

## 2023-2024 Willow Award Finalist List

### Shining Willow

**Abuelita and Me** by Leonarda Carranza, illustrated by Rafael Mayani. Annick Press, ©2022. ISBN 9781773216102 (hc).

*A girl and her beloved abuelita lean on each other as they contend with racism while running errands in the city.*

**And J.J. Slept** by Loretta Garbutt, illustrated by Erika Rodriguez Medina. Kids Can Press, ©2022. ISBN 9781525304194 (hc).

*A boisterous adoptive family welcomes their new baby boy who, thankfully, has a unique requirement for sleeping.*

**The Brass Charm** by Monique Polak, illustrated by Marie Lafrance. North Winds Press, ©2022. ISBN 9781443157582 (hc).

*Tali is staying at her Oma's apartment after a storm demolishes her family's house. She is upset at losing everything, but starts to think differently when Oma shares her story of survival during World War II, the brass monkey charm that she was given, and a message of hope, kindness, and perseverance in the face of disaster.*

**Butterflies Are Pretty...Gross!** By Rosemary Mosco, illustrated by Jacob Souva. Tundra Books, ©2021. ISBN 9780735265929 (hc).

*This humorous book introduces and explores interesting and not commonly known facts about butterflies.*

**Chickadee: Criminal Mastermind** by Monica Silvie, illustrated by Elina Ellis. Kids Can Press, ©2022. ISBN 9781525303388 (hc).

*A chickadee discovers he isn't quite who he thinks he is in this both entertaining and informative tale about discovering one's true nature.*

**Mina** by Matthew Forsythe. Simon & Schuster Canada, ©2022. ISBN 9781982182816 (hc).

*Mina and her father live in a hollowed-out tree stump on the edge of a pond on the edge of a forest. Nothing ever bothers Mina, until one day her father brings home a suspicious surprise from the woods.*

**I Hope / nipakoseyimon** by Monique Gray Smith, illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard, translated into Plains Cree by Dolores Greyeyes Sand. Orca Book Publishers, © 2022. ISBN 9781459833258 (hc).

*In this bilingual picture book written in English and translated into Plains Cree, Indigenous author, Monique Gray Smith, explores all the hopes adults have for the children in their lives. Also available in French.*

**Petal the Angry Cow** by Maureen Fergus, illustrated by Olga Demidova. Tundra Books, ©2021. ISBN 9780735264687 (hc).

*Petal, a big-hearted cow with, unfortunately, an even bigger temper, learns how to control her behaviour from a swan, but not how you might expect.*

**Professor Goose Debunks Goldilocks and the Three Bears** by Paulette Bourgeois, illustrated by Alex G. Griffiths. Tundra Books, ©2022. ISBN 9780735267305 (hc).

*Mother Goose's great niece, Professor Goose, shares the truth – that fairy tales are NOT based in science – as she travels through the pages of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, exposing the flaws and explaining the scientific facts.*

**The Wolf Suit** by Sid Sharp. Annick Press, ©2022. ISBN 9781773217208 (hc).

*Sheep Bellwether Riggwelter must go into the forest to pick more blackberries. To keep himself safe from predators, he decides to disguise himself in a sewn wolf suit. However, he realizes he can't enjoy the forest in a bulky suit and he may not be the only creature who feels that way.*

## **Diamond Willow**

**Apartment 713** by Kevin Sylvester. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., ©2022. ISBN 9781443460941 (hc), 9781443460965 (pbk 2024).

*Jake hates his rundown home, The Regency. However, meeting the quirky residents and finding mysterious secrets changes his perspective. When word comes that the apartment building will be demolished, Jake feels powerless to help stop the destruction until he enters Apartment 713 and travels back in time to discover The Regency's illustrious past and hope for its future.*

**Berani** by Michelle Kadarusman. Pajama Press, ©2022. ISBN 9781772782608 (hc), 9781772782936 (pbk).

*Told in three voices; Malia, who is prepared to risk anything to save the rainforest and endangered orangutans; Ari, who wants to help the caged orangutan, Ginger Juice, owned by his uncle; and Ginger Juice, who longs for freedom in the forest with her mother. Will Malia and Ari be brave enough to act? Can Ginger Juice be rescued?*

**The Crosswood** by Gabrielle Prendergast. Orca Book Publishers, ©2021. ISBN 9781459826625 (pbk).

*Blue Jasper is hiking with his younger siblings, twins Indigo and Violet when they suddenly disappear. Blue frantically searches for them and ends up in the world of faeries with strange rules and discovers a secret that affects the lives of his family. He must rescue the twins or face the consequences of a broken faerie pact.*

**Extremely Gross Animals** by Claire Eamer. Kids Can Press, ©2021. ISBN 9781525303371 (hc).

*What disgusts us doesn't disgust these extremely gross animals. From super spitters to tongue-eating parasites, these creatures' icky adaptations are what help them survive and thrive. Be prepared to be grossed out!*

**For the Record** by Monique Polak. Owlkids Books, ©2022. ISBN 9781771474375 (hc).

*Justine is stressed living in two vastly different homes since her parents' divorce. Her mother enlists Justine to collect evidence against her father to obtain sole custody. When she finds herself creating outright lies about her father to please her mother, Justine starts to question her mother's behaviour and must find the courage to tell the truth.*

**Ghostlight** by Kenneth Oppel. Puffin Canada, ©2022. ISBN 9780735272330 (hc), 9780735272354 (pbk 2023).

*Gabe's summer job scaring tourists with ghost stories takes a terrifying turn when he accidentally summons the spirit of a dead girl. Rebecca Strand and her father fell to their deaths and the evil spirit, Viker, who killed them, is growing stronger by the day. Together Gabe and Rebecca must join forces to save the world of the living.*

**The Grave Thief** by Dee Hahn. Puffin Canada, ©2022. ISBN 9780735269439 (hc), 9780735269422 (pbk).

*Spade and his brother are sent by their father to rob a grave in the Wyndhail castle cemetery, but get caught in a royal trap. As punishment, Spade is tasked with finding the master of the Woegan, a deadly creature that is stalking the castle by night, in order to save his brother from certain death.*

**Sorry for Your Loss** by Joanne Levy. Orca Book Publishers, ©2021. ISBN 9781459827073 (pbk).

*Evie, known as “corpse girl” at school, is not obsessed with death, but thinks a lot about it because her family runs a Jewish funeral home. When Evie’s parents enlist her help with Oren, a boy suffering a traumatic loss, Evie is determined to practice her funeral director skills to help him deal with his loss.*

**Taking the Ice** by Lorna Schultz Nicholson. Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2021. ISBN 9781443182393(pbk).

*Life was pretty good for Aiden. He had a dad who played in the NHL, tons of friends and a hockey team he loved being on. But after a tragic accident, Aiden and his mom move to his parent’s hometown on the Prairies. Now he’s having trouble fitting in, on and off the ice.*

**A Terrible Tide** by Suzanne Meade. Second Story Press, ©2021. ISBN 9781772602111 (pbk).

*Celia is preparing for her birthday celebration when the house starts to shake. An earthquake, rumbling under the Atlantic Ocean, leaves her home and Newfoundland village in ruins. Celia and her family must band together and share the work needed for the isolated community to survive. Will help arrive before it's too late? Based on a true story.*

**Snow Willow**

**Eight Days** by Teresa Toten. Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2022. ISBN 978-1-4431-902-2 (pbk)

*Sami just learned that the mother she thought was dead, has actually just died. Now, with her grandfather and neighbour, the unlikely trio set out on an eight day road trip to recover her body, find out what really happened, and to learn what family really means.*

**Firefly** by Philippa Dowding. DCB, ©2021. ISBN 978-1-77086-598-3 (pbk)

*From elaborate 1800s gowns to singing lobster costumes, thirteen-year-old Firefly has her pick while she lives in her Aunt Gayle's costume shop. With so many options it can be hard to find the real you, but sometimes it just takes a few tries to get it right.*

**Fly** by Alison Hughes. Kids Can Press, ©2022. ISBN 978-1-5253-0583-2 (hc)

*Fly wants to be a hero. With courage, he must stand up to a rogue for the honour of the girl he loves. But it is not easy being a modern-day knight, especially when your trusty steed is a wheelchair and the jousting ground is the school hallways.*

**Four Faces of the Moon** by Amanda Strong. Annick Press, ©2021. ISBN 978-1-77321-453-5 (pbk), 978-1-77321-454-2 (hc)

*Based on her family's history, Amanda Strong's stunning graphic novel takes readers on a journey through time with Spotted Fawn, a young Métis photographer. Her darkroom becomes a portal through which she meets her ancestors, and learns of what they endured in their fight to keep their culture alive.*

**Houston, Is There a Problem?** by Eric Walters. Orca Book Publishers, ©2021. ISBN 978-1-4598-28735 (pbk)

*When an invitation to space camp turns into a government project, Houston must learn to lead and survive the most difficult test of his life. Join Houston, Teal, and*

*Ashley as they figure out what it means to really be a team and make it onto the mission.*

**How to be a Goldfish** by Jane Baird Warren. Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2022. ISBN 978-1-4431-9230-9 (pbk)

*Lizzie uncovers a secret during a family tree project. She asks Harry, a family friend, for advice, but he is losing his farm! David has a chance for a new life after reading his grandfather's will. Together can they unravel their family secrets and save Harry's farm?*

**Operation Do-Over** by Gordon Korman. Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2022. ISBN 978-1-4431-93788 (hc)

*Seventh graders Mason and Ty have been inseparable for most of their lives, until the new girl, Ava, walks into their classroom, triggering the end of their friendship. Following a freak accident, seventeen year old Mason finds himself back in seventh grade with a chance at a do-over.*

**The Limitless Sky** by Christina Kilbourne. Dundurn Press, ©2022. ISBN 9781459748873 (pbk)

*Told from two perspectives, The Limitless Sky is a dystopian novel set years after a catastrophic event leaves society divided. Rook lives inside ArHK, an experimental community guarded from the apocalypse. Gage lives in the world Outside. Can they help each other and their communities when they connect by chance?*

**The Science of Boys** by Emily Seo. Tradewind Books, ©2022. ISBN 978-1926890371 (pbk), 9781926890401 (hc)

*Emma, a science nerd, is hoping to fit in when she starts high school. A popular girl asks for her help to get noticed by her crush. Emma claims to be writing a book on the subject of boys and with the help of her friend invents science-based advice.*

**When You Least Expect It** by Lorna Schultz Nicholson. Red Deer Press, ©2021.  
ISBN 9780889956414 (pbk)

*Holly wants nothing more than to make the national rowing team to compete overseas, but she gets cut, shattering her dreams. She returns home devastated. But she is not a quitter, and an opportunity arises to train with a renowned coach, who has a sadness of his own to overcome.*