

Passport: World of Reading; USBBY's 2014 Outstanding International Books List introduces readers to the global community

School Library Journal

February 1, 2014

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School Library Journal

For Children's, Young Adult, and School Libraries

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 30; Vol. 60; No. 2

Length: 2926 words

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Body

At first blush, it might appear that great effort is required to obtain, read, and share international literature with children and young adults. Truth be told, it would be more difficult to avoid using international literature than it is to embrace it. We frequently utilize international literature—which according to the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY) is any book that originated or was first published in a country other than the U. S. and was subsequently published or distributed here. J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is a prime example. Familiar authors who appear on the 2014 USBBY Outstanding International Books List include Anthony Browne, Shaun Tan, Shirley Hughes, and David Almond.

While the committee identified the books on the list below as best of the best, there are many more excellent international books available in the United States. Take a moment to check the copyright page and other front matter in the children's and young adult books you select, recommend, and use in instruction. You may discover that some of your favorite books are international literature. Once you realize a book originated outside the United States, new perspectives related to the content or illustrations may emerge. Perhaps begin with titles from the list below as you develop diverse approaches to reading and critical literacy.

Preschool—Grade 2

BROWNE, Anthony. One Gorilla: A Counting Book. illus. by author. Candlewick. RTE \$16.99. ISBN 9780763663520. UK.

A large, lavish format featuring Browne's exquisitely detailed paintings introduces 10 different primates, with accompanying numerical digits 1 to 10. The concluding spread with people from all over the world in every gender, shape, and color is a meaningful reminder of the interconnectedness of our animal and human kingdoms.

CHAUD, Benjamin. The Bear's Song. tr. from French. illus. by author. Chronicle. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9781452114248. France.

A bee leads honey-hungry baby bear and his reluctant father on a wild chase from the safety of the forest to the lights of a French opera house. The loving relationship of father and cub shines through. Oversize trim size highlights the tiny details in the illustrations.

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DUMONT, Jean-François. *The Chickens Build a Wall.* tr. from French. illus. by author. Eerdmans. RTE \$16. ISBN 9780802854223. France.

The chickens build an enormous wall when a hedgehog appears in the barnyard. Unfortunately, they discover they built the wall where the hedgehog had been hibernating, and they had neglected to include a door. The book may be enjoyed as a humorous farm story or as a reminder of how we relate to the "strangers" among us.

GRAHAM, Bob. *The Silver Button.* illus. by author. Candlewick. RTE \$16.99. ISBN 9780763664374. UK.

In the minute it takes Jodie to finish her drawing, her brother takes his first step, a jogger runs by, a baby is born, a shoelace is tied, phones ring, ships leave, the world moves. Graham's distinctive pen-and-watercolor art enhances the changes that can happen in a moment.

LAGERCRANTZ, Rose. *My Happy Life.* tr. from Swedish by Julia Marshall. illus. by Eva Eriksson. Gecko. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 9781877579356. Sweden.

This is an emotionally honest look at a young girl's anxieties about starting school, finding and then losing a friend, and ultimately healing in order to appreciate others around her. The 20 brief chapters with frequent pen-and-ink illustrations are engaging and accessible for early chapter book readers.

LUNDE, Stein Erik. *My Father's Arms Are a Boat.* tr. from Norwegian by Kari Dickson. illus. by Øyvind Torseter. Enchanted Lion. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 9781592701247. Norway.

A sleepless young boy who is missing his recently deceased mother finds comfort and warmth in his father's arms. Uniquely collaged, exquisite art that provides understanding without artificial reassurance enhances this gentle lullaby of a story.

PENDZIWOL, Jean E. *Once Upon a Northern Night.* illus. by Isabelle Arsenault. Groundwood/House of Anansi. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 9781554981380. Canada.

Delicate illustrations bring to life this poetic lullaby and love song as a parent portrays a winter night to a sleeping child. Snowflakes, a great gray owl, hares, a fox, and other scenes of woodland and sky are depicted.

REID, Barbara. *Picture a Tree.* illus. by author. Albert Whitman. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 9780807565261. Canada.

This paean to trees, illustrated in expressive, detailed, and gestural plasticine, allows readers to imagine a tree—from its branches as a drawing in the sky to a tunnel, or the ocean, and anything in between. The background of each spread is textured and filled with birds, leaves, and planes.

UMAN, Jennifer & Valerio Vidali. *Jemmy Button.* illus. by authors. Candlewick/Templar. RTE \$16.99. ISBN 9780763664879. UK.

Orundellico, a native of Tierra del Fuego, is invited to visit England, is renamed Jemmy Button, and experiences new lights, language, music, and costumes. Eventually returning home, he realizes where he belongs. Stunning collage art supplemented with oil painting and gouache reflects the Victorian world into which he is introduced. Based on a true event.

YOUNG, Cybèle. *Out the Window.* illus. by author. Groundwood. Board \$12.95. ISBN 9781554983704. Canada.

This wordless board book consists of one double-sided, fan-folded page that opens out to reveal a unique bear's-eye view of the world. Effective use of white space helps depict the initial journey, in contrast with energetic illustrations presenting an alternate view when the leaf is seen in reverse. A simple yet ingenious exploration of perspective.

ZULLO, Germano. *Line 135.* tr. from French. illus. by Albertine. Chronicle. RTE \$18.95. ISBN 9781452119342. Switzerland.

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A young girl walks along a horizontal line with her mother, boards a train, and finally walks along a horizontal line with her grandmother. Realistic line drawings of a city progress into a fantastical countryside as the child thinks about her future and all its possibilities.

Grades 3–5

ALMOND, David. *Mouse Bird Snake Wolf*. illus. by Dave McKean. Candlewick. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9780763659127. UK.

The gods had grown tired of creating, so to fill the gaps Ben creates a mouse, Sue creates a bird, and Harry creates a snake. When a wolf is created, there are unintended results, with the horror of this reflected in McKean's deft marriage of exaggerated forms, faces, and graphic design.

BAKER-SMITH, Grahame. *FARThER*. illus. by author. Candlewick/Templar. RTE \$17.99. ISBN 9780763663704. UK.

The play on the words "father" and "farther" in the title encapsulates this bittersweet conflict between parenthood and achieving personal dreams "of air and flight" for two generations of fathers and sons. Baker-Smith's stupendous illustrations are lofty, meticulous works of fantasy, reality, and wonder.

BUNANTA, Murti, retel. *The Tiny Boy and Other Tales from Indonesia*. illus. by Hardiyono. Groundwood/House of Anansi. Tr \$24.95. ISBN 9781554981939. Canada.

Eight tales, some with familiar motifs and some that may be new to readers, are artfully presented to illustrate how greed and selfishness are punished, obedience is rewarded, and gratitude is valued. Hardiyono's vibrant, stylistic illustrations enhance and extend the cultural richness found in the collection.

GARLAND, Sarah. *Azzi in Between*. illus. by author. Frances Lincoln. 978-1847802613. UK.

This graphic novel tells the story of Azzi, her loving family, a war that changes their lives, and the tragedy of having to leave one's home and settle in a new country. Though Azzi eventually makes the transition to a new language, new culture, and new school, the journey is not overdramatized and is often conveyed through symbolic images.

GOOSSENS, Jesse. *Holland/A Thousand Things About Holland*. Set 2 vols. tr. from Dutch by Jonathan Ellis. illus. by Charlotte Dematons. Lemniscaat. Tr \$29.95. ISBN 9781935954330. The Netherlands.

Travel to Holland in the first title in this set, a remarkable wordless, oversize picture book that offers detailed illustrations of the land, people, and important moments in history. Unable to identify something in the pictures? Check the accompanying guide, *A Thousand Things About Holland*, for a description of each scene. Holland is a book for all ages.

LESTER, Alison. *Sophie Scott Goes South*. illus. by author. Houghton Mifflin. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9780544088955. Australia.

Sophie (the author's younger alter ego) accompanies her father, captain of the icebreaker *Aurora Australis*, on a trip to Antarctica and has adventures both on the ship and in Antarctica. Based on the author's expedition to Mawson Station, factual information is incorporated in a child-accessible text, including full-color line drawings and photomontages. Glossary and maps included.

MERVEILLE, David. *Hello, Mr. Hulot*. tr. from French. illus. by author. NorthSouth. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 9780735841352. France.

Inspired by a favorite character created by French filmmaker Jacques Tati in the 1950s and 1960s, Merveille has fashioned 22 whimsical and clever vignettes that are all nearly wordless. The sequential panels are just obvious

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enough for sophisticated young viewers, and the rather bumbling Hulot is a sympathetic and endearing character. The art has a clean, retro feel, and the layout offers a page-turning visual surprise in almost every episode.

MOUNDLIC, Charlotte. *The Bathing Costume: Or the Worst Vacation of My Life.* tr. from French by Claudia Zoe Bedrick. illus. by Olivier Tallec. Enchanted Lion. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 9781592701414. France.

Eight-year-old Ronnie is anxious when he is sent to the country to spend the summer with his cousins and grandparents. His fears are assuaged when he is victorious on the diving board, and even a recalcitrant bathing suit cannot dampen his newfound confidence.

SUNEBY, Elizabeth. *Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education.* (CitizenKid Series). illus. by Suana Verelst. Kids Can. Tr \$18.95. ISBN 9781554538164. Canada.

A school for girls is being built in Razia's village in Afghanistan. She desperately wants to attend, but the task of getting permission from her father and older brother will not be easy. An author's note about the Zabuli Education Center near Kabul that is teaching hundreds of young girls to read and write, a glossary, and classroom activities are included in the back matter.

WEULERSSE, Odile, retel. *Nasreddine.* tr. from French by Kathleen Merz. illus. by Rébecca Dautremer. Eerdmans. Tr \$17. ISBN 9780802854162. France.

Loosely based on the Middle Eastern folk hero Nasreddine Hodja, in this retelling young Nasreddine learns that, instead of always listening to the advice of others, it is better for one to "decide if what you are hearing is wise, or if it's only silly and hurtful." Humorous, earth-toned watercolor illustrations effectively use line, white space, and pacing to offer an authentic Middle Eastern setting.

WOLF, Gita, retel. *The Enduring Ark.* illus. by Joydeb Chitrakar. Tara Bks. Tr \$21.95. ISBN 9789380340180. India.

In this Indian retelling of the biblical story, Noah's family works to fill a giant boat with pairs of animals as they seek refuge from the great flood that will "swallow all life." Bengal Patua scroll paintings are cleverly featured in an accordion-style format.

Grades 6–8

BLACKCRANE, Gerelchimeg. *Black Flame.* tr. from Chinese by Anna Holmwood. Groundwood. Tr \$15.95. ISBN 9781554981359; ebk. \$12.95. ISBN 9781554983643. China.

Kelsang, a magnificent Tibetan mastiff dog, herds sheep on the northern Tibetan plateau, until one day strangers take him away and his life changes dramatically. After adventures that evidence Kelsang's bravery, he finds a place he can call home.

BRAHMACHARI, Sita. *Mira in the Present Tense.* Albert Whitman. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 9780807551493. UK.

May is a month filled with many changes for 12-year-old Mira. She's told to keep a diary for a month, during which time she has her first period, her beloved grandmother dies, she begins a new relationship with a Rwandan boy, and she distances herself from her parents and best friend.

BRITT, Fanny. *Jane, the Fox & Me.* tr. from French by Christelle Morelli & Susan Ouriou. illus. by Isabelle Arsenault. Groundwood/House of Anansi. Tr \$19.95. ISBN 9781554983605. Canada.

Hélène is overly self-conscious about her weight and is bullied by the popular girls in school, but finds comfort in the character Jane Eyre, seeing a fox on a school trip, and making a new friend. The use of color in this graphic novel signals Hélène's immersion in Jane Eyre, and finally her growth and assurance.

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HUGHES, Shirley. Hero on a Bicycle. Candlewick. RTE \$15.99. ISBN 9780763660376; ebk. \$15.99. ISBN 9780763663599. UK.

In Florence, Italy, in 1944, young Paolo and his family harbor escaped prisoners of war in the cellar of their home. The setting and the complex politics of the time come vividly to life, and the cliff-ending chapters make for thrilling historical fiction.

JOFFO, Joseph. A Bag of Marbles: The Graphic Novel. tr. from French by Edward Gauvin. adapted by Kris. illus. by Vincent Bailly. Lerner/Graphic Universe. lib. ed. \$29.27. ISBN 9781467707008; pap. \$9.95. ISBN 9781467715164; ebk. \$21.95. ISBN 9781467716512. France.

Because of their Jewish heritage, 10-year-old Jo and his 12-year-old brother, Maurice, are forced to leave their parents and their home in German-occupied Paris to join their older brothers near the Italian border. This is a retelling of Joffo's memoir by the same title, in graphic-novel format.

McKAY, Sharon E. & Daniel Lafrance. War Brothers: The Graphic Novel. illus. by Daniel Lafrance. Annick. RTE \$27.95. ISBN 9781554514892; pap. \$18.95. ISBN 9781554514885. Canada.

Two friends are kidnapped from their school and must survive incomprehensible horrors when they are conscripted into Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army. Based on real-life interviews, the chilling graphic novel bears formidable testimony to the brutal tragedy of Uganda's child soldiers.

MATTI, Truus. Mister Orange. tr. from Dutch by Laura Watkinson. illus. by Jenni Desmond. Enchanted Lion. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 9781592701230. The Netherlands.

When his older brother departs to serve in World War II, Linus begins making deliveries for his Manhattan greengrocer family. Each week he takes a crate of oranges to an immigrant painter who encourages the boy to examine the world from multiple, broader perspectives. The Dutch artist Piet Mondrian is a character in this fictional story.

SETTINGINGTON, Ken. Branded by the Pink Triangle. Second Story. pap. \$15.95. ISBN 9781926920962. Canada.

As Hitler's power strengthened, the Nazi Party enforced laws in order to persecute homosexuals. Weaving personal stories with original photographs, Settingington tells the horrific story of how gays were treated, in and out of concentration camps, and reveals how the pink triangle became a symbol for gay rights.

WATTS, Irene N. Touched by Fire. Tundra. Tr \$17.95. ISBN 978 1770495241. Canada.

A Jewish teenager in Russia immigrates to New York, circa 1911, and becomes involved in the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire. Watts introduces a sympathetic cast of individually drawn characters who experience anti-Semitism, the arduous journey to America in steerage, Ellis Island, and labor problems.

Grades 9–12

MAROH, Julie. Blue Is the Warmest Color. tr from French by Ivanka Hahnenberger. illus. by author. Arsenal Pulp. pap. \$19.95. ISBN 9781551525143; ebk. \$19.95. ISBN 9781551525136. Belgium.

In this tender coming-of-age and coming-out story, young Clementine grapples with her sexuality, family, and friends, as she accepts her love for the older, assured Emma. Using shades of brown accented with hues of blue, Maroh candidly and fluidly illustrates this story of lesbian love. [Graphic scenes of lesbian lovemaking.]

SAX, Aline. The War Within These Walls. tr. from Flemish by Laura Watkinson. illus. by Caryl Strzelecki. Eerdmans. Tr \$17. ISBN 9780802854285. Belgium.

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Trapped by the Nazis in Warsaw's newly created Jewish Ghetto in 1939, young Misha takes dangerous risks to help his family, eventually joining a resistance group determined to attempt one final stand against their vicious oppressors. Haunting ink paintings emphasize the prisoners' desperate plight.

SHARAFEDDINE, Fatima. *The Servant*. Greenwood/House of Anansi. Tr \$14.95. ISBN 9781554983 070; ebk. \$9.95. ISBN 9781554983094. United Arab Emirates.

In 1985 in Beirut, Faten is uprooted from her village life and becomes a live-in servant to a wealthy family, where violence from the ongoing Lebanese Civil War seems never-ending and impacts her goal of getting an education. Richly drawn characters soar in this moving coming-of-age story.

TAN, Shaun. *The Bird King: An Artist's Notebook*. illus. by author. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine. Tr \$19.99. ISBN 9780545465137. Australia.

Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award winner Tan offers whimsical glimpses into his creative process with a four-part collection of ingenious tidbits and reminiscences from his entire oeuvre. Included are story ideas, on-the-road sketches, storyboards, drawings from life, and other visual insights.

AWEIN, Elizabeth. *Rose Under Fire*. Hyperion/Disney. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9781423183099; ebk. \$17.99. ISBN 9781423198697. UK.

In this compelling and tautly written drama of loyalty, friendship, and bravery, young Rose Justice has been asked to ferry a plane back from France to England. When she is captured by the Germans and put into Ravensbrück concentration camp, her survival is dependent on her wits, ingenuity, and fellow prisoners. Companion book to *Code Name Verity* (Hyperion, 2012).