

Maryann Cocca-Leffler – Brief Summaries

Written and Illustrated:

Bravery Soup

PB

Age range 3-7 years

Carlin is afraid of everything—even his own shadow! Then he meets Big Bear, the bravest animal in all the land, who tells him that there is a way to become brave. Alone, Carlin must make a perilous journey and bring back the secret ingredient for Big Bear's Bravery Soup. Scared but determined, Carlin sets off. He faces the dangers of the Forbidden Forest, Skulk Mountain, and the lair of a ferocious monster—only to find bravery in the most unexpected place. 32 pages

Bus Route to Boston

PB

Age range 5-8 years

Maryann grew up on a bus route near Boston. As a young girl, she remembers frequent Saturday bus trips, which traveled down her street, through crowded neighborhoods, over the bridge, then all the way into Boston. Maryann, her mother and sister went bargain hunting in Filene's Basement, enjoyed ice cream at Bailey's, shopped for vegetables at Haymarket and ventured into the Northend for pizza and cannoli. Through her story and paintings she has shared these warm childhood memories of Boston. BUS ROUTE TO BOSTON is a treasure for anyone who shares these memories, as well as children of all ages who love nostalgic family stories. 32 pages

Jack's Talent

HC

Age range 4-8 years

"You must be good at something," said Miss Lucinda. "Everyone has a special talent."

On the first day of school, Miss Lucinda asks the students to share their special talents. Francesca is a star soccer player, Matthew can catch huge fish with his grandpa, and Candace is an excellent artist. It seems that everyone has something to share. But Jack is worried. He doesn't have any talent at all . . . or so he thinks. 32 pages

Let it Fall

PB

Age range 3 + years

The leaves turn red, brown, and orange, then drift down from the trees. It is time to go apple picking and on hayrides at the county fair. Fall is finally here! With soft colored art, adorable children, and colorful outdoor scenes, LET IT FALL celebrates all the seasonal awe of autumn.

Let it Snow

PB

Age range 3 + years

From building snowmen to drinking hot chocolate by the fire's warm glow, LET IT SNOW celebrates wonders of winter! With softly-colored art, adorable children, and festive outdoor scenes, LET IT SNOW is the perfect wintry follow-up to LET IT FALL.

Mr. Tanen's Ties

HC/PB

Age range 5-8 years

The students of Lynnhurst Elementary love their principal, Mr. Tanen—and his ties! He has holiday ties, ties that light up and play music, and ties for rainy days. But Mr. Apple from the school office does not love Mr. Tanen's ties. He insists that Mr. Tanen wear only blue ties from now on. When Mr. Tanen calls in sick with "the blues," the humorless Mr. Apple substitutes. The students are miserable—until they give Mr. Apple a tie of his very own. 32 pages

Mr. Tanen's Tie Trouble

PB

Age range 5-8 years

Mr. Tanen and his ties are back! But now there's trouble. Mr. Tanen's school has run out of funds for the long-awaited playground. He needs to raise money—fast. But how? Then Mr. Tanen remembers the words of Mr. Apple, his boss, "I wish our bank account was as full as your tie closet." "That's it!" shouts Mr. Tanen. And the next day, the entire town is plastered with signs that read "Mr. Tanen's Tie Auction." 32 pages

My Dance Recital

PB

Age range 4-8 years

After months of preparation and rehearsals, it's finally time for the annual recital! This lively book captures all the fun and excitement of the big event— from hairstyles and makeup to pirouettes to the final bow. Ballet, tap and jazz, come alive with pull-tabs, wheels, lift-the-flaps, and pop-ups, all illustrated with Maryann Cocca-Leffler's gorgeous watercolor artwork. Young dancers (and dancers at heart) will enjoy every minute. 14 pages

Princess K.I.M. and the Lie That Grew Too Much

HC

Age range 4-9 years

Kim wants the kids at her new school to like her, so she tells a teeny, tiny, bitty lie. She says her name is really "K.I.M."— for "Katherine Isabella Marguerite"—and that she comes from a royal family! Pretty soon all the students know there is a princess in the school. Kim wears her golden tiara from dance class and a big fancy ring she won at the arcade. Her little

lie grows and grows. When a classmate invites her to a birthday party, Kim says she can't go because her grandmother is coming to visit. But she had told the kids her grandmother was a queen. Now they all want to meet the queen. Kim is in a real bind; her lie has grown too big and it's about ready to explode!
32 pages

Princess Kim and Too Much Truth HC Age range 4-9 years
Although she's always been called Princess at home, Kim is not a *real* princess, so she decides, "From now on, no matter what, I'm only going to tell the truth!" She tells her dad that the pancakes are rubbery and her grandma that her new necklace looks like the slimy rocks at the bottom of the fish tank. At school, she's just as honest...until she learns what too much truth can do.
32 pages

Rain Brings Frogs HC Age range 3 + years
Behind every cloud there is sun. Nate always sees the bright side of life. While others complain about rain, Nate is happy about the frogs that it brings. When you might think there is nothing to do, Nate is just happy to enjoy the view. Instead of wanting more, Nate is grateful for what he's got. Smile along with Nate as he enjoys all the good things life has to offer.
32 pages

Edgar Degas: Paintings That Dance PB Age range 5-9 years
Part of the SMART ABOUT ART SERIES - A fun Biography of French Impressionist artist, Edgar Degas. Especially written for children grades 2-5. Highlights his life and works in a fresh and exciting format. Over 20 of Degas' paintings & drawings are featured. Written by Kristin N. Cole.
32 pages

My Backpack PB Age range 4-8 years
When a boy discovers all the wonderful things he can fit in his backpack, he turns the household upside down. Written by Eve Bunting
32 pages

The Peanut-Free Cafe HC Age range 5-8 years
Simon loves peanut butter. To Simon peanut butter is essential. But then Grant, a new student, comes to school. Grant is allergic to peanut butter and can't sit near anyone eating it. Should the principal forbid peanut butter in the cafeteria? Simon is worried, but soon comes up with a clever idea. (A note from a pediatric allergist is included.) Written by Gloria Koster.
32 pages

Smart About the Fifty States PB Age range 7-10 years
The kids in Ms. Brandt's class create a special report on the United States of America, with each child doing research on ten states. There's a double-spread map of the whole U.S. and a page for every state jam-packed with trivia, interesting facts, handwritten captions, and jokes. At the end of the book is a map showing how the United States grew over time, a spread on the presidents and what states they hailed from, as well as a "bibliography" of books the kids used in their research. Written by a team of well-known author/artists, this 64-page Smart About History book is a great guide for kids. One of 6 authors and 6 illustrators.
64 pages

Smart About the Presidents PB Age range 5-8 years
Kids will love discovering the floor plan of the White House, a list of presidential perks, and lots of interesting info about all the presidents, from George Washington to Barack Obama. (Did you know he is the only president born in Hawaii?) Each page is jam-packed with trivia, fun facts, and information on the historical events of each presidency. One of 4 authors.
64 pages

Wanda's Roses PB Age range 4-8 years
This is a heartwarming story of a little girl with a big dream and great faith to go with it. Even when everyone in town tells Wanda that the scrawny bush she keeps nurturing is not going to produce any roses, she finds a way to make it happen. What really stands out here is Wanda's indomitable spirit and the concern and kindness everyone shows for her. Written by Pat Brisson.
32 pages

All Around Reading Books:

Calling All Cats PB Age range 3-6 years
Calling all cats! Time for a birthday party! But what happens when a dog shows up for the party, too? In this hilarious new tale, watch the cats and dog play with yarn, drink milk, and eat birthday cake. Friends really do come in all shapes and sizes!
32 pages

Dog Wash Day PB Age range 3-6 years

It's time to wash the dog! Have a splish-splashin' good time with simple words, pictures, and flash cards to make learning to read easy and fun! 32 pages

Ice Cold Birthday

PB

Age range 4-6 years

Colorful, cheerful illustrations accompany the story of a seven-year-old girl who considers herself unlucky until her winter birthday party is snowed out and she has a few lucky birthday surprises. A pleasant beginning reader about turning lemons into lemonade. 48 pages

Easy/Picture Readers:

Lots of Hearts

PB

Age range 3-6 years

A little girl painstakingly crafts Valentines for her mother and father, and when her cards mysteriously disappear, she tracks down the culprit and gets her own Valentine's treat, in a beginning reader complemented by 24 flash cards to help reading comprehension. 32 pages

Silly Willy

PB

Age range 3-6 years

Silly Willy, our eponymous hero, likes to get dressed in a topsy-turvy way--with gloves on his head, socks on his ears, and the rest of his clothes in the strangest places. Featuring extra-large type and primer easy sentences, this All Aboard Reading book includes 24 flash cards. 48 pages

Mary Casanova – Brief Summaries

Dog Watch Series:

Danger at Snow Hill

PB

Age range 8-12 years

Is it a dog? A wolf? Or maybe even a bear? Whatever it is, it's causing a lot of trouble in Pembroke -- scaring kids and getting into the garbage. Dog Watch is on the case, but it has to work fast. A new person in town has decided that all dogs should be on leashes or behind fences. If Kito and the gang can't find out who is behind the trouble, they could lose their precious freedom forever! 128 pages

Dog-Napped!

PB

Age range 8-12 years

With strange smells and spooky sightings, fall is not Kito's favorite time of year. It makes Kito nervous: Something bad is going to happen. At the fire hydrant his fears are confirmed. Missy and Muffin are missing! No one's seen them for days. They may have just wandered off, but Kito doesn't believe it. When four puppies also disappear, Kito is sure they've been dog-napped! Kito, Chester, and the rest of the Dog Watch team set out to find the dog-napper and rescue their friends -- before it's too late! 144 pages

Extreme Stunt Dogs

PB

Age range 8-12 years

Canine celebrities - or dogs in trouble? When a super-size truck carrying the stars of *Hollywood's Amazing Extreme Stunt Dogs* shows up in Pembroke, Kito thinks there's something really weird about the owner. Can the Dog Watch gang figure out whether the dogs are truly amazing - or in a truckload of danger - before it's too late? 144 pages

To Catch a Burglar

PB

Age range 8-12 years

A thief has struck Pembroke! Dog Watch is on the case, but they're running out of clues. Kito and the gang set a trap, but when it goes awry, they realize they're dealing with a professional. So Kito and Chester try again, putting their own home at risk. This time, it has got to work! 144 pages

Trouble in Pembroke

PB

Age range 8-12 years

A ripped down sign, a broken fire hydrant, and now Tundra, the alpha dog of Pembroke, is missing! There's trouble brewing in this quiet Minnesota town, and none of the humans seem to notice. But the dogs do! They can smell it in the air. So the dogs of Pembroke -- Kito, Chester, and the rest of the gang -- form Dog Watch, a canine version of Neighborhood Watch. Together, they set out to uncover the person (or animal) behind the vandalism in town and to find Tundra. Hopefully they're not too late! 128 pages

The Turtle Hatching Mystery

PB

Age range 8-12 years

When Kito, Chester, and Schmittie go on a Mexican vacation with their owners, they plan on relaxing on the quiet beach. But when the sea turtle nests are disturbed and the eggs are stolen, the dogs use their Dog Watch skills and team up with village dogs to find out who is threatening the future of the gentle sea turtles. 144 pages

Picture Books:

The Day Dirk Yeller Came to Town HC Age range 4-8 years

The day Dirk Yeller came to town, the wind curled its lip, cattle quit lowin', and tumbleweeds stopped tumblin' along. Townsfolk whispered. "He starts stampedes!" "He holds up trains!" "He's trouble!" When Dirk Yeller scours the town for something to stop his itchin' and twitchin' and jumpin' and rattlin', no one seems able to help. But Sam, who's been following Dirk all day—and who can sometimes be a little fidgety, too—knows the perfect solution... 40 pages

One Dog Canoe PB/HC Age range 3-6 years

Sometimes – the more the merrier! *I set off one morning in my little red canoe. My dog wagged his tail. "Can I come, too?" "You bet," I said. "A trip for two – just me and you."* But when "with a slap and a swim" Beaver scrambles in, and then "with a 'woo-hooo!' – flap!" Loon lands in the young canoeist's lap, it's clear that this will be no ordinary canoe trip. A bouncy rhyming text and exuberant pictures full of funny, escalating antics will have young readers laughing out loud – for just when it seems the canoe can't hold anyone else, frog jumps in! 32 pages

Some Dog HC Age range 3-6 years

Some Dog! is the story of George and Zippity—two unlikely dogs with temperaments different as night and day. Zippity is the dog that does tricks and lives to please his new family but his high-strung nature sends him running outside during a storm, George finds that his special skill, the ability to follow a scent, saves the day! 40 pages

Utterly Otterly Day HC Age range 3-6 years

Little Otter likes to play in a carefree, unabashed, utterly otterly way. Mom warns Little Otter, "Be careful!" Dad says, "Stay close!" But does Little Otter listen? Oh, no! No. No. No. Little Otter thinks he's a big otter now, big enough to take care of himself. But watch out, Little Otter, because no matter how big you get, it's good to have loved ones looking out for you. 40 pages

Utterly Otterly Night HC Age range 3-6 years

Little Otter is ready for some action! Rustling leaves call to him. Sweet, spicy air beckons. The moon is as huge and golden as Owl's eyes. So Little Otter sets off for some fun. But with wolves on the prowl, Little Otter's adventures are a series of dizzying close calls. When he finally returns to his den, Little Otter's family is all played out and ready for bed! 40 pages

American Girl Books:

Chrissa PB Age range 8 + years

On her very first day at a new school, Chrissa attempts to make friends but is greeted at first with icy silence from the girls she sits with in Cluster Four. Then, when teasing and pranks turn into serious bullying, Chrissa must find the courage to stand strong and speak out. A section at the back of the book includes letters from real girls who, like Chrissa, have dealt with or witnessed bullying, and gives readers advice on how to handle challenging people in their lives. Each book also includes discussion questions to spark conversations and encourage girls to stand up for themselves and one another. 130 pages

Chrissa Stands Strong PB Age range 8 + years

Chrissa's had a good summer practicing for swim team tryouts. Then her world is shaken when she and her friends get mean text messages and there's an accident at the pool. Can one girl put an end to the bullying? A section at the back of the book includes letters from real girls who, like Chrissa, have dealt with or witnessed bullying, and gives readers advice on how to handle challenging people in their lives. Each book also includes discussion questions to spark conversations and encourage girls to stand up for themselves and one another. 130 pages

Historical Fiction:

The Klipfish Code HC Age range 10 + years

The year is 1942, and Norway is under Nazi occupation. Twelve-year-old Marit has decided to take action, despite her grandfather's warnings. But will her plan work? Can she really complete her part of this secret code? And even if she can, would it make any difference to the Resistance? As this novel reveals what Norwegian people did to preserve their dignity and freedoms, it uncovers a startling statistic: the German secret police systematically rounded up one teacher in ten and sent them to concentration camps for their refusal to teach Nazi propaganda to Norwegian schoolchildren. Set on an island of sturdy fishing trawlers and brightly painted homes, with smells of kelp and salt water, here is a riveting novel about risks taken, secrets kept, and, always, questions about whom to trust. 240 pages
(PB due April 17, 2012)

Barbara O'Connor – Brief Summaries

Beethoven in Paradise

PB

Age range 10 and up

Set in a trailer park called Paradise. "You're just wasting your God-given talents if you don't get yourself something besides a little ole harmonica to play." Wylene made it sound so easy. Martin had always like music—liked to listen to it, liked to make up tunes in his head. All he had to do was say the word "piano" to his father and all hell would break loose. His father thought music was for sissies, and was always mad at Martin for not being good at baseball. With a lot of help from his friends Wylene and Sybil and his grandmother, Hazeline, Martin learns that, although he can't change his father, he can learn to stick up for himself. With humor, pathos, and a colorful cast of offbeat characters, Barbara O'Connor shows that there's room for genius wherever there's a place for compassion—even in Paradise.

168 pages

Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia

PB

Age range 8-12 years

All her life, all Bird has ever wanted is to be noticed in her small town and to get to Disney World. As it turns out, Bird just might have a chance to realize at least one of her goals because of a state spelling bee, and she might get to make a friend along the way—a boy named Harlem Tate who has just moved to Freedom. Harlem seems like a kindred spirit—someone like Bird, whom people don't usually take the time to find the good in. (Unless it's someone like Miss Delphine, who always makes Bird feel special.) But as much as Bird tries to get his attention, Harlem is not easily won over. Then Harlem agrees to be her partner in the spelling bee, and if they study hard enough, the two might just win everything Bird's always wanted.

112 pages

Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester, The

PB/HC

Age range 8-12 years

An amazing secret has tumbled off a freight train into Carter, Georgia, and Owen Jester is the only person who knows about it. If he can simply manage to evade his grandfather's snappish housekeeper, organize his two best friends, and keep his nosy neighbor, Viola, at bay, he just might be in for a summer of a lifetime.

176 pages

Greetings from Nowhere

HC

Age range 10 and up

Aggie isn't expecting visitors at the Sleepy Time Motel in the Great Smoky Mountains. Since her husband died, she is all alone with her cat, Ugly, and keeping up with the bills and repairs has become next to impossible. The pool is empty, the garden is overgrown, and not a soul has come to stay in nearly three months. When she reluctantly places a For Sale ad in the newspaper, Aggie doesn't know that Kirby and his mom will need a room when their breaks down on the way to Kirby's new reform school. Or that Loretta and her parents will arrive in her dad's plumbing company van on a trip meant to honor the memory of Loretta's birth mother. Or that Clyde Dover will answer the For Sale ad in such a hurry and move in with his daughter, Willow, looking for a brand-new life to replace the one that was fractured when Willow's mom left. Perhaps the biggest surprise of all is that Aggie and her guests find just the friend they need at the shabby motel in the middle of nowhere.

208 pages

How to Steal a Dog

PB/HC

Age range 8-12 years

Georgina Hayes is desperate. Ever since her father left and they were evicted from their apartment, her family has been living in their car. With her mama juggling two jobs and trying to make enough money to find a place to live, Georgina is stuck looking after her younger brother, Toby and she has her heart set on improving their situation. When Georgina spots a missing-dog poster with a reward of five hundred dollars, the solution to all her problems suddenly seems within reach. All she has to do is "borrow" the right dog and its owners are sure to offer a reward. What happens next is the last thing she expected.

192 pages

Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis

PB/HC

Age range 8-12 years

Nothing ever happens in Fayette, South Carolina. That's what Popeye thinks. His whole life, everything has just been boring, boring, boring. But things start to look up when the Jewells' Holiday Rambler makes a wrong turn and gets stuck in the mud, trapping Elvis and his five rowdy siblings in Fayette for who knows how long. Popeye has never met anyone like Elvis Jewell. He's so good at swearing he makes Uncle Dooley look like a harp-strumming angel, and he says "So what?" like he really means it. Then something curious comes floating down the creek—a series of boats with secret messages—and it sends Popeye and Elvis into the big world on the hunt for a small adventure.

176 pages

Shelley Pearsall - Brief Summaries

All of the Above

PB

Age Range 9 and up

Inspired by actual events, *All of the Above* is the delightful and suspenseful story of four inner city students and their quest to set a math record by building the world's largest tetrahedron.

Lively and fast-paced, the novel weaves together the stories of the kids, their teacher, and the community that surrounds them. 256 pages

All Shook Up

PB/HC

Age Range 10 and up

When 13 year old Josh finds out he has to stay with his dad in Chicago for a few months, he's not too thrilled. But when he arrives at the airport, he's simply devastated. His father—who used to be a scatterbrained, but pretty normal, shoe salesman—has become a sideburn-wearing, hip-twisting, utterly embarrassing Elvis impersonator. A heartwarming story about a father and son discovering something about being who you are—and who you're not. 272 pages

Crooked River

PB/HC

Age Range 10 and up

Humanity and justice don't always join hands as 13-year-old Rebecca Carver painfully discovers; especially when it's 1812 in a small frontier settlement and a young Chippewa Indian is being held captive for the crime of murdering a white trapper. When her ironhanded Pa chains the "savage" in their loft until his trial, an unspoken bond slowly forms that defies prejudice and incites courage as Indian John and Reb sneak small trinkets to each other. The tandem telling in Reb and Indian John's voices creates an immediacy of the times when red and white cultures clashed and human convictions could decide a conviction of death. This vivid look into the reality of crude frontier life and justice is outstanding historical fiction is based on a true story, 256 pages

Trouble Don't Last

PB

Age Range 9 and up

Eleven-year-old Samuel was born as Master Hackler's slave, and working the Kentucky farm is the only life he's ever known—until one dark night in 1859, that is. With no warning, cranky old Harrison, a fellow slave, pulls Samuel from his bed and, together, they run. The journey north seems much more frightening than Master Hackler ever was, and Samuel's not sure what freedom means aside from running, hiding, and starving. But as they move from one refuge to the next on the Underground Railroad, Samuel uncovers the secret of his own past—and future. And old Harrison begins to see past a whole lifetime of hurt to the promise of a new life—and a poignant reunion— 220 pages