

2004 Notable Children's Books

2004 Notable Children's Books Committee: Marion Rutsch, Chair, Our Lady of Lourdes School Library, Bethesda, Md.; Carolyn R. Angus, George Stone Center for Children's Books, Claremont, Calif.; Jerene D. Battisti, Renton (Wash.) Public Library; Peg W. Ciszek, Niles (Ill.) Public Library; Elizabeth Guldseth, Arlington, Va.; Susan Link, Colony Bend Elementary School, Sugar Land, Texas; Elizabeth Long, New York; Micki Nevett, Westmere Elementary School, Albany, N.Y.; Maria Salvadore, Washington, D.C.; Victoria J. Smith, McArthur Public Library, Biddeford, Maine; and Maureen White, University of Houston at Clear Lake School Library.

Younger Readers

Chodos-Irvine, Margaret. *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*. Illus. Harcourt. (0-15-216413-8)

In "Ella Sarah Gets Dressed" a young girl stands in front of her wardrobe to select her attire and makes her OWN fashion statement. Elegant in its simplicity, this perfect picture book uses a "variety of printmaking techniques." Cheerful, bold colors outlined in white emphasize Ella Sarah's freedom and confidence. **A 2004 Caldecott Honor Book .**

Cobb, Vicki. *I Face the Wind*. Illus. by Julia Gorton. HarperCollins. (0-688-17840-5)

A Vicki Cobb Science Play book, *I Face the Wind* asks the young to think like scientists as it leads them through experiments and observations about wind. Cobb's simple text and Gorton's dynamic illustrations invite participation. **A 2004 Sibert Honor Book .**

Davies, Nicola. *Surprising Sharks*. Illus. by James Croft. Candlewick. (0-7636-2185-4)

Bright colors, big print, and breezy writing distinguish this brief introduction to the great white, dwarf lantern, sand tiger, and other amazing creatures.

Floca, Brian. *The Racecar Alphabet*. Atheneum. (0-689-85091-3)

A compelling alliterative text and large exuberant watercolors capture the excitement of racecar driving beginning with a 1901 Ford and continuing through the alphabet to a 2001 Ferrari.

French, Jackie. *Diary of a Wombat*. Illus. by Bruce Whatley. Clarion. (0-618-38136-8)

An endearing hilarious tale about Australia's most endangered mammal. A wombat keeps a diary of her daily activities, often no more than 'slept' or 'ate grass'. When human neighbors arrive, she sets about training them to care for her demands.

James, Simon. *Little One Step*. Candlewick. (0-7636-2070-x)

Three ducklings lost in the woods encourage the smallest to take "one step" until they find mama. The soft golden hued illustrations clearly enhance the feelings expressed in the text.

Jenkins, Steve & Page, Robin. *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* illus. Houghton Mifflin. (0-618-25628-8)

What Do You Do With a Tail Like This? is an innovative guessing book that delivers a fun and playful science lesson on 30 animals' body parts: ears, eyes, mouths, noses, feet and tails. The artist uses exquisite cut-paper collage to detail basic forms combined with clever placement of the spare text to create an interactive visual display. **A 2004 Caldecott Honor Book** .

Long, Melinda. *How I Became a Pirate*. Illus. by David Shannon. Harcourt, Inc. (0-15-201848-4)

In this rollicking pirate tale young Jeremy joins a pirate crew and happily finds that no baths or vegetables are required, but sadly learns that there is no one to tuck you in or read a good night story. Shannon's illustrations and Long's story team to make this a great read aloud for the younger set.

Morales, Yuyi. *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*. illus. Chronicle Books. (0-8118-3758-0)

Morales' energetic and playful illustrations capture the essence of Mexican culture with bold and humorous motifs that illuminate Grandma Beetle's vitality and Señor Calavera's expressiveness. **The 2004 Belpré Illustrator Medal Book**.

Recorvits, Helen. *My Name is Yoon*. Illus. by Gabi Swiatkowska. Farrar Straus and Giroux. (0-374-35114-7)

Unusual perspectives and amusing detail, captures Yoon's transition from a shy newcomer to a happy schoolgirl who is willing, at last, to write the American version of her beloved Korean name.

Sayre, April Pulley and Sayre, Jeff. *One Is a Snail Ten is a Crab: A Counting by Feet Book*. Illus. by Randy Cecil. Candlewick. (0-7636-1406-8)

Count the feet of a variety of creatures as they bicycle, limbo, and play volleyball across the beach. Discover the basic concepts of counting, adding, and multiplying using colorful textured illustrations and simple text.

Willems, Mo. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Hyperion. (078681988-X)

In *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, a persistent pigeon asks, pleads, cajoles, wheedles, connives, negotiates, demands and uses emotional blackmail in attempts to get behind the wheel. Pigeon will not take no for an answer, and puts the reader on the spot, using an escalating series of tactics. Perfectly paced, each line and blank space in the deceptively simple illustrations is essential. **A 2004 Caldecott Honor Book** .

Middle Readers

Avi. *Silent Movie*. Illus. by C.B. Mordan. Anne Schwartz/Atheneum. (0-689-84145-0)

Warm up the organ, bring out the popcorn and watch as this melodramatic tale unfolds. Dramatic black and white illustrations and brief, caption-like text effectively reveal the rags-to-riches tale of an immigrant family. Just like viewing an old-time movie.

Brown, Don. *Mack Made Movies*. Roaring Brook Press. (0-7613-1538-1)

From his first role as a horse's rear end, to filming the first pie in the face, Mack Sennett made a lasting impact on the film industry. Brown tells his story in text and sepia tone illustrations, using flowing lines to convey a sense of humor and movement.

Browne, Anthony. *The Shape Game*. Farrar Straus and Giroux. (0-374-36764-7)

The celebrated illustrator recalls his unlikely introduction to fine art when his working class family visits an art museum for the first time. Just as his mother helped the family find a way to become involved in the paintings, the artist provides the reader with amusing illustrations to explore.

Chandra, Deborah and Comora, Madeleine. *George Washington's Teeth*. Illus. by Brock Cole. Farrar Straus and Giroux. (0-374-32534-0)

The sad saga of Washington's terrible tooth problems are told through lively poetry and amusing pastel illustrations. In the midst of the fun, the reader painlessly learns other interesting facts about colonial life.

Christelow, Eileen. *Vote! Clarion*. (0-618-24754-8)

From rallies to recounts, lively cartoons and a lucid text explain the intricacies of the electoral process using a fictional mayoral race as a model.

Creech, Sharon. *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup*. Illus. by Chris Raschka. Joanna Cotler Books/HarperCollins. (0-06-029290-3)

When Rosie and her best buddy Bailey have a falling out, it is the warmth and wisdom of Granny Torrelli's kitchen that provides the ingredients for understanding and growth until tutto va bene-all is well!

D'Adamo, Francesco. *Iqbal: A Novel*. Translated by Ann Leonori. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. (0-689-85445-5)

Translated from the Italian, this is a gripping, fictionalized story of Iqbal Masih who is forced into child labor weaving carpets to pay off his family's debts. A seamless translation, which demonstrates that one person, can make a difference.

DiCamillo, Kate. *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread*. Illus. by Timothy Basil Ering. Candlewick. (0-7636-1722-9)

The Tale of Despereaux draws the reader into an enchanting account of a smaller-than-usual mouse in love with music, stories and a princess named Pea. This tiny hero faints at loud noises but gathers the courage to fulfill his dreams. ***The 2004 Newbery Medal Book.***

DuPrau, Jeanne. *The City of Ember*. Random House. (0-375-82273-9)

The City of Ember is dying: the mammoth underground generators that provide its only light are slowly breaking down. Lina and Doon alone hold the key to escape, but will they be able to persuade their fellow citizens to follow them into the unknown.

Fenner, Carol. *Snowed in with Grandmother Silk*. Illus. by Amanda Harvey. Dial. (0-8037-2857-3)

In this early chapter book that sports big print, humor, and a situation children can appreciate, Ruddy and his grandmother learn to be best friends when a surprise storm strands them without electricity or telephone.

Hamilton, Virginia. *Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl*. Illus. by James E. Ransome. Bluesky Press/ Scholastic. (0-590-47376-x)

In Hamilton's retelling of a Gullah version of the beloved Tar Baby story, Bruh Rabbit once again fools the luckless Bruh Wolf. Ransome's vibrant watercolor illustrations and Hamilton's vivid language will make this picture book an exceptional read-aloud.

***Horse Hooves and Chicken Feet: Mexican Folktales*. Selected by Neil Philip. Illus. by Jacqueline Mair. Clarion Books. (0-618-19463-0)**

Familiar themes take on the flavor of Mexico and the southwest in these smooth retelling selected by an experienced anthologist. Well-suited to telling or reading aloud.

Krull, Kathleen. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. Illus. by Yuyi Morales. Harcourt. (0-15-201437-3)

In *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*, Morales uses brightly colored acrylics, handmade stamps, and computer-created cutouts to depict the life of this civil rights leader. Golden, earth-toned colors and wide, flowing brush strokes lend depth and honesty to the history and struggle of migrant farm workers in California. **A 2004 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book.**

Lasky, Kathryn. *The Man Who Made Time Travel*. Illus. by Kevin Hawkes. Melanie Kroupa/Farrar Straus and Giroux. (0-374-34788-3)

Lasky's well-researched accessible picture book biography of John Harrison, the brilliant 17th century inventor of the marine chronometer, is supported by Hawkes' intriguing equally well-researched paintings.

Levine, Karen. *Hana's Suitcase: A True Story*. Albert Whitman. (0-8075-3148-0)

A child's suitcase in a museum display leads a teacher and her class to research and discover the life of a child caught up in the Holocaust. Told in alternating chapters, Hana's story is revealed gradually which lends immediacy to the story .

Schyffert, Bea Uusma. *The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon: The Story of Apollo 11 Astronaut Michael Collins*. Translated by Emi Guner. Chronicle Books. (0-8118-4007-7)

Schyffert's seamless integration of text, illustration, charts and photos draws readers into this amazing story of the astronaut who kept Apollo 11 circling the moon while his colleagues took a giant step for mankind. **The 2004 Batchelder Honor Book.**

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotion*. Putnam. (0-399-23115-3)

Written in conversing free verse, Woodson tells the emotional story of a young boy as he settles into his foster home. Lonnie misses his parents who died in a fire and his sister who has been adopted. Lonnie is a character who is hard to let go.

Older Readers

Cameron, Ann. *Colibrí*. Frances Foster Books/Farrar Straus Giroux. (0-374-371-31519-1)

Twelve-year-old Rosa's compelling story unfolds as she regains her identity and confidence. Her riveting story is steeped in the culture, traditions and folk beliefs of modern Guatemala.

Cooper, Ilene. *Jack: The Early Years of John F. Kennedy*. Dutton Children's Books. (0-525-46923-0)

The compelling story of John F. Kennedy's childhood and adolescence provides previously unknown details. A fascinating assortment of photographs and letters enliven the text.

Fleming, Candace. *Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life*. Anne Schwartz/Atheneum Books for Young Readers. (0-689-83549-3)

Presented in the style of Franklin's own original almanac, Fleming's fascinating biography is chock full of information that makes history jump right out of the page.

Freedman, Russell. *In Defense of Liberty: The Story of America's Bill of Rights*. Holiday House. (0-8234-1585-6)

In his eminently clear and careful text Freedman explains why and how the first ten amendments to the U. S. Constitution came to be written and what they mean. Timely and valuable commentary on our freedoms.

Funke, Cornelia. *Inkheart*. Translated by Anthea Bell. The Chicken House/Scholastic. (0-439-53164-0)

When Meggie's father reads aloud, characters jump right out of the book into the real world. Funke creates an action packed adventure fantasy peopled with memorable characters and chilling villains.

Henkes, Kevin. *Olive's Ocean*. Greenwillow Books. (0-06-053543-1)

12-year-old Martha receives a page from the journal of a classmate, Olive, who has died in an accident. Olive's entry about a desire to be Martha's friend, to see the ocean, and to become a writer propels Martha into a journey from childhood to the brink of adolescence. ***A 2004 Newbery Honor Book.***

Holt, Kimberly Willis. *Keeper of the Night*. Henry Holt. (0-8050-6561-7)

Set against the lush beauty of Guam, exquisitely crafted present-tense text snapshots follow thirteen-year-old Isabel as she struggles to preserve her family and to realize her own independence in the wake of her mother's suicide.

Jones, Diana Wynne. *The Merlin Conspiracy*. Greenwillow. (0-06-052318-2)

Told alternately by Roddy and Nick, this complex, riveting fantasy moves swiftly along as the characters combine their newfound magical powers and learn the actions in one world may have long reaching effects in other worlds.

Kraft, Betsy Harvey. *Theodore Roosevelt: Champion of the American Spirit*. Clarion. (0-618-14264-9)

Kraft draws from many sources for this complete biography of the reformer president "who erected his own monument." The writing is as lively as the irrepressible subject himself.

Macaulay, David. *Mosque*. Houghton Mifflin. (0-618-24034-9)

Meticulous pen-and-ink drawings and judicious application of color combine with an infectiously enthusiastic text to document the construction of a mosque and its role in the community. The spiritual and the architectural are inextricably entwined and clearly explained.

McCaughrean, Geraldine. *Stop the Train!* HarperCollins. (0-06-050749-7)

In 1893, the future of newly settled Florence, Oklahoma and its scrappy townspeople depends on getting the Red River Railroad to make a local stop. Colorful, eccentric characters, hair-raising escapades, and robust humor bring an unforgettable period of U.S. history to life.

Murphy, Jim. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*. Clarion. (0-395-77608-2)

Murphy draws material from primary sources, such as private diaries, newspapers, and books, to give insight into the political, social, and cultural challenges of the yellow fever epidemic. The compelling narrative pulls readers into the crisis, illuminates the community's responses, and shows the best and worst of humanity. ***The 2004 Sibert Medal Book and A 2004 Newbery Honor Book.***

Nelson, Theresa. *Ruby Electric*. Atheneum. (0-689-83852-2)

Ruby deals with her real life problems by visualizing screen plays in her head. Full of humor and drama, Ruby's voice crackles with electricity.

Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*. Translated by Hillel Halkin. Houghton Mifflin. (0-618-16465-0)

At the age of eight, Srulik is left alone in the Warsaw Ghetto, and must fend for himself, even forgetting his name, in order to survive the Holocaust. ***The 2004 Batchelder Award Book.***

Osa, Nancy. *Cuba 15*. Delacorte Press. (0-385-73021-7)

Violet Paz prepares unwillingly for her quinceañera, the traditional Latina 15th birthday celebration. Her journey into self-discovery leads her to truly value and understand her Cuban heritage for the first time. ***A 2004 Belpré Author Honor Book.***

Pattou, Edith. *East*. Harcourt. (0-15-204563-5)

A compelling retelling of East of the Sun, West of the Moon. Rose saves her sister's life by agreeing to live with the white bear. Her curiosity condemns the bear to enslavement by the Ice Queen. Rose's quest to rescue him is filled with heart stopping action.

Peck, Richard. *The River Between Us*. Dial Books. (0-8037-2735-6)

In a voice uneducated and wise, unsophisticated and ironic, the narrator spins a dramatic, poignant tale of family and racial identity, peopled with unforgettable characters who struggle against a Civil War backdrop.

Pratchett, Terry. *The Wee Free Men*. HarperCollins. (0-06-001236-6)

With the help of the Nac Mac Feegle or Wee Free Men, a shockingly rude band of 6-inch tall blue men, young Tiffany Aching leaves her family's farm in the chalk country to rescue her brother from the fairy kingdom. This original fantasy is both hilarious and scary.

Preston, Diana. *Remember the Lusitania!* Walker & Company. (0-8027-8846-7)

A riveting account of the ocean liner's last Atlantic crossing. Juxtaposed are chapters chronicling personal accounts of passengers and the chilling plan of the German U-boat captain and crew lying in wait for the Big Lusy.

Reeve, Philip. *Mortal Engines*. EOS/ HarperCollins. (0-06-008207-0)

In this original and fast-paced science fiction set in a post-apocalypse future, cities of the world move around on tractor treads pursuing and scavenging each other.

Rembert, Winfred. *Don't Hold Me Back: My Life and Art*. Cricket/Marcato Book. (0-8126-2703-2)

African-American folk artist Winfred Rembert takes readers on a guided tour of his childhood and coming-of-age at the bloom of the Civil Rights movement. Brilliantly composed tooled leather paintings are full of color, movement, and emotion.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic. (0-439-35806-x)

Fifteen-year-old Harry experiences the angst of being a teen including feelings of abandonment, powerlessness, isolation, and grief. Budding romance, rib-tickling humor and a darker sensibility fill this action-packed fifth title in the series.

Sís, Peter. *The Tree of Life: A Book Depicting the Life of Charles Darwin Naturalist, Geologist and Thinker*. Illus. Frances Foster/Farrar Straus and Giroux. (0-374-45628-3)

Darwin's unique Life and work is presented in a visually stunning, complex and appealing manner that begs multiple readings.

Stroud, Jonathan. *The Amulet of Samarkand*. Hyperion Books for Children. (0-7868-1859-x)

Bartimaeus. A powerful 5,000 year old djinni with a sarcastic bent is summoned by an inexperienced apprentice magician. The results are danger, death, and a big dose of comic relief.

All Ages

Blake, Quentin. *Tell Me a Picture*. Millbrook. (0-7613-2748-7)

In this innovative offering, comical cartoon children walk the reader through an art exhibition, introducing and offering commentary on twenty-six works while at the same time allowing opportunities for individual contemplation.

Frazer, Marla. *Roller Coaster*. Harcourt. (0-15-204554-6)

The text swerves, dips, and loops across the pages along with the cars of a roller coaster as a young girl enjoys her much anticipated first ride and is ready to go again.

Gerstein, Mordicai. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*. Illus. Roaring Brook Press. (0-7613-1791-0)

This true story recounts the daring feat of a spirited young Frenchman who walked a tightrope between the World Trade Center twin towers in 1974. *The 2004 Caldecott Medal Book*.

Leedy, Loreen and Street, Pat. *There's a Frog in my Throat! 440 Animal Sayings a Little Bird Told Me*. Holiday House. (0-8234-1774-3)

An energetic array of familiar sayings are cleverly defined by the pranks of lively collage animals described in idiomatic phrases.

Morpurgo, Michael. *Kensuke's Kingdom*. Scholastic. (0-439-38202-5)

Eleven-year-old Michael is washed overboard off his family's yacht and awakens on what he believes is a deserted island in the Pacific. In this riveting survival story, Michael discovers he is not alone.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Blues Journey*. Illus. by Christopher Myers. Holiday House. (0-8234-1614-5)

Poetry and art combine for a striking look at jazz, as the book presents an overview of African American history.

Sabuda, Robert. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: A Pop-up Adaptation of Lewis Carroll's Original Tale*. Illus. Little, Simon. (0-689-84743-2)

An adaptation of Lewis Carroll's story, illuminated with ingenious paper engineering.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. *The Hidden Alphabet*. A Neal Porter/ Roaring Brook Press. (0-7613-1941-7)

Each letter of the alphabet is introduced by a word as well as an arresting image. As the reader lifts the heavy black frame on each page, the small illustration is transformed into a large, elegant capital letter. A beautifully designed toy book that allows the reader to peek through a keyhole and find a fresh way of seeing things.