

**Young Adult  
Sequoyah  
Reader's Theater Scripts  
2009**

BORN TO ROCK  
by Gordon Korman

	Publicist	Bernie	Leo	King
	X	X	X	X
Narrator:				
X				

Narrator: We are presenting a contemporary fiction story, *Born to Rock* by Gordon

Korman. Leo has it together; president of the Young Republicans, 4.0 GPA, and a future at Harvard. That is, until he loses his scholarship to Harvard and

finds out his biological father is the lead singer of the punk rock group Purge!

Outraged, he intends to seek out King Maggot and somehow convince him to pay

for his tuition to Harvard. We find him trying to gain an audience with his father

by talking to King's publicist. Leo is read by \_\_\_\_\_, the publicist is read

by \_\_\_\_\_, Bernie is read by \_\_\_\_\_, King is read by \_\_\_\_\_

and I am \_\_\_\_\_ the narrator.

Leo: I'm looking for Nigel Ratcliff.

Publicist: (barking) Anybody seen Nigel?

Bernie: He left.

Leo: But I'm supposed to meet him here. At two o'clock.

Publicist: Sorry, kid.

Leo: Mr. Ratcliff wanted to talk about my letter. You know, the *Letter*---

Bernie: So you're *that* kid. I didn't recognize you without a half-ton of gristle clamped  
on.

Leo: You were at the press conference?

Bernie: I'm Purge's manager. Bernie McMurphy.

Leo: McMurphy----

Bernie: King and I are cousins. So my interest is personal *and* professional.

King: Tell me about your mother.

Leo: Her name is Donna—Donna Davis, back then. It was at a show in New Haven  
where you guys—met.

King: I don't remember her.

Leo: (insulted) That's it?

King: Nothing personal.

Leo: (highly offended) It's personal to *me*!! It's the reason I'm alive! But you don't  
remember, so too bad kid, take a hike.

King: I'm not sending you away. I'm just telling the truth. I don't remember. I wish I  
did.

Bernie: So? Are we related?

King: Definitely. He has the ear.

Leo: *The what?*

King: Feel that little notch in the lobe? It runs in the family.

Bernie: Not all of us have it. It skips the occasional kid. But if you do, you're a  
McMurphy.

King: We'll do DNA testing too to sew it up nice and neat for the lawyers. The final  
results take four to six weeks. I think we should use that time to get to know each  
other.

Leo: I'd like that. Maybe when the tour is over, we could – uh – have dinner or something.

King: It's already been seventeen years. We can't waste any more time.

Leo: Yeah, but you'll be on the road with the band. You're not going to be in -- I don't even know where you live.

King: I live in Malibu but I'm not talking about the occasional dinner. Why don't you spend the summer traveling with me?

Leo: (floored) You mean---

King: (interrupting) With Purge on the Concussed tour. Don't worry about money. I'll take care of your expenses. And you'll have a job. Have we got something for Leo to do?

Bernie: I can always use another pair of hands. Junior roadie. You'll like the guys.

Leo: (doubtful) I've already met them.

King: Thanks for coming down. I'm really looking forward to this.

Narrator: One might think it would be cool to be a roadie! Not so when the group that has been traveling with King resents the new guy and the fact that he might be King's son. You will be in for a summer of a lot of laughs and unexpected adventures with a punk rock group if you read *Born to Rock* by Gordon Korman.

COPPER SUN  
by Sharon M. Draper

**X**  
Narrator

**X**  
Amari

**X**  
Polly

**X**  
Tidbit

**Narrator:** We are presenting a scene from Sharon Draper's historical fiction novel,

*Copper Sun*. Amari was kidnapped from her African village in 1738 then brought to the Carolinas and sold to a plantation owner's son. Polly is an indentured servant working on the plantation. Tidbit is the son of one of the slaves who also works on the plantation. Amari is read by \_\_\_\_\_, Polly is read by \_\_\_\_\_, and Tidbit is read by \_\_\_\_\_. Polly, Amari, and Tidbit have run off from the plantation, hoping to make it to Florida and freedom.

Polly: Myna, let's stop for a bit and get our bearings.

Tidbit: (Whispering) Myna, I got to pee.

Amari: Go quick---behind that tree. (Pause a minute) My name be Amari.

Polly: What's wrong with the name they gave you? We're used to it now.

Amari: (With certainty) Not Myna no more. Amari.

Polly: If you say so. I suppose it is a good name for a free woman.

Amari: (Exclaiming) Free!

Tidbit: (Whimpering) I want my mama.

Amari: (Whispering) You be free too, small one. You make your mama proud, you hear?

Polly: Which way do we go now, Amari? It's so easy to get turned around. I think the river is that way.

Amari: No, river that way. I be smellin' muddy water.

Polly: (Sighing) How will we ever get to the North if we can't even find the river?

Amari: (Defiantly) We not go north--- we go south.

Polly: But Dr. Hoskins said to follow the river to the North. That's where we have a better chance at freedom. He's a doctor—he's got to know what's best for us.

Amari: (Instantly) Cato say go south.

Polly: And he also said the streets were paved with gold. I think Cato's story is just an old slave's tale about a place that doesn't even exist!

Amari: (Emphatically) I believe Cato! He be right about Massa Clay. He be right about doctor.

Polly: But he *knew* them. This place he called Fort Mose is just a pretend place he's heard of--- like the Promised Land---a place you go when you die. And I don't want to die---not yet!

Amari: (Quietly) We die if we go north.

Polly: You will forever be a slave if we go south.

Amari: (Fiercely) You want go north? Go alone.

Polly: We would all die if we split up.

Amari: Choice up to you. Me and Tidbit goin' south. You come if you want.

Polly: Slavery's not so bad up north. I hear tell that lots of black folk are free up there.

Amari: I free here. I free now. You white gal. You not need us.

Polly: (Quietly) I think we need each other.

Polly: Do you truly believe there is a place called Fort Mose?

Amari: I feel it --- here. It be place where, if you get there, you be free inside and outside.

Polly: (Slowly) I hope Cato is right. But going south makes no sense to me.

Amari: Patrols be looking' north.

Polly: How will we ever find our way to a place we are not even sure exists?

Amari: Spirits will lead us.

Polly: (Quietly) I don't believe in all that spirit talk. And it is such a long way.

Amari: Long walk anyhow. You not trust Amari?

Polly: Well, we should get started.

Amari: No talk, we must move quiet like snakes.

Tidbit: (Whispering) Silent Snakes.

Amari: River be very close. We follow water in dark time.

Tidbit: (Whining) Tidbit tired, I wanna go back to my mama! I don't wanna walk no  
more!

Amari: We stop here, sleep some, for we walk much soon.

Amari: (Whispering) We got to leave river.

Polly: Why? I thought the plan was to follow the river.

Amari: All rivers run to sea. We gotta go by land.

Polly: How will we know which way is which?

Amari: Moss grow on north side of trees. So we follow other side of tree!

Polly: We can't see moss at night.

Amari: Stars lead us.

**Narrator:** Will Amari, Polly, and Tidbit make it to Florida? Will their dream of being  
free come true? If you would like to trek through the wilderness with the trio and  
share in some of their dangerous adventures, read *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper.

DAIRY QUEEN  
by Catherine Gilbert Murdock

Narrator  
X

D.J.  
X

Mom  
X

Narrator We are presenting a reader's theatre from the novel, *Dairy Queen* by Catherine Gilbert Murdock. This story takes place in Red Bend, Wisconsin. D.J. is a girl who lives in this small town and runs the dairy for her injured father and busy schoolteacher/administrator mother. Football is very important in Red Bend and in D.J.'s family. She agrees, reluctantly, to train a player from the rival town's team. She then decides to do something herself. We enter the story when D.J., read by \_\_\_\_\_ is having a conversation with her mother, read by \_\_\_\_\_.

Mom Dorrie, are you awake? Can I come in?

D.J. Okay.

Mom How'd you sleep?

D.J. Okay

Mom Is everything OK?

D.J. Oh, it's fine.

Mom You're not a little girl anymore, you're almost a teenager. I remember when you were born, I was so happy to have a girl

D.J. Oh.

Mom I didn't have a little girl for long. I don't think you know how proud we are of you. Your father, he's told me at least a dozen times in the past six

months how proud he is. If it hadn't been for you, we would have had to sell the farm. Did you know that?

D.J. (Shakes head yes)

Mom (sighs) I just want you to know that you don't have to prove anything to us. To me or Dad. We love you so much.(pause) You don't have to play football for us.

D.J. What?

Mom Your trying out, it makes me see we haven't been appreciating you enough. But you don't have to—

D.J. (interrupting) How did you know about that?

Mom Jeff Peterson came by the Board of Ed meeting last night to give us the heads up.

D.J. Oh, (pause) I didn't know about that.

Mom (surprised) Neither did I.

D.J. It's got nothing to do with Dad. It's just that I spent all summer feeling like I was doing everything I was supposed to do, and seeing everyone around me doing what they were supposed to, and no one seemed happy. They just seemed caught. And I was so unhappy I tried to find something that made me happy, and I had this idea of playing football. And that made me happy. So I thought I'd try.

Narrator Going out for football will have a lot of consequences for D.J. To find out if she makes the football team and how it affects her friends and family, read *Dairy Queen* by Catherine Gilbert Murdock..

EVERLOST  
by Neal Shusterman

X  
Narrator

X  
Allie

X  
Nick

X  
Lief

Narrator: We are presenting Neal Shusterman's fantasy novel, Everlost. Everlost is a holding place for children who have left the living and are awaiting their final destination. I am \_\_\_\_\_, your narrator. After a head-on collision, Allie, read by \_\_\_\_\_ and Nick, read by \_\_\_\_\_ bump into each other in the tunnel of light. They wake up in the presence of a boy they name Lief, after the forest where he was found. Lief is read by \_\_\_\_\_. He becomes their guide and friend as they begin their trek into the afterlife.

Nick: This is bad. (short pause) This is really, really bad.

Allie: I'm sure they're all okay. (softly). I'm sure they are. We survived; we can't be the only ones.

Lief: (Derision in his voice). The only survivors. (laughing) That's a good one.

Allie: (demanding loudly). Who are you? Why are you here?

Lief: This is my place. It can be your place too.

Nick: Did you see the accident?

Lief: No, but I heard it. I went up to look.

Nick: What did you see?

Lief: Lots of stuff.

Allie: (Almost frantically) Were the other people in the cars all right?

Lief: Why does it matter? Either they got better, or they got where they were going,  
(pause) and anyway, there's nothing you can do about it.

Nick: (shouting) This is crazy. Why are we talking to this kid?

Allie: Just forget it. Can you take us to your home? We can call the police from there.

Lief: I don't got a telly-phone.

Nick: (Sarcastically) Oh, that's just great!

Allie: Will you just shut up. (pause,) Where do you live?

Lief: Here.

Allie: And your name?

Lief: I haven't needed one for a long time. So, I lost it.

Nick: (slowly) Whoa.

Allie: Yeah. Major Whoa.

Lief: It's okay. I get used to it. You will too. You'll see. It's not so bad.

Allie: How old were you when you got here?

Lief: Eleven

Nick: (Sarcastic) You still look eleven to me.

Lief: I am!

Allie: I'm going up to the road. Maybe I can flag down a ride.

Lief: I wouldn't. You won't like it up there. You'll see.

Allie: I know what I'm doing.

Nick: Don't (nervously) Allie. . .

Allie: Don't worry. If they don't stop, I'll jump out of the way.

Nick: There's a bus coming.

Allie: Okay, Okay. (Frantically) I'm sinking. I can't move! (Screams) Ahhhhhh!

Lief: (laughing) Surprise. You should see the look on your face when that

bus passed through you.

Narrator: Follow Nick and Allie as they wander through Everlost, meeting such souls as

Mary

Hightower and her hundreds of children that now reside in the twin towers of New York, the Haunter, who traps souls in pickle barrels, and the meanest monster of them all, the McGill. You must read *Everlost* by Neal Shusterman to find out if the duo find the answers to their questions, their place in Everlost, or the way out.

HAPPY KID!  
by Gail Gauthier

Narrator	Kyle	Melissa
X	X	X

**Narrator:** This reader's theater depicts what happens between our protagonist, Kyle and one of his classmates, Melissa, whom he feels is more than a bit of a Know-It-All in *Happy Kid!* by Gail Gauthier. Kyle is read by \_\_\_\_\_ and Melissa, is read by \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_, your narrator. Kyle's mother is worried about him. She purchases a book she thinks might shed light on how he can make the most of his middle school years and be happy. Rather than read the book, Kyle lets the book fall open to a page, and then looks for whatever the book talks about to happen.

**Kyle:** Ah, Melissa, open the book to the page where your fingers are and read the beginning of the new chapter your hand is touching.

**Melissa:** (Suspicious) Why?

**Kyle:** Take a look at it and tell me what it says.

**Melissa:** Listen To Others Sometimes. You might want to hear what they have to say just in case you're mistaken and you don't actually know it all. Perhaps your problems forming satisfying relationships have something to do with the way you treat....

**Kyle:** (Stopping her abruptly.) That's enough.

**Melissa:** (Sarcastic) Already read that part, Kyle?

**Kyle:** No, I've never seen that page before. But I think I might understand what it means. Close the book. Close it without marking your place. Leave the bound edge of the book in your hand just like you've got it there, and let the pages fall open by themselves. Now read the page that showed up.

**Melissa:** Listen To Others Sometimes. You might want to hear what they have to say just in...

**Kyle:** All done! I'll take this book back now.

**Melissa:** (Startled) What was that all about?

**Kyle:** Watch this. Enjoy Surprises! That's What They're There For! Just because you didn't expect something to happen, it doesn't follow that something is bad. In fact, it could be good. Recognize those good surprises when they happen. Have fun with them. Oh! It sounds as if I'm going to get a surprise.

**Melissa:** That's not what it sounds like to me.

**Kyle:** Look! It fell open to the same page. And it opened to the same place again. Now you let it fall open. (Pause) You see, this isn't a regular self-help book at all. It doesn't give sappy advice. It gives readers messages that are just for them. Try Again!

**Narrator:** What do you think will happen when Melissa tries again to open the book? Kyle has seen a few exciting, strange and questionable occurrences lately. Some have been good and bad at the same time. GO FIGURE!?! To find out more about Kyle's interesting life, pick up Gail Gauther's *Happy Kid!*

but don't just let the book fall open—read it from cover to cover. You might just end up being a *Happy Kid!* yourself!

# HEAT

by Mike Lupica

Narrator	Michael	Mr. Minaya
X	X	X

Narrator: We are presenting the book *Heat* by Mike Lupica. Welcome to New York City, home of the famous New York Yankees, where baseball is king. Michael loves to play baseball and is a valued member of his team. They are playing for a chance to go to the league's world series and several coaches have challenged Michael's age. Michael and his brother and dad came from Cuba. Their father died and they are trying to keep the fact that they live alone a secret until his brother is 18. They have told everyone that their dad is in Florida, because their uncle is dying. Michael and his brother have no idea how to get the birth certificate from Cuba. Michael is read by \_\_\_\_\_, his coach, Mr. Minaya is read by \_\_\_\_\_ and I am \_\_\_\_\_, your narrator.

Mr. Minaya: I don't want you to worry about this.

Michael: Yeah, right. Why are they doing this now?

Mr. Minaya: You know why.

Michael: Because they don't believe I'm twelve. Does the Grand Concourse coach think I'm not twelve?

Mr. Minaya: No, he's on our side. He knows this is basically just sour grapes from Westchester South, but he's one of the league commissioners and he's got to do his job. So when coaches file a complaint, he has to go by the rules, which we sort of bent when we accepted the baptism certificate.

Michael: You said coaches. I thought it was just the coach of Westchester South.

Mr. Minaya: He wrote the letter but quite a few other coaches signed it.

Michael: They all think I'm lying about my age?

Mr. Minaya: No, just a bunch of coaches who think they're good enough to get to Williamsport this year, and that their chances improve tremendously if you're not pitching against them. This all got going because you showed up the man's son. I know it's probably going to be a pain in the butt for

your father, because somehow he'll have to get help from somebody back in Cuba. He told me he probably could if he ever really had to. Well, now he really has to. You want to give me his number in Florida?

Michael: No, it's okay. I'll tell him.

Mr. Minaya: Mr. Gibbs said he's not even worried about it. He joked with me that where he works during the day, he's got a lot more important things to sweat that pain-in-the butt Little League parents.

Michael: Where does Mr. Gibbs work?

Mr. Minaya: ACS, Administration for Children's Services. It's a city agency, in charge of---

Michael: (interrupting) I know what they're in charge of.

Narrator: A chance to play in Yankee stadium is at stake. Even worse, the possibility that Michael will be taken from his brother is very real now that Mr. Gibbs might find out the truth. In order to find out if two brothers will be able to catch a break, you will need to read *Heat* by Mike Lupica.

THE HEIGHTS, THE DEPTHS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

by Sally Nemeth

Narrator	Lucy	Jake	Gary
X	X	X	X

Narrator: We are presenting the *Heights, the Depths, and Everything in Between* by Sally Nemeth. I \_\_\_\_\_ am your narrator, Gary is read by \_\_\_\_\_, Jake is read by \_\_\_\_\_ and Lucy is read by \_\_\_\_\_. Lucy and Jake are best friends and live in the same neighborhood just a few houses from each other. When they were in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Lucy continued to grow and Jake didn't. Lucy is 5'10" and Jake is a dwarf. What a pair! They didn't care about their physical differences because they were friends forever. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade they become friends with Gary Geary, a rebel and rough around the edges. He has a good heart which Lucy discovers along the way. Many things happen during their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year. For one, Jake becomes very sensitive about his height and decides to run away to live with the Amish who supposedly have many dwarfs in their community. Lucy and Gary decide to go get Jake. They find him thumbing a ride.

Lucy: Pull over! Pull over! There he is! There's Jake!

Jake: Lucy? Gary? What the hell are you doing here?

Gary: What do you think we're doing? Looking for you, you dope!

Jake: Well, good for you. You found me, now you gonna help me or what?

Lucy: Help you? We are helping you!

Jake: No, you're not. You're not gonna take me up to Lancaster County, are you? You're here to take me back.

Lucy: Of course we're here to take you back.

Jake: Then you're wasting your time. Go on home. I'll find a ride.

Lucy: Don't be ridiculous.

Jake: I'm being ridiculous? Whose car is that?

Lucy: Stephanie's, she said we could take it!

Jake: She did not. I can always tell when your lying, Lucy. You're a rotten liar. You stole that car.

Lucy: Oh, what does it matter whose car it is or how we got it, Jake? It's about to snow any second now, we're all freezing to death, and everyone's worried about you like you don't know, so why don't you just climb in and we'll all go home.

Jake: I'm not going home.

Lucy: You have to.

Jake: Why? Give me one good reason why.

Lucy: Your mom's really upset.

Jake: Tough. She's got what she wants. She's got Frank. She doesn't need me.

Lucy: Well, I do. I need you!

Jake: Here's the thing, Lucy. I know you mean that right now. I really do. But this is what you don't get, soon enough you won't need me. It's already happening. You're gonna have your basketball buddies, and you and Gary, well, you like each other, I can tell. My mom's got someone, my dad's got someone. I swear, even Kwame is gonna find someone one of these days. But who's gonna ever want to be with me, huh? Who's gonna want that? Sometimes I feel so all alone I can't even see straight. And I know maybe it's crazy to think I could go up to Lancaster County and fit right in. But why not? I don't fit in where I am right now. Why not there?

Gary: You know what, Jake, I can't think of a time in my life when I didn't feel alone. Especially after Luke died. He was the only person I ever felt close to. I started hanging out with you and you totally got me. And I thought it went both ways. But if you can stand there and say that you're

still all alone when you've got two people here telling you you're not, well, fine, I'll drive you up to Lancaster County. I will.

Narrator: Do Lucy and Gary bring Jake home? Will Jake be able to resolve his feelings of loneliness? To find the answers to these questions and much, much more you will have to read *The Heights, the Depths, and Everything In Between* by Sally Nemeth.

*Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*  
by Wendy Mass

Narrator:	Lizzy	Jeremy	Mabel Billingsly
X	X	X	X

Narrator: We are presenting the book, *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* by Wendy Mass. Jeremy receives a locked box from his deceased father that he is supposed to open on his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. It says it holds the meaning of life but there is no key. In desperation Jeremy and his best friend Lizzy go in search of a key that might work. Their search evolves into a summer job with a retiring antique dealer and the opportunity for many adventures. Their job is to return items to their original owners. I am \_\_\_\_\_ your narrator, Lizzy is read by \_\_\_\_\_, Jeremy is read by \_\_\_\_\_, and Mabel Billingsly is read by \_\_\_\_\_. Mrs. Billingsly is their first stop.

Jeremy: My name is Jeremy Fink, and this is Lizzy Muldown.

Mabel: Mabel Billingsly. So, what brings you to my humble abode?

Lizzy: Er, don't you know?

Jeremy: Didn't you order this from Mr. Oswald? The antique dealer?

Mabel: Antiques? No, I haven't bought an antique in years. Truth be told, they give me the creeps.

Jeremy: So you don't know what this is?

Mabel: Why don't we find out? (whispering) Where did you get this?

Lizzy: We told you. Mr. Oswald asked us to deliver it. We sort of work for him.

Mabel: Old Ozzy? No, that's not possible. Why, he'd have to be a hundred and twenty years old by now.

Jeremy: I think he's only in his seventies. And I can't imagine anyone calling him Ozzy.

Mabel: (in a shaky voice) How much do I owe you for this?

Jeremy: Uh, nothing?

Lizzy: (whispering) Should we leave now? I'm not sure what's going on.

Jeremy: Me either. She sure seems to like that book though.

Mabel: (distracted) Would you like to hear my favorite part? *Later on, when they had all said "Good-bye" and "Thank you" to Christopher Robin, Pooh and Piglet walked home thoughtfully together in the golden evening, and for a long time they were silent.*

Lizzy: (shouting) That's *Winnie-the-Pooh*!

Jeremy: Mrs. Billingsly, did that book once belong to you?

Mabel: It was only half mine. The other half belonged to my best friend, Bitsy.

Lizzy: You mean Betsy?

Mabel: Bitsy. Bitsy Solomon.

Lizzy: People had funny names back then.

Jeremy: Go on.

Mabel: I haven't spoken to Bitsy in over sixty-five years.

Lizzy: (confused) But you said she's your best friend.

Mabel: I misspoke. Bitsy used to be my best friend, until I sold this book for a fancy dress. She confronted me, but I told her I hadn't taken it. I knew she knew I had. Best friends always know when the other's lying. For years I wanted to apologize but I was too embarrassed.

Lizzy: I don't get it. How could you buy a whole dress for the cost of that book?

Mabel: It is autographed to Bitsy and Mabel from A.A. Milne.

Lizzy: Oh!

Jeremy: Wow!

Mabel: Old Ozzy gave me twenty dollars for it. Back then, in the thirties, that was near a fortune for a child.

Lizzy: Why'd you need this dress so badly?

Mabel: It's all in this letter. Will you do me a favor and read it later? I'd like to be alone.

Narrator: As Jeremy and Lizzy return precious items to their original owners, not only do they get a peek of the meaning of life but they meet interesting characters and bring fond memories. If you would like some insights into the meaning of life, and to find out if Jeremy is able to unlock the box from his father, you need to read *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* by Wendy Mass.

LIFE AS WE KNEW IT  
by Susan Beth Pfeffer

Narrator	Miranda	Jonny	Matt
X	X	X	X

Narrator We are presenting *Life as We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer. Tragedy has struck all over the world when an asteroid hits the moon and knocks it out of orbit. Miranda and her family live in Pennsylvania. They have just heard from Mrs. Hitchkiss, a lady in town, that she and her family are moving south to find more food and better conditions. We are entering the story where Miranda, played by \_\_\_\_\_ and her two brothers Matt, played by \_\_\_\_\_ and Jonny, played by \_\_\_\_\_ are having a discussion about what they should do.

Jonny I think we should go, too. We should go to Kansas and see if we can find Dad.

Mat We don't know where Dad is. He could be in Colorado. He could be back in Springfield.

Miranda No, he would have stopped off here if they came back east.

Matt We still don't know where he is, Jon, (pause) Mom and I have talked about it a lot, about what we should do. There's no point in going. We have shelter. We have firewood, so we won't freeze. It's not like we're going to be able to find food anyplace else.

Jonny We don't know that. Maybe there's food in Kansas.

Miranda Dad couldn't even get into Kansas.

Jonny Missouri then, or Oklahoma, (frustrated) I don't see why we're staying here just to die.

Matt We're not going to die.

Jonny You don't know that. What if the moon crashes in?

Matt Then it won't matter where we are, we'll die anyway. Our chances of survival are best here. (pause) This isn't just happening in Pennsylvania, Jon. It's all over the world. We have a roof over our heads. We have heat. We have water. We have food. How long do you think we'd survive biking our way across country?

Jonny Dad got gas. We could get gas.

Matt Dad bought black market gas. He had connections. And at that, his gas ran out.

Miranda Black market?

Matt How do you think he got all that food? You didn't really think it was just waiting to be taken, did you?

Miranda Does Mom know?

Matt (shrugging) Dad and I talked about it while we were cutting down trees. I don't know what he talked to Mom about. He probably didn't tell her. Mom's happier not knowing things. You know that.

Jonny So, we're stuck here?

Matt I'm afraid so. But things will get better. Maybe not right away but we'll make it.

Narrator Will they be able to survive with no electricity, food running low, bad weather, and increasing crime? To find out if Miranda and her family do indeed “make it”, or if you wonder whether or not you could make it, you need to read *Life as We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer.

MONKEY TOWN  
by Ronald Kidd

Narrator	Frances	Mr. Earle
X	X	X

**Narrator:** *Monkey Town* by Ronald Kidd, takes place in 1925, in the declining town of Dayton, Tennessee. Frank Earle Robinson and some of the town elders decide to gain some publicity for the town. They want to be the first to challenge the recently passed state law, which prohibits teaching theories contrary to accepted interpretation of the biblical account of human creation. Thus John Scopes, a young football and basketball coach, is arrested and put on trial for teaching a chapter on evolution. In the following scene Frank Earle Robinson, has just testified in the trial and the jury has gone to deliberate. His daughter, 15-year-old Frances Robinson, who has a crush on Scopes, finds herself torn between loyalty to her father and her love for John. Mr. Earle Robinson is read by \_\_\_\_\_, and Frances is read by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Frances:** Why do you seem so happy?

**Mr. Earle:** I'm famous darling. Your daddy testified at the Scopes trial.

**Frances:** Aren't you embarrassed?

**Mr. Earle:** About what?

**Frances:** Mr. Scopes is on trial for teaching that textbook, and you're the one who sold it to him.

**Mr. Earle:** I own a store. I sell lots of things.

**Frances:** This one might send a man to jail.

**Mr. Earle:** Frances, he's not going to jail. I told you that.

**Frances:** What about his reputation? You know what people are saying?

**Mr. Earle:** It'll blow over.

**Frances:** Then why don't you send him a contract?

**Frances:** You've been grinning and shaking hands. You think everything is fine. Well, you know what? Some people don't think so. They say your publicity scheme has backfired, and Dayton's the laughingstock of the world.

**Mr. Earle:** Who have you been talking to?

**Frances:** Wake up, Daddy. Look around. Listen. People are making fun of Dayton. They're calling it Monkey Town.

**Mr. Earle:** You and I are having our troubles these days, aren't we?

**Frances:** I used to believe everything you told me. Now I wonder about all of it. Even Coca-Cola it's a lie, isn't it?

**Mr. Earle:** Not exactly

**Frances:** It wasn't the truth.

**Mr. Earle:** We could go outside right now and find a hundred people who would swear Coca-Cola made them feel better.

**Frances:** That doesn't mean it was right.

**Mr. Earle:** I taught you well, didn't I?

**Frances:** Yes, sir, you did.

**Frances:** Daddy, why did you do it?

**Mr. Earle:** I'm a salesman. That's what I do. I sell things.

**Frances:** Like textbooks?

**Mr. Earle:** Like anything. Pills, bandages, screwdrivers, kites, newspapers, kitchen utensils, And, yes textbooks.

**Frances:** Even if they're used against someone?

**Mr. Earle:** Look, Frances, I know you're upset. I didn't come in here to make excuses or explain things away. I want to tell you the truth, as near as I can. The truth is, I'm just a person like you who's doing his best to get by. Sometimes I make mistakes sometimes I stretch the truth. Sometimes I push too hard to make a sale.

**Mr. Earle:** I know Coca-Cola's not a medicine. But people want to believe it, so I go along with them. I know that textbooks can be misused, but my customers want to buy them, so I oblige. I won't defend it, except to say I was earning money for you and Sonny and Mama. My intentions were perfect, even if I'm not.

**Frances:** What about evolution?

**Mr. Earle:** What about it?

**Frances:** Mr. Scopes believes it. Clarence Darrow believes it. That professor said all the scientists believe it. Maybe you're wrong about that, too.

**Mr. Earle:** That's different.

**Frances:** Why

**Mr. Earle:** I stretch the truth once in a while, but God doesn't. Read the Bible. It's right there in black and white.

**Frances:** You really think all those scientists are wrong?

**Mr. Earle:** Don't take my word for it. Mr. Bryan's talking tomorrow. You can go hear him.

**Frances:** I heard him already at church. Besides, I think he's strange he says he's on a diet but won't stop eating.

**Mr. Earle:** William Jennings Bryan is a great man. He was almost president.

**Frances:** I think he's a salesman too. He's selling the Bible.

**Mr. Earle:** (shocked) Frances!

**Frances:** It's true, isn't it?

**Mr. Earle:** If Mr. Bryan is a salesman, then so is Clarence Darrow. I'll take the Bible over evolution any day.

**Frances:** Where does that leave Mr. Scopes?

**Mr. Earle:** What about him?

**Frances:** Everyone's so busy selling, they've forgotten who's on trial. They don't even look at him. Its like he's not there.

**Mr. Earle:** This trial isn't about John Scopes. It's about the truth.

**Frances:** I thought it was about publicity.

**Frances:** I wish none of this ever happened. I wish we could go back to the way we were.

**Mr. Earle:** You and me? Or the town?

**Frances:** Everybody. All of us. We're out of control. We're changing into something different.

**Mr. Earle:** Is it really so bad?

**Frances:** Dayton was going to be famous. Mr. Scopes was going to be fine.

**Mr. Earle:** He will be. Just be patient...

**Narrator:** Frances must rethink many of her beliefs about religion and truth, as well as her relationship with her father. Can everything go back to the way it was in Dayton? Will John Scopes be found guilty? Will the school board renew his teaching contract? Or has this publicity stunt gone all wrong? To find out you will have to read *Monkey Town* by Ronald Kidd.

NOTES FROM THE MIDNIGHT DRIVER

by Jordan Sonnenblick

	Solomon	Alex	Laurie
Narrator:	X		
		X	
			X

Narrator: We are presenting *Notes from the Midnight Driver* by Jordan Sonnenblick.

Alex was mad at his dad, so he foolishly got drunk, took the car keys, and drove to his dad's house. In the process he lost control of the car and was arrested. His punishment is community service. He is assigned to Solomon, an old man at a nursing home. Sometimes Solomon is reasonable; most of the time he is cantankerous. Laurie, Alex's close friend and confidant, is helping him with a New Year's Eve party for the residents. Solomon is read by \_\_\_\_\_, Alex is read by \_\_\_\_\_, and Laurie is read by \_\_\_\_\_. Your narrator is \_\_\_\_\_.

Laurie: You know, when you told me your sentence, a hundred hours seemed like forever. Can you believe you're more than halfway done?

Solomon: Wait a minute, Alex. You're not a volunteer? I'm your sentence? I'm your PUNISHMENT?

Alex: Oh, my gosh, Sol. I always assumed you knew. I was assigned to spend a hundred hours here by the juvenile court, with the patient of my mom's choice. She picked you because she said we would be a good match.

Solomon: So now I'm a charity case, heh? I never thought I would live to see the day when I would be a burden for the state to put on somebody else's back.

Alex: It's not like that. They thought I could learn from you, so I wouldn't ... um, you know... get arrested again.

Solomon: What in the world did they arrest a clean-cut boy like you for anyway?

Alex: Well, it was nothing, really.

Solomon: Nothing? Like what kind of nothing? Jaywalking? Skipping school to be with your darling, here?

Alex: No, I... I got drunk and tried to drive my mom's car to my dad's house. But it was no big deal. Really.

Solomon: No big deal? You didn't hit anybody?

Alex: No, I didn't hit anybody. Well, except a lawn gnome.

Solomon: A lawn gnome, you hit? So you drove up on somebody's lawn?

Alex: Well, yeah, but....

Solomon: And this is the "no big deal"? You're lucky to be alive, Alex. And you're lucky that you DIDN'T kill anyone. "No big deal," he says. You're even more *meshuggeh* than I thought.

Alex: But....

Solomon: Just get out of here, you little criminal. Old I might be, and sick I might be, but handouts from a crazy outlaw who doesn't even know how stupid he is, I don't need.

Laurie: You know, that wasn't fair. He really isn't as bad as you.....

Laurie: Come back, Alex, all is forgiven. Stop being such a drama queen! Sol is even sorry. Aren't you, Sol?

Solomon: Get your little car-crashing *tuchis* back here before I....

Narrator: Alex did not wait to hear Solomon's parting insults. However, at home he was subject to Laurie's threats.

Laurie: (Angry) All right, wuss boy, I'm on my way over there and I'm pumped up to jump on you and start working your head like a speed bag!

Narrator: Both Solomon and Laurie soon get over being angry. As Solomon and Alex serve out their time together, they both learn to forgive and appreciate life. If you read *Notes from the Midnight Driver* by Jordan Sonnenblick you will laugh your way through a story about relationships and meet unforgettable characters!

RULES  
by Cynthia Lord

X	X	X	X		
Narrator	Mom	David	Catherine	X	X
				Ryan	Kristi

**Narrator:** We are presenting *Rules* by Cynthia Lord. All Catherine has ever wanted was a friend; just one real friend to confide in, play basketball with and tell secrets to. But best friends are hard to come by with her autistic brother, David, who seems to interrupt everything that's going on in Catherine's life. Catherine, is read by \_\_\_\_\_, David is read by \_\_\_\_\_ and Mom is read by \_\_\_\_\_. They are returning home and Catherine spies her new next door neighbor, Kristi read by \_\_\_\_\_ and her boyfriend, Ryan read by \_\_\_\_\_ standing in the yard.

**Catherine:** David, go inside with—

**Mom:** (*Interrupting*) I'll take Nutmeg and your things. Send David in if you go next door.

**Catherine:** But MOM!

**Mom:** He doesn't have any friends—not like you have. Surely you can let David stay a few minutes? I'll be in my office.

**David:** (*hungrily*) Gum?

**Ryan:** (*sarcastically*) Yeah, it's gum.

**David:** Can I have a turn?

**Kristi:** I've been waiting for you to come home.

**Catherine:** I went to OT with David. Then I had to stop at the mall.

**David:** (*impatiently*) Can I have a turn? If someone is holding something you want, ask if you can have a turn. That's the rule.

**Kristi:** What's OT?

**Catherine:** (*uncomfortably*) Occupational therapy. David works on writing, jumping, stuff like that.

**Ryan:** (*rudely*) You can't jump?

**Kristi:** Of course he can-

**Ryan:** (*interrupting her*) JUMP!

**Narrator:** David begins jumping up and down, hoping that his so-called friend Ryan will give him "a turn" with the gum if he proves he can jump, like normal children do.

**Catherine:** Stop it! (*Distraught*) STOP!

**Kristi:** Ryan, give him some gum.

**Ryan:** It's a miracle! You're cured!

**Narrator:** It looks like a friendship with Kristi will be difficult. Not everyone understands those who are different. However Kristi is not the only prospective friend Catherine meets. At the clinic there is a new boy, Jason, who communicates using cards. He finds Catherine full of patience and ideas to help students with difficulties. Read *Rules* by Cynthia Lord to understand what having an autistic brother is like and to watch the friendship develop between Jason, Catherine, and David.

RULES OF SURVIVAL  
by Nancy Werlin

Narrator  
X

Matt  
X

Mr. Murdoch  
X

Narrator: We are presenting the novel, *Rules of Survival* by Nancy Werlin. Matt is the oldest of three children and has been doing his best to protect Emmy and Callie from their abusive mother, Nikki. He has a true protector in Mr. Murdoch, a man his mother dated until he realized how unstable she really was. He still wants to help protect the children from her. Nikki has decided to take out her aggression on Mr. Murdoch, and Matt is afraid for him. We find Mr. Murdoch and Matt talking after Nikki has vandalized his truck. Matt is read by \_\_\_\_\_ and Mr. Murdoch is read by \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_, the narrator.

Mr. Murdoch: Well, here's one way of looking at it. Your mother was getting her rage out of her system. One black eye and some broken glass are a pretty small price to pay.

Matt: No, you don't understand. It's not out of her system. She's just getting started.

She's got other plans for you.

Mr. Murdoch: Have a seat.

Matt: She's just getting started.

Mr. Murdoch: Well, I'm going to sit. You can join me if you like.

Matt: You better believe me about her. You have to believe me. You didn't get hurt enough last night to make her happy. She's nowhere near through. I don't even know what would make her happy.

Mr. Murdoch: Me dead?

Matt: That's not funny, Murdoch.

Mr. Murdoch: I wasn't laughing. I was asking. What exactly should I be afraid of here?

Matt: She won't want you dead. That's no fun. No fun at all.

Mr. Murdoch: What would be fun for her?

Matt: Seeing you hurt. Seeing you sorry. Seeing you in trouble. Seeing you worry. That would all be fun.

Mr. Murdoch: Fun for your mother.

Matt: Yes! Who else do you think I'm talking about here?

Mr. Murdoch: You're angry at me yourself, Matthew.

Matt: You're wrong. I'm just trying to help.

Mr. Murdoch: Okay.

Matt: I didn't come here because I wanted to see you hurt. It's not fun for me. Okay? I'm not—I'm not like her. Same with Callie and Emmy. It's you we--- There's something else.

Mr. Murdoch: Take it easy. It's okay.

Matt: No. It's actually not okay. And I hate when people say that, when they say it's okay even though it's not. It's better to tell the truth. Sorry.

Mr. Murdoch: Don't apologize. You're right. It's not okay. I won't pretend that it is anymore. I should be the one apologizing. I get it. I sort of promised things to you

and Callie and Emmy. I didn't mean to. I thought I was just being a friend to you kids. But--- But you need a father, Matt. A real father. All of you do. And it wasn't okay that I stepped in there and pretended for a little while. Not when it wasn't real, and I knew it wasn't real. I'm sorry. I had no business doing that, and I see that I hurt you. All of you. Which I never meant to do. I never meant to hurt you.

Matt: You didn't hurt us. It was---we like you.

Mr. Murdoch: But I did hurt you. I led you to expect.... You know, Matt.

Matt: I have a father. I know you haven't met him, but he exists. He cares about us. And I did want a friend. I still do. We—Callie and Emmy and I ---we actually need a friend now. Right now. Someone who---who---- Someone who will believe us about her. She's crazy, Murdoch. I could tell you—there's stuff I could tell you... anyway. You know. I think you know. Do you?

Narrator: Mr. Murdoch does know. But it is not so easy to protect children from their mother. If you would like to find out if Matt, Callie, and Emmy find peace, you must read *Rules of Survival* by Nancy Werlin.

# RUNAWAY

by Wendelin Van Draanen

Holly

Meg

X

X

Narrator

X

Narrator: We are presenting *Runaway*, by Wendelin Van Draanen. Holly has spent the last six months running away from the Benders', her most recent abusive foster family. After making it through many trials and tribulations, she finally found refuge with a mother (Vera) and daughter (Meg) who have agreed to take her in. Holly is read by \_\_\_\_\_ and Meg is read by \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_, the narrator. We find Meg in Holly's room talking about the journal she has kept throughout her entire journey.

Meg: You keep a journal? It looks like it's been through a lot.

Holly: (*chuckling*) You could say that.

Meg: I used to keep a journal.

Holly: Really? ..... You don't write in it anymore?

Meg: No one's ever read mine, either.

Meg: (*quietly*) It helped me through a really rough time.

Holly: Mine, too.

Meg: You started it when you ran away?

Holly: A little before.

Meg: (sadly) I meant what I said at dinner. You're a real blessing in my life. I hope someday you'll be able to trust me with what you've gone through. It's so hard to talk about, isn't it? Who could possibly understand? I'll see you in the morning.

Narrator: What did Holly go through on her journey to California? What "rough time" did Meg's journal help her through and where is it now? To find out the answers to these questions, you will have to read *Runaway* by Wendelin Van Draanen.

STANDING AGAINST THE WIND  
by Traci L. Jones

Narrator  
X

Patrice  
X

Monty  
X

Narrator: We are presenting the contemporary fiction book, *Standing Against the Wind* by Traci Jones. The story takes place in inner city Chicago where Patrice is now living with her Aunt because her mother is in prison. Her biggest fear is the gang that hangs around her neighborhood. She is an excellent student and hopes she can win a scholarship to the prestigious African American boarding school, Dogwood, in Mississippi. The only thing holding her back is the signature from her mother in the prison in Mount Rose. Dogwood would take her away from the rough neighborhood and the burden her Aunt faces having Patrice live with her. Patrice is read by \_\_\_\_\_, her boyfriend, Monty, is read by\_\_\_\_\_.

Patrice: You don't happen to know how much it costs to take the Greyhound to Mount Rose, do you?

Monty: Nah, I don't even know where Mount Rose is. Why?

Patrice: 'Cause I've got to get my mother to sign the Dogwood application, and I don't think I can depend on Cherise to get me there in time. I want to give the forms to Mrs. Hutton. I just want to finish them.

Monty: When you gonna go?

Patrice: I don't know. Soon. I've got a little over three weeks before I have to turn in everything.

Monty: Sounds like plenty of time to me. Anyway, why don't you just sign it for her?

Patrice: I thought about that, but I'd be too nervous that they would somehow find out.

Plus it asks for her social security number, and I have no idea what it is. Besides,

I want to do everything right and not have to lie and stuff, you know?

Monty: You always this honest?

Patrice: Yes, I guess so. I'm not real good at lying. Will your friends be mad at you for

hitting Eddie and Rasheed?

Monty: Don't know. Doubt it, though. They like seeing a fight. I don't care one way or

the other. Most of them is weak. Spending their time picking on people who can't,

or won't, defend themselves. They are just trying to act bad in front of the group,

that's all.

Patrice: You know, the drug dealers who hang around don't bother me as much as your

friends do ---- or did.

Monty: (waiting a minute before speaking) Yeah, at least for now they don't. You still

look young enough to them that they won't try and hook up with you, but that

won't last much longer. Eddie and them pick on you 'cause they don't understand

you and because you cry and run away. You're easy pickin's. Those older dudes

is too concerned about running drugs and making money to worry about you. At

least right now.

Patrice: I hope I get one of those scholarships.

Monty: Yeah, me, too. I guess.

Patrice: You guess! What you want one instead of me, Mr. Perfect Math Paper?

Monty: Nah, it's just that I'll miss you and your weird ways, that's all.

Patrice: Weird? I'm not weird. Why do you think I'm weird?

Monty: You is weird. You always got your head in some book. All you do is study. You ain't like the other girls, getting your hair done and shoplifting clothes to wear. Look how you dress! I ain't never seen Chanterelle and Sarah in old jeans and faded sweatshirts. Cain't nobody even tell how you're shaped or nothing in all that.

Patrice: How I'm shaped? Who cares about my shape anyway?

Monty: Oh, I know a few people who would like to see you in something less baggy.

Patrice: Yeah right. So I guess I am weird. So why are you hanging out with such a freak?

Monty: Because, weirdo, I like you. You're real. It's like you're the only clean thing around here.

Patrice: Oh.

Monty: You know that empty lot near school?

Patrice: Yeah, why?

Monty: Well, the whole lot is filled with junk and trash and crap, but last spring, in the middle of the trash this flower bloomed. This pretty little flower, right there, in the middle of a lot full of garbage. It was the weirdest thing. I mean, where did it come from? I didn't know whether to pick it or let it keep growing. I'd go by there everyday to look at that stupid flower 'cause it was so unique and pretty and it tripped me out that it could bloom in the middle of all that trash. Then one day I went by and someone had thrown an old stuffed chair over it and broke it. Killed it. I told myself that the next time I saw something beautiful trying to survive in

the middle of trash I'd do what I could to protect it, to make sure it grew and that nobody messed it up. So, I guess you're my flower.

Patrice: (softly) Wow, Wow. I-----Thank you Monty.

Monty: Hey, no problem. My pleasure.

Narrator: Monty is at least one good thing about Chicago. She would miss him if she went to Dogwood. Still, Dogwood is her ticket to an excellent education and the possibility to go on to college. If you would like to find out what happens to Patrice, you will have to read *Standing Against the Wind* by Traci Jones.