



BookExpo America 2010: 'Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales' Takes Audie Honors

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On Tuesday evening, the Audio Publishers Association presented the 15th annual Audie Awards, celebrating another year of record submissions (1,0058 to be exact) and exceptional production and marketing of audiobooks at the Museum of the City of New York. *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales* (Hachette Audio) took top honors for Audiobook of the Year, beating out *Time of My Life* (Simon & Schuster), Patrick Swayze's memoir, and *The Word Promise @ Audio Bible* (Thomas Nelson). The award—presented by Ellen Myrick, chair of the judging committee—honored the audiobook with “the most distinguished production, innovative marketing, and highest impact of sales on the industry.”

Myrick praised all three nominees—especially Swayze's memoir which he and his wife, Lisa Niemi, recorded in the weeks before his death as “one case where the audiobook pushed sales of the book.” But *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales*—100% of whose proceeds will go to African children orphaned by HIV/AIDS—was singularly honored for its humanitarianism and overall quality and wide appeal. “It pushed recognition for the format and won new converts,” said Myrick. “It's a really great audiobook and accessible on a number of different levels. And the team at Hachette did such an outstanding job. They marketed it so passionately.”

Solo narration awards, in the male and female categories, went to Charlton Griffin for *Great Expectations* (Audio Connoisseur) and Jenna Lamia for *The Chosen One* (Macmillan Audio). Neil Gaiman, perennial audiobook favorite, won in the category Narration by the Author for *Odd and the Frost Giants* (HarperChildrensAudio). Crowd favorite, *The Help*—whose author and several of its narrators were in the audience—took the award for Distinguished Achievement in Production.

The evening's emcee Gary Dell'Abate (aka “Baba Booney”) producer of the Howard Stern Show and self-professed audiobook aficionado and “early adopter,” is a big fan. “I listened to it [*The Help*] while my wife read it,” he

said. "And I think I had the better experience." Executive producer Patti Pirooz said that she knew she was onto something from the beginning with *The Help*—which also took the award for best fiction audiobook. "I knew it was going to be special. With so many points of view in the novel—you can think outside of the box with the audiobook. From the get-go, the author, Kathryn Stockett, wanted Octavia Spencer to play the role of Mimi. They were old friends, and as it turned out the character of Mimi was actually *based* on Octavia. Octavia was great in the audition and will be playing Mimi in the upcoming film."

With digital downloads making it easier than ever for candidates and judges, Myrick envisions greater growth in the coming years for both the awards and the industry—an optimism shared by presenter and narrator Richard Ferrone, who noted how well suited [the Audies](#) were to the venue: a museum that tracks "the perpetual transformations" of one of the world's most dynamic cities. "There's no more appropriate place to celebrate the fastest growing and changing segment of the entertainment industry," he said.