

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

—Isaiah 41.10

Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek: A Tall, Thin Tale (Introducing His Forgotten Frontier Friend). Deborah Hopkinson. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2008.

In 1816, in Knob Creek, Kentucky, seven-year-old Abe Lincoln falls into a creek and is rescued by his best friend, Austin Gollaher.

Across the Alley. Richard Michelson. New York: Putnam, 2006.

Jewish Abe’s grandfather wants him to be a violinist while African-American Wille’s father plans for him to be a great baseball pitcher, but it turns out that the two boys are more talented when they switch hobbies.

The Berenstain Bears and the Gift of Courage. Jan Berenstain; Mike Berenstain. Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderkidz, 2010.

Through the story of David and Goliath, Brother and Sister Bear learn that they can stand up to bullies and be as brave as David, because God is with them just as he was with David.

Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia. Jeanette Winter. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2010.

After amassing piles of books, Luis, a voracious reader, dreams up a way to share his collection with “faraway villages.”

The Boy Who Painted Dragons. Demi. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2007.

Ping, a painter of dragons—of which he is secretly afraid—is challenged to seek the truth, find the truth, and dare to be true.

The Bravest of the Brave. Shutta Crum. New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2005.

A fearless little skunk sets off through the woods alone at night encountering scary creatures, which the reader can correctly identify as various forest animals.

The Eensy Weensy Spider Freaks Out! (Big Time). Troy Cummings. New York: Random House, 2010.

Frightened after the scary waterspout incident, the Eensy Weensy Spider needs some encouragement from her friend the ladybug before she will try climbing again.

Finn McCool and the Great Fish. Eve Bunting. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2010.

Irish giant Finn McCool is told that in order to become wise he must catch and eat the salmon that possesses knowledge, but Finn finds that he cannot bring himself to kill the miraculous fish.

Four Feet, Two Sandals. Karen Lynn Williams. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2007.

Two young Afghani girls living in a refugee camp in Pakistan share a precious pair of sandals brought by relief workers. Includes the author's note about refugees.

The Girl on the High-Diving Horse. Linda Oatman High. New York: Penguin Group, 2005.

Eight-year-old Ivy Cordelia spends the summer of 1936 in Atlantic City with her photographer father and dreams of being the girl who perches on a horse as it dives into a tank of water.

The Giant Surprise: a Narnia Story. Hiawyn Oram. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.

In the land of Narnia, Puddleglum the Marsh-wiggle and his niece Lally try to outwit the giants who capture their two mice friends for a mice pie.

Good Enough to Eat. Brock Cole. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2007.

When an Ogre comes to town demanding a bride, the mayor chooses the homeless girl with no name that everyone thinks is a pest, but she finds a way to outwit them all.

Goyangi Means Cat. Christine McDonnell. New York: Viking Children's Books, 2011.

An understanding cat helps a young Korean girl adjust to her new home in America.

Jenny's Moonlight Adventure. Ester Holden Averill. New York: New York Review of Books, Inc., 2006.

On Halloween night when Madame Butterfly slips down the drainpipe, hurts her paw, and loses her nose flute, Jenny bravely volunteers to return her friend's beloved flute, even at the risk of being captured by dogs.

Library Mouse: A World to Explore. Daniel Kirk. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2010.

When Sarah, an explorer mouse, meets Sam she gives him the courage to finally climb to the highest library shelves—and beyond—and he shows her how to explore the world through reading.

Lizzie Nonsense. Jan Ormerod. New York: Clarion Books, 2005.

Her mother calls it nonsense when Lizzie pretends that their house is pretty or that a bath is the sea, but it turns out that imagination runs in the family.

Marley's Treasure. Gable Yerrid. New York: Yorkville Press, 2007.

Marley finds a bunch of "the most beautiful golden bananas." Marley is a little monkey.

My Name is not Isabella. Jennifer Fosberry. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2010.

From breakfast to bedtime, a young girl imagines being different women who made history, and ends the day empowered to be herself.

My Name is Sangoel. Karen Lynn Williams. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009.

As a refugee from Sudan to the United States, Sangoel is frustrated that no one can pronounce his name correctly until he finds a clever way to solve the problem.

No Easy Way: The Story of Ted Williams and the Last .400 Season. Fred Bowen. New York, NY: Dutton Children's Books, 2010.

Ted Williams hit .406 for the season in 1941—a feat not matched since. In this inspirational picture book, authentic sports writing and rich, classic illustrations bring to life the truly spectacular story of the Red Sox legend, whose hard work and perseverance make him the perfect role model for baseball enthusiasts of all ages.

Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival. Kirby Larson. New York: Walker, 2008.

Bobbi and Bob Cat are the best of friends. When their hometown of New Orleans was struck by Hurricane Katrina, many lost everything. But not Bobbi and Bob Cat—they still had each other. Only by staying together could they survive. This is the story of their remarkable friendship.

“For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”

—Hebrews 13:5-6