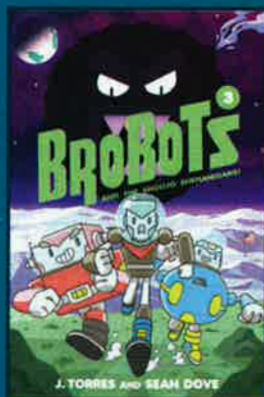
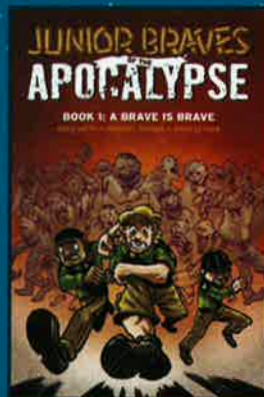


NEW & FORTHCOMING MIDDLE GRADE GRAPHIC NOVELS!



DISTRIBUTED BY SIMON & SCHUSTER

Middle Grade Books

Marketing Middle Grade Books

We asked editors and marketing and publicity teams to share their insights on middle grade marketing trends and to spotlight some recent successful efforts in this area.

According to Ben Rosenthal, senior editor at HarperCollins imprint Katherine Tegen Books, “The marketing of middle grade is trying to balance between speaking directly to the readers and to the gatekeepers, as you need to be able to get both groups excited about a book or series.” He offers a few examples of what seems to be working: “I think we’re seeing more interactive content set in the world of the book or series, such as trailers and microvideos, or BuzzFeed-type quizzes,” he says. “For *The Lost Rainforest: Mez’s Magic* by Eliot Schrefer [which published in January], our marketing team did these quizzes about what



Real-life pals author Shannon Hale (l.) and illustrator LeUyen Pham teamed up for a joint tour in support of the graphic memoir *Real Friends* from *First Second*.

kind of rainforest animal you are. That’s a really fun idea, as it can engage both kids and gatekeepers and spark discussion.”

Abby McAden, associate publisher at Scholastic, agrees that the marketing of middle grade books is multifaceted in terms of its targets. “Middle grade books are probably the last category where adults control the purchasing,” she says. “Kids in upper elementary and middle school are still influenced by their classroom experiences too. So a lot of energy goes into reaching the gatekeepers.” She spoke about her company’s unique window on the school world via its book club and book fair business. “Our Scholastic Book Clubs and Book Fairs interact with kids more directly than we in the trade division do through our retailers.” McAden describes how marketing through the school channel works, using a typical scenario that many adults still remember fondly. “Kids receive the book club flyers and share with their parents, and kids actually experience the books directly at their school’s book fair,” she says. “Even if a title isn’t selected right then and there, representation—for every trade publisher—in our clubs and fairs allows kids to consider the books and maybe come back later [to them] at the bookstore or library.”

Over the past year, Scholastic rolled out an expansive effort to

Middle Grade Books

promote the *I Survived* historical fiction series by Lauren Tarshis, which has more than 25 million copies in print. The two newest titles are *I Survived the American Revolution, 1776* (2017) and *I Survived the Children’s Blizzard, 1888* (Feb.). Highlights included an author tour to multiple schools, libraries, and bookstores in October 2017 and March 2018, and “Beyond the Battlefield,” a virtual field trip to the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, where kids hear from historians and see various relics of the era. The video has been viewed by close to two million teachers and students nationwide.

At Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, senior publicity manager Heather Moore detailed the strategy for the March launch of *Switched*, fourth in Jen Calonita’s *Fairy Tale Reform School* series. “We created a sampler that included chapters of *Switched* and a preview of *Misfits*, the first title in Jen’s new series, *Royal Academy Rebels* [due out in October], and used it to create excitement for both books and create a bridge between the two series, which are set in the same world,” she says. The author gave away copies of the sampler at school visits throughout March, and Moore notes that the material was also helpful in driving preorders for *Switched*.

R.J. Palacio’s 2012 novel *Wonder* continues to sell extremely well, helped by the release of the November 2017 feature film. As part of its ongoing support for the book, Random House Children’s Books has been issuing a Certified Kind Classroom Challenge for the past three years, allowing classes to participate in various activities designed to spread kindness and qualifying them to win prizes. For the 2017–2018 school year, Lionsgate picked up and amplified the challenge idea as part of its marketing for the movie. A more general promotion continues to put forth the “Choose Kind” message that is at the heart of the book via such efforts as current N.Y.C. subway advertising.

At Macmillan Children’s Books, director of publicity Molly Brouillette Ellis notes a winning campaign for the graphic memoir *Real Friends* by Shannon Hale (2017), illustrated by LeUyen Pham. Elements included a digital advertising campaign on YouTube and SuperAwesome, featuring a book trailer; a National Best Friends Day program targeted toward summer reading; a craft activity kit, including friendship bracelets and draw-your-own-story starters; a national events strategy during Children’s Book Week; and a national media campaign.

Annie Nybo, editor at Albert Whitman, cited a recent major campaign for her company. “We had the 75th anniversary of the *Boxcar Children* last year and found success by releasing an illustrated version of the first book and creating a miniseries where the *Boxcar Children* went on an international adventure,” she explains. “It was a moment to celebrate everything the fans know and love about the series, while simultaneously embracing the future with a new logo and series branding.”

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers rolled out its support for Peter Brown’s *The Wild Robot Escapes*, which published in March, 50 days prior to release with a countdown-to-publication campaign. Other marketing and publicity highlights included a national kid- and parent-targeted consumer advertising effort with a reach of four million; a holiday advertising campaign with a reach of 1.5 million (coming in fall 2018); a book club promotion, including a book club guide and a nationwide book club outreach with a reach of 275,000; and a two-week national tour visiting 10 markets, and additional events throughout the spring.

—S.M.

QUIRK BOOKS PRESENTS

COMIC QUESTS

MIDDLE GRADE GRAPHIC NOVELS
THAT YOU CAN PLAY!



“I enjoyed that it was a RPG. . . . It’s similar to *Dungeons and Dragons*, except with a different story.”
—Marshall, age 9, on *Knight’s Club*

“It feels just like a video game!”
—Keenan, age 12

“A fun and adventurous read.”
—Iivia, age 11, on *Hocus & Pocus*

COMING IN JANUARY 2019:



Available for download on Edelweiss and NetGalley
Learn more at QuirkBooks.com/ComicQuests



/quirkbooks



QUIRK BOOKS