

Chapter Books and Novels

For each selected title, we provide the following:

Title in English

Title in Japanese (romanization) | Author/Illustrator | Publisher | Publication Year | Number of Pages |

Trim Size | ISBN | Target Age | Keywords

Basic Book Description (Last Name of Reviewer)

* Information on this material comes from data bases, such as that of the National Diet Library, Japan.

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Mountain Animal Hospital 2

Toramaru Goes to the Mountain

やまの動物病院2 とらまる、山へいく (Yama no dobutsu byoin 2: Toramaru, yama e iku)

Text/Ill. NAKAGAWA Chihiro | Tokuma Shoten | 2023 | 63pp | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-1986-5738-3 | Ages: 7+ | *Animal hospital, Cat, Doctor*

Toramaru the cat lives in the hospital that treats animals from the town. But at night, unbeknownst to humans, he opens up the hospital to animals from the woods. One night, a rabbit comes to tell Toramaru that the turtles in the swamp asked her to fetch him. When Toramaru reaches the swamp, however, the turtles tell him that a flying squirrel asked them

to call him. Each time Toramaru visits one animal, he is directed to another, and a long line of creatures follows him as he travels deeper and deeper into the woods to find the patient. Toramaru's search and his interactions with all the animals are very entertaining. (Doi)

17



Training Yui

ナナのおけいこ (Nana no okeiko)

Text: ITOH Hiroshi | Tokuma Shoten | 2024 | 64pp | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-1986-5788-8 | Ages: 7+ | *Cat, Family, Adventure*

Nana is Yui's cat. Yui was born after Nana had already raised many kittens of her own. Yui's mother told Nana, "Please take care of Yui now." Nana teaches Yui many things, as if she were Yui's mother. Things like how to catch prey, how to walk along the top of a fence, how to groom fur, and how to eat without her hands. As Yui is not a cat, it's difficult for her to keep up sometimes, but Nana doesn't accept that as an excuse. The illustrations capture the

humor of this unusual relationship from the perspective of Yui, who is growing up, and Nana, who is growing old. The final scene is particularly poignant. (Nogami)



Simmered Daikon Gathering

ふろふき大根のゆうべ (Furofuki daikon no yube)

Text: AWA Naoko | Ill. AYAI Akiko | Asunaro Shobo | 2024 | 47pp | 24×19cm | ISBN 978-4-7515-3201-0 | Ages: 7+ | *Boar, Daikon*

One day, as winter approaches, Mohei hurries home from the field with a basket full of daikon someone gave him. On the way, he meets a large boar wearing a towel around its head and tied under its chin. The boar is off to buy miso for a simmered daikon gathering that evening. Mohei shares his daikon with the boar, who invites him to come along. Wild boar from distant mountains gather around the steaming pot of daikon and share memories and stories. Originally published as a short story, this imaginative tale is

presented as a picture book with original illustrations, which take the reader on a journey into a strange and wonderful world. (Sakuma)



My Cat Paws

ぼくのねこ ポー (Boku no neko Po)

Text: IWASE Joko | Ill. MATSUNARI Mariko | PHP Kenkyujo | 2024 | 78pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-5698-8162-1 | Ages: 7+ | *Cats, Changing schools*

One day Toru notices a cat without a collar in his neighborhood, and talks to him. The cat is always outside, even on a rainy day. Maybe he has been abandoned? Toru takes him home with him, names him Paws, feeds him, prepares a litter tray for him, and makes a great big fuss over him. But then Mori, a new boy at school who has just moved to the area, says he is searching for his pet cat which has gone missing. Toru is torn between not wanting to give

Paws up and having to give him back. Along with this story wonderfully depicting a child's feelings are illustrations that really capture the expressions of cats and children, so that the reader sees themselves in the protagonist as they read.

(Sakuma)



The Story Lily Can't Remember

リリの思い出せないものがたり (Riri no omoidasenai monogatari)

Text: TAKADONO Hoko | Ill. TAKAHASHI Kazue | Poplar | 2024 | 94pp | 22×16cm | ISBN 978-4-5911-8190-4 | Ages: 7+ | *Memory, Made-up stories, Handkerchief*

Lily goes to stay at her grandmother's house during the summer holiday, and listens to her grandmother's friend Fusako tell one of her stories, as yet unfinished, called "The Tale of the Polka Dot Handkerchief." It is about a girl who wears a polka dot handkerchief as a scarf, but it gets blown away by the wind and is picked up by various people who make it into a dress

for a stuffed toy, a tool for magic tricks, and so forth. Lily recalls a distant memory of her own, and describes how she saw a family of moles using a polka dot handkerchief, thus completing the story. The reader can enjoy the fun of making up stories through this unique friendship between females of different ages. (Doi)

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My Days

あたしデイズ (Atashi deizu)

Text: ITO Miku | Ill. HIRASAWA Tomoko | Shinnihon Shuppansha | 2023 | 110pp | 21×16cm | ISBN978-4-4060-6787-4 | Ages: 9+ | *Friends, Being ostracized, Identity*

Mutsuki is in Year 4 of elementary school. When the groups for an overnight field trip are being decided, she suddenly finds herself shunned by Komari and other friends, and put in a group with an oddball called Ishimaru. Even after the trip, she continues to be ostracized by Komari and the others. She feels increasingly lonely at home, too, as her mother is really busy with work, but she tells her mother how she feels and is understood. Reflecting on her own attitude, she plucks up the courage to ask her friends why they are shunning her. Then Ishimaru tells her that it's okay to make mistakes. We can see Mutsuki's mistakes and the way she overcomes her problems portrayed realistically. (Doi)

22



The Coral-Colored Cloud

さんごいろの雲 (Sango iro no kumo)

Text: YAEHASHI Naoko | Ill. DEGUCHI Haruna | Kodansha | 2024 | 125pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-0653-4441-5 | Ages: 9+ | *Fantasy, Short story collection, Mysterious*

People, animals, and trees have strange experiences in these seven short stories. In the title story a poor fiddler traveling with his dog plays his violin for a beautiful coral-colored cloud. The cloud thanks him by casting a spell that will grant the modest wishes of unhappy people every time he plays, but warns him never to play for greedy people. In "Lirum Larum," a sister and brother go to pick wild strawberries in the forest, but are led astray by the rabbits singing, and in "The King and the Rainbow," a king is wandering around filled with grief for the death of his wife, when a little bird draws his attention to a rainbow. The descriptions are so beautiful that you can almost see the scenes before your eyes. (Doi)

23

Not Santa Claus's Flying Parcel Delivery Service

サンタクロースは空飛ぶ宅配便ではありません (Santakurosu wa sora tobu takuhaibin dewa arimasen)

Text: ICHIKAWA Nobuko | Ill. TAKAHASHI Kazue | Poplar | 2023 | 126pp | 21×16cm | ISBN978-4-5911-7979-6 | Ages: 9+ | *Christmas, Presents, Santa Claus*



Santa Kurosu is in Year 4 of elementary school. He always feels fed up as Christmas approaches. Not only is he teased about his name, but this year letters from first-graders asking for a gift are placed in his shoe box at school. It appears there is a rumor going around that if you tell Santa Kurosu, your wish will come true. Then Rudolph the Reindeer appears in Santa's apartment bike park, urging him to undergo "flight training" by helping with deliveries; he teaches him that gifts are not mere commodities but should be wrapped with love. This whacky Santa Claus story set in Japan is a fun read that will have you chuckling along. (Sakuma)

24



The Moon and Granny Zaza

月さんとザザさん (Tsuki san to Zaza san)

Text/Ill. KADONO Eiko | Shogakukan | 2023 | 122pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-0928-9331-3

| Ages: 9+ | *Old woman, House, Night*

Zaza is an old woman who lives alone in a house in the forest. The house, which is called Sumiko, gets sick of Zaza's endless complaining and throws her, still on her bed, out of the front door, then walks off at a smart pace. Zaza can't take the fact her house is leaving home, and chases after it brandishing a saw. The Moon, on its nightly walk in the sky, notices them and tells Zaza not to be so angry all the time, but to try thinking

of funny things and laugh more. The Moon often comes at night to tell Zaza and Sumiko amusing stories. This rather whacky story is accompanied by humorous illustrations drawn by the author herself. (Nogami)

25



Usakichi Under the Desk

机の下のウサギ (Tsukue no shita no Usakichi)

Text: OKADA Jun | Kaiseisha | 2024 | 222pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-0361-0210-5 | Ages:

9+ | *Fantasy, Rabbits, Adventure*

Ippei is alone looking after the house while his grandfather is out. When a storm comes and the power goes out, he takes a lantern and crawls under the desk. He sees a rabbit in the desk's woodgrain, and he is instantly transported to a meadow where he meets a giant rabbit called Usakichi. Usakichi calls him Kyochi, and informs him that he has been waiting for him as the Witch has taken away his power to jump. They go to see the Witch, meeting a

rat, some bandits, and a dragon on their journey to the summit of Mount Saihate. Readers can enjoy the fantastical adventures of Ippei along with appealing mystery-solving elements such as who Kyochi is. (Doi)



The Garden on Monster Path

けものみちのにわ (Kemono michi no niwa)

Text: MINAGI Kumiko | Ill. GEMI | BL Shuppan | 2023 | 198pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-7764-1102-4 | Ages: 11+ | *Fantasy, Grandpa, Path*

Fuka is in Year 5 of elementary school. This story follows her over the year as she visits her grandfather, who lives alone, every month. Leading from the garden is what is known as the Monster Path, said to be the boundary between life and death or the path to the other world. There the two of them encounter a diminutive man, a girl who looks just like a crow, and a rainbow in the moonlit sky. Fuka dreams that her grandfather got lost on the Monster Path in his youth, and saves him. The scenes are beautifully described, and the way the

grandfather and granddaughter connect with each other while accepting their strange experiences leaves a deep impression. (Doi)



Naoki and the Mysterious Garden

直紀とふしぎな庭 (Naoki to fushigi na niwa)

Text: YAMASHITA Miyuki | Seizansha | 2024 | 217pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-8638-9763-2 | Ages: 11+ | *Fantasy, Gardens, Yokai*

When 10-year-old Naoki meets his favorite uncle, a white cat that looks exactly like the cat his uncle had as a child appears and leads them to an old house. A real estate agent comes out and offers to rent the house at a discount, and the uncle agrees. However, the reason the rent is so cheap is because a lot of yokai come to the garden, and the real estate agent is himself a supernatural cat. Naoki ends up having to help the yokai in the garden. Meanwhile,

the real reason why the supernatural cat rented the house is revealed, and it has to do with some terrifying yokai in the garden. Naoki's efforts are amusing, and the yokai themselves have their own funny idiosyncrasies. (Doi)



When a Dragon Calls 1

The Curse of the Bow Witch

竜が呼んだ娘① 弓の魔女の呪い (Ryu ga yonda musume 1: yumi no majo no noroi)

Text: KASHIWABA Sachiko | Ill. SATAKE Miho | Kodansha | 2024 | 255pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-0653-5543-5 | Ages: 11+ | *Royal palace, Magi, Mother*

Mia was born in a village that was imprisoned by sheer cliffs following their defeat in battle with dragons and witches hundreds of years ago. Upon turning 10, girls may leave the village if they are summoned by a dragon. Mia, who was left behind by her mother at the age of two and raised by an aunt rumored to have been a witch's apprentice, is summoned and made a

handmaiden to a legendary hero in the royal palace. However, the hero is invisible due to the curse of the Bow Witch. Mia meets her mother in a fierce battle to break the curse and save the royal family from danger. This epic story continues in *The Dragon of the Dark Storehouse, Where Witches Give Birth and The Storyteller's Pot*. (Nogami)

29



The Path Leading to Me

わたしに続く道 (Watashi ni tsuzuku michi)

Text: YAMAMOTO Etsuko | Ill. SATO Makiko | Kinnohoshisha | 2023 | 254pp | 20×13cm | ISBN978-4-3239-7541-9 | Ages: 11+ | *Family, Travel, International roots*

With a Kenyan father and Japanese mother, Riima has dark skin and curly hair. She is often mistaken for a foreigner and hurtfully teased for being “black.” The first half of this book portrays Riina’s troubles in Year 5 of elementary school, up until she is invited on a trip to Kenya by her grandmother on the side of her mother’s second husband Shin-chan. In the second half, Riima contemplates her roots as she encounters Kenya’s colorful landscapes, wildlife, and the reality of the law of the jungle. The complex characters are portrayed realistically, with Riina’s somewhat unapproachable but kind grandmother, and her friends, who misunderstand and understand her by turns. (Okuyama)

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Upcycle for Our Future!

アップサイクル！ぼくらの明日のために (Appu saikuru! Bokura no ashita no tame ni)

Text: SATO Madoka | Ill. KIUCHI Tatsuro | Poplar | 2023 | 223pp | 20×13cm | ISBN978-4-5911-7926-0 | Ages: 13+ | *Starting a business, Crowdfunding*

Upcycling is the process of giving new value to products that would otherwise be thrown away. Jo, Shizuki, and Wang, a boy with Chinese roots, decide to focus on this upcycling theme for their group research during the summer holidays during Year 2 of junior high. Shizuki’s college student sister lets them use her studio, where their first project is to create a table from an antique sewing machine and a blackboard. The three discover how much fun it is to upcycle objects, and consider ways of using the internet to turn this into a business and connect with society. Readers will feel encouraged by these three middle school students, who are realistically depicted overcoming a case of theft and starting their own business. (Sakuma)

31

Someone’s Melancholy

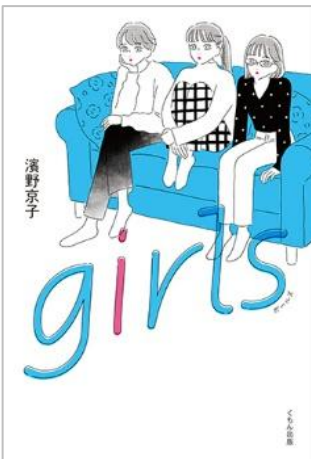
あるいは誰かのユーウツ (Aruiwa dareka no yuutsu)

Text: TENKAWA Eito | Ill. KASHIWAI | Kodansha | 2024 | 217pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-0653-5712-5 | Ages: 13+ | *Junior high, Gender, Body*



A collection of six short stories depicting the troubled daily lives of Year 2 junior high school students. In "Red Cocoon," Akari has heavy periods and Shimosaka lives with his mother, an obstetrician and gynecologist. In "Three Hook Bras and Compression Shirts" Mana, who is into Boy's Love manga, has large breasts; meanwhile, Manaka is uncomfortable with her female gender. Other characters deal with voice changes, feel ashamed of their thick body hair, don't understand love, or think they know everything about sex . . . With their varying characteristics and preoccupations, the characters all have different concerns, but by acknowledging their differences and attempting to understand each other, they manage to get along. (Okuyama)

32



Girls

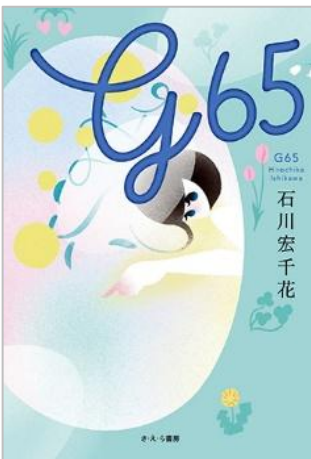
girls (Garuzu)

Text: HAMANO Kyoko | Ill. USHIKUBO Masami | Kumon Shuppan | 2024 | 221pp | 20×14cm
| ISBN978-4-7743-3762-3 | Ages: 13+ | *Junior high, Women, Family*

The one thing that Year 3 junior high school students Hiro, Sana, and Mimori have in common is that they live with only their single mothers. Other aspects such as their mothers' jobs, the students' feelings towards their mothers, and their attitudes to men are different. The discomfort they experience in their daily lives also varies; one suddenly has someone confess feelings for her another is intimidated by a teacher; still another notices her father's

contempt for women. Nevertheless, their friendship develops as they talk with each other, go on school trips and to photo exhibitions, and spend Christmas together. A flexible sisterhood that includes their mothers' generation is depicted interwoven with awareness of gender in society and the changing systems around women. (Okuyama)

33



30G

G65 (Ji rokujugo)

Text: ISHIKAWA Hirochika | Saera Shobo | 2023 | 253pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-3780-1564-4 | Ages: 13+ | *Bras, School, Family, Social media*

Kiwa is in Year 2 of junior high when she has the terrifying experiences of her large breasts being secretly photographed and posted on a blog, and being targeted by a pervert. In the middle of the first semester, her concerned mother sends her to live with her aunt to attend a new school, where she spends her days as inconspicuously as possible. Her 30G-cup bra, called Pepa, works hard to support her breasts and look after her. The structure of the book

is superb, with Pepa narrating Kiwa's recovery, encouraged by the kindness and warmth of her aunt, classmates, school infirmary teacher and the blog of her favorite actress who wears an I cup. The final scene, in which Kiwa vaguely senses

Pepa's mysterious presence, is also very funny. (Nogami)

34



Lost for Six Days!

6 days 遭難者たち (Shikkusu deizu sonansha tachi)

Text: YASUDA Kana | Kodansha | 2024 | 267pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-0653-5559-6 | Ages: 13+ | *Climbing, Family, Life*

Year 1 high-school student Miku quit the mountaineering club after breaking a promise to her grandfather, by failing to climb a particular mountain. She goes on a one-day climbing trip to a mountain suitable for beginners with her friends Arisa, who needs distracting from her mother's illness, and Yuma, who feels out of place at home after her mother remarried. However, they get lost on their way back down, and for the next six days wander through

valleys and get caught in the rain. The narrative switches among the perspectives of the three girls, who are ill-equipped, hungry, and suffering from fever and injuries. Readers are drawn into their life-threatening experience as they face their fears and try not to give up. (Okuyama)

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A Girl at the Museum: The Clamorous Ghost

博物館の少女2 騒がしい幽霊 (Hakubutsukan no shojo 2: sawagashii yurei)

Text: TOMIYASU Yoko | Kaiseisha | 2023 | 365pp | 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-0381-4520-9 | Ages: 13 | *Apparitions, Artworks, Family, Mystery solving*

Ikaru Hanaoka moved to Tokyo from Osaka after her parents died, and works for the Ueno Museum researching apparitions. She is sent to investigate the strange phenomena occurring at the residence of Lord Oyama Iwao, Minister for the Army, in the guise of a private tutor for his young daughters. Following the death of his first wife, Oyama married Yamakawa Sutematsu, but the couple hail from the rival domains of Satsuma and Aizu and

suspicion ultimately falls on Sutematsu. Oyama's daughters do not get along with her, and sometimes see the ghost of their dead mother. This poignant tale, the second featuring Ikaru Hanaoka, is set against the late 19th century westernization of Japan and features a number of of mysterious incidents in a meticulously constructed story. (Nogami)