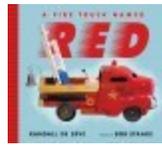


The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

A Fire Truck Named Red

By: Randall De Seve
Illus. by: Bob Staake
Farrar Straus Giroux, 2016
ISBN: 9780374300739

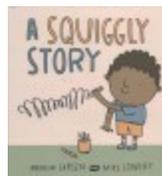


Topics: Birthdays; Grandparents; Memories
Rowan wanted a fancy new fire truck for his birthday, but what he got was his grandfather's old red one. Trying not to cry, he helps his grandfather fix up the truck while Papa relates all the adventures he and Red had together. From cat rescues to feeding the thirsty elephants at the circus and fighting a fire at the town library, the stories pull Rowan into his Papa's imagination until he feels like he was actually there too, part of the team, and he is happy with his gift. Papa's tales are presented in sepia tones, like an old movie, while the other illustrations are bright and cartoon-like. This is a lovely generational story showing the value of memories and keepsakes.

Review by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

A Squiggly Story

By: Andrew Larsen
Illus. by: Mike Lowery
Kids Can Press, 2016
ISBN: 9781771380164



Topics: Beginning writers and writing

Larsen and Lowery's story of a would be author is a graphic mini-novel full of helpful ideas about how to write—ideas like these. You don't have to know how to spell a

lot of words to write your own story. A big sister can come in handy—sometimes you need a coach and an audience. The main thing is to know that even when you are stuck, it's your own story and you are still the boss. Suggestions? You can take 'em or leave 'em. And once you write one story, you'll probably get an idea for another one. Oh, don't forget . . . after the beginning, you need a middle to help you to get to the end. Pictures and text are nicely paired in this fun introduction to narrative writing.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.

Daddies Are Awesome

By: Meredith Costain
Illus. by: Polona Lovsin
Henry Holt and Company,
2012



ISBN: 9781627784527

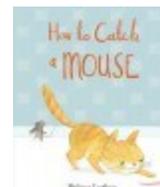
Topics: Fathers; Puppies; Rhyming Stories

Non-traditional fatherhood roles are demonstrated in this lovely rhyming book about doggie daddies and their pups. A great book for kindergarten and pre-schoolers to discuss gender roles, but also dog breeds! Perfect also for Father's Day or Valentine's Day read-alouds.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

How to Catch a Mouse

Written and Illus. by:
Philippa Leathers
Candlewick Press, 2015
ISBN: 9780763669126



Topics: Cats; Mice; Trickery; Disguises

Clemmie is a cat who knows everything

Brought to you by
the Denver Public
Schools Book
Review Committee.

Volume 13 Number 5

January 2017

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.)

about catching a mouse. She has never actually seen one, but stays vigilant, just in case. Then she spots something, a long, pink tail? No, just the ribbon of a hat. Then she spots two round ears! No, it's a stuffed panda. While Clemmie looks, there is a little mouse, in disguise, sneaking past her. She curls up for a nap and hears noises. She creeps into the kitchen and there she finds a mouse in disguise eating crackers. It's a mouse! She didn't catch it, but thinks she can trick the mouse. This time, the cat is in disguise! This is a simply illustrated book that children will enjoy as they see the cat and mouse. Fun to read, and can be used to predict what happens next.

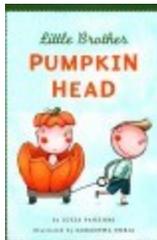
Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Little Brother Pumpkin Head

By: Lucia Panzieri
Illus. by: Samantha Enria
Holiday House, 2016
ISBN: 9780823435371

*Topics: Brothers;
Pregnancy; Babies*

This sweet Italian import is the story of a little boy who is concerned that his mother's food cravings will transfer to his little brother. When mom goes crazy for everything pumpkin in the Fall, the little boy is convinced that his brother will be born with a "pumpkin head", full of seeds and no brain. He decides to help make his brother smart by teaching him the names for all the flora and fauna and important people he encounters in his daily journeys. The illustrations are touching as we see the boy recording his voice in a tape recorder and also him talking to his mother's swollen belly. A great book to help ease a young child's fears about a new baby.
Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.



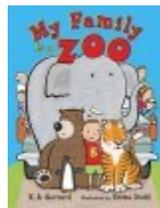
My Family is a Zoo

By: K. A. Gerrard
Illus. by: Emma Dodd
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2016
ISBN: 9781619638518

*Topics: Road trips;
Rhyming: Animal fiction*

Featuring a motley group indeed, this is a whimsical, rhyming road trip out to collect an extended family's pets. A peripatetic penguin, sis's sunbathing whale, and a bounding kangaroo are joined by a dinosaur, grandpa's tiger, and more. Children's verse books sometimes suffer from abominably bumbling meter, but here the rhythms --and rhymes--ring true. Accomplished illustrator Emma Dodd makes a special contribution. Who else would squeeze the family menagerie into--and on top of--a 1950's station wagon?

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



Early Elementary Nonfiction

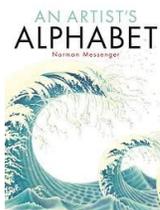
An Artist's Alphabet

Written and illus. by:
Norman Messenger
Candlewick Studio, 2016
ISBN: 9780763681234

Topics: Alphabet; Watercolor art

This stunningly beautiful alphabet book provides readers a deeper look at everyday objects and people, re-imagined as lower and upper case alphabet letters, painted in muted water colors. Each page spread includes a small box with notebook paper lines to demonstrate proper written letter placement. A gorgeous book for either an art class discussing found object art, or a Kindergarten room.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.



Upper Elementary Fiction

Ms. Bixby's Last Day

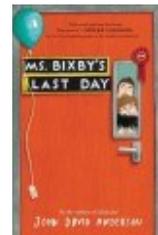
By: John David
Anderson
Walden Pond
Press, 2016

ISBN: 9780062338174

*Topics: Teacher/
Student Relationships;
Adventure; Cancer*

Ms. Bixby is one of those teachers: She loves. She teaches. She cares. Yet, she is sick and her students are bound and determined to get a chance to say goodbye when she leaves earlier than planned. In an adventure that will delight middle grade readers Topher, Brand, and Steve make sure Ms. Bixby heads East to visit her family with the fare she deserves. While this book covers a very tough topic--teachers with cancer--it handles it in an age appropriate way, and ends in a way that helps and allows children to process what happens.

Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.



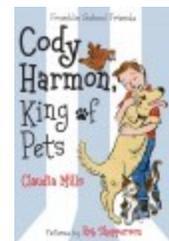
Cody Harmon, King of Pets

By: Claudia Mills
Illus. by: Rob
Shepperson
Farrar Straus Giroux,
2016

ISBN:
9780374302238

*Topics: Pets; Kindness;
Friendship*

Cody lives on a farm and he loves animals. He has two dogs, two cats, a rooster, three hens and a pig as pets. He is excited to find out the school is going to have a pet show as a fundraiser for the animal shelter. Cody figures this is where he will shine since math, reading and sports aren't his thing. Then he finds



out that it will cost ten dollars to show each animal. He doesn't even have enough money to enter one pet. Some of the kids in his class don't have pets at all. There must be a solution for both issues.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

Arf

By: Spencer Quinn
Scholastic Press,
2016

ISBN:

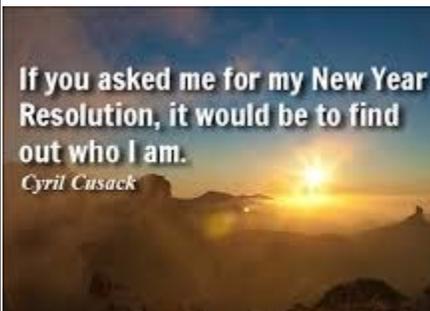
9780545643344

Topics: Talking animals; Mystery; Family; Relationships



In another Bowser and Birdie Novel, Quinn continues to entertain middle grade readers with the antics of the Gaux family, and more importantly, Bowser the dog. In this title we witness via Bowser a robbery--from someone that the humans do not suspect at all. Children who love dogs and realistic books about kids their age will absolutely adore this book and enjoy discovering events in the story from the point of view of Bowser. Keep in mind that Birdie (the young girl), is living in a multigenerational home with her mother and her grandmother. Birdie's dad died during his service as a police officer in New Orleans when she was quite young.

Reviewed by Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.



Although no
one can go back
and make a
brand new start,
anyone can
start from now
and make a
brand new
ending.

-- Carl Bard

Upper Elementary Nonfiction

Anne Frank: Holocaust Diarist

Written by: Alexis
Burling

Abdo, 2016

ISBN: 9781680782981

Topics: Holocaust; Diaries



This book focuses not just on the writing of Anne's Frank's famous diary, but also its journey from a hidden room in Amsterdam to 30 million copies in 60 countries. The reader is taken through a summary of the rise of Nazism, the exodus of the family from Germany to Amsterdam, and then to the aftermath of their betrayal at the hands of an informant. Anne's father, Otto, was the only member to survive the Holocaust, and when he reconnected with Miep and Jan Gies, the couple who had hidden the family, he recovered Anne's diary and vowed to make it her legacy. Black and white photographs add to this well-written and accessible book that is a good addition to our knowledge about an inspiring person.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

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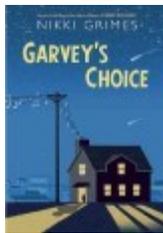




Middle School Fiction

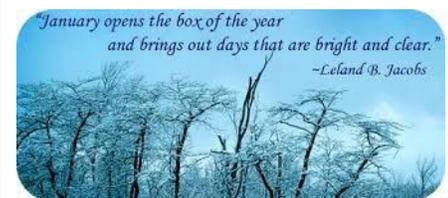
Garvey's Choice

By: Nikki Grimes
Boyd's Mills/Wordsong,
2016
ISBN:
9781629797403
*Topics: Verse novels;
Fathers and sons; Com-
ing of age*



Poet Nikki Grimes reveals that when a son finds himself, his father can find him, too. Garvey's dad is searching for a boy who loves basketball and roughhousing, so much so that he can't see the son he has. In response Garvey makes a series of choices, some life-affirming, some unhealthy. Ultimately, Garvey truly finds himself as a show-stopping tenor in the school choir. Dad discovers a different son he always wanted—like him, a singer, a Luther Vandross fan, and a man strong enough to make his own choices. Grimes tells Garvey's story in 105 Japanese-inspired tanka poems, delivered in her typical graceful language.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



The Inn Between

By: Marina Cohen
Illus. by: Sarah Watts
Roaring Brook Press,
2016
ISBN: 9781626722026
*Topics: Haunted places;
Friendship*



Quinn and Kara have been best friend since forever. Now Kara and her family are moving away. Quinn is allowed to go with Kara's family as they drive to their new home. It has been a long day in the car and everyone is tired and grumpy. They find an old Victorian inn where they stop. The inn is such a strange place! The longer the girls wander around, the stranger it gets. What has happened to Kara's parents? Come to think of it what has happened to her brother? And was that really Quinn's missing sister in the upstairs window?

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

The Fire Dragon Storm

By: Anne Cameron
Greenwillow Books,
2016
ISBN: 9780062112866
*Topics: Adventure;
Mystery; Weather;
Working together*



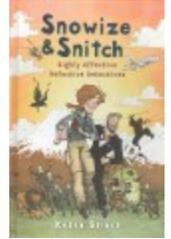
This is book four and the conclusion of the Lightning Catcher Series. Angus, Dougal and Indigo are presumed dead while exploring a glacier cave in Canada. However, they are not dead, but use the diversion to continue to look for Angus' parents and to defeat the evil Scabious Dankhart. Angus is the only living storm prophet and has the ability to control the fire dragon. Angus and his friends must work together in order to save Perilous as well as his parents. The final battle pits good and evil and reveals the traitors in their midst. Readers must follow the

clues to solve the mystery. In order to be understood, the books should be read in sequence. There is mystery, adventure and a thrilling battle at the end. This is a good read for middle school and upper elementary readers.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Snowzie and Snitch

By: Karen Briner
Illus. by: Victor Rivas
Holiday House, 2016
ISBN:
9780823435678
*Topics: Scientists;
Mystery; Detectives*



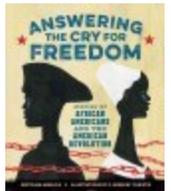
Ever is supposedly the daughter of very bright parents. She doesn't know that because she doesn't remember them. She has spent her life with Doc, an extremely bright inventor. When Doc goes missing, Ever enlists the Highly Effective Defective Detectives to help her find him. As it develops, several other world-class inventors who have also gone missing. Snowzie was once a spy and Snitch is a rat, between the three of them they are on a mission to figure out what is going on.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

Middle School Nonfiction

Answering the Cry for Freedom

By: Gretchen Woelfle
Illus. by: R. Gregory
Christie
Calkins Creek, 2016
ISBN: 9781629793061
*Topics: African
American; Biography;
U.S. Revolutionary Period*



Woelfle provides an account of thirteen black men and women who lived during a time in U.S. history when the

quest for liberty and freedom where the driving force shaping a new nation. Although their backgrounds and occupations differed, few of the individuals represented in this title were free. Yet each became a voice in the fight for freedom. This title paints a vivid portrait of the impact slavery and the slave trade had on African Americans living at the time, and how the Black community helped shape the world we live in today.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
George Washington H.S.



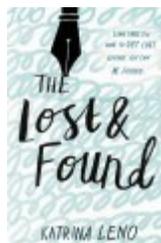
High School Fiction

The Lost and Found

By: Katrina Leno
Harper, 2016
ISBN:
9780062231208

Topics: *Trauma; Relationships*

Frannie and Louis have only met on the internet through a site for trauma survivors, but they have much in common; both have lost things emotionally and physically, even belongings that have mysteriously disappeared. They each end up taking a road trip to Texas, Frannie to see if she can find the actor her mentally ill mother claimed was her real father, and Louis to see if he has the courage



to move there for college. On their journeys and through their meeting, truths are revealed and lost things are found as a little magical realism is injected into the story. Told in alternating voices by two narrators that are quirky and endearingly human, this is a well-spun tale about growing up and out of ourselves.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni



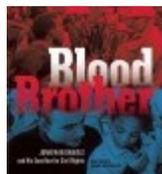
High School Nonfiction

Blood Brother

By: Rich Wallace and Sandra Neil Wallace
Calkins Creek, 2016
ISBN: 9781629790947

Topics: *African American; Civil Rights; Social Activists; Civil rights movement*

At the height of the civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King urged members of the clergy and seminaries to stand beside the activists in the South in an effort to encourage change. Jonathan Daniels, a young, white seminary student from New Hampshire answered the call in 1965. He participated in demonstrations and worked alongside other activists to encourage the registration of black voters in Selma, AL. His murder five months later inspired a change in Alabama law allowing the inclusion of blacks and women on juries. A well-researched and moving look at a little



known figure in the fight for social change.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
George Washington H.S.

January

The name, given to the month of 'January', is derived from the ancient Roman name 'Janus' who presided over the gate to the new year. He was revered as the 'God of Gateways', 'of Doorways' and 'of the Journey.' Janus protected the 'Gate of Heaven', known as the 'Lord of Beginnings', is associated with the 'Goddess Juno-Janus', and often symbolized by an image of a face that looks forwards and backwards at the same time. This symbolism can easily be associated with the month known by many as the start of a new year which brings new opportunities. We cast out the old and welcome in the new. It is the time when many reflect on events of the previous year and often resolve to redress or improve some aspect of daily life or personal philosophy."
Mystical World Wide Web

