



### **The Problem with Not Being Scared of Kids**

By Dan Richards, Illustrated by Robert Neubecker, *Boyd's Mills*, 2015, 28 pp., ISBN 978-1-62979-102-9, \$16.95.

Some monsters want to be friends, but it is hard when you just want to fit in, but you don't. However, the monsters in this book don't give up and they finally find a little boy who isn't afraid of them and wants to play. With vivid, colorful illustrations of a variety of non-scary monsters, this is a lighthearted look at how to make friends when you don't quite fit in and are a little different. There is also an earlier companion book entitled *The Problem with Not Being Scared of Monsters*. This would be an excellent book to use in a friendship unit or around Halloween for a non-scary monster story with younger children in both schools and public libraries.

**A** | 4-8  
**V** | LOVE

*Anne Hoffman*

### **The Remembering Day/ El Día de los Muertos**

By Pat Mora, Illustrated by Robert Casilla, Translated by Gabriela Baeza Ventura, Piñata, 2015, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-55885-805-3, \$17.95.

We all know about the celebration of the Day of the Dead in Mexico, but what are the origins of this important day? This is the question that author Pat Mora poses as she imagines that the holiday began long ago in an indigenous community and reflects the love between a grandmother and her granddaughter. Mamá Alma passes on family values, history, and traditions, as she chats about the past and plays hide and seek with Bella. The joy of being together is visible in the caring looks they exchange. Mamá Alma talks about her mother and father and remembers their times together and objects that are meaningful to their family. Memories mean that they are always with her, even now that they are dead.

Mamá Alma asks Bella to plan a remembering day every fall to think of her when she is gone, a day for singing, telling stories, and praying. Mamá Alma tells Bella to teach the

community that when they think about those who are gone, they will always be with them. One night Bella sees a small light escaping from her house and realizes her grandmother has died. The next year, Bella organizes the community to remember. Bella dreams of her grandmother enjoying all her favorite foods and songs. When Bella looks up at their favorite tree, her grandmother is on the highest branch, smiling down at her! Even though she misses her grandmother, she knows she is with her.

This beautifully illustrated book focuses on the love between generations, the teaching of traditional values and customs, and the importance of remembering loved ones who have passed away. It is a sensitive and thoughtful introduction to the subject of death for young children.

**A** | 5-10  
**V** | COMMUNITY-FAITH-LOVE

*Roberta Gordenstein*

### **A Riddle in Ruby**

By Kent Davis, *Greenwillow*, 2015, 432 pp., ISBN 978-0-06-236834-8, \$17.99.

Kent Davis's first book, *A Riddle in Ruby*, is also the first book of a planned trilogy. Davis, of Montana State University, is well-qualified to undertake the task, employing his degrees in literature, drama, and theater.

Fantasy reigns as the reader follows the adventures of Ruby. A pirate's daughter, she accompanies him on the voyages from Boston to Philadelphia and back. But this time is different. In mid-journey, her father insists that she, a shipmate, and a new friend hide in safety on the ship until he tells them to come out. Hours pass. He does not come... night becomes day. They search, but he and all the crew are gone!

How do they get to shore? Where is he? How will they find him? Reader, hold on tight to your seat. Prepare for a journey into fantasy run wild, into adventure after adventure, as they come to shore and begin a search for him that becomes weirdly more and more complex.

**A** | 8-12  
**V** | COURAGE-HOPE

*Frances O'Dell, OSF*

### **Woodford Brave**

By Marcia Thornton Jones, Illustrated by Kevin Whipple, *Calkins Creek*, 2015, 192 pp., ISBN 978-1-62979-305-4, \$16.95.

Cory Woodford is trying to live up to his family's legacy of courage, but it isn't easy. His father is away fighting in World War II, his German neighbor may be a Nazi spy, and his best friend Aidan is spending less time with him and more time with a mean-spirited boy who constantly challenges Cory's claims of bravery. When a new girl moves to town, Cory begins to question his ideas about friendship and courage.

Cory copes with his challenges and feelings by writing and drawing a comic book featuring his favorite hero, the Mighty Space Warrior, and a character of his own invention, the Warrior's Kid. The plot of Cory's comic reflects his experiences, challenges, and growth. The strongest feature of the book are Kevin Whipple's illustrations of Cory's comic. The comic book segments are smoothly integrated into the narrative, and the black-and-white drawings are reminiscent of 1940s comic books.

The book includes an author's note about her inspiration for the book and a selected bibliography of books and websites for readers interested in exploring more about World War II. It would be a good supplemental purchase for public and school libraries.

**A** | 10-14  
**V** | COURAGE

*Andrea Hebert*