

# younger readers

For Kids, Young Adults, and Children of All Ages

BY WENDY MASS



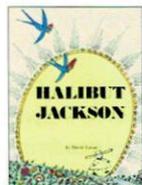
School's out for the summer. What better time for kids to fall in love with reading?

## Children

AGES 0-8

### HALIBUT JACKSON

Written and Illustrated by David Lucas



Halibut Jackson is very shy and likes blending in everywhere he goes. So, he sews his own suits with different patterns that match his surroundings. The suit with the bricks on it helps him blend in with the city, while the book pattern is perfect for the library. But one day Halibut Jackson makes a mistake and dresses for the wrong occasion. Instead of blending in, he stands out like a sore thumb—and discovers he likes it!

**"He's rather shy. But if I could, I'd give him a wing-dinger because I don't want readers to miss this charming but diminutive chap. ... The author brings the sensitivity of Kevin Henkes or Rosemary Wells to his perfectly pared-down text ..."** SUE STAUFFACHER, THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

**"... charming ... half the fun of this witty tale is spotting Halibut hiding in the library or the produce aisle."**

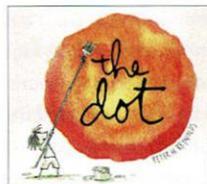
CATHERINE REESE NEWTON, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

**"... the story is simply presented, and children struggling with their own shyness will respond to Halibut's social**

**anxieties. What may entrance kids most, however, are Lucas' charming line-and-watercolor paintings. ... The playful, jam-packed scenes, which distract the eye from the camouflaged Halibut, add a whimsical seek-and-find element that extends the book's appeal."** JENNIFER MATTSON, BOOKLIST

### THE DOT

Written and Illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds



Vashti doesn't believe she has any artistic ability. Her art teacher tells her to just "make a mark and see where it takes you." Frustrated, Vashti jabs her marker on the page, making a single dot. The teacher praises it and hangs it on the wall. Vashti starts to believe that maybe she does have some artistic ability and creates more dots of all colors and sizes. She becomes so filled with the joy of artistic creation that she then helps a little boy who thinks that he can't draw. "Just make a mark," she tells him. And he does.

**"... this small book carries a big message. The pen-and-ink drawings accented with splotches of colorful circles aren't quite as minimalist as Vashti's work, but they reflect the same spareness and possibility. Art teachers might consider reading this at the beginning of each semester to quell the idea, 'I can't draw.'"** ILENE COOPER, BOOKLIST

**"Elegantly designed, with expressive illustrations in watercolor, ink, and tea, this beautiful book offers the simple**

**but profound wisdom of a Sufi teaching tale."** MARGNY DUPUY, TIMES-PICAYUNE

For little ones who like little cats and dogs, here are two books guaranteed to please. *Kitten's First Full Moon*, by Kevin Henkes, follows the exploits of a kitten that thinks the moon is a bowl of milk and tries her hardest to reach it. Dianne Ochiltree's *Pillow Pup* introduces a very peppy puppy that just won't stop stealing the pillow.

## Intermediate

AGES 9-12

### THE GOLDEN HOUR

By Maiya Williams



When 13-year-old Rowan and his 11-year-old sister Nina move to a small town in Maine to be with relatives following the loss of their mother, they are not happy. But, they soon discover that the town has a secret—it houses an old hotel that contains a portal into the past. When Nina disappears after taking a trip on the hotel's elevator-like contraption called an alleviator (because it alleviates curiosity), Rowan and his new friends find themselves on an adventure of a lifetime as they try to locate her in the middle of the French Revolution. While the reader gets a lesson in history, Rowan and Nina learn that they are stronger than they think.

**"Rowan's self-doubt makes him an appealing and realistic character, and supporting characters, including the two eccentric aunts, are well-drawn. The fast-paced plot and smooth transition from everyday life to fantasy adventure make this a good choice for reluctant readers."** BETH L. MEISTER, SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

LIBRARY JOURNAL

**"Although parts of the adventure in eighteenth-century France strain belief, the emotions and relationships at the heart of the story are solid and convincing. One of the few fantasies with any African American characters, this takes readers on an adventure that makes everyday phenomena seem a little more magical."** CAROLYN PHELAN, BOOKLIST

## MILKWEED

By Jerry Spinelli



Newbery Medalist Spinelli's latest novel features an innocent boy with no name, whose first memory entails running through the chaotic streets of 1939

Warsaw with a stolen bread under one arm and shouts of "Stop thief" ringing in his years. The only artifact of his old life is a mysterious yellow stone tied around his neck. Then Uri, an older Jewish boy, takes him under his wing and renames him Misha. Uri invents for the young boy a past as a kidnapped gypsy in order to protect him from the Nazis. As the two fight side-by-side for survival, Misha discovers that at this time in history, it is safest to have no identity at all.

**"One source of the story's heart-wrenching power is the innocence of its untutored narrator, who views the unfolding tragedy with the non-judgmental attitude of an uncomprehending child until, finally, his heart is broken. Only many years later does he receive a gift that helps restore a measure of what he has lost."**

CECELIA GOODNOW, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

**"Reading this unusual, fresh view of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of a child who struggles to understand the world around him is like**

**viewing a poignant collage of Misha's impressions. This historical novel can be appreciated both by readers with previous knowledge of the Holocaust and by those who share Misha's innocence and will discover the horrors of this period in history along with him."** GINNY GUSTIN, SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

## NEVER MIND

A Twin Novel

By Avi and Rachel Vail



Edward and Meg are seventh-grade twins who couldn't differ more. They're not just night and day; "he's midnight and she's twelve noon." Meg

attends a school for gifted students, while Edward goes to an alternative school for "free spirited" kids. Meg plans to be popular by pretending that her "runty" brother is actually a rock star, while Edward's mischievous schemes turn the tables on them both. The book becomes a fast-paced comedy of errors, and the twins' biggest surprise is that they aren't so different after all.

**"The authors explore complicated early adolescent dilemmas and conflicts with comedic agility. It's a real collaboration; the alternating voices of their characters ring true, and the narrative is seamless."** KIRKUS

**"The story moves along very quickly and it's easy to read because Meg and Edward tell each part in short chapters. But we're betting you'll find it hard to put down."** WASHINGTON POST

## Young Adults

AGES 13 AND UP

### LUNA

By Julie Anne Peters



Regan, a high school sophomore, is more involved in her 17-year-old brother Liam's life than her own. She's the only one who knows that Liam believes he harbors a girl named Luna

within him. Liam experiments at home with dressing in women's clothing and wearing makeup. Eventually, to free both Regan and himself, he reveals Luna to the outside world. Only then can he embrace Luna for real.

**"Groundbreaking, finely tuned realism about a transsexual teen. Peters writes her characters with care and complexity. At the end, Luna's off to Seattle to begin the process that will end with sex-reassignment surgery and Regan's ready to focus on herself for a change. The first of its kind—well done and essential for every library serving young adults."** KIRKUS

**"This novel breaks new ground in YA literature with a sensitive and poignant portrayal of a young man's determination to live his true identity and his family's struggle to accept Luna for who she really is."** SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

JOURNAL

### DOUBLE HELIX

By Nancy Werlin



When Eli decides to work at Wyatt Transgenics for a year instead of going straight to college, his father mysteriously objects. It's a choice job with a great salary, and the formidable Dr. Wyatt seems very interested in working with Eli. When Eli spies a beautiful young woman at the lab who resembles a younger version of his mother, he suspects that this woman might have something to do with his mother's life-threatening genetic disorder. He resolves to uncover this growing web of secrets—but at what cost?

**"The pace here is fast and the problems ethically complicated. Likely to spark discussion, and not just on rabbits."**

MARY HARRIS RUSSELL, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

**"Werlin is a mistress of intelligent, imaginative mystery writing for the YA crowd, and Double Helix is as good as anything she's done."** ELIZABETH WARD,

WASHINGTON POST ■