in lyrical language. Some dark elements and the length make this book more appropriate for older elementary students. The illustrations are nothing short of gorgeous. Rendered with miniature sable brushes in oil and watercolor on gesso panels, they are rich in detail and depth of color. There is a certain misty luminosity that carries readers into this forest of illusion. VERDICT Even libraries that own Marriana Mayer’s beautiful Beauty and the Beast (Four Winds, 1978) should still consider this enchanting addition.—Grace Oliff, Ann Blanche Smith School, Hillsdale, NJ


K-Gr 3—With vivid language and illustrations that reward careful looking, this book introduces readers to the life cycle of the spotted salamander, a colorful amphibian that lives in underground forest burrows and vernal pools that fill up in the late winter or early spring. The cycle begins when the spotted salamanders leave their underground homes and migrate to pools, where they “dance in the dark,” lay their eggs, and, in time, return once again to their woodland hideaways. The poetic text makes this an excellent choice for reading aloud and for careful study. Words slide off the tongue (“Through slippery leaves, down muddy ground homes and migrate to pools, where the spotted salamanders leave their underground homes; others of perspectives, offering readers a view from nearby. The visuals also include a variety of perspectives, offering readers a view from

—another beautiful collaboration

K-Gr 3—This simple, delightful story of two fireflies finding each other among thousands is sure to enchant children. A female firefly flashes in the night, hoping against odds to find her mate, and she is successful. Written in verse, the text is lyrical yet simple enough for even the youngest readers to enjoy and short enough to be shared aloud in a group setting. The photographs are breathtaking, with close-ups of fireflies flashing in the night, and complement the dreamlike tone. Panoramic shots of a forest filled with flashes provide different perspectives. Educators hoping to tie this book to science curricula will appreciate the note depicting how a firefly’s flashes function in the wild. VERDICT This enchanting look at fireflies will be enjoyed by all who read it.—Ellen Norton, Naperville Public Library, Naperville, IL


K-Gr 2—Presenting several diverse families struggling to find a way to be a wonderful introduction to some of the world’s most frightening creatures and will be inspired to seek out more information.—Jody Kopple, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, MA


Gr 3-5—This large-format book examines the history of the world, starting with the big bang and continuing to the 2010s. Each spread covers a different time period, with renderings of the culturally or geologically significant aspects and a short paragraph of text. Exploration, including space, is also covered. Notes abound throughout the illustrations, explaining different facets and interjecting interesting facts. There is a Eurocentric focus, especially once more modern history is reviewed. The color palette is muted, and the cartoonlike illustrations are full of detail that will keep readers interested. VERDICT While the vast scope of this book makes it unsuitable for research use, it is the ideal text for reluctant readers, who will likely find tidbits that will spark curiosity and further investigation.—Ellen Norton, Naperville Public Library, Naperville, IL


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