

The CBCA 2023 Book of the Year Shortlist Books

Early Childhood Category

Bev and Kev

Katrina Germein (text), Mandy Foot (illustrations)
Published by Little Book Press - ISBN 9780645027051

Themes of friendship, acceptance and finding one's place and tribe are explored as Bev the giraffe moves through the African landscape, experiencing social rejection from animals that cannot relate to her due to her size. Using the theme 'opposites attract', readers may empathise with Bev's loneliness and her joy at finding a non-judgmental companion. Interesting synonyms for 'big' provide rich language, while important messages are imparted, such as body image, the comfort found in companionship and how our words may affect others. The pencil and watercolour illustrations shift in perspectives, emphasising Bev's great height and perfectly matching her mood as seen in the bird's eye view of her solitary walk. The southern African setting is clearly defined in these outstanding watercolour and pencil illustrations which are placed onto digitally rendered backgrounds, capturing the mood of the story to perfection. Illustrations and text harmonise well, and the spectacularly eye-catching final fold-out page creates a lovely resolution, told wordlessly.

Jigsaw: A Puzzle in the Post

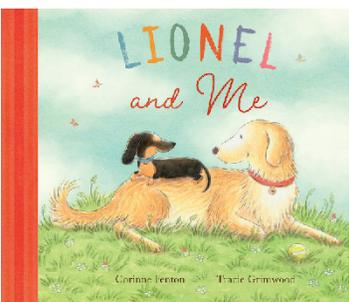
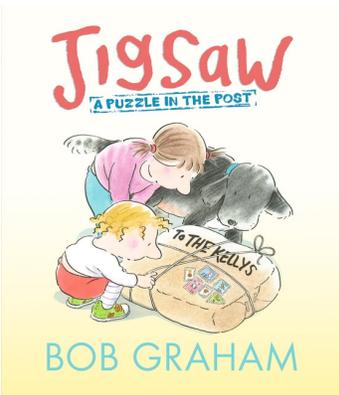
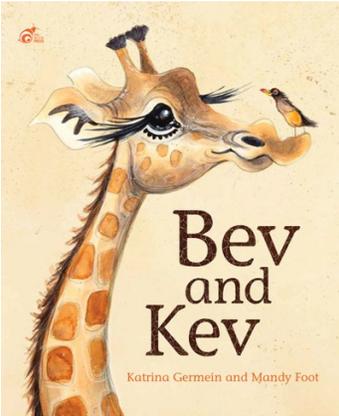
Bob Graham
Published by Walker Books Australia - ISBN 9781529503319

The Kelly family embraces a mysterious puzzle anonymously sent to them in the post. The subplot narrates how a puzzle piece falls to the ground and goes missing while the family undertakes the long project of completing the puzzle. These parallel storylines continue throughout the book. Serendipitously, their threads do cross paths, and the reader is privy to this, while the characters are not. Themes of family, the generosity of strangers, persistence, hope, determination and serendipity are explored. Beautiful illustrations vary from small vignettes, time-lapse, and full-page double spreads. The use of framing and white backgrounds help to focus attention and are used to effect, while the language is simple and economical, yet magical. The mystery of time, and the slowness of its passage, are beautifully mirrored through the almost tragic journey that the puzzle piece takes to 'the end of the world', as it were. Without being didactic, Bob Graham shows that we may discover lost things, and enable things of value to return to consciousness when we

Lionel and Me

Corinne Fenton (text), Tracie Grimwood (illustrations)
Published by New Frontier Publishing - ISBN 9781922326607

The theme of the younger/new addition to the family is highly relatable to the age level of this audience, adding the themes of an animal protagonist/antagonist and animal angst. The title and imprint pages cleverly set up the conflict and tension before the narrative begins. Narrated by the dog Maverick, the language is simple and clear, with lovely pauses and bold words for directed emphasis and expression. Many young children may be able to identify with Maverick's emotions, allowing them to self-reflect and connect. Whilst this book is about a pet dog learning to accept a new puppy into the household, it would also provide a very useful tool in supporting discussions about a new family member, and the mixed feelings that come with this. The narrative arch is well-sustained and draws the reader in, leading to a perfectly pitched and delightfully surprising resolution. The pencil and watercolour illustrations are beautiful, full of movement, and perfectly convey the mood and emotions.





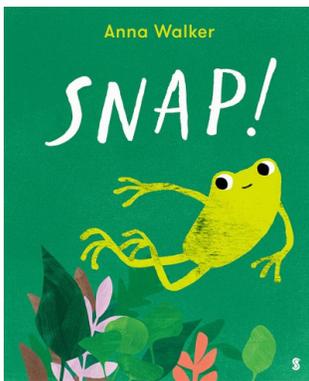
Market Day

Carrie Gallasch (text), Hannah Sommerville (illustrations)
Published by Hardie Grant Children's Publishing - ISBN 9781761049071

Market Day narrates the story of a little girl that arrives at a market with one coin she can spend in any way. Several themes are explored, including community, generosity, the power of music, kindness, transience and appreciation. The evocative, detailed digital illustrations depict a bustling produce market and invite further investigation on each read. The language is simple as the girl narrates, yet also, at times, quite beautiful, matching the mood of the outing. It is punctuated by metaphor, analogy, alliteration and an interesting range of verbs. A busker is seen intermittently, and he turns out to be the girl's most interesting and worthwhile encounter at the market.

Snap!

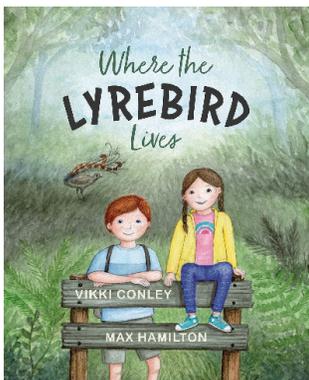
Anna Walker Lawrence
Published by Scribble Kids' Books - ISBN 9781922585387



Anna Walker has cleverly created a humorous, energetic, and playful tale of a frog's adventure through the jungle and the unexpected creatures it meets along the way. It is immediately relatable to young children, with its minimal, simple and direct language that perfectly evokes the sensory world of the frog and the other creatures in it. The tactile front cover is bright and engaging, with the little frog literally leaping off the front and into the narrative. The endpapers extend the storyline, and the text is creatively positioned on the page, like the movement of text mirroring the animals' actions, which adds interest and catches the eye. The story's pace is maintained by the illustrations and humour introduced by the near misses of the frog as it narrowly escapes the dangers around it. While the predominantly green pages immerse the reader into the setting of a jungle, the illustrations are varied in design and colour and are offset by a clever use of texture using collage techniques on such things as tree trunks, water, and birds' feathers. This is a picture book that will bring joy and de-

Where the Lyrebird Lives

Vikki Conley (text), Max Hamilton (illustrations)
Published by Windy Hollow Books - ISBN 9780645323566



This book delights and entices the reader from beginning to end. Lush green spreads fill the pages, beautifully capturing the setting of cool climate forests in watercolour and pencil. The sparse descriptive narrative sets a gentle pace and reads aloud well, drawing the audience in with questions and facts. Readers are encouraged to slow down, listen and look, for every now and then there is a sign of the hidden lyrebird. Metaphors and similes add richness, and the enlarged text for action words and onomatopoeia will increase participation and engagement. A well-crafted narrative that will encourage children to read aloud themselves.

