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LOUISE YATES' TOP TEN LIST

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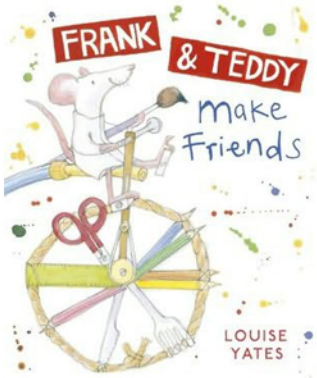

Today is World Book Day! And so we give you another top ten book list... Louise Yates is an author/illustrator who lives in London. Her second book, Dog Loves Books
- a beautifully illustrated and outrageous book about a dog who loves books, won the 2010 Roal Dahl Funny Prize. Her most recent book, Frank and Teddy Make Friends
is a story about friendship and is equally as charming. Louise studied English at Oxford University and currently attends the Prince's Drawing School. We are thrilled she took some time out of her busy schedule to give us her top ten children's books. Here they are:

1.) ***Ameliaranne at the Circus***
, by Margaret Gilmour, illustrated by S.B. Pearse
This was my first picture book ? or the first one I can remember. My Grandmother gave it to me (it was hers when she was a child and was given to her in 1933). I learned the story off by heart and knew exactly when to turn the page, so it appeared that I knew how to read. I think I got so much praise and attention for this precocious trick that it encouraged me to learn to read properly!
I was enchanted by the idea that I might find an elephant with a damaged trunk at the end of the garden and become a heroine to younger brothers and sisters as Ameliaranne does in the story ? though as the youngest of two with an easily unimpressed older brother, this was the stuff that dreams (and picture books!) were made of.

2.) ***Eloise***
, by Kay Thompson, illustrated by Hilary Knight
I love the way Eloise?s character is written ? this is a brilliantly self-centred, first-person narrative! The illustrations are a complete delight and the page compositions perfectly compliment Eloise?s erratic enthusiasms. In the same glance they give both the child?s and the adults? impressions of her anarchic antics in the fabulous adventure playground that is The Plaza Hotel!

3.) ***Clown***
, by Quentin Blake
Clown is ?silent? ? there is no text ? and Quentin Blake?s amazing ability to describe emotion through facial and physical expression shows that illustration itself can be a form of mime. Clown?s story is full of ups and downs, and the book subtly celebrates the comic and tragic nature of life - conjuring the essential spirit of the delightful and heart-warming Clown.

4.) ***Jacko***
, by John S. Goodall
I remember Jacko, the stow-away monkey and his parrot from childhood. I?ve just had to re-order it, as it?s a vague but extremely

fond memory! This book also has no words. It is quite small and a landscape format. Its pages alternate between half pages and full pages and when you flap the half pages back and fourth against the larger ones, they complete the story in different ways. It?s a very ingenious design ? allowing children to ?spot the difference? and to see alternative outcomes (and near misses!) within a single scenario. I find this book, with its detailed description of life aboard ship and Jacko?s mischievous evasion of authority completely transporting.

5.) ***A Long Piece of String***
, by William Wondriska
I like the pared down red and white pallet, the simplicity of the concept, the surreal use of scale and the twist at the end!

6.) ***Frog and Toad***
, by Arnold Lobel
The best of friends ? to each other and to anyone lucky enough to have read these books! I like them just as much now as I did as a child and their struggles seem just as relevant to me now as they did then! Arnold Lobel is also brilliant at illustrating weather. You really feel the wind blow and the sun shine in these books.

7.) ***It's a Secret!***
, by John Burningham
I love John Burningham?s books. I find it hard to choose one that I like above the others, but at the moment it is between ?Oi! Get Off our Train? and his latest book: ?It?s A Secret!?. His artwork is always very original and conceptually interesting. He uses different media with what appears to be both great abandon and great care - not an easy thing to do! His stories seem to have a rarefied quality to them ? a delicious element of secrecy and anarchy; and his characters often have gumption and pluck, mingled with a quiet sensitivity, eccentricity and intelligence: I love spending time with them.

8.) ***The Cat That Lived a Million Times***
, by Yoko Sano
I found this book in a Japanese shop in London, I bought it because I fell in love with the illustrations - the text was in Japanese. The cat has such an intelligent, worldly and defiant gaze. The colours are beautiful - subtle ink washes, loose and free. There is a sort of flattened perspective and a naiveté to the style that is very endearing and interesting. I became very curious to know the story and found a translation on the Internet. It is a sort of parable about the search for happiness. This completed my impression of what is, I think, a very, very beautiful book.

9.) ***Wind in the Willows***
, by Kenneth Grahame, illustrated by E.H. Shepard
I have always loved this story about the friendship between Ratty, Mole, Badger and Mr Toad. E.H. Shepard?s illustrations for Winnie the Pooh are equally wonderful, but I thought that readers are less likely to be aware that he also illustrated a version of The Wind in the Willows. One of my favourite images is that of Toad in the dock. The scale of the little creature in front of a huge and comically menacing policeman, expresses so perfectly the indignity with which poor Toad has fallen.

10.) ***Jitterbug Jam***
, by Barbara Jean Hicks, Illustrated by Alexis Deacon
I might have also chosen Beegu, or Slow Loris, or While You Were Sleeping, here ? books that Alexis Deacon wrote as well as illustrated. I think he is a virtuoso illustrator. There is a tenderness in his drawings that I find very moving. His work combines a vulnerability, a degree of darkness and a vivid, joyful technicolour quality, that to me describe the stuff of childhood itself.

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