

Bauer, Joan. (2009). *Close to Famous*. (240 pages)

When twelve-year-old Foster and her mother land in the tiny town of Culpepper, they don't know what to expect. But folks quickly warm to the woman with the great voice and the girl who can bake like nobody's business. Soon Foster - who dreams of having her own cooking show one day - lands herself a gig baking for the local coffee shop, and gets herself some much-needed help in overcoming her biggest challenge - learning to read . . . just as Foster and Mama start to feel at ease, their past catches up to them. Thanks to the folks in Culpepper, though Foster and her mama find the strength to put their troubles behind them for good.

Greenwald, Tommy. (2011). *Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Not Reading*. (240 pages)

Charlie Joe Jackson may be the most reluctant reader ever born. And so far, he's managed to get through life without ever reading an entire book from cover to cover. But now that he's in middle school, avoiding reading isn't as easy as it used to be. And when his friend Timmy McGibney decides that he's tired of covering for him, Charlie Joe finds himself resorting to desperate measures to keep his perfect record intact. This is the hilarious story of an avid non-reader and the extreme lengths to which he'll go to get out of reading a book.

Landon, Kristen. (2010). *The Limit* (304 pages)

An eighth grade girl was taken today . . . With this first sentence, readers are immediately thrust into a fast-paced thriller that doesn't let up for a moment. In a world not too far removed from our own, kids are being taken away to special workhouses if their families exceed the monthly debt limit imposed by the government. Thirteen-year-old Matt briefly wonders if he might be next, but quickly dismisses the thought. After all, his parents are financially responsible, unlike the parents of those other kids. As long as his parents remain within their limit, the government will be satisfied and leave them alone. But all it takes is one fatal visit to the store to push Matt's family over their limit—and to change his reality forever.

Lasky, Kathryn. (2010). *Ashes* (320 pages)

Berlin, 1932. Thirteen-year-old Gabriella Schramm's world is slowly, but steadily, crumbling as Adolf Hitler rises to power. The only thing that soothes Gabriella is her favorite pastime-reading. But then her country's tensions rise, the streets fill with soldiers, Gaby's sister's boyfriend raises his arm in a heil Hitler salute, and a family friend-Albert Einstein-flees the country. And her only solace-her books-come under attack. Will Gaby have to leave behind the stories-and the life-that she has always loved?

Lupica, Mike.(2010) *Hero*.(304 pages)

Zach Harriman knew that his dad was something of a hero, a man trusted by the president to solve international crises at a moment's notice. Suddenly people are telling him he has powers - people who know much more about his father than Zach ever did. But there are the Bads, who appear out of nowhere and attack him and his best friend. One thing is clear: he can do things ordinary people cannot. Like fend off grown men as though he possesses the strength of a hundred. Like sense when evil is about to strike. And evil is about to strike in a very big way. Zach Harriman is his father's son. And he, too, is a hero.

Rhodes, Jewell Parker (2010) *Ninth Ward*.(224 pages)

Twelve-year-old Laneshia lives in a tight-knit community in New Orleans' Ninth Ward. She doesn't have a fancy house like her uptown family or lots of friends like the other kids on her street. But what she does have is Mama Ya-Ya, her fiercely loving caretaker, wise in the ways of the world and able to predict the future. So when Mama Ya-Ya's visions show a powerful hurricane--Katrina--fast approaching, it's up to Laneshia to call upon the hope and strength Mama Ya-Ya has given her to help them both survive the storm.

Silberberg, Alan. (2010). *Milo: Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze*. (288 pages)

Loveable thirteen-year-old geek Milo Cruikshank finds reasons for frustration at every turn, from the annoying habits of his neighbors to his futile efforts to get Summer Goodman to realize his existence. The truth is, ever since Milo's mother died, nothing has gone right. Now instead of the kitchen being full of music, his whole house has been filled with Fog. Nothing's the same. Not his Dad. Not his sister. And definitely not him. Milo achieves a rare and easy balance of poignancy and awkward, natural humor, making it deeply accessible—this is the kind of book that can change lives.

Falls, K. (2010).*Dark Life: Book 1* (304 pages)

Dive deep into the vivid underwater world of Dark Life!

The oceans rose, swallowing the lowlands. Earthquakes shattered the continents, toppling entire regions into the rising water. Now, humans live packed into stack cities. The only ones with any space of their own are those who live on the ocean floor: the Dark Life.

Ty has spent his whole life living deep undersea. When outlaws attack his homestead, he finds himself in a fight to save the only home he has ever known. Joined by Gemma, a girl from

Topside, Ty ventures into the frontier's rough underworld and discovers some dark secrets to Dark Life. Secrets that threaten to destroy everything.

Connor, Leslie. (2010). *Crunch*. (336 pages)

Dewey Marriss is stuck in a crunch. He never guessed that the gas pumps would run dry the same week he promised to manage the family's bicycle-repair business. Suddenly everyone needs a bike. And nobody wants to wait.

Meanwhile, the crunch has stranded Dewey's parents far up north. It's up to Dewey and his older sister, Lil, to look after their younger siblings and run the bike shop all on their own.

To top things off, Dewey discovers that bike parts are missing from the shop. He's sure he knows who's responsible—or does he? Will exposing the thief only make more trouble for Dewey and his siblings?

Carmichael, Clay. (2009) *Wild Things*. (241 pages)

headstrong girl. A stray cat. A wild boy. A man who plays with fire. Eleven-year-old Zoe trusts no one. Her father left before she was born. At the death of her irresponsible mother, Zoe goes to live with her uncle, former surgeon and famed metal sculptor Dr. Henry Royster. She's sure Henry will fail her as everyone else has. Reclusive since his wife's death, Henry takes Zoe to Sugar Hill, North Carolina, where he welds sculptures as stormy as his moods. Zoe and Henry have much in common: brains, fiery and creative natures, and badly broken hearts. Zoe confronts small-town prejudice with a quick temper. She warms to Henry's odd but devoted friends, meets a mysterious teenage boy living wild in the neighboring woods, and works to win the trust of a feral cat while struggling to trust in anyone herself. Zoe's questing spirit leads her to uncover the wild boy's identity, lay bare a local lie, and begin to understand the true power of Henry's art. Then one decisive night, she and the boy risk everything in a reckless act of heroism.

Ylvisaker, Anne. (2011) *The Luck of the Buttons*. (224 pages)

In Iowa circa 1929, spunky twelve-year-old Tugs vows to turn her family's luck around, with the help of a Brownie camera and a small-town mystery.

Tugs Esther Button was born to a luckless family. Buttons don't presume to be singers or dancers. They aren't athletes or artists, good listeners, or model citizens. The one time a Button ever made the late Goodhue Gazette - before Harvey Moore came along with his talk of launching a new paper - was when Great Granddaddy Ike accidentally set Town Hall ablaze. Tomboy Tugs looks at her hapless family and sees her own reflection looking back until she befriends popular Aggie Millhouse, wins a new camera in the Independence Day raffle, and

stumbles into a mystery only she can solve. Suddenly this is a summer of change - and by its end, being a Button may just turn out to be what one clumsy, funny, spirited, and very observant young heroine decides to make of it.

Mone, Gregory. (2010) *Fish*. (256 pages)

The exciting adventure of a resourceful boy who discovers his hidden gift as a fortune-hunting pirate

Fish--nicknamed for his incredible swimming abilities--is a twelve-year-old boy from a poor farming family. After taking a job as a courier for his uncle, Fish is waylaid by pirates, who steal the package he's carrying. He soon learns that it's the key to locating the Chain of Chuacar, a legendary treasure. As he works to earn the trust of Cobb, the fortune-hunting captain of the Scurvy Mistress, Fish learns of a mutiny headed by a nasty pirate called Scab. With time running out to find the Chain, Fish and some fellow shipmates still loyal to Cobb must thwart Scab's dastardly plan.

Shang, Wendy Wan-Long (2011) *The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*. (320 pages)

In this humorous and heartfelt debut about a split cultural identity, nothing goes according to plan for sixth-grader Lucy Wu.

Lucy Wu, aspiring basketball star and interior designer, is on the verge of having the best year of her life. She's ready to rule the school as a sixth grader and take over the bedroom she has always shared with her sister. In an instant, though, her plans are shattered when she finds out that Yi Po, her beloved grandmother's sister, is coming to visit for several months -- and is staying in Lucy's room. Lucy's vision of a perfect year begins to crumble, and in its place come an unwelcome roommate, foiled birthday plans, and Chinese school with the awful Talent Chang.

Holm, Jennifer. (2010). *Turtle in Paradise*. (208 pages)

Life isn't like the movies and 11-year-old Turtle is no Shirley Temple. She's smart and tough and has seen enough of the world not to expect a Hollywood ending. After all, it's 1935 and money and sometimes even dreams are scarce. So when Turtle's mother gets a job housekeeping for a lady who doesn't like kids, Turtle says goodbye and heads off to Florida to live with relatives. Florida's like nothing Turtle's ever seen before though. It's full of rag tag boy cousins, family secrets to unravel . . . and even a little bit of fun. Before she knows what's happened, Turtle finds herself coming out of her shell and as she does, her world opens up in the most unexpected ways. Inspired by family stories, three-time Newbery Honor winner Jennifer L. Holm blends family lore with America's past, in this charming, gem of a novel rich in history, humor, and the unique flavors of Key West.

Davis, Eleanor. (2009). *The Secret Science Alliance and the Copycat Crook.* (160 pages)

Super-smart Julian Calendar thinks starting junior high at a new school will mean he can shed his nerdy image—but then he meets Ben and Greta, two secret scientists like himself! The three form a secret club, complete with a high-tech lair. There, they can work to their hearts content on projects like the Stink-O-Meter, the Kablovsky Copter, and the Nightsneak Goggles.

All that tinkering comes in handy when the trio discovers an evil scientist's dastardly plan to rob a museum. Can three inventors, armed with their wacky creations, hope to defeat this criminal mastermind?

Greenwald, Lisa. (2009). *My Life in Pink and Green.* (288 pages)

Twelve-year-old Lucy Desberg is a natural problem-solver. At her family's struggling pharmacy, she has a line of makeover customers for every school dance and bat mitzvah. But all the makeup tips in the world won't help save the business. If only she could find a way to make it the center of town again—a place where people want to spend time, like in the old days. Lucy dreams up a solution that could resuscitate the family business and help the environment, too. But will Lucy's family stop fighting long enough to listen to a seventh-grader?

Shulman, Polly. (2010). *The Grimm Legacy.* (336 pages)

Elizabeth has just started working as a page at the New York Circulating Material Repository - a lending library of objects, contemporary and historical, common and obscure. And secret, too - for in the repository's basement lies the Grimm Collection, a room of magical items straight from the Grimm Brother's fairy tales. But the magic mirrors and seven-league boots and other items are starting to disappear. And before she knows it, she and her fellow pages - handsome Marc, perfect Anjali, and brooding Aaron - are suddenly caught up in an exciting, and dangerous, magical adventure.

Magoon, Kekla. (2009). *The Rock and the River.* (304 pages)

In 1968 Chicago, it's not easy for thirteen-year-old Sam to be the son of known civil rights activist Roland Childs. Especially when his older brother, Stick, starts keeping to himself. Then, one day, Sam finds something under Stick's bed that changes everything: literature about the Black Panthers. Suddenly, nothing feels certain anymore. And when Dr. King is shot and killed,

Sam's father's words are no longer enough to make him believe in change....This moving, coming-of-age story gracefully encompasses the scope of the struggle between the civil rights and black power movements through an intimate and relatable lens.

Myers, W.D. & Workman, R. (2011).*Kick*(224 pages)

For the very first time in his decades-long career writing for teens, acclaimed and beloved author Walter Dean Myers writes with a teen, Ross Workman.

Kevin Johnson is a great kid and skilled soccer player. With attitude.

Then he ends up in jail. Sergeant Brown is a tough cop and Kevin's mentor. With attitude.

If Kevin and Brown can learn to trust each other, they might be able to turn things around. Before it's too late.

Reedy, Trendy. (2011). *Words in the Dust*. (272 pages)

In the tradition of SHABANU, DAUGHTER OF THE WIND and THE BREADWINNER, a beautiful debut about a daughter of Afghanistan discovering new friends and opportunities after the defeat of the Taliban.

Zulaikha hopes. She hopes for peace, now that the Taliban have been driven from Afghanistan; a good relationship with her hard stepmother; and one day even to go to school, or to have her cleft palate fixed. Zulaikha knows all will be provided for her--"Inshallah," God willing.

Then she meets Meena, who offers to teach her the Afghan poetry she taught her late mother. And the Americans come to her village, promising not just new opportunities and dangers, but surgery to fix her face. These changes could mean a whole new life for Zulaikha--but can she dare to hope they'll come true?

Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Book List

2012- 2013