

# The Review Crew

## Early Elementary Fiction

### The Silver Button

Written and illus. by: Bob Graham

Candlewick, 2013

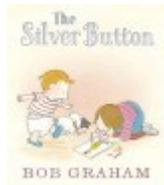
ISBN: 9780763664374

*Curriculum: Time; Coincidence*

Just at the instant Jodie puts a final silver button on her drawing, her little brother Jonathan takes his first step. At the same time, other events, commonplace and yet remarkable, are taking place in the wider world. Soft ink and watercolor illustrations depict the little moments that make up life, including a bird finding a worm, a soldier saying good-bye, and a little girl playing with her granddad. Use this book to remind students of the preciousness of our days.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-Fiction



### Beauty and the Beast

By: H. Chuku Lee

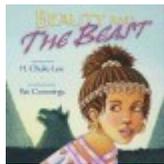
Illus. by: Pat Cummings

Harper Collins, 2014

ISBN: 9780688148195

*Curriculum: Beauty and the Beast; Love; West Africa*

While on a journey, a father decides to pick a beautiful rose for one of his daughters. The owner of the garden, a terrible,



ugly beast, is furious and takes the father prisoner. His daughter Beauty begs the Beast to take her prisoner instead and he agrees. Beauty is treated very well, but she is not allowed to leave the Beast's palace. As her father lies dying, she is allowed to leave and say her last farewells, if only she promises to return to the Beast's palace. Beauty realizes she really does care for the Beast and does return. When she agrees to marry him, he turns into a handsome prince and they live happily ever after. This is the well-known tale but with a twist - it is set in West Africa. Magnificent full page illustrations enhance the ageless story of love and trust.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

Green Valley Elem.

### A Very, Very Noisy Tractor

By: Mar Pavon

Illus. by: Nivola Uya

Cuento De Luz, 2013

ISBN: 9788415619659

*Curriculum: Tractors; Noise*

An eccentric lady with a gigantic beehive hairdo, oversized glasses, blue raincoat, and rubber boots rides a very noisy blue tractor down the road. Startled onlookers yell harsh judgments at her, but she can't hear them over the noise of the tractor. When she reaches her farmhouse, her ever supportive husband is there to meet her with dinner and a kiss. As the family spends a quiet evening together, the lady offers her daughter, who hopes to be a farmer like her mom,



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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!

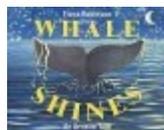
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers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

one piece of advice, "... make sure that your tractor is very, very noisy - so that you can't hear the silly things people shout at you." This is an endearing story that speaks to the themes of tolerance, acceptance, and relying on one's own self-esteem while trying to ignore the unwanted judgments of detractors.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen  
TJ H.S.

### Whale Shines

Written and illus. by:  
Fiona Robinson  
Abrams Books, 2013  
ISBN: 9781419708480



*Curriculum: Whales; Sea life; Art; Self confidence*

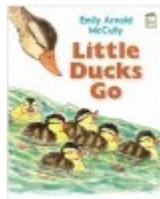
The Whale is advertising the under-sea art exhibition by swimming around with the sign on his side. He really admires all the different art works that his friends are making. The Giant Squid has ink paintings and the Hammerhead Shark is making sculptures. Whale wishes he was talented and could join in. He meets a school of plankton who want to help him. At first he turns them away, then he discovers these little creatures glow in the dark ocean. By swimming through them, he can make shapes. When the art exhibit starts, he paints his picture. "His giant body was his paintbrush, the plankton his paint, the ocean his canvas." Everyone loved his art. This book is great for Kindergarten through early middle school. The illustrations make the story.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy



### Little Ducks Go

Written and illus. by:  
Emily Arnold McCully  
Holiday House, 2014  
ISBN: 9780823429417



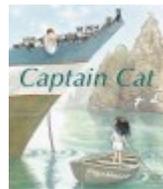
*Curriculum: Ducks; Families; Helpers*

Mama duck is moving her little family. Suddenly her little ones are swept down the storm drain. Mama duck can hear the little ones under the street. She keeps running down the street. Is there someone who can help mama duck get her little ones back?

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College

### Captain Cat

Written and illus. by:  
Inga Moore  
Candlewick Press, 2013  
ISBN: 9780763661519



*Curriculum: Cats; Adventure*

The captain of the Carlotta, a trading ship, loves cats. He loves cats so much that he is called Captain Cat by the other ship captains. He trades rare and valuable items for cats. Everyone wonders how he can make a living. One day Captain Cat decides it is time to see the world, so he sails off west instead of east. He sails so far that he thinks he might come to the edge of the world. Instead he comes to a beautiful and remote island. The queen has never seen a cat before. She is thrilled. She invites the captain and all the important members of the kingdom to a feast. As the food is set down, the feast is overrun by rats. Can Captain Cat save the day?

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College



## Spanish

### Azulín Azulado

Written and Illus. by:  
Raquel Díaz Reguera  
Thule Ediciones, 2012  
ISBN: 9788415357117



*Curriculum: Friendship; Companionship; Loneliness; Respect for the elderly*

In this Spanish edition, Grandma Lonely lives all by herself in a big house with an overgrown garden. She feels blue (azulado), because children have stopped coming to visit, and she is resigned to her fate, when one day, a sad, poetry-writing dog appears. Grandma invites him to stay, and names him Companionship. A writing cat (Happiness) comes next, followed by an artistic mouse (Sympathy). To give them a place to play, Grandma clears the garden, and soon neighborhood children come to visit again. Lush and colorful illustrations accentuate facial features - making sweet, poignant emotions visible.

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

## Upper Elementary Fiction

### Mountain Dog

By: Margarita Engle  
Illus. by: Oleg & Aleksey Ivanov  
Henry Holt, 2013  
ISBN:  
9780805095166



*Curriculum: Rescue dogs; Family relationships*

Tony has come to live in the Sierra Nevadas with his great-uncle, a forest ranger, after his mother is incarcerated for dog fighting. Tony meets

a new kind of canine in Gabe, his Tio's chocolate lab, who is a search-and-rescue dog. Told in poetry, with voices alternating between Tony and Gabe, the story shows how they learn to trust each other as Tony finds a permanent home in the welcoming wilderness. Upper elementary dog lovers will especially appreciate this inspiring book about the power of love to rebuild a life.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Waller K-8

**Eliza Bing is Not a Big Fat Quitter**

By: Carmella Van Vleet  
Illus. by: Karen Donnelly  
Holiday House, 2014



ISBN: 9780823429448

*Curriculum: ADHD; Friends; Determination*

Eliza really wants to take a cake decorating class at the recreation center. But her parents are doubtful that she'll follow through and complete the class. And money is tight. So when her brother quits his taekwondo class, they suggest she fill in for him. If she completes the class, she'll convince them to sign her up for cake decorating afterward. She endures the taekwondo class and even learns to like parts of it. But her other struggles involve the trials and tribulations often shared by pre-teen girls who are anxious about entering middle school. In addition, because of some of her quirky behaviors that stem from her ADHD, classmates often make fun of her. To make matters worse her best friend (and fellow cake decorating enthusiast) Tony seems to be shunning her and has moved on to make new friends. But

Eliza prevails in a very adult way and is determined to finish taekwondo and move on to her real love, cake decorating.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
Green Valley Elem.

**Meeting Cézanne**

By: Michael Morpurgo  
Illus. by: François Place



Candlewick Press, 2013  
ISBN: 9780763648961

*Curriculum: Artists; Family*

When Yannick's mother needs to have an operation he is sent off to live with his aunt and uncle in an idyllic country village while she recuperates. Yannick doesn't want to go but his mother talks him into it by telling him stories of the greatest painter who ever lived, Cézanne, who lived there. Yannick's uncle runs a small restaurant. One evening a special guest arrives for dinner. Yannick's cousin is completely crushed when Yannick throws his paper table covering in the fire. His uncle explains that the man is the greatest painter who ever lived and if he likes his dinner, he will leave a sketch on the table cover. Yannick is sad that he has upset his uncle and cousin so he goes into the hills to find the man he believes is Cézanne and explain his mistake. Of course the painter turns out not to be Cézanne, but who he actually is will satisfy readers.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College



**Upper Elementary  
Nonfiction**

**The Colorado Avalanche**

By: Mark Stewart  
Norwood House Press,  
2014



ISBN: 9781599536187

*Curriculum: NHL; Colorado Avalanche; Hockey*

Since relocating from Quebec to Denver in 1995 and winning two Stanley Cups, the Colorado Avalanche have entertained loyal fans. This title traces the team's history highlighting notable games and players, including Joe Sakic and Patrick Roy, along the way. Special mention is given to their arena, coaches, and uniforms. All reviewed titles in the Team Spirit series feature each team's awards and accomplishments as well as quotes from people related to each organization. A brief timeline and a publisher-sponsored website, updated throughout the hockey season, is included. Although the local team will be the most requested, 3rd-5th grade hockey fans may enjoy the whole series.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**Triangles**

By: David A. Adler  
Illus. by: Edward Miller  
Holiday House, 2014  
ISBN: 9780823423781



*Curriculum: Triangles; Angles; Degrees*

This book gives children and teachers a fun way to learn about triangles. Two kids and a friendly robot build another robot using their triangle skills, pointing out new vocabulary along the

way. Readers learn about different kinds of triangles and the concepts of angles and degrees. There is a lot of information packed into this picture book, but it could serve as a handy guide for teachers as they explain new concepts. Colorful pictures enhance the text, making this book kid-friendly.

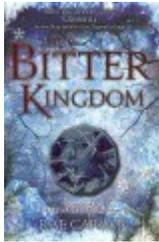
Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
Green Valley Elem.

## Middle School Fiction

### The Bitter Kingdom

By: Rae Carson  
Greenwillow Books, 2013  
ISBN: 9780062026545

Curriculum: *Fantasy; Magic; Prophecy; Queens*



This is the third book and the conclusion of the *Girl of Fire and Thorns* trilogy. Queen Elisa has lost her kingdom and has been named a fugitive. There are orders to kill her on sight. She has escaped with her loyal companions in an attempt to rescue Hector, the man she loves so he can help her win back her throne. She must fulfill the prophecy and learn to use her developing powers. Elisa has come a long way from the beginning of the series and proves to be an intelligent and powerful leader for her country. This is a series that should be read in sequence to understand the background of the characters. A good series for both middle school and high school fantasy lovers.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

## Middle School Nonfiction

### The President Has Been Shot: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy

By: James L. Swanson  
Scholastic, 2013  
ISBN: 9780545490078

Curriculum: *John Fitzgerald Kennedy; Assassination; History - USA-1960's*



Similar in appearance and style to Swanson's *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* (Scholastic, 2009), the first section of this book introduces JFK's childhood, military service, political life, presidency, and family life. Part two deals with the timeframe immediately before, during, and after the assassination. An abundance of archival photos appear throughout. This one reads like a crime novel, and will certainly engage middle and high school readers.

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

## High School Fiction

### Winger

By: Andrew Smith  
Simon & Schuster, 2013  
ISBN: 9781442444928

Curriculum: *High school; Coming of age; Relationships*



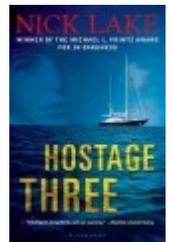
Ryan Dean, a 14-year-old junior and rugby winger at Pine Mountain boarding school, has a challenging year ahead of him. He's placed in the

troublemakers' dormitory, he's in love with Annie (his best female friend), and rugby is tough. How will he survive? Smith handily incorporates jealousy, homosexuality, teenage-boy humor, first love, and bullying into this funny and tragic glimpse into teenage life. Interpersonal relationships, decisions, mistakes and consequences, and grief are all presented with an authentic voice (some mature content and language) making this a terrific novel for HS boys. Give to fans of Herbach and Calame.  
Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

### Hostage Three

By: Nick Lake  
Bloomsbury, 2013  
ISBN: 9781619631236

Curriculum: *Hostages; Pirates; Survival*



After the suicide of her mother, Amy Fields seems determined to self-destruct until her father and stepmother decide to take her on a graduation cruise in their new yacht. A group of Somali pirates boards the yacht in the Arabian Sea, and as Amy learns more about their motives she begins to question her privileged upbringing. Tension, family, and romance play equal roles in this story with a bittersweet ending that high school students will find believable.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Waller K-8

### Second Impact

By: David Klass and Perri Klass  
Frances Foster Books, 2013  
ISBN: 978034379964

Curriculum: *Football; Conduct of life; Sports injuries;*



*Blogs; High schools*

Jerry Downing is the star quarterback for his high school's football team. This year he has the opportunity to lead his team to victory and claim the title of State Champions. Carla is the sports blogger for the school's paper and invites Jerry to give an insider's view of the game by contributing his own writing to the blog. As the season progresses and the wins keep coming, the tone of the blog begins to change as each writer tackles the tough questions of dealing with the danger involved with football.

When does the cost of winning come at too high of a price? *Second Impact* provides intense, exciting football action while also highlighting the inherent dangers associated with sports.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen  
TJ H.S.

**High School  
Nonfiction**

**Red Madness: How  
a Medical Mystery  
Changed What We  
Eat**

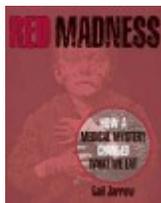
By: Gail Jarrow

Calkins Creek, 2014

ISBN: 9781590787328

*Curriculum: Pellagra; Epidemics;  
Scientific method;*

A horrible red rash, diarrhea, dementia, then death. These were the symptoms of the mysterious disease called pellagra that inflicted hundreds of thousands in the U.S. during the early 1900s. The cause unknown; filth, corn, heredity, par-



asites...all were blamed at one time, but it wasn't until Dr. Joseph Goldberger was enlisted to help that the true cause and cure were eventually discovered. Jarrow's thorough research is evident in this excellent examination of pellagra. A lengthy bibliography, extensive source notes, and additional resources are provided along with an awesome array of photographs, quotes, and first-hand accounts. While this book may have limited appeal, its production is of the highest quality.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**Never cut a tree  
down in the  
wintertime. Never  
make a negative  
decision in the  
low time. Never  
make your most  
important  
decisions when  
you are in your  
worst moods.  
Wait. Be patient.  
The storm will  
pass. The spring  
will come.**

Robert H. Schuller

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