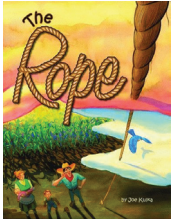


and unpredictable qualities of Octavio's dreams. Readers of all ages will appreciate the sincere affection between grandfather and grandchild in this intergenerational story. A perfect book for sharing aloud. (October) *Angela Leeper*



The Rope

Joe Kulka
Pelican Publishing,
Hardcover \$15.95 (32pp)
978-1-58980-487-6

Today, everyone wants more—more comfort and, definitely, more money. The family in this story has found a way to get it with a thick rope dangling from the sky with a tiny note attached to it that simply reads, “Pull for more.” At supper, Pa decides to pull the rope to get more soup. When he pulls it, they are not prepared for the waterfall of potato soup that soils Junior, Ma, Pa, and the nameless baby. Next, Ma wants more shoes, but pulling the rope yields all kinds: bunny slippers, stilettos, clogs, and boots. “None of them match!” said Ma. “What good are a bunch of left-footed shoes?” When Junior pulls the rope, Pa and Ma holler for money. Pennies pelt the family, forcing Ma, Pa, and the bawling baby to run for cover. Pennies crack the roof’s shingles and dent the already-worn truck. A double page spread shows the family huddled together surveying the damage.

Angry, Pa burns the rope. The family cleans up the pennies and puts the shoes to good use as birdfeeders and flowerpots. Rid of the rope, Ma declares she has learned a lesson, but has she? The look of possibility in Ma and Pa’s eyes when they learn a metal chain replaced the rope leaves readers to wonder. The author/illustrator, a graduate of the University of the Arts, has won several awards for his book *Wolf’s Coming!* He is also the illustrator of *Monkey Math* and *Granny Gert and the Bunion Brothers*.

Readers will find it refreshing to return to the wholesomeness of a traditional tale like this one. The morals, folksy language, rustic setting, and earth tone illustrations are warm and reminiscent of a simple, but meaningful, way of life. This is a good book for story time with grandparents and their little ones. (September) *KaaVonia Hinton*

MIDDLE READERS



Archipelago

David Ward
Red Deer Press
Softcover \$12.95 (155pp)
978-0-88995-400-7

“I need a quest,” twelve-year-old Jonah tells God. “Hear that? I want a quest. You took my

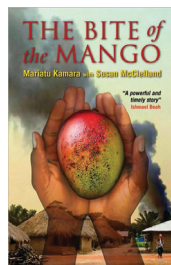
dad. The least you could do is give me some direction.” In fact, God has already prepared a quest for Jonah, teasing him with the tantalizing mystery of a girl no one else can see.

As it turns out, the girl is Akilah, and she is also twelve. She lived 14,000 years ago on the same Queen Charlotte Islands where Jonah and his mother have been camping. In Akilah’s time, glaciers lined Canada’s western shores and water levels were so low that some islands are not on Jonah’s contemporary map because they have been submerged by glacial melt. A door has opened between the two times, and a magical mist guides Jonah to the threshold so that he can begin his adventure.

To Jonah’s mother, Jonah appears to be sleeping deeply because of a possible concussion from a fall earlier in the day. This *Wizard of Oz* motif frames the story gracefully, even though Jonah’s quest is much more perilous than anything Dorothy faced on her way to the Emerald City. Together, Jonah and Akilah confront sub-zero temperatures and the “Crossers,” who try to kill Akilah’s people for their meager belongings. Akilah and Jonah must defend themselves from these fierce fighters if they want to live. During their free time, however, they talk, and Akilah’s matter-of-fact attitude about death strikes Jonah as appalling. However, she also tells him that his father “lives on inside of you,” and that it is a “great honor” to live in ways he would have respected.

David Ward’s clear, direct prose keeps the plot lively, and his dialogues, especially those between Jonah and his mother, are lifelike and compelling. This is his fifth book. His other titles include the *Mask* trilogy and *The Hockey Tree*. (February) *Elizabeth Breau*

YOUNG ADULT



The Bite of the Mango

Mariatu Kamara
Annick Press
Softcover \$12.95 (216pp)
978-1-55451-158-7

Twelve-year-old Mariatu Kamara often prayed for new clothes, for a good harvest, or for a nice man to marry when she got older. Then, one day in 1999, the Sierra Leone native prayed for something quite different: “Please let me die quickly. Let it be over quickly. Let my family, if they have been captured by the rebels all die quickly, too. Don’t let the rebels cut my body piece by piece.”

Her prayers went unanswered. When members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attacked their village, she did survive, as did her family, but the rebels chopped off both her hands.

It’s a time and place probably unfamiliar to most readers, not to mention incomprehensible. Before the attack, Mariatu lived simply, spending mornings working in the community garden, afternoons playing hide and seek with cousins. After the attack, she recovered in a hospital in Freetown, the nation’s capital, but quality of life slipped even further when she discovered that she was pregnant.

Mariatu moved to Toronto in 2002, sponsored by a local family. She currently attends college, is a representative for UNICEF, and tours North America in speaking engagements. Mariatu narrates her story by intertwining two time periods: life before the attack and life after. When using words unique to her culture, she always defines what she’s referencing. For example, she mentions a tamalanga, “what we call a whipping stick, made from a long thick weed that grows everywhere.”

This is the story of the results of war as seen through a child’s eyes, re-told by a young woman who lived through it. Despite the intense subject matter, the book is not overly graphic or gratuitous. It’s recommended for older teens, but adults won’t be able to put the book down either. It appears Mariatu took her mother’s advice: “It’s bad what happened to you. But you must see the positive in everything.” (September)

Robin Farrell Edmunds



The Dust of One Hundred Dogs

A.S. King
Flux
Softcover \$9.95 (312pp)
978-0-7387-1426-4

By the 1980s, Emer Morrissey has lived a long and difficult life. During the mid-1600s, in her original incarnation, she watched as her parents fought and died to protect their Irish village from Oliver Cromwell’s army. Emer is forced to live with her abusive uncle and his family until her fourteenth birthday, when he sells her to a Frenchman looking for a wife. Repulsed by the fat man who is meant to be her fiancé, Emer manages to run away.

She hides in Paris until she decides to travel to the Caribbean because signs claim that “... women like Emer would find happiness and husbands...” The reality is that the islanders are no different from the mainlanders. Desperate, she dresses in men’s clothes, boards a ship, and works as a sailor until her gender is discovered. She proves her bravery and strength when defending the ship against pirates, so the captain awards her a brig and crew of her own. Before long, Emer becomes a pirate. She is eventually cursed, then killed: “I curse you to one hundred lives as the bitch you are, and hope wild dogs tear your heart into the state you’ve left mine!” Scene-shift to Emer’s life during the 1980s as