

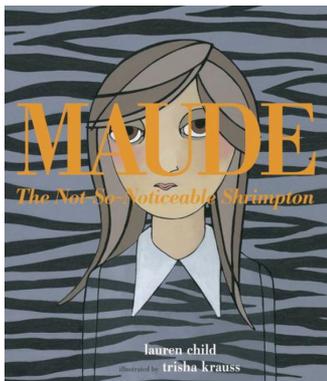
# A Page in a Book

by Gerry Paige Smith



## Finding the Extraordinary in the Ordinary!

The word 'ordinary' seems to denote a sense of the unremarkable. But when you look more closely at the ordinary, really get inside its skin, special qualities emerge and unique aspects are revealed that are, in fact, extraordinary. The following titles explore ordinary's journey to extraordinary through brilliantly realized tales. Wallflowers bloom, hidden talents are revealed and opposites swap places to see their ordinary celebrated in extraordinary ways. Look closer and discover remarkable characteristics cloaked in the trappings of the everyday.



## Maude The Not-So-Noticeable Shrimpton

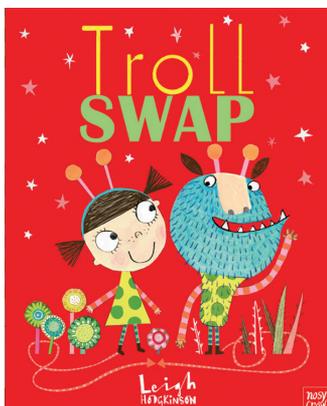
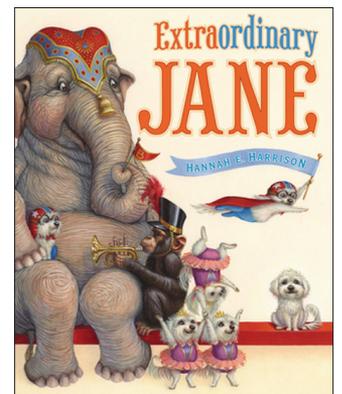
by Lauren Child, Illustrated by Trisha Krauss (Candlewick)

In a larger-than-life family of show-offs, Maude Shrimpton almost disappears within their scene. Her parents and siblings are extraordinary in their taste and talents. Flashy hats with live peacocks (Mom), mustaches that spiral to new heights (Dad), beauty that stops traffic (Sister) and other wild talents are the trademarks of her family. Maude's quiet manner and simple tastes ensure that she fades into the background wherever she goes. When Maude asks for a simple pet for her birthday, her outrageous family surprises her with something much larger, grander... and hungrier. And when her new pet goes on the prowl, suddenly the ability to blend in with the background becomes an extraordinary gift! Krauss' clever and sophisticated illustrations make this title anything but ordinary!

## Extraordinary Jane

by Hannah E. Harrison (Dial / Penguin)

In the midst of the most amazing sights, sounds and performances on earth, Jane is a circus dog who feels very plain indeed. She wants to play a flashy role in the show like the other members of her family, but she doesn't have her mother's grace or her father's strength. Jane isn't bold like her brothers who launch themselves from canons and she's not as fearless as her sisters who walk the high wire. Her search for her circus talent ends in disappointment until the reader discover there is something very ordinary about Jane that makes her special to everyone. Harrison's rich circus-style paintings accompanied by simple and concise text share a wildly sweet perspective on Jane's journey to find her gift – which is extraordinary, indeed.



## Troll Swap

by Leigh Hodgkinson (Nosey Crow / Candlewick)

Timothy Limpet doesn't quite fit in with the other trolls. While they are loud, messy and very active, Timothy prefers to be still and quiet in his tidy cave. Tabitha Lumpit isn't like other children who are nice, polite and neat. Her parents despair that their loud and active little girl will ever settle down. When Timothy and Tabitha meet by chance, they decide to swap places to see if they each find a better fit in the other's life. Their experiment reveals that their "normal" is soon missed by their friends and family – and perhaps their ordinary is exactly what makes them special. With unique typeface used for Timothy and Tabitha's distinct narratives, readers will enjoy re-reading how each character finds their own extraordinary voice within their ordinary worlds.



# Get This!

## Recommending the Best Toys and Products for Kids

by Gerry Paige Smith

### Curious Chef 27-Piece Foundation Set (Curious Chef)

For the child who turns up his nose at 'pretend' kitchen tools, preferring his own bona-fide cookware instead, the Curious Chef cooking set is the answer. This 27-piece cooking set include measuring spoons and cups, a rolling pin, a whisk, spatula, 3-quart mixing bowl, and more kitchen implements – as well as thumb mitts and proper chef garb! Designed for children (around age 5 and up), these cooking items are ready for actual food preparation (lead and BPA-free). Curious Chef takes young foodies seriously by giving them the real deal to work with in the kitchen. Ideal for serious young chefs and parents who want to support their interest in the kitchen, this cooking set is first on the menu!



### The Wooden Cooktop (Alex)

The youngest chefs can play-cook anything, anywhere with the well-designed and infinitely portable Wooden Cooktop from Alex. Mimicking a real stove top, and crafted from durable wood, the Wooden Cooktop features real dials that turn and a clock with moveable hands (because the timing on a poached egg is critical). And just to stir the pot further, the handle folds out with pegs for hanging utensils. While they're too young to use your stove, the Wooden Cooktop from Alex is a smart alternative to support kids' cooking interests on their own or on the counter, by your side.



## Calling All Cooks!

For parents who are enjoying exclusive access to food prep at home, it can be a little daunting when kids decide that they want to "help" with the cooking ("Knives, hot stoves and pepper – Oh my!"). Rather than taking the hands-off approach, parents should welcome their children's interest, slap an apron on 'em and let them in on every secret recipe. Fostering children's interest in food preparation is an ideal way to incorporate learning about nutrition, measurement, chemistry and more. While kids are maturing toward their chef apprenticeship in the kitchen, the following items are recommended to boost their early interest in the culinary arts!

### My Chocolate Boutique Workshop (Fashion Angels)

For budding chefs with an entrepreneurial spirit, the Chocolate Boutique Workshop is an excellent introduction to crafting sweets with extra flair for sampling, giving and sharing with family. A battery-powered pot melts chocolate that can be spooned into the workshop's fancy molds to start young confectioners on the path to culinary cocoa success. Decorative stickers, wrappers and boxes (included) transform sweet creations into gifts in an instant. The pot also makes a fun fondue for family and friends who want to dip their own chocolate treats. Carob or other chocolate melt products are ideal for this easy-to-use, delicious outlet for kids with a sweet tooth for candy cuisine.



### Balancing Burger (International Playthings)

Building the biggest burger is part of a balanced diet with this game that encourages kids to add ingredients to an every-growing burger without letting the masterpiece collapse. With a wobbly plate to start, players roll a die to determine how many ingredients to add in their turn. As the burger builds higher, a balanced diet is harder to maintain. Choosing from the customary toppings (tomatoes, lettuce, pickles, cheese and bacon) players meet the challenge as they try not to let the towering tasty feast fall. How do you want your burger? With everything, please.



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