This is the Good Stuff: Books You Don't Want to Miss!

Graphic Novels

In the second offering about Mirka, Mirka continues to battle her own demons as a mysterious doppelganger forces her into battle.

Gauld provides a sympathetic portrayal of Goliath.

Sadie believes that she’ll have an easier transition into her new school if she fakes a severe peanut allergy. Unfortunately for Sadie, things spiral out of control.

The adaptation of L’Engle’s Newbery winning book in which the Murry and O’Keefe children go in search of their missing father who was doing a top secret government experiment.

Miss Annie, a kitten, makes interesting observations about her human family and eagerly seeks the freedom of the outdoors.

Callie and her friends weather the storms and the joys of putting on a musical production of Moon over Mississippi.

A widowed dad who can’t find work gives his son all he can afford for his birthday, a cardboard box. That box, however, is the key to the dad, the son, and the neighbors coming to terms with deep hurts and denials in their lives and to moving forward. Action-packed while really highlighting the pain/emotion/stagnant lives.

Full Length Fiction

Buddy’s family gives her away because they are moving to the city. She ends up in the town of Erthyly where Mark, a young boy who has longed for a dog of his own for a long time, lives. But, Mark is not the only one in this town filled with longing. Luckily
circumstances work together to fulfill many hopes and dreams. Verse is sparse but achingly beautiful, captures the confusion, longing, hope of all involved. Good book for discussions of community, friendship, hope, etc.

Nonfiction

Introduction to rocks and minerals, how they are formed, used, etc.

The story of a small dog in Poland who gets stuck on an ice flow and is eventually rescued by a research boat.

Chin explores the concept of evolution by tracing the formation of the Galapagos Islands and the evolution of the animals that found their way there. A very approachable look at evolution.

Simple, straightforward story about how basketball was invented.

Details what kids throughout the world eat for lunch as well as the cultural aspects of the food.

Introduces frogs from various habitats around the world and their impact on the environment.

On a single spread, poetry detailing the homes that illustrated children are making while on the opposite spread a photo similar to what the children have made.

Details the happenings of animals on the day that they are born.

Based on a true story, an orphaned polar bear manages to survive against great odds.

Details the life of Nelson Mandela.
A biography of Helen Keller that doesn’t necessarily introduce new information but is a fresh offering for a younger generation that might not know her as well as adults.

Part of the Scientists in the Field Series, this book details the construction, launching, and discoveries of the robots that were expected to explore Mars for only 3 months but survived far longer than that.

The very accessible life story of Marcel Marceau.

In rhyming verse provides information about the many slaves who worked to build the white house.

Details the life of Babe Ruth.

**Picture Books**

A young girl and her father tend to the cows on their dairy farm every morning and every evening.

An awesome exploration of social/economic class. Sierra who lives in the inner city with her aunt who is a waitress has finally made a competitive soccer team. But, her games are on Saturdays, when her aunt has to work, and in the suburbs more than a bus ride away. When her aunt finally is able to make a Saturday game, the game in rained out. Sierra makes an important decision, she tells her coach that she has a need.

In this wordless picturebook, a young girl discovers a runaway slave hiding in her barn and secretly provides food and silence until the runaway can continue the journey to freedom.

Homer, an old dog, declines each family member’s invitation to leave the porch, but each family member returns with a gift and a memory. He ends his evening content and knowing that he is loved.

A three year old works through her emotions over the death of her grandfather, and he visits from Heaven to help her.

Multiple animals steal Bears stuffed teddy, and he eats each one in turn until he gets his favorite toy back.

In a world where there are no more plants, trees, or animals, a young boy discovers the last tiger. They become secret friends until the tiger is captured. The boy makes a discovery that will free the tiger and bring the world back to what it once was.

Two dogs, so alike in so many ways share most of their time together, except their days on opposite porches. But, then, a curious squirrel comes along.

Three cats play together and tangle words in a most interesting way.

Bear gets lost in the woods, ends up in the city in someone’s home and makes himself comfortable. Back home, the humans realize their home has been invaded. It is ultimately revealed that Baby Bear and Goldilocks have both grown up and the tables are reversed.

A brother and sister decide to have a lemonade stand on a cold, snowy, blustery day and while the sister teaches her little brother about counting money, he ends up teaching her about the true meaning of success.

Tai Shan and his father are separated during China’s Cultural Revolution. While his father is in a work camp, they fly kites to signal to one another that they are never far away.

Klassen, J. *This is Not My Hat.* Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2012. Gr. PK-3
A tiny fish steals a hat from a much bigger fish and doesn’t think he’ll suffer any consequences.

A white rabbit is afraid of the large, black rabbit that he believes is following him and tries to escape, only to run into a much more dangerous foe.

Details in awesome illustrations and stark beautiful language the pain, cold, and terror of war which makes the Christmas Truce, although brief, all the sweeter.

Two Chinese girls remember their trips to visit their aunt/uncle/cousins and the tradition that began when they found soybeans growing on a Midwestern farm. Based on a true story.

A young boy who can’t sleep, takes a walk with his father, wishes upon a star, and is reassured that everything will be fine despite the fact that his mother has died.

Ellen’s parents, like so many others, are elated that they can now have legal marriages, but Ellen and her parents decide to never forget the tradition of symbolically jumping the broom.

Tosh loves visiting with his grandmother, eating her homemade cookies, and hearing stories about the past, but he worries when it becomes harder and harder for her to remember things.

Emily’s younger brother loves butterflies and together they look for, chase, and make them. But, Emily’s brother is very sick and eventually dies. She copes with her grief and her loss/loneliness over the next few months.

A young boy is proud of the work that his mother does as a stonecutter, completing the work of the Cathedral of St. John in New York.

A young girl has plenty of spunk and confidence to do so many things when others aren’t around.


A magpie, gifted with a marble from his friend the mouse, decides to go in search of more and more, until his tree cannot hold it all. His mouse friends bring him to reality and help him to recover. Fascinating look at consumerism/hoarding/etc. Magpie has a tag on his leg with a number that is never explained in the book and would make for interesting speculation from older students.


A kind-hearted frog befriends what he thinks is a lost bird and seeks to help the bird to find its lost home.


Bear wants to tell all of his animal friends a story, but they are preparing for winter hibernation. When spring comes around, Bear has an opportunity to finally share it.


A young girl is overwhelmed with the care that her grandmother needs and that she has to help provide as she realizes her granny is now a completely different person due to dementia.


Although thought of as strange and a fool by many of the villagers, Anton Suchinski risks his own life to save Jews during the Jewish Holocaust. Based on a true story.


2013 Geisel Honor Book

Elephant and Piggie collect everything they could possibly need to go for a drive except a car!

After a Ms. Albert teaches a lesson on kindness, Chloe realizes that she should have taken the initiative among her friends to be nice to the new girl whose family is clearly struggling financially. Even more unfortunate for Chloe is that she won’t ever get a chance to make up for it because the new girl and her family move.


A mother explains to her daughter the history of the necklace that she is handing down to her and the history of all the women who wore it before her.

Poetry


Collier interprets Hughes’ poem by invoking the history of African American Pullman Porters. He uses the American flag as a metaphor for the transition of rights of African Americans. The illustrations are powerful if a bit flawed in some ways.


A mother and child are depicted in illustration of Hughes’ famous poem.


Reversed poems provide a fresh perspective on favorite fairy tales.


Sophisticated, beautiful poetry that ponders the existence of animals.

Yolanda Hood, Ph.D.

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