

book: *Flossie and the Fox* by Patricia McKissack (African-American version)

MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS

BY ROBERT MCCLOSKEY

PreS.-2 62pages Viking, 1941

In this Caldecott Award-winning classic, we follow Mrs. Mallard and her eight ducklings as they make a traffic-stopping walk across Boston to meet Mr. Mallard on their new island home in the Public Garden. Also by the author: *Blueberries for Sal*.

MIKE MULLIGAN & HIS STEAM SHOVEL

BY VIRGINIA LEE BURTON

K-4 42 pages Houghton, 1939

This is the heartwarming tale about the demise of the steam shovel and how it found a permanent home with driver Mike. Also by the author: *Katy and the Big Snow* and *The Little House*.

RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI BY RUDYARD KIPLING;

ADAPTED AND ILLUSTRATED BY JERRY PINKNEY

K-4 44 pages Morrow, 1997

Rikki is a fearless mongoose, adopted by a family in India to protect their child. In no time, he is tested by the cunning cobra snakes that live in the garden. Made famous by Kipling a century ago, this tale features a ferocious fight between the mongoose and snakes and is not for the timid.

SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE

BY WILLIAM STEIG

PreS.-4 50 pages Simon & Schuster, 1969

In this contemporary fairy tale and Caldecott Medal-winner, young Sylvester finds a magic pebble that will grant his every wish as long as he holds it in his hand. When a hungry lion approaches, Sylvester wishes himself into a

stone. Since stones don't have hands, the pebble drops to the ground and he can't reach it to wish himself normal again. The subsequent loneliness of both Sylvester and his parents is portrayed with deep sensitivity, making for great joy a year later when they are happily reunited.

TIKKI TIKKI TEMBO BY ARLENE MOSEL; BLAIR LENT, ILLUSTRATOR

PreS.-5 40 pages Holt, 1968

This little picture book tells the amusing legend of how the Chinese people stopped giving their first-born sons incredibly long first names and started giving all children short names. The repetition of phrases and their predictability make it a lasting favorite.

THE UGLY DUCKLING BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN; ROBERT INGPEN, ILLUSTRATOR

Gr. 1 and up 54 pages Penguin, 2005

It is a special book that unites one of the world's great storytellers with one of the world's great illustrators in a traditional telling of the ugly duckling. Ridiculed by his brothers and sisters, the duckling leaves home in search of beauty and finds it within himself. Related book: *Eleanor* (Eleanor Roosevelt) by Barbara Cooney.

A list of several hundred other titles can be found in the Treasury of Read-Alouds in *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease (Penguin)



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Jim Trelease's Web site:

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CLASSIC PICTURE BOOKS ALL CHILDREN SHOULD EXPERIENCE

BY JIM TRELEASE

Author of the New York Times Bestseller
The Read-Aloud Handbook



A Note on Classics and the Availability of These Titles

The great Columbia University professor Mark Van Doren once defined a “classic” as any book that stays in print. If they’re still around when others have disappeared, there must be something to them. And *that’s* the badge this little collection of titles wears.

It would be rare for one of these titles to go out of print (OP) but today’s publishers’ have accounting systems that sometimes affect their value systems. But even an out-of-print (OP) title can be easily and freely borrowed from your local library (or, upon request, your library can borrow it from *other* libraries). If you wish to own the book, inexpensive used-copies (including OP) can be found at Web sites like bookfinder.com or Amazon. New copies (but not OP) can be purchased at your local bookstore.

AESOP’S FABLES BY JERRY PINKNEY
Gr. 2–5 85 pages North-South, 2000

Aesop’s fables offer us not only wisdom but also an introduction to the characters, ideas, and images that turn up again and again in the literary tradition. This volume includes more than 60 of Aesop’s most famous tales.

THE BIGGEST BEAR BY LYNDA WARD
K–5 80 pages Houghton, 1952

Johnny adopts a bear cub fresh out of the woods and its growth presents problem after problem—the crises we invite when we tame what is meant to be wild. Related books: *Capybobby* by Bill Peet; *Harry’s Pony* by Barbara Ann Porte; *The Josefina Quilt Story* by Eleanor Coerr; and *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi* by Rudyard Kipling.

BRAVE IRENE BY WILLIAM STEIG
K–5 28 pages Farrar, 1986

When Irene’s dressmaker mother falls ill and cannot deliver the duchess’s gown for the ball, Irene shoulders the huge box and battles a winter storm to make the delivery. Related book on courage: *The Butterfly* by Patricia Polacco; and *Mirette on the High Wire* by Emily Arnold McCully

THE COMPLETE ADVENTURES OF PETER RABBIT BY BEATRIX POTTER
PRES.–1 96 PAGES WARNER, 1982

Here are the four original tales involving one of the most famous animals in children’s literature—Peter Rabbit. In a vicarious way children identify with his naughty sense of adventure, and then thrill at his narrow escape from the clutches of Mr. MacGregor.

IF I RAN THE ZOO BY DR. SEUSS
PRES.–4 54 PAGES RANDOM HOUSE, 1950

Little Gerald McGrew finds the animals at the local zoo pretty boring compared with the zany, exotic creatures populating the zoo of his imagination (just like a little lad imagined things while walking to and from school in Seuss’s first book for children, *And To Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*). Dr. Seuss’ father ran the zoo in Springfield, Massachusetts for 31 years. Fans of Dr. Seuss also enjoy the books of Bill Peet like *The Whingdingdilly*.

IRA SLEEPS OVER BY BERNARD WABER
K–6 48 pages Houghton, 1972

This is a warm, sensitive, and humorous look at a boy’s overnight visit to his best friend’s house, centering on the child’s quandary whether or not to bring his teddy bear. It makes for lively discussion about individual sleeping habits, peer pressure, and the things

we all hold on to—even as grown-ups. In the sequel, *Ira Says Goodbye*, the two best friends experience a childhood pain when Reggie moves away.

THE ISLAND OF THE SKOG
BY STEVEN KELLOGG

PreS.–2 52 pages Dial, 1975
Sailing away from city life, a boatload of mice discover the island of their dreams, only to be pulled up short by the appearance of a fearful monster already dwelling on the island. How imaginations can run away with us and how obstacles can be overcome if we’ll just talk with others are central issues in this tale. Also by the author: *The Mysterious Tadpole*.

THE LITTLE HOUSE
BY VIRGINIA LEE BURTON

PreS.–5 40 pages Houghton, 1942

This Caldecott Medal winner uses a little turn-of-the-century house to portray the urbanization of America. With each page, the reader/listener becomes the little house and experiences the contentment, wonder, concern, anxiety, and loneliness that the passing seasons and encroaching city bring. Many of today’s children who daily experience the anxieties of city life will identify with the little house’s eventual triumph.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
RETOLD BY TRINA SCHAT HYMAN
PreS.–5 52 pages Holiday, 1985

It’s hard to imagine a better illustrated version of this famous tale. The artist has given us a child and grandma who are every child and grandmother and a texture so rich you can almost smell the woods. Related