

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award 2003 Nominees

Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson

During the summer of 1793, Mattie Cook lives above the family coffee shop with her widowed mother and grandfather. Mattie spends her days avoiding chores and making plans to turn the family business into the finest Philadelphia has ever seen. But then the fever breaks out. Disease sweeps the streets, destroying everything in its path and turning Mattie's world upside down. At her feverish mother's insistence, Mattie flees the city with her grandfather. But she soon discovers that the sickness is everywhere, and Mattie must learn quickly how to survive in a city turned frantic with disease.

Hope Was Here by Joan Bauer

When 16-year-old Hope, waitress extraordinaire, moves cross-country to Wisconsin with her aunt Addie to run the Welcome Stairways Diner, Hope isn't sure she'll fit in. But she quickly finds herself involved in the small town's mayoral race, as G. T., owner of the diner, surprises everyone with his entry into the race. After all, G. T. has leukemia. And his opponent is the previously undefeated longtime mayor. Some think G. T. is crazy, but Hope sees the goodness and power in him. Will everyone else see it too? Joan Bauer, known for creating strong, unique, feminine characters, finds in Hope a sharp heroine who won't soon be forgotten.

Williwaw! by Tom Bodett

Ivan and September Crane, ages 12 and 13, are left alone for a couple of weeks while their fisherman Dad is away at sea. In typical adolescent fashion, they quickly proceed to ignore his only two instructions—don't run down the batteries on the portable short-wave radio, their only means of communication, and don't cross the bay to town. Through a series of bad decisions they find themselves crossing Bag Bay in their skiff when they are suddenly overtaken by a sudden and fierce autumn storm known as a williwaw. Ivan and September must use every ounce of strength, courage, and ingenuity they possess to keep themselves afloat until help comes.

Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges

In November 1960, all of America watched as a tiny six-year-old black girl, surrounded by federal marshals, walked through a mob of screaming segregationists and into her school. An icon of the civil rights movement, Ruby Bridges chronicles each dramatic step of this pivotal event in history.

Crossing Jordan by Adrian Fogelin

Twelve-year-old Cassie narrates the dramatic events that unfold when Jemmie, an African-American girl, and her family move in next door. Despite their parents' deeply held prejudice against each other's family (exemplified by the fence Cassie's father builds between their two houses) the girls find they share more similarities than differences. Mutual interests in reading and running draw them together, and their

wariness of each other disappears. But when their parents find out about the burgeoning friendship, each girl is forbidden to see the other.

Nory Ryan's Song by Patricia Reilly Giff

Nory Ryan's family has lived on Maidin Bay on the west coast of Ireland for generations, raising a pig and a few chickens, planting potatoes, getting by. Every year Nory's father goes away on a fishing boat and returns with the rent money for the English lord who owns their cottage and fields, the English lord bent upon forcing the Irish from their land so he can tumble the cottages and clear the fields for grazing. Times are never easy on Maidin Bay, but this year, a terrible blight attacks the potatoes. No crop means starvation. Twelve-year-old Nory must summon the courage and ingenuity to find food, to find hope, to find a way to help her family survive.

Jackie & Me by Dan Gutman

Like every other kid in his class, Joe Stoshack has to write a report on an African American who's made an important contribution to society. Unlike every other kid in his class, Joe has a special talent: with the help of old baseball cards, he can travel through time. So for his report, Joe decides to go back to meet one of the greatest baseball players ever, Jackie Robinson, to find out what it was like to be the man who broke baseball's color barrier. Joe plans on writing a prize-winning report. But he doesn't plan on a trip that will for a short time change the color of his skin -- and forever change his view of history and his definition of courage.

The Year of Miss Agnes by Kirkpatrick Hill

It's 1948 and ten-year-old Fred has just watched her teacher leave -- another in a long line of teachers who have left the village because the smell of fish was too strong, the way of life too hard. Will another teacher come to the small Athabaskan village on the Koyukuk River to teach Fred and her friends in the one-room schoolhouse? Will she stay, or will she hate the smell of fish, too? Fred doesn't know what to make of Miss Agnes Sutterfield. She sure is a strange one. No other teacher throws away old textbooks and reads Greek myths and Robin Hood. No other teacher plays opera recordings, talks about "hairy os," and Athabaskan kids becoming doctors or scientists. No other teacher ever said Fred's deaf older sister should come to school, too. And no other teacher ever, ever told the kids they were each good at something. Maybe it's because Miss Agnes can't smell anything, let alone fish, that things seem to be all right. But then Miss Agnes says she's homesick and will go back to England at the end of the year. Fred knows what this is about: Just when things seem to be good, things go back to being the same.

Jason's Gold by Will Hobbs

"Gold!" Jason shouted at the top of his lungs. "Read all about it! Gold discovered in Alaska!" Within hours of hearing the thrilling news, fifteen-year-old Jason Hawthorn jumps a train for Seattle, stow away on a ship bound for the goldfields, and joins thousands of fellow prospectors attempting the difficult journey to the Klondike. The Dead Horse Trail, the infamous Chilkott Pass, and a five-hundred-mile trip by canoe down the Yukon River lie ahead. With help from a young writer named Jack London,

Jason and his dog face moose, bears, and the terrors of a subarctic winter in this bone-chilling survival story.

Dancing in Cadillac Light by Kimberly Willis Holt

Set against a backdrop of a small town in Texas in 1968, Kimberly Willis Holt's fourth novel brims with quirky Southern characters and the wisdom and humor that are her trademarks. 11-year-old Jaynell, called "Boy" by her father, is tough and cranky, and very different from her sister, Racine, a girly-girl with a butt-twisting walk and "a hole in her head as big as Texas." But both of them have learned a thing or two about poor people like the Pickens family that lives in a shack on the wrong side of town. "Never, never eat anything at a Pickens' house," their momma tells them. Fact is, nobody in Moon, Texas, has much, but everybody is real aware of who's got what and how much. Except for Grandpap. He comes to live with her family after Grandma dies, and he always makes time to visit with the Pickens, even after he buys a '62 emerald green Cadillac convertible. When Grandpa dies, the entire family learns his secret: he has given away his house to the Pickens. And Jaynell learns another secret about Grandpap that changes the way she will look at poverty forever.

The Wreckers by Iain Lawrence

There was once a village bred by evil. On the barren coast of Cornwall, England, lived a community who prayed for shipwrecks, a community who lured storm-tossed ships to crash upon the sharp rocks of their shore. They fed and clothed themselves with the loot salvaged from the wreckage; dead sailors' tools and trinkets became decorations for their homes. Most never questioned their murderous way of life. Then, upon that pirates' shore crashed the ship *The Isle of Skye*. And the youngest of its crew members, 14-year-old John Spencer, survived the wreck. But would he escape the wreckers? This is his harrowing tale.

The Art of Keeping Cool by Janet Taylor Lisle

Only Robert ever sees the plane. But the pilot is shadowy -- maybe his missing father, maybe not. Robert doesn't mention this vision to Elliot, his cousin, whom he meets when he moves from Ohio with his mother and sister to live out the war with his grandparents in Rhode Island. Elliot can draw better than anyone Robert has ever seen, but he keeps his talent hidden in Grandpa's house. He won't say why. No one will talk either about Robert's father, who left the house as a teenager, never to return. After one dinner, Elliot draws a picture of Grandpa wielding a carving knife like a murder weapon. The time is February 1942, and Nazi submarines are torpedoing U.S. ships off the coast. In March, two tremendous guns are trundled to nearby Fort Brooks. They are mighty sixteen-inch bore Naval guns, one hundred forty-three tons apiece, capable of firing all the way to Nantucket Island. Elliot is frightened by the sight, but half an hour later he's got them down on paper, their huge gray barrels, the nervous crowd of townspeople. "Everything was just like that," Robert exclaims when he sees the finished drawing. "Only this is even better." "That's what happens," Elliot says with a nod. "If I do it right, that's exactly what happens. The real thing gets caught....It can't get you." Also watching the guns' arrival is another artist -- a well-known one from Germany -- Abel Hoffman. A recluse, he becomes Elliot's teacher and friend. But his prowls along the

beach raise local suspicions, and his arrest, when it occurs, unleashes havoc in a scene neither cousin can forget.

Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry

Lame and suddenly orphaned, Kira is mysteriously removed from her squalid village to live in the palatial Council Edifice, where she is expected to use her gifts as a weaver to do the bidding of the all-powerful Guardians. While her almost magical talent keeps her alive, she struggles with ever broadening responsibilities in her quest for truth, discovering things that will change her life forever.

The Squire's Tale by Gerald Morris

Growing up an orphan in an isolated cottage in the woods with Trevisant the hermit, young Terence never expected much adventure. But upon the arrival of Gawain, his life takes an odd turn. Terence leaves his secluded life for one of adventure as Gawain's squire in King Arthur's Court.

The Graduation of Jake Moon by Barbara Park

Life hasn't been the same for Jake Moon since his grandfather, Skelly, got Alzheimer's disease. At first Jake thought, no big deal, it was just a disease that made old people forget where they put their car keys. But he was wrong. It is a big deal. A very big deal. For one thing, he can't invite friends over because Skelly might do something embarrassing like tell them to zipper their "briskets," or Jake might reach into the freezer for a can of frozen orange juice and find Skelly's frozen pajamas there instead. He used to love spending time with his grandfather...but now he is mostly stuck fastening the Velcro on Skelly's sneakers, or wiping rice off his chin. It's like all of a sudden he's the grown-up, and Skelly's the kid. How can the one person Jake could always count on be fading as fast as -- well, as the moon.

A Year Down Yonder by Richard Peck

In 1937, during the Depression, fifteen-year-old Mary Alice, initially apprehensive about leaving Chicago to spend a year with her fearsome, larger-than-life grandmother in rural Illinois, gradually begins to better understand and admire her grandmother's unusual qualities.

I Was a Rat! by Philip Pullman

"I Was a Rat!" So insists a scruffy boy named Roger. Maybe it's true. But what is he now? A terrifying monster running wild in the sewers? The Daily Scourge is sure of it. A victim of "Rodent Delusion?" The hospital nurse says yes. A lucrative fairground freak? He is to Mr. Tapscrew. A champion wriggler and a budding thief? That's what Billy thinks. Or just an ordinary small boy, though a little ratty in his habits? Only three people believe this version of the story. And it may take a royal intervention (and a bit of magic) to convince the rest of the world.

Walking to the Bus-Rider Blues by Harriette Gillem Robinet

During the Alabama bus boycott, six months after Rosa Parks made her famous bus protest, Alfa Merryfield and his family struggle to pay the rent. But someone keeps stealing their rent money -- and now someone is accusing them of stealing!

With only a few days left before rent is due, Alfa and his sister, Zinnia, know they don't have much time. To solve this mystery, they must "walk the walk and talk the talk of nonviolence" that Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders preach -- and what they discover may be more than they dreamed.

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli

From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of "Stargirl, Stargirl." She captures Leo Borlock's heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first. Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal.

Homeless Bird by Gloria Whelan

Like many girls her age in India, thirteen-year-old Koly is getting married. When she discovers that the husband her parents have chosen for her is sickly boy with wicked parents, Koly wishes she could flee. According to tradition, though, she has no choice. On her wedding day, Koly's fate is sealed. In the wake of her marriage, however, Koly's life takes an unexpected turn, and she finds herself alone in a strange city of white-sari-clad windows. Her only choice seems to be to shed her name and her future and join the hopeless hordes who chant for food. Even then, cast out in a current of time-worn tradition, this rare young woman sets out to forge her own exceptional future. And a life, like a beautiful tapestry, comes together for Koly-- one stitch at a time.