

Growing Readers Review

Volume 13, Issue 4

BOOKS OF EXCELLENCE

PRESCHOOL

Extra Yarn

Written by Mac Barnett;
illustrated by Jon Klassen

Sometimes something very ordinary turns out to be extraordinary and sometimes a story that appears to be about knitting is about something much, much more! This uniquely illustrated book follows young Annabelle as she discovers a small box filled with colorful yarn. She knits a simple sweater for herself and soon learns an important lesson about giving.

Annabelle quickly transforms her entire town from cold and ordinary to...well, you will have to read it to find out. Word gets out about the changes to her small town and Annabelle is faced with a decision that could make her very, very wealthy. Which path will she choose?

The cover of this book draws you in with its colorful lettering that looks soft enough to touch. The woodland animals in sweaters will make you want to keep on reading. This Caldecott Honor Book and *New York Times* bestseller is a must have for your child's library.

About the Author/Illustrator

Mac Barnett has penned several children's books including *Oh No! (Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World)* and *Billy Twitters and His Blue Whale Problem*. On top of being a wonderful author, Mac shares his talents at 826LA, a nonprofit writing center for students in Los Angeles. The illustrator, Jon Klassen, hails from Canada and currently resides in Los Angeles. In addition to illustrating children's books, he also lends his talents to animated films like *Kung Fu Panda* and *Coraline*.



Girl Power: Stories of Adventure, Courage, and Creativity

Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors? is the story of Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman in the United States to become a physician. Chances are the five- to eight-year-olds who read this inspiring biography will have seen just as many female physicians in their young lives as male physicians. It may be hard for them to imagine a time when society put strong limits on what women could accomplish.

Most children also would not remember a time when finding female heroes in literature for any age was rare. Today, children's literature presents an introduction to a world of possibilities for young girls and boys. Heroes come in all sizes, shapes, and genders. And the books can be biographical, informational, or just good fiction.

When we read to young children (and later when they become the readers) they may hear the cadence of the words as in *I Can Do It Myself!* They may find the artwork of *Extra Yarn* appealing, or simply enjoy the adventures of *Violet the Pilot*. There's also the chance that they will see their own potential. We've come a long way since Elizabeth Blackwell's graduation from medical school in 1849. This issue of *Growing Readers Review* features books about empowered girls and young women who can become all they want to be.

By Susan C. Brenner, EdD



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INFANT AND TODDLER

I Can Do It Myself!

Written by Stephen Krensky; illustrated by Sara Gillingham • Infant/Toddler

This board book has a simple storyline just right for toddlers and older infants. It tells of a young girl, proud of her new accomplishments and growing independence. The main character discovers that she can choose her own clothes, blow her nose, ride a bike, and more. When you are about two years old, these are big accomplishments. The girl is joined on many pages by a tiny yellow bird that toddlers will enjoy finding and telling what it is doing in each picture. The illustrator uses primary colors, patterns, and black accents. Toddlers will find it easy to relate to this visually appealing book.

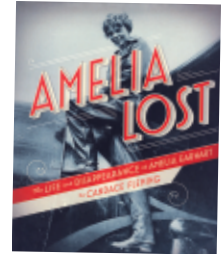


SCHOOL AGE

Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart

Written by Candace Fleming • School Age

Perhaps most well known for her failed attempt to circumnavigate the globe, Amelia Earhart remains a most inspiring woman for all that she accomplished. *Amelia Lost* chronicles her life, from childhood through her death in 1937. Women, she believed, should be encouraged to take chances. “There are a great many boys who would be better off making pies, and a great many girls who would be better off as mechanics.” “Study whatever you want,” she counseled us girls. “Don’t let the world push you around.” She encouraged women to challenge themselves and seize their dreams. Her story, told as an inspirational account of her life, serves as more than just a historic description of a female pilot, but also as a rousing portrayal of a bold and courageous person.



NOTABLE BOOKS

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Written by Sarah Josepha Hale; illustrated by Tomie dePaola
Infant/Toddler

Folk art illustrations give a lovely look to this 1830 classic, a read-aloud tale of love and kindness.

Little Mouse

Written and illustrated by Alison Murray • Infant/Toddler

Mommy calls her little mouse, but this young lady is strong, and brave, and tall. Her imagination takes her into the world of her favorite animals.

A Hen for Izzy Pippik

Written by Aubrey Davis; illustrated by Marie Lafrance • Preschool

Inspired by Jewish and Islamic traditional tales, Shaina comes across a lost hen that she cares for while she awaits its owner’s return. As Shaina faces pressure to give up the hen and its growing brood, she stays strong and teaches us all to stand up for what we believe is right, even in the face of adversity.

Who Says Women Can’t Be Doctors? The Story of Elizabeth Blackwell

Written by Tanya Lee Stone; illustrated by Marjorie Priceman • Preschool

This spirited biography tells the true story of a young woman, curious and determined, who grew up to be the first female physician in the United States.

Bea at Ballet

Written and illustrated by Rachel Isadora
Preschool

A performer herself, this author portrays the joy of ballet for even the youngest dancers.

Violet the Pilot

Written and illustrated by Steve Breen
Preschool

Violet Van Winkle is a little girl who prefers monkey wrenches to tea sets. Her real adventures begin when, alongside her trusty dog Orville, she builds machines...flying machines.

Unspoken: A Story From the Underground Railroad

Written and illustrated by Henry Cole • School Age

Without words, the dramatic drawings in this book tell the story of a girl who helped an escaped slave find refuge in her family’s barn during the Civil War era.

Harlem’s Little Blackbird, The Story of Florence Mills

Written by Renee Watson; illustrated by Christian Robinson
School Age

This true story of Florence Mills demonstrates to children of all ages that no dream is too big and dreams can help erase the dividing lines between people.



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