

fabulously funny

I don't sit here roaring with laughter but you have wonderful inside jokes all the time and it's got to be exciting, it's got to be fast, it's got to have a good plot but it's got to be funny. It's got to be funny. ~ Roald Dahl.

This has been one of the most difficult themes to source. 'Funny' is such a personal judgement. Hopefully, by having many contributors to the list, you will have a variety of opinions and books to choose from.

Humour is also very age-appropriate. As adults, we may weary of toilet-humour, but children will delight in it. Then there is the problem of adult humour in books purportedly written for children. We know that adults have to enjoy children's books – otherwise they won't buy them for, or read them to, children – but sometimes the humour is too sophisticated for children. As the age of the audience grows, there are less straight-out funny books published. One of the best reasons for this change comes from one of the books on our list, *My Big Birkett*:

as you get older, life becomes like... like marbled chocolate. When you're younger, it's like Top Deck. The white chocolate sits flush on the dark chocolate, but separate from it. The joyful things in life are clear and distinct from the sad. But as you get older, it gets muddled. The good comes with the sad. The sad with the good. And it's not so clear. Life's not harder or easier. It's just both, all whirled into one...

Contributors: Kerry Aluf, Sanya Baker, Helen Beckingsale, Crissi Blair, Annie Coppell, Maria Gill, Lois Huston, Fiona Mackie, Wayne Mills, Helen Schwarcz, Angela Soutar, Rosemary Tisdall, Kate Villers.

Welcome first time reviewers Maria Gill, Fiona Mackie and Kate Villers, and our special guest reviewer Jonathan, aged 11.

For under 5s

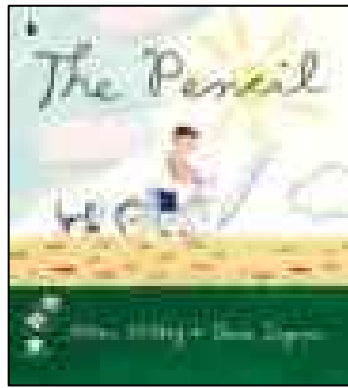
The Pencil

Allan Ahlberg, illustrated Bruce Ingman
Walker Books UK 2008

ISBN 9781406319552

When the pencil starts to draw a boy and then a dog and cat who chase each other the fun starts.

There are more and more requests for the pencil and when the cat and dog turn their noses up at the food pencil draws, he draws a paintbrush. The trouble really starts when the pencil draws a rubber. First of all the rubber does just what he was told but then he begins to rub out EVERYTHING! Pencil manages to solve the very big problem of the out of control rubber by being extremely clever. A very funny story and wonderful illustrations full of expression and detail. HS.



The Runaway Dinner

Allan Ahlberg, illustrated Bruce Ingman
Walker Books UK 2007

ISBN 9781406305494

Every night Banjo sits down at his little table and eats a sausage for dinner. But one night the sausage, named Melvin, runs away, followed by all the other food on Banjo's plate, the plate, the cutlery, furniture, Banjo and his parents, the cat and the neighbours' dog. A fun race through the neighbourhood and park (well, not that fun for some of the peas) ensues. Silly and fun, accompanied by suitably silly illustrations. 4+. AC.



Yellow Bird, Black Spider

Dosh and Mike Archer
Bloomsbury USA 2004

ISBN 158234874X

Black Spider wonders why Yellow Bird doesn't do normal bird things but, instead, plays guitar, wears stripy socks and eats vanilla ice cream. When asked about eating worms, Yellow Bird answers in a way Black Spider was definitely not expecting. Slightly gruesome fun for 4+. AC.



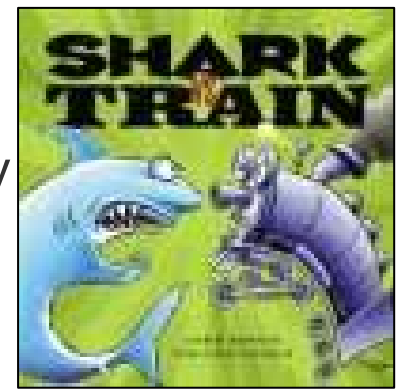
Shark vs Train

Chris Barton, illustrated
Tom Lichtenheld

Little, Brown & Company
2010

ISBN 9780316007627

Two boys raid the toy box, pulling out a shark and train. Who will win? Wildly imaginative situations – hot air balloon rides, pie-eating, lemonade stands, and much more – and tongue-in-cheek humour follows. 4+. AC.



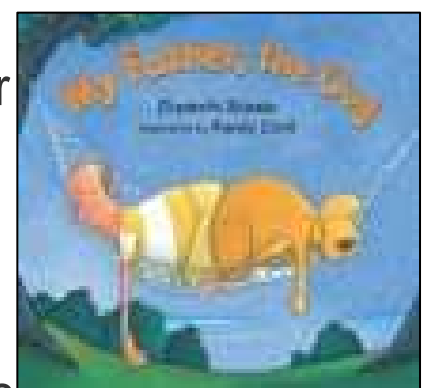
My Father the Dog

Elizabeth Bluemle, illustrated Randy Cecil

Candlewick Press 2006

ISBN 0763622222

A young girl offers evidence that her father is really a dog. He is 'fuzzy around the edges' in the morning, makes 'pit stops' under trees, growls, and much more. An affectionate look at a father's foibles. 3+. AC.

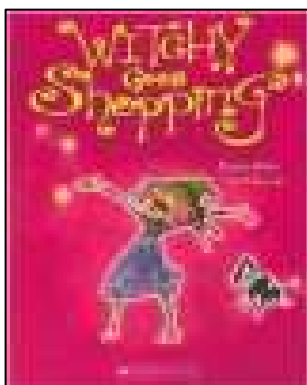


Witchy Goes Shopping

Dianne Boles, illustrated Aki Fukuoka
Scholastic New Zealand 2010
ISBN 9781869439255

It was a particularly beautiful morning and Witchy was awake earlier than usual.

She had remembered something very important. It was her birthday!



Witchy inspects herself in the mirror and sees she is looking remarkably good for a 577 (or was it 775) year old witch. To celebrate she decides to make her particularly special birthday spell but wait... she's run out of ingredients. She writes her shopping list and in her haste forgets her glasses. When she walks around the supermarket she picks up all sorts of normal looking ingredients thinking they're just what she needs for her spell: a watermelon instead of a big fat toad, blueberries instead of spider eggs... you get the picture. How on earth, can she make her special spell when she gets home and finds she's got it all wrong...

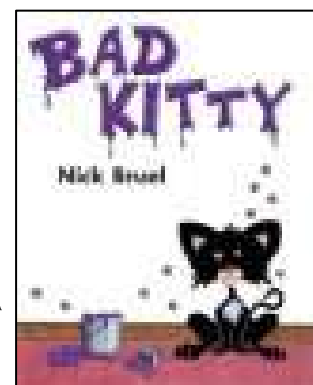
I really enjoyed this quirky tale and so will kindergarten and junior students at primary. I can just hear the students shouting out the special magic word that Witchy has forgotten but remembers on the last page. They'll also laugh out loud at all Witchy's mistakes. Lots of fun! Māori version available too. MG.

Bad Kitty

Nick Bruel
Roaring Brook Press 2005, reprinted 2009
ISBN 9781596430693

The reason that Kitty became a bad kitty, and what she did is shown in several alphabet sequences.

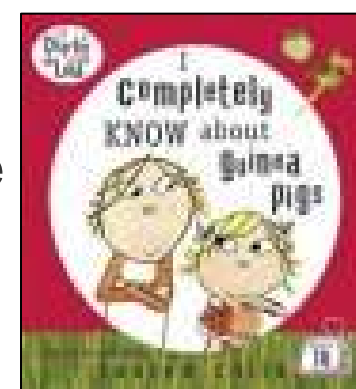
The first is an array of vegetables as there is no cat food left and an increasingly horrified Kitty is shown at the centre of each page. Next comes an alphabetical catalogue of her crimes, followed by a list of all the unlikely foods which have been bought, including 'a variety of vultures' and 'an eXcess of tyrannosaurus reX'. As a result the kitty decides to be good and her good deeds are depicted followed by her reward, which is a friend to play with, and will no doubt lead to further mayhem. The humour is in the illustrations especially the graphic depictions of how the cat is feeling. 4+. HB.



I Completely Know About Guinea Pigs

Lauren Child
Puffin Books 2008
ISBN 9780141384016

Lola knows all about guinea pigs and when the teacher picks her to look after Bert the class pet she is delighted. At home Lola takes very good care of Bert and even builds him a run to have adventures in. But, suddenly 'Bert is completely, extremely gone!' When Lola finds Bert he seems to have 'gone all tiny!' It's Charlie who works out that Bert probably isn't a boy after all which Lola knew anyway! Lauren Child's clever, collage type illustrations match a story that all pet lovers (especially with guinea pigs) will enjoy. HS.



Dr Dog

Babette Cole

Johnathan Cape 1994

ISBN 9780099650812

Babette Cole never fails to disappoint and *Dr Dog* is no exception. The

Gumboyle family don't realise that Dr

Dog is both their pet and

their medical advisor

until he goes to Brazil

and the family gets ill.

Upon return he cures all

their ailments and

manages to give the

reader basic health and hygiene advice

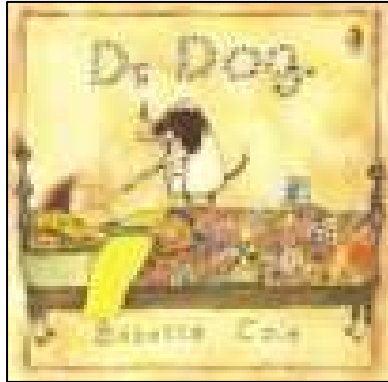
as he does so. The family gets too much

though and hilarity ensues. This book is

great for all ages and it touches on some

important themes in a humorous and

accessible way for young readers. KV.



Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type

Doreen Cronin, illustrated Betsy Lewin

Pocket Books UK 2002

ISBN 0743461517

When Farmer Brown's cows

get hold of an old typewriter,

he suddenly finds he has

some industrial relations

issues on his farm: *Dear*

Farmer Brown, The barn is very cold at

night. We'd like some electric blankets.

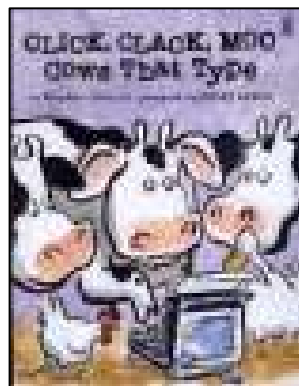
Sincerely, The Cows. Strikes, mediation;

where will it all end? What we do know is

that this picture book will provide

guaranteed giggles for both children and

adults. SB.



Stick Man

Julia Donaldson, illustrated Alex

Scheffler

Alison Green Books 2008

ISBN 9781407106175

The Stick Man lives in his family tree

with his Stick Lady Love and their three

children. One morning he gets up early

to go for a jog and finds himself caught in a series of unfortunate incidents.

Mistaken for an ordinary stick he is thrown for a dog,

used as a Pooh stick, taken to build a nest and finally in

spite of exclaiming 'I'm a Stick man, I'm a Stick Man,

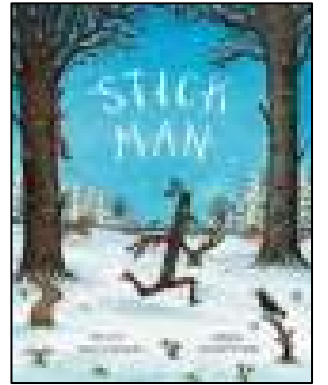
I'M STICK MAN, that's me!'

he finds himself in a fireplace. By the

creators of *The Gruffalo* this cleverly

rhyming story conveys humour in both

the illustrations and written text. HS.



Bye-bye, Big Bad Bullybug!

Ed Emberley

Little Brown and Company / Hachette

USA 2007

ISBN 9780316017626

The itty-bitty baby bugs

wonder what has arrived. It

is Big Bad Bullybug, ready

to pinch, scratch and eat

itty-bitty baby bugs. But Big

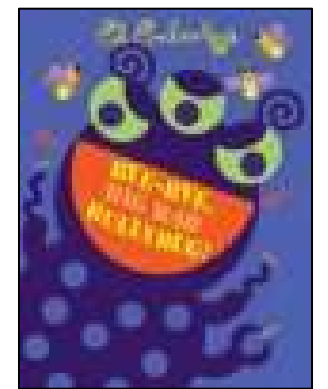
Foot comes along and saves them. Cut-

outs on each double-page spread slowly

reveal more of Big Bad Bullybug,

Reminiscent of *I'm Coming to Get You*

by Tony Ross. For 3+. AC.



Manfred the Baddie

John Fardell

Quercus 2008

ISBN 9781847244826

Manfred has everyone at

his beck and call as he

uses fear and force to

make people do what he

wants. He kidnaps, steals, plunders,

pirates, raids and generally makes life

miserable until the day he has to go to

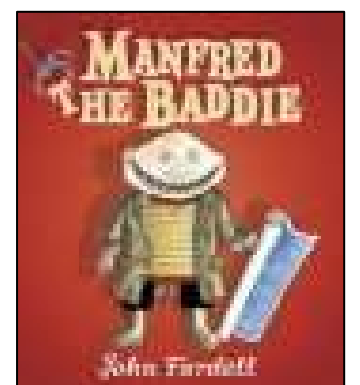
bed with a bad cold. He discovers

loneliness and unhappiness for the first

time. Turning over a new leaf is a

moralistically good ending – but there is

also a wee surprise!! 3-8 year olds. RT.



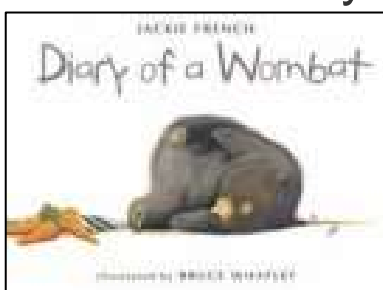
Diary of a Wombat

Jackie French, illustrated Bruce Whatley
Angus & Robertson
2002

ISBN 9780007212071

Mothball is a cheeky
wombat who loves

nothing more than eating and sleeping. She also wants to train her humans to become better pets and attempts to do so in this award winning picture book. The simple diary format of this delightful book makes it easy to read and thoroughly enjoyable while the gorgeous illustrations have the reader captivated by the curious lives of wombats. KV.

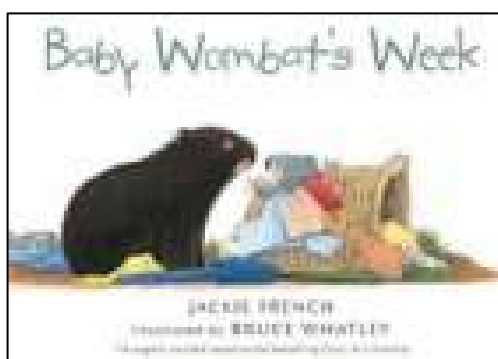


Baby Wombat's Week

Jackie French,
illustrated Bruce
Whatley
Angus & Robertson
2009

ISBN
9780732286941

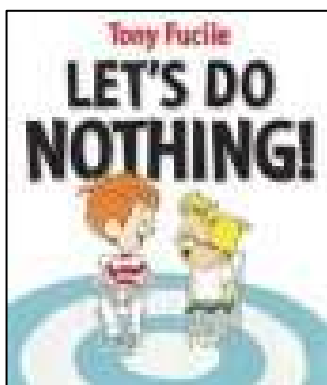
The sequel to *Diary of a Wombat* stars Mothball's baby – who is even pushier and stroppier than Mothball! The wombat family need new accommodation and, in finding it, the baby finds a friend – a human baby – and creates chaos. Fun for 4+. AC.



Let's Do Nothing

Tony Fucile
Walker Books UK 2009
ISBN 9781406321357

Frankie and Sam are bored. They have played every game, baked, painted... so what's next? Doing nothing. But 'nothing' is very difficult to do when you have a very active imagination! Frankie can't even manage 10 seconds of 'nothing'. Different fonts are used for each character, with the



whole story told in dialogue. Simple illustrations, with minimal backgrounds, complement and expand the text. 4+. AC.

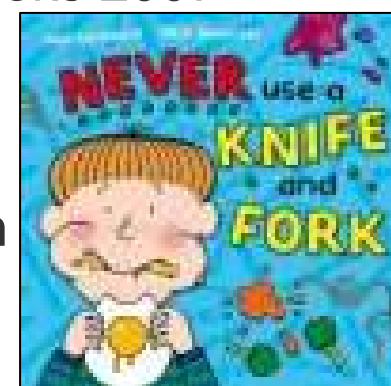
Never Use a Knife and Fork

Neil Goddard, illustrated Nick Sharratt
Macmillan Children's Books 2007

ISBN 9780230016163

This colourful and crazy collection of mealtime chaos hooks you in from the very first page. Nick Sharratt's delightful illustrations provide the

perfect backdrop to this rhyming treat of a book. Highly recommended for its entertainment factor, this is an imaginative look at food and the way it can be consumed. It is guaranteed to be popular with a new generation of creative culinary experts! KV.



The Odd Egg

Emily Gravett
Macmillan 2008

ISBN 9780230014916

All the other birds have laid an egg except for duck so when he finds his very own egg he

couldn't be happier. Despite the other birds teasing and berating his funny looking egg he patiently waits and is thrilled with the end result! A wonderful book with a funny twist and a simple but sweet storyline. I really enjoyed this book. KV.



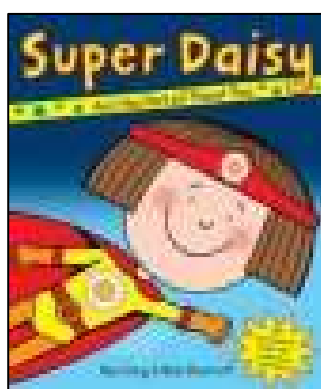
Super Daisy and the Perils of Planet Pea

Kes Gray, illustrated Nick Sharratt
Red Fox UK 2009

ISBN 9781862309647

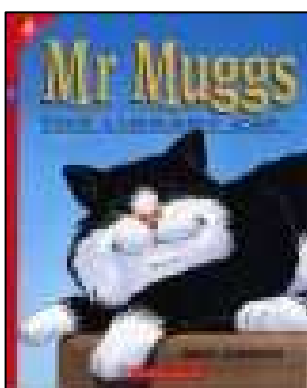
Daisy does not like peas at all and when she finds out that Planet Pea is going to collide with Planet Earth the prospect of an explosion causing a gazillionpillion

peas to find their way to every corner of Daisy's life – she has to take action. As Daisy puts her super powers to the test there are opportunities to pull tabs and lift flaps to see just how Daisy saves the world from peas. HS.



Mr Muggs the Library Cat
Dave Gunson
Scholastic New Zealand 2008
ISBN 9781869438333

Mr Moon, the head librarian, doesn't want a cat in the library, but the staff explain that Mr Muggs is good at catching rats – which he demonstrates. However, Mr Muggs and Pablo, the rat, have a deal: Mr Muggs 'catches' Pablo – thus proving his usefulness, and helps Pablo to food. Together they read books and act out stories each night. The illustrations have many things to look out for – the authors' names and changes in perspective, for example. Slightly sophisticated humour for 4+. AC.



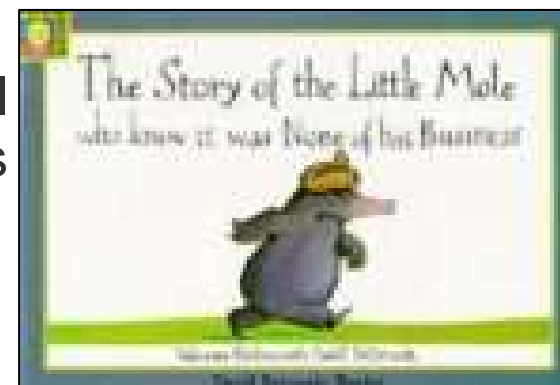
Smile!
Leigh Hodgkinson
Orchard Books 2009
ISBN 9781408301821

A large-format book to put a smile on your face. Sunny McCloud isn't feeling happy today. She's lost her smile and she looks everywhere to try and find it. Loose but skilful mixed media illustrations capture Sunny's exuberant character and you've gotta love her dog Mr Honeycomb. 3+. CB.



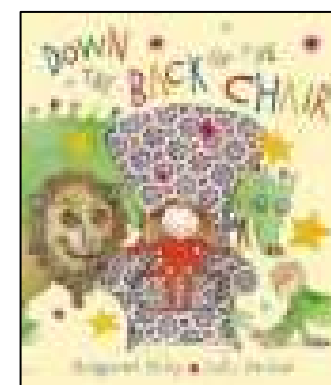
The Story of the Little Mole Who Knew it was None of his Business
Werner Holzwarth, illustrated Wolf Erlbruch
HarperCollins 2007
ISBN 9780732286972

Someone defecates on the rather sweet mole's head and he learns from all the other animals that it couldn't be them because their poo looks quite different! 3-6 year olds think it is hilarious and slightly shocking. AS.



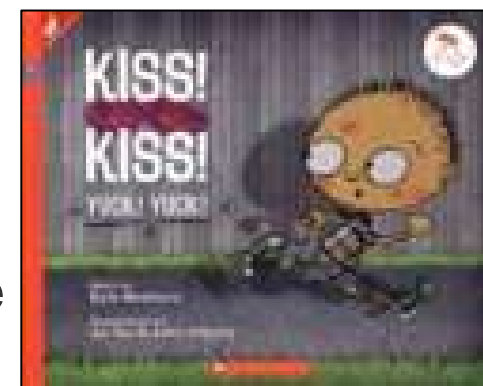
Down the Back of the Chair
Margaret Mahy, illustrated Polly Dunbar
Frances Lincoln UK 2006
ISBN 1845074408

This delightful stand-alone publication of Margaret Mahy's much-loved comic poem is not to be missed. When Dad can't find the keys to his clapped out car two-year old Mary suggests he looks where she often does – down the back of the chair. The roll-call of what he finds would take some beating, even in the messiest of households! SB.



Kiss! Kiss! Yuck! Yuck!
Kyle Mewburn, illustrated Ali Teo and John O'Reilly

Scholastic 2006
ISBN 1869437608
Every time Aunty Elsie comes to visit Andy tries to escape her and her big sloppy kisses. He hatches elaborate schemes to avoid a run in with her and hilarity ensues.



When the kisses abruptly stop Andy re-evaluates his feelings towards her. This is a fun book with a cheeky plotline and very clever artwork. Children and adults alike will enjoy and identify with this gem of a book. KV.

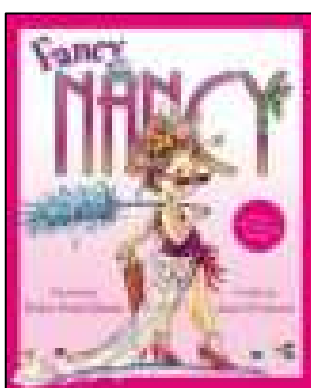
Fancy Nancy

Jane O'Connor, illustrated Robin Preiss Glasser

HarperCollins 2006

ISBN 9780007253463

Fancy Nancy just loves being fancy. She wears lace trimmed socks to soccer, uses fancy words like 'stupendous' and 'Oh la la' and can't wait to learn French which she thinks is totally fancy. Unfortunately, her family don't appreciate fancy and Nancy has to give them lessons. Having concentrated hard on their lessons the family go out for the night. First Nancy has to find them suitable accessories to transform their usual plain attire and they all go out looking stunning. After this fabulous start it ends in disaster, but there is a happy ending with Nancy cleaned up in her peignoir ready for a parfait and a kiss goodnight. A wonderful story especially for children who are fancy, and those who live with them. Suitably fancy illustrations, great vocabulary and very funny. HS.



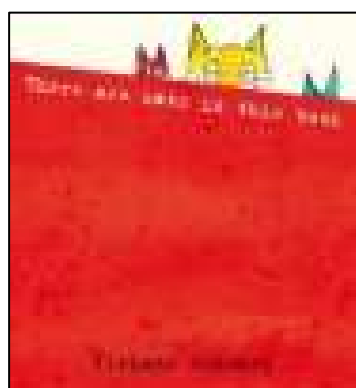
There are Cats in this Book

Viviane Schwarz

Walker Books UK 2008

ISBN 9781406300949

A lift-the-flap book in which the cats speak directly to the reader. We begin by waking them up, then help them play with wool, boxes and fish. 3+. AC.



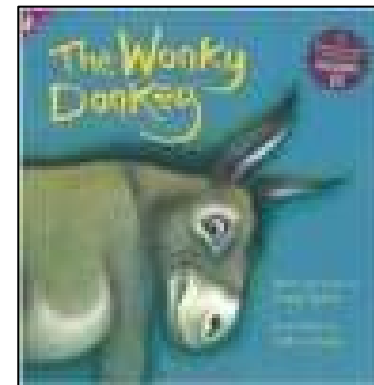
The Wonky Donkey

Craig Smith

Scholastic 2009

ISBN 9781869439262

The Wonky Donkey is a hilarious book and CD combo. It is definitely laugh out loud material.



As a funny looking donkey wobbles his way down the street his appearance is slowly but surely elaborated on. With its witty storyline and accompanying illustrations, *The Wonky Donkey* is a sure fire hit for both parents and children and was entertaining from beginning to end. KV.

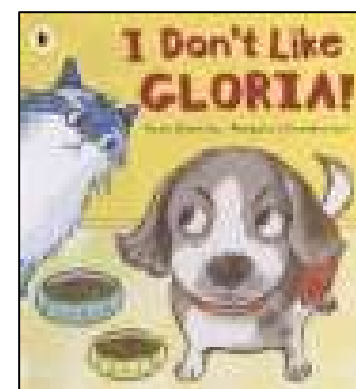
I Don't Like Gloria

Kaye Umansky, illustrated Margaret Chamberlain

Walker 2007

ISBN 9781406313406

Colin the dog has had his nose put out of joint by the arrival of Gloria, a pampered cat, and he indignantly lists his



grievances until both he and Gloria are supplanted by a rabbit named Jeffrey so they can unite in agreeing, 'we really don't like Jeffrey'. Much of the humour is in the expressions on the animals' faces. 3-6. HB.

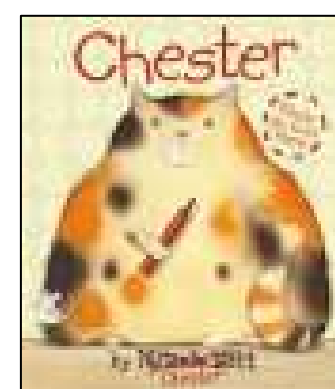
Chester

Mélanie Watt

Kids Can Press 2007

ISBN 9781554531400

Mélanie tries to write and illustrate a story about a little mouse living in the country. However



Mélanie's cat, Chester, takes over with his red pen. He writes his own story and makes additions to the illustrations. He and Mélanie battle over the book. Chester's red pen can be seen

throughout the book – end flaps (in the hardcover edition), cover, verso, etc. Keep an eye out for *Chester's Back* and *Chester's Masterpiece*, too. 4+. AC.

Big Frog Can't Fit In: A Pop-Out Book

Mo Williems

Hyperion Books for Children 2009

ISBN 9781423114369

Poor Big Frog is too big for the book. This makes her very sad. But her friends - a lot of friends - come up with solutions to her problem. Great fun, although the pop-outs, ups, and sideways, components need to be handled with care. 4+. AC.



Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus

Mo Willems

Hyperion Books for Children 2003

ISBN 078681988X

This is an example of humour that adults and/or children either get or don't get. One can't always explain humour. It is based on the similarity of the pigeon to a toddler throwing a tantrum. It is riffed on by the subsequent books about the pigeon, eg *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late* and *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy*. And eventually I got the humour! AS.



Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed

Mo Willems

Hyperion Books for Children / Disney Book Group 2009

ISBN 9781423114376

Wilbur is a naked mole rat who wears clothes. This upsets and disgusts the other naked mole rats, but Wilbur loves dressing up and being other characters. Lines are drawn in the argument over clothes, until the other naked mole rats

ask Grand-pah for help. After a lot of thought, Grand-pah goes along with Wilbur's question over clothes – 'why not' wear them? Fun, but with a subtle message, for 3+. AC.

There is a Bird on Your Head!

[An Elephant and Piggie Book]

Mo Willems

Pub Hyperion Books for Children 2007

ISBN 9781423106869

If you love *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* and the others in that series, you will laugh out loud at the antics of Elephant and friend, Piggie. In this particular book, Elephant discovers a pair of love birds has made a nest on his head and then proceed to raise a family in it. He is most disgruntled. And Piggie's calm reassuring assessment of the unfolding situation does not seem to help Elephant see reason. With a simple pencil change of leg or eyebrow movement, Mo Willems manages to bring such emotion and expression to the scene perfectly complementing the very few words. Suitable for all ages, young to old! RT.



Mammoth Pie

Jeanne Willis, illustrated Tony Ross

Anderson Press Ltd 2008

ISBN 9781842706596

Og is determined to eat the fat mammoth that lives on the mountain. He enlists the help of all his friends (with suitably delightful names like Gog, Ug, Bog), to get just what they need to trap and kill the mammoth – trouble is, he's been observing them the whole time, so is able to prepare himself well. Some of the pictures hold their own moments of humour if you look closely. 3-8 year olds. RT.



For 5 to 8

Never Glue Your Friends to Chairs

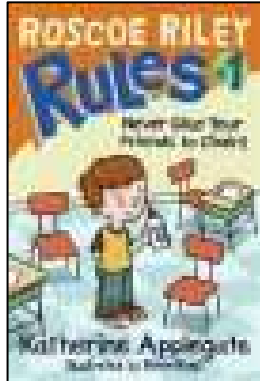
[Roscoe Riley Rules; book 1]

Katherine Applegate, illustrated Brian Briggs

HarperTrophy 2008

ISBN 9780061148811

Roscoe is so excited about being in first grade he wants to help their teacher out – by making sure his classmates stay still during the school show. Roscoe is always well-meaning and enthusiastic, but his solutions don't quite work out. A great fun series for newly independent readers. AC.



The Fly Guy books are perfect for readers gaining confidence with their independent reading, particularly boys with an appreciation of the absurd. AC.

The Mouse that Squeaked

Murray Ball

Scholastic NZ 2010

ISBN 9781869439613

Barry Mouse was a potter. He had a wheel upon which he used to 'throw' his pots... where they broke.

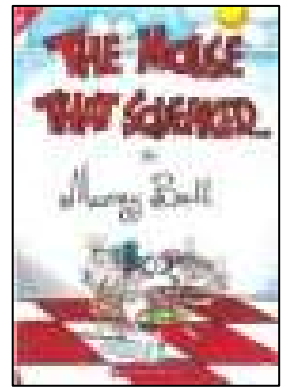
It was very disappointing.

It was very expensive, buying new pots.

What was the point of being a potter if his pots all broke on the wheel?

Barry had another problem...

Barry lives in fear of Razour the Rat but he also wants to do something to impress pretty Titanya. In a brave/rash moment he says he'll bash up Razour for her. Only problem is – Barry is rather a frightened little mouse. Does he get the girl/mouse? Does he impress or get flattened? Read this comic/picture book to find out if Barry and Titanya live happy ever after. A fun read for children and adults who are followers of the legendary cartoonist Murray Ball (of Footrat Flats fame). Murray Ball now writes and illustrates books for his grandchildren to enjoy. His first title with this in mind, *Fred the (Quite) Brave Mouse*, was shortlisted for the New Zealand Post Children's Book Awards, and *Willie Wants to Wee-Wee* has been reprinted five times! MG.



Stinking Rich and Just Plain Stinky

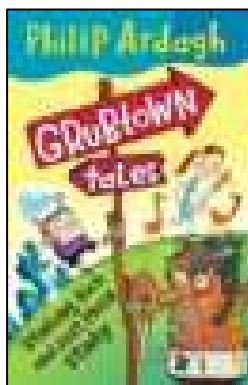
[Grubtown Tales]

Philip Ardagh, illustrated Jim Paillot

Faber and Faber 2009

ISBN 9780571242320

Grubtown is a grubby town – as you'd expect from its name – and is full of some real characters. Manual Org is too repulsive, even for Grubtown, but attempts to get him to leave are thwarted after the discovery of a large diamond. 7+. AC.



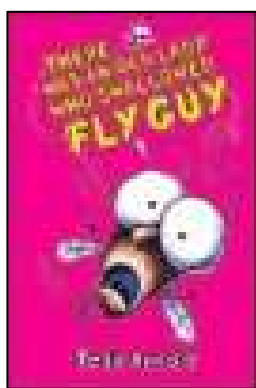
There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Fly Guy

Tedd Arnold

Scholastic US 2007

ISBN 9780439639064

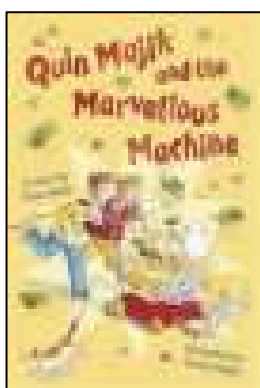
Ever wondered how the old lady ended up swallowing the fly? In this tale of Buzz and his pet fly, Fly Guy, we find out that Buzz's grandma did it accidentally – then comes the catalogue of animals to get him out.



Quin Majik and the Marvellous Machine
Fleur Beale, illustrated Philip Webb

Mallinson Rendel 2008
ISBN 9781877423239

Quin Majik and his parents move to a street occupied almost entirely by control freaks, (well it is called Tidy Street).



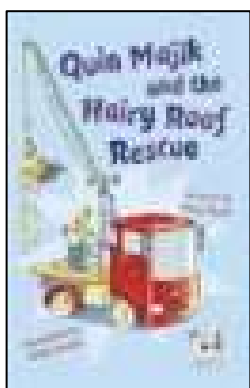
Determined not to follow the rules Quin enlists the help of the boy over the road, who is only too willing to embrace a bit of dirt and mess. The speed with which the boys rebuild machines and transform the landscape makes a funny story with an underlying message about the need for individual freedom. 7+. HB.

Quin Majik and the Hairy Roof Rescue

Fleur Beale, illustrated Philip Webb

Mallinson Rendel 2009
ISBN 9781877423284

The second book in the series about Quin Majik, who lives with his family on Tidy Street, in a neighbourhood with rules for everything to do with



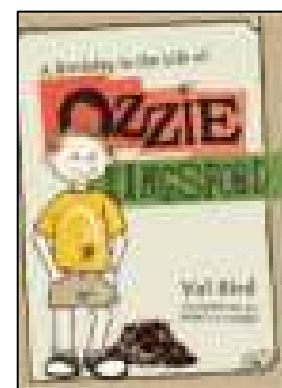
tidiness and behaviour. Quin's family don't quite fit the mould and subsequently get themselves into trouble with the neighbours. Roof Cleaning Day is today – as the story opens, the day 'every year, this day, every man on Tidy Street scrubs his roof' advises Mrs Smart. And of course, they must wear their tie, as per the rules, to maintain standards... Of course, things cannot possibly go smoothly for Quin's family. 7+. RT.

A Birthday in the Life of Ozzie Kingsford

Val Bird, illustrated Rebecca Cundy

Random House NZ 2008
ISBN 9781869419868

A trip to the beach for Ozzie Kingsford's 11th birthday is plagued by a series of disasters which make for very funny reading. This one of four equally funny books about Ozzie and his family. HB.

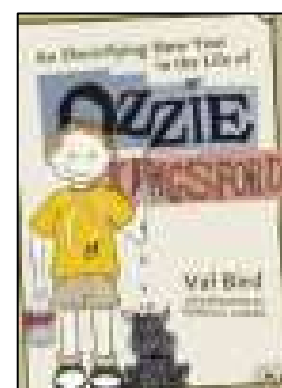


An Electrifying New Year in the Life of Ozzie Kingsford

Val Bird, illustrated Rebecca Cundy

Random House NZ 2009
ISBN 9781869791568

The third book in the series, so look out for them (four in all so far). Ozzie and his friend, Fletch, decide to build an Electricity Storage Machine. They need to use things from dad's workshop and the vacuum cleaner so here's hoping the experiment works otherwise both parents won't be happy! You can imagine with Ozzie, nothing is ever straightforward and nothing goes to plan. Visually appealing for 7–10 year olds. RT.



Burglary for Beginners [Master Crook's Crime Academy]

Terry Deary

Scholastic UK 2009

ISBN 9781407110158

Terry Deary, the author of the *Horrible Histories* series, sets his readers off on a new adventure – into the world of crime. Smiff Smith is the newest student at Master Crook's Crime Academy, where he joins a cadre of students ready to learn their trade. 8+. AC.



I'd Really Like to Eat a Child

Sylviane Donnio, illustrated Dorothee de Monfreid

Random House Books
for Young Readers 2007
ISBN 9780375837616



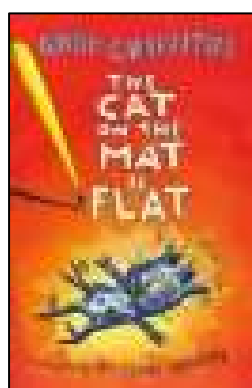
Wish fulfilment for adults? Cute story of a crocodile who wants to eat a child. The reality is that the crocodile is a baby and when he encounters a child she thinks he's sweet – so he goes back home determined to eat a lot to help him grow big enough so he really can eat a child. Years 2-6. AS.

The Cat on the Mat is Flat

Andy Griffiths, illustrated Terry Denton
Pan Aust 2006

ISBN 9780330422604

Think Dr Seuss – but even zanier, and with more violence. That's the best way I can think of to describe this collection of rhyming tales.



There are yaks and snacks in sacks, hogs on logs running around bogs, and a flat cat courtesy of a rat and a baseball bat. Appealing for boys 6+. Also track down *The Big Fat Cow That Goes Kapow!* AC.

The Fly

Gusti [Gustavo Rosemffet]
Allen & Unwin 2006

ISBN 9781741750812

Picture book suitable for year 2 or 3 upwards.

The fly is about to have an exciting day – he is going swimming... He enjoys himself but suddenly the sky goes dark, a brown thing he calls a meteorite falls towards him, he escapes



just in time. We gradually realise a child has just used the toilet. Hootingly funny

and produced in an interesting, yet simple collage technique – drawings mixed with fabric. Other illustrations have mainly strong black outlines with sparing use of primary colours, grey... and brown – of course! AS.

The Witch's Children Go to School

Ursula Jones, illustrated
Russell Ayto

Orchard Books 2008
ISBN 9781843628576



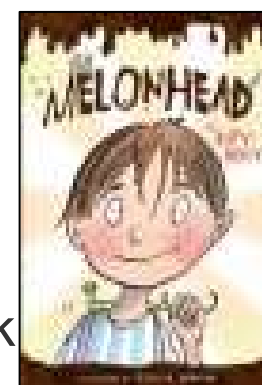
This is the third story about the witch's children and their antics. Gemma, the youngest, is scared of the big children in Class Three, so the Eldest One turns her into an ogre – but can't turn her back. The Middle One turns everyone into other storybook characters so that the Ogre fits in. But then the School Inspector arrives, so the children call for help – their mother, the witch. Spiky, over-the-top illustrations perfectly match the anarchic story. 5+. AC.

Melonhead

Katy Kelly, illustrated Gillian Johnson
Delacorte Press 2009

ISBN 9780385734097

Adam Melon – Melonhead – has a propensity for getting into trouble. He has his own, unique, way of looking at work and approaching problems.



After getting his foot stuck in a tree, and being rescued by firefighters, he saves his 'ruined' shoe and nails it to his wall as a memento. He is completely unaware that there might be consequences to his actions, and so is bemused by his parents' reactions. Great for reluctant readers – and others – aged 7+. AC.

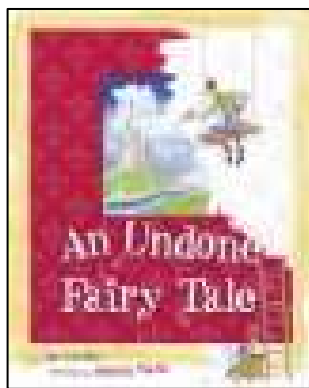
An Undone Fairy Tale

Ian Lendler, illustrated Whitney Martin

Simon & Schuster 2005

ISBN 9780689866777

We – the readers – are reading this fairy tale too fast. So fast that Ned hasn't had a chance to finish the illustrations. So, a man keeps interrupting the story to tell us to slow down and explain what substitutions Ned has had to make to keep up with us. Therefore, knights go into battle on fish, wearing tutus, to face a pretzel (the dragon is still in the shower) and the king has a doughnut for a crown. Great fun for readers familiar with traditional tales, aged 7+. AC.



Every Second Friday

Kiri Lightfoot, illustrated Ben Galbraith

Hodder Children's Books 2008

ISBN 9780340956120

Two children visit their rather eccentric father 'every second Friday'. We witness the difficulties of living with Dad's collection of bits and bobs and the zany activities they get up to. Drawing, paint and collage blend together expertly via Ben Galbraith's computer and each page is packed with details and surprises, and combine with lyrical language to form a portrait of a loving family. 5+. CB



Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things

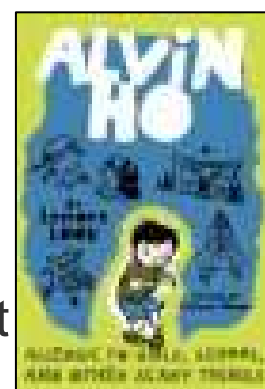
Lenore Look, illustrated LeUyen Pham

Schwartz & Wade Books 2008

ISBN 9780375839146

Alvin Ho is preparing for second grade. The problem is, he can't speak in school.

He opens his mouth, but nothing comes out. The only person at school who understands him is Flea. Which is a problem – because Flea is a girl. Things are not good in Alvin's world. Not a laugh-out-loud read, but this tale of childhood will inspire a few chuckles as Alvin deals with being seven. 6+. AC.



Dirty Bertie series of small novels.

Alan MacDonald, illustrated

David Roberts

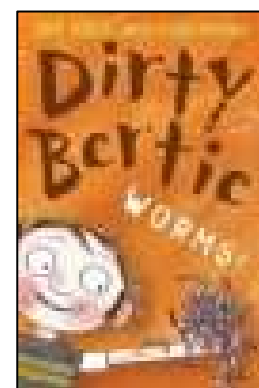
Koala Book 2006 onwards

Yuck!, Worms!, Fleas!, Burp!,

Pants!, Crackers!, Bogeys!,

Mud! and Loo! can mostly all be bought now.

I have read the first two and found them innocently and gleefully funny. They get right to the humour of 4-7 year olds. By 7/8 years old children will be wanting to read for themselves. Each book has large font and is broken up into very short chapters with lots of amusing and detailed black and white line drawings. AS.



Sheep with Boots

Maritgen Matter, illustrated Jan Jutte,

translated Bill Nagelkerke

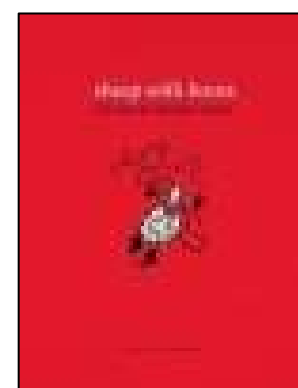
Gecko Press 2009

ISBN 9781877467424

Wolf is out looking for something to satisfy his hunger on a cold dark night. He finds Sheep in a barn

and thinks of a lovely lamb dinner.

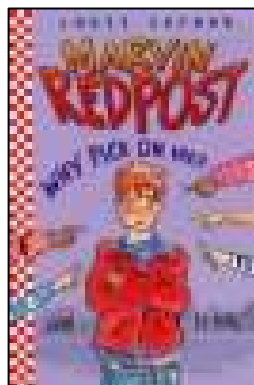
Sheep thinks she's made a new friend and happily goes along with Wolf. Great humour for the reader who is witness to Wolf's every thought and Sheep's innocent misunderstandings. Line drawings add to the humour.



Winner of 2003 Silver Pencil Award (Netherlands) and 2004 Youth Literature Prize (Germany). 6+. CB.

Why Pick on Me? [Marvin Redpost]
Louis Sachar, illustrated Sue Hellard
Bloomsbury Publishing 2004
ISBN 9780747562825

Another adventure of this fun-loving kid, Marvin Redpost, by Newbury award winner writer of *Holes*.

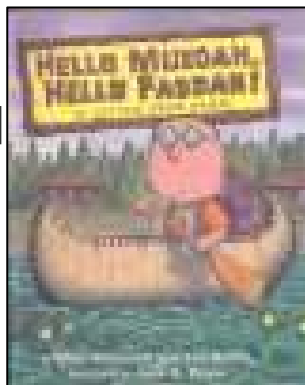


Not a topic we all talk about but Marvin manages to be teased and vilified by the whole class after the class bully says he is a nose picker. He discovers injustice and loss of friendship, until he comes up with an ingenious idea to make everyone, including his teacher, to think hard about themselves.

Reprinted 10 years after their first publication, this shows how well they are received. Great for 7+ readers. RT.

Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah! (A Letter from Camp)

Allan Sherman (original songwriter from 1962/3) and Lou Busch, illustrated Jack E Davis
Dutton Children's Books
2004



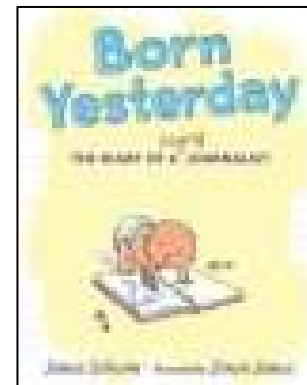
ISBN 9781417750580
Illustrated version of the song about Camp Granada which a lot of us will know. A nerdy boy is not enjoying camp and exaggeratedly pleads at length for his parents to take him home. However, eventually the sun comes out, games begin and he asks 'Muddah, Faddah, kindly disregard this letter'. Small amounts of text and illustrations of people with somewhat enlarged heads enhance the letter writer's feelings. Good for year 3 upwards. It would have been good to include a CD of the song. AS.

Born Yesterday: The Diary of a Young Journalist

James Solheim, illustrated
Simon James

Philomel Books US 2010
ISBN 9780399251559

A baby writes its diary over the course of its first few months of life. We learn about big sister and Foofy, the dog, and the baby's plans and goals. Sophisticated humour that will be appreciated by 5+ and adults. AC.

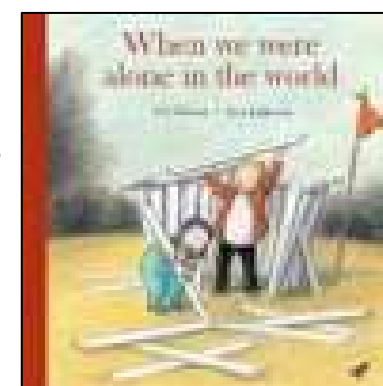


When We Were Alone in the World

Ulf Nilsson, illustrated Eva Eriksson,
translated Julia Marshall

Gecko Press 2009
ISBN 9781877467356 / ISBN
9781877467349

A five year old accidentally leaves school early, thinking it's three o'clock. He gets home and finds his parents are not there and immediately



concludes that they are dead. After a wee cry he realises he'll have to take care of his little brother so fetches him from playschool and goes to extraordinary lengths to take care of his sibling – makes a hut for them to live in 'till we grew old, left home and went to university', makes a bed, a TV from a box... Eventually the parents arrive home, to everyone's relief. The humour is a little black but funny nonetheless. Beautifully portrayed in the soft colour pencil illustrations. 5+. CB.

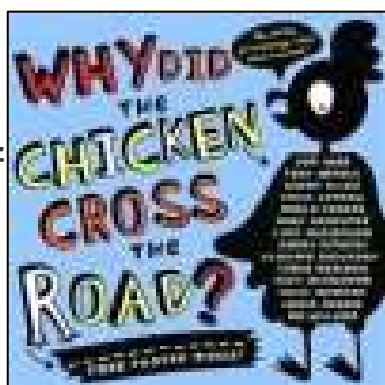
Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

Dial Books USA 2006

ISBN 9780803730946

Fourteen illustrators offer their interpretations on the old joke –

why did the chicken cross the road? You'll see chickens heading off to weddings, to the diner, fleeing lizards, zombies... Visual fun for 6+. AC.



rendered and the ending is not quite what you expect. Although this is a picture book, it's packed with text too so great for an independent reader. 6+. CB.

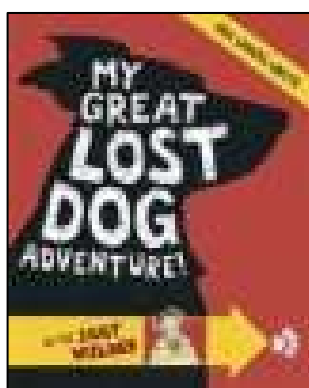
My Great Lost Dog Adventure! By Me Iggy Wilder

Marcia Williams

Walker Books 2010

ISBN 9781406319118

Iggy's grandpa has died and asked Iggy to take care of his dog, Fred, but the family sends Fred away to be 'rehomed'. The story of Iggy and his friend Daisy's determined efforts to get Fred back are told in comic book format, each page augmented with illustrated facts and doggy. Each page is skilfully



Frankie Pickle and the Closet of Doom

Eric Wright

Simon & Shuster 2009

ISBN 9781416964841

Frankie is sent to clean his room. Frankie has an excess of imagination. So, he imagines himself a convict – and his mother gives him a reprieve. However, his room becomes so bad something has to be done. Part graphic novel (Frankie's imagination), part chapter book (the real world), Frankie, his imagination, and his adventures will appeal to newly independent readers 7+. AC.

For 8 to 12

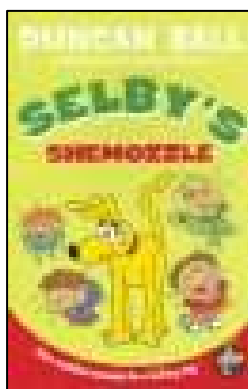
Selby's Shemozzle

Duncan Ball

Harper Collins 2005

ISBN 0207200300

There are a number of books about Selby the talking dog and he has been trying to keep his ability to talk a secret since 1985. In this book Selby has told a joke so funny that all the population of Bogusville is in hospital. 8+. HB.



An undercover operative for Krpshtskan has been at work at Hubble Middle School for years, helping children create super-weapons as their science fair projects. A completely wacky premise, which is matched by the word-play, witticisms and action of this fun and outrageous story – one that involves Star Wars memorabilia, cheese and frogs. 10+. AC.

Science Fair: A Story of Mystery, Danger, International Suspense, and a Very Nervous Frog

Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson

Disney 2008

ISBN 9781423113249



The Waiting Dog

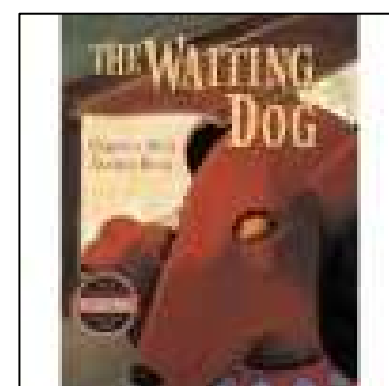
Carolyn Beck, illustrated Andrea Beck

Kids Can Press 2003

ISBN 9781553370062

A sophisticated picture book in rhyme.

A sinister looking dog (it is all in the eyes!) waits for the mail deliverer to push the post through the slot in the door



European-style and fantasises about attacking this person and eviscerating him/her. Illustrations reveal what might happen to this person and how much blood and organs might be involved. Gruesome and hilarious for over 8s. AS.

Cosmic

Frank Cottrell Boyce

Macmillan Children's Books 2008

ISBN 9781405054645

From the shiny silver cover this is 'One small fib for twelve-year-old Liam Digby. One giant rocket-fuelled

adventure for mankind'. The narrator, Liam is extremely tall for a twelve-year-old and is often mistaken for a grown up (on account of his beard). Through a series of events and 'sort of by accident' Liam finds himself on a rocket 200,000 feet above the surface of the earth. His parents believe he is happily engaged in outdoor pursuits at a South Lakeland Activity Centre. However, Liam has won a World's Best Dad competition and persuaded his friend Florida to go along as his daughter. Like other books by Frank Cottrell Boyce this one is funny, thought provoking and very hard to put down and will be enjoyed by 9+ readers. HS.



Top Secret: Pass it On!

Jaqualine Chapman, illustrated Rebecca Cundy

Longacre Press 2009

ISBN 9781877460357

In a series of notes passed in class two boys discuss a variety of subjects, including their class work.

Unfortunately Miss Hall intercepts their correspondence as seen by the letters of apology and lines written as punishment.



These letters are very funny, although some of the humour may be more obvious to adults, and will also be an entertaining read aloud. 8-12. HB.

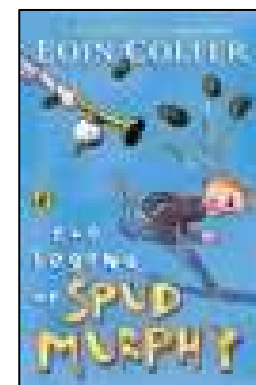
The Legend of Spud Murphy

Eoin Colfer

Puffin 2004

ISBN 9780141317083

Will and Marty's mother has decided that the boys will be at the local library every afternoon during the holidays. However Mrs Murphy the librarian is notorious for her very strict rules and ability to strike fear into the hearts of children with her spud gun. Will and Marty are sentenced to the small carpet in the children's area, and are forbidden to move from there. The boys' schemes are hilarious, as they try to outwit the legendary 'Spud' Murphy, and get themselves off the carpet. A great read for years 3-8. FM.



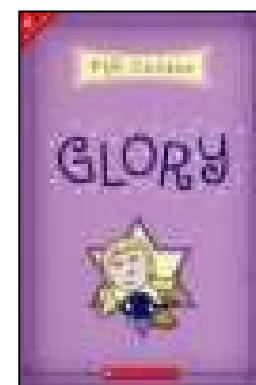
Glory

Fifi Colston

Scholastic NZ 2009

ISBN 9781869438685

Florence Bright is average, and she's sick of the fact that people like her never win the prizes, no matter how hard they try. So Florence tries to organise for someone ordinary to have their moment of glory, though everything doesn't quite go to plan and things get rather dramatic while Florence learns that people aren't always what they appear to be. Lots of laughs along with some dramatic moment told in a warm, chatty style. 9-12 years. CB.



Janie Olive: A Recipe for Disaster

Fifi Colston

Scholastic NZ 2005

ISBN 1869436776

Janie protests against her mother's cooking – macaroni cheese three times a week – by saying she could do better. But, she's a failure at cooking class. There's only one option – cheat!



Unfortunately, she's now on dinner duty once a week, and she's running out of money. 9+. AC.

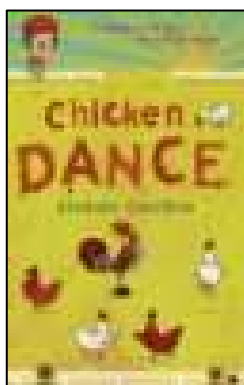
Chicken Dance

Jacque Couvillon

Bloomsbury 2008

ISBN 9780747589303

Don knows there are mysteries in his personal, and family, history. He's found out his real name is Stanley, and there's some deal with his sister. If you add in a chicken judging contest, it doesn't make this sound like the funniest book ever, but its quirky, poignant tone make it funny, in a bittersweet way. 10+. AC.



Achtung Pavlova

Stu Duval

Reed 2002

ISBN 9781869487348

The adventures that occur when Germans arrive in Dynamite Bay in New Zealand in 1942. The humour comes from dialogue and non politically correct situations. The town gets a tremendous surprise when a U-Boat of Germany's elite arrive to kidnap Mrs Possywater, creator of the world famous pavlova (and therefore unwittingly inspires pavlova making in today's classes). Years 3 and 4 as a read aloud and up to intermediate. AS.

Nathan Nuttboard Hits the Beach

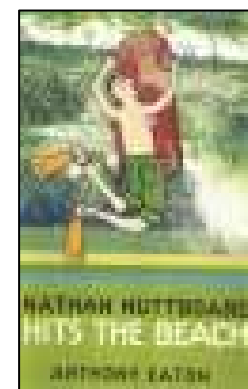
Anthony Eaton

University of Queensland

Press 2002

ISBN 9780702233401

First in a series about Nathan and his family. In this tale they're off to the beach – but there's a tent acting up, a lovestruck older sister, a surfer and a bike rider. As with most family-based books, there's both funny and touching moments – just like in life. 10+. AC.



Eating Things on Sticks

Anne Fine, illustrated Kate Aldous

Doubleday Children's Books 2008

ISBN 9780385616027

Mistakes happen. You forget things. And that's why Harry and his uncle become suspected missing persons on a remote island, full of people with beards (women included). Anne Fine's families are spectacularly human, with humour, sarcasm and frailties. This story of misunderstandings, guilt-trips and bribes, will ring bells with many a child aged 9+. AC.



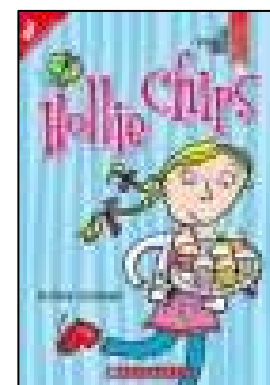
Hollie Chips

Anna Gowan

Scholastic NZ 2010

ISBN 9781869439316

When Hollie Chips moves into a new neighbourhood she is looking forward to making friends and having fun. She is insatiable in her quest for knowledge and actively explores everything in her new surroundings. At dusk when it is too dark to explore on foot, she often sits in a tree, fascinated with watching the people of Puriti Road.



Hollie's curiosity leads her to discover that a developer is planning to demolish the houses of Puriti Road. Determined to thwart his dastardly plan, Hollie tries to enlist the neighbours. Unfortunately, the neighbours are an unsociable introverted bunch. She definitely has a hard job ahead of her.

Hollie Chips is a feisty character, with a strong sense of ethics and a passion to put things right. She reminds me of Matilda, in her quirkiness and oddity. Roald Dahl would be pleased. Above all, Hollie Chips is a fun character, and this is a fun book. Recommended for readers of 8 years and up. LH.

The Dumpster Saga

Craig Harrison

Scholastic New Zealand 2007
ISBN 9781869438166

This book is laugh out loud funny. Despite the use of the word dumpster it is set in suburban New Zealand where 15-year-old Ben and his younger brother become involved with aliens after Chesney finds a helmet in a skip. It's good to read a book about a normal family where parents and siblings like each other and get on well together and there are some hilarious episodes, not all triggered by the helmet. This would be a great read aloud as well as a very funny read for 11+. Pity about the cover. HB.



The House of Many Ways

Diana Wynne Jones

Harper Collins 2008
ISBN 9780007275663

One of the great attractions of this author's work is the humour that lies within her fantasy. Charmain, who has been properly brought up to know nothing of housework or



magic, is sent to look after her great uncle's house. Here she is joined by Peter, a wizard's apprentice who is equally hopeless at practical skills such as cooking, housework or laundry and their efforts to survive in the magical 'house of many ways' make entertaining reading. Wizard Howl, of *Howl's Moving Castle* appears disguised as a dreadfully 'sweet' little boy but the main focus of the story is on Charmain and how she learns to control her magical gifts and helps to save the kingdom. 11+. HB.

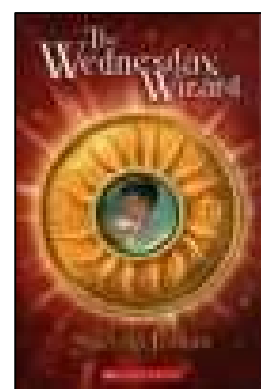
The Wednesday Wizard

Sherryl Jordan

Scholastic NZ 1991 and 2007
ISBN 9781869438388

Denzil's master, the wizard Valvasor, has been away for weeks now, and Denzil has been out of honey ever since he guzzled the whole jar full the day after Valvasor departed. But Denzil's visit to Mother Wyse's place results in more than another jar of honey – Denzil receives a warning: beware of Rue Wednesday! Beware of the large town! And most of all, beware of the dragon! Since Denzil is far from any large towns, while his master has headed to London, the young apprentice assumes the warning is for Valvasor and his subsequent efforts to warn his master are a comedy of errors. Not only does he miss his target in place but also in time, finding himself an accidental visitor to the back garden of a quirky, suburban family 700 years in the future.

This perennial favourite was recently awarded the Storylines Gaelyn Gordon Award for a much-loved book and no doubt will continue to be loved by generations to come. SB.



Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw

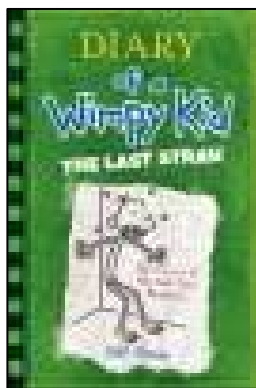
Jeff Kinney

Amulet Books 2009

ISBN 9780810970687

The Diary of a Wimpy Kid

books are hilarious and great for encouraging reluctant readers. Kids can relate to the main character, Greg Heffley, a high school kid who tries his best to be 'cool'... and fails miserably, ending up as possibly the most uncool kid on the planet, albeit one with phenomenal bad luck! In the third book, *The Last Straw*, Greg's dad tells him he has to stop his wimpy ways or he'll get sent to a military academy. Greg takes many attempts at showing his dad how tough he is but getting too sick to go to the father and son scout camp leaving dad stuck going as a driver, and being found by dad cowering in a hotel hallway with nothing on but your undies are not the brightest examples! Jonathan.



It won the Whitbread Children's Book Award in 2002. 10+. HB.

Doghead

Jill Marshall

Macmillan Children's Books 2009

ISBN 9780330451536

This novel by the author of the Jane Blonde series is fast-paced with humour, surprises and a lots of info about mummification and Egyptian mythology. Jack Bootle-Cadogan is nearly 13, lives in a stately home but just wants to be an ordinary kid at his local school. Jack's granny has just died and when he's bitten by a dog strange things start happening to him – hair sprouting from his chin... then fangs and a snout! There are characters from Egyptian mythology, and a strange and gory story about one of Jack's ancestors. There's a bit of everything – drama, action, mystery and lots of humour. 10+. CB.



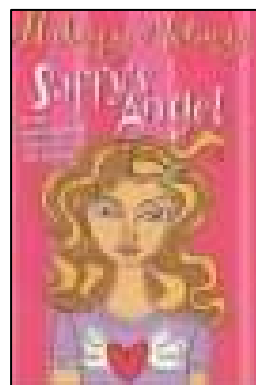
Saffy's Angel

Hilary McKay

Hodder 2001

ISBN 9780340850800

A story about a dysfunctional family where the children are neglected by both their artist parents may not seem to hold much potential for humour but the eccentric Casson family is bound to make you laugh. Saffy is determined to find the stone angel bequeathed to her by her grandfather, and heads for Italy (as a stowaway in her neighbours' car). The rest of the family sets off to Wales on the same quest, driven by Caddy, the eldest in the family, whose unsuccessful attempts to gain her driver's licence form an amusing subplot. This is the first and funniest of five books about the Casson family.



Ribblestrop

Andrew Mulligan

Simon and Schuster UK 2009

ISBN 9781847382306

I was riveted by this book and I'm an adult! Mulligan has a complete handle on how to suspend disbelief believably. The characters are varied, fully drawn, interesting, intriguing and feel mostly real. The goodies have faults and some of the baddies have good points. A well-meaning headmaster is trying to establish a school where children can learn through carrying out tasks in real life – well he is forced to work this way as he keeps running out of money. Most of what the children attempt is carried out successfully – like reroofing the stately home the school is in and finding the money to pay the bills, carrying a gun or two, spying, driving cars.

It is hugely entertaining with many plot twists – nasty experiments in the basement, a ghost, lost children, bent coppers, the lot. A great deal of humour – the school's motto is rewritten as 'Life is dangerous'. Lessons are learnt – seriously. I hope the author can match this romp with his next book. Years 6-8. AS.

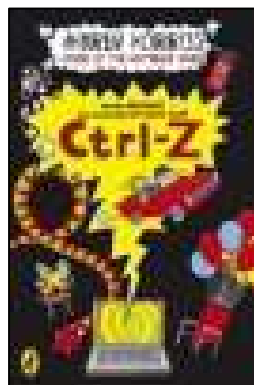
Ctrl-Z

Andrew Norris

Puffin 2009

ISBN 9780141324296

Imagine a laptop that not only undoes what you just did on your computer when you press Ctrl-z but undoes time



so you can undo the most major blunder. This gift from Alex's godfather seems ideal to help his best friend who is constantly in trouble but Alex is the only one who can actually remember that he rewound time. When his friend uses the computer in his absence Alex finds himself caught in a constant replay desperately trying to get home before he is forced to replay the same section of time yet again. 9-12. HB.

Bad Boys

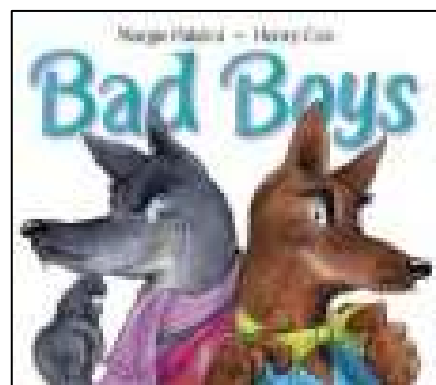
Margie Palatini, illustrated Henry Cole

HarperCollins 2003

ISBN 006000102X

Sophisticated picture book.

Two bad wolves are chased by the pigs and Red Riding Hood. To stay in hiding they decide to dress up as respectable lady sheep and join a



whole flock – the Bo Peep sheep. The wolves are about to encourage three of the sheep to jump the fence – so they could eat them – but the real

sheep become suspicious. However, they give the wolf/sheep fashion advice about their messy wool and hair and lead them away for treatment which turns out to be at the hands of shearers. The wolves head for the hills and learn to knit while they wait for their hair/fur to grow back. The language is hilarious and quite advanced. There are many double meanings linked with fairy and traditional tales and contemporary fashion so it has meaning for years 4 to 8. AS.

How Angel Peterson Got His Name

Gary Paulsen

Wendy Lamb Books 2003

ISBN 9780385729499

Now, the writing isn't necessarily hard-out funny, but the situations. Now, they're funny. Written in a deadpan style that perfectly complements these tales of boyhood derring-do (ie stupidity) this collection is a must-read for boys – including adults. There's the true story of Orvis and the bear wrestling, Emil and his unintentional hang-gliding – and how Carl became known as Angel for ever more. Dedicated to all boys in their 13th year, and the miracle that they get any older, this is great for 10+. AC.



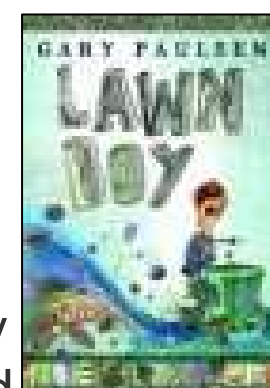
Lawn Boy

Gary Paulsen

Wendy Lamb Books 2007

ISBN 9780385746861

On his 12th birthday a boy is given his late grandfather's ride-on lawn mower by his, slightly different, grandmother. Bemused, he tries it out on his family's very small lawn and is approached by a neighbour to mow his lawn.

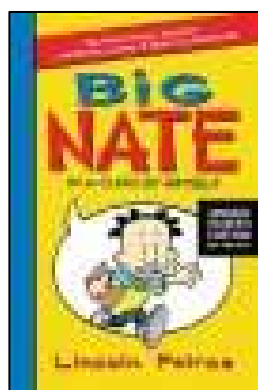


Within a short time, he has more lawns than time, a financial advisor, employees, is sponsoring a boxer – and a fortune.

An economically-themed tall tale. Great for reluctant readers, and as a class read-aloud. 10+. AC.

Big Nate: The Boy with the Biggest Head in the World

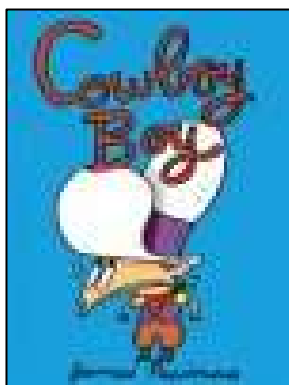
Lincoln Peirce
HarperCollins 2010
ISBN 9780007355167



This is a goofy story about Nate who is finding school rather trying. When he gets a fortune cookie that says on this day 'he will surpass all others' he wonders what glory that will bring him. Rather silly humour that will entertain the more reluctant readers. With lots of cartoon illustrations throughout, this should appeal to boys 9+. KA.

Cowboy Boy

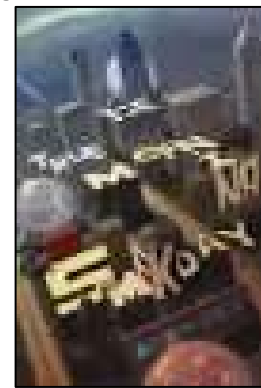
James Proimos
Scholastic 2003
ISBN 9780439416818



Bittersweet and ultimately triumphant boy starting middle school in US who is subjected to bullying. He seeks advice and reassurance from his grandma and best friend, dresses up as a cowboy and uses his alter ego and humour to get through it. A mixture of smart quips and boyish outlook and some jokes better appreciated by adults. Spacious layout with amusing drawings which look very much like those produced by young boys. AS.

The True Meaning of Smekday

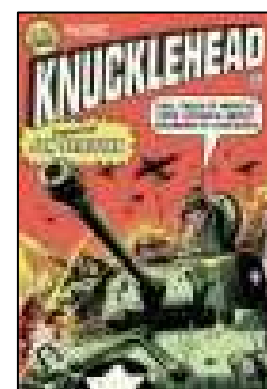
Adam Rex
Hyperion 2009
ISBN 9780786849017



After the Boov invasion of Earth and her mother's disappearance, 11-year-old Gratuity (aka Tip) Tucci decides to drive the family car across America to where she believes her mother to be. She ends up rescuing a Boov mechanic, who names himself J-Lo, and they form an alliance with others to outwit the Gorg who want to destroy the Earth. Tip's adventures, sarcastic comments on life today and wonderful illustrations, including a graphic novel on the origins of the Boov and Gorg make this funny read very special indeed. Years 6 to 9. FM.

Knucklehead

Jon Scieszka
Viking 2008
ISBN 9780670011384

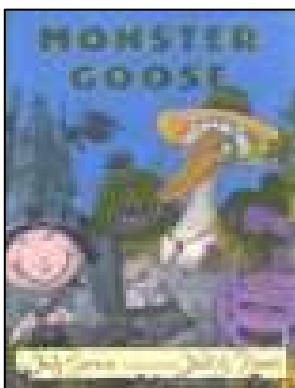


This is Jon's attempt to answer the perennial question: where do you get your ideas? The answer is – growing up the second of six boys. Yep, six! You learn the joys of being one of the oldest – and the issues. Find out why 'stop breathing my air' is a popular Scieszka family phrase – as is, 'darn near ruined 'em'. And, how, sometimes, you really need to stick by your brothers. (This, of course, can be aided by the use of a candy log, a cat, a car and vomit.) 8+. AC.

Monster Goose

Judy Sierra, illustrated Jack E Davis
Harcourt 2001
ISBN 9780152020347
Nursery rhymes reworked to keep you awake at night.

Little Miss Muffet has turned into a mummy; Bo-Peep is a werewolf with sinister vampire sheep; instead of frightening a mouse, Pussycat puts one in the queen's underwear. Perfect for those of a gruesome frame of mind aged 8+. AC.



You're a Bad Man Mr Gum!
Andy Stanton, illustrated David Tazzyman

Egmont Publishers 2006
ISBN 9781405223102

Want a great funny read-aloud book? Look no further then as this is it. Mr Gum is a series and one in the series *Mr Gum and the Dancing Bear* won the inaugural Roald Dahl Funny Prize in 2008.

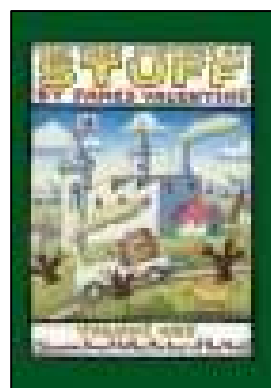


Mr Gum is a horrid old man who hates children, animals, fun and corn on the cob. He's a right slob except for the fact that he maintains his garden in immaculate order. The reason is simple; if he didn't a fairy would whack him about the head with a frying pan. This book is eminently suitable for 8-11s. Hook them into this and you've got 'em! WFM.

The True History of Stuff Volume One

James Valentine
ABC Books 2008
ISBN 9780733321580

A quirky 'history' of the country Trapezia and its inventions, including shampoo and peanut butter. Outrageously silly, with some quite sophisticated, tongue-in-cheek commentary that younger readers may completely miss – the



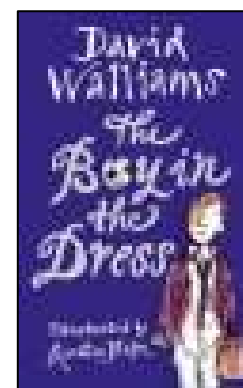
description of dictators for example. Although an easy read, the humour makes this more appropriate for 9+. AC.

The Boy in the Dress

David Walliams, illustrated
Quentin Blake

HarperCollins UK 2006
ISBN 9780007279036

Co-star and co-creator of the TV series *Little Britain*, David Walliams makes his authorial debut in this comedic tale of Dennis, who is 12 and likes wearing dresses. As a boy, and star of the football team, it's not something he wants publically known. When his secret is revealed he is expelled from school. A thoughtful and funny tale of nonconformity and individuality. 10+. AC.



Niagara Falls, or Does It? [Hank Zipper; book 1]

Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver
Walker Books 2009 [first published
Grosset & Dunlap 2003]
ISBN 9781406318906

Henry Winkler, best known for his role as the Fonz in *Happy Days*, began his children's writing career with this first tale of Hank Zipper – The World's Greatest Underachiever. On his first day of fourth grade, Hank's teacher sets the perennial 'What I Did On My Summer Vacation' essay. However, Hank has never been good at writing and reading, so he decides to make a working model of Niagara Falls. As his model floods the classroom, Hank is in big trouble. Eventually, his music teacher realises Hank might need testing to see if he has a learning problem. A great start to a fun series featuring a sympathetic cast of characters. 8+. AC.

For teens

Standard Hero Behaviour

John David Anderson

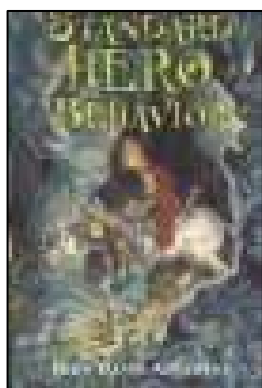
Clarion Books USA 2007

ISBN 9780618759200

Mason Quayle's barding business is not going well. For years now, his town has had only one hero,

singlehandedly protecting it from marauding bands of goblins, trolls and werewolves and apparently already covered for all his bardic requirements. But Mason is desperate to earn some money and despite his antipathy for Duke Darlinger, whose solo feats of bravery had driven all the town's other heroes, including his father, away years ago, he decides to go to him to beg for a job.

Mason gets more than he bargained for when he finds out the danger his town is now in. Armed only with his father's Guide to Adventures for the Unadventurous, and his trusty friend Cowel, Mason leaves the town of his birth on an urgent quest to track down some heroes in time to prevent disaster. This witty exploration of what it is to be a hero will be enjoyed by any fans of comic fantasy, particularly of a Terry Pratchett or Diana Wynne Jones flavour. SB.



up for himself, and Ishmael and his friends find themselves involved in James' plans, which include starting a debating team, reading aloud in English, and talking to girls! Laugh out loud funny, especially the discussions between Ishmael and his oddball friends Bill, Orazio and Ignatius. FM.

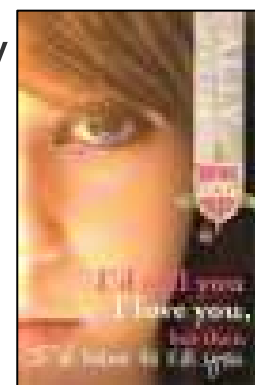
I'd Tell You I'd Love You, But Then I'd Have to Kill You [Gallagher Girls; book 1]

Ally Carter

Hachette Livre 2008 [originally published Hyperion 2006]

ISBN 9780734410795

The Gallagher Academy for Exceptional Young Women, a prestigious girls' boarding school, provides the perfect cover for training young spies. Cammie Morgan can speak 14 languages, is experienced in martial arts, and has been trained to observe and blend in. None of these skills help her when a local boy, Josh, notices her while out on assignment, and so she pretends to be a local so her true identity isn't discovered. Cammie's amusing misadventures trying to conceal the truth from Josh as her romance with him develops are the highlight of the book in the series. Year 7 upwards. FM.



Don't Call Me Ishmael

Michael Gerard Bauer

Omnibus Books 2006

ISBN 1862916667

Despite the challenges of his unusual name, 14-year-old Ishmael Leseur has managed to avoid the notice of the bullies at his school. However, the arrival of James Scobie at the beginning of year 9 ends that. James is incapable of feeling fear and is determined to stand



Julian Corkle is a Filthy Liar

DJ Connell

HarperCollins UK 2010

ISBN 9780007332168

Discretion needed. There is a lot of angst and adjustment for an indomitable and optimistic boy through his childhood until he is about 16. He wants to be a star, his mother keeps telling him he will be, but he has to battle with the disadvantages or emotional



complications which come with leaving school early, being gay, moving to another city, leaving his best friend behind (who he feels is also gay), and his mum and dad split up! Some sexual activity and a lot of images in his head but nothing too hard core in the way of actual events. Generally light hearted and an easy read, lots of humour but not quite as laugh out loud as the blurb says! AS.

An Abundance of Katherines

John Green

Dutton Books 2006

ISBN 0525476881

Colin has been dumped by 19 Katherines. His friend Hassan prescribes a road trip to improve his mood. In



Gunshot, Tennessee, they are befriended by Linsdey, and stay awhile. There, Colin tries to crack the code of love. Colin's inherent nerdiness may put off some readers, but the humour and characters make this book well worth the effort. AC.

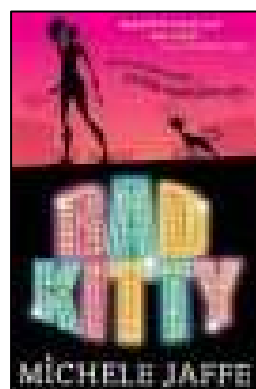
Bad Kitty

Michele Jaffe

Puffin UK 2006

ISBN 9780141319766

Jas has to suffer a family vacation in Las Vegas, which doesn't sound that bad. But family includes her 'perfect' cousin Alyson, and Alyson's 'Evil Hench Twin' Veronique.



Jas is lying next to the hotel pool, trying to attract the hot guy she's spotted, when the bad kitty lands on her, and won't let go. The situation degenerates – which completely ruins Jas' plan to become 'Model Daughter'.

And it launches her into the middle of a murder investigation. Her friends arrive in Vegas to 'save' her – and become embroiled in the mystery. Written in the first person, with footnotes. The footnotes are a work of art. When there's a group conversation, there's often side chats – and that's what these footnotes are – Jas' friends butting in. A fast-paced, quirky, and fun tale of murder and friendship, hot guys and Kermit undies. AC.

Jingo

Terry Pratchett

Corgi Books UK 1998

ISBN 9780552154161

When a long-forgotten piece of land re-surfaces in the straights between Ankh-Morpork and Klatch, erstwhile peaceful neighbours are suddenly racing for their blunt instruments and sharp sticks. Watch Commander Vimes tell the city's Patrician that everyone is running around with weapons saying daft things about a war. '... any citizen has a right to bear arms,' he is reminded. 'Arms is one thing. Holding weapons in 'em and playing soldiers is another,' is his practical reply.



Jingo is another masterpiece of satire set in Pratchett's Discworld, a flat world carried on the back of a giant space-swimming turtle, imbued with magic and peopled with trolls, werewolves and a human who needs to carry a species certificate, that for all its absurdity is anchored in a deep sense of compassion and sharp observation of the human condition.

And above all, funny. SB.

My Big Birkett

Lisa Shanahan

Allen & Unwin 2006

ISBN 1741145872

Gemma's family call it
chucking a Birkett when

your emotions override

everything. This year Gemma learns that

a Birkett can be a beautiful thing, and

sometimes the only thing. This is a

bittersweet novel of life, friendship,

family and community. Gemma's crush

on Nick leads her to try out for the school

play – *The Tempest* – which is a bit of an

issue, as she has a tendency to vomit

when speaking in front of crowds. Oh,

and it throws her together with Raven De

Head, middle son in a family of

troublemakers. Only, Raven is more than

what he appears. And then there's her

sister's wedding to Brian – and Brian's

military-mad family. AC.



Fill Out this Application and Wait Over There

Ruth Starke

Omnibus 2009

ISBN 9781862918474

Hailee is a school leaver,

and rather than going to

university has decided to

work for a year so she can travel, first

stop Thailand. With sharp observations

on the life of a retail worker, this should

be required reading for all school

students about to enter the real world.

Written in diary form, we follow Hailee as

she manages to get casual work at the

local supermarket as a checkout

operator, seasonal work at a chocolate

factory, and a chance at the dream job in

an upmarket fashion store. This is a fun,

laugh out loud read with not a vampire,

werewolf or Prince Charming in sight.

KA.



The booklist is available online at www.storylines.org.nz – you will need to log on with your Storylines account to view the booklist.

If you would like to join our group of reviewers - you can! Email us:

publications@storylines.org.nz – or write to:

Attn: Publications

Storylines Children's Literature Charitable Trust of New Zealand

PO Box 96 094, Balmoral

Auckland 1342

Our previous list of funny books was published in May 2002. It is available to download from our website.