

» The Mummy Chronicles

8 gems to read along with junior



BY TAN KENG YAO

MY FIVE-YEAR-OLD son is a great bargainer, at least when it comes to haggling over how many books I read to him before bedtime.

He loves to be read to, and he not only wants me to read to him, but he also wants four books each time. I don't know how he derived that magical figure, but he is uncompromising about it.

I recognise that reading to a child is crucial to intellectual development. But sometimes, after a day of grappling with miscellaneous chores that I struggle to name but which sap a great deal of my energy, all I want to do is lie down come night-time.

However, my son is having none of that "too tired to read me a book" nonsense.

So, trying my luck, I'll offer him one book.

"Four," he'll insist.

"Two," I counter.

"Four."

Okay, he wins. I really shouldn't fight too hard when it comes to this.

Fortunately, there are many children's books which are enjoyable enough to stave off the sleepies and stand the test of repeated reading (because my son likes having each book read to him approximately 276 times before he tires of them).

Here are eight lively books that my son and I have enjoyed.

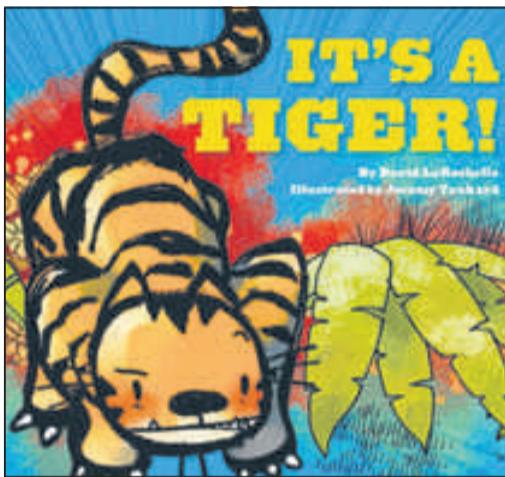
All are available from the National Library.

1. IT'S A TIGER! BY DAVID LAROCHELLE

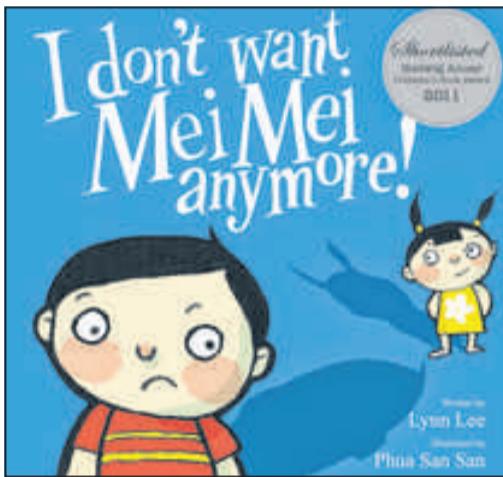
This is a surreal book in which a tiger is seemingly stalking a boy, trailing him from jungle to sea and popping up in unexpected places. However, it comes with an aww-inducing surprise ending. This book is fun because the simple repetitive text and shout-aloud lines allow my son to join in the reading – and yelling.

2. BADNESS FOR BEGINNERS BY IAN WHYBROW AND TONY ROSS

In this book, dad and mum wolf try their best to teach their kids how to be naughty. Here, the familiar theme of being good is turned



READ ALOUD: This book has simple repetitive text and shout-aloud lines for kids to join in the reading.
PHOTO: AMAZON



LOCAL TWIST: The illustrations help liven up a familiar storyline of a boy who wants to change his sibling.
PHOTO: STRAITS TIMES PRESS

on its head, which tickled my son, who is always told to be good.

But eventually, dad and mum get their comeuppance, showing that being bad doesn't pay. My son laughed at the naughtiness of the wolves, and laughed even more when he realised what goes around comes around.

3. I DON'T WANT MEI MEI ANYMORE BY LYNN LEE

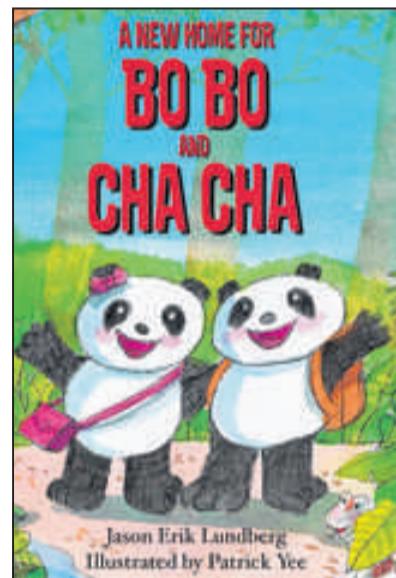
This story by a local author tells of Mark, who is tired of little sister Mei Mei's antics and tries to swap her for a better playmate. The storyline is not new, but I like the delightful twist given by the cute illustrations with adult humour and the story's localised context.

4. A NEW HOME FOR BO BO AND CHA CHA BY JASON ERIK LUNDBERG

Pandas Bo Bo and Cha Cha have come to live in the Singapore Zoo, but Cha Cha suffers culture shock from the humidity and strange local animals. This book teaches kids how to be accepting of unfamiliar situations. On top of that, I find it fun to read the speech of Singlish-speaking orang utans, and it is also a chance to discuss the different kinds of English used in Singapore.

5. DAVE BY SUE HENDRA

A gluttonous cat finds himself stuck in a cat flap after an indulgent breakfast. His adorable animal friends try many ways to get him loose, including a scheme involving flatulence. This book was



CULTURE CLASH: This story on pandas at the zoo teaches kids how to accept unfamiliar situations. PHOTO: EPIGRAM BOOKS

and cleverness of this book.

7. BUNNY MONEY BY ROSEMARY WELLS

Bunny siblings Max and Ruby go to town to buy a birthday present for grandma, but Max fritters away their money on frivolous things like glow-in-the-dark vampire teeth. This book endeared itself to my son, who recognised the allure of buying whimsical things. But at the same time, this helped me to talk to him about budgeting and the difference between a need and a want.

8. COMMOTION IN THE OCEAN BY GILES ANDRAE

This is a collection of short poems about marine creatures. My son and I loved this book for its sunny illustrations as well as the animals' quirky personalities, like the crab who wants to be a spy. Reading rhymes to children is important because it helps them grasp phonics, and teaches them about language patterns and structures.

What books do your children enjoy reading?
Share with us at myp@sph.com.sg



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