
BEST BETS 2006

Reading for Children

The OLA's Canadian Materials
Committee picks this annual list.

Books are selected on the basis of
their literary/artistic merit as well as
their appeal for children.

Text and illustrations are of equal
importance in picture books and
information books.

PICTURE BOOKS

Bailey, Linda. *The Farm Team.*

Illustrated by Bill Slavin. Kids Can Press

Who will win the coveted Stolski Cup? The Farm Team has lost for the last fifty years but not this year. Cows, pigs and chickens don their skates to beat those weasel, grizzly, skunk and porcupine bullies of the Bush League Bandits. Hilarious hockey fun!

Bailey, Linda. *Stanley's Wild Ride.*

Illustrated by Bill Slavin. Kids Can Press

In this winning dog caper, we find Stanley escaping from his yard and joining his friends on an unforgettable and hilarious romp into the night. Look out world, here come the dogs on wheels!

Bar-el, Dan. *Alphabetter.*

Illustrated by Graham Ross. Orca Book Publishers

What happens when 26 kids don't want the object associated with their letter of the alphabet? Gwendolyn doesn't want a goldfish. She wants a hammer. Luckily, Hector has a hammer he doesn't want, instead of the ice cream he does. And so it goes in this whimsical look at the alphabet.

Chartrand, Lili. *Taming Horrible Harry.*

Illustrated by Rogé. Tundra Press

When Harry the monster frightens a young girl away, she leaves behind her an object that seems to be of no use to Harry. It doesn't taste good and it is hard to play with but the pictures inside lead Harry to the world of reading.

Côté, Geneviève. *What Elephant? Kids Can Press*

There's an elephant in the house! A pertinent and refreshing variation of a familiar theme. The author's whimsical and playful illustrations add to the humour of this gentle message.

Edwards, Wallace. *The Extinct Files: My Science Project.*

Kids Can Press

In a picture book for school age kids, young Wally proves that dinosaurs live among us. Excellent illustrations match with many plays on words to make this spoof a real treat.

Reid, Barbara. *Fox Walked Alone.*

Illustrated by Barbara Reid. Scholastic

Sensing something in the air, a curious fox tags along with a growing parade of animals and meets another fox just in time for them to board the Ark together. Stunning illustrations.

Springett, Martin.

Jousting With Jesters: An ABC for the Younger Dragon.

Orca Book Publishers

An alphabetical catalogue of advice ('Ignore irritating imps.') guides flameless Dennis the Dragon on a journey through a humorously realized medieval landscape to the source of dragon fire.

Ward, David. *The Hockey Tree.*

Illustrated by Brian Deines. North Winds Press

When Owen and Holly are playing hockey on the lake with their Dad, they lose the puck in a fishing hole. All is not lost, Dad tells them, if they can find a "hockey tree" in the forest. Readers will enjoy the kids' surprise and delight when Dad helps them find the best hockey puck ever.

Yerxa, Leo. *Ancient Thunder.* Greenwood

Dramatic illustrations using unusual art techniques accompany a praise-song as wild horses gallop through time.

FICTION

Citra, Becky. *Never to be Told.* Orca Book Publishers

What does the ghost, which 12 year old Asia sees around the farm, have to do with Asia having to leave the only home she remembers? A gently spooky ghost story anchors this tale of love, loss and starting anew.

Cullen, Seán. *Hamish X and the Cheese Pirates.* Penguin

Children labouring in the world's most miserable orphanage are given new hope with the arrival of an enigmatic young escape artist in magical boots. A fantastic adventure tale packed with thrills, leavened with laughs, and capped with the year's most curious ending.

Dyer, Hadley. *Johnny Kellock Died Today.* Harper Trophy Canada

Rosalie and her family keep many secrets from each other. Perhaps the biggest family secret Rosalie would like to uncover is about her favourite cousin who has mysteriously disappeared. In this touching and humorous story, Rosalie sets out to find some answers and learns something important about herself and her family.

Ellis, Sarah. *Odd Man Out.* Greenwood

Sent to stay with his grandmother and five lively girl cousins, 12 year-old Kip gradually comes to terms with identity, loss and his mother's remarriage. A multi-layered, skillfully-constructed novel written with humour, poignancy and vivid characterization. Not to be missed.

Gregory, Nan. *I'll Sing You One-O.* Thomas Allen

Gemma is a twelve year old who has long accepted her foster family as her own. When the family is broken up and Gemma sent to live with relatives she never knew she had, she does not go willingly. Gifted writer Gregory does it again in her first novel for children.

Heneghan, James. *Safe House.* Orca Book Publishers

12-year-old Liam Fogerty is cruelly orphaned and now supposedly sheltered in a "safe house." Soon Liam is again in flight in a fast-paced thriller that sensitively portrays the strife in Northern Ireland.

Johansen, K.V. *Torrie & the Firebird.* Annick Press

This new adventure starring the fearless Captain Anna and the magical, funny, and resourceful "Old Thing" follows the daring duo as they set out to save Kokaho, a young boy who is accused of stealing a precious stone. Battling goblins and an evil sorcerer, the heroes take us on an amazing journey.

Lawrence, Iain. *Gemini Summer.* Random House

A poignant, beautifully written story set in 1965. When his older brother dies, Danny believes Beau has been reincarnated in a stray dog and determines to make his greatest dream come true by running away with the dog to Cape Canaveral and a meeting with astronaut Gus Grissom.

Wood, Beverly and Chris. *The Golden Boy.* Raincoast

Guided by terrier Patsy Ann, 13-year-old Tomi finds himself transported to Juneau, Alaska in 1939. Encountering hostility, friendship and challenge, Tomi comes of age in this exciting story. Third title in the Sirius mysteries.

NON-FICTION

Becker, Helaine. *Secret Agent Y.O.U.: The Official Guide to Secret Codes, Disguises, Surveillance, and More!* Maple Tree Press

Packed with intriguing information, practical tips, and fun activities, this book is guaranteed to ensure kids top marks in Espionage 101.

Berkowitz, Jacob. *Jurassic Poop: What Dinosaurs (and others)*

Left Behind. Illustrated by Steve Mack. Kids Can Press

Get the scoop on dinosaur poop from this entertaining and informative book about animal doo-doo. Not only is the layout very appealing, but the illustrations and photos are also loaded with details to delight and encourage budding scientists and detectives.

Bowers, Vivien. *Crazy About Canada.* Maple Tree Press

Answers to questions from kids across Canada. Divided into three sections, the clear, well-illustrated explanations are offered in an engaging, informative and amusing way.

Coren, Stanley. *Why Do Dogs Have Wet Noses?* Kids Can Press

Informative and entertaining, Stanley Coren's book is a valentine to dogs everywhere. Interesting facts combined with unique and humorous photos make this a must read for kids and adults and anyone who is curious about our best friends. This book deserves 5 paws.

Lesynski, Loris. *"I Did it Because..." How a Poem Happens.*

Illustrated by Michael Martchenko. Annick Press

The popular author surrounds 30 of her funniest poems with dozens of easy-to-follow ideas to get kids reading, writing, and reciting. The best poetry appreciation lesson you'll ever encounter.

MacLeod, Elizabeth. *Eleanor Roosevelt: An Inspiring Life.*

Kids Can Press

Elizabeth MacLeod continues her excellent biography series with the life of Eleanor Roosevelt. Using letters and photos, combined with stunning layouts, MacLeod reveals a fascinating, complex and inspirational woman who rose from personal tragedies, insecurities and fears to become one of the most beloved women in America.

Patterson, Heather. *I am Canada.* Scholastic

Multicultural children go about their daily activities while simple language describes their lives.

Romanek, Trudee. *Squirt! The Most Interesting Book You'll Ever*

Read About Blood. Kids Can Press

This is another title in the excellent "Mysterious You" series by Trudee Romanek. Every possible thing one could hope to know about blood from circulation to toads! Great illustrations that help explain clearly all of the vast information in this book.

Ross, Val. *You Can't Read This: Forbidden Books, Lost Writing,*

Mistranslations and Codes. Tundra Press

This is a fascinating anecdotal account of the history of censorship and literacy. Read about everything from the development of the printing press and Braille to the sanitization of Shakespeare and the secret teaching of girls in schools in Afghanistan. Great for older elementary school students.

Taylor, C.J. *All the Stars in the Sky.* Tundra Press

Author-illustrator C.J. Taylor's striking paintings illustrate seven North American legends. Drawn from different First Nations groups, the legends are retold with wisdom and compassion.

NON-FICTION SERIES

Medieval World series. Crabtree

Includes the titles *Manners and Customs in the Middle Ages* by Marsha Groves, *Medieval Myths, Legends and Songs* by Donna Trembinski, *Famous People of the Middle Ages* by Donna Trembinski, *Medieval Medicine and the Plague* by Lynne Elliott and *Medieval Projects You Can Do* by Marsha Groves.

These are excellent additions to public and school library collections to help fill curriculum needs. They will be of interest to the recreational reader as well.

Kids Can Do It series. Kids Can Press

Includes the titles *Horse Crafts* by Linda Hendry, *Knotting: Make Your Own Basketball Nets, Guitar straps, Sports Bags and More* by Judy Sadler, *Quick Knits* by Judy Sadler and *Junk Drawer Jewelry* by Rachel Di Salle.

This series is consistently well executed and are must have books for your craft and hobby sections. Sure to be of interest to both children and adults looking for crafts to do with children.

The OLA's annual Best Bets evolved from a list put out by the Canadian Materials Committee of the Children's Services Guild. The OLA's Canadian Materials Committee selects books on the basis of their literary/artistic merit as well as their appeal for children and young adults.

OLA'S CANADIAN MATERIALS COMMITTEE

We are a long standing committee with a strong voice in promoting Canadian children's and young adult literature. Our goal is to highlight excellence in children's and young adult literature for the OLA membership and others interested in this area.

Meetings are held a minimum of four times a year at National Book Service (25 Kodiak Crescent in North York). Members discuss and evaluate recent publications by Canadian authors and illustrators. From these discussions, the Committee produces "Best Bets", annual annotated lists of recommended titles. New this year is a young adult list. The list is released each year at the OLA Super Conference.

OLA's Canadian Materials Committee Members:

Dinah Gough (Oshawa Public Library)
Patrick Gracey (Toronto Public Library)
Joanne Hawthorne (Toronto Public Library)
Sandy Laird (Mississauga Public Library)
Sheilah O'Connor (Toronto Public Library)
Laura Reed (Kitchener Public Library)
Cecily Reid (Richmond Hill Public Library)
Jane Salmon (Barrie Public Library)
Jennifer Stephen (Vaughan Public Library)
Shelagh Straughan (Trinity College, Port Hope)

For further information please contact

Jane Salmon at the Barrie Public Library
jsalmon@barrie.ca

Ontario Library Association

50 Wellington Street East, Suite 201
Toronto, ON M5E 1C8
Tel: 866-873-9867
FAX: 800-387-1181
www.accessola.com
info@accessola.com
