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Portis, Antoinette. *Not a Box*. Illustrated by Antoinette Portis. HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 0061123226. \$12.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture books; Fiction;

Subject: Boxes--Juvenile fiction; Rabbits--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

A little rabbit is repeatedly asked why he is sitting on, standing on, squirting, or wearing a box—but the person asking just does not understand: it is not a box! It's all sorts of things: from a tugboat to a burning building to a racecar to a robot. It is wonderful, it is amazing—but it is not a box.

Though Portis uses a limited color palette (brown, black, and white for the pages asking about the box and red, yellow, black and white for the pages showing what the box *really* is), her illustrations simply and beautifully convey the magic of imagination. The book's design is enough to make older readers smile: it's designed inside and out to look like a brown cardboard box, complete with directions stating "This End Up" and the weight in ounces. The charming illustrations paired with the simple and brief text make this Theodor Geisel honor book an excellent addition to family and school libraries alike.

Bottner, Barbara and Gerald Kruglik. *Pish and Posh Wish for Fairy Wings*. Illustrated by Barbara Bottner. HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 9780060514198. \$15.99. 48 p.

Reviewer: Angel Pearce

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Picture books;

Subject: Fairies--Juvenile fiction; Monsters--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

As Pish and Posh prepare to become fairies, they must make a wise wish to obtain their wings. Trouble soon brews because they do not see the world the same way. In the end help comes from, of all places, the monster under the bed.

Although other early readers offer strong competition, this little story is likeable enough. *Pish and Posh Wish for Fairy Wings* is not truly original, but it is decent reading for those stepping closer to chapter books.

LaMarche, Jim. *Up*. Illustrated by Jim LaMarche. Chronicle, 2006. ISBN 0811844455. \$16.95.
32 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture books;

Subject: Self-actualization--Juvenile fiction; Psychokinesis--Juvenile fiction; Brothers--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

LaMarche, who won acclaim for his delicate illustrations in *The Rainbabies*, again shows his sense of emotion, color, and style in *Up*, the second book he has written and illustrated. Mouse (who is actually named Daniel) is the younger of two brothers. Michael gets to help their father out on the fishing boat, but Daniel is too small to help (something Michael reminds him of repeatedly). In a moment of frustration, Daniel somehow causes a small cracker to float very briefly above a table. While he gets better at levitating with practice and can lift heavier and heavier items, he can't move them around and he can't lift them very high up. Daniel wonders how his ability can be useful—and promptly has an opportunity to use his power to help.

The story is simple and universal—a small boy wanting to be bigger and stronger. The text is suited to older readers or to be read aloud for younger readers. The main attraction of the book is its beautiful illustrations—LaMarche's acrylic washes and colored pencils create images suffused with light and color. The sea, sky, and landscapes are almost iridescent and everything has a soft texture and glow to it. The overall effect is that of wistful nostalgia (there are no cars or computers in sight) and wonder. This book should be included in libraries and especially in homes if not for the story then for the sake of its pictures alone.

Gold, Rozanne. *Kids Cook 1-2-3: Recipes for Young Chefs Using Only 3 Ingredients*. Illustrated by Sara Pinto. Bloomsbury, 2006. ISBN 1582347352. \$17.95. 144 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Quick and easy cookery--Juvenile literature; Cookery--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Even young kids can cook delicious, simple meals from the recipes in *Kids Cook 1-2-3*—all the recipes use only three main ingredients (barring simple kitchen staples like water, salt, and pepper). Gold, a professional chef, has carefully created straightforward dishes that will appeal to kids and adults alike. The bright, child-like illustrations, rendered well by Pinto, are friendly to timid readers who have never cooked before. Gold is careful to explain how to stock up the kitchen, how to measure, kitchen terminology, and other basic cooking skills before beginning the recipes. Better still, Gold collaborated with several sous-chefs, ranging in age from eight to 16—while Gold developed most of the recipes, her assistants tested, refined, and added variations to them. The recipes cover the common cookery topics of breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, side dishes, and desserts. This is a must-have for the family kitchen.

Kehret, Peg. *Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio*. Albert Whitman & Company, 2006. ISBN 0807574597. \$15.95. 205 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Autobiographies; Informational books;

Subject: Kehret, Peg--Health--Juvenile literature; Poliomyelitis--Patients--United States--Biography--Juvenile; Books--Reviews;

Prolific children's writer Kehret tells the story here of her experiences when she was struck with polio in 1949. This autobiography's is in a clear voice that feels more like having a one on one conversation with the author than just reading. Perhaps some of the dialogue is fictitious--the actual words lost in memory--but all of it is appropriate and very real-sounding. Kehret does not hold back in describing the fear, pain, depression, or selfishness that she experienced during her ordeal, but it is well balanced by her determination, the support she received from her family, and the friendships she had with her roommates at the hospital.

This edition, published at the tenth anniversary of the original work, includes extended information--a "where are they now"--concerning the experiences of Kehret and other people mentioned in the book, as well as a chapter on polio, its history, and its current status. For younger generations who only know of polio by its vaccine, this book is a well-crafted look at the effects of a disease that was once epidemic and terrifying.

Mass, Wendy. *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*. Little, Brown and Company, 2006. ISBN 0316058297. \$15.99. 289 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Conduct of life--Juvenile fiction; Fathers and sons--Juvenile fiction; Self-realization--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Jeremy Fink is not adventurous. He does not go further than a couple blocks from his apartment, he has never taken a bus or subway without an adult, and he will not try new food; peanut butter sandwiches, pizza, hamburgers and candy are all he will eat. A month before his 13th birthday Jeremy receives a present from his father who died 5 years ago. The present is a beautiful wood box with four keyholes, no keys, and an engraved inscription: THE MEANING OF LIFE: FOR JERMEY FINK TO OPEN ON HIS 13TH BIRTHDAY. Now Jeremy and his best friend Lizzy are taking buses *and* subways, without an adult, to search New York City for the keys to open the box. Along the way they meet many different people who share with them what they think is the meaning of life. While the conclusion of the book is seems contrived and somewhat improbable, the story is funny and entertaining. It will get the reader, and like Jeremy and Lizzy, thinking about the meaning of life.

McNamee, Eoin. *The Navigator*. Random House, 2007. ISBN 9780375839108. \$15.99. 342 p.

Reviewer: Laura Wadley

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Fantasy; Time--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Owen is making his way towards his hideout by the river when the sky goes dark and then light again, and a raggedy man tells him that “it has begun.” Owen soon finds himself camped with The Resistors, near where his home would be if his home were still there, but the Resistors are battling the Harsh, frightening presences whose goal is to reverse time and eliminate all living things. Owen and his new friend Cati are indirectly involved in the action until they discover Owen is the Navigator, who must find a way to stop the Harsh from destroying the earth.

The Navigator is a rip-snorting adventure, somewhat raggedly plotted here and there, but the inventiveness in both situation and characters makes for gripping reading. There is often so much going on in this book that it is hard to tell the bad guys from the good guys, but the Harsh are genuinely frightening, and the setting is memorably atmospheric.

Haarsma, PJ. *The Softwire: Virus on Orbis 1*. Candlewick Press, 2006. ISBN 0763627097.
\$15.99. 262 p.

Reviewer: Angel Pearce

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Science Fiction;

Subject: Science Fiction; Computers--Juvenile fiction; Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Haarsma has written a fun and fast-paced science fiction book worth recommending. A group of children, orphaned in outer space, arrive on an alien world where they are forced to work off their deceased parents' debts. Johnny and his sister Ketheria, the only sibling pair born on the ship, are soon embroiled in a struggle between the factions that rule this new world. Johnny discovers that he has a gift that allows him to enter any computer with his mind, making him a human softwire. When the computers on the Rings of Orbis begin to malfunction, fingers are pointed at him, and he must solve the mystery of who is really causing the computer problems. Johnny continues to believe, a bit naively, that life will get better for him even as the struggle heats up and both sides want him dead. *The Softwire: Virus on Orbis 1* is science fiction for children at its best—with no offensive language and with great appeal. This book should certainly find its way into classrooms and onto library shelves.

Tulloch, Richard. *Weird Stuff*. Illustrated by Shane Nagel. Walker & Co., 2006. ISBN 080278058X \$16.95. 195p.

Reviewer: Angel Pearce

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Humorous stories;

Subject: Writing--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

What do a pink easyflow pen, soccer, and true love have in common? They are all elements in this surprising story. Imagine just trying to be the "Ice Man" of the school and scoring the winning game in soccer but finding out your current crush did not see your goal or even seem to care. Add a little mystery by borrowing the school nerd's pen to take a test and end up writing the type of essay that gets you noticed not only by the teachers but also your peers.

Weird Stuff is an uncommon book: it tells the problems of growing up from a boy's point of view, yet it manages to keep it funny at the same time. The illustrations in this book are part of the magic. This makes a great teacher read-aloud when providing examples of creative writing, and it is also a good one to recommend to reluctant readers who have moved beyond *Captain Underpants* and *Goosebumps*.

Davies, Nicola. *Extreme Animals: The Toughest Creatures on Earth*. Illustrated by Neal Layton. Candlewick Press, 2006. ISBN 0763630675. \$12.99. 64 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Animals--Adaptation--Juvenile literature; Extreme environments--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Life is everywhere on our planet and a good deal of it exists in extremes that would kill a human. From the Arctic and Antarctic to volcanoes and deep sea vents, *Extreme Animals* highlights the various creatures that have adapted to some of the harshest conditions our planet can produce. Davies gives examples of animals that live in extremes and explains how their physiology has adapted to the conditions in terms that will be easily understood by a child. In addition to hot and cold adapted creatures, she highlights animals that can live to great ages, or live in a vacuum, or survive excessive g-forces, or withstand extreme pressure.

While Davies plays a little fast and loose with the definition of "animal" (she mentions thermophilic bacteria as an example of something that thrives in high temperatures and yew trees as an example of long-lived organisms) the book will certainly both educate and entertain a child. It is full of trivia, accompanied by cartoonish illustrations, which would be a great introduction or accompaniment to a lesson on earth's biomes and the creatures that inhabit them.

Kerr, M.E. *Your Eyes in Stars*. HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 9780060756833. \$16.89. 229 p.

Reviewer: Jan Staheli

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Friendship--Juvenile fiction; World War, 1939-1945--Juvenile fiction; Conduct of Life--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Jessie's father is the prison warden. Elisa's father is a visiting university professor from Germany. Jessie is a tomboy who collects wanted posters. Elisa is confident and sophisticated, a world traveler. The girls forge their unlikely friendship over Slater Carr, a young "lifer" at the prison who plays Taps every evening over the prison loudspeaker so soulfully that people come out of their houses just to listen. It is the 1930's in America: people are trying to recover from the Depression and Hitler is on the rise. Slater Carr's tragic life plays out as the girls' friendship grows and the world changes. When Elisa's father takes his family back to Germany to look after an elderly grandmother, Jessie loses track of her.

Kerr has written a slow, funny, understated story of friendship, family and prejudice in a small American town. The characters are engaging and the book brings back memories of being young and having a best, best friend. The prison background makes the story unusual, and the slightly menacing presence of Hitler in the background gives the conclusion quite a punch.

There are no language issues in this book, but there is some violence. It is a completely absorbing story, particularly good for thoughtful readers, that should certainly be recommended.

Fan, Nancy Yi. *Swordbird*. Illustrated by Mark Zug. HarperCollins, 2007. ISBN 9780061130991. \$15.99. 219 p.

Reviewer: Angel Pearce

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy;

Subject: Children's writings, American; Birds--Juvenile fiction; Fantasy; Books--Reviews;

This book is impressive considering a 12-year-old girl wrote it. It is pretty amazing in fact considering how difficult it is for some children to write a story without rushing to finish it, when it reaches the right length, with something like "and they lived happily ever after."

Swordbird is a fantasy about two warring tribes of birds, the blue jays and cardinals. Like many stories of its type, the hero must follow through with his quest or all is lost. The jacket cover states that Fan wrote this story after a vivid dream about birds as she was wrestling with her feeling about September 11th. Her descriptive narrative is less wordy than many youthful authors and she does not make up unpronounceable words. Students in the fourth to sixth grade and their teachers could use this book as an example of what they could write. Although not classic material, it should find a good following among fans of *Redwall* and *The Guardians of Ga'Hoole*.

Hurst, Carol Otis. *Torchlight*. Houghton Mifflin, 2006. ISBN 0618276017. \$16.00. 142 p.

Reviewer: Pat Frade

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Irish-Americans--Juvenile fiction; Prejudices--Juvenile fiction; Friendship--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Ten-year-old Charlotte Hodge and her brother Zach were orphaned when their parents died of cholera. They go to live with their aunt and uncle in Westfield, Massachusetts. Westfield is a small town with two groups of citizens, the Yankees and the Irish. There is a prejudice among the Yankees against the Irish. Being new in town, Charlotte tries to make friends with the other Yankee girls, but they ignore her. The first day of school, Charlotte meets Maggie Nolan, an Irish girl and they become fast friends. But the friendship causes tension in both families and Charlotte is harassed and bullied by other Yankee girls. As tension among the two groups rise, a Yankee mob threatens to burn down the new Catholic Church. Charlotte and Maggie's friendship, along with Charlotte's Uncle Hiram, helps to diffuse the mob.

This historical fiction novel is based on actual events in 1854 and introduces readers to the anti-Irish sentiments of that time. It is interesting to see the parallels of that era with the parallels of today's conflicts and prejudices with different races and religion. Parents and teachers can use this book to discuss friendships, prejudices, racism, and ignorance.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Writing Magic: Creating Stories that Fly*. HarperCollins, 2006.
ISBN 0060519614. \$16.99. 167 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Fiction--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Levine's *Writing Magic* has a specific task: to get the reader writing. She completely sidesteps an introduction and instead starts off the book with a writing exercise. The text style is informal, friendly, and encouraging. The chapters, which vary in length but tend to be short, focus on different aspects of story and character development. She focuses mainly on getting people writing and less on getting them published, though she does share some thoughts on publication towards the end of the book.

This book is not intended to be read in one sitting (it's rather dull if read that way), but to be used as a workbook, read in between writing sessions and referred back to during the course of an exercise. All these elements and the interesting insights into Levine's own experience as a writer and as a published author create a helpful and personable resource for young writers. In the course of the text, Levine also suggests a few other resources that readers might consider, such as *The Young Writer's Guide to Getting Published*. The index included at the end is useful for quickly looking up different books Levine references, as well as writing exercises. This would be a useful resource for classrooms, school libraries, and young aspiring authors.

Klein, Lisa. *Ophelia*. Bloomsbury, 2006. ISBN 1582348014. \$16.95. 328 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction; Historical fiction;

Subject: Revenge--Juvenile fiction; Murder--Juvenile fiction; Princes--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

In this gripping story, Klein creates a very different Ophelia from the pitiable girl in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This Ophelia is intelligent, witty and not afraid to speak her mind. She first meets Hamlet as an 11-year old tomboy and as she grows into an accomplished lady of the court the attraction between them grows. After the death of Hamlet's father, they secretly wed with only loyal Horatio as their witness. But on her wedding night Hamlet's leaves her to investigate the report of his father's ghost haunting the battlements. Despite her attempts to dissuade Hamlet from revenge he drags her into the middle of the intrigue and then abandons her to defend herself as he plunges into madness. With the eyes of the murderous Claudius and his henchmen upon her Ophelia cloaks herself in madness as she plan a daring escape from Denmark. Intermixed into the dialogue of the story are many lines from *Hamlet* which Klein creatively uses in different scenes and spoken by different characters than Shakespeare to propel the story forward, weaving a spellbinding tale.

Elliott, Patricia. *Ambergate*. Little, Brown, 2007. ISBN 9780316010603. \$16.99. 390 p.

Reviewer: Reynolds, Kate

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Significant shortcomings

Genre: Fantasy;

Subject: Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Orphan 102, otherwise known as Scuff, finds herself on the run when soldiers come searching for her. As she stumbles from one incident to another she collects a motley assortment of friends and enemies.

Though *Ambergate* has an intriguing beginning, it only sets up for disappointment. Scuff is a well written character, but most characters surrounding her seem incomplete and one dimensional. The character Chance seems interesting and well-rounded until late in the book when his actions and motivations become inconsistent with his previous characterization with almost no explanation. The narrative constantly switches from Scuff's first-person telling to a third-person omniscient voice for other characters, which makes for a choppy story.

Just about the only interesting thing in the book is the fact that Scuff is wanted not for the crime she thinks she is condemned for, but for being the illegitimate child of the Lord Protector's late wife--but this detail gets lost in the hustle and turns out to be a very minor plot point. The climax is set very close to the end and there is no resolution, giving the feeling that the story just trails off into nothing. Obviously it sets itself up for a sequel, but with the dubious merits of this book, it doesn't have much to recommend for itself.

Croggon, Alison. *The Riddle*. Candlewick Press, 2006. ISBN 0763630152. \$17.99. 490 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy Fiction;

Subject: Self-realization--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Riddles--Juvenile fiction;

Books--Reviews;

The Riddle, the second Book of Pellinor, continues the quest begun in *The Naming* but now Maerad and Cadvan are pursued by those of the light as well as of the dark. As they are relentlessly chased from place to place they also find that they are pursued by Winterking, an Elemental who is neither of the light or the dark. As they head further north to uncover the Riddle of the Treesong, Maerad learns more about her nature and power. But that knowledge brings her no closer to the truth and in fact makes her more of a riddle than the ancient forgotten song she seeks.

Throughout this story Croggon is able to maintain the mystery and tension of the first book and never allows the story to seem trite or contrived. The rich and full world of Edil-Amarandh is a place whose past history is just as important as the present in shaping Maerad and her quest that makes the read even more riveting.

Cole, Stephen. *Thieves like Us*. Bloomsbury, 2006. ISBN 1582346534. \$16.95. 352 p.

Reviewer: Angel Pearce

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Adventure stories;

Subject: Interpersonal relations--Juvenile fiction; Adventure and adventurers--Juvenile fiction;

Books--Reviews;

In this fast-paced novel, Jonah Wish, a brilliant hacker, is extracted from a juvenile prison where he is serving time. His new benefactor, Nathaniel Colehardt (his last name clearly a play on words), is everything one would expect and at the same time nothing one is quite sure of. Is he really a nice guy or an evil genius? Jonah joins a crew of brilliant but odd teens as they race to find a priceless artifact that could bring eternal life. For the rest of the crew, it's another day on the job – they have accepted their way of life and its risks.

The first few pages of this book will grip the reader. The heart-pounding adventure deals with Jonah's conscience and developing sense of who he is. Definitely a great read for thriller fans, though some readers may find the language offensive. Fans of the *Alex Rider* books (fifth and sixth grade) will enjoy this novel.

Johnson, Maureen. *Devilish*. Razorbill, 2006. ISBN 9781595140609. \$16.99. 263 p.

Reviewer: Rachel Wadham
Reading Level: Young adult
Rating: Outstanding
Genre: Fantasy fiction;
Subject: Devils--Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Everyone knows that high school is hell, but at St. Teresa's Preparatory School for Girls in Providence, Rhode Island it most literally is. When senior Jane Jarvis's best friend Allison starts acting oddly, she soon discovers that Ally has sold her soul to junior devil Lanalee in exchange for popularity. It is now up to Jane to save her, by taking her place. But contracts with the devil are never that simple and Jane must survive giant hailstorms and textbook pyrotechnics to save her school and her soul. The typical quest for popularity in high school is turned on its head in this extraordinary remix of the German tale of Faust. With a story that could really strain the bounds of credibility, Johnson weaves things so tightly that all the plot twists become believable. As with Johnson's realistic works (*13 Little Blue Envelopes* and *The Key to the Golden Firebird*), her strong point is her exceptional characters. From Jane's friends and family, to the cadre of devils, to the good demon hunter—the characters each fill their places well and add to the overall believability of the book.

Connections to other works abound with this novel—from the legend of Faust to modern chick lit fantasy such as Meg Cabot's Mediator series, savvy teachers and librarians will find lots of ways to connect this work to a larger context. The only negative for this rapidly paced and very funny novel comes at the end where things are tied up a little too fast. Readers must pay close attention to understand the trick Jane uses to finally break the devil's contract. The blending of modern horror elements and legend with a typical teen girl novel plot, balanced on the shoulders of outstanding characters, makes *Devilish* a very unique and exciting novel that will definitely have high appeal.

Thompson, Kate. *The New Policeman*. Greenwillow, 2007. ISBN 9780061174285. \$16.99.
441 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy Fiction; Folklore;

Subject: Music--Fiction; Ireland--Fiction; Space and time--Fiction; Books--Reviews;

In the small village of Kinvara, as well as the rest of Ireland, there never seems to be enough time, and each day slips by even quicker than the last. To fulfill his mother's half-joking birthday wish, J.J. Liddy sets out to find her more time. In his quest, J.J. learns more about his family's past and discovers that the slippage of time is more than matter of perception but a fact: time is leaking out of his world into the Tír na n'Óg or "Land of Eternal Youth." To stop the leak, J.J. travels to Tír na n'Óg and meets figures out of Irish mythology who are more real than he ever imagined.

The short chapters are told from the different perspectives of several characters, including the new policeman in the village who is on a quest of his own, but he just cannot remember what it is. Although there are some gaps and seemingly incongruent elements to the story, especially the new policeman, Thompson is able to pull them together to create a thoroughly enjoyable story. Part of the book's charm is the interweaving of traditional Irish music and dance as well as mythology and history. Each chapter ends with a musical score of traditional Irish music whose title closely relates to the chapter. The only element that could make the story more enchanting would be an accompanying CD with all the music so richly described in the text.

Joyce, William. *A Day with Wilbur Robinson*. Illustrated by William Joyce. HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 9780060890988. \$16.99. 40 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: All

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Humorous stories; Picture books;

Subject: Eccentrics and eccentricities--Juvenile fiction; Lost and found possessions--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Joyce's signature 1930s-style, brightly colored illustrations and quirky perspective return in this expanded reprinting of *A Day with Wilbur Robinson*, published in anticipation of the film adaptation being released next year. Readers follow an unnamed blond boy as he visits his friend Wilbur's house and aids him in finding his grandfather's false teeth (and his grandfather, whom no one has seen lately).

The text frequently describes typical at-home situations like Wilbur being needed in the backyard by his father and hilariously places these scenarios alongside illustrations of Wilbur's father and the family robot, or the text itself will mention how the dinosaurs were by the pool again because the Time Machine had been left on. There are new illustration spreads in this reprint, but they blend seamlessly into the story. Joyce's dry humor and exuberant pictures combine to make a treat for young readers and adults alike. This would make an excellent addition to a home, school, or classroom library, but illustration details will be missed if this book is used as a read-aloud.

Lester, Helen. *Batter Up Wombat*. Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
ISBN 9780618737840. \$16.00. 32 p.

Reviewer: Angel Pearce

Reading Level: All

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture book;

Subject: Baseball--Juvenile fiction; Tornadoes--Juvenile fiction; Wombats--Juvenile fiction;
Books--Reviews;

A new baseball season is at hand, and the Champs are ready to play. They have a secret weapon this year, Wombat. Thinking that his size will help them beat the other teams, they are in for a surprise when they discover Wombat has no idea how to play. He becomes an unlikely hero when a tornado threatens to ruin the game for everyone.

This is Lester at her *Wodney Wat* and *Score One for the Sloths* finest. This book is an excellent addition for school and public libraries and one that correlates with many children's interest in baseball. *Batter Up Wombat* would be a good story to share with a captive audience as a companion to *Chickens to the Rescue* for a discussion of heroes in books.