

THE BOOK NOOK

Your monthly guide to making the most of storytime and raising forever readers

5 New Titles to Pick Up Now

1. *Armadillo Antics*

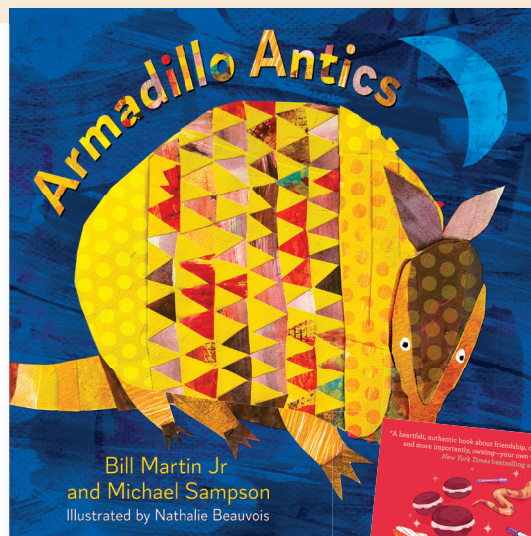
Written by Bill Martin Jr. and Michael Sampson, illustrated by Nathalie Beauvois

A collab between Martin, the late author of *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, and his longtime writing partner, this short rhyming story about a night in the life of an armadillo is cozy and soothing. Beauvois's collage-style art, especially the armadillo curled up inside its nest, gives Eric Carle vibes. A collection of eight facts on the final page ("The snout of an armadillo is as strong as steel") will fascinate kids and grown-ups alike. Ages 3 to 6

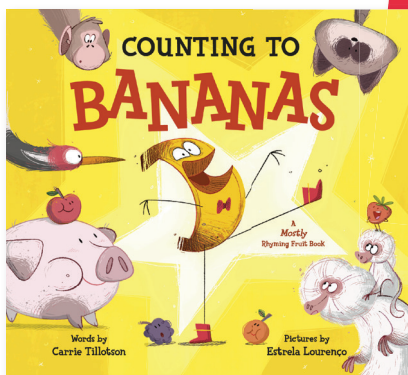
2. *Dear Student*

Written by Elly Swartz

Tweens won't be able to put down this heartfelt story with a fresh plot, vibrant characters, and even a recipe for whoopie pies. Socially awkward Autumn lands the position as the anonymous advice columnist for the school newspaper, and things are going well until her secret is threatened. Readers will relate to how Autumn finds courage to continue her role and navigates friendship drama (her two new pals don't like each other). Swartz has a knack for writing authentic-sounding dialogue that resonates with kids. Ages 10+



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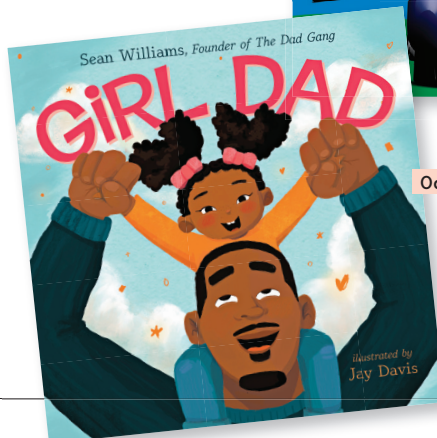


③

All the
feels



④



Ode to modern
fatherhood

⑤

3. *Counting to Bananas*

Written by Carrie Tillotson, illustrated by Estrela Lourenço

An endearing yet opinionated banana makes learning numbers hilarious. The story starts as kids might expect: one plum, two figs, three oranges. But when four pigs show up, the banana interjects that pigs aren't a fruit. The counting by ones continues up to 20 with occasional punny commentary ("I'm starting to feel bruised," the overlooked banana chimes in, after plantains are picked for number ten). When the narrator skip counts from 20 to 100, things get even wilder. Mo Willems fans will give this book one, two, three, four, five stars! Ages 4 to 8

4. *Moody Moody Cars*

Written by Eileen Kennedy-Moore, Ph.D., photographs by Michael Furman

Not since *Inside Out* has a story about feelings felt so innovative. The grills of classic cars display facial expressions that the rhythmic text connects to their mood. (In a note to readers, clinical psychologist Dr. Kennedy-Moore, a *Parents* advisor, explains that the concept is called pareidolia.) The story covers ten emotions, from jealousy to excitement, and has a nifty "key" of them at the end. Ages 4 to 8

5. *Girl Dad*

Written by Sean Williams, illustrated by Jay Davis

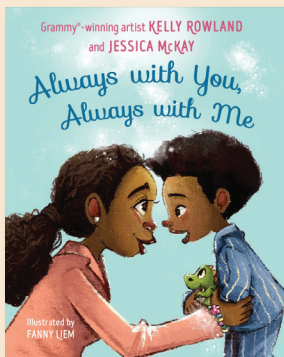
Williams, CEO of The Dad Gang—a group that celebrates Black fathers and challenges stereotypical depictions of them—crafts this cheerful story about dad-daughter pairs. Dads rock bows, read stories, and uplift their daughters. ("He'll remind you that you're beautiful—that you're also very smart. Girl dad's the one who has your back and had it from the start.") The colors in Davis's drawings make the story extra warm and fuzzy. Ages 4 to 8



BOOK CRUSH

Kelly Rowland's New Release

The Grammy-winning singer pens a deeply personal picture book about a mom who juggles a career with caring for her school-age son.



Singer-songwriter Kelly Rowland credits Toni Morrison for inspiring her latest project: "She said, 'If there's a book you want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it.'" For Rowland, mom of Noah, 1, and Titan, 7, that book is *Always With You, Always With Me*, which grapples with the separation a mom and son feel when she leaves for work. Although the mom in the story, cowritten with educator Jessica McKay, is a construction supervisor, Rowland drew on her experiences as a working musician for the book, due out April 26. "I'm a working mother. My friends are working mothers. The part in the book where the mother cries in the car, I have definitely seen those days," she says. *Parents* caught up with Rowland after a performance.

What do you hope families learn from the story?

I want parents to know it is okay to feel what they're experiencing and to

be honest about the emotional journey and anxiety that it causes. We all need to find the vocabulary to explain it to ourselves and our children.

Has a childhood book stuck with you?

My mother used to read me *Love You Forever*, by Robert Munsch. I adore the dynamic that it shows between a mother and a child.

How do you balance your kids' reading time with screen time?

We try our hardest not to do screen time during the week and have it on the weekends. And not all day on the weekends. It's hard sometimes because of how convenient it is. But we read a lot together, and Titan is enjoying reading books to his brother.

What kinds of books excite Titan?

He loves learning about animals, so *Ultimate Reptile-Opedia*, *Discovering Sharks*, and *Science Comics Sharks* are his faves.

Describe your perfect reading experience.

On a beach listening to the waves, in a hammock, curled up with my favorite book. The best!

A hit with
Rowland's son



POWER TO THE PRINCESSES

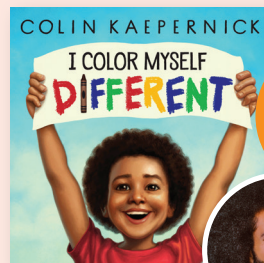
Because marrying a man you only just met shouldn't be a thing, here are three shimmery yet smart alternatives to the old fairy-tale tropes.

● In **Princess Charming**, written by Zibby Owens and illustrated by Holly Hatam, a girl who doesn't think she has any talents ends up saving the day. Ages 3 to 6



● The characters in **Not All Princesses Dress in Pink**, written by Jane Yolen and her daughter, Heidi E. Y. Stemple, and illustrated by Anne-Sophie Lanquetin, rock a tiara but still play soccer, build things, and get messy. Look for the Wonder Woman lunch box sneaked into the illustrations. Ages 4 to 8

● The nine beginning chapter books in the **Princess in Black** series, written by Shannon and Dean Hale and illustrated by LeUyen Pham, feature a girl with an alter ego. She changes from a fancy dress to a caped black costume to battle the evildoers in her kingdom. Ages 5 to 8



RAISING
THE
FUTURE
BOOK CLUB



CELEBRATING ALL FAMILIES

Former Super Bowl quarterback and global human rights activist Colin Kaepernick writes about his younger self in his new picture book, *I Color Myself Different*. A classmate asks Kaepernick, who was adopted by white parents, "Why are you the only brown one in your family?" The story explores adoption, race, identity, and self-love in ways young kids can understand. Check @Parents Instagram on April 5 to watch Kaepernick read his book. Get more details at parents.com/bookclub.