



The Reading Chair

***Sleepy Places*, by Judy Hindley. Illus. by Tor Freeman. 2006. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick. 32 pp. ISBN 0-7636-2983-9. Ages 1 to 5.**

Bedtime has never been so enticing. The humorous text surveys the sleep habitats of animals and children by employing ear-pleasing alliteration and rhyme. “[A] rose makes a bed for a bee,” the author writes. “A fish may dream in the reeds of a stream.” Freeman’s dreamy watercolor and pencil illustrations marry perfectly with the text. All creatures sleep right where they should. Humans look silly “snoozing in the ooze of a pond” like a frog or hanging upside down like a bat. Where do children sleep? In their own beds, of course. Well, these children prefer to cuddle in their big sister’s bed. Charming and lovely.



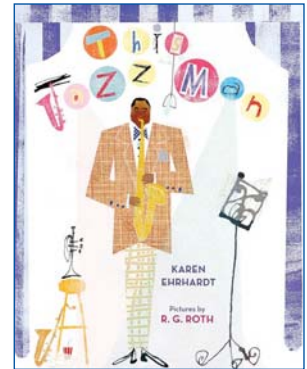
***This Jazz Man*, by Karen Ehrhardt. Illus. by R.G. Roth. 2006. New York: Harcourt. 32 pp. ISBN 0-15-205307-7. Ages 2 to 7.**

To the favorite tune of “This Old Man, He Played One,” meet nine of the world’s greatest jazz players. The book opens with Louis Armstrong and this author’s new lyrics: “This jazz man, he plays one / He plays rhythm

with his thumb / With a snap! snap! snazzy-snap! / Give the man a hand / This jazz man scats with the band.”

The rhythm, rhyme, and repetition in Ehrhardt’s song promote literacy and beg the reader to join in. The words and beat are simple enough for preschoolers, yet there is detail and complexity that will capture the attention of five- to seven-year-olds who may examine the book more closely.

The illustrations, mixed media collage, and print-making on watercolor paper make the book sing like the music itself. Ticket stubs and curtains on the opening pages and back cover increase the reader’s anticipation of the entertainment inside. One of the very best books of the year, it’s a sure winner for story hour.



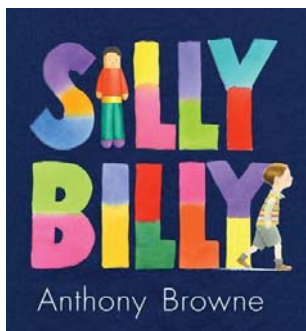
***Move!* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. 2006. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 32 pp. ISBN 0-618-64637-X. Ages 3 to 7.**

Jenkins and Page, the husband-and-wife team who brought us the Caldecott Honor book

What Do You Do with a Tail Like This? combine striking collage art with bare bones text in this compelling new book about animals on the go. Deceptively simple, *Move!* is a smooth-flowing, dynamic guessing game about the interconnectedness of animals. With colorful cut and torn paper illustrations set against a plain white background and with one verb highlighted on each double-page spread (swing, dance, leap, float, slide, waddle), children will have no difficulty keeping their focus. Vivid illustrations and an animal glossary allow for easy follow-up discussion, and the text design makes this book an inviting literacy booster. After children examine the large, bold words on the page, ask them to act out each movement.

Isabel Baker, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of preschool children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children’s librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.

Chair illustration by Diane Greenseid.



***Silly Billy*, by Anthony Browne. 2006. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick. 32 pp. ISBN 0-7445-7017-4. Ages 3 to 7.**

Guatemalan worry dolls have long been given to young children to ease their cares, and they're just the trick for Billy. In this beautiful multicultural book about childhood

anxieties, Billy's grandmother offers him a set of worry dolls to take away his nighttime fears. All goes well until Billy worries that he has given the dolls too much to worry about. Browne skillfully captures the gloom of Billy's dark room at night on one page and the warm reassurance his grandmother offers him on the next page. A humorous book about a loving family, it offers creative ways in which children manage fears.

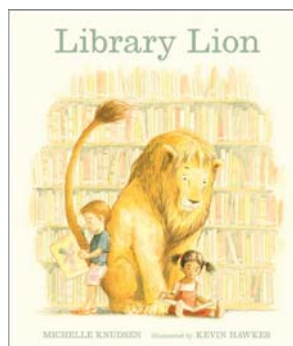
***Library Lion*, by Michelle Knudsen. Illus. by Kevin Hawkes. 2006. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick. 48 pp. ISBN 076362262-1. Ages 5+.**

Libraries, where everyone is welcome and books are free, are one of our country's greatest assets. In this book, the librarian even welcomes a lion who

walks in off the street for story hour. He may stay, as long as he follows the rules: no roaring, for example. But how will he call for help, without getting kicked out, when the librarian injures herself?

Hawkes' acrylic and pencil illustrations convey the magic of libraries and children's love of fantasy. And with a keen understanding of children's sensibilities, Knudsen's text—well written with no wasted words—is never sentimental. Instead, the story has gripping tension and deals with a rich subject: the importance

of rules and knowing when to break them. This plot—both outrageous and totally believable, like *The Carrot Seed*—recalls a simpler era when children's schedules were not as full and trips to the library were a regular yet special event. Don't miss this one!



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