
PROFICIENT

🍁 Atwood, Margaret **Bashful Bob and Doleful Dorinda** ISBN 1552636097

Margaret Atwood provides more fun than a barrel of monkeys with her third alliterative tale. She fills the pages with sophisticated and amusing wordplay that requires a great deal of attention on the part of the reader to keep the tongue from being twisted beyond recognition. Their respective families have mistreated the heroes of this tale. They meet each other on a dreary day in December on a vacant block, littered with 'bushes, buttercups and benches'. They know they are meant to be friends. But by the end of the story the doleful and bashful parts of their personalities have vanished, to be replaced by daring and brave.

🍁 Batten, Jack **The Man who Ran Faster than Everyone** ISBN 0887765076

In the early twentieth century people loved long distance running. They didn't want to participate, but they were thrilled to watch and often thousands of people would attend a two-man race. The greatest distance runner of this time was Tom Longboat, an Onondaga from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. Tom was a family man, a good worker, but, most of all, he was a runner. He was honoured as an athlete, but constantly reminded of his place in the society of the time. Jack Batten is forthright in his writing about this incredible Canadian whose career exemplified the best of the best; he describes the challenges that Longboat met as an Aboriginal and gives us a clear and disturbing look at the social and economic prejudice he faced. This is a wonderful sports story about a truly remarkable Canadian hero.

Baylor, Byrd **The Table where Rich People Sit** ISBN 0689820089

Do you often think about how rich your life is? Of course, it depends on how we measure that wealth. Byrd Baylor has long lived a life blessed with the riches of nature's bounty. Her narrator, Mountain Girl, feels that her family is not rich enough; they sit at an old, homemade table and wear shabby clothes and shoes. Her parents hold to another belief about what makes people rich. They want to see the sky when they work...that is richness. They enjoy sunsets and long hikes into cool canyons near their home. In the end, it proves difficult to attach a price to those things that allow us to live a *rich* life.

🍁 Bouchard, David **The Journal of Etienne Mercier** ISBN 1551431289

Etienne Mercier is a Hudson's Bay Company employee when he is sent to establish contact with the Haida people of the Queen Charlotte Islands. It is his job to record his findings and so he keeps a journal. Filled with his observations of all that he is discovering, as well as the accompanying vivid pictures that he paints, he shows the reader what life is like for the people of the west coast in the mid nineteenth century. The language and beauty of the book will encourage readers to lend an ear to Canada's past. An accompanying CD with songs sung by the author adds to the experience. The design is impeccable and will provide much enjoyment for those wanting to know more about our history.

Cormier, Robert

Frenchtown Summer

ISBN 0440228549

Both historical and autobiographical, this novel in verse tells of Eugene's thirteenth summer. Not unlike the summer of many boys his age, Eugene falls in love for the first time, gets his first job, and takes note of the people and events that are part of his Frenchtown community. He is also struggling to define his relationship with his father. Filled with evocative language and beautiful images, Cormier has created a special book that will be read and savoured by even the most reluctant among us.

 Doyle, Brian

Mary Ann Alice

ISBN 0888995512


Mary Ann Alice is another of Brian Doyle's unforgettable characters. She is original, independent, and a budding geologist. Her love of rocks and fossils comes from her incomparable teacher, Patchy Drizzle, who says that she has the 'soul of a poet'. Progress is set to change the landscape of her community, and much will be lost when a dam is built on the Gatineau River. It will destroy the farms of many of her neighbours and the only way of life they have known. Doyle is expert at creating setting, superb characters, and a touching story that will remain with you for a very long time.

Fleischman, Paul

Seedfolks

ISBN 0064472078

It begins with Kim who plants six lima bean seeds in the hope that they will call up the spirit of her dead father. A neighbour watches as she plants them and when she discovers what they are, makes a plan to help keep them moist. As the sprouts poke through the ground, others in the multi-ethnic neighbourhood notice and try their hand at helping. The result is a community garden. This elegant story introduces us to 13 characters. Each of their voices is distinct; but each is part of the same story and has a hand in creating something beautiful from a rat-infested patch of land. A lesson that we learn along the way is that we can all work toward the same goal, despite our differences. Uplifting!

 Galloway, Priscilla **Archers, Alchemists and 98 Other Medieval Jobs** ISBN 1550378104

If you would like to read a witty, but uncompromising book about the Middle Ages, pick this one. From a highly regarded and inquisitive author it gives you the real goods on the jobs that were available to all at this time in history. By sorting this book into ten chapters that deal with the variety of jobs to be had, Galloway informally discusses the many strange, but true, occupations that consumed their days and helped them make a meagre living. It is very interesting to note the expectations for many of the workers. One that comes to mind is the barber who not only cut off hair, but also the occasional infected thumb. YUCK!

🍁 O'Reilly, Gillian

Slangalicious

ISBN 15503777647

Are you interested in words? This author surely is. Not wanting to use a dictionary format to reveal the discoveries she made when researching the origin of slang, O'Reilly decided to make it more appealing by including some of the history associated with the words she found. She designed a story that would tell what she had learned. A language assignment turns to fun when two computer characters help put it together. The design is impressive, the illustrations amusing, and sidebars ensure that any additional information is presented.

Paulsen, Gary

How Angel Peterson Got His Name

ISBN 0440229359

Every story in this hilarious collection will have you roaring with laughter. Paulsen chooses to tell 'extreme sport' stories from the summer of his 13th year when he and his friends were trying to prove something to the world. In the way of many 13-year-old boys, they were not averse to danger and most of the stunts ended in amusement while also being a bit scary. For the reader, this book is nonstop fun and destined to be on bestseller lists for years to come!

Peck, Richard

The Teacher's Funeral

ISBN 0803727364

When Richard Peck turned his attention to historical fiction, he did all of us a huge favour. He has created some of the best and most memorable characters in recent years. It is 1904 and Russell is due to begin school in rural Indiana when he hears that his teacher has died. It's the best news he's heard and it is his fervent hope that it will result in the school being shut down so that he might pursue his dream of riding the rails. Not going to happen...his older domineering sister is hired to take over the school and nothing deters her from bringing education to her six students. A superb readaloud that you would be remiss to miss!

Polacco, Patricia

Pink and Say

ISBN 0399226710

There are few picture books about the Civil War and none as dramatically stunning as this book about two young soldiers who meet when one is wounded. Pink returns home with Say in tow. Moe Moe Bay cares for him and brings him back to good health. When marauders kill Moe Moe, both young men feel the need to return to battle. They are soon captured and sent to Andersonville Prison...a death trap. Pink is hanged for his colour, and Say is left to pass their story from generation to generation. The artwork is brilliant and the story more powerful when it is revealed that Say is Polacco's great-great grandfather.

Rohmann, Eric

Time Flies

ISBN 0517885557

Time travel, scientific theory, an artist's interpretation, and dinosaurs...WOW! Rohmann has created a book that needs no words to tell its story. A bird flies into a dinosaur museum in a bid for protection from a summer storm. Unwittingly unconcerned as it flies, it is soon eaten by what looks to be a surviving Tyrannosaurus. The museum alters to become a landscape and the columns become trees. As the bird descends through its throat, the T-Rex transforms to the skeletal remains of itself. Inspired by the idea that birds might be the direct descendants of the dinosaurs, Rohmann has created an eerie world portrayed in captivating oil paintings.

Sis, Peter

Tibet: Through the Red Box

ISBN 0374375526

Peter Sis is a marvelous storyteller. In this personal account from his childhood, we learn about the red box that sat just out of reach in his father's study. When his father left it to Peter, he discovered its secrets. Inside was his father's diary, kept while he was lost in Tibet. He was only able to share unforgettable tales when he finally returned to his family. With his return, colour came back into Peter's world. In this book he shares his father's tales with us...as a legacy to his own son, Matej.

Spinelli, Jerry

Wringer

ISBN 006592826

Palmer is nine and reveling in being so. He has been accepted into the gang of bullies that constantly harass an old friend, he has a nickname, and he is feeling pretty good. He knows, though, that ten is coming and he dreads the town ritual that he will have him wringing the necks of wounded pigeons. The fact that he has befriended a pigeon and is trying to keep it secret adds to his dilemma. The pace is tight, the drama is tense, and the story is thought provoking. Spinelli uses the bird and Palmer's attempts to protect it as just the right touch of humour to give the reader a needed break from the intensity of this wonderful story.

 Taylor, C.J.

Peace Walker

ISBN 0887765475

Listening to the elders tell stories of the Great Peace gave C. J. Taylor a starting point for this wonderful story of how Hiawatha, the great Onandaga chief, struggled to bring peace to his people. Hiawatha chose to work with Tekanawita of the Mohawk nation to bring a quiet end to the fighting incited by the tyrant Atotarho. Only Hiawatha was brave enough to stand up to him and seek peace and initiate the Iroquois Confederacy. While retelling this remarkable story, Taylor also shares realistic details of native life in historical context. Her art graces each chapter. This is a worthy addition to any collection of aboriginal literature.

Van Allsburg, Chris

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick

ISBN 0395353939

Who is Harris Burdick? Why did he leave his paintings to be found? What did he want to be done with them? What an imaginative and skillful way to get your audience involved. Van Allsburg presents fourteen drawings, each rendered in black and white, with only a title and a caption to accompany them. The reader is left to take a personal journey of discovery and imagination while trying to come to grips with the scene presented. A portfolio of the prints has been made available...you need it!

Wick, Walter

A Drop of Water

ISBN 05900221973

Wick's abiding interest in old science books for children led him to try some experiments having to do with amazing discoveries. When he brought his camera to the task, he added an incredible new dimension to these findings. Through brilliant, stop action photographs he shows us the many facets of water...evaporation, condensation, snowflakes, and even some special magical tricks. He adds some experiments for readers to try...if they can be enticed to leave the elegant, captioned photographs.

Williams, Vera

Amber was Brave, Essie was Smart

ISBN 0060571829

Through poems and pictures Vera Williams introduces Amber and Essie, two loving sisters whose life will make you laugh, and then cry. Their love for each other is evident in the tiny glimpses we get at the life they lead together. Their mother works long hours for little pay, their father is incarcerated for larceny, and food is scarce. But, there is much love, laughter, and the occasional ritual to keep them upbeat and looking forward. The illustrations complement and give life to the poetic vignettes intended to bring to our attention two fine and spirited, young girls.

Wright-Frierson, Virginia

A Desert Scrapbook

ISBN 0689806787

The practised hand of this meticulous artist brings the life of the Sonoran Desert right to our prairie doorsteps. As she did with *An Island Scrapbook* and then again with *A North American Rain Forest Scrapbook*, Wright-Frierson uses her astute hand and her sharp-eyed attention to the flora and fauna of the chosen habitat. The design is intriguing, and the text is informative and chatty. There is much to see in this intense study of a unique environment. It serves again as a marvelous example of how information can be presented in a highly personal way.