

The Review Crew



Early Elementary Fiction

Grumpy Gertie

Written and illus. by: Sam Lloyd

Pavilion Children's Books, 2013

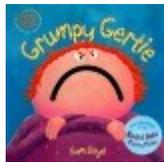
ISBN: 9781843652281

Curriculum: Moods; Attitude

Gertie wakes up on the wrong side of the bed; her mood is contagious and soon everyone she meets is having a bad day as well. But a creative monkey shows her how to change her perspective and become more positive. Soon Gertie and everyone in the book is feeling good again. Gertie ends her day with determination that tomorrow will be much better. This is a simple board book that will bring smiles to children's and adults faces. Illustrations are simple, colorful, and kid-friendly. A simple message of the importance of having a good attitude is communicated in a fun and playful way.

By: Jutta Gebauer

Green Valley Elem.



Good-bye, Fish

By: Judith Koppens

Illus. by: Eline van Linde-huizen

Clavis Books, 2013

ISBN: 9781605371535

Curriculum: Death; Dying; Grief; Friends

When Kitty's pet fish dies, he is consoled by



his friends Giraffe and Dog. The three friends plan a reverent funeral and kitty's friends support him as he grieves for his good friend. A nice surprise ending helps Kitty know that his friend Fish lives on in his memory. This is a cute yet appropriate book for children who may be experiencing the death of a loved one.

By: Jutta Gebauer

Green Valley Elem.

The Table Sets Itself

Written and illus. by: Ben Clanton

Walker Books, 2013

ISBN: 9780802734471

Curriculum: Chores

Izzy is thrilled to finally be able to set the table by herself, and day after day after day she arranges her friends Dish, Cup, Knife, Fork, Spoon, and Napkin in their correct places. When the utensils and dishes get bored, they try some crazy new arrangements which are nixed by Izzy's parents. Frustrated, Dish and Spoon run away and send their friends postcards from around the world before returning with a pair of chopsticks to add to the table setting. Silly jokes and cartoonish pencil and watercolor illustrations will amuse young readers.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



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

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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 fifteen 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.)

"STUDENTS MUST HAVE INITIATIVE; THEY SHOULD NOT BE MERE IMITATORS. THEY MUST LEARN TO THINK AND ACT FOR THEMSELVES - AND BE FREE."

CESAR CHAVEZ

© Lifeback Quotes

Journey

Written and illus. by:
Aaron Becker

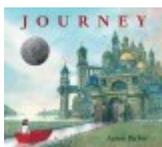
Candlewick Press, 2013

ISBN: 9780763660536

*Curriculum: Adventure; Drawing;
Friendship*

Vaguely reminiscent of Harold of purple crayon fame, this fabulous adventure takes a young girl away from her mundane existence with the stroke of a red marker. The girl is bored but finds a red marker on her bedroom floor with which she proceeds to draw a doorway to a remarkable world. While here she witnesses the capture of a beautiful bird. She sets it free but is captured herself. The bird returns the favor and leads her to another doorway. What waits on the other side may well be the best adventure of all. With no words the artist takes readers on an epic adventure. The illustrations are beautiful with always a distinguishing speck of red in each. This is a book for all ages.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College



Early Elementary Nonfiction

Shapes in Nature

By: Oona Gaarder-Juntti

Photographs

ABDO, 2014

ISBN: 9781617834141

*Curriculum: Shapes; Shapes in nature;
Geometry*

Shapes are everywhere in nature: a starfish is shaped like a star, a rhino's horn like a cone, and some crystals like a pyramid. This book offers a



unique look at shapes in nature, finding them in creative places and using detailed photographs to show 2-D and 3-D shapes.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

Measurement

By: Sara Pistoia

Photographs

The Child's World,
2014

ISBN: 9781623235314

Curriculum: Measuring; Math

You can measure to find out how tall you are, how much your dog weighs, or how much milk you want in your cup. One in a series for young students, Simply Math, it introduces basic math concepts using familiar things around a child's world. Questions and activity ideas are included to encourage students to think critically about various measurements and practice using them.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



Upper Elementary Fiction

The Magician's Bird: A Tuckernuck Mystery

By: Emily Fairlie

Illus. by: Antonio
Javier Caparo

HarperCollins, 2013

ISBN: 9780062118936

Curriculum: Scavenger hunt; Schools

Laurie, Bud, and Misti are back to solve their second Tuckernuck mystery. The three are excited about organizing a scavenger hunt for the



school, but accusations that their school's founder, Maria Tutweiler, may have been a murderess threaten to shut down their scavenger hunt and also the school! Can the kids clear Tutweiler's name and save the school? An eccentric set of secondary characters along with emails, notes, and illustrations are peppered throughout the book breaking up the text and making it that much more entertaining.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.

The Treasure of Way Down Deep

By: Ruth White

Farrar Straus Giroux,
2013

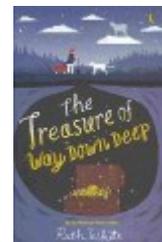
ISBN:
9780374380670

*Curriculum: Buried
treasure; Orphans;
West Virginia*

In 1954, thirteen-year-old Ruby has dreams of bettering the lives of those in the town of Way Down Under, but with coal mine closures affecting everyone, the only solution seems to be finding the mythical treasure buried by the town's founder. With the help of her three-legged dog Tripod and the prophetic dreams of her guardian Miss Arbutus, Ruby unearths the treasure and guides the adults in town to the most farsighted way to use the money. This seems to be a simple story but it holds many truths about learning what is most important in life.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



Upper Elementary Nonfiction

Fairy Tale Comics

By: Chris Duffy

Illus. by: Various artists

First Second, 2013

ISBN: 9781596438231

Curriculum: Fairy tales; Graphic novels

This collection of 17 fairy tales retold by various illustrators offers an interesting assortment of artistic styles. Some are simple retellings while others take a fresh approach, like Rapunzel finding her own way in the world without a prince. The Brothers Grimm are represented, but there are also Asian, Middle Eastern, and American stories. Unusual details like Puss in Boots on a scooter and the Bremen Town musicians set in the Wild West add to the fun. Comic lovers who enjoy twists on familiar tales will relish this book.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8

Middle School Fiction

Scare Scope

By: Sam Fisher

Illus. by: Sam Bosma

Scholastic Press, 2013

ISBN:

9780545521604



Curriculum: Monsters; Survival; Family; Adventure

Morton Clay's family has just moved to Dimvale, the "Darkest Town in the Civilized World." It's an excellent place for astronomers like Morton's father. Morton, his brother and sister, explore their new house. No one likes the run down home except Morton. He is a big fan of the *Scare Scope* comics and thinks the house is perfect. While exploring, the three siblings find a gargoyle statue buried in the back yard that will grant them each a wish. Morton wants his monster toys to be more realistic and they come to life terrorizing the town. The siblings and a couple of new friends must research the owner of the house, so see if there is a way, to reverse the wish.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

The Dream Thieves

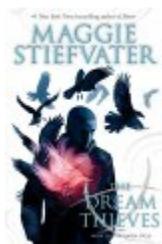
By: Maggie Stiefvater

Scholastic Press, 2013

ISBN: 9780545424943

Curriculum: Dreams; Magic; Family secrets; Relationships

This is the second book of "The Raven Cycle." It picks up where "The Raven Boys" left off, with Blue and the four boys trying to solve a puzzle. They have accepted that Noah is a ghost but is still a part of their group. This story turns to focus on Ronan, who seems to have the ability to pull objects out of his dreams. The ley lines have been awakened and the boys continue to look for Owen Glendower, a sleeping Welsh king. This story introduces the Gray Man, an evil



man who is also looking for the king. There are complicated relationships and twists in the plot that will have readers waiting for the third and fourth books.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

The Weight of Water

By: Sarah Crossan

Bloomsbury, 2012

ISBN: 9781599909677

Curriculum: Race relations; Immigrants; Bullying; Mothers and daughters

Beautifully and emotionally written in free verse, this is the story of twelve-year-old Kasienska and her mother who emigrate from Poland to Coventry, England in search of "Tata", the father and husband who deserted them. Kasienska has a difficult time as she tries to support her mother's search, deal with bullying at school, and understand her father's abandonment. Just when her world seems most bleak, Kasienska finds solace, triumph, and first love through her skill as a swimmer. This first-person narrative will touch the heart and make a lasting impression on anyone who has ever felt "different." And who hasn't?

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco

Skinner M.S.

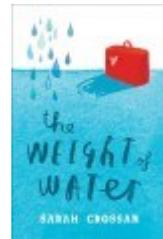
Middle School Nonfiction

Donner Dinner Party

Written and illus. by: Nathan Hale

Amulet Books, 2013

ISBN: 9781419708565



Curriculum: Donner Party; Pioneer life; Overland journeys; Cannibalism; Survival

In graphic novel format, Hale introduces teen readers to the harrowing journey of the doomed Donner Party as they travel from Illinois to California in 1846. After leaving the main wagon train to take a short cut, the group becomes stranded in the snow while attempting to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Facing starvation, the families have to make gruesome choices - which Hale announces in advance, giving squeamish readers the chance to skip "that part." Panels, sharply laid out in black ink with green and white illustrations, tell the story in short bursts - interspersed with enough dark humor to lighten the tale. Maps, notes, and a roster of party members lend historic authenticity.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner M.S.

High School Fiction

In the After

By: Demitria Lunetta
HarperTeen, 2013
ISBN:
9780062105455



Curriculum: Post-apocalypse; Aliens; Survival

Before They attack, Amy leads a normal teen life. After, she is alone with only the safety of her well-secured house. But she must leave this safety for food. Enter Baby, a toddler that has somehow managed to stay alive. The two survive in a silent word communicating through sign language. Any

noise draws the attention of Them. Rescue eventually comes but what she discovers shatters her world all over again. Apocalyptic fiction lovers in upper MS and HS will enjoy this exciting, fast-paced novel. Give to fans of the TV series *Falling Skies* and Yancey's novel *The 5th Wave*. Sequel due out June 2014.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Sweet Legacy

By: Tera Lynn Childs
Katherine Tegan Books,
2013
ISBN: 9780062001856



Curriculum: Sisters; Mythology; Monsters

Gretchen, Greer and Grace are triplets; the Key Generation; ancestors of Medusa. The sisters, only recently coming into their power, are trying to keep monsters from taking over earth. Each of the girls has a special talent that can either aid or hinder the quest. The end of this trilogy is an epic battle to open the doors between earth and the abyss and save the beings there. In the end not everything that is a monster is evil and not everything of beauty is good. The responsibilities of the Key Generation are not always clear-cut. This last installment is quick paced and filled with adventure. Readers of the first two books will not be disappointed by the third. There is romance and battles royale, but these books will still be appropriate for middle school as well as high school readers.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College



Find Me

By: Romily Bernard
HarperTeen, 2013
ISBN: 9780062229038



Curriculum: Computer hackers; Foster home care; Mystery and detective stories

Wick Tate's mother committed suicide several years ago and now her drug dealing father is a wanted fugitive. So now at just sixteen, Wick Tate is tough, untrusting, and knows how to take care of herself and her younger sister Lily. Secretly, Wick continues to hack and save money - just in case she and her sister have to run. Wick's paranoia may seem over the top, until a dead girl's diary ends up on the front porch with the message 'Find me' attached to the first page. Unwillingly, Wick uses her hacking skills to investigate and is troubled to find that an abusive man with whom Tessa had a relationship may also be the reason for her death. Now he may be interested in Lily, and Wick must use her hacking skills to learn the identity of her sister's stalker before it is too late. *Find Me* is a fast-paced, edge of your seat thriller with plenty of action.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

High School Nonfiction

The Nazi Hunters

By: Neal Bascomb
Arthur A. Levine Books, 2013
ISBN: 9780545430999

Curriculum: Adolf Eichmann; Nazi hunters; War Criminals; Secret Service; Holocaust; Germany; Israel

In 1957 the Israeli Secret Service learned that Adolf Eichmann, the notorious War World II Nazi leader responsible for rounding up and delivering millions of people to death camps, was hiding out in Argentina. The intelligence prompted the planning of an exact, detailed-oriented mission that would result in the capture and trial of Eichmann and bring closure to the many survivors who suffered as a result of his actions. *The Nazi Hunters* is a thrilling spy story, but more importantly a riveting look at a piece of history that should never be forgotten.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.



Leprechauns

The original Irish name for these figures of folklore is *lobaircin*, meaning small-bodied fellow. In Irish mythology, a leprechaun is a type of male faerie said to inhabit the island of Ireland. They are a class of "faerie folk" associated in Irish mythology and folklore, as with all faeries, with the Tuatha Dé Danann and other quasi-historical peoples said to have inhabited Ireland before the arrival of the Celts

Leprechauns usually take the form of old men who enjoy

partaking in mischief. Their trade is that of a cobbler or shoemaker. They are said to be very rich, having many treasure crocks buried during war-time. According to legend, if anyone keeps an eye fixed upon one, he cannot escape, but the moment the gaze is withdrawn, he vanishes.

Leprechauns rarely appear in what would be classed as a folk tale. Stories about leprechauns are generally very brief and generally have local names and scenery attached to them.

In most tales and stories leprechauns are depicted as generally harmless creatures who enjoy solitude and live in remote locations, while in others they are depicted as ill-natured and mischievous, with a mind for cunning. Opinion is divided as to if they ever enjoy the company of other spirits. Although rarely seen in social situations, leprechauns are supposedly very well spoken and, if ever spoken to, could make good conversation.

Among the most popular of beliefs about leprechauns is that they are extremely wealthy and like to hide their gold in secret locations, which can only be revealed if a person were to actually capture and interrogate a leprechaun for its money. Another popular belief is that you may find a leprechaun and his pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

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