

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award 2009 Nominees

Alabama Moon by Watt Key

For as long as ten-year-old Moon can remember, he has lived out in the forest in a shelter with his father. They keep to themselves, their only contact with other human beings an occasional trip to the nearest general store. When Moon's father dies, Moon follows his father's last instructions: to travel to Alaska to find others like themselves. But Moon is soon caught and entangled in a world he doesn't know or understand, apparent property of the government he has been avoiding all his life. As the spirited and resourceful Moon encounters constables, jails, institutions, lawyers, true friends, and true enemies, he adapts his wilderness survival skills and learns to survive in the outside world, and even, perhaps, make his home there.

Black Duck by Janet Taylor Lisle

When Ruben and Jed find the dead body on the Rhode Island shore, they are certain it has something to do with smuggling liquor. It is the 1920's, Prohibition is in full swing, and almost everyone in the shore community is involved. Suddenly, the boys find themselves involved as well: Didn't the dead man have something on him, and didn't they take it? It isn't long before Ruben is actually on the legendary Black Duck itself, caught in a war between two of the most ferocious prohibition gangs.

Black Storm Comin' by Diane Lee Wilson

WANTED. YOUNG, SKINNY, WIRY FELLOWS NOT OVER EIGHTEEN. MUST BE EXPERT RIDERS. WILLING TO RISK DEATH DAILY. ORPHANS PREFERRED. When Colton Wescott sees this sign for the Pony Express, he thinks he has the solution to his problems. He's stuck with his ma and two younger sisters on the wrong side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, with no way to get across. They were on a wagon train heading to California when Pa accidentally shot Colton and then galloped away. Ma is sick, and Colton needs money to pay the doctor. He'd make good money as a Pony rider. Colton also needs to get to California -- urgently -- to deliver freedom papers to Ma's sister, a runaway slave. The Pony Express job could get him there. There's a catch, though. Colton may look almost as white as his pa, but he knows from bitter experience what can happen when people find out Ma is black. To be a Pony rider, he'll have to "pass" for white. That scares him, and for good reason. If his secret is discovered, he could hang. Soon Colton is on the ride of his life, racing the dangerous route over the mountains. He's riding for his family, for freedom, and maybe even to help keep a divided America together. As the nation plunges toward civil war, Colton struggles to unite the two parts of his own identity in this gripping, atmospheric adventure.

Blood on the River: James Town 1607 by Elisa Carbone

Twelve-year-old Samuel Collier is a lowly commoner on the streets of London. So when he becomes the page of Captain John Smith and boards the ship the Susan Constant,

bound for the New World, he can't believe his good fortune. He's heard that gold washes ashore with every tide. But beginning with the stormy journey and his first contact with the native people, he realizes that the New World is nothing like he had ever imagined. The lush Virginia shore where they establish the colony of James Town is both beautiful and forbidding, and it's hard to know who's a friend or foe. As he learns the language of the Algonquin Indians and observes Captain Smith's wise diplomacy, Samuel begins to see that he can be whomever he wants to be in this new land.

Cornelia and the Audacious Escapades of the Somerset Sisters by Lesley M.M. Blume

Eleven-year-old Cornelia is the daughter of two world-famous pianists—a legacy that should feel fabulous, but instead feels just plain lonely. She surrounds herself with dictionaries and other books to isolate herself from the outside world. But when a glamorous neighbor named Virginia Somerset moves next door with her servant Patel and a mischievous French bulldog named Mister Kinyatta, Cornelia discovers that the world is a much more exciting place than she had originally thought.

A Drowned Maiden's Hair: A Melodrama by Laura Amy Schlitz

Maud Flynn is known at the orphanage for her impertinence. So when the charming Miss Hyacinth chooses her to take home, the girl is pleased but baffled, until it becomes clear that she's needed to help stage elaborate séances for bereaved patrons. As Maud is drawn deeper into the deception, playing her role as a "secret child," she is torn between her need to please and her growing conscience — until a shocking betrayal shows just how heartless her so-called guardians are.

Gossamer by Lois Lowry

Littlest One is a tiny creature slowly learning her job of giving dreams to humans. Each night she and her teacher, Thin Elderly, visit an old woman's home where she softly touches beloved objects, gathering happy memories, and drops of old scents and sounds. Littlest One pieces these bits together and presents them to her sleeping human in the form of pleasant dreams. But the dreaded Sinisteeds, dark fearsome creatures that plague their victims with nightmares, are always at work against the dreamgivers. When the old woman takes in John, an angry foster child with a troubled past, the Sinisteeds go after him with their horrifying nightmares. Can Littlest One, and her touch light as gossamer, protect John's heart and soul from the nightmare of his dark past?

The Green Glass Sea by Ellen Klages

It is 1943, and 11-year-old Dewey Kerrigan is traveling west on a train to live with her scientist father—but no one, not her father nor the military guardians who accompany her, will tell her exactly where he is. When she reaches Los Alamos, New Mexico, she learns why: he's working on a top secret government program. Over the next few years, Dewey gets to know eminent scientists, starts tinkering with her own mechanical projects, becomes friends with a budding artist who is as much of a misfit as she is—and, all the while, has no idea how the Manhattan Project is about to change the world.

Hattie Big Sky by Kirby Larson

For years, sixteen-year-old Hattie's been shuttled between relatives. Tired of being Hattie Here-and-There, she courageously leaves Iowa to prove up on her late uncle's homestead claim near Vida, Montana. With a stubborn stick-to-itiveness, Hattie faces frost, drought and blizzards. Despite many hardships, Hattie forges ahead, sharing her adventures with her friends—especially Charlie, fighting in France—through letters and articles for her hometown paper. Her backbreaking quest for a home is lightened by her neighbors, the Muellers. But she feels threatened by pressure to be a "Loyal" American, forbidding friendships with folks of German descent. Despite everything, Hattie's determined to stay until a tragedy causes her to discover the true meaning of home.

Heat by Mike Lupica

Michael Arroyo grows up in the shadows of hallowed Yankee Stadium, a boy forever on the outside looking in. His only chance to see his field of dreams? Pitch his Bronx all-star team to the district finals and a shot at the Little League World Series.

But there is a problem. Michael is good—too good. Rival coaches and players can't believe a boy could be this good and be only twelve years old. And Michael has no way to prove it—no mother, no father, and a birth certificate that is stuck home in his native Cuba. If the people from social services find out his secret, he will have an even worse problem: being separated from the only family he knows, his older brother Carlos. Baseball can be a game of heroes, of champions who refuse to lose. Or it can be a field of crushed dreams. For one boy, the game is about to turn serious.

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick

Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery.

Letters From Wolfie by Patti Sherlock

It's 1969 and America is deeply divided over the war in Vietnam. Yet when thirteen-year-old Mark donates his dog, Wolfie, to the Army's scout program, he feels sure he's doing the right thing. After all, his dad is a WWII veteran, and his older brother Danny is serving in Vietnam. But although Wolfie's handler sends letters detailing Wolfie's progress, the Army won't say when or if Wolfie and the other dogs will be returned to their owners. As Danny's letters home become increasingly grim, Mark grows more and more unsure of his decision to send Wolfie and of his feelings about the war. He'll need to do something drastic to get Wolfie back, but how can he raise his voice in protest without betraying his country?

Life as We Knew It by Susan Beth Pfeffer

Miranda's disbelief turns to fear in a split second when a meteor knocks the moon closer to the earth. How should her family prepare for the future when worldwide

tsunamis wipe out the coasts, earthquakes rock the continents, and volcanic ash blocks out the sun? As summer turns to Arctic winter, Miranda, her two brothers, and their mother retreat to the unexpected safe haven of their sunroom, where they subsist on stockpiled food and limited water in the warmth of a wood-burning stove. Told in journal entries, this is the heart-pounding story of Miranda's struggle to hold on to the most important resource of all--hope--in an increasingly desperate and unfamiliar world.

The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan

Twelve-year-old Percy Jackson is about to be kicked out of boarding school . . . again. No matter how hard he tries, he can't seem to stay out of trouble. But can he really be expected to stand by and watch while a bully picks on his scrawny best friend? Or not defend himself against his pre-algebra teacher when she turns into a monster and tries to kill him? Of course, no one believes Percy about the monster incident; he's not even sure he believes himself. Until the Minotaur chases him to summer camp. Suddenly, mythical creatures seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy's Greek mythology textbook and into his life. The gods of Mount Olympus, he's coming to realize, are very much alive in the twenty-first century. And worse, he's angered a few of them: Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy is the prime suspect. Now Percy has just ten days to find and return Zeus's stolen property, and bring peace to a warring Mount Olympus. On a daring road trip from their summer camp in New York to the gates of the Underworld in Los Angeles, Percy and his friends—one a satyr and the other the demigod daughter of Athena—will face a host of enemies determined to stop them. To succeed on his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the true thief: he must come to terms with the father who abandoned him; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of failure and betrayal by a friend; and unravel a treachery more powerful than the gods themselves.

Oh, Rats!: The Story of Rats and People by Albert Marrin

Able to claw straight up a brick wall, squeeze through a pipe the width of a quarter, and gnaw through iron and concrete, rats are also revealed in this fascinating book to be incredibly intelligent and capable of great compassion. Weaving science, history, culture, and folklore, awardwinning writer Albert Marrin offers a look at rats that goes from curious to repulsive, horrifying to comic, fearsome to inspiring. Arresting blackand-white scratchboard illustrations with bold red accents add visual punch to this study of a creature that has annoyed, disgusted, nourished, and intrigued its human neighbors throughout the centuries.

Penny from Heaven by Jennifer L. Holm

It's 1953 and 11-year-old Penny dreams of a summer of butter pecan ice cream, swimming, and baseball. But nothing's that easy in Penny's family. For starters, she can't go swimming because her mother's afraid she'll catch polio at the pool. To make matters worse, her favorite uncle is living in a car. Her Nonny cries every time her father's name is mentioned. And the two sides of her family aren't speaking to each other!

Project Mulberry by Linda Sue Park

Julia Song and her friend Patrick want to team up to win a blue ribbon at the state fair, but they can't agree on the perfect project. Then Julia's mother suggests they raise silkworms as she did years ago in Korea. The optimistic twosome quickly realizes that raising silkworms is a lot tougher than they thought. And Julia never suspected that she'd be discussing the fate of her and Patrick's project with Ms. Park, the author of this book!

Rules by Cynthia Lord

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules-from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"-in order to stop his embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a paraplegic boy, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

shug by Jenny Han

Annemarie Wilcox, or Shug as her family calls her, is beginning to think there's nothing worse than being twelve. She's too tall, too freckled, and way too flat-chested. Shug is sure that there's not one good or amazing thing about her. And now she has to start junior high, where the friends she counts most dear aren't acting so dear anymore -- especially Mark...

Wolf Brother by Michelle Paver

Six thousand years ago. Evil stalks the land. According to legend, only twelve-year-old Torak and his wolf-cub companion can defeat it. Their journey together takes them through deep forests, across giant glaciers, and into dangers they never imagined. Torak and Wolf are terrified of their mission. But if they do not battle to save their world, who will?