

Selected and annotated by Caitlin Stamm
October 2014

Berry, James. *Don't Leave an Elephant to Go and Chase a Bird.* Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1996. 32p. 4-8 yrs.

In this retelling of a Ghanaian folktale from the author's native Jamaica, Anancy Spiderman receives a corncob from Skygod. He trades the corncob, looking to get something even better. After a series of cunning and clever trades, Anancy's greed gets the better of him, and when he is distracted by a bird and ends up empty-handed. Berry's text draws on Jamaican rhythm patterns, and the illustrations are inspired by African wood carvings. The musical repetition makes this ideal for story time or reading aloud.

Brown, Marcia. *Stone Soup.* Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947. 41p. 5-8 yrs.

This classic version of the folktale features three hungry soldiers, who outwit the greedy inhabitants of a village who have hidden all their food. They convince the villagers to part with their food to transform a soup of water and stones, and the town enjoys a feast. Brown won a Caldecott Medal for this book.

Hamilton, Virginia. *Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl.* The Blue Sky Press, 2003. 32p. 5-8 yrs.

This is a retelling of the classic Brer Rabbit tale using Gullah dialect. Bruh Rabbit comes to Bruh Wolf's well-tended garden, where he helps himself to the food. Bruh Wolf can't scare Bruh Rabbit away, but cunningly traps him with a tar baby in the middle of the road, who, just as the Wolf plans, makes Bruh rabbit curious and leads to his entrapment. Bruh Rabbit has to make a clever and sneaky escape. Hamilton includes an endnote on the story's origin and definitions of obscure or potentially confusing terms.

Hickow, Rebecca. *Zorro and Quwi: Tales of a Trickster Guinea Pig.* Doubleday Books for Young Readers, 1997. 32p. 4-7 yrs.

In this retelling of a Peruvian folktale, a guinea pig, Quwi, deceives a hungry fox and makes his escape. The fox, Zorro, follows Quwi but is outwitted at each of their increasingly outrageous encounters. The illustrations draw on folkloric traditions, and the Spanish vocabulary woven into the story further ties it to its origins.

Knutson, Barbara. *Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains.* Carol Rhoda Books, 2004. 32p. 4-7 yrs.

Cuy the guinea pig is chased by Tio Antonio the fox, cleverly, escaping three times. Cuy is eventually trapped by a sticky doll and tied to a tree, but is able to talk Tio Antonio into switching places with him. A glossary guides pronunciation for the Spanish and Quechua words, and Knutson's robust woodcuts have great audience appeal.

McDermott, Gerald. *Monkey: A Trickster Tale from India.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011. 32 p. 4-8 yrs.

The sixth and final installment in McDermott's series of multicultural and international trickster

draws on the Jataka tales from ancient Buddhist tradition. A clever and lively monkey twice tricks a hungry and dimwitted crocodile in a story whose humorous and entertaining twists are still accessible for younger audiences. McDermott's usual vivid colors and use of regional patterning are accented here with collage .

McDermott, Gerald. *Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993. 32p. 4-8 yrs.

At the start of this story, the whole world is in darkness. Raven, the trickster, pities the people, so he flies to the home of the Sky Chief to find the light, which he has hidden. Raven uses his power for shape-shifting to trick the Sky Chief. In his art, McDermott draws on traditional dress, furnishings, and home construction for Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

MacDonald, Amy. *Please, Malese!: A Trickster Tale from Haiti.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002. 32p. 4-8 yrs.

In this story, Haitian trickster Malese causes trouble and dupes his neighbors. Malese manages to trick townspeople to get shoes from the cobblers and ingredients for baking. Malese's neighbors, angry that they have been had, put him in jail, but he convinces them to set him free. Once free, he objects to the chores that await him and convinces his neighbors to take them on. The book is filled with vibrant illustrations, with stimulating and repeated patterns.

Myers, Walter Dean. *How Mr. Monkey Saw the Whole World.* Doubleday Books for Young Readers, 1996. 32p. 3-6 yrs.

Mr. Buzzard pulls a wily trick on the animals he meets : he offers, for the price of an item of food, to carry animals "up to the clouds" so they can be the first animals to see the whole world , then tricks them into giving him their food. The bold and vibrant paintings add impact, and the playful depictions of the animals are appealing.

O'Brien, Anne Sibley. *The Legend of Hong Kil Dong, the Robin Hood of Korea.* Charlesbridge, 2006.

Hong Kil Dong is a Korean folk hero first brought to life by seventeenth-century writer Ho Kyun. While Hong Kil Dong shares Robin Hood's mission of bringing money to the poor, he also has astounding superpowers. In this story, Hong Kil Dong is sent away from home , going to learn martial arts and wisdom in a monastery in the mountains. He rallies peasants and trains them to be warriors who resist the oppression of the wealthy. Comic-book-style panels add to the superheroic feel of the story.

Pyle, Howard. *Some Merry Adventures of Robin Hood of Great Renown in Nottinghamshire.* Scribner, 1954. 212p. Gr. 5-7.

This modern classic take on the legend consists of a series of short episodes in which Robin Hood and the Merry Men trick and subvert the oppressive rich. Readers see Robin Hood recruit his bandits, resist the authorities, and get into hijinks with his friend Little John. This is excellent for reading aloud or for older readers who are looking for a challenge.

Rockwell, Anne F. *The Boy Who Wouldn't Obey: A Mayan Legend.* Greenwillow Books, 2000. 24p. 5-8 yrs.

The Mayan god Chac dives down to Earth to steal a child to be his servant, but the child he takes

causes endless trouble , stealing the god's rain-making tools and wreaking havoc with the weather. By the end of the story, the boy is reunited with his family, who do not believe the tales he tells them about his experiences with Chac. Rockwell's illustrations draw on Mayan motifs and culture , and the book includes sources for more information on the art and story .

Ross, Gayle. *How Rabbit Tricked Otter and Other Cherokee Trickster Stories.* HarperCollins, 1994. 80p. Gr. 4-6.

This collection of fifteen traditional Cherokee tales stars Rabbit, a central character in Cherokee stories. Rabbit is always causing mischief and is always ready and willing to prove himself better than the other animals he encounters, which he usually accomplishes through clever tricks. The quick-moving storytelling is accompanied by luminous illustrations.

Sherlock, Philip M. *Anansi, the Spider Man: Jamaican Folk Tales.* Cromwell, 1954. 112p. Gr. 4-6.

Both author and illustrator draw on their childhood familiarity with Anansi tales in this collection of fifteen Jamaican folk tales with over fifty illustrations. Anansi continually tricks the animals around him to get what he wants, usually turning the animals against each other. Sherlock strikes a balance between making Anansi sympathetic and admonishing him for his tricks.

Shute, Linda. *Clever Tom and the Leprechaun: An Old Irish Story.* Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1988. 32p. 5-7 yrs.

Clever Tom Fitzpatrick captures a leprechaun and tries to force him to reveal the place where he hides his gold. The leprechaun, however, is just as clever and tricks Clever Tom. The text is humorous and lively, making it an excellent readaloud, and Shute also focuses on the historical aspect of the story, including background on traditional Irish folktales and folklorists .

Stevens, Janet. *Tops & Bottoms.* Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995.

In this Caldecott Honor-winning picture book that turns traditional picture-book viewing on its side, Stevens combines aspects of European folk tales and stories passed down orally by slaves in the American South that emphasize overcoming hardships imposed by oppressive forces. After Hare loses his land to the rich and domineering Bear and must enter into an agreement for food , he convinces Bear to accept only the tops, the inedible parts, of vegetables, and thereby gets food for his family.

Subramaniam, Manasi. *The Fox and the Crow,* illus. by Culpeo S. Fox. Karadi Tales Company, 2014. 28p. Gr. 2-4.

Subramaniam adapts one of Aesop's fables, as a fox and crow vie for the same piece of bread and the prideful crow, flattered into opening its mouth and singing, is tricked into dropping its bread into the mouth of the hungry and wily fox. The text is short enough to read at a storytime, and the moody, dramatic illustrations will capture audience attention.