

# ***Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award 2001 Nominees***

## **The Dark Side of Nowhere by Neal Shusterman**

Jason Miller feels trapped in the small town of Billington — where nothing ever happens. But when his friend Ethan dies of what the doctor calls a burst appendix, Jason's life changes forever. First he is given a mysterious glove that can shoot pellets with deadly force. Then he learns that the monthly shots he gets from the friendly town doctor are not for his health but for a far more sinister purpose. As he peels away layer after layer of the lies he's been told, Jason comes to learn of his own true nature.

## **Flying Solo by Ralph Fletcher**

When the substitute for Mr. "Fab" Fabiano never shows up and his sixth-grade students are on their own, they set out to prove that they can run the class by themselves. With a little ingenuity and some careful planning, they might just succeed. But when a fight breaks out between Bastian Fauvell and Rachel White over a classmate, Tommy Feathers, who died six months earlier, everything begins to fall apart. Can Rachel deal with the anxieties that plunged her into silence the day Tommy died?

## **Gib Rides Home by Zilpha Keatley Snyder**

Gib Whittaker's life at Lovell House Orphanage in the early 1900s is pretty bleak. But along with hours of chores, bad food, and paddings, the boys do get some schooling, and reading and writing are better than scrubbing floors. Still, Gib's fondest dream is to have a real family. So when Georgie Olson is adopted, Gib can't help being jealous, even when he finds out that the "adoption" really means being farmed out to work as unpaid labor until the age of 18. Then one freezing January morning Gib finds Georgie hiding in the barn, his hands heavily bandaged. Constantly whipped by his master, then sent to work outside without mittens, Georgie ran away when they threatened to cut off his frostbitten hands. Is this the only kind of adoption there is? When Gib himself is farmed out, he arrives at the home he has always dreamed of. But he's soon aware of barely concealed tensions and secrets kept hidden from him. Will Gib end up like poor Georgie?

## **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling**

Harry Potter has never played a sport while flying on a broomstick. He's never worn a cloak of invisibility, befriended a giant, or helped hatch a dragon. All Harry knows is a miserable life with the Dursleys, his horrible aunt and uncle, and their abominable son, Dudley. Harry's room is a tiny closet at the foot of the stairs, and he hasn't had a birthday party in eleven years. But all that is about to change when a mysterious letter arrives by owl messenger: a letter with an invitation to a wonderful place he never dreamed existed. There he finds not only friends, aerial sports, and magic around every corner, but a great destiny that's been waiting for him...if Harry can survive the encounter.

### **Honus and Me by Dan Gutman**

Joe Stoshack lives for baseball. He knows everything there is to know about the game — except how to play well. His specialty is striking out. Joe feels like a real loser, and when he takes a low-pay job cleaning a bunch of junk out of his neighbor's attic, he feels even worse—until he comes across a little piece of cardboard that takes his breath away. His heart is racing. His brain is racing. He can hardly believe his eyes. Joe has stumbled upon a T-206 Honus Wagner—the most valuable baseball card in the world! And he's about to find out that it's worth a lot more than money. . . In the middle of the night, Joe wakes up to find himself face-to-face with the star of the 1909 World Series—Honus Wagner—one of the greatest ballplayers who ever lived. . .and they're about to travel through time on an amazing journey that will change both their lives forever.

### **Last Man's Reward by David Patneaude**

When a chance yard-sale purchase nets five boys a Willie Mays rookie card worth \$4,000, their lives seem to narrow and intensify. The boys devise a "last man" contest—the winner gets the Mays card, and losers get zip. Twelve-year-old Albert has a life-and-death reason for winning the card—and his own special terrors about the abandoned mine where the boys have hidden the card for safe keeping. Just how far is Albert willing to go to be the last man?

### **The Landry News by Andrew Clements**

Fifth-grader Cara Landry is an aspiring journalist who has created her own newspaper, The Landry News. In her first edition, she writes a harsh editorial that accuses Mr. Larson, her burned-out language arts teacher, of not doing his job. However, her criticism has positive results: It inspires Mr. Larson to become a real teacher again -- one who encourages his class to turn The Landry News into a classroom newspaper. But when the school principal uses something that's been printed in the paper to try to get Mr. Larson fired, the whole town gets involved, and Cara and her classmates learn about the First Amendment -- and the importance of tempering truth with mercy.

### **A Long Way From Chicago by Richard Peck**

What happens when Joey and his sister, Mary Alice -- two city slickers from Chicago -- make their annual summer visits to Grandma Dowdel's seemingly sleepy Illinois town? August 1929: They see their first corpse, and he isn't resting easy. August 1930: The Cowgill boys terrorize the town, and Grandma fights back. August 1931: Joey and Mary Alice help Grandma trespass, poach, catch the sheriff in his underwear, and feed the hungry -- all in one day. And there's more, as Joey and Mary Alice make seven summer trips to Grandma's -- each one funnier than the year before -- in self-contained chapters that readers can enjoy as short stories or take together for a rollicking good novel.

### **The Maze by Will Hobbs**

Just fourteen, Rick Walder is alone, on the run, and desperate. Stowing away in the back of a truck, he suddenly finds himself at a dead end, out in the middle of nowhere. The Maze. In this surreal landscape of stark redrock spires and deep sandstone canyons, Rick stumbles into the remote camp of Lon Perigrino, a bird biologist who is releasing fledgling California condors back into the wild. Intrigued by the endangered

condors and the strange bearded man dedicated to saving them, Rick decides to stay on. When two men with a vicious dog drive up in a battered old Humvee, Rick discovers that Lon and his birds are in grave danger. Will he be able to save them?

### **My Life in Dog Years by Gary Paulsen**

Gary Paulsen has owned dozens of unforgettable and amazing dogs, and here are his favorites--one to a chapter. Among them are Snowball, the puppy he owned as a boy in the Philippines; Ike, his mysterious hunting companion; Electric Fred and his best friend, Pig; Dirk, the grim protector; and Josh, one of the remarkable border collies working on Paulsen's ranch today. My Life in Dog Years is a book for every dog lover and every Paulsen fan--a perfect combination that shows vividly the joy and wisdom that come from growing up with man's best friend.

### **My Louisiana Sky by Kimberly Willis Holt**

Tiger Ann Parker is smart in school and good at baseball, but she's forever teased about her family by the girls in class. Tiger Ann knows her folks are different from others in their small town of Saitter, Louisiana. They are mentally slow, and Tiger Ann keeps her pain and embarrassment hidden as long as her strong and smart Granny runs the household. Then Granny dies suddenly and Aunt Dorie Kay arrives, offering Tiger Ann a way out. Now Tiger Ann must make the most important decision of her life.

### **Petey by Ben Mikaelson**

In 1920, a baby was born with cerebral palsy. His parents did everything they could to care for him, but they finally had to make a difficult choice - the infant, Petey, was given into the care of the state. Petey was misdiagnosed as an idiot and sent to live in a mental institution. His life within the boundaries of the institution was unimaginable by modern standards. Yet still, the boy touched many who knew him, amazing them with his joy and zest for life. In 1990, Petey is an old man. He hides within himself, mistrustful of people. So many people have come and gone in his life. So many promises have been broken. Until one day he trusts a teenage boy, Trevor. Through Trevor, Petey just might have another chance in the world.

### **Poppy and Rye by Avi**

Heartbroken over the loss of her beloved fiance, Ragweed, Poppy is making the long journey west to bring the sad news to his family, whom she's never met. There is no way Poppy can know that Ragweed's brother Rye is traveling east on his own quest for answers.... Coming across a beautiful green meadow in the forest, Poppy closes her eyes and begins to dance. Suddenly, she opens her eyes and, for one indescribable moment, thinks she sees Ragweed standing before her. Without a word, the strange new mouse takes her paws and the two dance in a graceful, magical duet. And then he is gone. Has it all been a dream? Or has something truly extraordinary occurred? Poppy isn't sure. But when she finally reaches Ragweed's family, she discovers great trouble. Beavers are constructing a giant dam and flooding the home of the mouse family. The mice have turned for help to Rye, who has always lived in the shadow of his older brother. Now, Rye longs to prove himself to his family...and to the beautiful deer mouse who captured his heart in the meadow. Before the battle is over, Poppy and Rye are

drawn together in a dangerous showdown with the cruel and relentless dam builders. Braving kidnap, imprisonment, and a daring rescue, they carry out a brilliant plan, and with Poppy by his side, Rye dares rise to meet the expectations of his family and the mouse he loves.

### **Riding Freedom by Pam Muñoz Ryan**

Charlotte Parkhurst never acted like most other girls. She climbed trees and fought with the boys and worked in a stable. She had a way with horses that was like nothing folks had ever seen. In the mid-1800s, some people didn't think it was proper for a girl to behave like Charlotte, and they tried to stop her. But Charlotte was smart, and she came up with a plan that would let her live her life the way she wanted — a plan so clever and so secretive that almost no one figured it out. A top-notch horse rider, a legendary stagecoach driver, the first woman to vote in the state of California and probably the United States, Charlotte Parkhurst, known as Charley, was a real person with a larger than life story. Pam Munoz Ryan's fast-paced historical novel combines the documented facts of Charlotte's life with her own spirited imaginings, and Brian Selznick's drawings celebrate the pluck and originality of this brave and colorful character. Together author and artist rescue a little known heroine from oblivion and bring her vividly alive for young readers.

### **Rules of the Road by Joan Bauer**

Meet Jenna Boller, star employee at Gladstone's Shoe Store in Chicago. Standing a gawky 5'11" at 16 years old, Jenna is the kind of girl most likely to stand out in the crowd for all the wrong reasons. But that doesn't stop Madeline Gladstone, the president of Gladstone's Shoes 176 outlets in 37 states, from hiring Jenna to drive her cross country in a last ditch effort to stop Elden Gladstone from taking over his mother's company and turning a quality business into a shop-and-schlock empire. Now Jenna Boller shoe salesperson is about to become a shoe-store spy as she joins her crusty old employer for an eye-opening adventure that will teach them both the rules of the road and the rules of life.

### **Shadow Spinner by Susan Fletcher**

Every night, Shahrazad begins a story. And every morning, the Sultan lets her live another day -- providing the story is interesting enough to capture his attention. After almost one thousand nights, Shahrazad is running out of tales. And that is how Marjan's story begins.... It falls to Marjan to help Shahrazad find new stories -- ones the Sultan has never heard before. To do that, the girl is forced to undertake a dangerous and forbidden mission: sneak from the harem and travel the city, pulling tales from strangers and bringing them back to Shahrazad. But as she searches the city, a wonderful thing happens. From a quiet spinner of tales, Marjan suddenly becomes the center of a more surprising story than she ever could have imagined.

### **Skellig by David Almond**

Michael was looking forward to his new house and neighborhood, until his infant sister became very ill. Now his parents are constantly frantic, the scary doctor is always coming around, and Michael feels helpless. When he goes out into the old rickety

garage, he comes across a mysterious being living beneath spider webs and eating flies for dinner. This creature calls himself Skellig, and over the weeks Michael and his new friend Mina bring Skellig out in to the light, and their worlds change forever.

### **Small Steps: the Year I Got Polio by Peg Kehret**

Acclaimed author Peg Kehret has written the true story of the year when she was twelve and stricken with polio. At first paralyzed and terrified, she fought her way to recovery, aided by doctors and therapists, a loving family, supportive roommates fighting their own battles with the disease, and plenty of grit and luck. With the humor and suspense that are her trademarks, Peg Kehret vividly recreates a year of heartbreak and triumph.

### **Tangerine by Edward Bloor**

Twelve-year-old Paul, who lives in the shadow of his football hero brother Erik, fights for the right to play soccer despite his near blindness and slowly begins to remember the incident that damaged his eyesight.

### **The Turnabout Shop by Colby Rodowsky**

After her free-spirited mother dies, Livvy is uprooted from her New York home and sent to Baltimore to live with her mother's old college friend, a woman Livvy has never heard of. Jessie is nothing like Livvy's mother: She's sensible, likes to weave, and doesn't even have pierced ears. What she does have is The Turnabout Shop, where she and her mother sell antiques, and a family larger than any Livvy has ever known. She also has a bunch of warm, quirky neighbors, including a girl Livvy's age. Set down to live among strangers, Livvy begins again from scratch, discovering that even without her mother, she can still learn and laugh and love, and take root in a whole different world.