

A SAMPLING OF BOOKS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORIGINS
for
Here on Earth

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A Bottle in the Gaza Sea by Valérie Zenatti. Translated from the French by Adriana Hunter. (France) U.S.: Bloomsbury USA Distressed over the Middle East conflicts, a 17-year-old Israeli girl (Tal) puts a message into a bottle and throws it into the Gaza Sea. Tal's message is answered by "Gazaman," and after that an unlikely, not always friendly series of e-mail exchanges ensues. This novel begins with appearance and moves beyond the superficial. (Ages 12-15)

Brave Story was originally published in Japanese in 2003 as *Bureibu Sutori*. Written by the prominent Japanese author Miyuki Miyabe, it was translated into English by Alexander O. Smith. The novel involves Wataru, a teenage boy whose chaotic life leads him to enter the videogame-infused world of Vision. His fate is altered as his complicated quest with a real-world rival and with fierce and friendly creatures unleashes a future Wataru could not have anticipated. The wisdom and power Wataru gains during his journey enable him to embrace the transformed reality to which he returns. It's complex, captivating and long enough to satisfy intrepid Harry Potter fans. The publisher VIZ Media won the 2008 Mildred Batchelder Award for arranging this first English translation of **Brave Story** for publication in the U.S. (Ages 11-18)

Burn My Heart by Beverley Naidoo. (U.K) U.S.: HarperCollins, 2009) Young Mugo, the black son of long-time employees of his sometime-playmate Mathew's white family, embarks upon a risky escapade with Mathew. The consequences of their actions soon explode into danger for all in the racially and culturally separate rural Kenyan communities of the 1950s. The rebellion of extremist Kenyans against many whites occupying rural lands is featured in a suspenseful novel written by a white South African who has lived in exile in England for decades. (Ages 11-14)

The Cat: Or, How I Lost Eternity written by the celebrated German author Jutta Richter was originally published in German as *Die Katze* and translated into English for the first time by Anna Brailovsky for publication by Milkweed Editions. The U.S. edition retains the original compelling artwork by Rotraut Susanne Berner. This novella is a timeless fable featuring willful young Christine's attempts to understand the nature of true learning and friendship. After imagining encounters with a persistent, sassy, mysterious cat, she discovers she can choose to act on behalf of others. The child-friendly exchanges in the text are accompanied by Berner's sophisticated artwork in this exceptionally handsome

little volume. Milkweed Press received 2008 Batchelder Honor Book status for publishing this book in the U.S. (Ages 5-9)

Dog Lost by Ingrid Lee. (U.K.) U.S.: Chicken House / Scholastic Inc. Eleven-year-old Mackenzie tries to track down his dog Cash who has been stolen by kids wanting to sell her for use in illegal pit bull fights. Municipal pressure, public opinion and several helpers otherwise unknown to each other become involved in a suspenseful, fast moving story - excellent short sentences and a fast pace for newly independent readers and also for reading aloud. The author is Canadian. (Ages 8-11)

Elephants Never Forget! by Amushka Ravishankar and Christianne Pieper. (India) U.S.: Houghton Mifflin. A lively, rhyming romp involves a tumbling and wallowing little elephant which benefits from a little help from her new buffalo friends. In return she gives them a little help, as well. The alliance of unlikely friends leads to a surprising conclusion. The fast paced story created by a famous writer from India, sometimes called the Indian Dr. Seuss, is related in words printed in dramatically varying sizes. The blue and black visual images almost leap off the tan pages of this distinctive, humorous picture book. (Ages 3-8)

A Fistful of Pearls and Other Tales from Iraq adapted by Elizabeth Laird and accompanied by occasional black & white artwork by Shelley Fowles. (U.K.) U.S.: Frances Lincoln Books) Laird has lived in Iraq. In addition to the title folktale, the eight other traditional Iraqi folktales retold in this slim paperback volume are Lazy Ahmed; Zirak and the Ring-Dove; The Pots That Had Babies; The Moon Pond; The Suit of Stone; The Sign of the Tassel; A Coat for a King; and I Want My Son! Laird has lived in Iraq. (Ages 8-11)

Ghaddar the Ghoul and Other Palestinian Stories adapted by Sonia Nimr with an introduction by Shada Karmi and occasional artwork by Hannah Shaw. (U.K.) U.S.: Frances Lincoln Books. Nimr was born in Jenin, a small Palestinian town. The nine folktales she adapted for this small volume are the title story; The Farmer Who Followed His Dream; Dancing Jasmine, Singing Water; Tanbouri's Clown; How Swallow Tricked Snake; I Landed at the Princes' Party; Hungry Wolf and Crafty Fox; Stupid Salma; and Hasan and the Golden Feather. (Ages 8-11)

The Girl Who Saw Lions by Berlie Doherty (U.K.) U.S.: A Neal Porter Book / Roaring Brook Press) Parallel contemporary stories by an acclaimed British writer feature two girls - Rosa living in London, England, and Abela in rural Tanzania, East Africa - whose lives cross unexpectedly, not only for the characters but for readers, as well. Unable to resist the authority of the adults who assume (or actually have) responsibility for her, Abela is tricked into leaving the remnant of her family after her mother's death from AIDS. Rosa experiences the effects of her mother's attempts to bring a second child into their tight-knit family through adoption. Each girl is firmly rooted in her cultural and class traditions. Well-crafted characters and locales earmark a distinctive, important, fast-moving novel with surprises throughout. (Ages 11-14)

***How to Heal a Broken Wing* by Bob Graham.** (U.K.) U.S.: Candlewick. A minimal number of words relate Will's discovery of a wounded bird on a sidewalk. The ways in which Will and his family care for the bird in their apartment until it is strong enough to be released to a wild existence are shown, rather than told. Artwork details indicate the passage of time and the elements of Will's family life. This eloquently developed picture book employs effective uses of light and space and demonstrates superb restraint in allowing the artwork to tell a story about nature and human nature within an urban setting. Graham is an Australian now living in England. (Ages 4-8)

I Feel a Foot! by Maranke Rinck with artwork by Martijn van der Linden (The Netherlands) U.S.: Lemniscaat / Boyds Mills Press. Turtle, Bat, Octopus, Bird, Goat and Elephant finally discover what is keeping them from going to sleep in the same hammock. Distinctive artwork rendered in full color exaggerates their confusion in this entertaining variation of the tale often called *The Blind Men and the Elephant*. (Ages 4-8)

The London Eye Mystery by Siobhan Dowd. (U.K.) U.S.: David Fickling Books / Random House. A page-turner with a generous sprinkling of geography-specific details, this adventuresome mystery set in contemporary London is a model of international fiction. Although Ted's condition (Asperger's) is significant to the narrative, it never overwhelms the fast-paced story. The mystery does not "speak down" to young readers while being welcoming to those for whom a more challenging text would exclude them from the fun. (Ages 10 – 13)

The Mozart Question by Michael Morpugo with artwork by Michael Foreman. (U.K.) U.S.: Candlewick. A reporter advised not to annoy Paolo Levi by asking the "Mozart question," says immediately to the famous violinist that she won't make that dreaded query. Thus Levi becomes disarmed. He then proceeds to relate how, as a boy, he discovered that his parents had met in a Nazi concentration camp. He found out that officers ordered them to play Mozart time and again. Pencil and watercolor artwork relieves a brief, memorable survival story by providing images of Venice, as well as of the camp. (Ages 9-13)

My Two Grannies by Floella Benjamin with artwork by Margert Chamberlain. (U.K.) U.S.: Frances Lincoln Books. Granny Vero was born in Trinidad. She loves Calypso music, chicken and plantains. *Anansi* is her favorite story. Born in England, Granny Rose appreciates brass band music and steak & kidney pie. Her favorite story is *Jack and the Beanstalk*. While Alvina's parents are on holiday, her grannies will take care of her. Will there be a cultural conflict? Alvina discovers how they can all enjoy being together. (Ages 4-8)

Nicholas and the Gang (France) is collaboration between writer René Goscinny and artist Jean-Jacques Sempé, one of the most famous teams in French children's literature. This volume was translated into English by Anthea Bell for the first time and published by Phaidon Press in the U.S. Originally published in French as *Le petit Nicolas et les copains*, this companion volume to *Nicholas* and *Nicholas on Vacation*, presents the further hilarious escapades of a schoolboy and his classmates in an all-boys school.

Sempé's jaunty pen-and-ink artwork extends the energy of the text. Brief, fresh, and funny, the Nicholas stories have been favorites among French schoolchildren for nearly 50 years. Phaidon Press received Batchelder Honor Book status for publishing *Nicholas* and *Nicholas and the Gang*. (Ages 6 -10)

Off to War: Voices of Soldiers' Children by Deborah Ellis (Canada, Groundwood Press) Twenty-seven families are represented by the Canadian and U.S. youth interviewed by Ellis who inquired about what it's like having a parent deployed to war zones, usually in Iraq or Afghanistan. Varied strategies for coping with loneliness, routines, chores, and parental mood swings are expressed. (Ages 10-18)

One Hen: How One Small Loan Mad a Big Difference by Katie Smith Milway with artwork by Eugenie Fernandes (Canada, Kids Can Press). Parallel texts offer access to an important, handsome book about how a boy Koko strives to become self-sufficient by raising hens and selling eggs. Young children will remember the parallel rhyme based upon *The House That Jack Built*, while older ones can gain the "big picture" from the longer narrative. Vibrant full-color artwork engages the eye, and the attractive format full of cultural details earmark this significant book. This picture story is based upon the efforts of Kwabena Darko, an actual person, who did change his family's life and then that of his community by owning a hen, selling eggs, getting another hen, etc. Now he works with others through a microcredit lending program. The story is set in a village in Ghana. (Ages 5-9)

The Savage written by David Almond with graphics by Dave McKean (U.K., U.S.: Candlewick) Almond has won many awards for his novels for young teen readers, so this astonishing and dynamic graphic exploration of deep childhood grief is quite a departure for him. A variation on the usual graphic novel form, the narrative is rendered in a prose text interspersed with a visual counterpart. Two colors are used throughout with the exception of hints of red where necessary. Not for the faint-hearted! (Ages 11-14)

The Secret Legacy by Rigoberta Menchú and Dante Liarto. Translated from a Mayan language in Guatemala by David Unger. Artwork by Domi. (Canada, Groundwood Press) A slim, elegant volume of folktales stemming from Menchú's heritage features seven-year-old Ixkem who has been chosen to protect her grandfather's special cornfield. Ixkem goes to the underworld of wee animal spirits, tells stories of her life on the earth's surface, and she returns with an important secret. Mexican artist Domi's vibrant oil paintings are imbedded with symbols of Mayan life. Domi's artwork accompanied the earlier two volumes of folktales by Menchú: *The Girl from Chimel* and *The Honey Jar*. Menchú is a Nobel Peace Prize winner who continues to be a critical voice for the Mayan people of Guatemala. (Ages 5-11)

The Shepherd's Granddaughter by Anne Laurel Carter. (Canada, Groundwood Press) Ever since she was little, Amani has wanted to be a shepherd like her grandfather Seedo. Now Seedo is teaching her how to do this, but she soon figures out that it's a dangerous responsibility. The sheep are definitely not easy to herd. There are dangers, too. Nearby Israeli settlements are being established closer and closer to the family's olive groves

below the grazing grounds used for generations by this extended Palestinian family.
(Ages 10-14)

We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures interpreted by artwork created by artists of the world (U.K.) U.S.: Frances Lincoln Books. All royalties will be donated to Amnesty International. Even though the title sounds formal, the cover is inviting and the text of the Articles has been adapted into an extremely child-friendly, welcoming narrative. The artwork was developed by artists of the world, and it's appealing, distinctive and memorable. The Articles are reprinted at the end of the book, and so are photos of and brief biographies of each artist who contributed her/his interpretation of one of the Articles. The book is listed at \$19.99 a copy. When one thinks about the price of a video game or toy, this splendid book seems like a bargain! (Ages 4-10)