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January 10, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2018 Sydney Taylor Book Award Winners Announced

Winners of the annual Sydney Taylor Book Award were announced by the Association of Jewish Libraries today. Named in memory of Sydney Taylor, author of the classic *All-of-a-Kind Family* series, the award recognizes books for children and teens that exemplify high literary standards while authentically portraying the Jewish experience.

2018 is the 50th Anniversary of the Sydney Taylor Awards. The first winner was *The Endless Steppe: Growing Up in Siberia* by Esther Hautzig in 1968, published by the Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

GOLD MEDALISTS

The Language of Angels: A Story About the Reinvention of Hebrew by Richard Michelson, illustrated by Karla Gudeon, published by Charlesbridge, won the Sydney Taylor Book Award in the Younger Readers category. This beautiful picture book tells the story of how Hebrew became an everyday language in Israel, after being out of use for two thousand years. The folk art illustrations are an illuminating match.

Refugee by Alan Gratz, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic, won the Sydney Taylor Book Award in the Older Readers category. The journeys of three different young refugees from Nazi Germany, 1990s Cuba and present-day Syria come together to form an emotional and timely narrative about the refugee experience.

The Librarian of Auschwitz by Antonio Iturbe, translated by Lilit Thwaites, published by Godwin Books, an imprint of Henry Holt and Company, a division of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, won the Sydney Taylor Book Award in the Teen Readers category. This powerful story of Dita Kraus and her protection of a handful of books in the Auschwitz concentration camp shows the importance of hope in the darkest of times.

Harold Grinspoon and PJ Library won the Sydney Taylor Body of Work Award. PJ Library, a project of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, is a family engagement program that sends free books celebrating Jewish values and culture to families with children 6 months through 8 years old. This program has revolutionized the field of Jewish children's literature by providing dramatically improved access to Jewish books for families. It has also significantly increased the publication of children's books with Jewish content. The Body of Work Award has been given twelve times in the 50-year history of the Sydney Taylor Awards. The last recipient was author Eric Kimmel in 2004.

SILVER MEDALISTS

Eight Sydney Taylor Honor Books were also recognized.

For Younger Readers, the Honor Books are: *Yaffa and Fatima: Shalom, Salaam* adapted by Fawzia Gilani-Williams, illustrated by Chiara Fedele, published by Kar-Ben Publishing, a division of Lerner Publishing Group

and ***Drop by Drop: A Story of Rabbi Akiva*** by Jacqueline Jules, illustrated by Yevgenia Nayberg, published by Kar-Ben Publishing, a division of Lerner Publishing Group.

For Older Readers, the Honor Books are: ***Viva, Rose!*** by Susan Krawitz, published by Holiday House, which was also the recipient of the 2015 Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award; ***This Is Just a Test*** by Madelyn Rosenberg and Wendy Wan-Long Shang, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic; and ***The Six-Day Hero*** by Tammar Stein, published by Kar-Ben Publishing, a division of Lerner Publishing Group.

For Teen Readers, the Honor Books are: ***To Look a Nazi in the Eye: A Teen's Account of a War Criminal Trial*** by Kathy Kacer with Jordana Lebowitz, published by Second Story Press; ***Almost Autumn*** by Marianne Kaurin, translated by Rosie Hedger, published by Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic; and ***The Girl with the Red Balloon*** by Katherine Locke, published by Albert Whitman & Company.

In addition to the medal winners, the Award Committee designated twelve Notable Books of Jewish Content for 2018. More information about the Sydney Taylor Book Award and a complete listing of the award winners and notables can be found at www.sydneytaylorbookawards.org

Winning authors and illustrators will receive their awards at the Annual Conference of the Association of Jewish Libraries, to be held in Boston, MA from June 18-20, 2018. Gold and silver medalists will also participate in a blog tour February 4-8, 2018. For more information about the blog tour please visit www.jewishlibraries.org/blog.

The Language of Angels and ***Refugee*** were also named winners of the 67th Annual National Jewish Book Awards, which were announced today as well. A full list of all the winners can be found on the Jewish Book Council's website <https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/awards/national-jewish-book-award.html>

Members of the 2018 Sydney Taylor Book Award committee are: Chair Susan Kusel, Temple Rodef Shalom Library, Falls Church, VA; Rena Citrin, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School, Chicago, IL; Elissa Gershowitz, Horn Book Magazine, Boston, MA; Rebecca Levitan, Baltimore County Public Library, Pikesville Branch, Baltimore, MD; Heather Lenson, Joseph & Florence Mandel Jewish Day School, Beachwood, OH; Marjorie Shuster, Congregation Emanuel of the City of New York, New York, NY; and Rivka Yerushalmi, Silver Spring, MD.

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January 10, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2018 Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award Winner Chosen

The Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award Competition committee is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2018 award. Judith Pransky, author of *The Seventh Handmaiden*, will receive the award at the annual conference of the Association of Jewish Libraries to be held in Boston, MA, from June 18-20, 2018. The Award is offered annually to an unpublished manuscript that has broad appeal to readers aged 8-13 and presents Jewish life in a positive light.

Set in the time of King Xerxes of Persia, the novel begins with the kidnapping of a young girl and then flashes forward several years to focus on Darya, a young slave who is uncertain of her origins. The story follows Darya and her free friend Parvaneh from service in the household of a Persian army captain to positions in Xerxes's palace as handmaidens to Queen Esther. Swirling around the girls' everyday activities is palace intrigue orchestrated by Haman's henchmen including Behrooz, who has a mysterious and frightening connection to Parvaneh's mother.

Filled with historical details, intrigue, mystery, politics and a host of issues that contemporary readers can identify with, the story has a satisfying ending for both Darya and her mistress Esther and fleshes out the story found in the Megillah. The judges were impressed by the unique approach to the story of Esther, the strongly nuanced characters, the touch of mystery and the relevance of the issues to today's world.

According to Ms Pransky, *The Seventh Handmaiden* was written with her sixth grade ancient history students in mind, and tries "to bring the history and lifestyle of Persia to life, as well as the characters that populate the Megillah and the Jewish story that permeates it." Ms Pransky, a middle school language arts/history teacher, has contributed to Philadelphia area magazines and edited the Marmac Guide to Philadelphia. She has also taught writing to adults and worked as an editor for a textbook publishing company before returning to teaching. *The Seventh Handmaiden* is her first novel for young readers.

In an unusually strong year, the Committee is pleased to name three honorable mention manuscripts: *Go To Yourself* by Stuart Melnick is the story of an Orthodox boy preparing for his bar mitzvah. Through sports he experiences the outside world for the first time and learns about friendship, decisions and their consequences. Diverse characters and a warm family setting are hallmarks of this story. *Raising Canaans* by Catherine Orkin Oskow uses humor to tell the story of a dog-crazy preteen who obsesses over the Canaan dogs that her aunt raises and finally comes to accept that she cannot have a dog. *Reeni's Turn* by Carol Coven Grannick uses verse to follow ballet dancer Reeni from doubt about herself to self-acceptance. The contemporary story focuses on issues common in today's families.

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The 2018 Sydney Taylor Book Awards Association of Jewish Libraries

The Sydney Taylor Book Award Winner for Younger Readers

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The Sydney Taylor Book Award Winner for Older Readers

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The Librarian of Auschwitz by Antonio Iturbe, translated by Lilit Thwaites,
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The Sydney Taylor Body of Work Award Winner

Harold Grinspoon and PJ Library

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published by Kar-Ben Publishing, a division of Lerner Publishing Group

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*This Is Just a Test* by Madelyn Rosenberg and Wendy Wan-Long Shang,  
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### **Sydney Taylor Honor Books for Teen Readers**

*To Look a Nazi in the Eye: A Teen's Account of a War Criminal Trial*  
by Kathy Kacer with Jordana Lebowitz, published by Second Story Press

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*The Girl with the Red Balloon* by Katherine Locke, published by Albert Whitman & Company

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Notable Books for Younger Readers

Yom Kippur Shortstop by David A. Adler, illustrated by Andre Ceolin
published by Apples & Honey Press, an imprint of Behrman House

Under the Sabbath Lamp by Michael Herman, illustrated by Alida Massari
published by Kar-Ben Publishing, a division of Lerner Publishing Group

Big Sam: A Rosh Hashanah Tall Tale by Eric A. Kimmel, illustrated by Jim Starr
published by Apples & Honey Press, an imprint of Behrman House

The Knish War on Rivington Street by Joanne Oppenheim, illustrated by Jon Davis
published by Albert Whitman & Company

Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Case of R.B.G. vs. Inequality by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Stacy Innerst,
published by Abrams Books for Young Readers, a division of Abrams

Notable Books for Older Readers

Hedy's Journey: The True Story of a Hungarian Girl Fleeing the Holocaust
by Michelle Bisson, illustrated by El primo Ramón
published by Capstone Press, a Capstone imprint

***The Children of Willesden Lane: A True Story of Hope and Survival During World War II:
Young Readers Edition*** by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen and adapted by Emil Sher
published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, a division of Hachette Book Group

Wordwings by Sydelle Pearl, published by Guernica Editions

The Dollmaker of Krakow by R.M. Romero
published by Delacorte Press, a division of Random House Children's Books

Notable Books for Teen Readers

Man's Search for Meaning: Young Reader Edition by Viktor E. Frankl, published by Beacon Press

Ronit & Jamil by Pamela L. Laskin
published by Katherine Tegen Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers

Stolen Secrets by L.B. Schulman, published by Boyds Mills Press, a division of Highlights

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