

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award **1998 Nominees**

Absolutely Normal Chaos by Sharon Creech

Mary Lou Finney is less than excited about her assignment to keep a journal over the summer. Boring! Then cousin Carl Ray comes to stay with her family, and what starts out as the dull dog days of summer quickly turns into the wildest roller coaster ride of all time. How was Mary Lou suppose to know what would happen with Carl Ray and the ring? Or with her boy-crazy best friend Beth Ann? Or with (sigh) the permanently pink Alex Cheevey? Suddenly a boring school project becomes a record of the most exciting, incredible, unbelievable summer of Mary Lou's life. But what if her teacher actually does read her journal?

Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters by Patricia and Frederick McKissack

The year is 1859, and it's Christmastime on a Virginia Plantation. The slaves are cleaning and setting up the Big House--where their masters live--for the festivities. The Big House is filled with warmth, colorful decorations, and yummy food...but there is talk of war and a sense that times may be changing. In the quarters--where the slaves live--conditions are poor, dirty, and cold, but the slaves are filled with hope for better times ahead, and they sing songs of freedom. Moving deftly between two worlds, this beautifully illustrated book is a historical tale as well as a holiday treat.

Climb or Die by Edward Myers

After a car accident in a snowy Colorado pass seriously injures their parents, athletic fourteen-year-old Danielle and her brainy younger brother, Jake, must scale a mountain to find help.

The Fear Place by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

For Doug's brother, Gordie, the ridge with its spectacular view is a magical, special place, but for Doug, it's The Fear Place. Two years ago, Doug hiked to the ridge during his family's annual camping trip, and he vowed never again to cross the narrow ledge from which the earth dropped away six hundred feet to the canyon below. But now the boys' parents have been called from their vacation by a family emergency, and Doug and Gordie are alone in the wilderness. After one of their seemingly endless fights, Gordie has stomped away from their campsite. When Gordie doesn't return, Doug fears the worst, particularly when he hears reports that a cougar has been sighted nearby. Doug knows he has to go after his brother, and he knows where he will find him. What he can't imagine is the surprising source of the courage to overcome his fears.

The Great Fire by Jim Murphy

A vertible cinematic account of the catastrophe that decimated much of Chicago in 1871, forcing more than 100,000 people from their homes. Jim Murphy tells the story through the eyes of several survivors. These characters serve as dramatic focal points

as the fire sweeps across the city, their stories illuminated by fascinating archival photos and maps outlining the spread of fire.

Harris & Me by Gary Paulsen

When an eleven-year-old city boy is dropped off to stay on a farm with relatives, he doesn't know what to expect. His cousin Harris soon takes care of that. Harris is rude and crude and finds trouble at every turn. He leads his city cousin into everything from wrestling slippery pigs to catching mice to a daredevil jump out of a barn loft. And that's not all. There are swimming and cowboy movies and enough good food to fill the boys up for days. Farm life is hard but never lonely. Before long, Harris's cousin has found a place where he belongs. If only summer could last forever.

Hound Heaven by Linda Oatman High

Living with her grandfather on Muckwater Mountain in West Virginia, twelve-year-old Silver aggressively pursues her dream of having a dog by working to earn the money for one.

Kokopelli's Flute by Will Hobbs

Tep Jones has always felt the magic of Picture House, an Anasazi cliff dwelling near the seed farm where he lives with his parents. But he could never have imagined what would happen to him on the night of a lunar eclipse, when he finds a bone flute left behind by grave robbers. Tep falls under the spell of a powerful ancient magic that traps him at night in the body of an animal. Only by unraveling the mysteries of Picture House can Tep save himself and his desperately ill mother. Does the enigmatic old Indian who calls himself Cricket hold the key to unlocking the secrets of the past? And can Tep find the answers in time?

The Magnificent Mummy Maker by Elvira Woodruff

The mummy that Andrew creates for his fifth grade project seems to have special powers and helps him to understand his feelings about himself, his dead mother, and his stepbrother, whom he calls Mr. Gifted.

Mieko and the Fifth Treasure by Eleanor Coerr

When the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Mieko's nearby village was turned into ruins, and her hand was badly injured. Mieko loves to do calligraphy more than anything, but now she can barely hold a paintbrush. And she feels as if she has lost something that she can't paint without--the legendary fifth treasure, beauty in the heart. Then she is sent to live with her grandparents and must go to a new school. But Mieko is brave and eventually learns that time and patience can help with many things, and may even help her find the fifth treasure.

Mick Harte Was Here by Barbara Park

How could someone like Mick die? He was the kid who freaked out his mom by putting a ceramic eye in a defrosted chicken, the kid who did a wild dance in front of the whole school--and the kid who, if only he had worn his bicycle helmet, would still be alive

today. But now Phoebe Harte's twelve-year-old brother is gone, and Phoebe's world has turned upside down.

Phoenix Rising by Karen Hesse

Nyle's life with her grandmother on their Vermont sheep farm advances rhythmically through the seasons until the night of the accident at the Cookshire nuclear power plant. Without warning, Nyle's modest world fills with protective masks, evacuations, contaminated food, disruptions, and mistrust. Nyle adjusts to the changes. As long as the fallout continues blowing to the East, Nyle, Gran, and the farm can go on. But into this uncertain haven stumble Ezra Trent and his mother, "refugees" from the heart of the accident, who take temporary shelter in the back bedroom of Nyle's house. The back bedroom is the dying room: It took her mother when Nyle was six; it stole away her grandfather just two years ago. Now Ezra is back there and Nyle doesn't want to open her heart to him. Too many times she's let people in, only to have them desert her.

Running Out of Time by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Jessie lives with her family in the frontier village of Clifton, Indiana, in 1840 -- or so she believes. When diphtheria strikes the village and the children of Clifton start dying, Jessie's mother reveals a shocking secret -- it's actually 1996, and they are living in a reconstructed village that serves as a tourist site. In the world outside, medicine exists that can cure the dread disease, and Jessie's mother is sending her on a dangerous mission to bring back help. But beyond the walls of Clifton, Jessie discovers a world even more alien and threatening than she could have imagined, and soon she finds her own life in jeopardy. Can she get help before the children of Clifton, and Jessie herself, run out of time?

Skylark by Patricia MacLachlan

When Sarah came to the prairie, Anna and her brother Caleb worried that she would not stay and be their new mother. But Sarah fell in love with Caleb and Anna, and with their father, Jacob. Together they became a family. Jacob is a man of the land but for Sarah, the prairie isn't yet her home. So when a drought threatens to devastate their way of life, Jacob must save the farm. But the children go back to the home Sarah knew first, Maine, where there is family and an ocean. But will they ever be a family again on the prairie?

Twinkie Squad by Gordon Korman

Chaos spreads when Douglas, the most eccentric sixth grader in Thaddeus G. Little Middle School, joins the Twinkie Squad, a special counselling group for problem students.

Under the Blood Red Sun by Graham Salisbury

Tomikazu Nakaji's biggest concerns are baseball, homework, and a local bully, until life with his Japanese family in Hawaii changes drastically after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

The Watsons Go To Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis

Enter the hilarious world of 10-year-old Kenny and his family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. There's Momma, Dad, little sister Joetta, Kenny, and Byron, who's 13 and an official "juvenile delinquent. " When Momma and Dad decide it's time for a visit to Grandma, Dad comes home with the amazing Ultra Glide, and the Watsons set out on a trip like no other. They're heading south. They're going to Birmingham, Alabama, toward one of the darkest moments in American history.

Winners and Losers by Stephen Hoffius

When a heart condition threatens to curtail his friend Daryl's track career, Curt finds himself taking Daryl's place as lead contender for the conference championship and as the new obsession of Daryl's driven father.

Yolanda's Genius by Carol Fenner

Yolanda is a great big girl and strong for her age, bigger and stronger and smarter than anyone else in the fifth grade. She is cool and streetwise, too, and afraid of no one. It's easy for her to watch out for her little, first-grade brother, Andrew. But their mother, a legal professional and a widow, is concerned about crime and drugs in her children's Chicago school. She moves them all to a smaller and, she hopes, safer town. Yolanda, at first, is scornful of her new town. And Andrew, who never talks much, is having trouble learning to read. What he loves to do is play on the old harmonica given to him as a baby by his father to teethe on and which he's kept blowing ever since. He can imitate any sound he hears, like bacon sizzling, or express any mood he feels, like the freshness of an early morning. Yolanda understands that that's the way he "talks." She is convinced Andrew is a true genius with a great musical gift. But no one else believes it--not her mother, nor Andrew's teachers, not even wonderful Aunt Tiny in Chicago. Yolanda sets out to open up adult eyes, a task whose strategies will call on far more than her physical toughness. Her plans crystallize on a visit back to Chicago to enjoy the great annual blues festival with Aunt Tiny.