

The Anne Izard Storytellers' Choice Award - THE BIG PICTURE

1992 - 2019

This award was established to honor Anne Izard, the noted librarian, storyteller and Children's Services Consultant in Westchester County (NY) who died in 1990. It is hoped the award will highlight and promote distinguished titles published in the field of storytelling and in doing so, bring the many riches of storytelling itself to a much greater public recognition.

Please note: award year noted in parenthesis at the end of annotation.

Gottschall, Jonathan. *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. The wait is over! Gottschall's research supports what storytellers have long known: our brains are wired for story. We come into this world as problem solvers and our methodology is storytelling in diverse forms: from a child's imaginative play to an ancient, culturally significant epic; from stories shared privately to mass entertainment; from a liar's contest to a scientific break-through. To retain data and navigate the complexities of our world, we require stories. Gottschall seamlessly blends new research into explanations of how and why storytelling is so effective, as well as why it is inevitably the cornerstone of our creation of individual and collective meaning. Through the agency of storytelling we teach, learn, remember and envision; we **are** the storytelling animal. (2013)

Lester, Julius. *On Writing for Children and Other People.* Dial, 2004. Julius Lester gives many definitions of "story" in this extraordinary memoir that charts his evolution as a storyteller. He reflects on the impact of religious, racial, social and familial influences. He philosophically explores issues of creative writing, the life of the imagination and the power of story. Most importantly, Lester shares his passion for stories— those we hear, tell, and live. As he says, "Story makes us more human to each other." And less lonely. Everyone who cares about connecting stories with children will find nourishment in this encouraging book. Seek it out; it offers nothing less than a moving, life-changing experience. (2004)

Martin, Calvin Luther. *The Way of the Human Being.* Yale University Press, 1999. When Europeans first landed on the American continent, they viewed indigenous Americans through an Anglo-European prism. For the next three-hundred years these newcomers missed, and worse, dismissed the storied, spiritual, lively, humorous, generous and profoundly intelligent world views of the first Americans. In this seminal work, Martin, drawing upon experiences living with Alaskan Eskimos and Navajos, introduces the reader to Indian worlds filled with grace, interrelatedness among all living and non-living things, and reciprocity, worlds that, above all else, were and are participatory. In these worlds, stories are the living tissue that binds, connects, and reveals to us the many manifestations of life and how we humans may live in harmony and beauty. Martin illuminates what others who have worked with indigenous people on other continents have begun to process: indigenous wisdom, the dominant wisdom for 99% of human time, is eerily close to what scientists are discovering in Quantum Mechanics and Chaos theory, and, as such, has much to teach the modern world about the way of the human being. (2000)

May, Rollo. *The Cry for Myth.* W.W. Norton, 1991. The eminent psychoanalyst Rollo May wrote: "Myths are like the beams in a house; not exposed to outside view, they are the structure which holds the house together so people can live in it." This is true for both society at large and the psychology of the individual. Exploring diverse myths from oral and written literature, May reveals them to be landmarks, providing direction and a sense of community in an alienated, morally confusing world. (1992)

Pullman, Philip. *Daemon Voices: On Stories and Storytelling.* Edited by Simon Mason. Alfred A. Knopf, 2018. With Promethean intellect on one hand and prodigious enthusiasm on the other, Pullman's thirty-two essays will refresh the spirits of storytellers! Recipient of the Carnegie Medal, JM Barrie, and Astrid Lindgren Awards, Sir Philip Pullman tells a good story, as he offers a master class on creating and shaping *STORY*. His knowledge and delight, his insight and clarity focus on the intersection of oral story and written text. He demonstrates how elements of story building – in stories both ancient and new – add dimension for readers and listeners alike. Dive in! Reflect on Pullman's sagacity, and return to what you write or tell reinvigorated. (2019)

Sobol, Joseph Daniel. *The Storytellers' Journey: An American Revival.* University of Illinois Press, 1999. Joseph Sobol, professional storyteller and folklorist, draws upon interviews with dozens of storytellers to chronicle the history of the past thirty years of American storytelling. He offers an absorbing account of the nation's search for myth and the concurrent development of the National Storytelling Association with its annual festival. Cited are those individuals who have most vitally influenced the renaissance of storytelling in America. Carol Birch and Melissa Heckler, editors of *Who Says? Essays on Pivotal Issues in Contemporary Storytelling*,

have called Sobol "our storytelling anthropologist. His book is original, insightful, and leavened with humor and compassion, offering a deep exploration of the territory we've traveled and a glimpse of future possibilities." (2000)

Spaulding, Amy. *The Wisdom of Storytelling in an Information Age*. Scarecrow Press, 2004. Information is important, but wisdom is invaluable. Spaulding, a professor at Long Island University's Palmer School of Library and Information Science, makes an eloquent and passionate case for storytelling as a path to wisdom. In a collection of talks – some to students, some to parent groups – she illuminates the value and relevance of storytelling in our technologically-driven society. She looks at stories as social glue, considers differences between listening and reading stories, and addresses how stories nurture imagination and creativity. Insightful, provocative writing demonstrates the vitality and efficacy of storytelling to our contemporary life. (2004)

Tatar, Maria, Editor. *Beauty and the Beast: Classic Tales about Animal Brides and Grooms from Around the World*. Penguin Classics, 2017. Maria Tatar's splendid—and tantalizing--- introduction beckons us to open forbidden doors where shocking, improbable, romantic, and erotic tales of shifting relationships between humans and animals hide. From the world over, brides and grooms - morphed into snakes, pigs, cranes, frogs, bulls - bid us to see and know ourselves as both beast and human. This ancient tale of transformation, compassion, and insight grows sticky with new meanings as it rolls through diverse cultures, told by storytellers asking new questions, seeking new answers to the vexing and primal issues of spousal partnership. Tatar writes with verve and scholarly depth to contextualize each tale, unlocking doors into secret worlds of culture, time, and place. Story sources, indexes, and tale types reward all who explore this book's abundant riches. (2019)

Thomas, Elizabeth Marshall. *The Old Way: A Story of the First People*. Sarah Crichton Books/Farrar Straus Giroux, 2006. Modern storytelling traditions are deeply rooted in the old way. Thomas, one of America's wise elders, illuminates the central role of storytelling in preserving and perpetuating vital cultural values through countless generations. As the Ju/'hoansi and /Gwi of Southern Africa strive to reconcile their ancient hunting/gathering way of life with the demands of the modern world, their complex stories provide moving testimony to the tensile strength of storytelling. (2007)

Warner, Marina. *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale*. Oxford University Press, 2014. Victorians, psychoanalysts, fascists, capitalists, feminists, folklore collectors and storytellers in print or performance endlessly divert fairy tales for purposes high and low. Yet, the genre flows unfettered across cultures and centuries. Marina Warner recognized as the "doyenne of fairy stories" and recipient of the Holberg Prize offers a succinct examination of tales in luxuriant, captivating prose that is, nonetheless, marked by quicksilver wit and crystalline clarity. "A gem of a book"? Indeed! (2015)