

## 2006 USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST

ADLINGTON, L.J. *The Diary of Pelly D.*

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

While excavating through post-war wreckage, 14-year-old worker Toni V. finds the diary of Pelly D., a spirited, carefree teenager who led a life of wealth and privilege before her futuristic society's genetic profiling led to genocide. This riveting dystopia will stun readers with its resemblance to the Jewish Holocaust.

BROWN, Anthony. *My Mom.*

Grades K-2. Great Britain.

This affectionate and gently humorous picture book is notable for its compelling and comforting portraits of a work-a-day mom. Captions incorporating similes and patterned language convey the amazing variety of traits that make mothers everywhere special.

CLARKE, Judith. *Kalpana's Dream.*

Grades 6-8. Australia.

Neema, a seventh grade Australian student and great-granddaughter of Kalpana, who is visiting from India, attempts to answer the question posed by her teacher, "Who am I?" This cross-cultural, intergenerational story combines magical and real worlds within a narrative told from various points of view.

DALY, Niki. *Ruby Sings the Blues.*

Grade K-2. Great Britain.

Lyrical text and vibrant mixed-media illustrations tell the story of Ruby and her "boom-box" voice. Ruby is ostracized because of loudness until the day her jazzy neighbors teach her to harness her powerful voice. Though the story could take place anywhere, Daly's South African context shines through.

DELANEY, Joseph. *The Last Apprentice: Revenge of the Witch.*

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

Thirteen-year-old Thomas Ward begins his apprenticeship with the Spook to learn how to keep the world free of boggarts, ghosts, and evil witches. During his early training, Tomas unintentionally releases the malevolent witch "Mother Malkin" from captivity, resulting in a series of shivery events.

DYER, Heather. *The Girl with the Broken Wing.*

Grades 3-5. UK.

In this witty Welsh novel, a girl crashes onto a skylight and startles twins James and Amanda out of bed. This girl, whose name is Hilary and just happens to have wings, has decided to stay for an unspecified period of time with the twins' family. Many humorous moments ensue as this "guardian angel" experiences daily life at school and on family outings.

GARCIA, Laura Gallego. *The Legend of the Wandering King.*

Grade 6-8. Spain.

An adventure steeped in legend and pre-Islamic poetry. Prince Walid dreams of being the best poet in the realm yet loses the poetry competition to a poor weaver. After eliminating the

## 2006 USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST

competition, Walid spends the rest of his adventure seeking redemption and discovering that true poetry comes from the heart.

GARDNER, Sally. *I, Coriander*.

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

At the heart of this atmospheric yet highly readable historical fantasy is privileged Londoner, Coriander Hobie. After a malevolent Puritan preacher locks her in a chest, Coriander is transported to a lush, parallel fairy world with startling similarities to Cromwell's England.

GRANT, K.M. *Blood Red Horse*.

Grades 6-8. UK.

Crusades of 1185-1193 come alive as two competitive brothers bid England and the girl they love, Ellie, farewell and with their father and the horse Hosanna board ship for the Holy Lands. Battles are gory, men die, horses die, and Hosanna's wounds bring enemies together. A thrilling historical ride offers adventure, romance, love and loss. First book of the deGranville trilogy.

GREY, Minnie. *Traction Man is Here!*

Grades K-2. Great Britain.

Powered by the imagination, Traction Man always saves the day, even when confronted by rather embarrassing fashion trends. Fast paced adventures of this intrepid action figure and his sidekick, scrubbing brush, are accompanied by brightly designed, comically expressive illustrations.

GRIBBIN, Mary and John. *The Science of Philip Pullman's HIS DARK MATERIALS*.

Grades 9-12. England.

A description for the young reader of the scientific theories and principles underlying Pullman's fantasy trilogy including the material of the universe, the unconscious mind, the quantum world and dimensions beyond, choice and randomness, the nature of life, light, and entanglement.

HAWORTH-ATTARD. *Theories of Relativity: A Novel*.

Grades 9-12. Canada.

Banished from the house by his mother so her new man won't know about his existence, sixteen year old Dylan tries surviving on streets with teen runaways and those who prey on them. With no family to turn to, some do-gooders offer a hand if he wants to accept them.

HEARN, Julie. *The Minister's Daughter*.

Grades 9-12. Great Britain.

During a time in English history when Puritans and pixies presumably coexisted, the minister's daughters accuse Nell, a "merrybegot" (one conceived during May Day festivities) of witchcraft. Historical fiction and fantasy seamlessly merge in this passionate and intriguing adventure.

HEYLAUFF, Lisa. *Going to School in India*.

Grades 3-5. India.

This captivating non-fiction book is filled with a collection of photographs, first-person narratives, and cultural information woven into a multi-faceted examination of how children go to school in various parts of India. Some children take cable cars across craggy mountains while

## 2006 USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST

others have class in a bus temporarily parked in a city neighborhood. The bright fold-out pages, textured backgrounds, and snippets of children's comments contribute to an appealing format for young readers.

HOLUB, Josef. *An Innocent Soldier*.

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

Farmhand Adam Feutcher, conscripted into Napoleon's Grande Armee in 1812, tells his story: cruelty of a sadistic sergeant; rescue by an aristocratic, young lieutenant; horrors of battle, starvation, cold, and betrayal. Only the growing friendship with "his" lieutenant saves them both. Page-turning historical fiction; poignant and personal view of war.

HUSSY, Charmain. *The Valley of Secrets*.

Grade 6-8. Great Britain.

Orphan Stephen Lansbury has always been without family so he is shocked when he inherits an English estate from his late uncle. The surprises multiply as he sets out to discover something about himself and the family he never knew. The adventure that unfolds is part fantasy, part ecological mystery.

LAGUNA, Sofie. *Surviving Aunt Marsha*.

Grades 3-5. Australia.

When their parents fly off to Paris to renew their wedding vows, eleven-year-old Tina and her two younger brothers are left at home in Melbourne, Australia in the care of the dreaded Aunt Marsha, a former nurse with unpopular views on nutrition and appropriate free-time activities. The kids' frustration grows more intense day by day, culminating in a final hilarious conflict in which Aunt Marsha gets her just desserts and all emotions flow freely.

LANAGAN, Margo. *Black Juice*.

Grades 9-12. Australia.

Ten short stories about unknown worlds, deftly and darkly told. With her "hung-headed shame," one protagonist must sink in the tar pit as punishment for wrong-doing. Young adult readers will find these tales alien, yet eerily familiar and memorable, twisted and scary.

McCAUGHREAN, Geraldine. *Not the End of the World*.

Grades 9-12. UK.

The story of Noah and The Great Flood is told by Timma, Noah's youngest daughter, with occasional contributions from other family members and animal passengers. A unique telling as readers learn about the Ark, filthy and teeming with ailing animals and humans. Moral/ethical dilemmas are posed as pleas of those unable to board the boat are ignored.

McKAY, Hilary. *Permanent Rose*.

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

In this 3<sup>rd</sup> installment in the Casson family saga (*Saffy's Angel*, *Indigo's Star*), the household is as chaotic as ever. Rose is determined to find her departed friend, Tom, and she has some humorous misadventures in her quest. Realistic dialogue and irresistible characters enliven the tale.

## 2006 USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST

McNAUGHTON, COLIN. *Once Upon an Ordinary School Day*  
Grades K-2. England.

In a nod to inspirational teachers, McNaughton describes the transformation of an ordinary child's ordinary day into an extraordinary learning experience. A nonconformist teacher encourages his students to visualize what they hear in music he plays. His invitation stirs the children's imaginations. The illustrations expand the color palette and convey the text's wry humor and characters' subtle gestures.

MICHAEL, Livi. *The Whispering Road*.  
Grades 6-8. UK.

Set in Victorian England, this historical fantasy follows the trials and adventures of poverty-stricken siblings Joe and Annie who had been left by their mother at a workhouse when they were very young and were then sold to an abusive farmer. After their escape from the farm, Joe and Annie travel a dangerous road and meet questionable as well as kind strangers as they search for their mother. This suspenseful and sad yet ultimately hopeful novel will be relished by fans of Dickens' *Oliver Twist*.

MORGENSTERN, Susie. *It Happened at School: Two Tales*.  
Grades 3-5. France.

Droll humor, clever dialogue, multiple perspectives and a distinctive French sensibility invigorate a match set of engaging stories about teachers, students and parents. Spare, spiky sketches add a whimsical touch to the mayhem.

NASLUND, Gorel Kristina. *Our Apple Tree*.  
Grades K-2. Sweden.

The illustrations of a productive and generous apple tree show its magic: everyone enjoys a delicious apple. "Every seed could be an apple tree. . . [and] . . . everyone likes apples." With soft, pastel pictures spilling from one page to another, we find honor in the simple apple tree.

NEIL, Philip. *The Pirate Princess and Other Fairy Tales*.  
Grades 3-5. UK.

Seven tales told by the famous Jewish storyteller Reb Nachmun of Bratslav are made very accessible to readers. Seemingly similar to traditional fairy tales, these all have a spiritual underpinning based on Kabbalistic beliefs. An introduction, background notes and extensive bibliography make this handsome book useful as well.

NILSSON, Per. *You & You & You*.  
Grades 9-12. Sweden.

The lives of 3 young people begin as separate plot strands and then intertwine as they help each other make crucial decisions and gain perspective on their futures. Attitudes towards sex and death convey a non-American perspective.

ORMEROD, Jan. *Lizzie Nonsense*.  
Grades K-2. Australia.

## 2006 USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST

In the bush country of frontier Australia, Lizzie's lively imagination keeps her mother entertained as they work and wait for her father to return from his trip to town to sell the sandalwood he has cut.

PAVER, Michelle. *Wolf Brother*.

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

In a stone-age land of clan rivalries, mystical spirits, and vast wilderness, Torak embarks on a journey at the behest of his dying father to destroy a demonic bear whose evil powers threaten civilization. With his wolf-cub as companion and guide, Torak confronts human, spiritual, and natural enemies in this fast-paced, coming-of-age adventure/quest fantasy, first in the series, *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness*.

PRATS, Joan de Déu. *Sebastian's Roller Skates*.

Grades K-2. Spain.

Sebastian, a shy boy discovers a pair of abandoned roller skates. Overcoming his fear of falling and failing, he learns to skate and in so doing, he's able to express his newly acquired self-confidence. Watercolors and collages illustrate Sebastian's change as the colors move from grey to bright.

PULLMAN, Philip. *The Scarecrow and His Servant*.

Grades 3-5. England.

When lightning strikes and humanizes a scarecrow, Jack partners up with him and their journey begins. They survive many narrow escapes as they're chased and stalked. This tale of friendship comes to a satisfying conclusion with good rewarded and evil punished. Kevin Hawkes' line drawings enhance the old-fashioned humor.

ROSE, Malcolm. *Framed!*

Grades 6-8. UK.

Luke Harding, 16, is the youngest Forensic Investigator (FI) graduated from his English prep school. Immediately there's a murder and all evidence points to Luke. With sidekick Malc, his trusty robot who conducts DNA testing onsite, and forbidden girlfriend, Jade, Luke hopes to snare the real killer. High interest, easy reading text is fast-moving, and characters are likeable and engaging.

ROSEN, Michael. *Michael Rosen's Sad Book*, illus. by Quentin Blake.

Grades 3-5. England.

Prompted by the death of his teenage son, Rosen writes a heartfelt and deceptively simple book about handling the swirling emotions of love, anger, and sadness and moving on with life.

Blake's ink and watercolor illustrations perfectly capture the emotions of the story.

SPILEBEEN, Geert. *Kipling's Choice*.

Grades 9-12. Belgium.

In 1915, as he lies dying in Loos, France, on the field of his first battle, Rudyard Kipling's 18-year-old son John remembers his childhood preparation for service to his country, and the carefree days before the Great Picnic turned out to be something quite different.

## 2006 USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST

STEINHOFEL, Andreas. *The Center Of The World*.

Grades 9-12. Germany.

Told from the perspective of Phil, a gay teen, this compelling, lengthy coming of age novel focuses on people closest to him and moves thematically between his childhood and adolescence. The story concludes, coming full circle as Phil addresses and reveals his most perplexing questions. Exquisite, lyrical writing.

UPDALE, Eleanor. *Montmorency On The Rocks*.

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

The continuing adventures of Montmorency, and his underworld alter ego Scarper, involve bombs, death and drug addiction. The Victorian setting adds to the dark intrigue, and may lead readers to other period classics.

VALCKX, Catharina. *Lizette's Green Sock*.

Grades K-2. France.

Lizette's journey to find a missing sock takes on amusing and realistic encounters with friends and bullies. As she begins to use a new perspective, Lizette figures out her dilemma and moves on, satisfied with her place in the world. A spunky little girl gets her domestic dramas under control!

WILSON, Jacqueline. *The Illustrated Mum*.

Grades 6-8. England.

Dolphin adores her mother, Marigold, who has vivid tattoos all over her body. But Mum's manic depression becomes overwhelming for Dolphin and her older sister Star. Difficult family situations are portrayed realistically, but leavened with humor.

WOODING, Chris. *POISON*.

Grades 6-8. Great Britain.

Poison's quest begins when phaeries substitute a changling for her younger sister. She meets unusual friends along the way who help her face unpredictable adversities. Ultimately, she must not only play a pivotal role in the battle between the lords of the realm, but discover some very uncomfortable truths about her own life.

WYNNE-JONES, Tim. *A Thief in the House of Memory*.

Grades 9-12. Canada.

After a dead body is discovered on his family estate, teenager Declan becomes obsessed with finding out what happened to his mother who disappeared several years earlier. This beautifully written and distinctive novel combines a suspenseful mystery with an intriguing family drama about secrets.

YAN, Ma. *Diary of Ma Yan*.

Grades 6-8. France.

Born into an impoverished family in a remote part of China, Ma Yan's schooling seemed over at 13, when her mother thrust her diaries into the hands of a French journalist who edited and published them and ensured her future.

## 2006 USBBY OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS LIST

ZENATTI, Valerie. *When I Was a Soldier*.

Grades 9-12. France.

Zenatti chronicles two years of compulsory military service in the Israeli army, her initial excitement with the uniform and gun, grueling training, an unexplained anxiety attack, and posting to a security listening post as she grows up and away from old friends.

ZUSAK, Markus. *I am the Messenger*.

Grade 9-12. Australia.

Ed Kennedy has a dead end job, loser friends, and a smelly dog. He drifts through life without goals. But after accidentally stopping a bank robbery, Ed finds himself becoming an agent of change, and as he carries out a series random missions he finds that he might actually care.