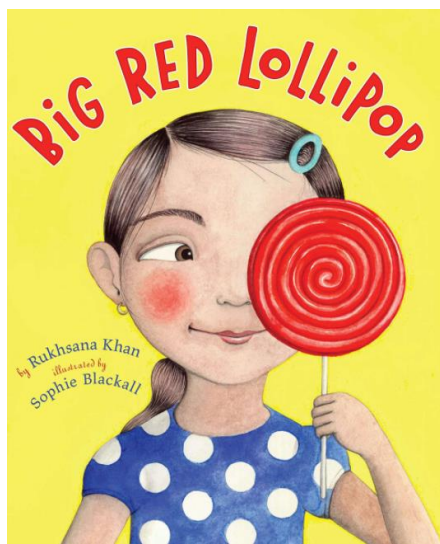
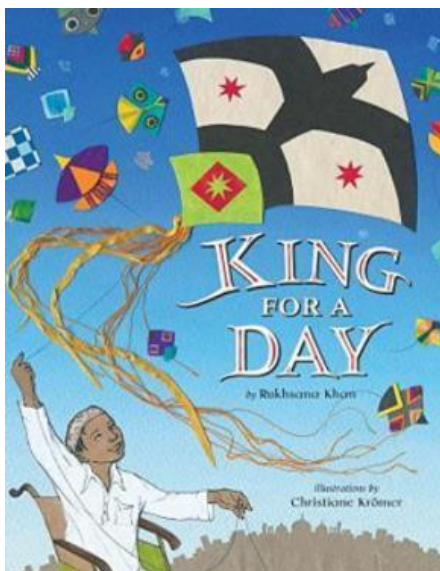


1) Rukhsana Khan

A celebrated children's author born in Pakistan and grew up in Canada, Ontario. She focuses on telling tales about diversity.

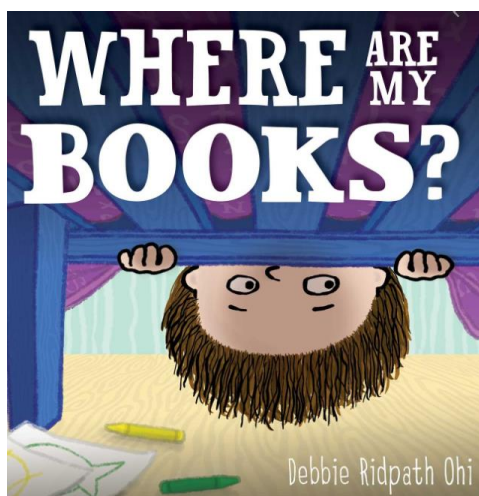


Her book Big Red Lollipop talks about a very relatable situation in a child's life while addressing culture clash with which every newcomer family must contend. A child is invited to her friend's birthday party, and her mother insists she takes her younger sister with her. But she does not want to take her little sister with her. This story is all about forgiveness and building a strong bond between siblings. You can talk all in abstract about how important forgiveness is but share this life lesson in a story set in a situation that is so relatable to their real-life, and they pick it up instantly. Also, through this story, the author successfully manages to show that no matter what country, background or ethnicity, you family emerges from, a little bit of sibling rivalry is shared across all families. Here we see one person letting the other off the hook just because it is the right thing to do.



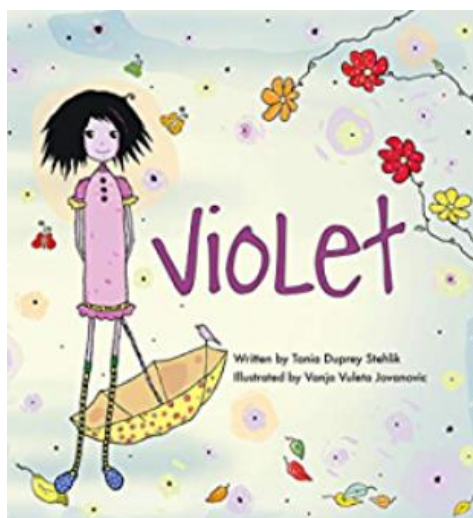
King for a Day is a book that tackles the complex issue of disabilities. The story is set in Pakistan and the backdrop is the vivid festival of kites or Basant. The boy who dreams of being the King of Basant is also in a wheelchair. The story helps children to focus on the story and the boy without making the wheelchair the central theme. This is an effective way of teaching children that children who are physically different are still capable and can do anything that anyone else can do even though it might look a bit different.

2) Debbie Ridpath Ohi



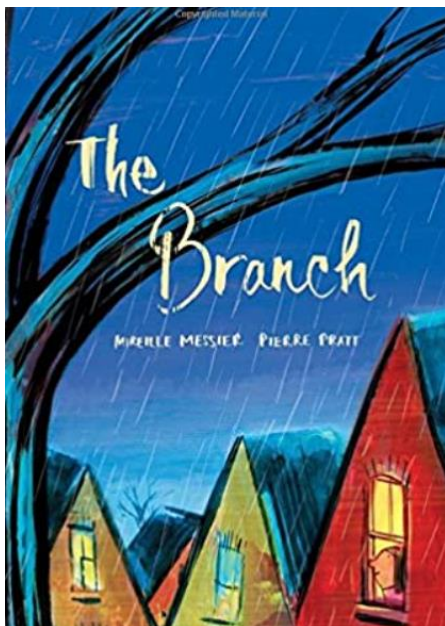
“Where are my books? It is a hilarious book about a boy who investigates the disappearance of his books. While looking for his books, he upsets his sister and must make up to her by playing tea party with her stuffed toys. It is an Aah Hah moment when he does find out who is stealing his books. The story is about sharing what you have even though it is a thing that is your favourite. We love this book because it is about books and the love a child has for reading and a beautiful introduction to how libraries work.

3) Tania Duprey Stehlik



Violet is one of the books that we strongly recommend. It tackles complex issues of race and ethnicity with simplicity. There have been several times children encounter the question, “Why do I look like I do?” This is a story of a girl on her first day of school and gets asked why she is not the same colour as her dad. Her mother explains to her by mixing colours Red and Blue when mixed to make a beautiful Violet. And Violet is Violet because her father is blue and her mother red. This story also points out that helping children be proud of who they are essential to develop into well-rounded individuals.

4) Mirelle Messier



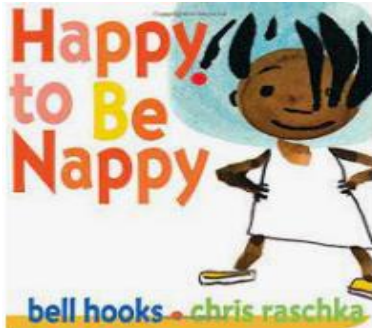
The Branch helps children tackle issues of loss, failures, and disappointments. A girl loses her favourite branch from her favourite tree during a storm. But with the help of a neighbour, she learns to shape her broken Branch into something new. This book effectively addresses how to deal with loss or disappointments and, more importantly, to ask for help.

5) Élise Gravel



We cannot finish this list without mentioning one of our most favourite children's authors. Her book Ada, the cranky ballerina, is one that addresses gender stereotypes with panache. She writes about this girl who struggles at Ballet but finds her passion in Karate. Sometimes these stories are essential for adults as well to feel encouraged and follow their passion. This search for what you love to do is best done without paying any heed to gender stereotypes that most of the children and us automatically internalise. Her website is filled with resources to help parents talk about Courage, loving your body, and apologising.

6) Bell Hooks



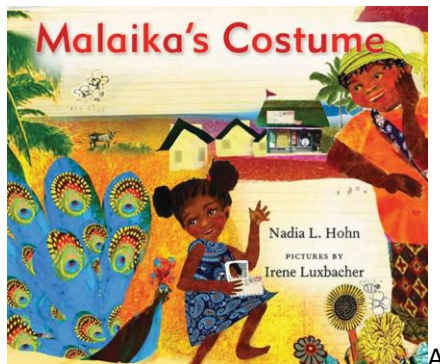
Who does not love Bell Hooks? The book *Happy to Be Nappy* by this legendary author authentically portrays how beautiful African American Hair is and empowers little girls to love their hair in its natural form. It inspires all children to embrace their differences.

7) Celina Kalluk



Celina Kalluk is an Inuit Canadian artist and an author. Her debut book *Sweetest Kulu* describes all the gifts given by animals of the Arctic to a newborn baby, teaching values of loving nature and respecting the environment around us. It is a reassuring and endearing book, and parents will love to share it with their newborns.

8) Nadia Hohn



Toronto born author of Jamaican descent; her book *Malaika's Costume* talks about a girl being raised by her grandmother wanting to buy a new costume for the carnival. She is waiting for her parents, who reside in Canada, to send her the money. At the start, you see how financial issues cause families to separate and children being raised in atypical family structures. The illustrations bring to life an unnamed Caribbean country. The story portrays the power of the community getting together to ensure that Malaika has a costume for the carnival.

9) Saumiya Balasubramaniam



An author born in Mumbai but now settled in Toronto. Her book "When I found Grandma" is about culture clashes that happen in every newcomer family. Children of First-generation Canadians constantly battle with the idea of fitting in with their external environment and keeping a link with their heritage. This is a beautiful story of a girl excited about her grandma visiting from India, but soon she finds out that she does not understand her grandmother that well. Later in the story, the girl realises that she can learn about her heritage from her grandmother. This is a lovely story about learning to embrace cultural and generational differences.