

Sharing pictures, sharing words



Bear and Hare Go Fishing

Written & illustrated by Emily Gravett
Macmillan £10.99 ISBN: 978-0230745391

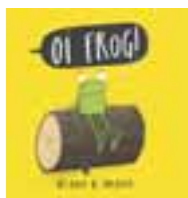
A delightfully recounted chronicle of a fishing trip enjoyed by friends Bear and Hare, told sparsely in a mere thirty-one words but more tellingly conveyed through the enticement of expressive illustrations. Whilst Bear, the single-minded fisherman, lands a succession of unexpected catches, such as Hare's hat and a roller skate, Hare, the amiable ghillie, occupies himself with other recreations like exploring the lunch basket or making a daisy chain. The 'catch of the day', when it happens, is full of comic irony. Beautifully produced and designed, the sturdy card pages exemplify Gravett's superb mastery of line, colour and space. First in a new series of *Bear and Hare* stories, its warmth, humour and the anticipation of its comic ending will invite successive bedtime readings.

Catriona Nicholson

Oi Frog!

Written by Kes Gray Illustrated by Jim Field
Hodder (eB) £11.99 ISBN: 978-1444910858

Frog has a problem. Cat wants him to sit on a log but Frog can see that it is knobbly and uncomfortable. So where else can he sit? On a mat? On a chair? On a stool? On a carrot? But Cat is quite firm. Only parrots sit on carrots, only mules sit on stools, only hares sit on chairs, only gofers sit on sofas, and so it goes on as this rhyming story gets sillier and sillier. Readers will really enjoy the clever play on words as well as the bold and comical illustrations. Don't be surprised if they even laugh out loud!



Marianne Adey

The Adventures of the Owl and the Pussycat



Written by Coral Rumble Illustrated by Charlotte Cooke
Parragon £5.99 ISBN: 978-1472319883

In this adventure the two small travellers don't have a beautiful pea-green boat, but they do have a box on the living room floor. In the course of their journey they spot all manner of interesting sea creatures having fun and then, when the voyage is over, they fall asleep by the

light of the moon. This enchanting story is obviously a loosely based, clever interpretation of the Edward Lear classic poem, but it has a charm all of its own. The rhythm and the rhymes work really well and the full page illustrations have great humour and child-appeal. There is much detail to spot on every page – I particularly liked the abandoned boat called Petit Pois!

Jan Lennon

Eat Up, Little Donkey

Written by Rindert Kromhout
Illustrated by Annemarie van Haeringen
Gecko Press £9.99 ISBN: 978-1877579332

Short and simple enough to engage even the shortest attention span, this humorous little book tackles the perennial problem of young children's meal times. Each bright and colourful spread presents a familiar scenario with which adults and children can identify, offering space for reflection and discussion, or for some playfulness to diffuse tiny tempers. Kids will find Little Donkey's antics amusing, but should also be encouraged to empathise with the patient and gentle Mama Donkey's frustrations. The



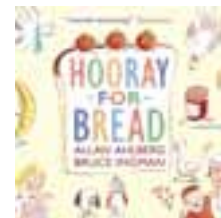
story ends on a positive note, with a successful outcome that gently models the notion of compromise for the benefit of both parent and child.

Rowan Stanfield

Hooray for Bread

Written by Allan Ahlberg Illustrated by Bruce Ingman
Walker £6.99 ISBN: 978-1406352627

Hooray for Bread is a charming picture book, which will have children clamouring to have bread with every meal! Using Ahlberg's popular rhyming style, we follow the life of a loaf of bread, slice by slice. Children will recognise how bread is part of their day; from having toast or bread and butter soldiers with almost every meal to feeding the ducks at the park with their parents. There is little text on each page which, along with the complementary illustrations, makes this a perfect book for children just beginning their reading journey. The bouncy rhymes will have younger children joining in as their parents read, especially the frequent 'shouts' of "Hooray for Bread!" The illustrations are deceptively simple pastel drawings, reflecting the traditional image of bread, and of course eating it with many and varied toppings. However, look in the background, and there are lots of delightful hidden extras; dogs waiting for tit-bits, children hiding in trees, even a mouse waiting till night time to get the last crumb of the loaf. An amusing book ideal for all younger children.



Jane Hall



The Way to the Zoo

Written and illustrated by John Burningham
Walker £12.99 ISBN: 978-1406348408

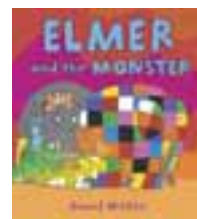
Sylvie discovers a mysterious, magical door in her bedroom wall as she settles down to sleep. Beyond the door is a passage, then another door, and then ... a zoo! Totally unfazed, Sylvie has a selection of animals visiting her each night, one night a little bear, one night the penguins, one night the messy monkeys, although always ensuring they are back in the zoo by morning. But one day, Sylvie rushes off to school and forgets to close the door in her wall, resulting in havoc being unleashed all over the house. The dream-like quality of the story is reinforced by the gentle colour-washed illustrations in this delightful picture book. But unless you are willing to spend time thoroughly examining the walls in your own little one's bedroom, be cautious about choosing this for the bedtime story.

Yvonne Coppard

Elmer and the Monster

Written and illustrated by David McKee
Andersen £11.99 ISBN: 978-1783440535

A new Elmer story is always a joy to be discovered by children. In this one, Elmer discovers all the jungle animals running away in terror from the roars of a monster. They all try to persuade him to run away too, but Elmer wants to see what a monster looks like. He discovers that the monster is a small furry creature who is roaring in terror at all the other 'monsters'. As always, Elmer manages to resolve the situation to everyone's satisfaction. Even after all this time, there is still a freshness to each new Elmer story, alongside the warm familiarity of the characters for existing Elmer fans. With rich, vibrant, illustrations, full of McKee's trademark humour, this is a welcome new title in the Elmer library and one that will be eagerly devoured by children and parents alike.



Annie Everall



Yeti and the Bird

Written and illustrated by Nadia Shireen
Jonathan Cape (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1780080147

“Deep in the forest there lived a yeti.” opens this story of friendship. The yeti in question is scary, and as a result lonely, until a new friend arrives in the shape of a lost bird. When yeti is unable to scare her away the story develops neatly and concludes with a clever revision of the opening text, for now the yeti lives with his friends. This is a simple story, full of warmth and affection. Younger children will easily understand the importance of having a friend, and there is plenty of scope for discussion about the reciprocal benefits of friendship. Nadia Shireen’s enormous hairy yeti manages to appear both intimidating and yet draw sympathy from the reader. Clever use of colour and contrasts, and a huge variety of page layouts will keep the young reader visually engaged and the text reads aloud delightfully.

Lucy Russell

The Big Splash!

Written by A.H. Benjamin Illustrated by Jon Lycett-Smith
Digital Leaf £6.99 ISBN: 978-1909428317

Something is frightening the animals in the wood. There is a loud noise, the ground is trembling and, in turn, the hare, the beaver, the skunk, the fox and the racoon all run away to hide. The large scary creature turns out to be a buffalo who just wants to play and he gives them an exhilarating ride through the wood followed by a huge splash into the lake. It’s so much fun that all the animals want to do it again. Sometimes, something that appears to be scary, can turn out be enormous fun and wails of fear can turn into shrieks of delight in a matter of seconds. This is bound to be a winner with anyone who reads stories to small children. The illustrations are big and bright and the recurring phrase of “Da-Dump, Da-Dump” gets bigger and louder as the excitement builds until the moment when we all share the release of tension and the thrill as the animals plunge into the warm water of the lake.

Jan Lennon



The Tiny King

Written and illustrated by Taro Miura
Walker £11.99 ISBN: 978-1406348194

This is an unusual picture book with blocks of illustrations combining strong colour and repeated shapes with photographs of objects. The Tiny King is lonely and life is dull. He lives in a big castle with an army of big soldiers where everything from the table to the bed and even the bath tub are so much bigger than him. But one day he falls in love with a Big Princess and when she agrees to become his Queen everything changes for the better. The Tiny King is so happy that he sends the army home to their families and everything from meal times to riding the big white horse is much more fun when he has a wife and family to share it with. It is great to come across a picture book with a difference and which provides opportunity for discussion whilst the unusual illustrations are shared and explored. Add to this a simple and heart-warming story about the value of love and families and you have a success.

Louise Stothard

Paul Meets Bernadette

Written and illustrated by Rosy Lamb Walker £9.99 ISBN: 978-1406347920

Paul’s life in the goldfish bowl is quiet, lonely and monotonous. He swims round and round, first one way and then the other way. He swims up and down, and down and up. There is nothing else to do, until the arrival of a



new fish. Bernadette’s imaginative slant on life opens Paul’s mind, and ultimately his heart, to new possibilities. In Bernadette’s eyes a teapot is an elephant, a pair of fried eggs are the sun and moon, a clock is a cactus! These erroneous interpretations of everyday objects will certainly amuse young readers while Rosy Lamb’s gracefully textured oil illustrations create a wonderful sense of movement and imbue the

simple forms of the goldfish with character and emotion. The story’s heart-warming conclusion makes for a sweetly satisfying read.

Megan Stanfield

Counting Chickens

Written and Illustrated by Polly Alakija
Frances Lincoln £11.99 ISBN: 978-1847804372

Polly Alakija’s previous counting book *Catch That Goat!* is set in a bustling town in Nigeria, whereas this book has a rural background. Tobi owns the best hen in the village and over the course of a week she lays seven eggs. Meanwhile, Tobi’s friends have animals, too – goats, dogs, pigs, cows, and sheep – and they all proudly show off their kids, puppies, piglets, calves and lambs to count. Poor Tobi has to wait patiently for twenty-one days until his seven chicks hatch. They in turn grow and have chicks until at the end of the book there are fifty chickens to find and count. Bright, charming and cheerful drawings will give children a glimpse of another culture, very unlike their own. This is a gift for parents and teachers who wish to widen children’s understanding of other lifestyles.

Nigel Hinton



Rainbow Stew

Written and illustrated by Cathryn Falwell
Lee & Low £12.99 ISBN: 978-1600608476

Told in rhyme throughout, this lively picture book is about three young children staying with Grandpa. On a rainy day he decides to show them how to make Rainbow Stew. They clearly do not want to spend the morning indoors despite the rain, so they get dressed up in colourful waterproofs and go out to the vegetable plot to gather an array of brightly coloured vegetables for the stew. The result is a rainbow collection of goodies, including radishes, peppers, aubergine, squash, potatoes, carrots and a variety of greens, which Grandpa cleverly turns into a tasty hot lunch. Bright colours and bold illustrations make this an attractive picture book very suitable for reading to a group as well as to individual children. This is an enjoyable book, with a simple message about healthy eating, and a recipe included.

Liz Dubber

Hector and the Big Bad Knight

Written and illustrated by Alex T. Smith
Scholastic £6.99 ISBN: 978-1407138480

A bright and cheery romp through forests and castles, facing dragons, tall towers and thick thorny weeds as Hector follows the trail of the Big Bad Knight in order to rescue Granny’s magic wand. With a little bit of cunning and a packet of crisps, will Hector be able to outwit the knight and prove wrong the mocking villagers who feel his muscles are too small for the job? Hector is a plucky young chap and the trials he faces are not too scary for even the most sensitive of youngsters. Pages are bursting with colour and bold illustrations in Alex T. Smith’s characteristic style. Variety in the use of font and text layout adds extra interest to pages. A real delight!

Lucy Russell

