The One and Only Ivan
by Katherine Applegate


Annotation:
Ivan, a silverback gorilla who resides in a rundown mall circus, finds a way, through his painting, to provide a better home at a large zoo for he and his animal friends.

Book Talk:
Ivan, a silverback gorilla who lives at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade, never thinks about life in the jungle. He is quite content to spend his days watching TV, thinking about art, and talking to his friends Stella, an elderly elephant, and Bob, a stray dog. But life at the mall is not always easy. Not a lot of people come to see the rundown circus anymore and money is tight. The owner, Mack, is not always the kindest caretaker and sometimes scrimps on the animal’s care. Ivan and his friends have adjusted to this life but when a new baby elephant, Ruby, comes to the mall, all of the animals want to provide a better life for her. Through Ivan’s paintings, he finds an unexpected opportunity to move Ruby and himself to a better home, a large zoo where they both are reunited with the jungle and become members of new families of their own kind.

Reviews:
Kirkus 09/28/2011
School Library Journal 03/7/2012

Author Website:
http://theoneandonlyivan.com

Other Books by Katherine Applegate:
The Buffalo Storm – December 2008
Home of the Brave – July 2009
Little Dog, Lost
by Bauer, Marion Dane


Annotation:
Written in verse, Little Dog, Lost is a story of a boy, a dog and a small town in need of a dog park. It is also a story of loss, heartbreak, determination and love between people and animals.

Book Talk:
Mark is a boy who needs a dog but can't get his mom on board with his plan. Buddy is a dog who needs a boy. Buddy has an owner but not one who understands the kind of love and care a dog needs. Mr. LaRue is a neighbor who needs a community. He's alone in his huge old house – and everyone needs more than that. Over the course of a summer thunderstorm and a chaotic town council meeting, these three characters cross paths and come together in a tale ripe with emotions that resolves with love, understanding, and a sense of belonging – plus a place to play a game of fetch!

Reviews:
Publisher's Weekly April 2, 2012
Kirkus
Booklist

Author's Website:
www.mariondanebauer.com (Site has discussion questions, reader's theater and a book trailer video)

Other books by Marion Dane Bauer:
On My Honor
Ghost Eye
Runt
Touch the Moon
Freaky Fast Frankie Joe  
by Lutricia Clifton


**Annotation:**
Frankie Joes is a twelve-year-old boy who has been uprooted from his home in Texas and taken to his with his father in Illinois where he has to learn to be part of a family and where he learns to use his strong work ethic to start a small, but successful business.

**Book Talk:**
Frankie Joe is a twelve-year-old boy who has had to grow up faster than most boys.  His mother is hardly around at all and he mostly takes care of himself while some friends in his trailer-park neighborhood watch over him.

When Frankie Joe’s mother lands in jail, the absent father suddenly shows up to take Frankie Joe into custody and be the father that he hasn’t been for years.  The catch is that his father has a whole different life complete with a wife and four sons.  Frankie is quickly uprooted from his home in Laredo, Texas and taken to Clearview, Illinois.

While there, Frankie Joe finds out what a parent is supposed to act like and suddenly he has rules and people that are concerned for his welfare.  Considering Frankie Joe is used to being on his own, this is a change that he doesn’t like at all.  He also has to contend with his four half-brothers who are bullied by the oldest brother.

When Frankie Joe first gets to Illinois, he is put back into a lower grade because of the amount of school he has missed while living with his mother.  The other kids call him names because of his oldest brother and he is not happy at all.  The only bright spot in the whole situation is a girl who befriends Frankie Joe and encourages him to become a better person.

After taking some time and trying to deal with his new lifestyle, Frankie Joe decides this new life is not for him and he is going back home to Texas where he belongs with his neighbors who need him and where his mother will need him once she gets out of jail.  He devises a plan to earn money by delivering pizza on his bike and is determined to make it back home before winter hits.  His plan becomes a failure when he is betrayed yet again by his mother who gives full custody over to his father.  His shock and hurt put Frankie Joe into a deep depression that the reader will wonder if Frankie Joe can overcome.

**Reviews:**
*Children’s Literature Reviews*  
*Kirkus Reviews*  
*School Library Journal*

**Websites:**
http://www.lutricia-lois-clifton.com/ (author website)
Awards and Nominations:
2012 Friends of American Writers Juvenile Fiction Award
2013 ALSC Notable Children's Book
2013 IRA-CBC Children's Choice Award
2013-2014 South Carolina's Children's Book Award Master List
2013-2014 Nebraska's The Golden Sower Intermediate Award Master List
2013 Chicago Public Library's Best of the Best Books for Great Kids
2013-2014 Texas Bluebonnet Award Master List
2013 Bank Street College's Best Children's Book of the Year Award
2014-2015 Missouri's Mark Twain Readers Award Master List
2014-2015 Kansas's William Allen White Award Master List

Other Books by Author:
Immortal Max

Related Books:
Flying the Dragon by Natalie Dias Lorenzi
Tua and the Elephant by H.P. Harris
The Humming Room by Ellen Potter

Annotations:
Daniels’s third grade class raises baby chicks for a class project. He gets to take five chickens home for the summer and is surprised when one of them turns out to be a rooster.

Book Talk:
When Daniel's class hatches chicks as a science project, he begs his parents to let him adopt them. Daniel’s parents finally give in, and then he finds out that his favorite bird, Peepers, isn’t a hen but a rooster, and therefore is illegal to keep in the city of Portland. That is when the *Secret Chicken Society* is formed to help save Peepers. Find out how Daniel and the *Secret Chicken Society* work together to help save the chickens.

Other books by Judy Cox:
Don’t Be Silly, Mrs. Millie
Ukulele Hayley
Carmen Learns English
Happy Birthday, Mrs. Millie
Puppy Power
Snow Day for Mouse
Haunted House, Haunted Mouse

Winner:
Oregon Spirit Award
Best of the Best – Chicago Public Library
Double Dog Dare
by Lisa Graff


Annotation:
Francine and Kansas find themselves in a dare war. The winner will be the news anchor for the Media Club at Auden Elementary. Boy against girl, enemies at first, but they have more in common than just the dares.

Booktalk:
Would you take part in a dare war? That’s exactly what Francine and Kansas did, when both were interested in being named the news anchor for their schools Media Club. The dares started out simple, lick a lizard and hang from the monkey bars to dye your hair green and wear a tutu to school, but as the competition continued, and the dares became more challenging they seem to have a different creator. But school isn’t the only challenge for both these students, their families are changing and that takes more patience and understanding than each thought possible. Francine and Kansas juggle wanting to be news anchor and wanting their families to be as they once were.

Reviews:
Booklist 03/15/2012
Kirkus Reviews 03/01/2012
Library Media Connection 10/2012
Publisher’s Weekly 2/13/2012
School Library Journal 04/2012

Author Website:
www.lisagraff.com includes a bio, notes about other books, contact information and information about school visits.

Book Trailer:
http://youtu.be/DUY5IZNPAHI

Other Books by Lisa Graff:
A Tangle of Knots
Sophie Simon Solves Them All
The Life and Crimes of Bernetta Wallflower
The Thing About Georgie
Umbrella Summer
Related Books:
*Stand Tall* by Joan Bauer
*Dear Mr. Henshaw* by Beverly Cleary

Awards and Honors for *Double Dog Dare*:
- Louisiana Young Readers’ Choice Award 2015
- Rhode Island Children’s Book Award 2014
- South Carolina Children's Book Award 2013-2014
- Sunshine State Young Readers Award (Florida) 2013-2014

**Annotation:**
Seventh grader Tucker McBean loves comic books. When a contest to create a new sidekick is announced, Tucker aims to win it with his creation of Beanboy, in order to make life for his struggling family easier.

**Booktalk:**
Tucker McBean loves comics. When his favorite comic puts out a call for the creation of a sidekick, with a college scholarship as the reward, Tucker creates Beanboy. Beanboy’s farts give him the power to fly. Imagine what else Tucker will enable Beanboy to do in order to win the contest to create his favorite hero’s sidekick.

**Reviews:**
*School Library Journal* February 2012
*Publishers Weekly* 1/2/2012
*Booklist* 3/1/2012

**Author Website:**
http://www.ldharkrader.com

**Related Books:**


Wigt, Eric. *Frankie Pickle Series*

**Annotation:**
Omar convinces his parents to let him have a pet snake; however his mom is not too keen on the idea. The snake escapes and Omar has to catch Arrow before his parents find out.

**Booktalk:**
Omar convinces his parents to let him have a corn snake and while his mom is not too keen on the idea she agrees as long as she doesn’t have to see the snake. Everything is going well until Arrow escapes and Omar has to capture him before his parents find out. However with a nosy little sister and watchful parents it’s not an easy secret to keep. As Omar searches for Arrow he learns why his mom is so afraid of snakes in this multicultural tale of family and friends.

**Reviews:**
*Booklist* 11/2012
*Kirkus Reviews* 8/2012
*School Library Journal* 10/2012

**Author Website:**

**Related Books:**
Fiction:

Nonfiction:
The Sinister Sweetness of Splendid Academy
    by Nikki Loftin


Annotation:
    Lorelei Robinson is an eleven year-old girl whose life has been turned upside down by her mother’s passing, her father’s new marriage, and the arrival of a new school in the neighborhood where the teachers don’t seem to care much about homework or learning, just that the students eat as much as possible.

Book Talk:
    Lorelei Robinson is an eleven year-old girl whose mother had recently passed away.  She has a new stepmother who doesn’t seem to like her or her brother much and Lorelei is tired of her father constantly getting onto her for her treatment toward her stepmother.
    Lorelei goes on a day trip with her family and sees some construction going on in her neighborhood.  Upon her return, there is a brand-new school that no one else but her seems to question.
    Suddenly, after Lorelei’s old school burns down, she finds herself at the new school that is called Splendid Academy where there is wonderful, gourmet food, candy on every desk, and teachers encourage the children to eat as much as possible.  Lorelei’s teacher, Ms. Morrigan, is beautiful and they don’t even have to do homework and have very few rules.  The school is too good to be true and that is exactly what has Lorelei and her new friend, Andrew, think.  They begin questioning what exactly is going on at Splendid Academy.
    After refusing to eat the food several days in a row, Andrew mysteriously disappears and Lorelei is extremely worried and determined to get to the bottom of whatever is the real objective of the school.
    Craving the attention of a mother, Lorelei starts to confide in Principal Trapp who seems like a motherly type, but Lorelei is soon warned away from Trapp from a kitchen worker who swears Trapp is indeed an evil person.  Lorelei doesn’t want to believe it, but after she quits eating and is forced to work in the kitchen, she begins to see what really goes on at Splendid Academy.

Reviews:
    Publisher’s Weekly
    Kirkus Reviews

Websites:
    http://www.bookpeople.com/event/nikki-loftin-sinister-sweetness-splendid-academy
    (Author website)
    http://splendidacademy.com/ (website dedicated to the Splendid Academy School)
    http://nikkiloftin.com/awards-and-publications/
Awards and Nominations:
Writer’s League of Texas 2013 Book Award for MG/YA fiction — Winner

Other Books by Author:
None

Related Books:
Remarkable by Lizzy K. Foley
Bliss by Kathryn Littlewood
The Power of Poppy Pendle by Natasha Lowe

**Annotation:**
Stranded in a Washington D.C. airport, Anna, Jose, and Henry try and uncover the mystery of the stolen giant sized American flag.

**Booktalk:**
Three kids, Anna, Jose’, and Henry are snowed in a Washington D.C. airport and find out their families are members of a super, secret organization that protects ancient artifacts. When the news is broadcast that the famous flag that inspired “The Star-Spangled Banner” has been stolen, Anna believes the thieves are stranded at the same airport and organizes her new friends to do what the police and FBI can’t -- solve the mystery and take back a national treasure and bring the dangerous thieves to justice!

**Website:**

**Other Books by Kate Messner:**
Sugar and Ice
The Brilliant Fall of Gianna Z.
Eye of the Storm
Capture the Flag (A Silver Jaguar Societies Mystery)
Hide and Seek (A Silver Jaguar Societies Mystery)
Manhunt (A Silver Jaguar Societies Mystery)
Wake Up Miss

**Awards:**
Parents Choice Award

**Annotation:**
Irene Pepperberg walks into a pet store and buys an African grey parrot for her Avian Learning Experiment. Alex the parrot surprises everyone with his ability to learn simple and complex concepts.

**Booktalk:**
A - Avian  
L - Learning  
EX – Experiment  
Irene Pepperberg, a graduate student at Perdue University, walks into a pet store in 1977 and buys an African Grey parrot for her Avian Learning Experiment. At that time in history most people believed animals had low intelligence. Irene and Alex were starting on a journey to disprove that belief. As with any experiment the beginning stages were slow but once Alex caught on he was a great student. However Alex could be very bossy and wanted to be obeyed. In fact, “no” became his favorite word. And when he got bored with the same questions being repeatedly asked he would purposely answer them wrong. Alex became famous and was in the news, even making television appearances. Alex and Irene had a very special relationship and were together for 30 years before his passing in 2007. Read *Alex the Parrot* to learn more about Alex’s history-making adventure with Irene.

**Reviews:**
*Booklist* 10/2012  
*Kirkus Reviews* 9/2012  
*Publisher’s Weekly* 9/2012  
*School Library Journal* 10/2012

**Websites:**
[https://www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) – search Alex the Parrot and you will find many videos of this amazing animal.

**Related Books:**

Sailing to Freedom
by Martha Bennett Stiles


Annotation:
Twelve-year-old Ray discovers a secret on board his uncle’s schooner in the early 1800’s. While trying to keep his pet monkey out of trouble, Ray must decide whether or not to help keep the secret of transporting a fugitive slave who just happens to be a baby to the free north.

Book Talk:
Ray Ingle wants to go to sea more than anything but his father says he has to wait until he is older. But when circumstances bring about the opportunity for 12-year-old Ray to go to sea he doesn’t hesitate. Surprisingly Ray, along with his pet monkey, is allowed to join the crew of his Uncle Thad’s ship The Newburyport Beauty as a cook’s assistant. Ray soon discovers that there is a secret aboard the ship hidden in the pantry. It’s 1839 and Ray lives in the north in Newburyport, MA. Uncle Thad’s ship often goes to the south transporting goods. In alternating chapters the author tells the story of a mother and son escaping slave owners, following the Underground Railroad to Canada and to freedom. How are the two stories connected? Will Ray keep the secret or spill the beans? Will the monkey help or hinder? Find out read Sailing to Freedom by Martha Bennett Stiles.

Reviews:
School Library Journal 08/01/2012
Kirkus 07/03/2012

Author’s webpage:
http://www.marthabennettstiles.com/

Book trailer:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V88Ri0uWd7g

Other books by author:
One Among the Indians 2006
Lonesome Road 1998
Island Magic 1999

Related books:
Night Boat to Freedom by Margot Theis Raven 2008
The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom by Bettye Stroud 2007
January’s Sparrow by Patricia Polacco 2009

Annotations:
After recovering from polio twelve year old Nick returns home and with a brace on one leg, Nick takes a job with the team for which his father is catcher and he gets to see the great pitcher Satchel Page play during the 1935 baseball season.

Book Talk:
Nick was going to be a baseball star; everyone who had seen him play always talked about his golden arm. Then, Nick is stricken with polio, a disease that killed thousands of people in the 1930’s. Nick is in the hospital for almost a year and when he finally gets out of the hospital he doesn’t know how to go back to being a regular kid. He also doesn’t know how he’s ever going to play baseball again with an iron brace on his leg. When he gets back home he doesn’t know what to do with himself and he wonders if it will ever be possible for him to play baseball again. Then one day he meets Satchel Paige, who is also a star baseball player but has adversities of his own to overcome – the color of his skin. Black baseball players in the 1930’s were not given the same opportunities as white baseball players. Read King of the Mound: My Summer with Satchel Paige by Wes Tooke and find out what these two unlikely baseball players have in common and how they encourage each other to never give up.

Website:
http://site.westooke.com/Home.html
Brothers at Bat
by Audrey Vernick


Annotation:
The Acerra brothers were the longest playing all-brother baseball team ever, hitting homers, overcoming game changing injuries, fighting in World War II, playing in the minor leagues; these brothers did it all, together.

Book Talk:
Twelve baseball-playing brothers. Enough to field an entire team. Enough brothers to have one on the high school baseball team twenty-two years in a row! Enough brothers to form their own semi-pro team. Enough notoriety to draw big crowds to games all across the Northeast. Enough courage to go to war when Uncle Sam called their name. Enough luck to all make it home safely. Read *Brothers at Bat* to find out what it’s like to have enough brothers to have your very own baseball team.

Reviews:
*School Library Journal* 4/2012
*Horn Book* March/April 2012
*Publishers Weekly* 2/6/2012
*Kirkus Reviews* 2/2012

Author website:
www.audreyvernick.com
The author website includes a discussion guide of *Brothers at Bat* and a link to a primary source video of the team playing a baseball game.

Related Books:

Kizzy Ann Stamps
by Jeri Watts


Annotation:
July 1, 1963. Kizzy Ann Stamps is getting ready to start a new *integrated* school and she’s really nervous. She’s nervous about how the white teachers and students will treat her. What will they say about the big scar running down the side of her face? One thing she is sure about and that is her best friend Shag, her devoted dog. Kizzy Ann Stamps learns a lot about people and how sometimes the color of your skin doesn’t matter, but what’s on the inside of a person is what is important.

Book talk:
Kizzy Ann Stamps is an African American child living in the south in the early 1960’s. All she has ever known is segregation. She was used to *whites only* signs everywhere she went and even though she didn’t think it was always fair, it was what she knew and what she expected.

At the end of the school year, Kizzy Ann learns that integration has come to her town and in the fall when she starts back to school, her school that is all black children will be closed and all of the students will be transferred to the *white* school. Kizzy Ann is very nervous about this change. Her teacher, Miss Anderson, knows the Kizzy Ann loves to write, so she encourages Kizzy Ann to write letters over the summer to her new teacher to help with the transition into the new school. Kizzy Ann thinks this is a good idea and can’t wait to get started.

Writing letters becomes a way for Kizzy Ann to express concerns about life, about her older brother and his behavior, her best friend Shag, who is the smartest Border Collie in the county, and about how she got the scar on her face and how looking different has affected her.

Read the heart-warming novel *Kizzy Ann Stamps* by Jeri Watts to find out more about the adventures that Kizzy Ann experiences that summer and fall of 1964, how she gets used to going to school with white teachers and students, and how Shag helps her make new friends.

Reviews:
http://www.parents-choice.org

About the author:
http://www.candlewick.com/authill.asp?b=Author&m=bio&id=3732&pix=y