A Cheat Sheet for Selling Diversity

We know that a bookstore floor is not the place to deliver a lecture, but it’s easy to interpret, “That’s not for us,” when the customer has only looked at the diverse cover. Well, these books ARE for them and you have the power to (gently) convince them. Let your buyers know that these books are more than their diversity.

Instead of,
“It’s about a girl in Ancient China trying to find good fortune with Chinese folktales woven in.”

Try,
“It’s an adventure story! The main character saves a dragon and they travel together on a great journey!”

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon (MG) by Grace Lin

Here are some examples of other diverse books “refocused.” While this is not supposed to be a definitive list, we hope it gives you an idea of how you can sell diversity to your patrons!

Fake ID by Lamar Giles
A boy in witness protection discovers his father may be involved in his best friend’s death. It’s a twisty page turner with a shocking ending! YAMystery

Planet Middle School by Nikki Grimes
From tom-boy to boy-crazy, this girl jock’s journey to accepting her new self is a laugh riot! But, she also learns to stay true on the inside. MG

The Hula-Hooping Queen written by Thelma Lynne Godin, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton
The sport of kite fighting, and a boy who would be king. An exciting, contemporary story about determination. PB

We Were Here by Matt De la Peña
Three teen boys break out of their group home with an envelope of cash and make a run for Mexico, avoiding police and sleeping on beaches along the way. YA

Jingle Dancer written by Cynthia Leitich Smith illustrated by Y. Hu and C. Van Wright
A heartwarming story about community and traditions. What’s better than grandma’s helping granddaughters? PB

Killer of Enemies by Joseph Bruchac
A steam punk thriller about “survival, courage and a lot of monsters.” A wild, fast-paced post-apocalyptic adventure. YA

Unstoppable Octobia May by Sharon G. Flake
A graveyard loving 10-year-old girl obsessed with vampires strikes a blow for independence and girl power during the segregated 50’s. MG (Fall 2014)

The Summer I Wasn’t Me by Jessica Verdi
An exciting, emotional read for anyone who has ever felt torn between what their parents want and what their heart demands. YA

The Path of Names by Ari Goleman
It’s really just your average summer at camp: swimming, crafts, new friends, a weird maze, a golem, and ghost possession. MG

Apple Pie 4th of July written by Janet Wong illustrated by Margaret Chodos-Irving
Celebrate the 4th of July! It’s crazy to sell Chinese food on this “all-American” holiday, isn’t it? Maybe not... PB