

African and African American Images in Newbery Award Winning Titles: Progress in Portrayals

Binnie Tate Wilkin



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Since 1922, the Newbery Medal of Honor has been awarded to distinguished works of literature for children. Although African and African American characters appeared in children's books well before the establishment of the Newbery award, such depictions were limited, with characters often only appearing as slaves or servants. However, over the last several decades, there has been much progress, and Black characters have played a much more integral role in many highly regarded novels. In *African and African American Images in Newbery Award Winning Titles*, Binnie Tate Wilkin provides a historical and contextual examination of books with such depictions that have been acknowledged by the nation's most prestigious award for children's literature.

Wilkin explores the depictions of African and African American characters in these novels and illuminates the progressive quality of such representations. Wilkin looks closely at such elements as aesthetic descriptions, subservient characterizations, the relationships between characters, and specific language usage to investigate how these images have progressed toward increasingly positive depictions. She also notes, when applicable, the significance of the lack of any African or African American images. This book is an essential resource for those interested in African American studies, children's literature, and the relationship between the two.

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