

Book Reviews for 2001

Goin? Someplace Special by Patricia C. McKissack; illustrated by Jerry Pinkney

Reading Level: Ages 4 - 8

?Tricia Ann lives in a southern town in the 1950s. This is her first trip alone and it?s filled with hurtful signs and people. But ?Tricia Ann is strengthened by her Grandma?s love and pride until she can reach that special someplace where ?ALL ARE WELCOME.? Winner of the Coretta Scott King Award for Pinkney?s illustrations.

Reviewer: HG

If the Shoe Fits by Alison Jackson; illustrated by Karla Firehammer

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 6

When the old woman who lives in the shoe takes her children to live somewhere else, they meet many interesting characters and discover that there?s no place like home.

Reviewer: PC

Score One for the Sloths by Helen Lester; illustrated by Lynn Munsinger

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 6

The author and illustrator of Tacky the Penguin have created another hilarious, offbeat picture book. This time the heroes are the students at Sleepy Valley Sloth School who enjoy full school days of doing nothing, in true sloth fashion, until the official representative of the Society for Organizing Sameness arrives.

Reviewer: SH

Sit Truman! By Dan Harper; illustrated by Cara Moser and Barry Moser

Reading Level: Ages 2 - 5

Extremely simple text and wonderful illustrations tell the story of a very large dog's day.

Reviewer: SH

The Frog Principal by Stephanie Calmenson; illustrated by Denise Brunkus

Reading Level: Grades K - 3

When the principal of P.S. 88 gets turned into a frog, he has to find a way to convince the teachers and students to let a talking frog be their principal. If you like this one, try Calmenson and Brunkus' The Principal's New Clothes.

Reviewer: PC

Mice and Beans by Pam Muoz Ryan; illustrated by Joe Cepeda

Reading Level: Grades K - 3

While Rosa Mara is planning a birthday party for her granddaughter, the mice in her house are busy too.

Reviewer: PC

Some From the Moon Some From the Sun: Poems and Songs for Everyone by Margot Zemach

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 8

Zemach's final book features favorite poems and songs accompanied by her wonderful drawings. Includes a few pages of her early work and a short biography.

Reviewer: PC

Petite Rouge: A Cajun Red Riding Hood by Mike Artell; illustrated by Jim Harris

Reading Level: Age 5 and up

Oh? Claude the alligator is up to no good in this clever Cajun version of Little Red Riding Hood. But Petite Rouge duck and her cat, TeJean, are not easily fooled as you will see when you travel with them through the Louisiana swamp to Grand-mre?s house.

Accompanied by delightful illustrations, the rhyming text, presented in a lively Cajun dialect, makes this book a read-aloud must--?an? dat?s fo? tru?!?

Reviewer: NB

Whose Shoes? by Anna Grossnickle Hines; illustrated by LeUyen Pham

Reading Level: Ages 2 - 5

This guessing book is about a playful mouse trying on different pairs of shoes. But whose shoes are they?

Reviewer: PC

How About a Hug? by Nancy Carlson

Reading Level Ages 2 - 6

This warm, comforting book reminds us that there are many occasions for hugs. Charmingly illustrated with Carlson?s signature pig, the pictures complement the text perfectly.

Reviewer: PC

Trouble on the Tracks by Kathy Mallat

Reading Level: Ages 2 - 6

The engineer of this train is having some very unusual trouble on the tracks. This short story is perfect for young train lovers.

Reviewer: PC

Molly and the Magic Wishbone by Barbara McClintock

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 6

This beautifully illustrated story is about a cat named Molly who gets a magic wishbone and can wish for anything she wants. She thinks about her choice very carefully and just when she is ready to wish, she finds there is something she wants more.

Reviewer: PC

You Read to Me, I'll Read to You by Mary Ann Hoberman; illustrated by Michael Emberley

Reading Level: Ages 4 - 8

With parts for two voices, this book is meant to be read with someone special! The funny illustrations only add to the fun.

Reviewer: PC

Widget by Lyn Rossiter McFarland pictures by Jim McFarland

Reading Level: Ages 2 - 6

Widget, a stray dog, acts like a cat in order to be accepted by Mrs. Diggs six "girls." Will he be able to act like a dog when circumstances demand it?

Reviewer: SH

Wait! No Paint! by Bruce Whatley

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 6

The story of the Three Little Pigs moves along just fine on its usual path, until the illustrator starts having problems in this silly fractured fairytale.

Reviewer: SH

What Do You Know! by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 5

This is a fun book for sharing, as it involves many activities, including counting and ?finding?.

Reviewer: PC

Larky Mavis by Brock Cole

Reading Level: Ages 4 - 6

Mavis is mooning about when she trips over three peanuts. One tastes like liver, one tastes like pudding and the third one contains a baby that only Mavis can see.

Reviewer: SH

Spike in the Kennel by Paulette Bogan

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 5

Spike isn't sure he is going to enjoy his first stay in the kennel with its doggy smell and strange food, but he soon realizes how fun it can be to spend a night away from home.

Reviewer: SH

Bully by Judith Caseley

Reading Level: Ages 4 - 8

When Jack (who used to be his friend) starts bullying him, Mickey asks for advice from everyone in his family. Judith Caseley has written another warm, funny book about growing up and getting used to new things.

Reviewer: PC

Sophie?s Masterpiece: A Spider?s Tale by Eileen Spinelli; illustrated by Jane Dyer

Reading Level: Age 4 - 6

The story of an artistic house spider who moves several times within Beekman's Boardinghouse, until she finally finds a place where she is welcome and her talents are appreciated.

Reviewer: PC

The Reluctant Flower Girl by Lynne Barasch

Reading Level: Age 4 - 7

April isn't happy about her older sister getting married, and she's not even excited about being her flower girl. She is worried about losing her best friend. So when something stops the wedding, she has to decide what she wants more ? her sister or her sister's happiness.

Reviewer: PC

The War by Anas Vaugelade

Reading Level: Grades 1 - 3

Nobody even remembers what started the war between the Reds and the Blues, but that doesn't stop them from fighting every day. When Prince Fabien is forced to participate in it the results are tragic and he is forced to introduce a new army ? the Yellow one.

Reviewer: PC

The Great Gracie Chase: Stop That Dog! By Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Mark Teague

Reading Level: Ages 2 - 7

Gracie Rose is a dog who enjoys her quiet life...until the painters come. They put her out of the house and she discovers an open gate, so she decides to take a walk ALL BY HERSELF!

Reviewer: SH

Five Creatures by Emily Jenkins, illustrated by Tomek Bogacki

Reading Level: Ages 4 - 7

In a house with a mother, a father, a child and two cats each of the creatures have similar and

different traits and talents. The reader will enjoy discovering which three creatures have orange hair while two have gray and which four creatures can open cupboards while one can crawl under the fridge.

Reviewer: SH

Butterflies Fly by Yvonne Winer, illustrated by Karen Lloyd-Jones

Reading Level: Age 4 and up

The beautiful illustrations and quiet, rhyming text will have you looking for butterflies everywhere you go. An identification guide in the back will help you sort them all out.

Reviewer: PC

The Web Files by Margie Palatini, illustrated by Richard Egielski

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 4

Ducktective Web and his partner Bill investigate the case of the picked peck of purple almost-pickled peppers in this Dragnet-meets-Mother Goose romp.

Reviewer: SH

We Got My Brother at the Zoo by John and Ann Hassett

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 5

Mary Margaret Morrison is not very pleased with her new brother. In fact, she is sure they got him at the zoo, or maybe the monsters in the closet left him behind, or perhaps he was once part of a band of wild monkeys, or...

Reviewer: SH

One Riddle, One Answer by Lauren Thompson, illustrated by Linda S. Wingerter

Reading Level: Ages 6 and up

Can a princess who loves numbers find a husband who can solve riddles? Read this beautifully illustrated story with someone who knows about numbers. If you get hooked on women who love

riddles, try *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady* by Selina Hastings.

Reviewer: PC

My Sister Gracie by Gillian Johnson

Reading Level: Ages 4 - 7

Fabio is an only dog who wags his tail with excitement at the thought of a brother joining his family. Imagine his surprise when the new addition is not at all what he was expecting.

Reviewer: PC

The Tale of Tricky Fox retold by Jim Aylesworth, illustrated by Barbara McClintock

Ages 5 and up

Aylesworth and McClintock have created a fresh, funny retelling of this classic tale. Their other collaborations include *Aunt Pitty Patty's Piggy* and *The Gingerbread Man*.

Reviewer: PC

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson illustrations by E.B. Lewis

Reading Level: Ages 4 - 8

Despite the fence that divides their town, and parental warnings not to venture beyond it, two little girls from opposite sides manage to form a friendship.

Reviewer: SH

Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children by Sandra L. Pinkney photographs by Myles C. Pinkney

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 6

Wonderful photographs illustrate a poetic celebration of African-American diversity.

Reviewer: SH

Max the Stubborn Little Wolf by Marie-Odile Judes illustrated by Martine Bourre

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 7

When Max, a young wolf, informs Papa Wolf that he wants to be a florist instead of a hunter Papa Wolf becomes angry and tries everything he can think of to make his son forget about flowers.

Reviewer: SH

Dial-a-Ghost by Eva Ibbotson; illustrated by Kevin Hawkes

Reading Level: Grades 3 5

Evil Uncle Fulton wants to kill ten-year-old Oliver, the new owner of Helton Hall, in order to take his inheritance. The Wilkinsons, a nice family of ghosts, are looking for a new home. The Shriekers, evil ghosts who enjoy hurting young children, need to be relocated, and Miss Pringle and Mrs. Mannering are just trying to help everyone with their the Dial-a-Ghost agency. If you like Roald Dahls off-beat novels or the Series of Unfortunate Events books, you will enjoy this slightly silly, sort of spooky ghost story.

Reviewer: SH

The Secrets of Ms. Snickles Class by Laurie Miller Hornik

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 4

From the beginning, the kids in Ms. Snickles class can see she is no ordinary teacher. On the very first day, she throws away their test and gives free time instead. She does have one rule: No telling secrets. But will Lacey, the tattletale, be able to resist telling secrets? Written by a real live teacher, this funny and original story will remind you of the importance of keeping secrets. For another great book about an unusual teacher, try A Book of Coupons by Susie Hoch Morgenstern.

Reviewer: PC

Lord of the Nutcracker Men by Iain Lawrence

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 6

Johnny was ten the year the Great War started. He's proud when his father leaves that fall to fight the Germans. Johnny is not happy when his mother sends him away to live in the country with his aunt. He hates being there. Johnny's only comfort is the soldiers his father makes for him. Every letter his father sends from the front contains another soldier. Johnny energetically stages elaborate battles in realistic trenches. But Johnny's pleasure fades as time passes and the battles become much, much too real.

Reviewer: SJS

The Thumb in the Box by Ken Roberts

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 4

In the village of New Auckland, everything is unusual. From the village pet to the new fire truck, you will be smiling just as much as Leon while you read this one. For another book about an unusual and obscure Canadian village, try Everything on a Waffle by Polly Horvath.

Reviewer: PC

The Monsters of Morley Manor by Bruce Coville

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 5

Anthony buys a whole lot of trouble when he buys a box of monster models at an estate sale. His fascination with the detailed models turns to horror when he accidentally spills water on one of the monster's hands and the fingers begin to wiggle. Instead of getting rid of them Anthony revives them all when he decides to plunge them all in water. Thus begins his dangerous, madcap adventures with the monsters of Morley Manor.

Reviewer: SJS

The Other Side of Truth by Beverley Naidoo

Reading Level: Grades 5 - 8

One minute 12-year-old Sade is getting ready for school, the next she, her father and younger brother are standing around the body of her murdered mother. The bullet had been intended for her father, an outspoken journalist. That same day Sade and her younger brother are smuggled out of Nigeria and, through a series of accidents, abandoned in London where they have to

struggle to survive on their own.

Other stories of children caught in the middle of political violence are *Grab Hands* and *Run* by Frances Temple and *The Honorable Prison* by Lyll Becerra de Jenkins

Reviewer: SJS

Boston Jane: An Adventure by Jennifer L. Holm

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 8

Sixteen-year old Jane has spent the last five years at Miss Hepplewhite's Young Ladies Academy transforming herself from a feisty, independent tomboy into a proper Philadelphia lady of 1854. She travels to Washington to marry her fianc, William, only to find him gone. Her etiquette lessons haven't exactly prepared her for life on the frontier. Will Jane rediscover herself and maybe a different love in the process? From the author of *Our Only May Amelia*.

Reviewer: HG

Breaking Through by Francisco Jimnez

Reading Level: Grades 4 and up

In this sequel to *The Circuit*, Jimnez continues the story of his family's struggle to survive as migrant workers in California in the late 1950s. Consumed by school, work and family, Pancho has little time for adolescent pursuits, but still manages to hold onto his dreams.

Reviewer: PC

Blister by Susan Shreve

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 6

Alyssa Reed feels like she has no control over things in her life, not to mention over the people in her life. Her mother cries and sleeps too much, while her father has moved out and distanced himself from them. Can she keep it together when everything is coming apart?

Reviewer: PC

Straw into Gold by Gary D. Schmidt

Reading Level: Grades 4 ? 8

Tousle has lived in an isolated cottage with his magical father for as long as he can remember. Then, on his first trip to the town of Wolverham, he is separated from his father, stands up to a king, and is told he has seven days to solve a riddle. If he fails, he, the blind boy he has been given as his companion, and a hundred innocent villagers will be killed. If you like variations on fairytales, such as Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine or Spinners by Donna Jo Napoli, you will enjoy this book.

Reviewer: SH

Lonesome Bear by Clay Carmichael

Grades K - 2

When Bear loses Clara, he finds a sympathetic rabbit and a cynical cat. Can they help him find Clara?

Reviewer: PC

Three Days by Donna Jo Napoli

Reading Level: Grades 4-6

11-year-old Jackie is enjoying a trip to Italy with her father when he collapses by the side of the road one night. Two men stop to help the stranded girl. But the men Jackie thinks are her rescuers turn out to be her kidnappers. They bring her to their home and to the woman Claudia. Unable to understand Italian, Jackie must figure out what is happening in order to escape. The story is told from Jackie's point of view so the reader gradually learns as Jackie does. This great thriller is by the author of Stones in Water.

Reviewer: HG

A River Apart by Robert Sutherland

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 8

In this gripping tale set during the War of 1812, Jamie Shaw tries to preserve his friendship with

Jared, his best friend and Leah, Jared's sister and the girl Jamie loves. Living on opposite sides of the St Lawrence River, less than a mile apart, the boys find themselves in opposite camps as Canada and the United States go to war. Will their lives ever be the same?

Reviewer: HG

Fat Camp Commandos by Daniel Pinkwater; illustrated by Andy Rash

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 5

When they're sent to Camp Noo Yoo to slim down, three fat kids run away and get their revenge. When a policeman catches them in the act, they try something a little more constructive. Includes underwear, hamburgers, and snakes.

Reviewer: PC

Notes from a Liar and Her Dog by Gennifer Choldenko

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 6

Eleven-year-old Antonia is on her own. Even though she has parents and two sisters, Antonia knows they neither love nor understand her. Her mother has made it plain over and over again that she doesn't even LIKE her daughter. In response Antonia lies. She lies about almost everything. Why should she let her family know anything about her?

Other good stories about isolated children are: There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom by Louis Sachar and Nothing's Fair in Fifth Grade by Barthe DeClements.

Reviewer: SJS

The Wizard's Dilemma by Diane Duane

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 7

Fans of Duane's 'Young Wizards' series take note. Nita and Kit are back in their fifth adventure. Just when Nita is at her most vulnerable, she must face a challenge that could end in the loss of what she loves most in the world.

If you've never had the pleasure of the 'Young Wizards', begin with So You Want to Be a Wizard. If you are already a fan, try Charmed Life by Diana Wynne Jones and A Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula Le Guin.

Reviewer: SJS

The Great Whale of Kansas by Richard Jennings

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 6

He was digging a hole in the backyard when he found the tip of a large fossil. The deeper he dug the more interested he grew. He wanted to dig it out himself. Unfortunately, he attracted the attention of the Natural History Museum, the state government and the national press.

Reviewer: SJS

Focus by Sallie Lowenstein

Reading Level: Grades 5 - 8

In the future, if you turn 17 without being genetically Augmented to be an expert in your chosen career, you may not continue your education, you must wear a U-A badge, and you will become an embarrassment and financial drain for your family. Therefore, when 15 year old Andrew decides not to be Augmented his diplomat father is forced to take a posting on a strange primitive planet in order to keep his family together.

Reviewer: SH

The Many Adventures of Johnny Mutton by James Proimos

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 4

Mama Mutton never notices that the baby she found on her doorstep was a baby sheep and the townfolks don't either (although they DO realize there is something different about young Johnny). If you enjoyed the Adventures of Captain Underpants by Dav Pilkey, or The Blue Moose by Daniel Pinkwater, you will like the off-beat humor of Johnny Mutton.

Reviewer: SH

A Book of Coupons by Susie Morgenstern

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 4

From the author of Secret Letters from 0 to 10, comes this short, entertaining story about a very unusual teacher.

Reviewer: PC

Harry the Poisonous Centipede's Big Adventure: Another Story to Make You Squirm by Lynne Reid Banks; illustrated by Tony Ross

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 4

When Harry the centipede pokes his head out of his hole to look at the no-top-world he is captured by a Hoo-Min and must find a way to escape in this sequel to Harry the Poisonous Centipede: A Story to Make You Squirm.

Reviewer: SH

Runaway Radish by Jessie Haas; illustrated by Margot Apple

Reading Level: Grades 1 - 3

Radish is a good pony, except when he is a little bit bad, which makes him a very good teacher. But after Judy, and then Nina, get too big for him, what is there for a pony to do?

Reviewer: PC

Girlhearts by Norma Fox Mazer

Reading Level: Grades 5 - 7

Sarabeth Silver's life is turned upside down when her mother's death leaves her at the mercy of well meaning friends. Another story of a teen alone is Thin Ice by Marsha Qualey.

Reviewer: SJS

The School Story by Andrew Clements, illustrated by Brian Selznick

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 7

Andrew Clements hits another homerun with this fresh and funny story about a girl and her

novel. With the help of her twelve-year-old agent (best friend Zoe) and her English teacher (the very brave Ms. Clayton), Natalie just might be able to get her novel into her favorite editor's hands. If you liked *Frindle*, *The Landry News*, and *The Janitor's Boy*, Clements will not disappoint you this time.

Reviewer: PC

Aquamarine by Alice Hoffman

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 6

Just as Claire and Hailey are about to say good-bye after their last magical summer, they discover a beautiful creature who helps them hold on even while they let go.

Reviewer: PC

Everything on a Waffle by Polly Horvath

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 6

Primrose Squarp is the only one who thinks her parents are still alive. But until they come back, she will have to live with Miss Perfidy and then Uncle Jack and then Evie and Bert (her foster parents). Somewhere in there she loses her sweaters (and some of her digits), sets fire to a guinea pig, and eats dinner at *The Girl on the Red Swing*. This new novel by the author of *The Trolls* (a National Book Award Finalist) has important things to say about faith, hope and love, not to mention the recipes at the end of each chapter.

Reviewer: PC

The Year of Miss Agnes by Kirkpatrick Hill

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 5

Ten-year-old Fred and her classmates really like Miss Agnes, but teachers don't last very long in their small Alaskan village. The students can see Miss Agnes is a very different kind of teacher, but when it comes to leaving, will she be just like the others?

Reviewer: PC

A Year Down Yonder by Richard Peck

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 7

Mary Alice isn't very happy about leaving Chicago to go and stay with Grandma Dowdel in downstate Illinois, but when it comes time to leave, she finds it hard. Set in 1937, this sequel to A Long Way From Chicago is the latest Newbery award winner.

Reviewer: PC

The Giggler Treatment by Roddy Doyle

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 5

This book is about dog poo. Really.

Reviewer: PC

The Gospel According to Larry by Janet Tashjian

Reading Level: Grades 8 - 10

Like many other teens, 17-year-old Josh has a website. Josh doesn't use his own name instead calling himself Larry. As Larry, Josh parodies commercials and writes witty rants about consumer culture and celebrities. Soon the site, www.gospelaccordingtolarry.com, receives a barrage of e-mail and is written up in the press. Everyone is speculating about Larry's identity. Even though Josh wants to remain anonymous, he begins including pictures of his possessions and other clues in his sermons. Soon what started out as a fun alter ego becomes something much more sinister

Of Sound Mind by Jean Ferris

Reading Level: Grades 7 - 10

Theo's parents have always relied on him. As the only hearing person in the household, Theo has been interpreting for his mercurial artist mother and gentle father for years. Theo loves his family but resents the demands of his difficult mother and feels smothered by his clinging younger brother, until he meets a special girl who helps him come to terms with his unique family.

Reviewer: SJS

Takeoffs and Landings by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Reading Level: Grades 6 - 8

Lori Lawson, popular freshman at a small town high school, and her awkward, insecure older brother, Chuck, accompany their mother on a trip flying around the country. During the emotional two weeks, they begin to understand themselves and to reconnect to each other. The story is told through Lori's and Chuck's alternating perspectives, with Mom's point of view interspersed. This is a good read for anyone who has felt estranged from parents or siblings, for popular kids who have ever felt insecure, or for those who might have suffered at the hands of classmates.

Reviewer: HG

Being Dead: Stories by Vivian Vande Velde

Reading Level: Grade 7 and up

Each of the seven stories in the collection deal with death and ghosts in seven unique ways. Ranging from traditional hauntings, and ghosts out for revenge, to an eerie love story this collection will appeal to the ghoul in everyone.

Reviewer: SH

The Hole by Guy Burt

Reading Level: Grade 8 and up

It was supposed to be a joke, the best school prank of all time. The five teens eagerly agreed to Marytn's plan. They willingly climbed the ladder down to the old cellar and set up their camp. Marytn was going to let them out in three days. Only later did they wonder how they ever could have been so stupid.

If you enjoy this psychological thriller try: I Am the Cheese by Robert Cormier and Lord of the Flies by William Golding.

Reviewer: SJS

Anne Frank and Me by Cherie Bennett and Jeff Gottesfeld

Reading Level: Grades 6 - 8

Tenth-grader Nicole Burns awakens to find herself a Jewish girl in Nazi Occupied Paris. The award-winning play has been adapted into a wonderful novel combining family, romance, betrayal, and heroism. There's much in common with *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen and *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*.

Reviewer: HG

Breathing Underwater by Alexandra Flinn

Reading Level: Grades 8 - 10

Sixteen-year-old Nick is infuriated when Caitlin, his girlfriend, obtains a restraining order against him. Sentenced by the court to counseling, Nick reluctantly begins to examine himself and his relationships. For a girl's point of view of an abusive relationship read: *Dreamland* by Sarah Dessen.

Reviewer: SJS

Cirque Du Freak: A Living Nightmare by Darren Shan

Reading Level: Grades 6 - 8

Steven's fascination with a creature of the night draws his friend Darren into a terrifying adventure.

If you enjoy this dark tale try: *Thirsty* by M.T. Anderson or *Companions of the Night* by Vivian Vande Velde.

Reviewer: SJS

Lirael, Daughter of the Clayr by Garth Nix

Reading Level: Grades 6 - 8

In this tale two misfits, Lirael, the only daughter of Clayr without the gift of the Sight, and Prince Sameth, who fears the very thing he is to master, must join forces to battle the powers of darkness.

Other fantasy tales featuring heroic girls include: *The Blue Sword* by Robin McKinley, *Alanna: The First Adventure* by Tamora Pierce, and *So You Want to Be a Wizard* by Diane Duane.

Reviewer: SJS

You Don't Know Me by David Klass

Reading Level: Grades 6 - 9

Physically abused by his mother's boyfriend, John creates an alternate world for himself in this compelling, sometimes funny, sometimes sad, book about the loneliness of adolescence. If you were drawn to *A Child Called It* and *The Lost Boy* by David Pelzer, this will pull you in as well.

Reviewer: PC

The Sterkarm Handshake by Susan Price

Reading Level: Grade 7 - adult

In the 21st century FUP, a private corporation, has discovered time travel. Andrea Mitchell, a young anthropologist, works for FUP in the 16th century living with and studying the Sterkarm clan. FUP, by authority of a contract with the kings of Scotland and England, rules Sterkarm land, which they plan to strip of its natural resources. They are sure the simple Sterkarms can be easily controlled. When Per, the son of the Chief of the Sterkarm clan, is mortally wounded in a forbidden border war, Andrea brings him to the 21st century to be healed. Stunned by the powers in "Elf-land" Per recognizes the danger to his people and swears to keep them from his land forever.

Another engrossing time travel novel with a similar theme is Michael Crichton's *Timeline*.

Reviewer: SJS

Shadow of the Hegemon by Orson Scott Card

Grades 6 - Adult

Card continues Bean's story in this gripping sequel to *Ender's Shadow*. The Formic War is over. The children from Battle School have been sent home, but these young geniuses will not live in peace for long. Very soon after their return the members of Ender's jeech are kidnapped. Only Bean remains free to somehow block the machinations of an evil genius.

Reviewer: SJS

The Transmogrification of Roscoe Wizzle by David Elliott; read by David Krumholtz

Grades K - 4

Roscoe Wizzle's slightly odd life becomes increasingly so after a classmate points out that he is beginning to look a lot like a bug. If you enjoy listening to this book you might enjoy reading Shoebag by Mary James.

Reviewer: SH

The Langley Schools Music Project: Innocence & Despair

All Ages

This charming recording is like a trip back to the 1970s. Performed by rural Canadian elementary school students in a school gymnasium, their enthusiasm and excitement is obvious.

Reviewer: PC

The Dark Side of Nowhere by Neal Shusterman; read by Jason Harris

Grades 4 and up

Jason Miller thinks his hometown of Billington is boring, but when exciting things start happening, will Jason be the same? Well read by Jason Harris, this science fiction novel will satisfy an appetite for aliens.

Reviewer: PC

The Last Book in the Universe by Rodman Philbrick

Grades 5 - 8

When Spaz goes to Ryter's stackbox to bust him down, he finds a crazy old man who is trying to write a book in a world where nobody reads. But when Spaz needs to leave their latch and go on a dangerous mission, he reluctantly lets Ryter accompany him. During their journey, Ryter

teaches Spaz to hold onto the few things that can be kept in their futuristic world ? memories, dreams, experience. After all, Spaz just may be the last book in the universe. This book on tape is wonderfully read by Jeremy Davies.

Reviewer: PC

Spy Kids starring Antonio Banderas, Carla Gugino, Alexa Vega and Daryl Sabara

Ages 7 - 11

Carmen and Juni Cortez are drawn into the world of international espionage after their ?retired? spy parents are captured by an evil genius in this fast paced adventure. Perfect for young James Bond wannabes. The library also owns this title in both VHS and DVD formats.

Reviewer: SH

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Ages 12 - 15

From the beginning, it?s obvious that freshman Melinda Sordino is getting off to a very bad start in high school. What?s not so obvious is the reason why. Told in Melinda?s own voice, and well read by actress Mandy Siegfried, this is one of those rare stories that makes you laugh and cry. If you?d rather read the book, [click here](#).

Reviewer: PC

Into the Land of the Unicorns by Bruce Coville

Grade 3 - 6

When Cara suddenly finds herself in the unfamiliar world of Luster, she is lucky enough to find new friends who will help her bring her grandmother?s message to the Queen.

Coville is joined by a full cast in this reading of his exciting first entry in the Unicorn Chronicles series. The library also owns the book and its sequel is *The Song of the Wanderer*.

Reviewer: PC

The Bad Beginning by Lemony Snicket; read by Tim Curry

Grades 3 - 5

This excellent recording of the first book in the highly popular A Series of Unfortunate Events includes an unusual interview with the author. The library also owns a recording of The Reptile Room (book #2 in the series) as well as print copies of all of the books in the series.

Reviewer: PC

The Gate in the Wall by Ellen Howard

Grades 4 - 5

At age ten, Emma Deane has already been working at the silk mills for three years when she finds herself locked out one day. Entering a gate she'd never noticed before, Emma finds herself next to a body of water she's never seen before, and soon her life on "the bank" seems like a distant memory. This recording is wonderfully narrated by Jenny Sterlin, but if you'd rather read the book, [click here](#).

Reviewer: PC

First Fun with Spanish

Ages 3 - 7

This introductory Spanish language learning video follows Isabel and her family through a busy day. Kids will enjoy watching them go through the same routines they are so familiar with, as well as looking for the yellow duck that appears in every scene. First Fun with French is also available in the library.

Reviewer: PC

Postman Pat Takes the Bus

Ages 3 - 6

Postman Pat is Greendale's beloved postman, delivering mail with his little red van. In these four episodes, Pat gets a new van that is also a bus, he predicts the weather, he finds things, and he loses the keys to his red van. Kids will like Pat and his fellow villagers, and especially his cat, Jess. More of Pat's adventures can be found in Postman Pat and the Tuba.

Reviewer: PC

Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World by Jennifer Armstrong

Grades 4 and older

This is a horrible, terrible, completely true story, wonderfully read by Taylor Mali. When you are done listening, check out the book so you can see the pictures. Still not satisfied? Check out one of the other recent books on the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition.

Reviewer: PC

We Rode the Orphan Trains by Andrea Warren

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 6

This follow-up to Warren's Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story, tells of eight more orphan train riders. Their fascinating stories will have you thinking about families and history in new ways.

Reviewer: PC

When Riddles Come Rumbling: Poems to Ponder by Rebecca Kai Dotlich; illustrated by Karen Dugan

Reading Level: Grades K - 3

For kids who like poetry and riddles, this book offers riddles in poetic form. The pictures will help you figure out these puzzling verses.

Reviewer: PC

Kate Culhane: A Ghost Story by Michael Hague

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 6

When Kate accidentally disturbs the grave of an old miser she is forced to carry his ghost to town and help him drain the blood from the man she loves.

Reviewer: SH

Alone Across the Arctic: One Woman's Epic Journey by Dog Team by Pam Flowers with Ann Dixon

Reading Level: Grades 5 and up

In December of 1992, Pam Flowers began an adventure in which she, and her eight faithful sled dogs, retraced the 1923 Arctic expedition of Knud Rasmussen. Combining narrative, diary entries, and photographs this book is a fascinating account of her remarkable trip, which armchair travelers of any age will enjoy.

Reviewer: SH

We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History by Phillip Hoose

Reading Level: Grades 6 and up

This book contains over sixty fascinating biographies of children and young adults who played a roll in U.S. History, from a twelve-year-old boy who sailed with Columbus to a modern girl who became an environmental activist at the age of nine.

Reviewer: SH

The Brothers Grimm: Two Lives, One Legacy by Donald R. Hettinga

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 6

Once upon a time there were two brothers, named Wilhelm and Jacob, who collected stories and wrote them down. They lived very closely for most of their lives, sharing both their home and their work. They were real and famous and this book tells the story of their lives.

Reviewer: PC

Margaret Knight: Girl Inventor by Marlene Targ Brill; illustrated by Joanne Friar

Reading Level: Grades 1 - 3

Margaret Knight's first-known invention saved lives and came when she was only twelve years

old. This inspiring story will make readers think about machines (and twelve year old girls) in new ways.

Reviewer: PC

Real-Life Diaries: Inspiring True Stories from Celebrities and Real Teens.

Reading Level: Grades 6 - 12

These true stories of difficult times from celebrities and real teens are inspirational and interesting.

Reviewer: PC

I Am Arachne: Fifteen Greek and Roman Myths by Elizabeth Spire; illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein

Reading Level: Grades 3 and up

Would you have opened Pandora's box? If you were Orpheus, could you resist looking back at Eurydice? These first person accounts, wonderfully illustrated by Gerstein, show that there are many different sides to a story.

Reviewer: PC

My Father's Keeper: Children of Nazi Leaders: An Intimate History of Damage and Denial by Stephan Lebert

Reading Level: Grades 8 and up

Could a godchild of Adolf Hitler become a normal adult? When Stephan Lebert's journalist father died, Stephan discovered a series of interviews his father conducted in 1959 with some of the children of Hitler's henchmen. The author, also a journalist, tracked them down and interviewed many of them again. Combining both his father's and his own interviews, biographies of each subject and his own musings, Lebert has crafted a book that will keep his readers awake far into the night.

Reviewer: SJS

Love to Mam: A Tribute to Mothers, edited by Pat Mora, illustrated by Paula S. Barragn M.

Reading Level: Grades K - 5

This well selected collection of poetry is like a love song to mothers everywhere. Share it with a Mom that you know!

Reviewer: PC

More True Lies: 18 Tales for You to Judge, told by George Shannon, illustrated by John O'Brien

Reading Level: Grades K - 4

These clever stories are full of truth and lies ? will you be able to tell the difference? If you can't get enough of these stimulating stories, check out the first volume, True Lies.

Reviewer: PC

Sir Cumference and the First Round Table: A Math Adventure by Cindy Neuschwander; illustrated by Wayne Geehan

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 4

In this story the clever knight Sir Cumference, his (even cleverer) wife, Lady Di of Ameter, and their son Radius, help King Arthur solve a problem.

Reviewer: PC

The Golden Mare, the Firebird, and the Magic Ring retold and illustrated by Ruth Sanderson

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 5

Based on Russian folklore, this tale tells of a magnificent horse, his young rider, and a jealous tsar. The vibrant pictures are especially well suited to the story.

Reviewer: PC

Guts: The True Stories Behind Hatchet and the Brian Books by Gary Paulsen

Reading Level: Grades 6 and older

In this unusual memoir, Gary Paulsen describes the events in his life (such as plane crashes, moose attacks and living off the land) that inspired his novel Hatchet and its sequels.

Reviewer: SH

Art Fraud Detective by Anna Nilsen

Reading Level: Grades 2 - 5

This fascinating art book has a magnifying glass so you can spot the "forgeries" and try and figure out which of the art fraud suspects painted them. A fun way to learn more about some of the world's great masters and their techniques.

Reviewer: PC

Master Man: A Tall Tale of Nigeria told by Aaron Shepard illustrated by David Wisniewski

Reading Level: Ages 3 - 7

When Shadusa, the strongest man in his village, begins to call himself "Master Man" he incurs the wrath of an even greater Master Man. If you like this story another tale of battling giants you will enjoy is Fin M'Coul: The Giant of Knockmany Hill retold by Tomie de Paola

Reviewer: SH

Shipwrecked! The True Adventures of a Japanese Boy by Rhoda Blumberg

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 6

When fourteen-year-old Manjiro is shipwrecked, it takes him twelve years to get back to his home in Japan. His incredible adventures on land and at sea would be hard to believe, if it weren't for the fact that they are completely true!

Reviewer: PC

Teen Angst? Naaah--A Quasi-Autobiography by Ned Vizzini

Reading Level: Grades 7 and up

Ned's name is one letter off from what he is a nerd. But that doesn't keep this sketchy account of his junior and senior high years from being hilariously funny. Jump in and follow Ned as he meets Nintendo, jumps turnstiles, and heads to Hooters. It's a real-life read-alike of *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13* by Sue Townsend

Reviewer: PC

It Takes a Dog to Raise a Village: True Stories of Remarkable Canine Vagabonds by Ruth Gordon

Reading Level: Grades 4 - 6

Animal lovers will enjoy this collection of nine, true stories about free-spirited dogs that belonged to nobody but themselves, yet were cherished by the communities in which they lived.

Reviewer: SH

Groom Your Room: Terrific Touches to Brighten Your Bedroom! from the American Girl Library

Reading Level: Grades 3 - 6

This fun book not only gives you great ideas for decorating your room ? it shows you how to do it! When you're done redecorating your room, check out the American Girl Library's *Clever Letters: Fun Ways to Wiggle Your Words* by Laura Allen, so you can tell a friend about your cool, new room.

Reviewer: PC

New Spanish and Bilingual Books

Si llevas un ratn al cine por/by Laura Numeroff; ilustrado por/illustrated by Felicia Bond

Reading Level: preescolar ? nivel 1 / preschool ? 1

Empezando con una visita al cine y continuando con un viaje por la Navidad, este libro precioso les encantar a los nios a quienes les gusta los dos.

Starting with a visit to the movies and continuing with a journey through Christmas, this charming book will please children who like both. [Click here for the English edition.](#)

Reviewer: PC

Bizcocho por/by Alyssa Satin Capucilli; ilustrado por/illustrated by Pat Schories

Reading Level: preescolar ? nivel 1 / preschool ? grade 1

Bizcocho el perrito es muy como un nio - no puede dormirse sin su agua, su mueca, su abrazo, etcetera.

Biscuit the puppy is very much like a child ? he can?t go to sleep without some water, and his doll, and a hug, etc. [Click here for the English edition.](#)

Reviewer: PC

Mi mundo por/by Margaret Wise Brown; ilustrado por/illustrated by Clement Hurd

Reading Level: preescolar ? K / preschool - K

Escrito como un compaero de Buenas Noches, Luna, este libro cuenta de las cosas de un conejito y como se comparen a las cosas de sus padres.

Written as a companion to Goodnight Moon, this book tells about a little rabbit?s things and how they compare to his parents? things.

Reviewer: PC

The Last Doll/La ltima mueca by/por Diane Gonzales Bertrand illustrated by Anthony Accardo

Reading Level: Grade K - 3

Este cuento se trata de una mueca muy especial que se llama Sarita. Al principio, Sarita tiene miedo de que nadie la va a comprar nunca, pero al final se encuentra un buen hogar ? y tambien asiste a una quinceaera.

This story is about a very special doll named Sarita. At first, Sarita is afraid that nobody will ever buy her, but finally finds a good home - and also gets to go to a quinceaera.

Reviewer: PC

El Ratoncito Pequeo/The Little Mouse: A Nursery Rhyme in Spanish and English as remembered by Pipina Salas-Porras; illustrated by Jos Cisneros

Reading Level: Preschool - K

Esta rima deliciosa es un poco espantosa ? pero todava muy divertida.

This delightful bilingual rhyme is a little scary but also very entertaining.

Reviewer: PC

Me gusto como soy! por Nancy Carlson

Reading Level: Preschool - Kindergarten

En este libro precioso, una cochinita habla de su mejor amiga s misma.

In this precious picture book, a little pig tells about her best friend - herself. The English title is I Like Me!

Reviewer: PC

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