

Cultural Awareness

C O R E T T A S C O T T K I N G B O O K A W A R D W I N N E R S

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- This award is “given annually to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults”
- The books must “demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values” (ALA).

WHY READ THESE BOOKS?

The American Library Association states this award “commemorates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and honors his wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and world brotherhood” (Coretta).

Read the following books for the history lesson, read them for their diversity, or read them because they are truly outstanding and deserve the recognition. You’ll be glad you added these to your Must Read list!

***Bud, Not Buddy*, Christopher Paul Curtis**

Curtis, C. (1999). *Bud, not Buddy*. New York: Delacorte Press.

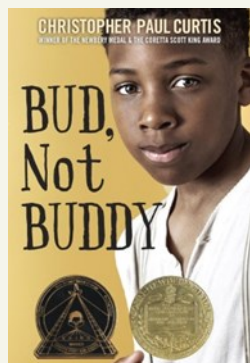
Being an orphaned child is tough, but being an orphaned child during the Depression is far more difficult. Ten-year-old Bud “not Buddy” isn’t going to let anything keep him down, though. After an abusive night with his new foster family, Bud finds his way to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in hopes of finding the man he believes is his father. Armed with a suitcase full of memories, Bud faces harsh conditions with wit and wisdom. Christopher Paul Curtis masterfully draws readers into Bud’s world, and there we find ourselves laughing, and eventually crying, right along with this plucky protagonist.

Age Level: 8-12

Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on April 3, 2015.

CITATIONS:

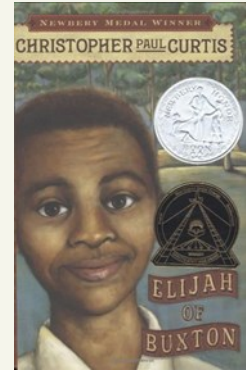
The Coretta Scott King Book Awards. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2015, from <http://www.ala.org/emiert/cskbookawards>



Elijah of Buxton, Christopher Paul Curtis

Curtis, C. (2007). *Elijah of Buxton*. New York: Scholastic Press.

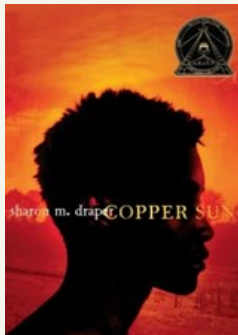
Elijah, a smart, mischievous boy who can chuck a rock with eagle-eye precision, is also the first freeborn child in the town of Buxton. Buxton is a safe haven for slaves escaping to Canada. 11-year-old Elijah manages to get himself both in and out of trouble throughout the book. As the novel reaches its intense and unexpected climax, he is forced to make decisions beyond his years, but readers will remain confident in Elijah's good heart. This piece of historical fiction is an excellent way to get readers interested in North America's history before the Civil War.



Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on March 18, 2015.

Age Level: 8-12

Copper Sun, Sharon Draper



Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on March 15, 2015.

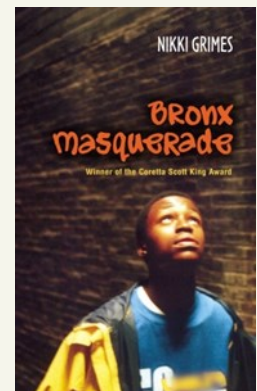
Draper, S. (2008). *Copper sun*. New York, N.Y.: Simon Pulse.

Amari, a fifteen-year-old girl, is captured by slavers and taken to Charles Town, South Carolina Colony. Once there, she is purchased as a birthday present for a plantation owner's son. Amari, with the help of an indentured servant, Polly, learns to speak English and other skills necessary to function in this new land. After a violent tragedy, both girls are going to be sold again, but they escape instead, running to a safe Spanish colony, Fort Mose in Florida. While beautifully told, this story refers to mature themes such as sexual assault that may not be appropriate for all audiences.

Bronx Masquerade, Nikki Grimes

Grimes, N. (2002). *Bronx masquerade*. Carmel, Calif.: Hampton-Brown.

When one of Mr. Ward's students writes a poem instead of an essay about the Harlem Renaissance for English class, a door of opportunity opens for the entire room. Open Mike Fridays become a regular thing, and through their poetry the students come to know each other on a whole new level. They find there is much more going on beneath the surface masquerade—they all have hopes, dreams, hurts and sorrows. This is a book you will want to read more than once, and you will definitely want to share it with others. **Age Level: 12 and up**

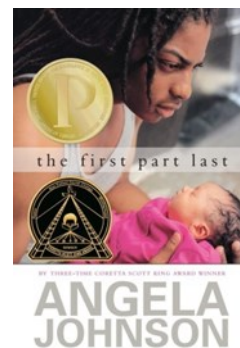


Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on April 3, 2015.

The First Part Last, Angela Johnson

Johnson, A. (2003). *The first part last*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Bobby, a sixteen-year-old boy, wants time to spend with friends, time to work on schoolwork, and lots of sleep. With his newborn daughter to take care of, none of those things will happen. Bobby is physically and emotionally exhausted. He goes back and forth between wanting his old life and loving what he has now, but sometimes he just wants to run to his mother and be the child he still is. This riveting story shows us teenaged parenthood from a refreshing male perspective, and it stays realistic throughout. Once I started reading, I couldn't put it down. **Age Level: 12 and up**



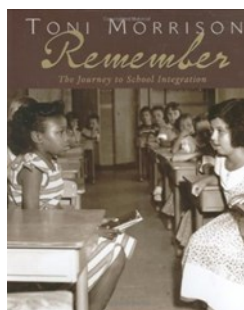
Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on March 19, 2015.

Remember: The Journey to School Integration, Toni Morrison



Morrison, T. (2004). *Remember: The journey to school integration*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Morrison offers readers a glance back at an ugly time in our country's history, a time when "separate but equal" was the mantra, but there was nothing equal about the treatment of African Americans. While the subject matter is ugly, and the hate and anger that comes through many of the photographs is shocking, the images used in this picture book also show people, especially children, coming together to laugh, play, and learn side-by-side. Both adult and young readers will appreciate the message of hope and reminder of how far we have come since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. **Age Level: 4-8 years**

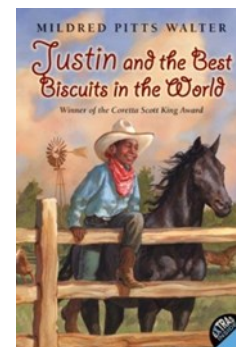


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Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World, Mildred Pitts Walter

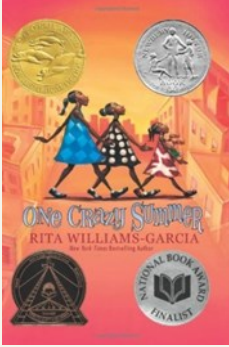
Walter, M., & Stock, C. (2010). *Justin and the best biscuits in the world*. New York: Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins Publisher.

Ten-year-old Justin can't seem to do anything right when he is around his sisters or mother, especially when it comes to "women's work." His grandfather invites him to spend a few days on his ranch, and there Justin learns more than how to make a bed and hang up his clothes properly; Justin learns how his ancestors, the Exodusters, came from plantations to live in Missouri. This easy-reading chapter book should appeal to youth struggling to bridge the gap between childhood and their tweens, and if they aren't careful, they might learn a bit of history at the same time. **Age Level: 8-12**



Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on March 23, 2015.

One Crazy Summer, Rita Williams-Garcia



Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on March 9, 2015.

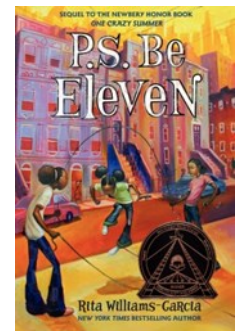
Garcia, R. (2010). *One crazy summer*. New York: Amistad. This historical fiction novel set in 1968, brings us into the lives of three sisters who are sent to Oakland, California, to spend a month with their estranged mother. Their cold, aloof mother wants nothing to do with them, so she sends them to a day camp run by the Black Panthers, and feeds them takeout Chinese every night. The girls learn a lot about themselves, their ethnicity, and their need to be loved. Readers will appreciate the strong characterizations in this novel, as well as the historically accurate portrayal of our country during the 1960s from a child's perspective.

Age Level: 8-12

P.S. Be Eleven, Rita Williams-Garcia

Garcia, R (2013). *P.S. Be eleven*. New York: Amistad.

P.S. Be Eleven is a sweet, sometimes heartbreaking, sequel to *One Crazy Summer*. No longer completely estranged from their mother, the girls write to Cecile, and she responds back. In each letter to Delphine, she leaves a reminder to “be eleven”—in other words, enjoy her youth. That isn't going to be easy. Their uncle returns from Vietnam, but he isn't the same. Their father marries a woman the girls hardly know. And there is a Jackson 5 concert coming. While the reminder is to “be eleven,” this is definitely a coming-of-age story readers will love. **Age Level: 8-12**



Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on March 15, 2015.

Brown Girl Dreaming, Jacqueline Woodson

Woodson, J. (2014). *Brown girl dreaming*. New York: Penguin.

This is a memoir the likes of which you have never read before. Instead of a straightforward retelling of her life story, Jacqueline Woodson writes her memoir in free verse. The early years of her life can be a bit confusing, but the power of the story grows as Woodson struggles to find her place in this world and can't balance between her North and South homes. The poems are peppered with nods to the civil strife of the time, the late 60s through the 70s, but the historical moments add to the story instead of taking it over. **Age Level: 10 and up**



Cover art retrieved from Amazon.com on March 15, 2015.