

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award 1988 Nominees

Agony of Alice by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Life, Alice McKinley feels, is just one big embarrassment. Here she is, about to be a teenager and she doesn't know how. It's worse for her than for anyone else, she believes, because she has no role model. Her mother has been dead for years. Help and advice can only come from her father, manager of a music store, and her nineteen-year-old brother, who is a slob. What do they know about being a teen age girl? What she needs, Alice decides, is a gorgeous woman who does everything right, as a roadmap, so to speak. If only she finds herself, when school begins, in the classroom of the beautiful sixth-grade teacher, Miss Cole, her troubles will be over. Unfortunately, she draws the homely, pear-shaped Mrs. Plotkin. One of Mrs. Plotkin's first assignments is for each member of the class to keep a journal of their thoughts and feelings. Alice calls hers "The Agony of Alice," and in it she records all the embarrassing things that happen to her. Through the school year, Alice has lots to record. She also comes to know the lovely Miss Cole, as well as Mrs. Plotkin. And she meets an aunt and a female cousin whom she has not really known before. Out of all this, to her amazement, comes a role model -- one that she would never have accepted before she made a few very important discoveries on her own, things no roadmap could have shown her. Alice moves on, ready to be a wise teenager.

Babe, the Gallant Pig by Dick King-Smith

When Babe arrives at Hogget Farm, Mrs. Hogget's thoughts turn to sizzling bacon and juicy pork chops—until he reveals a surprising talent for shepherding, that is. Before long, Babe is handling Farmer Hogget's flock better than any sheepdog ever could. Babe is so good, in fact, that the farmer enters him into the Grand Challenge Sheepdog Trials. Will it take a miracle for Babe to win?

Blackberries in the Dark by Mavis Jukes

It's the first summer after Austin's grandfather has died and he's not sure how much he'll enjoy his visit to the farm with just his grandmother for company, especially since this was the summer his grandfather was going to teach him to fly-fish. Everything feels different, and without Grandpa, it seems as though traditions are lost. But with a string of beads and a spur-of-the-moment fishing trip, Austin and his grandmother learn how to keep memories of Grandpa alive—and begin some new traditions of their own.

Blue Sword by Robin McKinley

Harry Crewe is an orphan girl who comes to live in Damar, the desert country shared by the Homelanders and the secretive, magical Hillfolk. Her life is quiet and ordinary-until the night she is kidnapped by Corlath, the Hillfolk King, who takes her deep into the desert. She does not know the Hillfolk language; she does not know why she has been chosen. But Corlath does. Harry is to be trained in the arts of war until she is a match for any of his men. Does she have the courage to accept her true fate?

The Cat That was Left Behind by C.S. Adler

Chad doesn't think his new foster family will be any better than the others, but after getting to know them during a summer at the Cape and after meeting a stray cat, he begins to change his mind.

Chapters: My Growth as a Writer by Lois Duncan

The author recounts the experiences from her childhood, adolescence, and marriage which have been incorporated into her fictional stories and poems.

The Cybil War by Betsy Byars

As soon as Cybil grins and crosses her eyes at Simon, he's in love. But the road to Cybil's heart is bumpy--mainly because of Simon's best friend, Tony, whose outrageous lies keep Cybil and Simon apart.

Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Cleary

Leigh Botts has been author Boyd Henshaw's number one fan ever since he was in second grade. Now in sixth grade, Leigh lives with his mother and is the new kid at school. He's lonely, troubled by the absence of his father, a cross-country trucker, and angry because a mysterious thief steals from his lunchbag. Then Leigh's teacher assigns a letter-writing project. Naturally Leigh chooses to write to Mr. Henshaw, whose surprising answer changes Leigh's life.

The Fighting Ground by Avi

He may be just thirteen, but Jonathan knows he's ready to go to the war against the British. He can handle a gun. He yearns to battle for glory, just like his brother and cousin. So when Jonathan hears the tavern bell toll, calling men to fight, he runs to join them. He doesn't realize that in just twenty-four hours, his life will be forever altered -- by the war, by his fellow soldiers, and by the terrible choices he must make.

Homecoming by Cynthia Voigt

The Tillerman kids' mother just left them one day in a car in a mall parking lot. Their father, too, had left them a long time ago. So, as usual, it was up to thirteen-year-old Dicey, the eldest of four, to take care of everything, make all the decisions, feed them, find places to sleep. But above all, Dicey would have to make sure to avoid the authorities who would split them up and place them in foster homes. Deep down, she hoped they could find an adult they could trust, someone who would take them in and love them. But she was afraid it was too much to hope for....

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson by Bette Bao Lord

Shirley Temple Wong sails from China to America with a heart full of dreams. Her new home is Brooklyn, New York. America is indeed a land full of wonders, but Shirley doesn't know any English, so it's hard to make friends. Then a miracle-baseball-happens. It is 1947, and Jackie Robinson, star of the Brooklyn Dodgers, is everyone's hero. Jackie Robinson is proving that a black man, the grandson of a slave, can make a difference in America and for Shirley as well, on the ball field and off, America becomes the land of opportunity.

The Indian in the Cupboard by Lynne Reid Banks

It all started with a birthday present that Omri didn't want—a small plastic Indian that was no use to him at all. But an old wooden cupboard and a special key brought his unusual toy to life, and strange and wonderful things began to happen. As Omri struggles to balance his real life in England with the characters of the Wild West of 18th century America, his incredible adventures are a fantasy beyond his wildest imagination.

A Light in the Attic by Shel Silverstein

Here in the attic of Shel Silverstein you will find Backward Bill, Sour Face Ann, the Meehoo with an Exactlywatt, and the Polar Bear in the Frigidaire. You will talk with Broiled Face, and find out what happens when Somebody steals your knees, you get caught by the Quick-Digesting Gink, a Mountain snores, and They Put a Brassiere on the Camel. From the creator of the beloved poetry collections *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *Falling Up*, here is another wondrous book of poems and drawings.

A Lion to Guard Us by Clyde Bulla

Left on their own in seventeenth-century London, three impoverished children draw upon all their resources to stay together and make their way to the Virginia colony in search of their father.

On My Honor by Marion Bauer

During a bicycle trip to the state park, Joel dares his best friend Tony to a swimming race in the dangerous Vermillion River. The boys have been warned never to go near the river, but Tony can't let Joel think he's scared. Both boys jump in. When Joel reaches the sandbar, he turns and looks for Tony and finds that he has vanished. Joel is stunned. How can he face their parents and the terrible truth?

Remembering the Good Times by Richard Peck

They were the best of friends. Sixteen-year-old Buck Mendenhall first met Kate Lucas the summer before seventh grade. In eighth grade they made friends with the brilliant and wealthy newcomer, Trav Kirby. They didn't seem to need anyone else. Mostly they looked forward to the good times shared at Kate's house. It didn't matter if their classmates wondered about them; no one could unravel their binding ties. At least that's what they thought. When one of the trio finds the future too great a threat, the other two can only wonder: "How well did we know our best friend?"

Sarah, Plain and Tall by Patricia MacLachlan

Their mother died the day after Caleb was born. Their house on the prairie is quiet now, and Papa doesn't sing anymore. Then Papa puts an ad in the paper, asking for a wife, and he receives a letter from one Sarah Elisabeth Wheaton, of Maine. Papa, Anna, and Caleb write back. Caleb asks if she sings. Sarah decides to come for a month. She writes Papa: I will come by train. I will wear a yellow bonnet. I am plain and tall, and tell them I sing. Anna and Caleb wait and wonder. Will Sarah be nice? Will she like them? Will she stay?

Seven Days to a Brand New Me by Ellen Conford

A shy girl follows the suggestions in a self-help book to win the attentions of the handsome new boy whose locker is next to hers.

Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth Speare

Until the day his father returns to their cabin in the Maine wilderness, twelve-year-old Matt must try to survive on his own. Although Matt is brave, he's not prepared for an attack by swarming bees, and he's astonished when he's rescued by an Indian chief and his grandson, Attean. As the boys come to know each other Attean learns to speak English while Matt becomes a skilled hunter. Though many months have passed, there's no sign of Matt's family. Then Attean asks Matt to join the Beaver tribe and move north. Should Matt abandon his hopes of ever seeing his family again and move on to a new life?

Wilderness Peril by Thomas Dygard

Two teenage boys camping in the Minnesota woods encounter a desperate airplane hijacker attempting to escape with three-quarters of a million dollars.