

Selected and annotated by Elora Agsten and Stacia McKeever

A list of 2018 favorites compiled by the current graduate assistants.

Anderson, M.T. *The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge*; illus. by Eugene Yelchin. Candlewick, 2018 [544p] Gr. 5-8. Recommended by Elora

Spoiler alert: Brangwain is not the one assassinated. “Unreliable narrators” could be the two-word summary of this mixture of graphic novel and traditional text about a quest whose real goal becomes overcoming centuries-long prejudice and nationalism. The short note from the author and illustrator at the end is also definitely worth a read.

Bagieu, Pénélope. *Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World*; written and illus. by Pénélope Bagieu; tr. from the French by Montana Kane. First Second, 2018 [304p] Gr. 8-12 Recommended by Stacia

First published as a weekly online comic *Les Culottées*, *Brazen: Rebel Ladies who Rocked the World* brings together the stories of 29 courageous women in a volume of biographies written and illustrated by Pénélope Bagieu. Stories range from 4th Century BC Athens to present-day Afghanistan, celebrating volcanologists, bearded ladies, social justice warriors, and more. Whether familiar with the women depicted or learning of them for the first time, readers will find these bite-size bios leave them wanting to know more.

Brown, Don, *The Unwanted: Stories of Syrian Refugees*; written and illus. by Don Brown, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018 [112p]. Recommended by Elora

A graphic novel exploration of the Syrian refugee crisis, explaining briefly its history and the ongoing effects of the Syrian Civil War and refugee crisis on millions of dispersed Syrians. A moving book and a great introduction to current affairs for tween and teen readers.

Clarke, Maxine Beneba. *The Patchwork Bike*; illus. by Van Thanh Rudd. Candlewick, 2018 [36p] 4-8 yrs. Recommended by Elora and Stacia

A young girl describes the fun she has with her brothers on their beloved bike made of cobbled together parts. While the setting is in an unnamed African village, the pure fun of the children and the frustrations of their “fed-up mum” are very universal.

Green, Laci. *Sex Plus: Learning, Loving, and Enjoying Your Body*. Harper/HarperCollins, 2018 [512p.] Gr. 9 up Recommended by Stacia

Sex educator Laci Green is best known for her series on YouTube *Sex Plus*; with this comprehensive guide to sex she sets out to put myths to bed, answer the questions young people might be afraid to ask, and ultimately empower readers about their bodies. Though the book is mostly female centered, Green covers a lot from gender, periods, masturbation, consent, and kink, to dating violence. A thorough index makes it easy to navigate and jump around, and her conversational tone helps put readers at ease.

Hautala, Beth. *The Ostrich and Other Lost Things*. Philomel, 2018 [288p] Gr. 5-8 Recommended by Elora

Eleven year-old Olivia unceasingly attempts to find her older brother's missing toy ostrich, thinking it will stop his autism-related meltdowns. This plot serves as the backdrop as Olivia tries new activities and finds herself increasingly frustrated and embarrassed by Jacob, and then ashamed for having those feelings about the brother she loves. This book takes a needed look at the dynamics of neurodiverse siblings, and how their parents try to attend to the needs of each. With an actual ostrich thrown in for good measure.

Henkes, Kevin. *A Parade of Elephants*; written and illus by. Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow/Harper Collins, 2018 [32p] 6-24 mos. Recommended by Elora

As I read this, I imagine performing it for storytime and counting the lovingly rendered pastel elephants with a group of toddlers. Perfect for group and one-on-one storytimes, this is a simple and sweet story of a group of elephants and how they go about their parade.

Hockney, David. *A History of Pictures for Children: From Cave Paintings to Computer Drawings*; by David Hockney and Martin Gayford; illus. by Rose Blake and with photographs. Abrams, 2018 [128p] Gr. 4-9 Recommended by Elora and Stacia

Hockney curates some of his favorite works throughout art history and uses them to introduce young readers to image making. Chapters are divided by concepts such as "Making Marks," "Mirrors and Reflections," and "Moving Pictures," which makes it perfect for use in the classroom. Hockney's perspective is that of an art maker more than an historian making entry points to topics unique. While the choices are indeed personal favorites more than a comprehensive history, this book is a great way to start conversations around why we make art and what it means.

Lê, Minh. *Drawn Together*; illus. by Dan Santat. Disney Hyperion, 2018 [34p] 4-8 yrs. Recommended by Stacia

This picture book brings together graphic novel style panels and full page spreads to share the story of an afternoon spent by a boy and his grandfather. As we're introduced we learn a language barrier keeps them from fully understanding each other, but when the boy brings out his sketchbook a new world opens to them.

McCullough, Joy. *Blood Water Paint*. Dutton, 2018 [304p] Gr. 10-12 Recommended by Stacia

This novel in verse tells the story of Italian Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi, the female contemporary to Caravaggio who was supported by the Medicis and admired by the likes of Galileo. But her success did not come easy; McCullough hauntingly depicts the heartbreak and violence Gentileschi faced as she fought for autonomy and the right to control the narrative of her own life.

Morales, Yuyi. *Dreamers*; written and illus. by Yuyi Morales. Porter/Holiday House, 2018 [36p] 5-9 yrs. Recommended by Elora and Stacia

In a beautiful narrative addressed to her son, Morales reminisces about her immigration from Mexico when he was just a baby. The book details the struggles the young immigrants encounter and a place where they find hope and new dreams: the library. Gorgeous and colorful mixed media illustrations accompany this beautiful tale.

Na, Il Sung. *The Dreamer*; written and illus. by Il Sung Na. Chronicle, 2018. [52p] 4-8 yrs. Recommended by Elora

A green pig admires birds, and from there, inspiration and creativity soars. Na's beautiful ode to the dreamer in everyone is a touching story, teaching dreamers everywhere that they too can change the world (especially with help from friends).