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## Page Turners: Books for Children

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### **The Complete Maus** (Books One and Two)

Written and Illustrated by **Art Spiegelman**

Patheon, 1996

ISBN: 9780679406419

*Note: The Page Turners column typically features reviews of recently published titles. However, we are including a review of Maus, published over a quarter of century ago. This review is in response to a recent challenge which resulted in the book being pulled from the curriculum in a school system.*

In the graphic novel world, *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman, is considered one of the most influential graphic novels. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, *Maus* helped the format to gain legitimacy as a format worthy of teaching and reading. *Maus* speaks to and literally illustrates the horrors of the Holocaust in graphic form making the fear, guilt, and relief experienced, by Vladek Spiegelman (and all Survivors) tangible to the reader. The work also explores the long-term trauma experienced by children of survivors, something not many Holocaust stories address. *Maus* tells the story from a Jewish perspective which is sometimes overlooked in favor of Holocaust stories which prioritize the heroics of Gentiles over the horror of the victims. As the world loses survivors, works like *Maus* become even more important. Their stories cannot be forgotten. *Maus* honors these stories and should be a must read in every American classroom. Ages 12+. (CKM)

### **Grandude's Green Submarine**

Written by **Paul McCartney**

Illustrated by **Kathryn Durst**

Random House, 2021

ISBN 9780593372432

In this companion text to *Hey Grandude!*, Sir Paul McCartney offers children another fanciful tale about a hip-hop-happening-hippy grandfather. This time, Grandude and the kids are off on an adventure to find Nandude. After boarding Grandude's secret new green machine, they simply follow the music: They drive, they fly, and they dive under the sea until they find

Nandude in a special underwater ship. Then, it's time for all to head back home again. The exciting story is accompanied by colorful, engaging illustrations. While young children probably won't catch the language play related to the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*, their parents and grandparents will, making it a fun read for all ages. Ages 4-8. (PAC)

### **The Heart of a Whale**

Written and illustrated by **Anna Pignataro**

Philomel, 2020

ISBN 9781984836274

Whale has a beautiful song that seems to reach the farthest depths of the sea. The healing sound touches many creatures as it brings cheerfulness to a sad sea urchin, offers a soothing touch to an octopus, and provides a lullaby for baby seahorses. Whale is grateful this song brings so much joy to others. Yet, he also realizes he finds no comfort in his own song. Things change only when his beautiful sound reaches the aching heart of another lonely whale. In this dazzling picturebook, the poetic text and dreamy watercolor illustrations invite readers to consider many different aspects of care, compassion, and friendship. Ages 4-8. (PAC)

### **Out of a Jar**

Written and illustrated by **Deborah Marcero**

Putnam Books, 2022

ISBN 9780593326374

*Out of the Jar* provides young readers with the tale of Llewellyn, a young rabbit, who struggles to deal with his many emotions. Llewellyn does not enjoy feeling strong emotions and in an effort to control his many typical emotions, he bottles them up and stores them away. Unfortunately, he eventually runs out of space for his emotions and is forced to deal with them. This engaging tale shows readers that emotions are a real and normal part of life. Readers see how when Llewellyn deals with his emotions he is a much happier and healthier rabbit. This message should ring true for all readers and can add an important text to the pivotal discussion of helping children maintain positive mental health. Ages 3-8. (MJS)

### **Outside In**

Written by **Deborah Underwood**

Illustrated by **Cindy Derby**

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2020

ISBN 9781328866829

This is a quiet book that draws you in with exquisite pencil and watercolor illustrations and lyrical prose. In *Outside In*, we are reminded of the beauty and connection we have to the outdoors - even in our modern, indoor lives. This text shares the ways that our homes, clothes, and daily routines are infinitely connected to the world of nature. It reminds us of the links between trees and chairs, and rivers and plumbing. In the end, it reminds us all to spend time outside of our homes and cars in order to explore nature in its purest form. Following a young child's interactions with nature (both indoors and out), this book delights both adults and young readers with simple moments of real connection. Ages 3-8. (KBJ)

### **Patricia's Vision: The Doctor Who Saved Sight**

Written by **Michelle Lord**

Illustrated by **Alleanna Harris**

Sterling Children's Books, 2020

ISBN 9781454931379

This lovely biography of Dr. Patricia Bath details the inspiring true story of the first African American woman to complete a residency in ophthalmology and who would go on to dedicate her life to helping people with visual impairments around the world. Young readers will enjoy learning about Dr. Bath's perseverance as a leader in her field, as well as her innovative spirit! The vivid and colorful illustrations depict Dr. Bath at work in her labs and around the world, while the text effectively describes the nature of scientific discovery to young readers, making it an excellent read-aloud. The author has also included quotes from her own conversations with Dr. Bath throughout the book's pages. It is a wonderful addition to any library, highlighting the work of a pioneer in her field. Ages 5+. (MTG)

### **The Rock From the Sky**

Written and illustrated by **Jon Klassen**

Candlewick Press, 2021

ISBN 978536215625

This is another text in typical Klassen style that mixes muted hue, sparse watercolor illustrations with a simple yet humorous text. This book contains five related short stories set up as chapters. The text, which is all dialogue, alternates in color to indicate which character is speaking and Klassen's typical dark yet child-appropriate humorous style shines through. A turtle, armadillo, and snake, all wearing hats of course, interact with an alien as they explore the perfect place to be and navigate spending time both alone and with others. Young and old readers alike will greatly enjoy *The Rock From the Sky*. Ages 5+. (MJS)

### **That's Life!**

Written by **Ame Dyckman**

Illustrated by **Cori Doerrfeld**

Hachette Book Group, 2020

ISBN: 9780316485487

This is a book that urges you to grab life and live it to the fullest. In this playful, whimsical text, Life is a furry little creature who is parachuted onto the doorstep of an inquisitive child. Centered on the antiques of this humorous personification of Life, with all its ups and downs, this text reminds us that while things rarely go as planned, they are almost always worth seeing through for the experiences. There are puns and plays on words that any adult reader will enjoy (such as Life "flashing before one's eyes" after a bath). While young children will be drawn in by the playful pictures and fast-paced prose, older children will appreciate the deeper themes of navigating the complexities that Life throws at us all. Ages 3-10. (KBJ)

**Thesaurus Has a Secret**

Written and illustrated by **Anya Glazer**

Katherine Tegen Books, 2020

ISBN 9780062916051

In this charming book, Thesaurus the dinosaur lives just like his other dinosaur friends, although with a much wider marvelous vocabulary! But Thesaurus has a big secret about his love of words that he is nervous to share with the other dinosaurs. Young readers will enjoy the simple pencil drawings and engaging story of what happens when Thesaurus' secret gets out. The text highlights the wonderful words that Thesaurus uses each day, exposing readers to his wide vocabulary. This picturebook contains elements that will please both adults and children alike, from clever illustrations to dinosaur-themed book puns—*One Hundred and Fifty Million Years of Solitude*, anyone? Ages 4-8. (MTG)