



Hooray for Hoppy

Written and Illustrated by Tim Hopgood
Macmillan £6.99 ISBN: 978-1447257097

Formerly published as a board book this story of the arrival of Spring, experienced through the five senses of Hoppy, a hopeful investigating rabbit, will continue to be a favourite at home and at school. Delightfully illustrated through boldly coloured crayon and collage effects Hoppy's venturings lead the reader from the snow and ice of the opening pages through to a glorious double-spread of Spring radiance. The final spread not only identifies the senses used by Hoppy to determine if his favourite season has yet arrived but also poses some visually contextualised questions inviting children to respond to the text they will have shared.

Catriona Nicholson

GRRRRR!

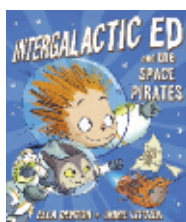
Written and Illustrated by Rob Biddulph
HarperCollins £12.99 ISBN: 978-0007594122

Arresting design, vivid use of colour, sumptuous paper stock and a clear, bold typeface characterise this captivating picture book that tells its tale in rhyming couplets. Fred has won the 'Best Bear in The Wood' contest for three years in a row. His claim to fame is his extraordinary roar of an extended 'Grrrrr' that ensures his victory. But, on the very day he must perform at his best, Fred has lost his roar and, despite the searches that he and his friends make, the sound cannot be found. To add to this calamity, stiff competition is expected from secretive Boris, the new bear in town. Three stages completed, and equal on points, the two bears line up for the Roaring section of the competition. Who will win? Later, it transpires that, in an effort to win the contest and therefore gain friends, Boris had stolen Fred's roar. A gentle moral lesson can be gleaned when Fred offers Boris forgiveness and the gift of friendship. Amusing and touching the book abounds with textual and visual jokes.



Catriona Nicholson

Intergalactic Ed and the Space Pirates



Written by Ella Denton Illustrated by Jamie Littler
OUP £6.99 ISBN: 978-0192739407

Children will feel that they are right alongside Ed and his sidekick, Sputnik the Spacecat, as they venture off into space. The pair need to save the moon which is under threat of being stolen by space pirates. Ed is passionate about space and will not have it messed with. He also explains to the Pirate Captain that, despite appearances, the moon is not the shiniest thing in the sky – it is just reflecting the sun. However, Pirate Captains don't like to be contradicted and soon Ed finds himself walking the space plank. Lucky for him that Sputnik knows his role as sidekick, creates a diversion and the two of them can escape, freeing the moon in the process. The illustrations are dynamic and expressive, adding to the pace of the story. The text is broken up into chunks and uses different fonts and speech bubbles, whilst remaining clear and easy to follow on each page. This will appeal to any reader who likes a few facts sprinkled in with the fantasy.

Annalise Taylor

Where the Bugaboo Lives

Written by Sean Taylor Illustrated by Neal Layton
Walker £7.99 ISBN: 978-1406324143

This is an interactive story in which you follow Floyd and his sister, Ruby, as they go down into the valley, behind the houses, where scary things live - including the Bugaboo. This book allows the reader to choose which path to take at the turning of each page and so is perfect for returning to again and again as a different adventure can be created each time. The illustrations are colourful, bold and amusing and although the reader is told how scary each monster is, there is so much humour in each picture that there is no danger of really being scared. Whilst it is suitable for younger children, the language offers challenge for an older reader as well. This is a book that will become a firm favourite with all ages, both for the story and the illustrations.



Sue Wilsher

Home



Written and illustrated by Carson Ellis
Walker £6.99 ISBN: 978-1406365795

Investigating the meaning of the word 'home', this book asks a question - What is a home? It is a beautiful picture book showing us over twenty different homes, ranging from country houses and flats, to wigwams, boats, and palaces. Some homes are imaginary, like the old woman's shoe from the popular nursery rhyme, or the spaceship-like window which looks out onto the moon. Others are indigenous to particular countries, like the home of the Slovakian duchess and the Kenyan blacksmith. Some are from legend, like the Norse God's home or the Russian babushka's. Others like beehives and racoon houses belong to animals. This book is a feast for the imagination and a wonderful way to introduce young children to the amazing variety of places that both humans and animals have called home.

Richard Monte

Tidy

Written and Illustrated by Emily Gravett
Two Hoots £12.99 ISBN: 978-1447273981

Here is another example of Emily Gravett's brilliant work. Using beautiful lush woodland illustrations and a witty, rhyming text, she tells the story of Badger Pete, the expert tidy-upper. He spends his time keeping the forest clean and tidy. However, it appears that not everything is quite as it seems because Badger Pete is becoming a little too conscientious. He is portrayed using a wicked pair of secateurs cutting off flower heads whose colours do not match. Is there a different solution to the problem? When autumn appears Pete starts work, pruning and cutting with a vengeance. A dramatic double-spread depicts a plethora of black binbags dwarfing the naked trees. He decides they now look "bare and scrappy", so he digs them all up. A flood follows, and as things go from bad to worse Pete begins to rethink his approach, and soon realises the error of his ways. However, the last page suggests that he has not really learnt the lesson of his ways. An excellent buy to explain ecology to young children.



Dee White

The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend

Written and illustrated by Dan Santat
Anderson £11.99 ISBN: 978-1783443840

Beekle is an imaginary friend who, like all his other imaginary friends, was born on a magical island far away. Here, he and friends play all day, and each night they wait beneath the stars, hoping to be picked, to be imagined, by a real child. Beekle waits and waits and waits. Finally, tired of waiting and not being summoned for duty he sets off on an adventure to find his own unimaginary friend. After a long search, a hesitant, shy introduction soon turns a place of strangers to an adventure with friends. Sumptuous colours, bold vivid drawings and an array of wonderful imaginary creatures greet the reader in this Caldecott Medal winning picture book, which has a heart-warming story of hope at its core. Any child that has ever struggled to make a friend, or seen others struggling to make friends, will instantly take hope from this tale.



Benjamin Scott



Thunderstorm Dancing

Written by Katrina Germein
Illustrated by Judy Watson
Allen & Unwin £11.99
ISBN: 978-1743314593

Poppy is playing at the beach in the sunshine. Then, a sky turns stormy and a thunderstorm approaches. This wonderful picture book evokes all the drama of a coastal thunderstorm, with movement on every page. The characters' body language speaks louder than words as they react individually, and as a family, to the build-up, climax and aftermath of the terrific storm. The family not only embraces the storm, but participates in it, collectively, and individually. Eventually, they personify the elements - thunder, lightning, rain, sun and, ultimately, the rainbow. Language and illustration complement each other brilliantly and the telling tabby cat with the fine tail is a firm favourite and an additional stimulus to valuable discussion. Wonderfully rousing and invigorating.

Gill Roberts

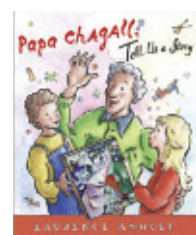
The Secret of the Kelpie

Written by Lari Don Illustrated by Philip Longson
Floris £5.99 ISBN: 978-1782502524

Flora is playing with her brothers and sisters by the Loch, when they notice a beautiful white horse. She is cautious, but her siblings throw caution to the wind in their desire to ride the horse. Suddenly, Flora realises that the horse is, in reality, a kelpie - a shape-shifting water horse who will steal children. Only Flora can save her brothers and sisters and it is a desperate race to do so before the kelpie drags them to their deaths in the waters of the Loch. A wonderful re-telling of the traditional Scottish folk tale. The language is very accessible and the hushed earth and water colours of the illustrations perfectly capture the impact of the Scottish landscape and the drama of the story. Ideal for storytelling.



Annie Everall



Tell us a Story, Papa Chagall

Written and illustrated by Laurence Anholt
Frances Lincoln £6.99 ISBN: 978-1847806581

The Anholt's Artists series brings the real stories of great artists to the world of the picture book - artists such as Matisse, Monet, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Degas and Leonardo da Vinci. In this

edition, the life and work of Marc Chagall is introduced through the eyes of his grandchildren, as they beg him for stories about his past. Through four different stories, happy and sad memories are shared with equal weight. In the first story, we learn about his childhood and discover how he gained a free place at Art College. The second story tells us about his move to Paris, getting married and having children. In the third story, the persecution Chagall suffered at the hands of the Nazis is told in a sensitive but straightforward way that is entirely suitable for young children. The final story is about his emigration to America and how the genius of his work was finally acknowledged. Laurence Anholt's enchanting illustrations are mixed with representations of Chagall's own pictures in a lovely introduction to one of the world's notable artists.

Yvonne Coppard



Some Birds

Written and illustrated by Matt Spink
David Fickling £11.99
ISBN: 978-1910200667

Vibrant illustrations and a strong rhyming text contribute to the aesthetic pleasure of this distinctive picture book. Stylized birds of all shapes, sizes and plumage colour are celebrated for the sounds they make, the movements they perform, the food they eat, the flights they make, the nests they build. The strong rhythms, the dazzling geometric illustrations, and the visually eloquent expressions of the exotic birds convey a compelling sense of action and energy. Having touched delicately on the question of those trapped in cages, the final page turn opens onto a riot of aerial colour and revelry in which free-flying birds display and perform. A valuable classroom resource in terms of literacy and artwork, this book would also lend itself well to discussions about environmental issues.



Catriona Nicholson

A Rainbow in my Pocket

Written by Ali Seidabadi Illustrated by Hoda Haddadi
Translated by Azita Rassi
Tiny Owl £12.99 ISBN: 978-1910328125

This unusual picture book explores the idea of writing down your dreams, thoughts and ideas and keeping them in your pocket. On each page, a paragraph of text reads like a delicate poem, and is an observation of the natural world and insects and snow and dolls and people. The collage of simple shapes and lines create illustrations which are a perfect complement and add a sense of texture as well as life and movement to each page. This delightful book will stimulate questions and encourage thoughtful observation for readers of any age.



Louise Stothard