

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award 2005 Nominees

Ashes of Roses by Mary Jane Auch

When she arrives on Ellis Island as a seventeen-year-old Irish immigrant, Rose Nolan is looking for a land of opportunities; what she finds is far from all she'd dreamed.

Stubborn and tenacious, she refuses to give up. Left alone to fend for herself and her younger sister, Rose is thrust into a hard-knock life of tenements and factory work.

When the devastating Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911 rushes into Rose's life, her confusions are brought to an all-too-painful head. To whom and to what can she turn when everything around her is in ashes?

Doing Time Online by Jan Siebold

Twelve-year-old Mitchell got involved with the wrong kid this past summer, and the prank they played led to an elderly woman's injury. Now he finds himself at the police station—his "sentence" is to chat online with a nursing home resident twice a week for the next month. Mitch isn't thrilled; what could he and some "old" person possibly talk about? But Mitch's new online friend has a personality all her own. Her name is Wootie Hayes, and she has plenty to talk about: how she got her name, how much she misses her own home, and how she detests bingo. But she also wants to know about Mitch's situation. Without expecting it, they help each other face the truth and begin a new friendship in the process.

Heir Apparent by Vivian Vande Velde

In Heir Apparent there are as many ways to win as there are to get killed. Giannine can testify to how many ways there are to die--it's about all she's been able to do since she started playing. Now all she has to do is get the magic ring, find the stolen treasure, answer the dwarf's dumb riddles, come up with a poem for the head-chopping statue, cope with the army of ghosts, outmaneuver her half brothers, and defeat the man-eating dragon. If she can do all of that, why, she just might save her own life!

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Unfortunately, Roy's first acquaintance in Florida is Dana Matherson, a well-known bully. Then again, if Dana hadn't been sinking his thumbs into Roy's temples and mashing his face against the school-bus window, Roy might never have spotted the running boy. And the running boy is intriguing: he was running away from the school bus, carried no books, and—here's the odd part—wore no shoes. Sensing a mystery, Roy sets himself on the boy's trail. The chase introduces him to potty-trained alligators, a fake-fart champion, some burrowing owls, a renegade eco-avenger, and several extremely poisonous snakes with unnaturally sparkling tails.

House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer

At his coming-of-age party, Matteo Alacrán asks El Patrón's bodyguard, "How old am I?...I know I don't have a birthday like humans, but I was born." "You were harvested," Tam Lin reminds him. "You were grown in that poor cow for nine months and then you

were cut out of her." To most people around him, Matt is not a boy, but a beast. A room full of chicken litter with roaches for friends and old chicken bones for toys is considered good enough for him. But for El Patrón, lord of a country called Opium -- a strip of poppy fields lying between the U.S. and what was once called Mexico -- Matt is a guarantee of eternal life. El Patrón loves Matt as he loves himself for Matt *is* himself. They share identical DNA.

Kite Rider by Geraldine McCaughrean

The great Miao master of the Jade Circus, offers twelve-year-old Haoyou the amazing chance to change his life -- to escape from his family's poverty and the pain of his father's recent death -- by becoming a kite rider! Strapped onto a beautiful scarlet -- and-gold kite, Haoyou is sent into the sky to soar perilously among the clouds and entertain the awestruck crowds below. Traveling the Empire as part of the Jade Circus, Haoyou earns freedom, money, and unexpected fame -- as he skillfully performs for local villagers who believe he can bring back messages from lost loved ones whose spirits haunt the sky. Miao even plans for Haoyou to perform before the Mongol conqueror Kublai Khan himself! But what about the duties that bind Haoyou to the ground -- his duties to his family, especially to his widowed mother? And is the Great Miao all that he seems, or could he be using Haoyou in a treacherous plot?

Memory Boy by Will Weaver

Worldwide disaster strikes early in the new millennium. A chain of cataclysmic volcanic explosions sends a cloud of ash into the atmosphere--three years later, the ash is still falling. Sunlight is scarce. Food is rationed. Cities are becoming wastelands of looting and murder. And sixteen-year-old Miles Newell is sure his family is in increasing danger. Escaping Minneapolis on the Ali Princess-- Miles's startling invention--the Newells hope to find comparative safety in the country. But as the family travel deeper into rural Minnesota, they find that people everywhere have changed. No one can be trusted.

Overboard by Elizabeth Fama

In a moment of sheer terror, fourteen-year-old Emily Slake is plunged into the dark ocean waters off the island of Sumatra, amid hundreds of panicked and drowning people. Miles from shore, and without a life vest, Emily is determined to survive. Striking out on her own, she encounters Isman, a frightened young Muslim boy, floating in a life vest. Trapped in the water for sixteen hours, they swim for their lives.

Phineas Gage by John Fleischman

Phineas Gage was truly a man with a hole in his head. Phineas, a railroad construction foreman, was blasting rock near Cavendish, Vermont, in 1848 when a thirteen-pound iron rod was shot through his brain. Miraculously, he survived to live another eleven years and become a textbook case in brain science. At the time, Phineas Gage seemed to completely recover from his accident. He could walk, talk, work, and travel, but he was changed. Gage "was no longer Gage," said his Vermont doctor, meaning that the old Phineas was dependable and well liked, and the new Phineas was crude and unpredictable. His case astonished doctors in his day and still fascinates doctors today.

What happened and what didn't happen inside the brain of Phineas Gage will tell you a lot about how your brain works and how you act human.

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff

Hollis Woods has been in so many foster homes she can hardly remember them all. She even runs away from the Regans, the one family who offers her a home. When Hollis is sent to Josie, an elderly artist who is quirky and affectionate, she wants to stay. But Josie is growing more forgetful every day. If Social Services finds out, they'll take Hollis away and move Josie into a home. Well, Hollis Woods won't let anyone separate them. She's escaped the system before; this time, she plans to take Josie with her. Yet behind all her plans, Hollis longs for her life with the Regans, fixing each moment of her time with them in pictures she'll never forget.

Ruby Holler by Sharon Creech

Dallas and Florida have been dubbed the "trouble twins." They have been shuffled between foster families and orphanages all their lives, longing only for a loving place to call home, though mistrustful that one exists for the likes of them. Tiller and Sairy are an eccentric, older couple whose children are grown and long gone, and they're each restless for one more big adventure while their bodies are still spry enough to paddle a river or climb a mountain. Ruby Holler is the beautiful, mysterious place that changes all of their lives forever. When Tiller and Sairy invite Dallas and Florida to stay with them and keep them company on their adventures, the magic of the Holler takes over, and the two kids begin to think that maybe, just maybe the old folks aren't so bad.

Runt by Marion Dane Bauer

In this beautifully written story set in the north woods of Minnesota, four healthy wolf pups—Leader, Sniffer, Runner, and Thinker—are born one spring. And then one final, undersized pup emerges—Runt. Despite his size, Runt manages to keep up with his brothers and sisters and learn the ways of the pack. But he finds it impossible to please his father, the pack's leader, and gradually withdraws from the others. When he ventures into forbidden human territory, Runt at last comes to understand his mistakes and to recognize his own worth.

The Shrouding Woman by Loretta Ellsworth

It was once common practice for small towns to have a shrouding woman to help put their dead to rest. Still, when eleven-year-old Evie's Aunt Flo—herself a shrouding woman—comes to town, Evie knows little of a shrouding woman's ways and wants nothing to do with this aunt of hers, especially after her own mother's recent death. But as this mysterious woman slowly makes her way into Evie's life, her strong and sensitive presence brings far more than signs of death to a grieving girl's home.

Stand Tall by Joan Bauer

Size matters, but Tree needs convincing. At six feet, three and a half inches, he's the tallest seventh grader in the history of his school, and people expect big things. But he's not good at basketball, he looks much older than he feels, and his parents' divorce is all too new. He copes by helping people like his grandpa, a Vietnam vet who's just had part

of a leg amputated, and Sophie, a new girl who's being taunted at school. Taking things apart helps, too. He learned that from Grandpa. And in the process of seeing how lamps get rewired and laser pens work, in Grandpa's powerful memories of the Vietnam War, in helping an old soldier learn to walk again, in Sophie's insistence that Tree be himself, he begins to heal from the divorce and learns to stand tall. But when a flood threatens his home, Tree's new-found confidence is put to the test.

Straw into Gold by Gary Schmidt

What fills a hand fuller than a skein of gold? By order of the king, two boys, Tousle and Innes, must find the answer to this puzzling riddle within seven days or be killed. A former nursemaid to the queen's child tells the boys that the banished queen may have the answer they seek. Danger presents itself at every turn, for the boys are pursued by the Great Barons, who are secretly plotting against the king. Another pursuer, the greedy King's Grip, reveals a strange story of a little man who once spun straw into gold of incredible beauty for the queen but then disappeared with her firstborn son. Tousle realizes that the man he calls Da is the strange little man and, even more amazing, that he himself may be the lost prince. Or could it be Innes, who although cruelly blinded can hear the music of the dawn? This skillful blend of fantasy and adventure reveals what might have happened before the queen makes her third and last guess and the story of Rumpelstiltskin—as we know it—ends.

Surviving Hitler by Andrea Warren

What was the secret to surviving the death camps? How did you keep from dying of heartbreak in a place of broken hearts and broken bodies? "Think of it as a game, Jack," an older prisoner tells him. "Play the game right and you might outlast the Nazis." Caught up in Hitler's Final Solution to annihilate Europe's Jews, fifteen-year-old Jack is torn from his family and thrown into the nightmarish world of the concentration camps. Despite intolerable conditions, Jack resolves not to hate his captors, and vows to see his family again. He forges friendships with other prisoners, and together they struggle to make it one more hour, one more day. But even with his strong will to live, can Jack survive the life-and-death game he is forced to play with his Nazi captors?

Surviving the Applewhites by Stephanie Tolan

Jake Semple is a scary kid. Word has it that he burned down his old school and then was kicked out of every other school in his home state. Only weeks into September, the middle school in Traybridge, North Carolina, has thrown him out, too. Now there's only one place left that will take him -- a home school run by the most outrageous, forgetful, chaotic, quarrelsome family you'll ever meet. Each and every Applewhite is an artist through and through -- except E.D., the smart, scruffy girl with a deep longing for order and predictability. E.D. and Jake, so nearly the same age, are quickly paired in the family's first experiment in "cooperative education." The two clash immediately, of course. The only thing they have in common is the determination to survive the family's eccentricities. In Stephanie S. Tolan's hilarious tale, a local production of *The Sound of Music* directed, stagecrafted, choreographed, and costumed by Applewhites -- brings the family together and shows E.D. and Jake the value of the special gifts they've had all along.

Trouble Don't Last by Shelley Pearsall

Eleven-year-old Samuel was born as Master Hackler's slave, and working the Kentucky farm is the only life he's ever known—until one dark night in 1859, that is. With no warning, cranky old Harrison, a fellow slave, pulls Samuel from his bed and, together, they run. The journey north seems much more frightening than Master Hackler ever was, and Samuel's not sure what freedom means aside from running, hiding, and starving. But as they move from one refuge to the next on the Underground Railroad, Samuel uncovers the secret of his own past—and future. And old Harrison begins to see past a whole lifetime of hurt to the promise of a new life—and a poignant reunion—in Canada.

Under the Same Sky by Cynthia DeFelice

For his fourteenth birthday, Joe Pedersen wants a motorbike that costs nearly a thousand dollars. But his mom says the usual birthday gift is fifty dollars, and his dad wants Joe to earn the rest of the money himself and "find out what a real day's work feels like." Angry that his father doesn't think he's up to the job, Joe joins the Mexican laborers who come to his father's farm each summer. Manuel, the crew boss, is only sixteen, yet highly regarded by the other workers and the Pedersen family. Joe's resentment grows when his father treats Manuel as an equal. Compared with Manuel, Joe knows nothing about planting and hoeing cabbage and picking strawberries. But he toughs out the long, grueling days in the hot sun, determined not only to make money but to gain the respect of his stern, hardworking father. Joe soon learns about the problems and fears the Mexicans live with every day, and, before long, thanks to Manuel, his beautiful cousin Luisa, and the rest of the crew, Joe comes to see the world in a whole different way.

When My Name was Keoko by Linda Sue Park

Sun-hee and her older brother, Tae-yul, live in Korea with their parents. Because Korea is under Japanese occupation, the children study Japanese and speak it at school. Their own language, their flag, the folktales Uncle tells them—even their names—are all part of the Korean culture that is now forbidden. When World War II comes to Korea, Sun-hee is surprised that the Japanese expect their Korean subjects to fight on their side. But the greatest shock of all comes when Tae-yul enlists in the Japanese army in an attempt to protect Uncle, who is suspected of aiding the Korean resistance. Sun-hee stays behind, entrusted with the life-and-death secrets of a family at war.