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# Children's Picture Books - English

## **Stolen Words, by Melanie Florence**

24 Pages

The story of the beautiful relationship between a little girl and her grandfather. When she asks her grandfather how to say something in his language – Cree – he admits that his language was stolen from him when he was a boy. The little girl then sets out to help her grandfather find his language again. This picture book explores the intergenerational impact of the residential school system that separated young Indigenous children from their families. The story recognizes the pain of those whose culture and language were taken from them, how that pain is passed down, and how healing can also be shared.

## **Song for the Summer Night: a Lullaby, by Robert Heidbreder**

32 pages

As night falls on a soft summer evening, neighborhood children are drawn out of their houses by the sights and sounds of the world after dark. First the fireflies come sparkling past, followed by a host of domestic and wild animals, from cats and dogs to owls and skunks. Accomplished children's poet Robert Heidbreder creates a world of enchantment, while Qin Leng's illustrations conjure the harmonious interplay between our everyday domestic world and one that is just a little bit wilder. All the characters, both human and otherwise, have their moment on the nighttime stage, but eventually, the curtain falls, and sleepiness beckons.

## **Earth to Audrey, by Susan Hughes**

32 pages

Audrey comes into Ray's life like an earthbound star. Everything about her is a bit far-out. And she's always in her own little world. So Ray decides that this unusual girl who has dropped into his neighborhood for the summer must be an alien. As they become friends, Audrey takes Ray on a journey of discovery — one that enables him to see his own planet in a new light. Soon, Ray can't imagine life on Earth without her.

## **Have you Filled your Bucket Today? by Carol McCloud**

31 pages

This heartwarming book encourages positive behavior by using the concept of an invisible bucket to show children how easy and rewarding it is to express kindness, appreciation and love by "filling buckets."

## **Enzo Races in the Rain, by Garth Stein**

36 pages

Life on the farm is pretty quiet—except when he races the cars that come down the barn road. Because Enzo is fast. He knows he's different from other dogs. But people never understand Enzo when he barks, and it drives him crazy! Then one day Enzo meets a little girl named Zoë and her father, Denny, and everything changes.

## **Noni Says No, by Heather Hartt-Sussman**

24 pages

Noni can do many things: she can give her baby brother his bottle, she can help her mother in the kitchen, and she can even walk over to her friend Susie's house. But Noni just can't say "no." When she was very small, it was easy saying "no" to everybody, but now that she has a best friend, she wants to please. Noni can't say "no" to her friend, even when it means she has to hand over a precious toy, or when it means agreeing to a hideous haircut, or even giving up her bed at a sleepover. But when Noni finally finds her voice, the consequences are not what she – or the reader – expects.

## **Stella, Fairy of the Forest, by Marie-Louise Gay**

32 pages

Stella's little brother, Sam, wonders whether fairies are invisible. Stella assures him that she has seen hundreds of them and says that if she and Sam venture across the meadow and into the forest, they are likely to find some. So begins another adventure of Stella, the irrepressible redhead, and her slightly apprehensive little brother. But Sam surprises Stella and himself by having a few ideas of his own — ideas that ensure a wonderful end to a perfect day in the woods.

## **Missuk's Snow Geese, by Anne Renaud**

36 pages

In the land under the Northern lights, a little girl dreams of carving snow geese out of soapstone, just like her father. He promises that he'll teach her when he returns from his hunt, so Missuk goes out to play in the snow, hoping to forget her worry that she lacks his skill as a carver. Then, when a terrifying storm blows in, Missuk has something far worse to worry about: Will her father return from his hunt?

# Children's Chapter Books

## **Dear Earthling: Cosmic Correspondent, by Per Avey**

183 pages

Dethbert Jones is your average ten-year-old – only he lives on the planet Crank with his pet chicken-snail and his robot best friend Andi Social. When he and Andi join the Space Cadets, a Scouts-like organization, they are totally smooched at the prospect of going to Space Camp where they'll learn to pilot a real shuttlecraft and disintegrate weapons of mass destruction. Blamtastic!

To earn his cosmic correspondent badge, Dethbert begins writing to an earthling – and boy, does he have a lot to write about! Between questions about Earth food, culture, and activities, Dethbert recounts his experiences attempting to avoid his horrible little sister, impress his animal-obsessed crush, and fly a space shuttle. Misadventures – from hairy ankles to crash landings – abound, but Dethbert's curiosity and enthusiasm can't be crushed, not by anything in this galaxy, anyway!

## **Those who run in the sky, by Aviaq Johnston**

200 pages

A coming-of-age story that follows a young shaman named Pitu as he learns to use his powers and ultimately finds himself lost in the world of the spirits. After a strange and violent blizzard leaves Pitu stranded on the sea ice, without his dog team or any weapons to defend himself, he soon realizes that he is no longer in the world that he once knew. The storm has carried him into the world of the spirits, a world populated with terrifying creatures—black wolves with red eyes, ravenous and constantly stalking him, and water-dwelling creatures that want nothing more than to snatch him and pull him into the frigid ocean through an ice crack—as well as beings less frightening, but equally as incredible, such as a lone giant who can carry Pitu in the palm of her hand and keeps caribou and polar bears as pets.

After stumbling upon a fellow shaman who has been trapped in the spirit world for many years, Pitu must master all of his shamanic powers to make his way back to the world of the living, to his family, and to the girl that he loves.

## **Confessions of a Teenage Leper, by Ashley Little**

304 pages

Abby Furlowe has plans. Big plans. She's hot, she's popular, she's a cheerleader and she's going to break out of her small Texas town and make it big. Fame and fortune, adoration and accolades. It'll all be hers.

But then she notices some spots on her skin. She writes them off as a rash, but things only get worse. She's tired all the time, her hands and feet are numb and her face starts to look like day-old pizza. By

the time her seventeenth birthday rolls around, she's tried every cream and medication the doctors have thrown at her, but nothing works. When she falls doing a routine cheerleading stunt and slips into a coma, her mystery illness goes into overdrive and finally gets diagnosed: Hansen's Disease, aka leprosy.

Abby is sent to a facility to recover and deal with this new reality. Her many misdiagnoses mean that some permanent damage has been done, and all of her plans suddenly come tumbling down. If she can't even wear high heels anymore, what is the point of living? Cheerleading is out the window, and she might not even make it to prom. PROM!

But it's during this recovery that Abby has to learn to live with something even more difficult than Hansen's Disease. She's becoming aware of who she really was before and what her behavior was doing to others; now she's on the other side of the fence looking in, and she doesn't like what she sees.

## **Very Rich, by Polly Horvath**

304 pages

Rupert lives with his parents and many siblings in a small house in the poorest section of Steelville, Ohio. When he spends Christmas with his classmate Turgid Rivers, he is offered all the food he can eat, and the opportunity to win wonderful prizes in the family games—prizes he hopes to take home so he can share his Christmas bounty with his family. But after he loses everything in the last game, Rupert resigns himself to going home empty handed.

Feeling secretly guilty, all of the adults in Rivers family try to make it up to him by taking Rupert on one unlikely adventure after another, embroiling him in everything from time travel to bank robberies. But can anything he experiences make up for what he has lost?

Deftly blending magical realism with heartbreak, hope, and a wide cast of eccentric characters, Polly Horvath weaves a tale that is darkly funny and deeply poignant. *Very Rich* is a bittersweet and quirky story that celebrates the unique nature of human experience.

## **Fire Song, by Adam Garnet Jones**

232 pages

How can Shane reconcile his feelings for David with his desire for a better life? Shane is still reeling from the suicide of his kid sister, Destiny. How could he have missed the fact that she was so sad? He tries to share his grief with his girlfriend, Tara, but she's too concerned with her own needs to offer him much comfort. What he really wants is to be able to turn to the one person on the rez whom he loves—his friend, David. Things go from bad to worse as Shane's dream of going to university is shattered and his grieving mother withdraws from the world. Worst of all, he and David have to hide their relationship from everyone. Shane feels that his only chance of a better life is moving to Toronto, but David refuses to join him. When yet another tragedy strikes, the two boys have to make difficult choices about their future together. With deep insight into the life of Indigenous people on the reserve, this book masterfully portrays how a community looks to the past for guidance and comfort

while fearing a future of poverty and shame. Shane's rocky road to finding himself takes many twists and turns, but ultimately ends with him on a path that doesn't always offer easy answers, but one that leaves the reader optimistic about his fate.

## **Here So Far Away, by Hadley Dyer**

368 pages

Feisty and fearless George Warren (given name: Frances, but no one calls her that) has never let life get too serious. Now that she's about to be a senior, her plans include partying with her tight-knit group of friends and then getting the heck out of town after graduation.

But instead of owning her last year of high school, a fight with her best friend puts her on the outs of their social circle. If that weren't bad enough, George's family has been facing hard times since her father, a police sergeant, got injured and might not be able to return to work, which puts George's college plans in jeopardy.

So when George meets Francis, an older guy who shares her name and her affinity for sarcastic banter, she's thrown. If she lets herself, she'll fall recklessly, hopelessly in love. But because of Francis's age, she tells no one—and ends up losing almost everything, including herself.

## **Black Chuck, by Regan McDonell**

304 pages

Psycho. Sick. Dangerous. Réal Dufresne's reputation precedes him. When the mangled body of his best friend, Shaun, turns up in a field just east of town, tough-as-hell Réal blames himself. But except for the nightmares, all Ré remembers is beating the living crap out of Shaun the night of his death.

Shaun's girlfriend, sixteen-year-old Evie Hawley, keeps her feelings locked up tight. But now she's pregnant, and the father of her baby is dead. And when Réal looks to her to atone for his sins, everything goes sideways. Fast.

The tighter Evie and Réal get, the faster things seem to fall apart. And falling in love might just be the card that knocks the whole house down.

===== Adele's Garden by Linda Amyot ===== 88 pages Wistful and profoundly intimate, Adele's Garden delves into the friendship between a teenage girl (Elaine) and an elderly woman (Adele) who lives in an elegant old house with a beautiful garden. They have an immediate affinity for one another. In a continuing series of regular visits, Elaine tells Adele about her family, friends and particularly about the boy at school on whom she has a crush. Elaine's confusion about the appearance of love in her life sparks Adele to reflect on the one great love of her life, bringing Adele and Elaine closer in ways neither expected.

## **Pulse Point, by Colleen Nelson**

284 pages

In Kaia's world, setting foot Outside can be deadly. The safety of the City has kept humans alive as climate change destroys the world. But the City has found a way to survive sustainably: it is run by the energy generated by its Citizens. The energy that citizens create is calculated and displayed on their pulse point, a transmitter embedded in their finger.

Kaia is a Citizen, one of the few deemed genetically perfect enough to live under the protective dome of the City with her grandmother and father. But when Kaia discovers her mother is alive and living Outside, she escapes the safety of the City and learns the truth about the sinister world she left behind.

## **Don't Tell the Enemy, by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch**

160 pages

During the Soviet occupation of Ukraine during World War II, some of Krystia's family are harrassed; others are arrested and killed. When the Nazis liberate the town, they are welcomed with open arms. Krystia's best friend Dolik isn't so sure. His family is Jewish and there are rumours that the Nazis might be even more brutal than the Soviets.

Shortly after the Nazis arrive, they discover a mass grave of Soviet prisoners and blame the slaughter on the Jews. Soon, the Nazis establish ghettos and begin public executions of Jews.

Krystia can't bear to see her friends suffering and begins smuggling food into the ghetto. When rumours circulate that the ghetto will be evacuated and the Jews will be exterminated, Krystia must decide if she's willing to risk her own family's safety to save her friends.

## **A World Below, by Wesley King**

288 pages

A class field trips turns into an underground quest for survival in the latest middle grade novel from the author of Edgar Award winner *OCDaniel*.

Mr. Baker's eighth grade class thought they were in for a normal field trip to Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. But when an earthquake hits, their field trip takes a terrifying turn. The students are plunged into an underground lake...and their teacher goes missing.

They have no choice but to try and make their way back above ground, even though no one can agree on the best course of action. The darkness brings out everyone's true self. Supplies dwindle and tensions mount. Pretty and popular Silvia does everything she can to hide her panic attacks, even as she tries to step up and be a leader. But the longer she's underground, the more frequent and debilitating they become. Meanwhile, Eric has always been a social no one, preferring to sit at the back of the class and spend evenings alone. Now, he finds himself separated from his class, totally by himself underground. That is, until he meets an unexpected stranger.



Told from three different points of view, this fast-paced adventure novel explores how group dynamics change under dire circumstances. Do the students of Mr. Baker's class really know each other at all? Or do they just think they do? It turns out, it's hard to hide in the dark.

## **A True Home (Heartwood Hotel, Book 1), by Kallie George**

176 pages

When Mona the Mouse stumbles across the wondrous world of the Heartwood Hotel in the middle of a storm, she desperately hopes they'll let her stay. As it turns out, Mona is precisely the maid they need at the grandest hotel in Fernwood Forest, where animals come from far and wide for safety, luxury, and comfort. But the Heartwood Hotel is not all acorn soufflé and soft moss-lined beds. Danger lurks, and as it approaches, Mona finds that this hotel is more than a warm place to spend the night. It might also be a home.

## **Sit, by Deborah Ellis**

144 pages

The seated child. With a single powerful image, Deborah Ellis draws our attention to nine children and the situations they find themselves in, often through no fault of their own. In each story, a child makes a decision and takes action, be that a tiny gesture or a life-altering choice.

Jafar is a child laborer in a chair factory and longs to go to school. Sue sits on a swing as she and her brother wait to have a supervised visit with their father at the children's aid society. Gretchen considers the lives of concentration camp victims during a school tour of Auschwitz. Mike survives seventy-two days of solitary as a young offender. Barry squirms on a food court chair as his parents tell him that they are separating. Macie sits on a too-small time-out chair while her mother receives visitors for tea. Noosala crouches in a fetid, crowded apartment in Uzbekistan, waiting for an unscrupulous refugee smuggler to decide her fate.

These children find the courage to face their situations in ways large and small, in this eloquent collection from a master storyteller.

## **The Cat at the Wall, by Deborah Ellis**

152 pages

On Israel's West Bank, a cat sneaks into a small Palestinian house that has just been commandeered by two Israeli soldiers. The house seems empty, until the cat realizes that a little boy is hiding beneath the floorboards. Should she help him? After all, she's just a cat. Or is she? It turns out that this particular cat is not used to thinking about anyone but herself. She was once a regular North American girl who only had to deal with normal middle-school problems — staying under the teachers' radar, bullying her sister and the uncool kids at school, outsmarting her clueless parents. But that was before she died and came back to life as a cat, in a place with a whole different set of rules for survival. It's not long before the boy's teacher and classmates come looking for him, and the house is

suddenly surrounded by Palestinian villagers throwing rocks, and the sound of Israeli tanks approaching. Not my business, thinks the cat. And then she suddenly understands what happened to the boy's parents, and knows it's up to her to diffuse the situation. But what can a cat do?

## Looking for X, by Deborah Ellis

132 pages

Smart and independent, 11-year-old Khyber lives with her mom, Tammy, a former stripper, and her autistic twin brothers in a poor Toronto neighborhood. Though she doesn't have a lot in common with her classmates, Khyber does have wonderfully eccentric friends: Valerie, Toronto's meanest waitress, and X, a homeless woman in hiding from "the secret police." Despite having to deal with pompous social workers who make her mother cry and ignorant kids who make remarks about her brothers, Khyber manages to enjoy herself, poring over atlases, planning exotic journeys, and taking peanut butter sandwiches to X. But when Tammy decides to move her sons to a group home for proper care, Khyber's world starts to crumble. She fights with her mom and then gets expelled from school. To make matters worse, X suddenly disappears. Khyber sets out to find her in a wild all-night odyssey of self-discovery.

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