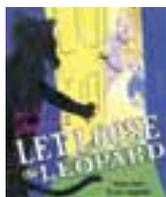


Go to Sleep or I Let Loose the Leopard



Written by Steve Cole Illustrated by Bruce Ingman
Jonathan Cape £6.99 ISBN: 978-1780080628

Every babysitter's nightmare! Joe and Ellie will not settle down and go to sleep. The new babysitter has been up and down the stairs all night, but announcing that she is losing her patience only makes the terrible two redouble their antics. She threatens to put their

whole room in a spaceship and send them to the moon ... to get a special robot to zap them with a sleep ray ... to get a toy-munching monster to babysit instead ... to produce a naughty child-nibbling plant! But all her threats are met with defiance and derision. Finally she comes up with an idea which does the trick – the title may give you a clue. This is a wonderful story, portrayed with just the right mix of simple text and humorous illustrations, and complete with a strong warning never to underestimate the babysitter.

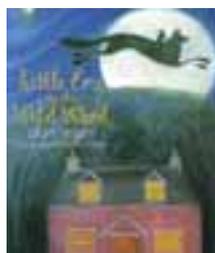
Gill Roberts

The Spring Rabbit

Written by Joyce Dunbar Illustrated by Susan Varley
Andersen £6.99 ISBN: 978-1783440788

Smudge is the only rabbit in the woods without a brother or sister. His mother tells him to wait for spring, but that seems a long way off. We follow Smudge through the seasons and Susan Varley's beautiful illustrations demonstrate how the forest changes as autumn turns to winter and spring finally bursts forth. Smudge plays with the fallen leaves and tries to make a leaf and twig rabbit, then he tries to mould the fallen snow into a snow rabbit, and finally makes a mud rabbit until, at last, the first signs of spring arrive. There are lovely illustrations of spring arriving in the forest with speckled eggs in a nest, frogspawn in the water and bluebells covering the ground, but Smudge is too downhearted to notice them until his Mummy shows him that he had been looking in the wrong places. This is a perfect sharing book as both text and illustrations are a real joy. An ideal book for any child with a new sibling on the way!

Ingrid Fox



Little Evie in the Wild Wood

Written by Jackie Morris Illustrated by Catherine Hyde
Frances Lincoln £12.99 ISBN: 978-1847803719

Creatures of the night can be spotted in the wild wood through which Little Evie, dressed in red and carrying her covered basket, makes her way. It is an ancient wood and one quickly realises that this story is a re-telling of the traditional Red

Riding Hood story. But this is far from being a tale of foreboding and menace. Although Evie's wood is illustrated in darkening green tones the girl is following a known pathway shown to her in early childhood by her mother. Shafts of sunlight fall through the tunnel of sombre trees and Evie's senses are alive with the wonders of the wood. She makes her way into its depths with confidence and it is clear that some kind of assignation has been arranged. The language used to introduce the she-wolf to the story echoes the 'eyes, ears, teeth' mantra of the traditional tale but Evie's wolf is a benign presence along the path and the two share Grandma's basket of jam tarts. Poetic prose and evocative illustrations make this an ideal book for young readers.

Catriona Nicholson



There's a Shark in the Bath

Written and Illustrated by Sarah McIntyre
Scholastic £6.99 ISBN: 978-1407121918

Could that menacing fin in the bath indicate a shark? Dulcie's parents don't think so when she goes to report her finding. Mum jokes that Dulcie will see an elephant in her cereal next, while Dad tells her to go and fish the shark out of the bath.

She does and, indeed, there is not just one but three sharks – Papa, Mama and Baby. True to their nature they look on Dulcie as an attractive breakfast – "Pass me the ketchup!" Baby Shark cries. Quick-thinking Dulcie distracts them by making them brush their teeth, and play messy games with bubbles and toilet paper. The sharks then panic when Dad tries to get into the bathroom. Dulcie enlists their help in clearing up all the mess then they swim off, back to the sea. Dulcie goes downstairs to eat her breakfast and discovers an elephant in her cereal! The fun is much enlivened by the big, bright colourful drawings that almost burst off the page with exuberant movement. It's a madcap little story.

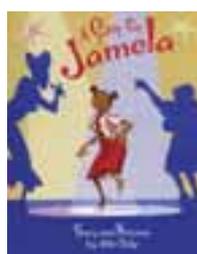
Nigel Hinton

The Prince's Breakfast

Written by Joanne Oppenheim Illustrated by Miriam Latimer
Barefoot £10.99 ISBN: 978-1782850748

This jolly story told in rhyme describes the attempts of a King and Queen to get their waning young son to start eating again. A trip round the world, to different lands and different cultures, in a flying coach, sampling different menus, fails to do the trick. Finally, an old African man comes up with a solution that, apparently, saves the day. This is a cheery picture book wittily illustrated in bold clear colours. It also includes a CD with the story jauntily narrated by Hugh Bonneville; this picture book is excellent value.

Nicholas Tucker



A Song for Jamela

Written and illustrated by Niki Daly
Frances Lincoln £6.99 ISBN: 978-1847804297

Picture book stories depicting real life are relatively rare and this one is a treat. Set in a South African township, young readers from many cultures will quickly identify with Jamela, bored stiff and waiting for her favourite pop-idol programme to begin.

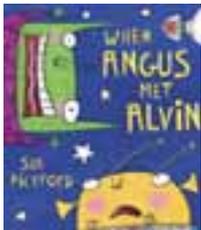
She's mad about Afro-Idols so when one of the stars, Miss Bambi Chaka Chaka, comes to her aunt's hair salon, to have her hair done before the final of the pop-idol contest, Jamela is breathless with excitement. But disaster strikes: a buzzing fly, a slipped razor and the star's hair is ruined. Or is it? Jamela has an ingenious solution. This is a warm, funny book with colourful detailed illustrations which convey the social context, the richness of relationships and the hilarity.

Julia Jarman

When Angus met Alvin

Written and illustrated by Sue Pickford
Frances Lincoln £11.99 ISBN: 978-1847803047

Angus is a gentle alien who likes nothing more than growing things and enjoying peace and quiet in his space garden. When Alvin, an alien from another planet suddenly arrives, determined to show off his special skills,



Angus' life is turned upside down and his peace is shattered. But when Alvin's skills backfire and he is miniaturised, it is Angus who solves the problem and returns him to normal size, but only on the promise that Alvin behaves himself. A lively, humorous story exploring friendship, problem solving and understanding, with much of the humour evolving from the difference in

personalities between the two aliens. The bright, colourful illustrations have a futuristic feel to them adding to the theme of the story. There is clever use of space, including creative designs on both end pages and each time you look at them, you discover something new.

Annie Everall

I Like Animals

Written and illustrated by Dahlov Ipcar
Flying Eye £11.99 ISBN: 978-1909263253

This book was first published in 1960 using a hand-picked colour palette and traditional printing techniques. It has been restored using modern techniques and brought back to life without losing any of the original art. Each page is brimming with different animals, fantastic art work and witty text. Children will pour over each page determined not to miss a single creature, and it is likely to provoke lively discussion as some of the animals are unusual. A very different story book to share with young children.



Ingrid Fox

A Book is a Book

Written by Jenny Bornholdt Illustrated by Sarah Wilkins
Gecko (eB) £8.99 ISBN: 978-1877579929

The jacket of this little hardback prepares us for a celebration of one of our most durable inventions. A giant book stands in the middle of a garden, a giraffe pokes its head out like a bookmark, letters jump into the sky. Inside, we discover all sorts of wonderful things, like their different sizes, the fact that they are

found in libraries, bookshops and homes and that they are sometimes read in baths or trees. Books are doors into weird and wonderful worlds and the stories they tell may be true or made-up. Even the smallest are great "because boredom can be very big". Unlike an eReader, a physical book never runs out of power and it can be lent to an infinite number of people. This edition is small enough to fit into your pocket and the simple retro style illustrations are reminiscent of the Ladybird books of the 1970s. Another unusual and quirky title from Gecko Press, which is bound to please all book lovers.

Richard Monte

Fred

Written and illustrated by Posy Simmonds
Andersen (R) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1783440290

The comic strip, in Posy Simmond's inimitable and instantly recognizable style, tells the tale of Sophie and Nick's recently deceased cat, Fred. They are saddened by the loss, reminisce about his capacity for sleep, and bury him in the garden. That night, however, they are awakened by the meowing of neighbour's cat called Ginger who tells them that Fred was the most famous cat in the world. They are amazed – famous? All he did was sleep and wee on the neighbour's flowers. No, indeed, Ginger tells them – at night, when he was put out, he was the greatest cat pop-singer in the world. A multitude of cats arrive to mourn Fred's passing by laying flowers on the grave and to sing and dance to his memory. Sophie and Nick join in the joyous celebration of Fred's life. It's a charming and funny story which could comfort children who have lost a pet.



Nigel Hinton



Chicken Clicking

Written by Jeanne Willis Illustrated by Tony Ross
Andersen £11.99 ISBN: 978-1783440528

One night Chick hops into the farmer's house and finds the computer. She is soon shopping online for the whole farm, unfortunately without their

knowledge or approval. She then starts to make friends online but when she arranges to meet up with one of her online friends she discovers to her cost that all is not what it seems and that online friends don't always tell the truth. This fantastic author/illustrator partnership has again created a wonderful picture book that is enjoyable, modern, has a strong underpinning message and which doesn't take the easy way out at the end. Rhyming text and illustrations work perfectly together and some of the messages of the book are only apparent in the visual clues of the illustrations. It gets the internet safety message across brilliantly, with humour. Could well be a possible Kate Greenaway Award contender!

Annie Everall

New Friends Old Friends

Written by Julia Jarman Illustrated by Kate Pankhurst
Andersen £4.99 ISBN: 978-1783440047

Daisy, Phoebe and Erika are excited to hear that a new girl from Pakistan is joining their class. Tensions develop when the girls try to outdo each other in befriending Shazia, but their rivalry is forgotten when they discover that her home problems may keep her from joining the school netball team and going to the school disco. Only the friends' last minute intervention can save the day. This heartwarming story about coping with the demands of friendship will appeal to all thoughtful readers.

Marianne Adey



Stinky Space Race

Written by Tim Collins Illustrations by Joëlle Dreidemy
Buster (eB) £4.99 ISBN: 978-1780551715

Colin's suspicions of Harry, his new classmate, are confirmed when he sees his friend disappear in the school's refuse bin only to reappear seconds later, and the CCTV footage proves it really happened! Really a time-travelling alien, Harry invites Colin to go for a time-travelling spin, but a single hair out of place changes their world. Can they work out how to stop everyone being a clone of Mr Watkins, the world's most boring teacher? Exuberant fun and a clever premise hide some smartly handled sci-fi tropes - like time travelling paradoxes - that young readers should be able to grasp. With the illustrations and text working in tandem to tell the story, they maintain a young reader's interest making this *Cosmic Colin* series a great way to build confidence and excitement around reading.

Benjamin Scott

Boa's Bad Birthday

Written by Jeanne Willis Illustrated by Tony Ross
Andersen £11.99 ISBN: 978-1849397629

This illustrator/writer dream team has created an entertaining and touching picture book on an age-old and universal theme: the disappointments and pleasures of birthday gifts. On his birthday Boa is given a series of gifts from his well meaning but unimaginative friends, none of which he can put to good use or enjoy. After five dud presents, his disappointment is intensified when dung-beetle arrives with his huge, smelly pile of what Boa's Mum calls "you know what". However, within the dung ball is a tiny seed which grows until it becomes a glorious tree of many branches, perfect in size and shape for an athletic boa constrictor. Vibrant with colour and cliched birthday sayings, this title will delight readers young and older.

