

rescues—quickly finds herself on the wrong side of the law. Flashbacks to the future (surprisingly logical) reveal, however, that she may be just a pawn in Quintum Mechanics' decades-spanning power grab. Reeder does a stellar job of packing the cantilevered panels with bursts of bright, punchy color and clearly depicted cinematic action, and her characters are refreshingly diverse in race, gender, and body type. Dayoung herself is notably free of the pernicious oversexualization that plagues so many girl superheroes in contemporary comics. With a complex, engaging story and beautiful artwork, this superb throwback series is the perfect fit for teen fans of superhero comics, particularly girls eager for a realistic-looking hero. —*Sarah Hunter*

Children's

BirdCatDog.

By Lee Nordling. Illus. by Meritxell Bosch.

Nov. 2014. 32p. Graphic Universe, paper, \$6.95 (9781467745239); Lerner/Graphic Universe, lib. ed., \$25.26 (9781467745222). 741.5. K-Gr. 3.

This cleverly formatted wordless graphic story follows three adventures—those of a bird, a cat, and a dog—over the course of one day. All three stories' panels appear in rows across each page, so little ones can choose to follow each individual story (with a unique color palette for each animal), or they can read each page as a whole and see the larger narrative that unfolds across the three animals' experiences. The bird escapes its cage and flies out the window of the house, enjoying its freedom until a bird of prey starts chasing it. The cat saunters outside and first tries to chase the bird, before it encounters a wild cat. Meanwhile, the dog guards its yard as both the cat and the bird travel through it on their chases. The bird's peril adds just enough drama for young readers, and the wordless story allows them to make up their own dialogue and narrative based on the pictures. Bosch's colorful illustrations add lots of humor, too, for eagle-eyed kids who like to spot details. —*Kat Kan*

Cat Dad, King of the Goblins.

By Britt Wilson. Illus. by the author.

2014. 48p. Koyama, paper, \$12 (9781927668115). 741.5. Gr. 2-5.

Luey and Miri have an . . . unusual home life. Their best friend is a human-size frog named Phil, their mom has some inexplicable magic powers, and their dad is a cat in every way. One day, Cat Dad bolts into the linen closet with Miri hot on his tail, and Luey and Phil tumble in after them. But this linen closet is far from just storage—inside is a forest and a goblin cave, and those goblins kidnap the ragtag crew. It turns out Cat Dad is a bit of a celebrity to the goblins, and they want to show their appreciation by planting him on a fancy throne. It's a nonsensical story with an even more nonsensical conclusion, but it's best not to look for logic,

since the off-the-wall fun and comical scenes capture kids' imaginative games perfectly. Wilson's purple-heavy palette, loopy cartoon figures, and playful sound effects ("FLAWALLOP") are a great complement to the fast-paced story, which should find an eager audience among fans of the TV show *Adventure Time*. —*Sarah Hunter*

The Incredible Plate Tectonics Comic.

By Kanani K. M. Lee. Illus. by Adam Wallenta.

Oct. 2014. 36p. No Starch, paper, \$7.95 (9781593275495). 741.5. Gr. 3-5.

George rides his skateboard to school while reviewing the information he'll need for his earth-sciences test. As he thinks about plate tectonics, earthquakes, and tsunamis, he imagines himself as superheroic Geo on his rocket board and his backpack as a robotic talking dog, dealing with obstacles, which are actually everyday things such as dodging a car splashing a puddle or helping a woman avoid an open manhole in the street. All the while, African American George/Geo reviews faults, subduction, seismic waves, and other terms, which are shown in the bright, clear illustrations. Although the text sometimes overwhelms the colorful panels, the visuals do help readers better understand plate tectonics. Lee, a professor of geology and geophysics at Yale, presents accurate information, while Wallenta's art shifts cleverly between superhero Geo and human-boy George as he makes his way to school. The book's back matter includes more information and educational online activities, which are all suitable for elementary students. —*Kat Kan*

Lowriders in Space.

By Cathy Camper. Illus. by Raúl the Third.

Nov. 2014. 112p. Chronicle, \$22.99 (9781452121550). 741.5. Gr. 3-6.

Lupe Impala, El Chavo Flapjack, and Elirio Malaria love fixing up cars together, but they are tired of working for tough old *el jefe*, so when they see an ad for a universal car competition—including a category for *ranflas* (lowriders), their favorite kind of car—they get busy fixing up the hunk of junk in their yard so they can win the contest and open their own garage. It's slow going until they stumble on some old plane-engine parts, and then things really start flying when, *¡que chido!*, their rocket-powered car zips into space for a stellar detailing job. Raúl's snazzy panels—impressively drawn in only red, blue, and black ballpoint pen on tea-stained paper—resemble an amped-up Mighty Mouse cartoon rendered in anarchic yet skillful doodles. It's a joyfully explosive style, and it perfectly matches the Latino characters and barrio setting. Camper sprinkles Spanish slang throughout (all defined in a glossary at the end) and closes with a note about the development of lowriders by Mexican Americans in Southern California after WWII. *¡Estellar!* —*Sarah Hunter*

★ Reading with Pictures: Comics That Make Kids Smarter.

Ed. by Josh Elder.

2014. 184p. illus. Andrews McMeel, \$19.99 (9781449458782). 741.5. Gr. 3-6.

In 2009, Elder founded Reading with Pictures, a nonprofit organization devoted to recognizing comics' potential as an educational tool. Their website is at the forefront of this effort, and *Reading with Pictures* is the tangible manifestation of this mission. It's a tremendous relief, then, that the book delivers. Elder has assembled an array of creators adept at speaking in engaging, nondidactic voices, and each subject—language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies—features three to five stories that skillfully craft basic principles into energetic stories. Not surprisingly, language arts and social studies achieve the greatest success here, and Fred Van Lente and Ryan Dunlavey's "George Washington: Action President" proves the high-water mark for a blend of facts and comics artistry. Stories run toward the comedic, but every student will find something to connect with, and even though teacher-oriented content is included, kids will happily gloss over that to get right to the comics. Although downloadable lesson plans are available for each story (a fact that could be better highlighted), any one of them could easily be assigned as a supplement to a larger lesson. A great tool in itself, hopefully *Reading with Pictures* will also prove to be but the first building block of a much vaster structure. —*Jesse Karp*



The Stratford Zoo Midnight Revue Presents Macbeth.

By Ian Lendler. Illus. by Zack Giallongo.

2014. 80p. First Second, paper, \$12.99 (9781596439153). 741.5. Gr. 3-6.

At night, the animals at the Stratford Zoo go to the theater. While snacking on peanuts and carrion, the animal-family audience settles in for a production of the Scottish Play. The lion takes on the role of power-hungry, hubris-addled Macbeth, while the spotted cheetah (of course) plays his conniving wife. Their literal understanding of the term *power-hungry* means the copious use of ketchup is not just for prop blood, and a stork ("not born of a mother") saves the day. All's well that ends well, and when daylight comes to the zoo, the animals are back to their usual lazy habits, except the peacock, who posts a flier about the next performance on the docket (*Romeo and Juliet*). An age-appropriate ending (everyone escapes Macbeth's expansive belly), along with the beautifully colorful panels and witty, entertaining tone, makes this a wonderfully accessible, engaging, and kid-friendly adaptation of the Shakespeare classic. The welcome hint at further installments in this wry and playful series means the Stratford Zoo Midnight Revue is a marquee to watch. —*Francisca Goldsmith*

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