

WORLD CLASS

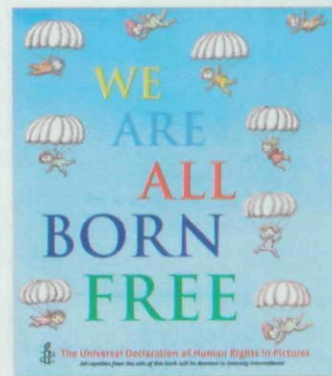
The latest Outstanding International Books list offers tales that speak to every student

By Carolyn Angus

TALK ABOUT AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT. Some of the world's best children's book artists got together to help Amnesty International celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' 60th anniversary in *We Are All Born Free*, one of the 42 titles recommended by the fourth annual United States Board on Books for Young People's (USBBY) Outstanding International Books committee. This and other titles on our list offer young people the best of children's literature from faraway places—books that introduce them to outstanding authors and illustrators from other countries, help them see the world from other points of view, and provide another perspective or address a topic that may be missing from children's books in the United States.

The number of translated books submitted to our committee was higher than ever before, and the diversity of the more than 400 submissions we received is most obvious in the titles for students in grades K–2, where 7 of the 11 picture books were written and illustrated by authors and illustrators from countries in which English is not the official language. Although English-language books from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom still represent the majority of titles on the 2009 USBBY Outstanding International Books list, this year's selections include volumes from South Korea, India, Japan, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Our committee is pleased to present this year's choices with the hope that these books will be used by young people, and those who work with them, to explore our diverse world. Information about the Outstanding International Books project, including lists of previous USBBY Outstanding International Books, can be found at www.usbby.org.



Members of the 2009 USBBY Outstanding International Books List Committee

Carolyn Angus (chair), George G. Stone Center for Children's Books, Claremont Graduate University, CA; Nancy Hadaway, University of Texas at Arlington; Marilyn Hollinshead, West Tisbury, MA; Helen Kay Kennedy, Kent District Library, MI; Ginny Moore Kruse, Madison, WI; Elizabeth Poe, Morgantown, WV; Karen Scott, Thompson Middle School, Alabaster, AL; Barbara Scotto, Children's Literature New England, Brookline, MA; and Kay Weisman, Vancouver, BC.

ALMOND, David. *My Dad's a Birdman.* illus. by Polly Dunbar. Candlewick. RTE \$15.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3667-8. U.K.

Gr 3-5—Young Lizzie's father is building a pair of wings to fly in the Great Human Bird Competition. The sadness and grief he feels over the death of his wife contribute to his strange behavior. An understanding Lizzie helps her father on his journey of healing, hope, and love.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. *We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures.* illus. Frances Lincoln. Tr \$19.95. ISBN 978-1-84507-650-4. U.K.

Gr 3-5—In this oversize book, published to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, each of the 30 articles of the Declaration has been simplified for young readers and illustrated by an internationally renowned artist. Photographs of and brief biographical information about the illustrators are included.

BENJAMIN, Floella. *My Two Grannies.* illus. by Margaret Chamberlain. Frances Lincoln. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-84507-643-6. U.K.

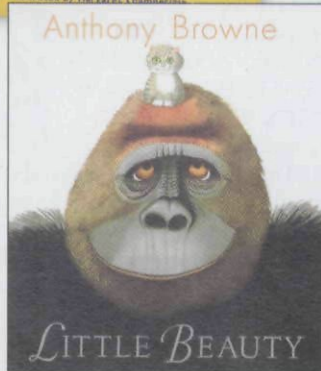
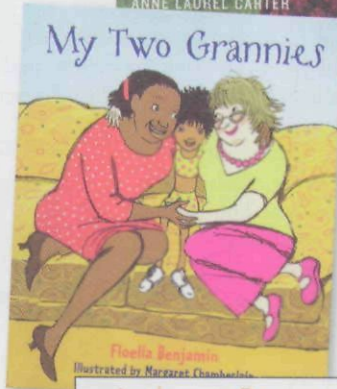
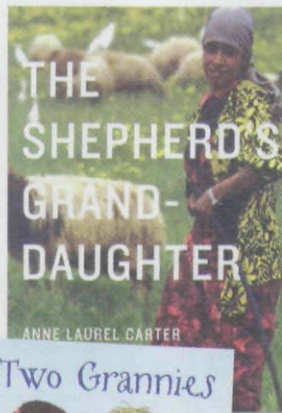
K-Gr 2—Born in Trinidad, Granny Vero loves calypso music, chicken with plantains, and Anansi stories. British Granny Rose appreciates brass band music, steak and kidney pie, and "Jack and the Beanstalk." When her two grannies care for Alvina while her parents are on holiday, she must find a way for them to enjoy being together.

BERNER, Rotraut Susanne. *In the Town All Year 'Round.* tr. from German by Neeltje Konings and Nick Elliot. illus. by author. Chronicle. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-8118-6474-9. Germany.

K-Gr 2—A large cast of characters have mini-adventures throughout the year in this oversize, almost wordless book featuring intricately detailed scenes of various sites all around their town. This is a book to read again and again, following the activities of the characters and noticing changes in the town during the four seasons.

BROWNE, Anthony. *Little Beauty.* illus. by author. Candlewick. RTE \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3959-4. U.K.

K-Gr 2—When a sad gorilla uses sign language to tell his zookeepers he wants a friend, he gets one. He and a small cat named Beauty are inseparable until the film *King Kong* makes the gorilla lash out in anger and Beauty teaches him the value of friendship and responsibility.



CAMPBELL, Nicola I. *Shin-chi's Canoe.* illus. by Kim LaFave. Groundwood. Tr \$18.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-857-6. Canada.

Gr 3-5—Shin-chi and his older sister must spend long months away from their family at an Indian residential school, where they are forced to endure many injustices. A small toy canoe made by his father helps keep Shin-chi's spirit alive. Illustrations based on archival photographs illuminate this picture book about a sad chapter of North American history.

CARTER, Anne Laurel. *The Shepherd's Granddaughter.* Groundwood. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-902-3; pap. \$12.95. ISBN 978-0-88899-903-0. Canada.

Gr 6-8—Fifteen-year-old Palestinian Amani, whose lifelong dream is to become a shepherd like her beloved grandfather, finds her way of life threatened as the Israelis encroach on her family's homestead. A timely look at a complex issue.

CHOUNG, Eun-hee. *Minji's Salon.* illus. by author. Kane/Miller. Tr \$15.95. 978-1-

933605-67-8. South Korea.

K-Gr 2—While her mother is away having her hair done at a salon, Minji is inspired to give her dog a shampoo, set, and color treatment at home. Parallel illustrations featuring mother and Minji's dog follow each step in this creative process.

CROSSLEY-HOLLAND, Kevin. *Crossing to Paradise.* Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Bks. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-545-05866-7. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Historical fiction at its best, this companion to Crossley-Holland's award-winning "Arthur" trilogy is Gatty's story. As chamber servant to Lady Gwyneth, Gatty sets out with the Welsh noblewoman and seven others on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1203. Both the journey and Gatty's return to Caldicot are filled with extraordinary surprises.

DOHERTY, Berlie. *The Girl Who Saw Lions.* Roaring Brook/A Neal Porter Bk. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-59643-377-9. U.K.

Gr 6-8—After nine-year-old Abela's Tanzanian mother dies from AIDS, an uncle tricks her into leaving her village. In suburban London, 13-year-old Rosa figures that her single mom's plan to adopt a child will wreck their close relationship. Strong, believable girls resist adult authority in a master writer's outstanding novel filled with surprises.

DOWD, Siobhan. *Bog Child.* Random/David Fickling Bks. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-385-75169-8; PLB \$19.99. ISBN 978-0-385-75170-4. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—In this perceptive look at the effect of politics and history on ordinary people in Ireland in 1981, Fergus discovers the ancient body of a murdered girl in a peat bog. As troubles mount, he finds it difficult to make his own way in an increasingly complex world.

DOWD, Siobhan. *The London Eye Mystery.* Random/David Fickling Bks. Tr \$15.99. ISBN 978-0-375-84976-3; PLB \$18.99. ISBN 978-0-375-94976-0. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Ted and Kat watch their cousin Salim board the London Eye. When his pod on the giant Ferris wheel makes its way back down, Salim does not get off. The two siblings join forces as they follow clues across London to find their cousin. A fast-paced story that will keep readers guessing.

GAIMAN, Neil. *The Graveyard Book.* illus. by Dave McKean. HarperCollins. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-06-053092-1; PLB \$18.89. ISBN 978-0-06-053093-8. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Bod, granted the Freedom of the Graveyard as a toddler, has grown up amongst the graveyard residents who maintain quirky characteristics from the time periods of their

lives. After an exciting adventure in which Bod foils an evil conspiracy, he is released to fully experience Life outside the Graveyard.

GOODMAN, Alison. *Eon: Dragoneye Reborn.* Viking. Tr \$19.99. ISBN 978-0-670-06227-0. Australia.

Gr 6-8—Disguised as a boy named Eon, 16-year-old Eona becomes one of 12 dragoneyes, apprentices to the energy dragons of good fortune who serve a mythical Asian kingdom. As she battles with forces attempting to overthrow the emperor and her disguise is revealed, Eona finally bonds with her dragon in this unforgettable page-turner.

GRAHAM, Bob. *How to Heal a Broken Wing.* illus. by author. Candlewick. RTE \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3903-7. Australia.

K-Gr 2—Glowing illustrations tell this tender story of an urban family's finding of an injured bird, and how they nurse it back to health and release it. Very few words are employed to express young Will's love for a small creature and his understanding of the healing process.

GREENWOOD, Mark. *The Donkey of Gallipoli: A True Story of Courage in World War I.* illus. by Frané Lessac. Candlewick. RTE \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3913-6. Australia.

Gr 3-5—When England declares war on Germany, Jack, who immigrated to Australia in search of adventure, enlists and takes part in the invasion of Turkey's Gallipoli Peninsula. In the 24 days before he's killed, Jack carries more than 300 wounded men off the battlefield on a donkey. Poignant gouache illustrations highlight this story of heroism.

GREY, Mini. *Traction Man Meets Turbodog.* illus. by author. Knopf/Borzoi. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-375-85583-2; PLB \$19.99. ISBN 978-0-375-95583-9. U.K.

K-Gr 2—After Scrubbing Brush is banished to the bin by Dad, action figure Traction Man, assisted by an annoying, battery-powered robotic Turbodog, bravely ventures out to rescue his trusty sidekick. This glorious adventure bursts forth from comic book-style mixed-media illustrations and is filled with tongue-in-cheek humor.

HOLE, Stian. *Garmann's Summer.* tr. from Norwegian by Don Bartlett. illus. by author. Eerdmans. Tr \$17.50. ISBN 978-0-8028-5339-4. Norway.

K-Gr 2—Garmann worries about starting

school. He queries elderly aunts, Daddy, and Mama about their worries. He discovers that being scared isn't a good or a bad thing. It's simply a fact that everyone fears something. Hole's award-winning exploration of childhood emotion is expressed visually in edgy mixed-media collages.

HOOPER, Mary. *News from the Dead.* Roaring Brook. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-59643-355-7. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—Class and gender inequalities of 17th-century England and the state of medicine at the time are explored through the real and gripping story of Anne Green, an innocent young woman who was hanged and presumed dead, but awakens on the dissection table. Alternate chapters are narrated by Anne and Robert, an Oxford medical student.

IBBITSON, John. *The Landing.* Kids Can. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 978-1-55453-234-6; pap. \$7.95. ISBN 978-1-55453-238-4. Canada.

Gr 9 Up—Music is Ben's love and also his hope for a better life. During one Depression-era summer, a new and extraordinary cottager on Ontario's Lake Muskoka unexpectedly opens the doors for his dream to become real.

IBBOTSON, Eva. *The Dragonfly Pool.* illus. by Kevin Hawkes. Dutton. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-525-42064-4. U.K.

Gr 6-8—While attending an international folk festival in the small country of Bergania in 1939, 12-year-old Tally and classmates from her progressive British boarding school help Crown Prince Karil escape the Nazis after his father, King Johannes, is assassinated.

JOCELYN, Marthe. *Would You.* Random/Wendy Lamb Bks. Tr \$15.99. ISBN 978-0-375-83703-6; PLB \$18.99. ISBN 978-0-375-93703-3. Canada.

Gr 9 Up—Much admired 18-year-old Claire is hit by a car,

causing irreversible brain damage and death. Narrated by her younger sister, Natalie, this is an engaging, if sober, look at how one random incident changes lives forever.

KRUUSVAL, Catarina. *Ellen's Apple Tree.* tr. from Swedish by Joan Sandin. illus.

by author. R & S. Tr \$16. ISBN 978-91-66905-3. Sweden.

K-Gr 2—Ellen and her friend Ollie love to play in the big apple tree in her yard, but a winter storm blows it down. In the spring, the tree is replaced with a sapling that bears one delicious apple in the fall. Intricate watercolor-and-ink illustrations depict Ellen's hardworking, fun-loving family throughout the seasons.

LAIRD, Elizabeth. *A Fistful of Pearls and Other Tales from Iraq.* illus. by Shelley Fowles. Frances Lincoln. Tr \$14.95. ISBN 978-1-84507-811-9; pap. \$8.95. ISBN 978-1-84507-641-2. U.K.

Gr 3-5—Laird retells nine traditional folktales that are much loved by children of Iraq. The collection includes a tale about a lazy man, Ahmed; a trickster tale about a wise hare, Firuz; and other stories about magic, animals, and wise and foolish people. Sources of the tales are acknowledged.

LEE, Ingrid. *Dog Lost.* Scholastic/Chicken House. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-545-08578-6. U.K.

Gr 3-5—Eleven-year-old Mackenzie tries to track down his dog, Cash, who was trapped by kids planning to sell her for illegal pit bull fights. Distinctive child, teen, and adult characters intersect in a suspenseful, fast-moving novel crafted by a Canadian writer and based upon an actual incident.

MARRIOTT, Zoë. *The Swan Kingdom.* Candlewick. RTE \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3481-0. U.K.

Gr 6-8—This clever retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Wild Swans" pits Alexandra, the only daughter of the king, against his new and evil wife Zella. It is a story of romance, revenge, love, and transformation that is woven together as a powerful and magical fantasy.

MCKAY, Hilary. *Forever Rose.* S & S/ Margaret K. McElderry Bks. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-1-4169-5486-6. U.K.

Gr 6-8—This fifth and final volume of the Casson family saga, narrated by youngest sibling Rose, brings hilarious and satisfying closure as Rose discovers a secret that reunites her delightful, messy, fiercely loving family.

MICHAELIS, Antonia. *Tiger Moon.* tr. from German by Anthea Bell. Abrams/Amulet. Tr \$18.95. ISBN 978-0-8109-9481-2. Germany.

Gr 9 Up—As Safia, a young bride, awaits her death at the hands of her cruel husband, she



tells Lalit, a house servant, a tale about Farhad, a young thief, and his white tiger, Nitish, and their quest to rescue a princess. This story within a story, set in India, is engaging and powerful.

MILWAY, Katie Smith. *One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference*. illus. by Eugenie Fernandes. Kids Can. Tr \$18.95. ISBN 978-1-55453-028-1. Canada.

Gr 3-5—Kojo uses a few coins of his mother's loan from their village to buy a hen. As he sells eggs, he buys more hens, and his business prospers. Based on the life of Kwabena Darko of Sinapi Aba (Mustard Seed) Trust in Ghana, this colorful, lively book introduces young readers to microfinance.

NAKAGAWA, Chihiro. *Who Made This Cake?* tr. from Japanese by the author. illus. by Junji Koyose. Front St. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-59078-595-9. Japan.

K-Gr 2—After a mother places an order for a birthday cake for her son, a large crew of very small people and their yellow construction vehicles go to work to produce a glorious confection. The bright colors, detailed drawings, and spare text of this clever, imaginative picture book will appeal to young readers.

NESS, Patrick. *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (Chaos Walking Series, Bk. 1). Candlewick. RTE \$18.99. ISBN 978-0-7636-3931-0. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—Todd is the only boy in a community of men who can hear what others are thinking and must constantly live with the noise and intrusion of others. Along with his dog and a girl he finds in the marshes, Todd flees his home. An intense look at adolescence, free will, and information overload.

NICHOLLS, Sally. *Ways to Live Forever*. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Bks. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-545-06948-9. U.K.

Gr 6-8—Eleven-year-old Sam keeps a journal of lists, stories, pictures, questions, and facts while he is dying of leukemia. Members of Sam's family and his friend Felix each express different ideas about illness, death, and memorial services. Compelling characters experience credible emotions in a book celebrating life while confronting its end.

PRATCHETT, Terry. *Nation*. HarperCollins. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-06-143301-6; PLB \$17.89. ISBN 978-0-06-143302-3. U.K.

Gr 6-8—When Mau's world is destroyed by a great wave, he finds himself completely alone. Then Daphne, the only survivor of a ship wrecked in the same catastrophe, appears. From entirely different worlds, these two must work together to rebuild their lives,

grappling with questions of religion, identity, responsibility, and culture.

RAVISHANKAR, Anushka. *Elephants Never Forget!* illus. by Christiane Pieper. Houghton. Tr \$16. ISBN 978-0-618-99784-8. India.

K-Gr 2—In this jaunty tale by "India's Dr. Seuss," the lilting words and dramatic pictures almost dance on the page, making this story of a little elephant, separated from his mother and taken in by buffaloes, perfect for reading aloud. Young readers will cheer when the elephant decides in the end to remain with his friends.

REEVE, Philip. *Here Lies Arthur*. Scholastic. Tr. \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-545-09334-7. U.K.

Gr 9 Up—In this ingenious recounting of the Arthurian legend, Myrddin functions like a medieval press agent, spinning tales to create the myth behind the man seen as the hope for uniting Britain's warring tribes. Young Gwyna, who plays important roles in creating this heroic legend, eventually becomes a bard herself.

RIDDELL, Chris. *Ottoline and the Yellow Cat*. illus. by author. HarperCollins. Tr \$10.99. ISBN 978-0-06-144879-9; PLB \$14.89. ISBN 978-0-06-144880-5. U.K.

Gr 3-5—Zany Ottoline Brown, a certified mistress of disguise, and Mr. Monroe, a hairy Norwegian bog creature, investigate the mystery of missing lapdogs and the string of burglaries baffling the police of Big City. Intricately detailed black-and-white illustrations, with touches of red, playfully augment the story.

RINCK, Maranke. *I Feel a Foot!* illus. by Martijn van der Linden. Boyds Mills/Lemniscaat. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-59078-638-3. The Netherlands.

K-Gr 2—Examining only one part of the intruder that has disturbed their sleep, each animal concludes it to be a super big version of itself, only to learn it's an elephant. All is well as they share their hammock with elephant—until elephant wakes up! A surprise ending and bold illustrations on a black background enhance this clever version of an old tale.

ROBINSON, Anthony & Annemarie Young. *Gervelie's Journey: A Refugee Diary*. illus. by June Allan. Frances Lincoln. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-84507-652-8. U.K.

Gr 3-5—Photographs, drawings, and short

chronological entries gently tell the true story of Gervelie's life as a refugee from turmoil in the Republic of Congo and the Ivory Coast. Presently a young teen in England, Gervelie expresses her hopes for the future—especially that she and her father will remain safe.

SKRYPUCH, Marsha Forchuk. *Daughter of War*. Fitzhenry & Whiteside. pap. \$14.95. ISBN 978-1-55455-044-9. Canada.

Gr 9 Up—In this powerful story of the Armenian genocide, Kevork witnesses the brutal suffering of his people as he travels, disguised as an Arab, through Turkey and Syria in search of his love, Marta. Upon their reunion, Kevork learns that Marta has escaped from a forced Turkish marriage and borne a child.

TAYLOR, Sean. *The Great Snake: Stories from the Amazon*. illus. by Fernando Vilela. Frances Lincoln. Tr \$19.95. ISBN 978-1-84507-529-3. U.K.

Gr 3-5—Storyteller Taylor describes river, jungle, and villages as he travels along the Amazon and shares tales of tricksters, myth, and magic he hears along the

way. Dramatic woodcuts add strength to this collection of Brazilian stories.

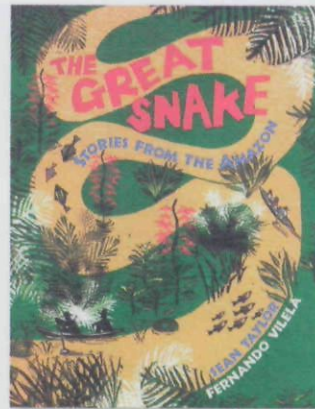
UEHASHI, Nahoko. *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit*. tr. from Japanese by Cathy Hirano. illus. by Yuko Shimizu. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Bks. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-545-00542-5. Japan.

Gr 6-8—Balsa, a young woman with great martial arts abilities, guards Prince Chagum, who must carry the water spirit's egg, which will save the kingdom from drought, until it hatches. As they are chased by egg-hungry creatures and the king's star reader warriors, Chagum becomes a caring person and Balsa confronts her own destiny.

WYNNE-JONES, Tim. *Rex Zero, King of Nothing*. Farrar/Melanie Kroupa Bks. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 978-0-374-36259-1. Canada.

Gr 6-8—Both serious and humorous, the saga of imaginative, good-natured sixth-grader Rex Norton-Norton (aka Rex Zero) continues as the boy confronts a new set of mysteries: a vindictive substitute teacher; a missing address book that leads to a beautiful woman with a black eye; and Mr. Norton-Norton's secretive behavior.

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