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Full Issue

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Lehman, Barbara. *Rainstorm*. Illustrated by Barbara Lehman. Houghton Mifflin, 2007. ISBN 9780618756391. \$16.00. 32 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Picture books;

Subject: Play--Juvenile fiction; Adventure and adventurers--Juvenile fiction; Stories without words; Books—Reviews;

A young boy is stuck inside on a rainy day. In his boredom he discovers a key that leads him to an old chest. In the chest is a ladder, which leads to a tunnel which leads to a staircase which opens out on a lighthouse balcony. On the island where the lighthouse stands it is bright and sunny and he finds himself playing games and making new friends.

Lehman's watercolor, gouache and ink illustrations are bright and attractive, but the story told by the pictures doesn't leave much room for creative interpretation. However, little children will enjoy making up dialog and narrative along the way anyway.

Kennedy, Marlane. *Me and the Pumpkin Queen*. Greenwillow, 2007. ISBN 9780061140235. \$16.89. 181 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Primary; Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Pumpkin--Juvenile fiction; Single-parent families--Juvenile fiction; Grief--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Every year pumpkins weighing in at over 1,000 pounds are showcased at Circleville Ohio's Pumpkin Show. When Mildred's mother was in high school, she was Queen of the Pumpkin Show and wore a beautiful crown as she rode on a float during the parade. The fall after her mother dies of cancer, Mildred visits the pumpkin festival with her father and learns that her mother had always wanted to grow a giant pumpkin. Mildred decides that she will try to grow one because her mother no longer can. Over the years, Mildred continually fails to achieve her goal. Now that Mildred is 11, she is determined that this year she will grow the winning pumpkin. She discovers from Grover Fernhart, the local expert on growing huge pumpkins, which brand of seeds to plant. Although Mr. Fernhart discourages Mildred from even trying, he tells her to buy Howard Dill's Atlantic Giant pumpkin seeds. Along with Mr. Fernhart, Mildred's Aunt Arlene refrains from offering any encouragement. She thinks Mildred's interest in growing pumpkins is abnormal. However, Jacob, a class mate who becomes Mildred's best friend, is always there to help. Readers and story characters discover the laborious process of preparing, planting, watching, weeding, pollinating, measuring, and culling (or cutting off) pumpkins from the vine. When a crack appears on the surface of her biggest pumpkin, Mildred fears that again her dream will not be realized. Mildred conquers this last challenge and excitedly enters her giant in the Pumpkin Show.

In Kennedy's debut novel about growing up and making friends, Mildred has an amazing family support system, and finds out even her Aunt Arlene is very enthusiastic about her achievement. Mildred's relationship with her father is realistic and supportive. In the process of planting and tending her pumpkins, Mildred develops empathy for others and experiences another phase of healing after her mother's death. Children will enjoy the short succinct chapters, and they will learn a lot about pumpkin growing, too. Consider omitting the few expressions of profanity (they did not need to be there at all!) for a great read-aloud book. Keep the jacket cover: Marla Frazee's artwork depicting Mildred dreaming of success as she watches a pumpkin grow will help draw readers to this enjoyable story.

Morpurgo, Michael. *On Angel Wings*. Illustrated by Quentin Blake. Candlewick, 2007. ISBN 9780763634667. \$8.99. 48 p.

Reviewer: Marsha Broadway

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Christmas stories;

Subject: Jesus Christ--Nativity--Juvenile fiction; Shepherds--Juvenile fiction; Books--reviews;

A grandpa once again relates to his children and grandchildren the events of the night that the angel Gabriel visited his family on the hillside outside of Bethlehem. Being the youngest of the shepherds, he was selected to watch the sheep while the others followed the star to the stable. Alone and complaining, the boy was revisited by the genial Gabriel who took him to the stable where he held the baby and gave him his shepherd's crook. A gentle and warm narrative makes this story a good choice for families to share at Christmas time:

“. . . he smiled, and it was a smile that I have never forgotten, a smile of such love that it moves my heart to this day whenever I think of it."

Blake's familiar watercolor and ink illustrations inject not only light and wonder but also tenderness and love that are almost as real as the sadness seen in *Michael Rosen's Sad Book*. Amid the blues and grays of the night, golds and reds illuminate Gabriel, the angelic choir, and the Christ Child. Many adult readers may question the arrival time of the wise men. Most Bible scholars estimate their arrival some months after and not on the night of the nativity, but the gentleness of the story overcomes this slip in the timeline.

Hale, Shannon. *Book of a Thousand Days*. Illustrated by James Noel Smith. Bloomsbury, 2007. ISBN 9781599900513. \$17.95. 308 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fantasy stories;

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

Dashti swore service to Lady Saren and immediately found herself locked in a tower for seven years, sharing in her mistress's punishment for refusing to marry Lord Khasar and instead choosing Khan Tegus. The fifteen year old maid keeps a journal of their time in the tower and of their adventure after they escape two and a half years into their confinement.

While based on a little-known Grimm fairytale, Hale's story takes on a shape of its own with the maid, rather than the lady, as the central character. The plot is fairly predictable but the characterization and language are the real draw. Hale depicts Dashti as a resourceful young woman whose determination allows the two to survive and even thrive while not allowing her character to become too perfect or unbelievable. Saren's tenuous emotional and mental stability add another aspect of reality.

The greatest weakness of *Book of a Thousand Days* is the pacing. The plot is rather slow until the climax, denouement and resolution all rush in the last 60 or so pages. However, few readers are likely to care much with the excitement of the battle against Lord Khasar and the anticipated fairy tale romance ending. Recommended for preteen and teenage girls, especially fans of Hale's previous works.

Marr, Melissa. *Wicked Lovely*. Harper Collins, 2007. ISBN 9780061214660. \$17.89. 328 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Fairies--Juvenile fiction; Secrets--Juvenile fiction; Kings and rulers--Juvenile fiction;

Books--reviews,

All her life Aislinn has followed the rules: “Don't stare at invisible faeries,” “Don't speak to invisible faeries,” and “Don't ever attract their attention.” These rules ensure that the faeries will never learn that she has the “Sight”: the rare ability that allows a mortal to see the horrible but beautiful faeries that invisibly live around humans. But something went wrong and Aislinn is being followed by two faeries, the Summer King, named Keenan, and the Winter Girl. The attention of royal faeries does not bode well for Aislinn, especially as she learns that Keenan wants to make her his Summer Queen and he cannot take “no” for the answer. She is left with two choices: either become a Summer Girl (a brainless groupie) or attempt to become the Summer Queen by grasping the staff of the Winter Queen, Keenan's mother. If she fails the staff will turn her into another Winter Girl who is bound by cold; if she wins she will become the Summer Queen. No matter what she chooses, Keenan's attention will change her into one of the fey.

Melissa Marr creates a fascinating faery world that is not separate from our own but invisibly intertwined. Aislinn is a strong character who uses all her resources to make an impossible situation work to her advantage. Keenan is a complex faery who is strong, passionate, and extremely vulnerable in his determination to free himself from his mother's wintry grasp. However, Aislinn's and Keenan's struggle for power and control over each other and over the Winter Queen seems to depend more upon sexual dominance than true power, at least until Aislinn turns that on its head. What ultimately gives Aislinn's character strength and power is her rejection of Keenan (despite her overwhelming sexual attraction to him) in favor of love and friendship that helped her retain her humanity despite losing her mortality.

Best Websites for Children

The internet can be a valuable resource for learning and teaching; unfortunately not all sites are of equal value or are appropriate for children. This list is intended to aid parents, teachers, and librarians looking for kid-friendly websites. Some of these sites are filtered search engines; others list recommended sites arranged by topic. Parents or caregivers who are unfamiliar with the internet or are unsure of web terminology should first look at the American Library Association (ALA) Association for Library Services for Children (ALSC) brochure (<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/greatwebsites/greatsitesbrochure.pdf>). The Children's Book and Play Review, Brigham Young University, and the Harold B. Lee Library are not responsible for content on sites outside the university servers.

Ask for Kids

<http://www.askforkids.com/>

- Intended for use by children in grades K–6.
- *Ask for Kids* is a filtered web search engine associated with Ask.com. All websites accessible through the search engine are selected by editors on the criteria of appropriateness, depth, quality, and style. Secondary links are evaluated as well (i.e. the sites and pages that are linked from the page the search turns up), but tertiary links are not evaluated. The *Ask for Kids* homepage features a Study Help area where children can click on icons in various subject areas to browse topics. The interface is easy to use; however on any given search *Ask for Kids* is likely to return one or two relevant results.

Berit's Best Sites for Kids

<http://www.beritsbest.com/>

- Intended for children up to age 12. Best used by adults helping children.
- *Berit's Best* provides links to recommended sites on specific topics listed in their categories. The search function on the home page is not very useful. All sites are rated on a scale of five balloons but only sites that rate at least three out of five get put on the list of recommended sites. Sites are evaluated based on extensive criteria that are explained on the site's ratings page. The site, however, often has dead links.

Great Websites for Kids

<http://www.ala.org/greatsites>

- Recommends sites for use for preschool, kindergarten, elementary and middle school children, as well as for use by parents and/or teachers. Best used by adults helping children.
- *Great Websites for Kids*, sponsored by the American Library Association, provides links to recommended websites. The homepage has main categories and subcategories as well as a website of the month. Within the categories, recommended websites include icons indicating the age level for which the site is appropriate. Selection criteria include the authority (author), purpose, design and stability, and content. *Great Websites for Kids* has

a search tool that searches their approved recommended websites and includes an option to search by age level. The keyword search, however, only searches the names and descriptions of the recommended sites. If a specific topic is covered on the site but it is not mentioned in the description, the search will not yield that site as a result.

KidsClick!

<http://www.kidsclick.org/>

- Intended for use by children grades K–7.
- *KidsClick!* is maintained by the San Jose State University School of Library and Information Science. The *KidsClick!* topical layout is clear, and it has a search function which yields comprehensive results; search results include a description of the website and a notation of the reading level of the site and how many illustrations the site uses. *KidsClick!* also has an option to view categories according to their Dewey Decimal classification.

KidSpace @ The Internet Public Library

<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/>

TeenSpace @ The Internet Public Library

<http://www.ipl.org/div/teen/>

- *KidSpace* is intended for children in grades 3–7. *TeenSpace* is intended for youth in grades 8–12.
- *KidSpace* has an easy layout for children to navigate with topics and subtopics clearly marked. Each subtopic will bring up a handful of websites and perhaps a few more subtopics. *TeenSpace* uses a similar format, but places specific items appropriate for older children in prominent locations (for example: the FAEQ section—Frequently Asked *Embarrassing* Questions, which lists places that teenagers can ask potentially embarrassing questions anonymously).

On-Lion for Kids

<http://kids.nypl.org/>

- Intended for children.
- Sponsored by the New York Public Library, *On-Lion for Kids* has a number of educational and entertainment links available in a kid-friendly interface. Some items are restricted to New York Public Library patrons and require login, but most items allow unrestricted access.

PBS Kids

<http://www.pbskids.org/>

PBS Kids GO!

<http://pbskids.org/go/>

- *PBS Kids* is intended for preschool and early elementary children. *PBS Kids GO!* is intended for older elementary/preteen audiences.
- The Public Broadcasting Service's website for kids includes a number of TV-related educational games (*Sesame Street* Letter of the Day feature, *Curious George* counting game). A number of favorite children's characters are used on the website (Berenstain Bears, Arthur, Barney, Clifford, etc.) giving it familiarity, but there is little available by way of research or homework help. *PBS Kids* has audio and picture cues for young

audiences who cannot read, making it one of the most accessible sites for the preschool/early elementary age group.

Quintura for Kids

<http://kids.quintura.com/>

- Intended for use by children grades K–6.
- *Quintura* is a filtered search engine based on the Yahoo! Kids search engine but with an innovative visual mindmap browsing capability. The site can be used for a traditional search for terms in the search bar but is clearly tailored to browsing topics.

Yahoo! Kids

<http://kids.yahoo.com/>

- Intended for use by children grades 7–12.
- Formerly *Yahooligans!*, *Yahoo! Kids* is a directory of approved sites for children using a search engine format. (In other words, it acts like a search engine but it does not use a filter instead it only searches pre-approved sites.) The site in its current incarnation is more focused on entertainment and games than on educational value; though the homework help and reference resources are adequate they are less visible than the advertisements and games.

Compiled by Kate Reynolds and Marsha D. Broadway,
Farnsworth Juvenile Literature Library,
Harold B. Lee Library,
Brigham Young University, October 2007.

Children's Literary Awards and Recommended Lists on the Net

compiled by
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More than 5,000 juvenile books are published each year in the United States. Identifying the best books can be a challenge; however, there is help. Hundreds of literary awards and recommended books are selected by professional or trade organizations which help identify the best in children's and young adult literature. Many of those award and recommended lists are easily accessible via the Internet.

The Cooperative Children's Books Center (CCBC)

The Cooperative Children's Books Center is part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education and serves as a clearinghouse for books, ideas, and expertise in the field of children's and young adult literature.

Awards and Best-of-the-Year Lists

<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/links/links.asp?idLinksCategory=2>

Links are provided to 40 award and recommended lists.

Books for Children and Young Adults

<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/default.asp>

Links are provided to thematic bibliographies and general information concerning books and publishing for young people.

Children's Book Council (CBC)

The Children's Book Council is a nonprofit trade association whose members are publishers of trade books for children and young adults in the United States. The CBC promotes the use and enjoyment of trade books for young people.

Awards and Prizes Online (subscription required)

<http://awardsandprizes.cbcbooks.org/Default.asp>

This database, maintained by the Children's Book Council, is the most comprehensive single source for information about children's book awards in English with booklist for 320+ literary awards. Updated quarterly.

CBC Reading Lists

<http://www.cbcbooks.org/readinglists/>

More than seventeen links to topical bibliographies including:

"Building a Home Library"

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/alacbcbuildingahomelibrary/ALACBCBuildingHomeLbry.htm>

"Graphic Novels for Young Readers"

<http://www.cbcbooks.org/pdfs/GraphicNovelBibliog2005.pdf>

"Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People"

<http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable/>

"Outstanding Science Trade Books"

<http://www.nsta.org/publications/ostb/>

"Books to Grow On"

<http://www.cbcbooks.org/readinglists/bookstogrow.html>

Association of Library Services for Children (ALSC)

The Association of Library Services for Children, a division of the American Library Association, is a professional organization of more than 4000 children's and youth librarians, children's literature experts, publishers, education and library school faculty members, and other adults dedicated to quality library service to children.

Recommended Book Lists from ALSC

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/booklists/booklists.htm>

A dozen book lists including six that deal with cultural diversity.

Literary and Related Awards

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/literaryrelated.htm>

Booklists for the major awards sponsored by ALSC, including the Newbery, Caldecott, Sibert, Wilder, Carnegie, Batchelder, Belpré, Geisel, and Odyssey awards and the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture.

Children's Notable Lists

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/childrensnotable/Default1888.htm>

Links are provided to annual recommended list that include books, videos, recordings, and computer software for children.

Young Adult Library Services Association

The Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association, is a group of professional librarians, educators, and publishers who advocate, promote, and strengthen library service to young adults.

Booklists & Book Awards

www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists

Links are provided to a dozen recommended lists of books, audio books, DVDs and videos, and Teen Choice. Six of the links are listed below:

Alex Award

www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/alex

The Alex Award is given annually to ten books published the previous year for an adult audience that appeal young adults ages 12-18.

Best Books for Young Adults

www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/bbya

This annual general list of fiction and nonfiction titles is selected by a committee of fifteen YA literature experts based on the books' proven or potential appeal to the personal reading tastes of young adults.

Great Graphic Novels for Teens

<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovelsforteens/gn.cfm>

This annual annotated list of graphic novels is prepared by a committee of eleven YA literature experts. Acceptable literary and artistic qualities, along with diversity, are considered.

Michael L. Printz Award

<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/printzaward/Printz.cfm>

The Printz Award is selected annually by a committee of nine YA literature experts and awarded for literary merit. The criteria states: "We hope the award will have a wide AUDIENCE among readers from 12 to 18 but POPULARITY is not the criterion for this award. Nor is MESSAGE. In accordance with the Library Bill of Rights, CONTROVERSY is not something to avoid. In fact, we want a book that readers will talk about."¹

Outstanding Books for the College Bound

www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/obcb

The lists, intended for students in grades 9-12, may be used to strengthen knowledge of various subject areas in both classic and contemporary literature and may be helpful in preparing for college entrance exams.

Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers

www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/quickpicks

Quick Picks is for young adults (ages 12-18) who do not like to read. The list identifies titles primarily for recreational reading, not for curricular or remedial use.

International Reading Association

The International Reading Association promotes literacy by improving the quality of reading instruction and sharing helpful information about using children's and young adults' literature to develop literacy.

Children's and Young Adult Book Awards

http://ira.org/association/awards/childrens_ira.html

Children's and Young Adult's Book Awards are given for an author's first or second published book written for children or young adults (ages birth to 17 years). Awards are given for fiction and nonfiction in each of three categories: primary, intermediate, and young adult.

Children's Choices

http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices_childrens.html

A joint project with CBC, each year approximately 10,000 young people (ages 5-13) from different regions of the United States choose approximately 100 favorite books.

Young Adult Choices

http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices_young_adults.html

Each year about 4,500 students in grades 7-12 from different regions of the United States select approximately 30 favorite books.

Teachers' Choices

http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices_teachers.html

Each year teachers, reading specialists, and librarians from different regions in the United State select 30 books for young readers ages 5-14.

¹ "Michael L Printz Award Criteria," retrieved October 19, 2007 from <http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/printzaward/aboutprintz/michaellprintz.cfm>,