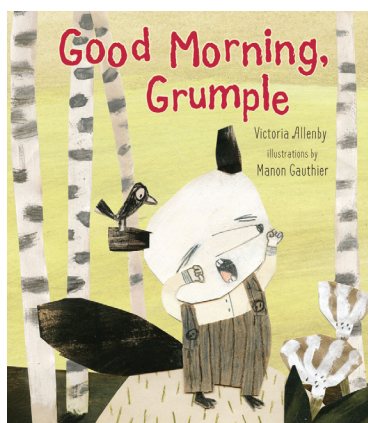


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Good Morning, Grumple

by Victoria Allenby,
Illustrated by Manon Gauthier
Toronto: Pajama Press, 2017
ISBN 9781772780147

On rare occasions, I am a Grumple. You have probably been a Grumple at some point in your life and, if stereotypes are to be believed, most sleep-deprived teenagers are Grumples: individuals who do not want to get out of bed in the morning. Despite its relevance to a broad audience, Victoria Allenby's *Good Morning, Grumple* targets a pre-school audience and beginning readers with rhyming words, a song to be sung, and advice on how to gently wake up a reluctant riser using increasingly insistent techniques. The appealing design features of this 24-page book include Manon Gauthier's child-like paper collage art work, a padded cover, rounded pages, and sturdy paper. All of these elements will wake up young readers with an invitation to look, touch and read.



My Beautiful Birds

by Suzanne Del Rizzo
Toronto: Pajama Press, 2017
ISBN 9781772780109

The polymer clay and acrylic media used to create the original artwork for *My Beautiful Birds* give an eye-catching three dimensional quality to sad but beautiful images of a Syrian family fleeing their burning town. A young boy from that family, Sami, remembers filling his pigeons' food bowl just before his home and his neighborhood abruptly disappear. For days, his family treks across the countryside before finding a temporary home in a refugee camp. While life becomes more "normal," Sami cannot overcome his sadness over the loss of his pigeons and the life they represent. Then he discovers new birds in his new home. The shadow over his life expressed by black paint in his art does not disappear, but it recedes and his heart opens to the pleasure of kite-flying and the joy of a new friend who has arrived at the refugee camp. This 32-page picture book for six- to ten-year-olds provides a sympathetic and hopeful description of refugee life and the process of healing.



Queen of the Crows

by Harmony Wagner
Charlottetown: Acorn Press, 2016
ISBN 9781927502682

In Harmony Wagner's own adaptation of her short film *Queen of the Crows*, the protagonist, Elsa, is proud of how her Aunt Claire designs her own jewelry, making "her weirdness work for her, instead of feeling like a freak." Elsa, virtually abandoned by her addict mother, has learned to survive by scavenging, and she comes to identify with the crows with whom she shares scavenging grounds. Like the crows who have been left without direction when their queen disappears, Elsa struggles against power-hungry bullies, drawing strength from the example of a refugee boy of her own age who has developed resilience through the challenges in his own life. Although she experiences a breakdown, Elsa, like the crows, finds that supportive acceptance of differences and mutual caring can conquer isolation and give strength to a family or a society.