

Transitional Novels

Ahlberg, Janet and Ahlberg, Allan. *Jeremiah in the Dark Woods*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1977.
ISBN 0141304960.

Jeremiah sets out in the dark woods to search for the no-good robber who stole the tarts from his grandmother's window. On his journey, he encounters the three bears, the mad hatter, a frog prince, a wolf, and other fairy tale characters who have problems of their own. The intertwining of all of these characters is very ingenious and creates delight for the reader.

☞ Related Reading: *Each Peach Pear Plum*, *Once Upon A Golden Apple*, *The Jolly Pocket Postman*, *The Jolly Christmas Postman* (nursery rhymes/fairy tales)

Bulla, Clyde Robert. *The Chalkbox Kid* (illus. Thomas B. Allen). New York: Random House, 1987.
ISBN 0394891023.

Nine-year-old Gregory moves to a new neighbourhood and a new school. In his loneliness, he turns to what he does best - drawing. Through the imaginary world he draws with his chalk, he discovers friendship and happiness. Sensitive written, this story will find a place in the hearts of many children.

☞ Related Reading: *Maple Moon*, *Crow Boy*, *The Hundred Dresses*, *The Sandwich* (acceptance)

Byars, Betsy. *Beans On The Roof* (illus. Melodye Rosales). New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1988. ISBN 0440403146.

Only Anna Bean is permitted to sit on the roof because it is the inspiration she needs to write a roof poem that may, if she's a winner, be included in a book of poems at school. The protests of her brother George that he, too, must go to the roof to write a poem, is the beginning of a progression of Beans to the roof to write roof poems. The supportive Bean family delights young children who can relate their real-life disappointments and joys to those experienced by the Beans.

☞ Related Reading: *The One in the Middle Is the Green Kangaroo*, *The Pain and the Great One*, *Jess Was the Brave One*, *Revenge of the small Small* (siblings)

Cameron, Ann. *Julian's Glorious Summer* (illus. Dora Leder). New York: Random House, 1987.
ISBN 0394891171.

Seven-year-old Julian is devastated when his best friend, Gloria, gets a new bike. Julian is afraid to ride the bike so he tells a fib that gets him into trouble with his dad. Throughout this delightful story, Julian learns that it is better to say what you mean.

☞ Related Reading: *Julian, Secret Agent*, *More Stories Julian Tells* (sequels)

Cleary, Beverly. *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (illus. Alan Tiegreen). New York: Avon Books, 1981. ISBN 0380709562.

Signs of modern-day stress are prevalent in this story. Mr. Quimby returns to school and the family has to live on a very limited income. Beezus is now a somewhat surly adolescent and Ramona has concerns of her own in grade three. However, the strength of the family helps to keep everyone together.

☞ Related Reading: *Beany (Not Beanhead) and the Magic Crystal* (adventures of a young girl); *Ramona the Brave*, *Ramona the Pest* (sequels)

Dalglish, Alice. *The Courage of Sarah Noble*. Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1954. ISBN 0689715404.

Fear, loneliness and hardship were daily challenges eight-year-old Sarah faced as she went alone with her father to build a new home in the Connecticut wilderness. Continually recalling her mother's encouraging advice, "Keep up your courage, Sarah Noble," she overcame her fears and demonstrated real courage as she cared for her father and became friends with her Indian neighbours. This is a beautifully-written true story that inspires the reader to appreciate the courage needed to exceed adversity.

☞ Related Reading: *Brave Margaret*, *Keep the Lights Burning Abbie*, *A Weave of Words*, *Molly Bannaky* (female courage)

dePaola, Tomie. *26 Fairmount Avenue*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1999. ISBN 039923246X.

This autobiography is told through the voice of Tomie as a young child. Between the Fall of 1938 to the new year of 1940, Tomie experienced the "Big Hurricane of the New England States", the death of his great-grandmother, his first day of school and the first major film ever to be released by Walt Disney. All of these things happened simultaneously with the construction of the family's new house at 26 Fairmount Avenue.

☞ Related Reading: *Eleanor*, *The Dalai Lama*, *Lucy Maud and the Cavendish Cat*, *Emily*, *Tomie dePaola: His Art & His Stories*, *A Picture Book of Louis Braille*, *Beatrix Potter* (biographies)

Gannett, Ruth Stiles. *My Father's Dragon* (illus. Ruth Chrisman Gannett). New York: Random House, 1948. ISBN 0394890485.

Wild Island is "mostly jungle and inhabited by very wild animals," warns the cat who had promised to rescue an overworked dragon held captive there. A young boy, Elmer Elevator, convinced that he can successfully complete the rescue, uses ingenuity and trickery as he encounters the wild beasts. This hilarious nonsense story is hard to put down. Comical black and white drawings add humour to the journey.

☞ Related Reading: *The Dragons of Blueiland*, *Elmer and the Dragon* (sequels)

King-Smith, Dick. *Sophie Hits Six*. Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1991. ISBN 1564024628.

Animals abound in Sophie's world. They include her pet cat and rabbit and the animals she dreams of owning when she becomes a lady farmer. Convincing her parents that six is old enough to take care of a puppy is not easy. Will she get her wish on her Christmas Day birthday? Pen and ink sketches highlight the humour and Sophie's determination to expand her menagerie of animals. This is one in a popular series of Sophie books.

☞ Related Reading: *Sophie's Tom*, *Sophie's Snail* (sequels)

Le Guin, Ursula K. *Catwings* (illus. S. D. Schindler). Toronto: Scholastic Inc., 1988. ISBN 0590428330.

Cats with wings? Inexplicable! Four young kittens, encouraged by their mother, use their wings to fly from their slum neighbourhood to a safer place. Fearful at first of the unfamiliar surroundings, the cautious kittens each day become a little more comfortable with the creatures in the woods. An unexpected meeting bodes great changes for them. Enchanting drawings add charm to this delightful fantasy.

☞ Related Reading: *Wonderful Alexander and the Catwings*, *Catwings Return* (sequels); *Catkin* (cat magic)

Little, Jean. *Lost and Found*. Markham, ON: Penguin Books Canada Limited, 1985. ISBN 0140319972.

A new town, a new home and no friends make life miserable for Lucy. A friendly dog that she meets on the street can make a big difference. Reluctantly she searches for the owner, a condition set by her parents for keeping "Trouble". A neighbourhood girl who loves to solve mysteries aids in the search. Lucy convinces herself that the dog's owners must be mean to have let him stray but she notices before long that Trouble is lonely for them. She has to make a difficult decision about what is best for Trouble. This is a story propelled by emotions from which young children can learn about life's disappointments and pleasures.

☞ Related Reading: *The Comeback Dog*, *Sable*, *Tornado* (dog stories)

Lowry, Lois. *All About Sam* (illus. Diane deGroat). New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1988. ISBN 0440402212.

Lowry has written many books about Anastasia and now here's one about her loveable younger brother, Sam. The thoughts and feelings of Sam are revealed throughout his adventures from his first day as a newborn to the days of his terrible twos.

☞ Related Reading: *Attaboy, Sam!*; *See You Around, Sam!* (sequels)

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. New York: Harper Trophy, 1985. ISBN 0060241012.

This is an exquisite story of pioneer life and family love. Caleb and Anna live with their Papa, their mother having died after Caleb's birth. Papa advertises for a wife and Sarah answers the ad. When she comes to live with them, they have to learn to accept each other. As they start to build a family relationship, they realize that change is unavoidable and the future holds promise.

☞ Related Reading: *Raising Sweetness*, *The Canada Geese Quilt*, *A Gift for Mama* (family); *Skylark* (sequel)

Roop, Peter and Connie. *Keep the Lights Burning Abbie* (illus. Peter E. Hanson). Minneapolis, Minnesota: Carolrhoda Books, 1985. ISBN 0876144547.

This is historical fiction for young readers. It tells the story of Abbie Burgess and her family who lived in a lighthouse in the nineteenth century. Abbie is given the responsibility of running the lighthouse when her father has to go to town and is kept away for weeks because of a storm. Children will find her heroic efforts fascinating and will get caught up in her tactics to survive and keep her family well. It is a timeless tale which will appeal to various ages.

☞ Related Reading: *Abbie Against the Storm* (variant); *Birdie's Lighthouse* (lighthouses)

Stolz, Mary. *Belling the Tiger* (illus. Beni Montresor). New York: Harper & Row, 1989. ISBN 0060258632.

This Newbery Honor is a new version of the tale, "Belling the Cat". Two tiny mice are selected to bell the house cat but their adventures bring them to a foreign land where they actually bell a tiger. The story has excellent appeal for young children.

☞ Related Reading: *The Peacock's Pride*

White, E.B. *Charlotte's Web* (illus. Garth Williams). New York: Scholastic, 1952. ISBN 0070707251.

This is a very popular animal fantasy in which Wilbur, the pig, develops a unique friendship with Charlotte, the spider. The spider uses a clever plan that makes Wilbur famous and at the same time saves him from death. Charlotte's Web is available in a special read-along edition for younger children, with larger print and illustrations.

☞ Related Reading: *Charlotte's Web: Special Read Along Edition*, *The Sheep-Pig*, *Ace: The Very Important Pig* (animal fantasy)

Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House in the Big Woods* (illus. Garth Williams). New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1953. ISBN 0064400018.

This first book in the eight-book series about the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder is as interesting to present-day children as it was to those in 1932 when it was first published. It is a story of pioneer struggles and family love, adding humour and historical information to enrich our students' lives. Reading this first book will inspire children to search out the others to continue reading about Laura's adventures.

☞ Related Reading: *Little House on the Prairie*, *Little Town on the Prairie*, *The Long Winter*, *On The Banks of Plum Creek* (sequels)