

Sunshine State Young Reader's Award Program

2003-2004

Grades 6-8

Ayres, Katherine. ***Silver Dollar Girl***. Dell Yearling Book, c2000.

In 1885, determined Valentine Harper leaves her comfortable Victorian lifestyle in Pittsburgh to search for her father in the silver boomtown of Aspen, Colorado. Disguised as a boy, Vallie faces overwhelming odds on the quest to locate her father in this fast-paced adventure in which she learns to rely on her own wits and courage.

Carbone, Elisa. ***Storm Warriors***. Alfred A. Knopf, c2001.

After the death of his mother in 1895, Nathan and his father move to Pea Island in North Carolina. While living there, Nathan decides he wants to be a storm-warrior and join the courageous African American Pea Island Life-Saving Station crew. He dreams of learning to row the heavy boats, rescuing storm-tossed sailors, and fighting fierce storms. In this story, which is based on real people and events, Nathan finds that the surfmen must not only fight the sea, but also other social problems in the Post-Civil War South.

Clements, Andrew. ***Things Not Seen***. Philomel Books, c2002.

Fifteen-year-old Bobby wakes up and finds himself invisible. Faced with this impossible situation, he and his professor parents as well as his new blind friend Alicia try to find out what caused this condition and, more importantly, how to correct it. In this fast-paced science fiction novel, the complications of invisibility are realistically described as Bobby continues his quest for a scientific answer.

Creech, Sharon. ***Ruby Holler***. Joanna Cotler Books, c2002.

Orphaned twins Florida and Dallas leave the loveless Bixton Creek Home to live with an eccentric older couple in Ruby Holler. Through many adventures and conflicts, the twins finally find acceptance and love. Creech fans are certain to enjoy this latest tale by the Newbery gold medal winner.

Cummings, Priscilla. ***A Face First***. Dutton Children's Books, c2001.

Kelley Brennan and her mother are involved in an automobile accident that leaves Kelley with a broken leg and a badly burned face. After weeks of surgery and intense pain, Kelley finally goes home, but refuses to have visitors or return to school as long as she wears the plastic, pressure mask on her damaged face. Kelley undergoes physical therapy, but she must also work through her self-pity, anger, and confusion in this well-told, unsentimental story.

Hiaasen, Carl. ***Hoot***. Alfred A. Knopf, c2002.

In this ecological mystery, involving endangered miniature owls, three middle school misfit kids are determined to upset the building of the Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House over the owls' burrows. Chad Lowe narrates, as Roy Eberhardt, newly moved to Florida from Montana, makes it his mission to save the owls. Roy tries several intriguing ways to slow construction progress as this engaging tale pits profit-minded adults against right-thinking kids. Quirky characters, comic twists, and fast pacing makes this adventure story a sure hit.

Hite, Sid. ***Stick and Whittle***. Scholastic Press, c2000.

The two Melvins, nicknamed Stick and Whittle, begin a quest together after a chance meeting on the Chisholm Trail in 1872. The unlikely duo rustle up amusing dialogue and adventures as they journey through the wild west looking for Stick's long-lost sweetheart, Evelyn. Other colorful characters join Stick and Whittle as they try to rescue Evelyn from a dangerous desperado. This yarn brilliantly blends humor, history, and adventure in an entertaining ride through the Old West.

Hobbs, Will. ***Wild Man Island***. HarperCollins Publishers, c2002.

Andy Galloway slips away from his Alaskan Adventure kayaking group on the last day of their trip. Fourteen-year-old Andy is a seasoned kayaker and wants to visit the place where his father had died nine years before. He successfully reaches the place and leaves a tribute for his father. Unfortunately, on the way back to camp a storm hits, knocks him off course, and Andy lands on a remote island. The fast-paced adventures continue in this entertaining and informative survival story.

Korman, Gordon. ***No More Dead Dogs***. Hyperion Books for Children, c2000.

Eighth-grade football hero Wallace refuses to tell lies and, consequently, writes a brief—and unacceptable—book report on a novel he dislikes. To make up for the assignment, Wallace must serve detention with his English teacher by attending rehearsals for the school play, which is based on the book Wallace dislikes. He becomes involved in rewriting the production to the satisfaction of his classmates and the chagrin of the teacher. In this funny tale, tensions build when Wallace's honesty clashes with the teacher's love of stories in which the dog dies.

Mikaelsen, Ben. ***Touching Spirit Bear***. HarperCollins, c2001

Cole Matthews is a defiant, angry young man who is constantly in trouble. He blames everyone else for his problems, including his alcoholic and abusive parents. When he severely beats a fellow student, Cole is recommended for Circle Justice, an alternative program based on Native American traditions. Cole is banished for one year to a remote Alaskan island where an encounter with the legendary white bear helps him change his life.

Napoli, Donna Jo. ***Three Days***. Dutton Children's Books, c2001.

Eleven-year-old Jackie accompanies her father on a business trip to Italy. The magical trip turns into a nightmare when her father suddenly dies in the rental car while driving back to the hotel. Jackie frantically summons help from passing cars and, finally, two men stop to help her. Instead of taking her to the police, the two men kidnap her and hold her for three days. Throughout this nightmare, Jackie uses her excellent analytical skills and strong survival sense to work her way out of this frightening situation.

Nixon, Joan Lowery. ***Playing for Keeps***. Delacorte Press, c2001.

While on a cruise ship in the Caribbean with her grandmother, sixteen-year-old Rose Ann meets fellow teenagers Neil and Julieta. Rose, however, also meets a seventeen-year-old castaway named Enrique, and falls in love with him. Enrique is framed for two murders in order to send him back to Cuba. The mystery action intensifies as the new friends quickly come to his rescue, investigate the murders, clear Enrique's name, and plan to smuggle him into the United States.

Siebold, Jan. ***Doing Time Online***. Albert Whitman and Company, c2002.

In this skillfully written, contemporary novel, twelve year-old Mitchell is "sentenced" to participate in the O.L.D. Friend program for juvenile offenders. Mitch chats online twice a week from the police station with Wootie, a resident of the Maple Grove Nursing Home located in another city. An unexpected friendship evolves as these new friends exchange advice on how to face the challenges they are experiencing in their lives.

Weeks, Sarah. ***Regular Guy***. A Laura Geringer Book, c1999.

Twelve-year-old Guy is convinced that he was switched at birth because he does not act or look like his eccentric parents. He switches places for a weekend with Bob-o—born in the same hospital and on the same day—who has "normal," quiet parents. In this delightfully funny tale, Guy learns to accept himself and his family.

Woodson, Jacqueline. ***Miracle's Boys***. G. P. Putnam's Sons, c2000.

Three orphaned African-American brothers live together under the care of the eldest brother who gave up his own dreams in order to keep the family together. This heartwarming story is told by 12-year-old Lafayette Bailey, the youngest of the brothers who clearly explains the family's plight with fast-paced, realistic dialogue. This Coretta Scott King Award winning book will also win the hearts of its readers with its honest portrayal of one family's struggle to overcome tragedy in contemporary New York City.