

Printz Award

I selected the novel how i live now by Meg Rosoff as the contender for the Printz Award. Since this award has flexible criteria, it is hard to say that this book is the best book out there to win this award. The story and voice of the book reflect that of a teenage girl from New York who is skeptical about the world. The voice is depicted accurately and reflects the thoughts of a girl trying to survive in a place ravaged by war. Also, the story has clear elements of setting (England), characters (Daisy, her cousins, and her family in NYC), and a theme of survival. There are no illustrations in the story, and the sentences are also pieced together with run-on's and grammatical errors. One notion that the Printz award encompasses is it's ability to use the flexible criteria in order to select current "quality" literature. In my opinion, the voice and design of this novel prevent it from being "quality."

As an individual with a strong Christian background, I was a bit outraged when the story started detailing how Daisy started having inappropriate "adult" relations with her cousin, Edwin. To me, that manner of content does not belong in a teen novel. However, I did appreciate how Daisy's character evolved and matured throughout the course of the novel, and how she felt the need to help Piper survive their trials. Regretfully, I could also identify with Daisy and her eating disorder and how she felt that it was one sector of her life that she could "control." This book has relatable qualities, but overall, I do not think it should win the Printz award.

Coretta Scott King

For the Coretta Scott King Award, I read the picture book Bad News for Outlaws by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson. This story depicts the life and success of US Deputy Marshall Bass Reeves. This story does service to the African American community by praising generally non-violent ways of outlaw capture, and how violence was a "last resort." This African American was a symbol of victory and triumph for the community. Starting out as a slave, Reeves rose to fame as a well-known hero on the Indian Territory where he served. This book exemplifies the focus of the Coretta Scott King award by detailing the hard work and dedication that Reeves displayed to his service and to his community. Reeves was very unselfish and did everything in his power to help protect the Indian reservation where his family lived. This pays testament to the African American culture and their willingness to help at any cost for the "good of the cause."

As a reader, the values of perseverance and dedication that I encompass were overtly displayed in Reeves. He did not do his job just because it was "easy." He put in the time and dedication to do his job to the best of his abilities, and gained respect from all people in his community, including whites, African Americans, and Indians. As a teacher, I also try to do everything I can in order to be the best possible teacher I can be for the children that I teach. There are so many facets to every job, and it

can get overwhelming. However, I believe both Revees and myself are willing to do everything in our power to create the best life possible for others.

Orbis Pictus

The children's picture book Balloons Over Broadway by Melissa Sweet depicts the biography of the Macy's Parade Puppeteer, Tony Sarg. While reading it as a contender for the Orbis Pictus award, I was drawn into the illustrations as well as the design and style of the book. The illustrations and text are designed in a way that uses various types of art forms including watercolor, collage, and paper mache puppets. There are different forms of typography, with some text hidden in corners and at the bottom of pages. This story gives an accurate depiction of Tony's life, while also telling it in a way that is suitable for a younger audience. The facts are very straightforward and it does not supply unnecessary information. Since this is a biography, the story is organized in a chronological order and flows seamlessly through the life events. Based on this criterion, I believe that this book is worthy of the Orbis Pictus award.

Having watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade for years on television (still to this day), I was captivated on how the parade balloons came to be. I had never thought about all of the engineering and innovation that had to be achieved in order to make the parade balloons possible. As a spectator of the parade, this book has given me a new appreciation for puppeteering and all of the components that go into creating such a grandiose event.

Schneider Family Award

For the Schneider Family Book Award, I read the novel Wonderstruck by Brian Selznick. This story features two characters that are deaf. A unique feature of this novel is that Rose's story is told entirely through pictures, and Ben's story is told only through text. And while the stories are set fifty years apart, their paths interweave and Rose is an inspiration to Ben as he commits to learning sign language. It was interesting to me that Ben became fully deaf through an incident in the story. The reader is then able to witness what it is like for someone to lose their hearing and have to adapt to a new lifestyle, vastly different from the one they previously lead. A theme that is emphasized throughout the story is the need to fit in. Both Rose and Ben get a sense that they are outsiders and struggle with finding their niche in a world full of hustle and bustle. Since this award is based on books that feature disabilities, I would say that this book is worthy of the Schneider Family award. Both of the main characters are deaf and have marked obstacles to overcome in order to find their place in society.

As someone who does not have a hearing disability, it was hard for me to fully grasp what it would be like for both Rose and Ben to go navigate the world while deaf. Ben

and Rose were able to use sign language and writing on paper as forms of communication. While I am fortunate enough not to have to resort to those forms of communication, it prevented me from making connections to their experiences. Ben was also a runaway who fled from his aunt and uncle's house to find his father in New York City. This was also hard for me to connect to since I have never traveled alone or had to deal with sneaking around an unfamiliar city.

Schneider Family Award

Another book that I read for the Schneider Family Award is Django by Bonnie Christensen. This is a biographical tale about the jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt. This story qualifies for the award because Django suffered a burnt hand and leg during a fire. He is considered to be disabled in that doctors did not think he would be able to use his hand again. However, after much practice, Django was able to use that hand and continue playing. Personally, I do not think this book really exemplifies the criteria for awarding it with the Schneider Family seal. I feel like there are much better stories about overcoming personal disabilities than a burnt hand. It did not talk about how Django overcame the disability or how he learned to live with it. Instead, it repeated the fact that he just had to practice. I did not feel a strong sense of feeling or emotion from the character about how this event had forever changed his life.

As someone who has played a musical instrument, I was able to identify with the practice and dedication it takes to play an instrument. When you are passionate about something and the odds are stacked against you, it makes you want to try even harder to prove others wrong. Coming from a family that was not known to be "musically inclined," I soon realized the need for practice and commitment, much like Django. Knowing that others in my family had not had much success with playing an instrument made me want to try even harder to succeed.