to protect her kingdom? Strong world-building, a tender romance, and royal intrigue make this title an entertaining read.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.



## **I LEARNED ALL ABOUT LIFE FROM A SNOWMAN...**

- It's okay if you're a little bottom heavy.
- Hold your ground, even when the heat is on.
- Wearing white is always appropriate.
- Winter is the best of the four seasons.
- It takes a few extra rolls to make a good midsection.
- There's nothing better than a foul weather friend.
- The key to life is to be a jolly, happy soul.
- We're all made up of mostly water.
- You know you've made it when they write a song about you.
- Accessorize! Accessorize! Accessorize!
- Don't get too much sun.
- It's embarrassing when you can't look down and see your feet.
- It's fun to hang out in your front yard.
- Always put your best foot forward.
- There's no stopping you once you're on a roll.