

# APALA BEST OF THE BEST BOOK LIST



## 2022

The Best of the Best Booklist celebrates stories from across the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) diaspora. All APALA members were invited to nominate picture book titles about AANHPI communities and experiences that were published in the 2022 calendar year. Members of the APALA Family Literacy Focus Committee evaluated the nominations against the APALA Rubric and curated the final list. Eligible titles that earned a 2023 APALA Literature Award or Honoree designation were automatically added to the Best of the Best Booklist. The titles depict diverse representations of heritages and cultures across the AANHPI diaspora.

### **Arab Arab All Year Long!**

**BY CATHY CAMPER,  
ILLUSTRATED BY SAWSAN CHALABI**  
ISBN: 9781536213959

A joyful book of children celebrating Arab life all year long.

### **Gibberish**

**BY YOUNG VO**  
ISBN: 9781646141104

New to town, all Dat hears from his classmates and teacher is gibberish. Then with patience and friendship, Dat slowly begins to understand his new friend Julie.

### **Hana's Hundreds of Hijabs**

**BY RAZEENA OMAR GUTTA,  
ILLUSTRATED BY MANAL MIRZA**  
ISBN: 9781646866205

Hana shares her love of fashionably styling her hijabs with others at her aunt's salon.

### **Holi Hai!**

**BY CHITRA SOUNDAR,  
ILLUSTRATED BY DARSHIKA VARMA**  
ISBN: 9780807533574

Gauri wants to help her family prepare gulal for Holi, but does not get her favorite color.

### **Hundred Years of Happiness**

**BY THANH HÀ LAI, ILLUSTRATED BY NGUYEN QUANG AND KIM LIEN**  
ISBN: 9780063026926

Bà's memory is failing, but An and Ông have a plan to bring her back to a happy memory. The pair grow food in the garden to create grandma's favorite dish from her wedding day. A loving story illustrating intergenerational Vietnamese family life.

### **Kapaemahu**

**BY HINALEIMOANA WONG-KALU, DEAN HAMER, AND JOE WILSON,  
ILLUSTRATED BY DANIEL SOUSA**  
ISBN: 9780593530061

Four Tahitian Mahu infuse their healing powers into four boulders in Waikiki, sharing their knowledge with Native Hawaiians. Based on a Native Hawaiian legend told in English and the Niihau dialect of Hawaiian.

### **The Katha Chest**

**BY RADHIAH CHOWDHURY,  
ILLUSTRATED BY LAVANYA NAIDU**  
ISBN: 9781665903905

While exploring Nanu's katha chest filled with quilts, Asiya connects to stories of the strong and brave women in her family.

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### Luli and the Language of Tea

**BY ANDREA WANG,**  
**ILLUSTRATED BY HYEWON YUM**  
ISBN: 9780823446148

Five-year-old Luli joins her new English as a Second Language Class. She uses a tea party to bring the classroom together. The book contains additional information regarding tea culture around the world.

### Love in the Library

**BY MAGGIE TOKUDA-HALL,**  
**ILLUSTRATED BY YAS IMAMURA**  
ISBN: 9781536204308

Based on true events - finding love and hope in a Japanese internment camp. Tama works in the library, and books offer her hope for a life beyond the camp. The author addresses heartbreaking realities and real life injustices.

### Mommy's Hometown

**BY HOPE LIM,**  
**ILLUSTRATED BY JAIME KIM**  
ISBN: 9781536213324

A boy listens to his mother's stories about her hometown and creates his own version in his mind's eye. The pair visit the hometown and the boy compares the memories against the reality. A heartwarming story that considers how to flow with the changes of time.

### Nana, Nanek, & Nina

**BY LIZA FERNEYHOUGH**  
ISBN: 9780593353943

Nina visits her two grandmas - one lives in Malaysia and one in England. An affectionate, warm story of the differences and similarities of two cultures.

2023 APALA  
PICTURE BOOK HONOR

### Punky Aloha

**BY SHAR TUIASOA**  
ISBN: 9780063079236

Behind grandma's sunglasses, Punky gains the confidence to cross Oahu to complete her errands with her aloha. A sweet story teaching readers how to find the courage to make new friends.

### Sitti's Bird: A Gaza Story

**BY MALAK MATTAR**  
ISBN: 9781623718251

The story of Palestine's occupation set in Gaza. Malak writes about her experiences as a child in Palestine and being home for days during the bombings. Malak finds strength through her art.

### Where Butterflies Fill the Sky: A Story of Immigration, Family, and Finding Home

**BY ZAHRA MARWAN**  
ISBN: 9781547606511

The author's immigration story from Kuwait to the US. Highlights hope, belonging, and handling scary new experiences.

### Who Turned On The Sky

**BY MARIELLE ATANACIO**  
ISBN: 9798985898408

An adventure story to find who turns on the sky, but meets the goddesses of Philippine mythology.

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Talk Story Resources for  
caregivers, educators,  
librarians, and community  
members alike.

