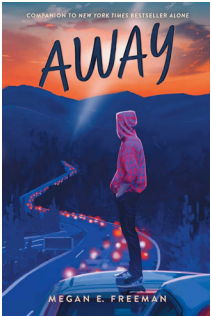


Iowa Children's Choice Award

2026-2027



AWAY FREEMAN, M.

Four evacuated kids investigate the danger that forced their escape.

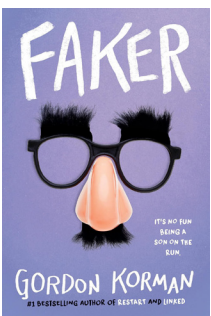
Told from multiple points of view, four kids relocated to the same evacuation camp investigate the mysterious threat that forced the large-scale exodus.



COOKIE CRUMBLES BADUA, T.

Two friends work together to solve a cookie competition mystery.

Middle school best friends Laila and Lucy learn they will be attending different high schools unless they can obtain scholarships for the culinary and journalism programs respectively at expensive Sunderland Academy. When Laila enters the Golden Cookie competition at Sunderland and Lucy reports on it, both girls hope to win admission to the school. But when celebrity judge Chef Remi collapses after sampling Laila's cookie, she becomes a suspect. The girls vow to solve the mystery and clear Laila's name.



FAKER KORMAN, G.

A boy tired of lies longs for honesty and home.

Trey is used to lying and always moving around due to his family's lucrative lifestyle. First, his dad gets him into a school full of kids with rich parents, where Trey makes friends and his dad makes connections. Then, Trey's dad suckers the other parents into investing in one of his schemes, and once they have the money, Trey, his sister, and their dad are on the run once again. His dad tells him it's okay because no one is getting hurt and the people getting swindled have more than enough money, but Trey is getting tired of running and lying, and he just wants to make an actual friend and have a place to call home.



LET IT GLOW MEYER, M.

Identical twins meet, swap lives, and reshape their holidays.

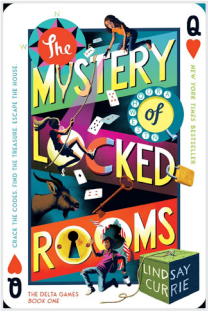
When Aviva Davis and Holly Martin meet at the holiday pageant tryouts for their local senior's center, they are shocked to discover they are identical twins. They both knew they were adopted, but they had no idea they had a biological sibling, let alone an identical twin. Although the girls look alike, they have very different personalities. Aviva is outgoing and loves to sing while Holly is shy and loves to write, but they are both curious about the different holiday traditions the other twin was raised in. Aviva has always wondered about mainstream Christmas celebrations and Holly is completely unfamiliar with Jewish culture and traditions, so they decide to secretly trade lives, planning to stage a dramatic reveal to their families at the pageant.



LION OF THE SKY HEMNANI, RITU

A boy is forced to flee India and start over in a new country.

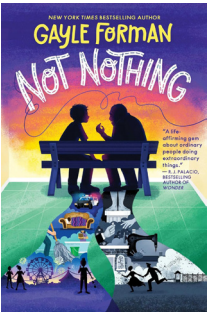
Twelve-year-old Raj is happiest when he's hanging out with his best friend Iqbal and flying his kite in the fields near his home of Sindh. Hopeful that India will finally be free from British rule, Raj is heartbroken when the Partition happens and violence comes to Iqbal's Muslim family. Forced to flee to Bombay, Raj and his family, who are Hindu, face numerous hardships and must persevere to start a new life.



MYSTERY OF LOCKED ROOMS CURRIE, LINDSAY

Three friends tackle riddles and secret passages to save a home.

Twelve-year-old Sarah Greene's family needs money or they will lose their house. She hears about a treasure rumored to be hidden in the walls of an abandoned 1950s funhouse by its previous owners, a set of triplets. The house features riddles, clues, and secret passages. Sarah, West, and Hannah use their puzzle-solving skills to enter the house and begin the challenge—no matter how scary the house seems.



NOT NOTHING FORMAN, GAYLE

A troubled boy bonds with a silent survivor and finds hope.

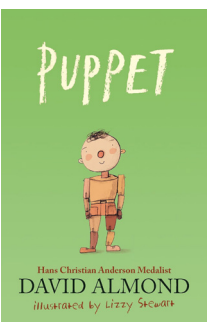
Twelve-year-old Alex is working at the Shady Glen Retirement Home to escape time in a juvenile detention center for an act of violence stemming from anger over his mother having disappeared a year ago. There, he meets 107-year-old Josey Kravitz, a Holocaust survivor who hasn't spoken in five years and is waiting to die. Something about Alex compels Josey to open up and he begins telling him his life story. Soon the pair form a bond and Alex opens up about his own struggles. They realize that they've both experienced loss and that together, they can rise above the hardships in their lives.



POPCORN HARRELL, ROB

A stressed seventh grader battles rising anxiety on picture day.

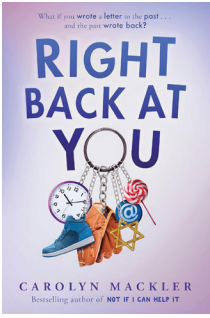
Seventh grader Andrew is trying to keep his anxiety and OCD in check on picture day at his school, but one thing after another seems to heighten his angst, including a basketball to the face in gym class and news that his grandmother with Alzheimer's is missing. As his anxiety builds and threatens to pop into a full-blown panic attack, he finds some key allies in teachers and friends and learns tools that will help him cope.



PUPPET ALMOND, DAVID

A lonely puppeteer finds friendship with his talking creation.

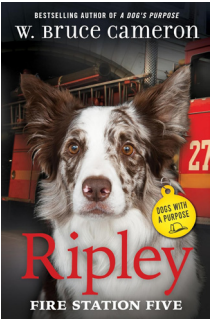
An old puppet master named Silvester feels lonely, so he decides to make one last puppet. When he talks to this one, named simply Puppet, Silvester is shocked when his new creation talks back. Showing Puppet the world helps Silvester come out of his shell, make a new friend, and find joy in passing on his skills to others.



RIGHT BACK AT YOU MACKLER, CAROLYN

Two bullied kids become pen pals across time.

In 2023, Mason is dealing with his parents splitting up and a classmate who won't stop picking on him, so his mom has him go see a therapist who gives him an assignment to write a letter to anyone he'd like but no one has to read it. He writes one to Albert Einstein but winds up throwing it in his closet, so he's surprised when he gets a letter back from a girl named Talia, who lives in 1987. Talia is dealing with her own problems and being bullied for being Jewish. Mason and Talia find someone to talk to about their problems and become pen pals across time.



RIPLEY : FIRE STATION FIVE CAMERON, W. BRUCE

A rescue dog supports a firefighting team and an anxious child.

A border collie named Ripley enters a firefighter training program with a man named Ben and is trained by a woman named Lilly and her daughter Samantha. As he begins to assist in rescues, he also becomes a source of support for Lilly's daughter, who suffers from anxiety.



SAME PAGE SWARTZ, ELLY

Book challenges cause problems for class president Bess and her newest friend.

Bess Stein is running to become sixth-grade class president, and with her new friend, June, by her side as her vice president, she knows nothing can stand in her way. She's most excited to implement one of their campaign promises, a book vending machine, especially so she can share books that represent all of her different fellow classmates. But when they get complaints about the books they've selected for the vending machine, Bess is shocked that one person believes they have the right to decide what other people can read. Then, things get even more complicated when Bess discovers June's mom is the one leading the fight against the so-called controversial books, and Bess wonders if she and June can even be friends.



SHERLOCK SOCIETY PONTI, JAMES

Kid detectives chase treasure and uncover real wrongdoing.

As summer approaches, thirteen-year old Zoe Sherlock and her twelve-year-old brother Alex use their last name as inspiration for finding summer jobs as detectives with friends Lina, a bookworm, and Yadi, an aspiring cinematographer. When they fail to drum up business, Zoe and Alex's grandfather, a former investigative reporter, allows them to go through his old case files where they discover the mystery of a hidden treasure tied to gangster Al Capone. While their grandfather drives them around the city to investigate and gives them pointers on how to follow the clues, the group stumble upon evidence of illegal activity in the Everglades. Following the evidence and the guidance of caring adults in their lives, the group embark on a madcap adventure and bring down a bad actor.



STRANDED SMITH, NIKKI SHANNON

A city girl must survive alone after a mountain blizzard.

Nature-loving Ava thought her invitation to move in with her Auntie Raven in her cabin in the Adirondack Mountains was finally her chance to have a real adventure outside the big city. Instead, Auntie Raven is called away, a terrible blizzard blows down the cabin, and Ava must use the survival skills she has read about and very briefly practiced to survive winter in the mountains. Her survival depends on working with nature enough to survive its harshness.



STRANGE THING HAPPENED IN CHERRY HALL WARGA, JASMINE

A boy, a ghostly girl, and a turtle solve an art heist.

Hanging out at the art museum where his mother works and staring at the empty space where a stolen painting once hung, middle school boy Rami meets a floating girl who looks just like the subject of the missing painting. When he and his mother becomes suspects in the crime, he teams up with his classmate, Veda, and a very observant turtle named Agatha to uncover what really happened in the ghostly heist.



TENTH MISTAKE OF HANK HOOPERMAN CHOLDENKO, GENNIFER

A boy caring for his sister searches for their missing mom.

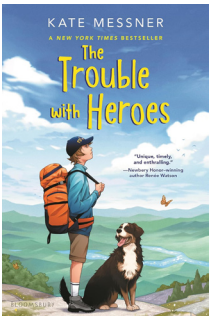
Eleven-year-old Hank Hooperman takes care of his toddler sister, Boo, when their mother goes out and never returns. After a week, the power goes off, they run out of food, and they face eviction. Desperate, Hank shows up on the doorstep of his late grandmother's friend Lou Ann Adler but asking for help has consequences. Now the children become involved with social workers and Hank is forced to enroll in a new school. Hank worries that if his mother doesn't return soon, he and Boo could end up in different foster homes. Over the course of several months, Hank grows close to an adult neighbor, Ray, and makes new friends. But his search for his mother triggers unexpected consequences.



TREE. TABLE. BOOK. LOWRY, LOIS

A girl helps protect her aging friend's independence and memory loss.

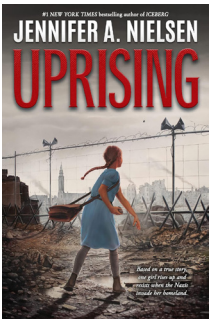
Eleven-year-old Sophia endeavors to prevent her increasingly forgetful eighty-eight-year-old neighbor and best friend Sophie from entering assisted living, and in the process, uncovers unexpected stories of war, loss, and hope.



TROUBLE WITH HEROES MESSNER, KATE

A grieving boy hikes forty-six peaks to redefine heroism.

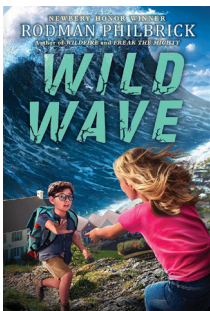
Wrestling with grief and anger since the loss of his father during the COVID-19 pandemic, thirteen-year-old Finn Connelly gets in trouble for vandalizing a local cemetery. The headstone he damaged is that of local climbing legend Edna Grace Thomas, who promoted the hiking of all forty-six Adirondack peaks. Edna's sympathetic daughter challenges Finn to complete the forty-six over the summer—with Edna's dog Seymour in tow—as restitution for the damage he caused. As Finn sets out to complete the hikes, he wrestles with his feelings for his famous father, a hockey legend, 9/11 hero, and paramedic, and works to complete an overdue poetry assignment on heroes that he couldn't bring himself to write during the school year. Each peak brings Finn closer to his father, himself, and to what it means to be a hero.



UPRISING NIELSEN, JENNIFER A.

A brave girl secretly aids resistance fighters in wartime Warsaw.

A fictionalized account of the true story of twelve-year-old pianist Lidia, a young Polish girl who bravely fights back against Nazi occupiers in the Warsaw city uprising. Lidia sees her Jewish neighbors in the Warsaw Ghetto suffering from Nazi cruelty and begins to smuggle them food. Then she follows her brother into the underground resistance and taking the code name Cello, she works smuggling weapons and messages for the resistance throughout the city. When the Warsaw city uprising begins, Lidia risks her life to fight for freedom.



WILD WAVE PHILBRICK, RODMAN

Two kids outrun a tsunami and fight to save others.

After an earthquake rocks the hometown of Nick Chase and Jess Hardy, they watch in terror as the water pulls back from the coastline, building into a towering wall of water. Nick and Jess find themselves on the run from the approaching tsunami, but when they make it to higher ground in the woods above the bay, they watch as the sea floods their whole town along the shore. The two must try to find their way to safety, but when they come across a stranded elderly couple, it's up to Nick and Jess to work together and get help so that they can all make it out alive.
