

younger readers

For Kids, Young Adults, and Children of All Ages



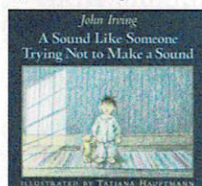
Children

AGES 0-8

It's inescapable: soon children's books will feature only characters appearing on Nickelodeon or be written only by celebrity authors. We'll address a few offerings in the latter category and then move on to authors whose primary focus is children's books.

A SOUND LIKE SOMEONE TRYING NOT TO MAKE A SOUND

By John Irving



Irving, author of *The Cider House Rules*, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, and *The World According to Garp*, told the story of children's author Ted Cole and his daughter Ruth in 1998's *A Widow for One Year*. Irving included the entire text of one of Ted's stories, which illustrator Tatjana Hauptmann has now helped turn into a stand-alone children's book. A young boy imagines frightening things when he hears noises in the middle of the night. As he explores the moonlit house, even a pile of clothes takes a scary form. In the end, the sound comes from a mouse. "That's all it was!" A fine story, although without Irving's name attached, it would not cause as much of a bang.

IT'S HARD TO BE FIVE

Learning How to Work My Control Panel

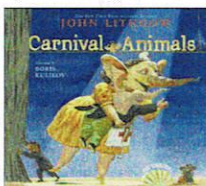
By Jamie Lee Curtis



Actress Curtis is well known for her roles in *A Fish Called Wanda* and *True Lies*, among other films. However, she is also a prolific children's author. Her last effort, *Today I Feel Silly*, was a *New York Times* best-seller. Laura Cornell illustrates all of Curtis' books in a bright, cheerful style. Their current collaboration takes a light touch with the hardships of being five—how to control your temper, deal with siblings, and start school. The rhymes are simple and pleasant enough. ("School seems so scary. School seems so strange. I'm only five. My whole world's going to change.")

CARNIVAL OF ANIMALS

By John Lithgow



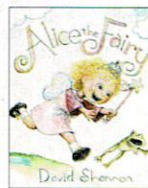
In addition to being an award-winning actor, Lithgow has published several children's books, including the well-received *I'm a Mantee*. Lithgow originally created and narrated a poem to accompany the New York City Ballet's performance of Camille Saint-Saën's 1886 orchestral suite, *Carnival of the Animals*. Now

migrated to book form, Lithgow's interpretation features Oliver Pendleton Percy the Third who, after wandering away from a school field trip at the Natural History Museum, falls asleep. There he dreams of classmates, teachers, and family members who transform into a variety of animals. "But oh! What a fabulous night he had had / When his world was turned into a zoo!" The translation of music to poetry and now to illustration has left some narrative gaps—individual episodes don't always connect, and the happy ending feels abrupt—but if you put on the accompanying CD with Lithgow's narration, all is right with the world.

And now a few authors for whom writing children's books is a full-time job:

ALICE THE FAIRY

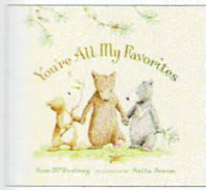
By David Shannon



The author of the Caldecott Award-winning *No, David!* series about active boys finally writes one for precocious little girls! Alice (who hates taking baths and eating broccoli) dresses up like a fairy and hopes to go to a special school to become a "permanent fairy." She uses her magic wand to help her out of a host of situations, including a humorous attempt to turn her bathwater into gelatin.

YOU'RE ALL MY FAVORITES

By Sam McBratney and Anita Jeram



This duo created the classic gift book, *Guess How Much I Love You* (over 15 million copies sold). Their

latest work reassures each of three little bear siblings that, despite any flaws they might try to find in themselves, their mother and father love them all equally.

★ GUJI GUJI

By Chih-Yuan Chen



This is our pick of the books in this age group. A mother duck on her clutch of eggs doesn't notice when a crocodile egg rolls into her nest.

Though she raises the four hatchlings as a loving family, can a crocodile resist his natural inclination to dine on his siblings? Can he stand up to other crocodiles threatening his family? Can he learn to waddle?

"...a heartening little parable about what makes a family. ... The entire drama unfolds by moonlight; attended by bats and ravens, and the stormy night sky and inky, leafless trees conjure an atmosphere of menace that makes the duck family's solidarity seem all the more precious." ELIZABETH WARD,

WASHINGTON POST

Intermediate

AGES 9-12

PETER AND THE STARCATCHERS

By Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson



Columnist Barry and thriller author Pearson (also bandmates in the Rock Bottom Remainers) come together to compose a prequel of sorts to *Peter Pan*. Along with roaring adventures, we learn about how Peter came to fly, his inability to grow up, and the origin of the name Neverland. J.M. Barrie purists will rebel at the liberties the two authors take and claim that *Peter Pan in Kensington*

Gardens was prequel enough. Despite the length (a hefty 464 pages), the writing style, short chapters, and non-stop action make this an entertaining story for growing readers.

THE GOLEM'S EYE

The Bartimaeus Trilogy, Book 2

By Jonathan Stroud



The second installment in the Bartimaeus trilogy finds Nathaniel, now 14 and an apprentice magician, working for the government to help solve a variety of crimes involving a clay golem. Once again, he joins forces with the powerful and willful djinni Bartimaeus (who, sadly, is not featured in this installment quite as much as in *The Amulet of Samarkand*). Stroud also spotlights Kitty, a young member of a group of commoners trying to overthrow the magicians, who appeared briefly in *Amulet*.

THE GRIM GROTTO

A Series of Unfortunate Events, Book 11

By Lemony Snicket



In the eleventh of the *Series of Unfortunate Events* books, the Baudelaire orphans continue their quest to locate the sugar bowl. This book contains enough adventures down Stricken Stream on a toboggan and aboard the Queequeg submarine to continue to delight fans. *Grotto* also introduces more clues and characters that we expect will only help the Baudelaires in their future journeys.

Young Adults

AGES 13 AND UP

THE SEA OF TROLLS

By Nancy Farmer

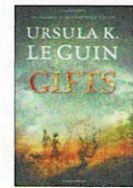


Farmer's previous book, *The House of the Scorpion*, won both a Newbery Honor award and the National Book Award. She turns from imagining drug lords in the future to exploring Vikings and Norse legends in the distant past. Eleven-year-old farmboy

Jack and his little sister Lucy are captured from Britain by Viking invaders in A.D. 793. Enslaved by Olaf One-Brow and his shipmate Thorgil, they embark on a fantastic series of adventures involving trolls, dragons, carnivorous plants, and Beowulf.

GIFTS

By Ursula K. Le Guin



Le Guin has written over three dozen books and received numerous awards, including the Newbery Honor for *The Tombs of Atuan*. In this fantasy, the people of the Uplands possess unusual gifts: the ability to talk to animals, cause illness, or even destroy at a glance. The community lives at the mercy of the threat of each other's "gifts." However, a new generation is rising, with some struggling to use their natural talents wisely. *Gifts* is a classic coming of age story in which characters question identity, the use of power, and the nature of good and evil. ■

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