

Immi

Written and illustrated by Karin Littlewood
Gullane £10.99 ISBN: 978-1862338036



Immi is an irresistible picture book about a small Inuit girl who is delighted to find a series of small treasures on her fishing line. She decorates her igloo with the bright flowers, starfish, feathers and leaves

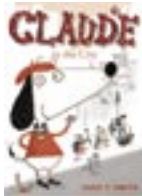
she has fished from beneath the ice. Visitors come to marvel at the colours and patterns, glowing in the igloo walls at night like an illuminated ice bowl. When the ice melts and she must move on with her husky, she sends her own silver polar bear pendant down through the hole for someone else to find and treasure, with very happy results in the tropics faraway across the world. The illustrations are extraordinary; soft, glowing watercolours pull you into the story while small hands hover over the whale and the seal, all the jellyfish, polar bears, arctic foxes and rabbits as well. A heart-warming story in the message-in-a-bottle tradition.

Tina Massey

Claude in the City

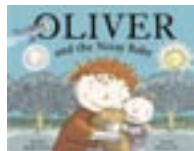
Written and illustrated by Alex T. Smith
Hodder £4.99 ISBN: 978-0340998991

Claude, a small plump dog, likes to have adventures while his owners are out at work. One day he goes into the city with his sidekick Sir Bobblesock, and they catch a robber. Another day they cause havoc at the local hospital. Just two of the incidents which are captured in colourful and lively illustrations which add immensely to the fun.



Marianne Adey

Oliver and the Noisy Baby



Written by Mara Bergman
Illustrated by Nick Maland
Hodder £10.99
ISBN: 978-0340997451

Oliver has a baby sister who won't go to sleep. Her tears are driving him to distraction so he jets off in his imaginary plane for worldwide adventures. Yet, however far he travels he cannot escape the dreadful din. Finally he realises he is needed back in the nursery so with a cuddle and a hug he puts his baby sister to sleep, before snuggling up with his toys himself. A perfect end to a perfect day. The pictures are big, bright and enchanting. Nick Maland uses his cross-hatching technique to good effect to create beautiful polar bears, tigers, monkeys and teddies. Mara Bergman's rhyming text is spot on, both catchy and fun and easy to join in

with. Verse and illustrations come together to create a rosy vision of family life at its best.

Ian Douglas

Tour Troubles: Stunt Bunny



Written by Tamsyn Murray
Illustrated by Lee Wildish
Simon and Schuster £4.99
ISBN: 978-1847387288

Harriet Houdini is the star act in the *Superpets Live!* tour. She can't wait to go on the road with Susie, her owner, but is less than thrilled when Susie's dad, Evil Edward (not Harriet's biggest fan) announces he is going too. However, he is the least of Harriet's problems as her main rivals, Miranda and her opera-singing poodle, Doodle, plot to oust her from the show. Young readers will be delighted by their dirty tricks and entranced by the hula-hooping chimp and trampolining rabbits – the illustrations do justice to the well balanced text and increase the sense of fun.

Jane Hall

Barney the Boat Dog

Written by Linda Newbery
Illustrated by John Francis
Usborne £4.99
ISBN: 978-1409521983



First in a set of stories about Barney, a brown and white dog, who lives on a narrow boat – it's a great beginning. The adorable dog on the cover will attract young readers and the tale inside will enchant them. At first the plot chugs along like the Whistling Jack itself, as we see the journey through Barney's ears, eyes and nose. Then, when he gets left at a lock by Jim, his beloved owner – a mistake of course – tension mounts and the pace increases. Will Jim and Barney ever find each other? Dare Barney go through the dreaded dark tunnel all by himself? Soon Barney is dizzy with muddlement – one of several linguistic delights – but he never gives up. Nearly confident readers (with a little help) will discover the pleasures of a realistic, zap-free story well told.

Julia Jarman

Lyra and the Flying Fish



Written by Peter Emina
Illustrated by Alice Ridley
Phoenix Yard £11.99
ISBN: 978-1907912016

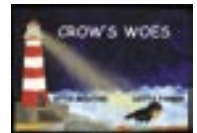
Floating gently in warm salty water, Lyra ponders. Is she in a giant bath or the sea? Safely accompanied by her ever present cuddly friend, W. Rabbit, she looks at the silvery fish swimming below her when – whoosh – the water comes alive and they are both carried up into the sky on a stream of frenetic flying fish! Lyra falls back but W. Rabbit is carried higher

and higher with the flying fish and disappears. Lyra finds herself alone in the sea's vast expanse and suddenly she doesn't feel safe anymore. She meets Timothy Turtle, who welcomes her into his wonderfully sumptuous home that he carries on his back. Yearning for adventure, he promises to help Lyra find W. Rabbit but Timothy seems to want more excitement on his adventure and so leads Lyra into even more perilous situations. Finally they find the missing friend – enrolled in flying school! Accompanied by delightfully gentle illustrations this is a charming story. With a lots of humour – I loved the idea of the humanised Timothy and his elaborate home – and just the right amount of trepidation. It highlights how a special toy can be an important friend to a child by providing much needed reassurance and security. Lovely to read together.

Heather Blackham

Crow's Woes

Written by Otto Mouton
Illustrated by Lotta Farber
Robin's Garden Books £6.00
ISBN: 978-1907793011



One of a series of five tales inspired by stories from classic Indian folklore, this picture book tells how an arrogant crow is finally humbled when the penguins he loves to mock end up by saving his life. Told in verse, some of which rhymes better than it scans, it offers plenty of food for thought while remaining entertaining throughout. Illustrated with nice, big pictures, the crow himself could come straight out of Disney. If the other four titles are as good as this one, they would be well worth catching too.

Nicholas Tucker

The Amazing Mrs Pepperpot

Illustrated and retold by Hilda Offen
Red Fox (R) £5.99 ISBN: 978-1849413701



This delightful and substantial picture book contains two stories – *Mrs Pepperpot and the Treasure*, and *Mrs Pepperpot and the Bazaar* – about the amazing

old lady who occasionally shrinks to the size of a pepperpot and has some unusual adventures as a result. First published around fifty years ago this edition works brilliantly for young readers. The stories are carefully honed to their essential components, whilst the bold illustrations bring the old lady and her escapades vividly to life. Lively and amusing stories, they preserve the mischief and good nature of the originals. Mrs Pepperpot is a wholly sympathetic character. She may be a little old-fashioned, but her magical escapades more than make up for that. A book that is excellent value for money.

Liz Dubber