

## AI AWARD 2021

**Cha, Hanna. *Tiny Feet Between the Mountains*.** Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2019.

In Korea, Soe-In is a small person who lives between two tall mountains. When the sun disappears, only Soe-In is brave enough to investigate. In a story filled with tension and triumph, Soe-In saves her village and the great spirit tiger who inadvertently swallowed the sun. A reminder that inner strength cannot be measured by external appearance. (2021)

**Crossley-Holland, Kevin. *Between Worlds: Folktales of Britain and Ireland*.** Illustrated by Frances Castle. Candlewick Press, 2019.

Master storyteller, folklorist, and poet Crossley-Holland's stories open as if in conversation. He offers a hand to jump us straight into 48 stories divided into: Magic and Wonder; Adventures and Legends; Fairies and Little People; Men and Women; Wits, Tricks and Laughter; Ghosts; followed by Sources and Notes. His style changes with the tone and tenor of each tale. A most refreshing collection which belongs off the shelf and into the hands of all seeking portals to the riches of the past. (2021)

**Dargent, Nathalie, *The Christmas Feast*.** Illustrated by Magali Le Huche. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2020.

Fox and his mates hunger for a savory Christmas feast. Setting out early, Wiley Fox finds a succulent turkey. But over weeks of Christmas preparations, Turkey out-foxes them all! Dargent's gem of a tale is easy to learn and the laugh-out-loud antics will leave audiences both young and old chuckling with delight. (2021)

**Fernihough, Jo. *The Crow and the Peacock*.** Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2021.

Crow was content until he heard the cooing of Dove, while Dove thought Nightingale must be the happiest bird, and Nightingale in turn admired Rooster. Finally, caged Peacock thinks Crow, flying free, must be the happiest bird alive. "Stonecutter" stories show how a focus on what we lack blinds us to all we have. Fernihough's fresh exploration of this traditional pattern is wise and wonderfully tellable. Audience participation will carry one and all to the satisfying conclusion. (2021)

**Hemingway, Blaise and Jesse Reffsin. *Ghost: Thirteen Haunting Tales to Tell*.** Illustrated by Chris Sasaki and Jeff Turley. Chronicle Books, 2019.

Can't get enough of Halloween spooks? You like to be kept up well past bedtime because you hear something out there? *Ghost: Thirteen Haunting Tales* may be the book for you! This collection of 13 original stories and poems is perfect for sleepovers, camping trips and those who love to be scared in an eerie way. This book is a great anthology for tellers introducing stories of horror to kids in middle school. There's much more to fear than...*Boo!* (2021)

**Hubbard, Rita Lorraine. *The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read*.** Schwartz & Wade. 2020.

This inspiring story of a dream deferred presents Mary Walker who received a Bible at 15 and finally learned to read it one hundred years later. The harsh realities of her life, as a hard working yet marginalized Black American woman, thwarted her at each turn. Words would have to wait! Walker not only survived, she prevailed. The significant story of an indomitable woman deserves to ring out across the land. (2021)

**Kheiriyeh, Rashin. *Bahar, the Lucky*.** Reycraft Books, 2020.

A suspenseful and tellable picture book weaves the siren songs of easy money with the pull of power. Bahar earns little as an artist weaving priceless rugs of great beauty. Then, a series of mad-cap misadventures bring her wealth and the favor of a capricious king. Her life and the family fortune transform, but at such a cost! Kheiriyeh's sumptuous storytelling captures Bahar's move from the dizzying swoosh of notoriety back to her center as an artist. (2021)

**Marsh, Sarah Jane. *Most Wanted: Revolutionary Partnership of John Hancock & Samuel Adams*.** Disney · Hyperion.

2020. So, think you know how the Revolutionary War started? Well, this delectable, lively re-telling re-educates us all. A revolutionary partnership between wealthy, fashion conscious, party-goer John Hancock, and outspoken, unfashionable, liberty obsessed Samuel Adams sparks a war. To the British monarchy these unlikely friends become "the most wanted". How does

radical-activist Adams convert haughty, hedonist Hancock to protest increasingly cruel laws and taxes? Sarah Jane Marsh's tale reminds us, what happened then links directly with events of today. History teachers, and storytellers, this is news. Rejoice! (2021)

**McShane, Marianne. *Rónán and the Mermaid: A Tale of Old Ireland*.** Candlewick Press, 2020.

An uncommon mermaid story tells of Rónán, a boy saved from drowning by a lady of the sea with a fish tail and long golden hair. She sings to him until they reach shore, then presses a silver ring into his hand, and tells him one day he will help her. The monks of Bangor Abbey, who find Rónán on the shore, tell him the legend of Liban who became a mermaid. When Rónán rescues Liban, the prophecy comes full circle. Known as the "Mermaid Saint," this moving tale suits those looking for Irish lore threaded with religious themes. (2021)

**Noel, Jerdine. *Freedom Bird*** Illustrated by James E. Ransome. A Paula Wiseman Book/Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2020.

In a narrative voice filled with warmth and wisdom, we meet an enslaved brother and sister who tend an injured bird in secret and then follow it to freedom in a moving tale set in the days right before the Civil War. This standout story unflinchingly depicts both the horrors of slavery and the indomitable spirit of those enslaved. The suspenseful plot and evocative prose simply beg to be shared through telling. (2021)

**Polacco, Patricia. *The Bravest Man in the World*.** Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books 2019.

Wallace Hartley placed others in life boats, yet bravely played with an orchestra to soothe 1,500 doomed Titanic passengers. Hartley's body and violin were recovered; the violin still exists. In counterpoint to Titanic's heartbreak, renowned author Polacco offers the heartening, fictional story of Jonathan, an Irish orphan, who was helped and then saved by Hartley. Jonathan's gratitude and musical gifts celebrate Hartley's limitless bravery. Note: a substantive story for seasoned tellers. (2021)

**Soundar, Chira. *Mangoes, Mischief, and Tales of Friendship: Stories from India*.** Candlewick Press, 2021.

A king, unavailable for daily sessions, permits his son along with his son's best friend to set up court for petty disagreements. Although only ten-years-old, Prince Veera and Suku make wise decisions as they decide on the price of a smell, find the thief who stole the king's candy, punish a greedy moneylender, show the dangers of superstitions, determine who owns the water in a well, and turn the tables on dishonest guards and neighbors. These amusing stories of wisdom and justice are short and ideal for both beginning and experienced tellers. (2021)

**Umrigar, Thirty. *Sugar in Milk*.** Illustrated by Khoa Le. Running Press Kids, 2020.

A young refugee feels lonely in her new country until she's comforted with a story. Her Auntie tells of a Persian leader whose people are forced to flee their native land. They sail to the shores of India where the local king cries, "We have no room for you!" The wise leader cleverly convinces the king to change his mind. This story unfolds as a tale within a tale that is not only poignant but also timely, and perfect for telling. (2021)