



Children's Literature Gems: Choosing and Using Them in Your Library Career

Betsy Bird

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Master the huge array of quality children's books from the past and the present with this must-have resource from children's librarian Elizabeth Bird. With her strong passion for children's books and the profession, Bird will help you: build and manage your children's collection; strike a balance between award winners and classics; arrange your space to best showcase and display books; review the basics of storytime, storytelling, and booktalking; and, add the 100 children's books that belong in every library. "Children's Literature Gems" is about managing and caring for a part of the library devoted to children who love good books and is a must for every children's librarian - new or experienced!

Children's Literature Gems: Choosing and Using Them in Your Library Career Details

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Author : Betsy Bird

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From Reader Review Children's Literature Gems: Choosing and Using Them in Your Library Career for online ebook

Lisa says

(Non-Fiction, Library Science) As an academic librarian, who selects some children's titles for our juvenile collection, I thought this book would be a quick skim, but I was wrong. Bird's writing style is delightful and conversational, which instantly drew me in. After just reading the intro, I subscribed to her blog. I loved the booklists, the advice for finding good children's books, and the question/answer portions from other children's librarians. Although I may never be a children's librarian, this book inspired me to look for ways to continuously be on the lookout for learning experiences and community. I loved this line: "Every time you leave your house, you leave yourself wide open to potential children's literary experiences."

Yukari says

I am a fan of Betsy Bird's blog and when I learned she wrote a book for librarians, I knew I had to get it.

As a newbie elementary librarian I found this book extremely useful. I have no formal training in librarianship or children literature; I've basically been "winging" it for the last 7 months solely on my love of kidlit and what I've picked up from working with kids in the past. Unlike other (thick) children's literature textbooks I've tried to read, *Children's Literature Gems* was easy to digest and packed with the basics I need to think about for my little library.

However, I can see that this book may not be as useful for experienced librarians who are already knowledgeable about booktalking, balancing classics vs. new books, etc.

But I do feel that even veteran librarians can gain something from this book. Betsy includes new kids' books in her suggestions and she talks fairly extensively about blogging and graphic novels, both topics I'm quite interested in.

My one real qualm with this book is its price. I bought mine on amazon for \$36 (suggested list price is \$45); it's a 125-page paperback book. A bit pricey, no?

Madigan Mirza says

I finally got my hands on a copy of librarian blogger Betsy Bird's first book. Her primer on children's literature is geared for library school students or first year librarians. Experienced librarians will probably find themselves nodding their heads in recognition of many of the reference scenarios that Bird describes.

I had expected that the book would have Bird's trademark relaxed, sometimes silly, always rambling style, but she (or her editors) really reigned things in for this short monograph. The normally verbose Bird weighs in at only 108 pages, along with a few booklists and an index. The slim paperback edition is priced at a hefty \$45. Library school students overwhelmed with plenty of lengthy reading assignments and accustomed to paying high prices for textbooks probably won't mind. For the most part, Bird adopts a more sedate tone but

she does let her own ad hoc patois slip through here and there, for example; when describing Tana Hoban's *White on Black* she explains, "Clear, contrasting tones are particularly good for babies vision and it doesn't get much contrastier than black and white." (Emphasis my own.)

Mainly, Bird advocates maintaining a healthy balance between classic children's literature and brand new items. She also covers such basics as the importance of the Newbery and Caldecott awards. I was tickled to see that she highlighted a couple of my own favorite lesser-known favorites to booktalk such as *A Drowned Maiden's Hair* by Laura Amy Schlitz, *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story of Brain Science* by John Fleischman, and *The Chicken Chasing Queen of Lamar County* by Janice H. Harrington, illustrated by Shelley Jackson.

With an influx of new children's books being released every spring and fall, this book is sure to be dated in another few years. But, for the moment, this is just the thing for anyone wanting a quick, readable guide to children's librarianship.

Laura says

I wish I had read more books like this when I was in library school -- a quick, easy to read guide on children's literature. Bird provides lists of must-haves broken down by age. She also walks through what new children's librarians need to know about collection development, readers' advisory, and using your space wisely. This is the kind of book that's helpful to pick up periodically to check in on your practice and to evaluate next steps.

I'm an elementary school media specialist and I feel that, while my practice is certainly much larger than the roles Bird describes, she gives a thorough and accurate description of the librarian (vs. teacher or administration) part of my job.

Hilary says

I have not read this book. :)

I have just read this author's review of *Bink and Gollie* which I just finished and which I loved. Not as much as *Mercy Watson*, but almost. I did like the pictures more. This is saying a lot. I lllloooovve *Mercy Watson*.

Elizabeth Bird is a children's librarian extraordinaire and she wrote this book *Children's Literature Gems* that I am recommending because although her review of *Bink and Gollie* was a tad overly long (*totally* understandable), she was generally so fantastic that it made me wonder why she isn't a children's author.

Then, get this-she's going to be one this year.

I don't know why I get up in the morning! I should just call Elizabeth up and say, "Oh, hi! Yeah, it's me Hilary! By the way, could you go and be me today? Okay, just like yesterday then? Thanks! Bye!"

She's that good.

I could take the day off and nap, or work on my art project, or contemplate my existence. Just read the reviews she's written and then you'll say to yourself, "Oh, *that's* what she meant!" and immediately subscribe to her blog, buy her book, and want to be her best friend! I know because that's what I did. :)

Monica Edinger says

Since a good friend wrote this I'm totally prejudiced and so I'm staying away from the stars. What struck me reading this is something I often forget --- I'm NOT a librarian. I'm a teacher, but read copiously in this world of children's books, review, etc. etc. Reading Betsy's book reminded me of some details that make the world of a children's librarian different from that of a teacher. And so this is a book that was written for a librarian audience and succeeds very much so for that audience. Betsy offers specific titles for specific ages, children, situations, and more. I would imagine it to be a superb title for newbie librarians, those teaching would-be librarians, and those who want to be quickly and expeditiously brought up-to-date on the best of recent and oldie-but-goodie titles.

Deborah says

I picked up this book not because I'm a librarian, but because I am a huge fan of Elizabeth Bird's newsy and witty blog, Fuse #8. I always love to hear what she has to say about the world of children's literature and I respect her taste in books, so I was curious. What books would she put on a must-read list? How does she choose books, in general, for a library collection? What makes a book perfect for storytime? All of those questions and more are answered in this book, and make CHILDREN'S LITERATURE GEMS, for me (an author/illustrator), a valuable peek behind the library shelves.

Leslie says

I'm so sorry to say that I was disappointed in this promising book from kid lit rockstar Bird. It contains some fresh info on blogging and how to break into reviewing, but as a librarian, I yearned for MORE. Bird's list of "Great Read-Aloud Picture Books" contains only 8 titles. I was really looking for more meat here and at the \$45 price tag I expected more than 100 pages. But I guess I have come to expect that from ALA Editions. This said, I really enjoyed the boxed "interviews" with librarians. This would be an excellent title for a children's services class in an MLS program or someone starting as a children's librarian who has never been to library school.

Cynthia Buhler says

I would have preferred a hardcover coffee table tome, but this one was easier to read in the bathtub. Ms. Bird has an engaging, quirky writing style. It's no wonder that everyone in kidlit pays close attention to her likes and dislikes; her reviews are long, deep, and very entertaining. I give her 5 stars for her reviews in general. If she ever writes a children's book I'd be happy to illustrate it...and I don't do that for just anyone.

Lars Guthrie says

The only reason for four instead of five stars is because the book (as advertised) is geared toward librarians only and because Bird seems a bit more reserved than she is in other venues (like here on Goodreads and there at <http://blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/...>). But I did catch enough glimmers of her jaunty humor to keep me going, and as always, she kept me thinking about what I like in kid lit and what kids like and what parents and librarians like and how to mush all that together and have some fun at the same time. And as always, she got me adding books to my to-read list.

meg says

this slim edition is quite the little gem itself. i enjoy bird's writing on her blog, a fuse #8 production, and this book was no exception. there are some great insights into and tips on reviewing, booktalking, displays, storytimes, and (of course) blogging, peppered with some solid book lists. great stuff, well presented, i just wish there was more of it. even so, definitely on my wishlist of books to own.

Rochelle says

I wish there was an accurate page count in Kobo. (I only downloaded it through their reader to support my local book store.) I'm either 2% or 12% into the book depending on whether the tablet is held horizontally or vertically. Fantastic read so far. It's making me want to reread a few titles. That is after my current stack is depleted.

Finished! I try not to double up my reviews since I keep an account for the store I work at however I make an exception to that rule when the book is meant for adults or is truly brilliant. I highly recommend following the author's reviews here on goodreads or on her blog.

Anastasia Tuckness says

A great, concise book. Interesting (and reasonably-sized) booklists with annotations and inspiring words about everything from booktalking to reference interviews. So much more than I'd expected, I'd recommend it to any youth librarian and plan to reread it in the future.

Rochelle Sondae says

Loads of great ideas and book recommendations. I've enjoyed reading the author's reviews here on Goodreads and am beginning to explore her blog. I decided I had to read this in preparation for BEA 2013. I didn't finish it in time. I'm looking forward to her forthcoming picture book that I failed to snag at the show. Definite book overload at the show.

Rachelccameron says

This was a useful resource and a good introduction to Children's Librarianship. The author assumes that the reader is both knowledgeable and a librarian but that fact is easy to negotiate. The book pointed me towards several other good resources as well.
