

2011-12 Story Builders Literature Selections

***THE MAGIC PILLOW* by Demi**

(Grades K-2)

In this Chinese tale, a poor young boy named Ping bemoans the fact that he will never have great wealth or power. With the help of a wise magician and his magic pillow, Ping goes on an epic dreamland adventure in which he learns that his loving family and peaceful existence are the true bearers of lasting happiness.

***BLUEBERRY SHOE* by Ann Dixon**

(Grades K-2)

On a family blueberry picking expedition, Baby loses a shoe. Rather than staying lost, the shoe is found by a variety of animals that make the shoe their home, toy, and meal. A year later, after the seasons have changed and changed again, Baby finds the shoe as well, although it has now blossomed into far more than any old piece of infant footwear. This story embraces the lesson that one man's – or rather baby's – trash is another's treasure.

***GO TO SLEEP, GECKO!* by Margaret Read MacDonald**

(Grades K-2)

When Gecko goes to Elephant for help with his sleeping problems, he learns an important lesson. Every bug, animal, and rain cloud – even the blinking fireflies that keep him awake at night – are part of a tightly woven chain that helps one another to survive. In this Balinese folk tale of community and appreciation for the work of others, Gecko learns that removing even one piece of the chain could lead to his ultimate demise.

***THE HUMMINGBIRDS' GIFT* by Stefan Czernecki & Timothy Rhodes**

(Grades K-3)

When a drought comes to the Mexican village of Tzintzuntzan, a farmer and his family sacrifice their own well-being to save the beautiful hummingbirds of the village. In exchange for their kind selflessness, the hummingbirds teach the family a skill that will sustain them for generations. Rich with Mexican culture and featuring Dia de los Muertos, this story illustrates the importance of making sacrifices and helping others.

***A STORY A STORY* by Gail E. Haley**

(Grades K-5)

Ananse, the famed African trickster spider, makes a bargain with the Sky God to obtain all the stories in the world, but first he must complete several nearly impossible tasks. Witness how Ananse outwits the forest animals and wins the fabled book of stories.

***THE MAGIC GOURD* by Baba Wagué Diakité**

(Grades K-5)

During a terrible drought, Brother Rabbit saves Chameleon from a thorn bush. In exchange, Chameleon gives Brother Rabbit a magic gourd that will fill with whatever the owner desires. The magic gourd sustains Brother Rabbit and his family until a greedy king hears about its wonders and steals it to build an endless supply of gold. However, the king underestimates the power of friendship and generosity and is soon taught that they are worth far more than any shiny treasure in this story from Mali.

***TASTY BABY BELLY BUTTONS* by Judy Sierra**

(Grades 2-4)

In this tale from Japan, Uriko's parents taught her to be a great warrior and master dumpling maker. When giant monsters named *oni* (who love to munch on baby belly buttons) invade her village and steal all the babies, Uriko's skills are put to the test. With a sack full of dumplings, a sword, and some loyal companions, Uriko's quest teaches that brains and teamwork are worth far more than brute strength.

***MR. LINCOLN'S WAY* by Patricia Polacco**

(Grades 3-5)

In a touching story about learning to think for oneself and make good decisions, one principal, Mr. Lincoln, makes all the difference in a young boy's life. After being a bully for most of his life, Mr. Lincoln was determined to find the good in Eugene's inner self. Through a love for birds the two individuals form a special bond and Eugene realizes the error of his ways.

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***RAVEN-WHO-SETS-THINGS-RIGHT* by Fran Martin (Grades 3-5)**

In this Native American myth, Raven wants to give sunshine to the people of the earth, but there is one problem: the Old One keeps the Sun, Moon, and Stars tied up in his house. In disguise, Raven tricks the Old One into releasing the Sun, Moon, and Stars to the world. While the world then begins to grow and transform, the Old One grows angry enough to destroy it all with his magic. Will Raven's tricks be enough to save the people this time or has his dishonesty cost them an enormous price?

***WILFRID GORDON MCDONALD PARTRIDGE* by Mem Fox (Grades 3-5)**

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge doesn't know what a memory is. All he knows is that his friend, Miss Nancy, has lost hers. Wilfrid Gordon seeks the help of his many elderly friends who live in the home next door. On this expedition to discover the meaning of memory, Wilfrid and his readers learn that friendship comes in all ages and that an object as simple as a seashell can help to unearth the most magical of moments.

***THE WOMAN WHO OUTSHONE THE SUN* by Alejandro Cruz Martinez (Grades 3-5)**

When Lucia Zenteno arrives in an ancient Mexican village surrounded by butterflies and accompanied by an iguana, the civilians are overwhelmed with her beauty and majesty. Despite the elders' warnings to respect Lucia, they are frightened of her power and turn to insults to drive her out of their village. With her departure she brings the village's river, and they must seek her forgiveness to save their homes. Written in Spanish and English, this story works well with multicultural and environmental units.

***LA MARIPOSA (THE BUTTERFLY)* by Francisco Jiménez (Grades 3-5)**

Because he can speak only Spanish, Francisco, a child of migrant workers, has trouble when he begins first grade. He cannot understand anything that is being said. However, a small caterpillar in a jar in the classroom opens the way for respect and acceptance. This book is written by a California author and is based on an incident in his life.

***RUBY'S WISH* by Shirin Yim Bridges (Grades 4-5)**

Ruby is a young Chinese girl who loves to read and write. She has the most beautiful handwriting and works harder in her studies than any of her male peers. However, because she is a girl, she must learn to do household chores instead of play outside, and will be married instead of attending university. Will her wealthy grandfather defy tradition and let her go to school? Ruby proves that with perseverance, strength, and some lucky red ribbons, anything is possible.

***NIGHT BOAT TO FREEDOM* by Margot Theis Raven (Grades 4-5)**

Christmas John is a young boy born into slavery in Kentucky. At night, he rows a small boat across the river to Ohio to deliver fellow slaves to freedom and then returns home to his grandmother, who makes a quilt square for every person they save. When the quilt is almost finished, it's Christmas John and his grandmother's turn to escape. Based on true accounts, this is a story of love, hardship, and the ability to find beauty in the darkest and ugliest of times.

***THE DAY OF AHMED'S SECRET* by Florence Parry Heide & Judith Heide Gilliland (Grades 4-5)**

Ahmed is a young boy who spends his days making deliveries throughout Cairo. He delights in the sounds, smells, and tastes of his city. He loves the people he meets on the street each day. But, what delights him most of all is that he has learned to write his name. Highlighting the importance of literacy, this Egyptian tale helps readers to understand that with education, anything is possible.