

NOVELS OF 2000

Compiled by Peggy M. Johnsen

Alcock, Vivien. *Monster Garder*. Houghton Mifflin. April 2000. ISBN 0-618-00337 -1

Frankie isn't sure what her scientist dad does in his top secret laboratory, but when her older brother steals a bit of mysterious goo from their father's lab, she makes sure she gets some. Her creature that grows from the goo brings a wonderful story of love, trust, and lots of reality intertwined in this delightful fantasy.

Almond, David. *Kit's Wilderness*. Random House. March, 2000. ISBN 0-358-32665-3.

Once again Almond presents a haunting and believable story! (author of *Skellig*.) To paraphrase a Kirkus reviewer, this is a mixture of everyday events with the marvelous, the eerie and magical. Thirteen-year-old Kit Watson and his parents move to the old coal mining town of Toneygate to care for Kit's recently widowed grandfather. Kit meets John Askew, another boy whose family has both worked and died in the mines. Askew takes Kit deep into the mines, "playing" a game of DEATH. As Kit is drawn deeper into the desolate world of the mines where childhood ghosts of their long-gone namesakes lurk, he is confronted with the reality of his grandfather slipping away into senility and death. The bond between Kit and grandfather deeply influences the bond between Kit and Askew. Powerful, poignant story, indeed.

Antle, Nancy. *Playing Solitaire*. Penguin Putnam Inc. April 2000. ISBN 0-8037-2406-3.

Playing solitaire is just about the only thing from before "the incident" that Ellie will allow being a part of her new life. There are the few good times she and Mama had shared, before the illness that took her away. But always, creeping in when she least expects it, there's Daddy. Out there... somewhere. Ellie lives with her Grandpa now, has changed her last name, but still fears that her Daddy will find her. Ellie has decided that only she will determine how the final "hand" is played.

Banks, Lynne Reid. *Alice-by-Accident*. HarperCollins. June 2000. ISBN 0380978652.

Alice Williamson-Stone keeps two journals: one that is her school notebook journal that her teacher, Miss Brand, reads and in which she provides literary feedback; and her private special notebook for her eyes only and in which Alice's provides us her life story full of emotions, fears, and discoveries. We are privy to Alice's life through her first person eyes as we learn of her mother's choice to have her in spite of not being married, of her mother's harsh and difficult childhood, of her grandmother Gene from her "father's" side, and her desire to know the father she has never seen. It is quite authentic journal writing, with misspelled words, run-on sentences, and disjointed thoughts. It reads well and would be quite appropriate for fifth and sixth grade girls. Lots of unique British (London) slang that is quite effective and charming.

Belton, Sandra. *McKendree*. Greenwillow Books. May 2000. ISBN 0-688-15950-8.

Fourteen-year-old Tiara has grown up the image of her dark-skinned, sever preacher father, who worshipped the image of his beautiful wife, a woman who had skin the color of cream and hair that hung to her waist in silky curls-and who died when Tiara was not yet two. It is 1 948 and Tiara travels to the hills of West Virginia to spend the summer with Aunt Cloelle. Tiara spends precious days at an old folks home called McKendre and surprisingly, finds new friends and romance. She gains new feelings of self-worth and self-love that will last Tiara her whole life. Strong presentations of how young black adolescents view the variety of color and shades of their heritage.

Brady, Laurel. *Say You Are My Sister*. HarperCollins Pub. 8/31/00. ISBN 0060283084.

Three sisters are left orphans: Georgie, almost seventeen, Mony, eleven, and Keely Fay, the baby. The story is told through the voice of Mony, as she struggles to understand prejudice in the South during the early 1940's. The meaning of family, love, and courage are beautifully told in the struggle these sisters have during the year following their father's death. "I remembered the day Pa and I went to town. Pa said we should fight against what isn't right. It was 1944, and even though so many soldiers went overseas to

fight those things, not many people dared yet to fight those things at home, but Georgie would. I could see it in her eyes and in her shoulders, the way she straightened them when she remembered Pa. I know Georgie, and she'll do it all right. And Keely Faye and I will be right by her side."

Calbert, Patricia. *Michael wait for Me*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. ISBN 0689-82102-6

Interesting novel that weaves together young "puppy love" and suicide. Sarah slowly rids herself of the resentment against her older sister, Kim, and her boyfriend, Michael, that she invites to spend the summer with the family. As Sarah begins to appreciate the gentleness and quiet listening that Michael gives to her, she finds that she is falling in love with him. Kim begins to fall out of love with Michael, and Sarah suddenly can't bear the thought of Michael's ever leaving, hence the title of the book. However, we discover quite late in the story, that Michael is unable to bear the great pain and guilt of the death of a brother and commits suicide. Sarah learns that sometimes love is not enough to heal the great sorrow and pain that others bear.

Cadnum, Michael. *The Book of the Lion*. Viking. March 2000. ISBN 0-670-88386-7.

Cadnum creates a powerful story of the famous battle at the Middle East city of Acre during the Crusades. Edmund, a young squire, sweeps the reader away on this twelfth-century Crusade mission. This book weaves together a "vibrant tapestry" of storms at sea~ the brutality of hand-to-hand combat. and on the classic horse and lance battles of recorded history-the Battle of Arsuf. Great writing and a terrific saga of the reality of the brutality of the Crusades.

Caseley, Judith. *Praying to A.L.* Greenwillow Books. May 2000. ISBN 0688-15934-6.

Suddenly Sierra's father dies in the middle of the kitchen, in the middle of lunch, in the middle of their lives. This powerful, real, and touching story of how a family comes to terms with the death of a father. Sierra has a junk-shop portrait of her historical idol, Abraham Lincoln, on her bedroom wall and he becomes her confidant, listening to what she longs to say so she can let Papa go and let her family back in. Highly recommend this book.

Clements, Andrew. *The Janitor's Boy*. Simon & Schuster. May 2000. ISBN 0-689-81818-1

Andrew Clements taught in the public schools for seven years, which speaks to the authenticity of this story. Fifth-grader Jack Rankin struggles with his shame that his father is the janitor of his middle school. He performs an act of revenge after his father greets him with a big smile and "Hi, son" in front of his entire class. His punishment is to assist "the janitor" for a month after school. During these weeks, Jack not only discovers the worth and dignity of his father, but also discovers his own role as "son." Suggested for ages 8-12.

Collins, Pat Lowery. *Signs and Wonders*. Houghton Mifflin. 1999. ISBN 0-395-97119-5,

Strange story of Taswell, a troubled adolescent with a busy grandmother who is a successful publisher, an estranged mother, and a father attempting to reconnect with her. Taswell is sent to a Catholic boarding school, an old monastery, which in itself is a cold, austere environment. No place for a troubled teenager. Believing that she is pregnant and knowing that she is a virgin, she begins to fantasize that she has been chosen by God to be another Virgin Mary. It is a tale of finding oneself and accepting the realities of her family, but I still think it is a rare reader who will stick through the entire book.

Conly, Jane Leslie. *What Happened on PLANET KID?* Henry Holt & Co. 1999. ISBN 0-8050-6065-0.

To help deal with the separation from her family, worry about her mother's serious operation, and suspicions about a new friend's abusive father, twelve-year-old Dawn creates an imaginary world while spending the summer of 1958 with her great-aunt and -uncle in rural North Carolina.

Conly, Jane Leslie. *While No One Was Watching*. Harpercollins. 3/31/2000. ISBN 006440787X.

Conly enfolds us in the lives of three young siblings, left on their own when their Aunt Lula disappears. Frankie, Earl, and Angela weren't excited about spending the summer with their aunt while their dad's away. Someone has to take charge and since Earl is the oldest, he feels responsible. His older cousin, Wayne, shows him how to steal bikes and shake down derelicts for money. While he struggles with the rightness of this dilemma, Frankie is involved in carry for a stolen rabbit and Angela is lost in her world of inventing a life for herself through her "stories." This is a tough and compelling survival story in a tough present world.

Cushman, Karen. *Matilda Bone*. Clarion Books. 10116100. ISBN 0-395-88156-0.

Karen Cushman is author of the Newbery Medal book *The Midwife's Apprentice*, as well as the Newbery Honor books *Catherine, Called Birdy* and *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*. Matilda yearns for her former life at the manor, where Father Leufredus instructed her, and her most difficult task "was to find her way to the privy in the dark!" Here in *Blood and Bone Alley* (left by the Father) she is alone in her belief that prayer and study are the only worthy pursuits. Matilda knows Latin and French and some Greek, as well as reading and writing and figuring. Set in the pungent medical quarter of a fourteenth-century English village, Matilda learns that perhaps her previous life in the manor was more like a prison from humanity and here with Peg the Bonesetter, Matilda discovers laughter, courage, friendship, and love for her fellow human beings. Once again Cushman creates human drama and self-discovery in a well-researched and accurate medieval English setting.

DeFelice, Cynthia. *Nowhere to Call Home*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 1999. ISBN 0-374-35552-5.

Twelve-year-old Frances Elizabeth Barrow is left a penniless orphan after her father's bankruptcy and suicide and she is sure that hoboing is better than being sent to live with an unfamiliar aunt in Chicago. This story realistically takes us along the tramping life of folks who hopped trains during the Great Depression. "On the drag, she meets Stewpot, a fifteen-year-old boy who teaches her the ropes- everything from the jargon to the signs the hoboes leave for one another, to how to outwit the cops." DeFelice once again communicates well the human elements of an historical period.

Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *Dovey Coe*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. May 2000. 0-689-83174-9

Dowell creates wonderful language, full of rhythm and mountain dialect in telling this strong story of twelve-year-old Dovey Coe who is used to protecting everyone around her. Suddenly she finds herself accused of murdering Parnell Caraway, who maligned her beloved deaf brother and persisted in wooing her older sister. "I reckon it don't matter if you like me or not. I'm here to lay the record straight, to let you know them folks saying I done a terrible thing are liars. I aim to prove it, too. I hated Parnell Caraway as much as the next person, but I didn't kill him." This has great pace and introduces a fabulously feisty heroine. (ags 8-12)

Erickson, John R. *Hank the Cowdog #34, Slim's Good-bye*. Penguin Putnam Inc. May 2000. ISBN 9-780451-18349-1.

Another of the series. Same writing, same stuff. Fun for read-aloud and for young readers loving to read a series.

Forrester, Sandra. *Wheel of the Moon*. HarperCollins. 10/31/00. ISBN 0688171494.

In August of 1627, at least 1,400 English children and young adults were captured and transported against their will to Virginia to work as indentured servants. Many were orphans, like Pen, our heroine. Realistic presentation of the seventeenth century life in England, aboard a sailing ship and finally in colonial Virginia. Hardship and courage finally lead to acceptance and love for Pen. Good for grade five and U.S. history.

Fleischman, Paul. *Mind's Eye*. Henry Halt, & Ca. September 1999. ISBN 0-8050-6314-5

Written as a play, Paul Fleischman explores how the power of the mind and imagination are survival tools for those that unable to interact with the physical world. This novel (written entirely in dialogue and can be performed as a play), is set in a modern North Dakota nursing home. Elva in her eighties invites Courtney, who has become a paraplegic victim of a horse accident, into the celebration of the power of the imagination and the possibility of love. Before Elva dies, Courtney learns to escape the confines of body's limitations and take a trip to Italy at the turn of the century through the reading and use of her imagination of a tour book on Italy. It truly touches the creative and the courage of the human spirit.

Gaeddert, LouAnn. *Friends and Enemies*. March 2000. ISBN 0689-82822-5.

Excellent presentation of the conflicting emotions pulling a young adolescent, William, during 1941 as he comes to grips with the beliefs of his best friend, Jim, a Mennonite and pacifist. LouAnn Gaeddert's historical novel authentically explores the meaning of friendship, patriotism, and differing beliefs how to act out one's beliefs for peace. Excellent middle school novel.

Harlow, Joan Hiatt. *Star in the Storm*. Simon & Schuster. 2000. ISBN 0-689-82905-1.

This short novel is based on the true rescue stories about the people and animals that lived in Newfoundland, a remote island known as "the beautiful rock." The story takes place in 1912 and involves twelve-year-old Maggie and her Newfoundland dog, Sirius. The language and customs of Newfoundland are well presented, and the historical accuracy of the unusual physical and intelligent traits of these dogs is presented in a believable story. Suggested for third through fifth grade interest level.

Jacques, Brian. *The Legend of Luke*. Penguin Putnam Inc. January 2000. ISBN 0-399-23490-X

The twelfth book in the Redwall series is as outstanding, intriguing, and rich as all the others. This tells the story of Luke who is Martin, The Warrior's father, and the adventure that befell him, his wife, and his followers. Once again wonderful and believable woodland creatures give us an allegory of human relationships and society. Too bad this will not be ready for Christmas gifts!!

Jennings, Richard. *Orwell's Luck*. Houghton Mifflin. September 2000. ISBN 0-618-03628-8

When a wounded wild rabbit is found in the front yard, a twelve-year-old girl with a liking for basketball, the trombone, and the newspaper's daily horoscope gives him a safe home and a memorable name. It soon appears that Orwell is attempting to reward his young caretaker by mysteriously sending coded messages. Can this little rabbit foretell the future? Can Orwell actually make luck happen? This is a combination of magical and heart-warming story about kindness, friendship, and hope in the shadow of fortune's ever-turning wheel. Rec. grades 5-9.

Kessler, Cristina. *No Condition is Permanent*. Philomel Books. Jan. 2000. ISBN 0-399-23486-1

A powerful story for middle school readers who seek to delve into the unique culture for African women. The issue of the traditional custom of circumcising young women in Africa is told through the eyes of fourteen-year-old Jodie who accompanies her mother (an anthropologist who is studying The Secret Society of African women) to Sierra Leone. As Jodie becomes close friends with young Khadi, it becomes clear that Jodie will create a terrible situation as she stubbornly refuses to understand that Khadi has no choice but to enter into the cycle of initiation and circumcising of the Secret Society. This is a must read in this genre; Kessler writes sensitively and with authority. A glossary contains Krio (a form of English) phrases and their meanings that are used in the novel.

Ketchum, Lila. *Orphan Journey Home Camelot*. March 2000. ISBN 0-380-97811-3.

This was written first as a story for a newspaper serial, so its format is episodic, with each chapter ending with a cliffhanger. It tells the story of a family of four orphaned children, the oldest fourteen, who are traveling from Illinois back to their home in Kentucky where their grandmother lives. It

is quite historic and presents a period of history (1828) in which orphans were many times "bound out" and were treated as slaves.

Kimmel, Eliabeth Cody. *Visiting Miss Caples*.. Penguin Putnam Inc. April 2000. ISBN 0-8037- 2502-7.

Powerful middle school and/or young adult novel which addresses the "necessary moment when a young person declares their independence from a peer group leader, and begins to look around for their own life. This an intergenerational story in which Jenna's visiting-the-old-people class project connects her with a silent, strange old lady who hasn't been out of the house in half a decade... Miss Elspeth Caples. We follow the telling of Miss Caples' story and at the same time watch Jenna's own life begin to unfold. As Jenna says, "I'm not the only one who's excited about, and a little afraid of, what we might discover."

Levine, Gail Carson. *Cinderellis and the Glass Hill*. Harper Collins. 2/29/00 ISBN 0-06-028336X

Levine is definite a great teller of modern fairy tales! As with her tales, *The Fairy's Mistake* and *The Princess Test*, *Cinderellis and the Glass Hill* draws on the readers' prior knowledge of the specific motifs of traditional fairy tales and creates a delightful tale. Genuinely delightfully and funny, says Kirkus Reviews and I agree.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Dave at Night*. Harper Collins. 8/20/99. ISBN 0-06-028153-7,

Levin, Newbery Honor book winner for *Ella Enchanted*, has written a novel in honor of her father, who spent his youth in the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in the 1920's. Although the characters in *Dave at Night* are completely fictional, parties or salons were held during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920' and '30s that were attended by the leading figures in the arts, both black and white. Langston Hughes, W.E.B. Du Bois, Wallace Thurman, Countee Cullen and other artists and authors are woven into this story. I liked it a lot, not only for the look of this period in history, but also the presentation of friendship, loyalty, and survival of the human spirit. It would make a great read aloud.

Levine, Gail Carson. *The Wish*. Harper Collins. 2000. ISBN 0-06-02790001

Wilma Sturtz is not popular. Luckily for her, she happens to bump into a witch who grants her a wish: to be the most popular girl at Claverford Junior High. Life is like a fairy tale until Wilma remembers she's graduating in just three weeks. Just how far is Wilma willing to go to make sure she'll never be unpopular again? Funny, painful, and very real... This is a truthful novel by award-winning author Gail Carson Levine. It explores the painful question of whether we really want to be liked for who we are. As Wilma shares with fellow junior highers, "Nobody has anything to do with somebody who isn't popular, and you can't be popular if nobody has anything to do with you Nobody has anything to do with anybody who isn't popular, even if they're really okay." Powerful stuff about which adolescent think and anguish. Wilma learns that she really wanted friends who liked her because of who she was, not because they had no choice to like her. CHOICE is paramount in true friendship.

Lewis, Catherine. *Postcards to Father Abraham*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Jan. 2000. ISBN 0-689-82852-7

Sixteen-year-old Meghan finds herself no longer the top-notch runner, but a victim of cancer with only one leg. She begins to write postcards to Abraham Lincoln, having discovered comfort in reading about his pain and how he rose above it. Definitely a strong young adult novel that will take the reader through an authentic journey with Meghan's feelings of loss, fury, and ultimately hope and control for her future.

Lisle, Janet Taylor. *The Lost Flower Children*. Philomel Books. 5/24/99. ISBN 0-399-23393-8.

Charming, heart warming story concerning great-aunt Minty and nine-year-old Olivia and her demanding five-year-old sister, Nellie. Following their mother's death, their father sends them to live with his Aunt Minty, until he can sort "things" out, find a job, and discover a way to begin again with his two daughters. The unfolding of self-discovery , acceptance, and love occurs in the big horseshoe-shaped garden off Aunt Minty's side porch. It's so wild and overgrown the sisters avoid it, until Olivia finds an old story about a party of children transformed into flowers by a fairy spell. Only someone discovering the lost

children's eight cups can bring them back. The two sisters know what they must do, and DO they do! Fantasy hovers every so lightly within the harsh realities of death, acceptance, and living in this charming story. This would make a great read-a-loud for third and fourth graders.

Lunn, Janet. *The Hollow Tree*. Viking Penguin Children's Books. 1998. ISBN 0-670-88949-0.

Once again, Canadian Janet Lunn weaves a historical novel that tells the Loyalist side of the revolutionary war. The story moves quickly, realistically, sharing the hardships and ordeals of the British sympathizers in the 1777's. Our American fifth and eighth graders need to read Lunn's novels. Don't forget her award-winning novel, *The Root Cellar*. *The Hollow Tree* received the 1999 Canadian Governor General's Award. This is the primary reason this book is now in print in the United States.

McCaughrean, Geraldine. *The Stones Are Hatching*. HarperCollins. 5/31/00. ISBN 0060287659.

A tale from ancient Celtic legend roots. The people of the land have forgotten the old-ways and the Stoor Worm is waking along with the hatching of her "stones"... her children. The guns of WWI have awakened them. It is up to Phelim to save the world. He has the assistance of a horse, a maiden, and a fool. The tale is full of legend truths, magic adventures, and ends in Phelim (youngest son of the true savior, who is locked away in an asylum. Evil Prudence, the sister provides a wonderful false "mirror" that Phelim uses to judge his character; it is marvelous to discover, along with Phelim, his true self as we travel through his quest-journey. The rhythm of the prose is somewhat verbose, but it's a great quest journey tale. Would sit nicely on a reading shelf next to Harry Porter books.

McClaren, Clemence. *Waiting for Odysseus*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. March 2000. ISBN 0-689-82876-6

It is nice to have more novels that present the women's point of view in major historical and mythical events in young adult literature. McLaren presents cleverly the voyage of Odysseus through the eyes and point of view of the four women of this tale: Penelope, the wife; Circe, the sorceress; Eurycleia, the nursemaid and servant; and Athena, the goddess who set this test in motion. Connect readers who enjoyed these voices to Marion Zimmer Bradley's novels from the point of view of the women of the legend of King Arthur and Merlin: *The Mists of Avalon*, *The Forest House*, and *Lady of Avalon*. Also, remember Bradley's *the Firebrand*, Kissandra's point of view of the story of the Trojan War.

McGill, Alice. Houghton Mifflin. April 2000. ISBN 0-395-97938-2.

Miles, a slave, learns to hide his true feelings and intelligence from the masters and white folks, even through the grueling ordeal of "'breakin' ground." Strong development of characters and powerful presentation of the plight of slaves and their journey to freedom by stealth and the Underground railroad. Fifth grade curriculum will welcome this novel.

Maynard, Bill. *Pondfire*. Penguin Putnam Inc. March 2000. ISBN 0-399-23439-X

Good story for intermediate readers (4th grade and up) that involves the trust one has from parents, when it seems that all evidence points to Jed being responsible for the set fires in town. Jed and his friends set out to find out who is really to blame. Believable story.

Morris, Gerald. *The Savage Damsel and the Dwarf*. Houghton Mifflin. April 2000. ISBN 0-395-97126-8

This is the "filling-in" of what Sir Thomas Malory left out in his Arthurian tales, *Le Morte D'Arthur*. This is an adventure story of Dame Lyonesse; therefore, a strong heroine is presented. Also, the weaving of the magic and wonder of the Arthurian tales. Would make a nice addition a collection of Arthurian tales.

Nex, Garth. *The Seventh Tower*. Scholastic Inc. June 2000. ISBN 0-439-17682-4.

The Seventh Tower initiates the inaugural book series of a "new and innovative joint publishing imprint between Lucasfilm and Scholastic. This first in the series is a compelling weave of magic, adventure and fantasy that introduces us to Tal, a Chosen One, who lives in the vast fortress city that is built upon a mountain that "few would dare to climb." Tal has lived his whole life in darkness. He has never left his home, this mysterious castle of seven towers on top of the mountain. His father has disappeared, his mother has fallen ill; his future now seems dim. The source of all power within the castle walls is Sunstones, brilliant objects of light and magic. Tal's Sunstone has been stolen, and now he must get a new one, at any cost. Wonderful sinister and evil forces pop up through out the book that are working against Tal. However, as in all great Hero Folk tales, Tal also is assisted in his quest by the unusual and unexpected... creatures and people. Milla, on her own quest to become a Shield Maiden, reluctantly becomes Tal's protector and companion. The book is quite well written; the setting is very believable and the ending of book one makes us anxious for the next in the series! Nix has also written *Sabriel and Shade's Children*, a 1998 Best Book for Young Adults (ALA) and was a Pick of the Lists (ABA). Ages 8 and up. Fun to read a loud.

Nicholson, William. *The Wind Singer*. Hyperion Books for Children. August 2000. ISBN 0-7868-0569-2.

This is the first book in *The Wind of Fire* fantasy trilogy by Nicholson who is the director/producer of more than forty films for the BBC and has written the screenplays for such films as *Shadowlands*, *Sarafinal*, *Nell*, and *First Night*. Peter Sis will be the illustrator of this book. This is a great story, full of adventure, suspense, humor, and warmth. Kestrel Hath and her twin brother, Bowman, along with their father and mother and baby sister are the unusual, not the norm in the stifling caste system of Aramanth. They are family unconcerned by the mandate of the government to "improve daily", but demonstrate love, affection, and humor openly. Kestrel's rebellion against this controlled system of competition and constant examinations that decide whether points are won or lost for the family, results in her discovering that there is truly a key to the wind singer. The wind singer, a long-defunct device in the city's center, was once the source of happiness and harmony in Aramanth. Many generations ago, its key was given to the evil spirit-lord, the Morah, in exchange for his calling off his terrible army of Zars. Kestrel, Bowman, and Mumpo, a classmate, set off to find the key, armed with desperate bravery, wits, and determinations, and an ancient map. This first novel "ends" with no looming or foreboding evidence of a needed "next book." Ages: 10 and up.

Osborne, Mary Pope. *My Brother's Keeper*. Scholastic. May 2000. ISBN 0-439-15307-7.

This is one of two new additions to the DEAR AMERICA family books. These are written in journal format by award-winning authors. The main character in this particular title, shares with us the three days of the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Information on the daily life of the people who lived at the time is naturally shared, and we are drawn into the family and extended family of ten-year-old Virginia B. Dickens. This would make a great compliment to *Thunder at Gettysburg*. This title should be a definite addition to your fifth grade social studies library.

Pearce, Philippa. *Minnnow on the Say*. HarperCollins. May 2000. ISBN 0-688-17098-6.

This is a reissue of the classic young novel of two boys' summer adventures aboard the canoe *Minnnow on the River Say*. It was first published in England and the United States in 1955. David and Adam find each other through a drifting canoe. It binds them together as they explore the river and for the long-lost ancestral treasure that they must find. Great language and ageless presentation of human relationships. Great for ages 10 and up.

Pryor, Bonnie. *Luke on the High Seas*. HarperCollins. June 2000. ISBN 0688171346.

This is the sequel to *Luke: 1849- On the Golden Trail* and this time Luke is making a perilous voyage by clipper ship to the gold fields of California. On board, Luke and his friend Toby endure terrifying storms,

solve a mystery, and outsmart pirates. This easy-to-read excellent action-packed adventure cries out for reluctant readers. Historical facts are also woven into the story lines in a natural fashion.

Saunders, Susan. *Lucky Lady*. HarperCollins. May 2000. ISBN 0380977842.

Fourteen-year-old Jamie Cooper is sent to live the summer with her grandfather (mother's father) in Texas while her mother travels to the Far East on job assignment. Jamie hasn't seen her grandfather since her father died four years earlier. She is terribly lonely, and soon she realizes her grandfather is just as lonely. This is a fast moving story (takes place in a two-week period of time) of a "defiant young girl, a tough old rancher, and a beautiful but uncontrollable horse." The recommendation of the publisher is for ages 3-7, but I would recommend this as a good intermediate, grade 5 & 6 book. Saunders presents nicely real feelings of acceptance of love and courage to take risks, both with new situations and new people.

Snicket, Lemony. *The Austere Academy, A Series of Unfortunate Events*. HarperCollins. 8/31/00.

The fifth in the series of these strange, humorous tales of the Baudelaire children: Violet, Klaus, and Sunny. These "intelligent and resourceful" children face snapping crabs, strict punishments, dripping fungus, comprehensive exams, violin recitals, S.O.R.E., and the metric system. Fun, fun, fun.

Turner, Megan Whalen. *The Queen of Attolia*. GreenWillow Books. April 2000. ISBN 0-688- '7 423-X.

Eugenides, the Thief of Eddis and beguiling narrator of the Newbery Honor-winning novel *The Thief*, returns in this brilliant yarn of war between the nations of Sounis and Attolia. A wonderful fantasy series, full of classic components of high fantasy: love, adventure, duplicity, and discovery of talents and truth. Read both novels and hope for more!

Vas, Ida. *The Key is Lost*. HarperCollins. May 2000. ISBN 0688162835.

This novel is based on the author's experiences during World War II. Two Jewish sisters are separated from their parents and forced to hide in attics throughout Holland. The events and challenges that face the girls and those that help them are quite well presented. This book could serve as an introduction to the Holocaust. The story rings true and honest, but the language at times is halting and choppy. I'm not sure if this is due to the author's style or the style of the interpreter. Elementary middle grades.

Warner, Sally. *Totally Confidential*. HarperCollins. June 2000. ISBN 0060282614.

Middle-schooler Quinney decides to earn money during the summer by charging people a dollar for fifteen minutes of time for her to listen to their problems. She has always been told that she is a great listener. What would be the harm? However, she isn't prepared for people wanting advice from her, along with the listening! We learn of Quinney's family and friends' relationships and dynamics. This novel is fairly realistic, but nothing special. Girls, ages 2-12 will find this quick reading.

Whelan, Gloria. *Homeless Bird*. Harper Collins. 2000 ISBN 0-06-028452-8.

Thirteen-year-old Koly is married to the husband chosen for her, which is not unusual in India. Too late, it is discovered that the husband is too young and terribly sick and dies within months following the wedding. This tragic tale is one of present day India. Gloria Whelan masterly enfold us into the plight of widowed women of India and their lack of any rights and support. The work and organization of communal homes for these widows is introduced and explored. Beautifully written with a strong social message.

Whelan, Gloria. *Return to the Island*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 10/31/00. ISBN 0060282533.

This is the stunning sequel to *Once on this Island and Farewell* to the Island which tell the historical fictional story of life in the Great Lake Region during the forming of the U.S. and the influence and relationships of the English, Natives, and the French. The heroine is Mary who matures through these turbulent times. There is adventure, romance, and vibrant history. This particular novel cries out yet for a fourth to follow.

Wittlinger, Ellen. *What's in a Name*. Simon & Schuster. March 2000. ISBN 0689-82551-X

Excellent young adult novel, providing in each chapter the voices of ten young adults whom shares their perceptions of their identities within the complicated world of high school. These are powerful voices that will resonate for all young high students. A must read.

Yep, Laurence. *Dream Soul*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 9/30/00. ISBN 0060283890.

Once again Yep invites us into the personal memories of his childhood, living in an American Chinese family. This particular novel shares his "two spiritual homelands" and their influence in his life. One is to the west, across the Pacific...China, and the other to the east, across Mississippi...West Virginia. This is a work of fiction, but many of the events are based on true incidents that happened to Yep's family. The conversations in Chinese are in roman type and conversations in English in *Italics*.