
STUFF AND NEW STUFF

Honored books

The Randolph Caldecott Medal is awarded annually to the previous year's most distinguished picture book for children. The medal is awarded by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association. The Caldecott Medal plus recommendations and awards made by other organizations like the Geisel Award (for beginning reader books), the Sibert Medal (for informational books), and the Newberry Medal (for distinguished contribution to children's literature) offer sound guidance on developmentally appropriate book choices for children.

In addition, the ALSC offers an annual list of notable books in categories that loosely reflect interests and reading levels from early childhood through age 14.

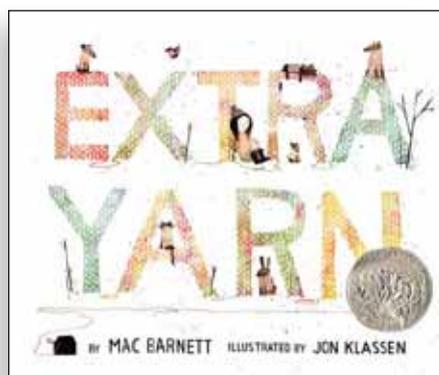
The books below offer a sampling of award-winning books in recent years.

Extra Yarn

Written by Mac Barnett and illustrated by Jon Klassen. HarperCollins, 2012. (\$16.99)

Caldecott Honor, 2013

On a cold, snowy day Annabelle finds a box of yarn of every color—and starts to knit. She makes a sweater for herself, her dog, her friend



Nate, and his dog too. Her teacher complains that the riotously colored garments are distracting, but Annabelle knits on, making sweaters for everyone

and everything—mailboxes, birdhouses, barns, a pickup truck, and even grouchy Mr. Crabtree.

The box keeps producing yarn and Annabelle keeps knitting until one night robbers steal the box for the archduke—who is furious when he finds the box empty and tries to destroy it. But, as in all good tales, good triumphs over evil, and the magic box, returned to Annabelle, again offers its gifts.

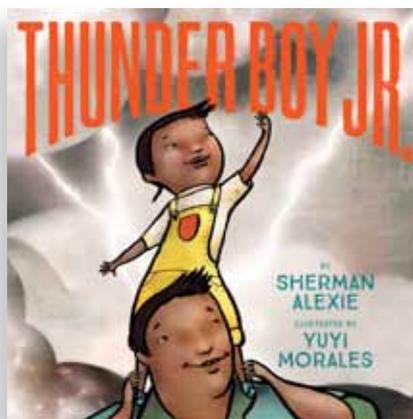
Klassen's illustrations are simply drawn in shades of white and sooty gray, save the perfectly styled knit stitches in every color.

Thunder Boy Jr.

Written by Sherman Alexie and illustrated by Yuyi Morales. Hachette Book Group, 2016. (\$17.99).

New York Times Notable Children's Book, 2016

Thunder Boy Jr. is named after his dad—Big Thunder—that fills the sky in a storm. But Thunder Boy Jr., called Little Thunder, hates his



name and entices the reader to appreciate his justified substitutions. Perhaps because he has climbed a mountain, he could be named Touch the Clouds. Or because he mastered his bicycle

at age 3, he should be called Gravity's Best Friend. Little Thunder laments, "I love my dad but I want my own name. What do I do?" Respectful, responsive, and loving, Big Thunder offers his son the

power of a new name—Lightning—so together they can light up the sky.

Vibrant color, collage, and mixed media splashes give a layered, three-dimensional punch to this story of a powerful and inspiring Native American family.

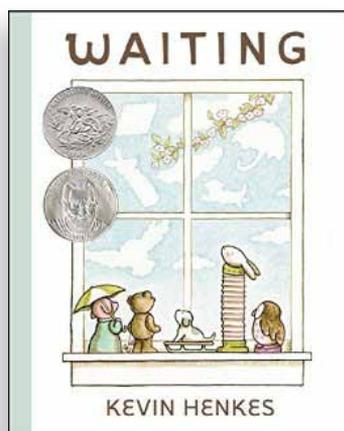
This book is the first picture book by Alexie, who has won numerous awards, including the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature. Illustrator YuYi Morales is a 2015 Caldecott Honor Book winner for *Viva Frida*.

Waiting

Written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes.
Greenwillow Books, 2016. (\$17)

Caldecott Honor and Geisel Honor, 2016

Four toys sit on a window sill, each waiting for something—the wind, the rain, the moon, and the snow. The fifth toy though, “a rabbit with stars” isn’t waiting for anything special; he just looks out the window and waits.



The book, through simple text and line drawings colored softly, reflects the joy, disappointment, sadness, optimism, and frustration shared by children who are so often

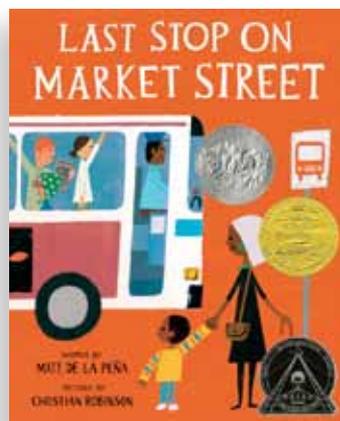
challenged to wait, sometimes for the next terrific surprise.

Last Stop on Market Street

Written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson. G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2016. (\$16.99)

Newberry Award and Caldecott Honor, 2016

CJ and his grandma take a long bus ride after church on Sundays. CJ, as impatient and curious as any child, peppers the ride with inevitable questions and complaints. In response, Nana offers observations about what CJ might be grateful for. When CJ comments on the rundown part of town, Nana offers, “when you’re surrounded by dirt, CJ, you’re a better witness for what’s beautiful.”



Illustrations reflect the urban setting showing people with different skin colors, abilities, ages, and body types authentically and naturally. Eventually, CJ and Nana arrive at their destination, a soup kitchen, opening opportunities for

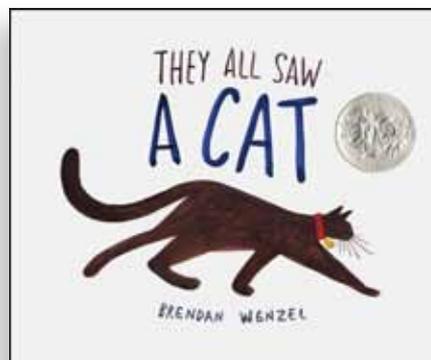
groups of children to see—and feel—the impacts of volunteerism, compassion, and altruism.

They All Saw a Cat

Written and illustrated by Brendan Wenzel.
Chronicle Books, 2016. (\$16.99)

Caldecott Honor, 2017

Perspective or point of view is an essential component of developing empathy and compassion.



A delightful entry into the ability to see the world as another sees it focuses on a cat—in the eyes of a child, a dog, a fox, a fish, a mouse, and even a flea.

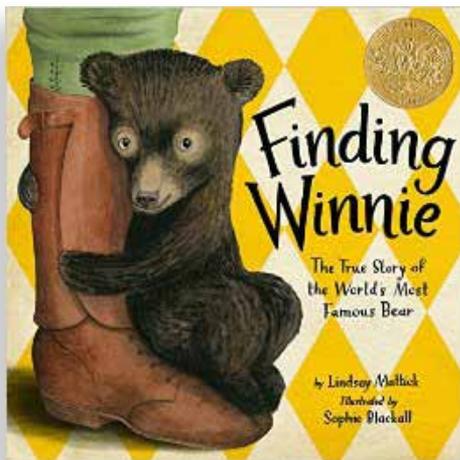
Wenzel’s convincingly illustrates the cat who walks “...through the world, with its whiskers, ears, and paws,” that *they* all see with unique eyes, emotions, and interests. The book invites young readers to build a framework for understanding that we don’t all see the same object in the same way: The cat doesn’t change, perspective does.

Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World’s Most Famous Bear

Written by Lindsay Mattick and illustrated by Sophie Blackall. Little, Brown and Co., 2016. (\$18)

Caldecott Medal, 2016

Once upon a time, a young Canadian soldier leaves his home to care for soldiers' horses in Europe during World War I. At a train depot, he



buys an orphaned baby black bear and names it Winnipeg, Winnie, for short. Winnie becomes the mascot for the soldier's unit and is left in the

care of the London Zoo when the soldier and his unit ship out to combat.

Years later, A.A. Milne and his son Christopher Robin visit the zoo, where Christopher Robin forms a strong bond with the bear, and his father is inspired to create the much-loved adventures of Winnie-the-Pooh.

Cheerful, muted colors, expressive characters, and a whimsical bear combine to make this a book that integrates biographical history, fantasy, and child-like joy to lovers of Milne and those who don't yet know the Hundred Acre Wood, Piglet, Eeyore, Owl, Tigger and their friend Winne-the-Pooh. ■