

And the winner of the 2013 Caldecott is...



It's that time of year again, awards season! Sure the Oscars and Golden Globes may get the most media attention, but the announcement every children's librarian looks forward to is the Caldecott Medal. Each year the Caldecott Medal is awarded by the Association for Library Service to Children to "the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children". The ALSC may also name a few runners-up, or Honor Books. We'll learn the 2013 medal winner tomorrow, Monday, January 28th.

So who will win the 2013 medal? In anticipation of this year's announcement our Children's Department pulled as many contenders as we could find. We chose our books based on recommendations from School Library Journal, Horn Book, and the more populist list put together by Goodreads. We dubbed our cart of thirty-some books "The Caldecart" and over the past week we've read as many of them as we could, making notes and picking our favorites. Was there a consensus? Nope! But here are a few of the books we liked the best and a few on which we couldn't quite agree.



Books about animals, especially dogs, are always hits with us and the Caldecott committee (did you read last year's wordless winner, *A Ball For Daisy* by Chris Raschka?) So of course we loved *Homer*, written and illustrated by Elisha Cooper. It's a quiet book about a dog who is perfectly content to spend the day on the porch. With few words, the picture book relies on lovely watercolor illustrations in washed out tones of peach and blue. Another favorite was *Little Dog Lost* by Monica Carnesi. This touching book tells the true story of a dog who drifts out to sea on moving sheet of ice and is heroically rescued by a ship of scientists.

And then it's Spring™, illustrated by 2011 winner Erin Stead and penned by Julie Fogliano, received mixed reviews from our staff. Called "beautiful" and "sweet, but boring," one librarian thought it just didn't stand up against similarly themed classics like *The Carrot Seed*™ and *The Gardener*™. Another book we couldn't quite agree on was *The Obstinate Pen*™, written and illustrated by Frank W. Dormer. It's a funny book about a pen with a mind of its own. Full of memorable lines like "Kiss her, banana head!" it has clear kid appeal, but one librarian thought it was 'weird for weird's sake.'



Jon Klassen and his moodily illustrated books have quickly become favorites among our staff. So it makes sense that three Klassen illustrated books found their way to onto the Caldecart. We loved *I Want My Hat Back*™, and were disappointed it wasn't honored in 2012. Opinions on the follow-up, *This is Not My Hat*™, about a tiny fish who steals the hat of a much much larger fish, were mixed. Some thought it suffered from sequel syndrome while another librarian backed it whole-heartedly, noting that the book is a great read aloud and beloved by children. A more likely medal candidate is *Extra Yarn*™, illustrated by Jon Klassen and written by Mac Barnett. In *Extra Yarn* Klassen employs a softly colorful palette full of texture and leading lines. An ideal style for the tale of a girl who knits a special something for everyone (and everything) in her town. Two more picture books we liked were *Green*™ by Laura Vaccaro Seeger and *Mom, It's My First Day of Kindergarten*™ by Hyewon Yum. Full of rich illustrations, *Green* uses die-cut pages to guide you through the book. It's beautiful, but may not have enough of a plot to win the big one. On the other hand, the story of *Mom, It's My First Day of Kindergarten* isn't particularly original. But there's something about the emotional illustrations and the successful role reversal of the small kid, big parent dynamic that we loved.



The Caldecott Medal and Honor books will be announced live tomorrow morning at 11 a.m. Eastern Time. You can watch the free webcast hosted by the American Library Association live, or follow the live blog on the [ALA Youth Media Awards Facebook page](#)™. We'll also learn the winners of the 2013 Newbery, Printz, and Coretta Scott King awards. We can't wait!

Posted by Aubrey D. on January 27, 2013

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