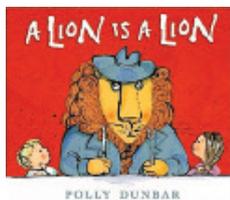


A Lion is a Lion

Written and illustrated by Polly Dunbar
Walker £11.99
ISBN: 978-1406371536



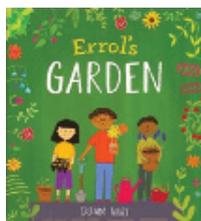
Introducing one lion, who is frowning, but not showing his teeth. If he takes part in all kinds of human activities, such as eating, wearing clothes and dancing, is he still a lion? A lion arrives on the doorstep of two children and does all of these things. He seems to be a very friendly, sociable individual, but, he is still a lion. The two children aren't sure but

they do take part in all these different activities with the lion. Finally, they make up their minds and take appropriate action. This is a lovely book with rhyming text and funny illustrations. There are lots of opportunities here to talk about judging people by what they do rather than what they look like.

Pat Thompson

Errol's Garden

Written and illustrated by Gillian Hibbs
Child's Play £5.99
ISBN: 978-1786280848

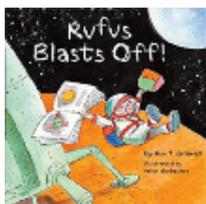


This is a fantastic book about a little boy called Errol who lives in a flat with his father and sister. He loves growing plants in all sorts of containers, but what he really wants is a garden. One day he discovers a space on the roof of his tower block that would make a great garden. He meets his neighbours in the lift to talk about his idea. Everyone offers to help so Errol researches and plans his dream. Gillian Hibbs' colourful illustrations capture the diversity and growth of the community as they work together on a range of tasks that transform the space and everyone's lives. Neighbours become friends and share different fruit and vegetables. The idea for the book came to Gillian Hibbs when she was on a bus and saw cress being grown on the windowsill of a flat above a shop. An inspirational book about hope, transformation, collaboration, and the benefits of gardening. Highly recommended.

Brenda Marshall

Rufus Blasts Off!

Written by Kim T. Griswell
Illustrated by Valeri Gorbachev
Sterling £12.99
ISBN: 978-1454920991



Rufus, the pirate pig, is desperate for a new story to tell his shipmates. He decides that space is the best place to find one. So, he sets off to be an astronaut. However, pigs are not allowed in space, even if they have their own spacesuit, so Rufus is rejected. However, a crisis arises because one of the astronauts is supposed to read a story to the earth's children from out in space, but she has a cold. Obviously, as a great storyteller, Rufus fits the bill perfectly, so off he blasts. This is a lovely, heart-warming story about the intrepid Rufus. His total determination to be blasted off into space is impressive. It is a lovely book, with its lively text and brilliant illustrations. A real pleasure to read.

Pat Thompson

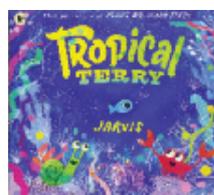
Tusk Tusk

Written and illustrated by David McKee
Anderson (R) £6.99
ISBN: 978-1783446612



This year the acclaimed *Tusk Tusk* by David McKee celebrates its 30th birthday, but its message, sadly, is just as relevant and necessary today. Many years ago, elephants were either black or white. The two tribes kept away from each other until the day they decided to go to war. Peace loving elephants left and went into the jungle where they lived together, while the others fought to the death. For many years it was thought there were no more elephants, but then grey elephants started to appear. This simple, yet striking, book is an ideal way to introduce children to the concept of empathy, and to celebrate diversity, rather than fearing it. The illustrations are colourful and vivid, and although the wording is sparse, much is conveyed on each page. David McKee uses imagery in his art - the fighting elephants' trunks ingeniously become fists and guns, and the expressions on the elephants' faces skilfully portray their feelings. There is a disturbing twist at the end, which will hopefully be used to generate discussions around the book's message and its continuing relevance.

Jane Hall



Tropical Terry

Written and illustrated by Jarvis
Walker £6.99
ISBN: 978-1406378627

This jolly, underwater, adventure picture book tells the story of Terry, the duller looking fish in Coral Reef City. In fact, he's so plain that Terry's only talent seems to be that he's very, very good at hiding. Although he is friends with Cilla the crab and Steve the sea snail, Terry longs to be accepted by the colourful tropical fish who exclude him from their games with unkind words. So, Terry creates for himself an exotic, dazzling costume. The other fish are impressed and for a while everything seems wonderful, until, Terry's new look gets noticed by an extremely unwelcome predator! Themes of friendship, acceptance, as well as discovering and valuing one's own qualities, are joyously explored through this vibrant picture book. Entertaining, alliterative language evokes the movement of the sea creatures and makes the words a delight to read aloud, while Jarvis' exuberant illustrations are richly coloured, packed with humour and full of fun details for young readers to enjoy discovering.

Anne Walker

Unplugged

Written and illustrated by Steve Antony
Hodder £6.99
ISBN: 978-1444934168



Blip spends all day plugged into her computer, learning new things, playing games and having fun. But one day there is a power cut, and tripping over the wire, Blip becomes unplugged,

tumbles down the stairs, through the front door and outside! In this new and colourful world, with grass, trees and a river, she meets two new friends, a young deer and a rabbit. Together they learn new things, play games and have fun. When night falls it is time to go home and Blip is sad - she decides that it is much more fun to be outside and to be unplugged! A delightful and entertaining book to share, with a gentle message about the over-use of digital devices, contrasting the black and white of Blip's life plugged in to the colourful fun to be had outside, with friends. A timely title, given the current concerns about the reliance some parents and children have on their screens.

Jayne Gould

The Little Pioneer

Written and illustrated by Adam Hancher
 Frances Lincoln £6.99
 ISBN: 978-1847807991



When her father dies, a young girl and her family travel out west to the homestead he has left them in California. Journeys like this were dangerous affairs, with long arduous treks across prairies, rivers and deserts, in rickety wooden wagons pulled by oxen. Their guide is an enigmatic man called Mr Reed, who the girl distrusts at first, but soon realises that, beneath his dour expression, he is a kind and trustworthy

soul. There is an authenticity to the author's words which place it in the 19th century American west and the evocative illustrations with their 'cowboy style' further add to the historical period. This is an unusual subject for a picture book and the story gives us an insight into the struggles and challenges that early American pioneers faced.

Richard Monte

Hansel & Gretel

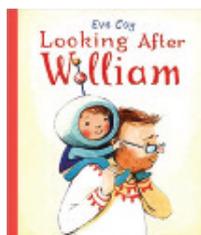
Written and illustrated by Bethan Woollvin
 Two Hoots £11.99
 ISBN: 978-1509842698

Darkly funny, this book turns the familiar fairy tale on its head. Hansel and Gretel are not very nice children and, having refused to help Witch Willow, decide to eat her gingerbread house instead. But, Willow only has so much patience! This book will surprise and delight children with its twist on such a well-known story and there is plenty to talk about in the way each of the characters behave. The bold illustrations in orange, black, white and grey are attention-seizing and funny in their own right. Along with *Little Red* and *Rapunzel* this is one of a series of *alternative tales* – a very witty addition that will be certain to entertain.



Julia Wills

Looking after William



Written and illustrated by Eve Coy
 Andersen £11.99
 ISBN: 978-1783445417

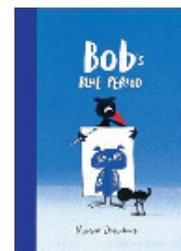
A very young, pre-school narrator describes daily life at home with William, her dad, in a novel way, picturing herself as Mummy in the parenting role, and William as needing the care and attention – a very clever role-reversal. The story has gentle wit, lovely sun-bathed, watercolour illustrations and a backbeat of adult humour. Most of all, this debut picture book has a honeyed stream of simple, unabashed love reaching out from the page to make you smile. Read it on a grey, miserable day. I think it will help.

Yvonne Coppard

Bob's Blue Period

Written and illustrated by Marion Deuchars
 Laurence King £10.99
 ISBN: 978-1786270696

Bob's Blue Period tells the story of bird artist, Bob, and his best friend, Bat. Bob and Bat do everything together - play games, dance, share tea and best of all, paint. But one day Bat leaves a note saying that he has to go away and Bob

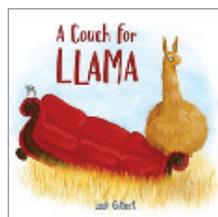


becomes so sad that even his paintings are completely blue. Only with the help of his friends, and the return of Bat, can Bob's world become filled with joy and colour again. This is Marion Deuchars' second picture book featuring Bob, and everything about it is beautiful. It's a story which deals with deep emotions with humour, sensitivity and lightness of touch. Friendship, loss, depression and recovery are explored through the story and illustrations in a way that is completely accessible to young children. The story is told with skilful simplicity and her beautifully executed illustrations, spare in detail and thoughtful in colour, are rich in emotional truth and understanding. This is a life-affirming picture book which simultaneously tells a lovely story, looks at deeply-felt emotions and celebrates the joy of art and colour.

Anne Walker

A Couch for Llama

Written and illustrated by Leah Gilbert
 Sterling £12.99
 ISBN: 978-1454925118



The Lago family love their couch which has been an integral part of family fun. Eventually it needs replacing so the family choose a perfect new couch. On the way home the new couch flies off the car and lands in the llama's field. We watch the llama approaching the couch apprehensively, trying to work out what it is. At one point the llama eats a little of it, and then a glorious double page spread shows

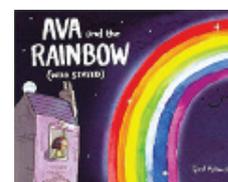
the joy of the llama bouncing on the couch and falling in love with it. At this point the Lago family return for their furniture, but the llama is stubborn and does not want to get off the couch. Finally, the Lagos retrieve their coach but they donate their old one to the llama who is blissfully happy with his acquisition. Leah Gilbert excels in her drawings of the llama's expressions and his character is an attractive feature of the book, which reminds readers of the similarities between people and animals. This very enjoyable story is great fun to read and share.

Brenda Marshall

Ava and the Rainbow (Who Stayed)

Written and illustrated by Ged Adamson
 HarperCollins £12.99
 ISBN: 978-0062670809

When the sun comes out in the middle of a rainstorm Ava knows she will see a rainbow, the most beautiful rainbow she has ever seen. Wishing it could stay for ever, she is surprised to find it still there in the morning the next day ... and the next day ... and the day after that! Brightening the town and drawing visitors from far and wide, the rainbow is celebrated and promoted. Until that is, one day, when people just stop noticing it. Overhearing a conversation, the rainbow realises that it's time to go, and Ava learns that a rare and precious sight is the most valuable of all. A heartwarming story that speaks to the desire of youngsters to hold onto the fleeting and the beautiful. This book will be enjoyed simply as a story, but it will also promote discussion about what is truly valuable.



Lucy Russell