

**COPPER SUN**  
**SHARON DRAPER**

Draper, Sharon M. *Copper Sun*. Atheneum. 2006. 302p. Grades 8 and up.

**Annotation:**

Amari's life changes drastically when she is stolen from her peaceful village and plunged into the horrific life of a slave.

**Booktalk:**

*What is Africa to me:  
Copper sun or scarlet sea,  
Jungle star or jungle track,  
Strong bronzed men, or regal black  
Women from whose loins I sprang  
When the birds of Eden sang?*  
from Heritage by Countée Cullen

Amari loved her village home in Africa. The path that led to her home welcomed her with the sweet smell of the mango trees. She loved the thatched roofs, the smoky cooking fires, and the chickens scratching in the dirt. She loved her laughing, playful brother, her kind and loving mother, her wise father, and Besa, whom she would soon marry. She loved the land of Africa with its glowing copper sun.

But all that is gone. It ended when the strangers, both black and pale-faced men, visited the village. As the villagers celebrated with food, stories, music, and dancing, an explosion came from the weapon stick of a stranger. In a matter of minutes, Amari's brother and parents were dead, her village destroyed, and the 24 survivors, all young and strong, were shackled and herded away.

Amari and her friends are marched to the coast, imprisoned, sold, branded, and still shackled, loaded in the cargo hold of a ship. Many die on the long voyage from disease, storms, and abuse of the slave traders. But Amari survives because of the friendship she makes with an older woman and the compassion of a sailor who helps her learn the strange language of the traders.

Now standing naked and humiliated on the auction block, Amari knows not what is yet to come. She only knows that as a slave it will not be good, but as long as she lives, Amari still has one possession-- Hope.

Experience the horrors of slavery in *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper. Discover how Amari and an indentured girl endure life on Derbyshire Farms through their friendship and hope.

**Reviews:**

Booklist. February 1, 2006  
Bookpage. January, 2006  
Horn Book Guide. Fall, 2006  
Kirkus. January 1, 2006  
Library Media Connection. August/September, 2007  
Publishers Weekly. January 9, 2006  
School Library Journal. January 1, 2006  
VOYA. February 1, 2006

**Author Website:**

[sharondraper.com](http://sharondraper.com)

Sharon Draper's website has a wealth of information, especially for students and teachers. Besides the normal information concerning biography, books, and school visits, Draper has study guides, homework help, letters from teachers/students, and *Copper Sun* resources.

**Related Books on Topic:**Nonfiction:

Currie, Stephen. *A Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Plantation South*. Lucent Books. 112p. Describes the growth, practice, and eventual end of slavery in the United States.

DeFord, Deborah H. *Life Under Slavery*. Chelsea House. 112p.

Explains the development, practice, and effects of slavery in the Americas including living conditions, religious and cultural traditions, resistance and rebellion, and how the "Black Codes" molded slave life.

Jordan, Anne Devereaux. *Slavery and Resistance*. Marshall Cavendish Benchmark. 70p. Describes slavery in the United States from colonial times up to the Civil War.

Levy, Debbie. *Slaves on a Southern Plantation*. KidHaven Press. 48p.

For more than 150 years, starting before 1700, people from Africa and their descendants were forced to work as slaves on large plantations in the American South. They worked long days for no pay and without a say in their own lives. They endured cruel punishments, poor food, shabby clothes, and ramshackle housing. Plantation slaves suffered many hardships, yet they fought not only to survive but also to preserve their humanity. At this they were successful, working and developing skills, and creating loving families and homes.

Sharp, S. Pearl. *The Slave Trade and the Middle Passage*. Marshall Cavendish Benchmark. 70p.

Traces the history of the transatlantic slave trade and the development of slavery in the New World.

Fiction:

Lasky, Kathryn. *True North*. Blue Sky Press. 267p.

Because of the strong influence which her grandfather, an abolitionist, has in her life, fourteen-year-old Lucy assists a fugitive slave girl in her escape.

Lester, Julius. *Time's Memory*. Farrar Straus Giroux. 240p.

Ekundayo, a Dogon spirit brought to America from Africa, inhabits the body of a young African American slave on a Virginia plantation, where he experiences loss, sorrow, and reconciliation in the months preceding the Civil War.

Lyons, Mary E. *Letters from a Slave Girl: the Story of Harriet Jacobs*. Scribner. 146p.

A fictionalized version of the life of Harriet Jacobs, told in the form of letters that she might have written during her slavery in North Carolina and as she prepared for escape to the North in 1842.

Mosley, Walter. *47*. Little, Brown. 232p.

Number 47, a fourteen-year-old slave boy growing up under the watchful eye of a brutal master in 1832, meets the mysterious Tall John, who introduces him to a magical science and also teaches him the meaning of freedom.

Myers, Walter Dean. *The Glory Field*. Scholastic. 375p.

The story follows a family's 24-year history, from the capture of an African boy in the 1750s through the lives of his descendants, as their dreams and circumstances lead them away from and back to the small plot of land in South Carolina that they call the Glory Field.

Paulsen, Gary. *Sarny: a Life Remembered*. Delacorte. 180p.

Continues the adventures of Sarny, the slave girl Nightjohn taught to read, through the aftermath of the Civil War during which time she taught other Blacks and lived a full life until the age of 94.

Rinaldi, Ann. *Taking Liberty: the Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave*. Simon & Schuster. 272p.

After serving Martha Washington loyally for twenty years, Oney Judge realizes that she is just a slave and must decide if she will run away to find true freedom.

Torrey, Michele. *Voyage of Midnight*. Alfred A. Knopf. 240p.

In the early nineteenth century, when his sea-captain uncle invites him to assist the ship's surgeon on his next voyage, orphaned, fourteen-and-a-half-year-old Phillip, eager to be with family, accepts-- only to find out that his uncle is a slave trader.

**Related Websites on Topic:**

<http://people.uvawise.edu/runaways>

<http://www.uwec.edu/geography/Ivogeler/w111/slaves.htm>

[http://www.africanculturalcenter.org/4\\_5slavery.html](http://www.africanculturalcenter.org/4_5slavery.html)

<http://www.sciway.net/hist/chicora/slavery18.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html>  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/index.html>  
<http://www.innecity.org/holt/slavechron.html>  
<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery>  
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml>  
<http://www.juneteenth.com/middlep.htm>  
<http://www.juneteenth.com/mp2.htm>  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/99/railroad/j1.html>  
<http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0213580/fortmose1.html>  
<http://www.archaeology.org/9609/abstracts/ftmose.html>  
<http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/services/magazine/01winter/mose.cfm>  
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1601-1650/mittelberger/servan.htm>  
<http://www.stratfordhall.org/ed-servants.html?EDUCATION>  
<http://www.sciway.net/afam/slavery/houses.html>  
<http://www.sciway.net/afam/slavery/indexs.html>

**Other Books by the Author:**

*Tears of a Tiger.* Atheneum: New York. 1994.  
*Forged by Fire.* Atheneum: New York. 1997.  
*Romiette and Julio.* Atheneum: New York. 1999.  
*Darkness Before Dawn.* Atheneum: New York. 2001.  
*Double Dutch.* Atheneum: New York. 2002.  
*The Battle of Jericho.* Atheneum: New York. 2003.  
*Fire From the Rock.* Dutton: New York. 2007.  
*November Blues.* Atheneum: New York. 2007.

**Awards or Honors:**

Coretta Scott King Author Award, 2007  
Heartland Award for Excellence in YA Literature, 2007  
Ohioana Award for Young Adult Literature, 2007  
Booklist Top Ten Historical Fiction Books for Youth, 2007  
NAACP Image Award for Literature Nominee, 2007  
School Library Journal Best Books of the Year  
Tennessee Volunteer State Book Award Nominee, 2008  
Virginia Readers' Choice Award Nominee, 2008  
Texas Tayshas Reading, 2007-2008  
Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Award Nominee, 2008  
Maryland Black-eyed Susan Award Nominee, 2007-2008  
Finalist in Society of Midland Authors Award for Children's Fiction, 2007  
CBC/National Council of Social Studies Notable Social Studies Trade Book  
IRA Notable Book for a Global Society

**HAPPY KID!**  
**GAIL GAUTHIER**

Gauthier, Gail. *Happy Kid!* Penguin. 2006. 192p. Grades 5-8.

**Annotation:**

Kyle's only wish for seventh grade is to stay invisible and out of trouble, but his mom and her back-to-school present of a self-help book have different plans for him.

**Booktalk:**

Seventh-grade Kyle hopes that everyone (including the faculty) has forgotten the "screwdriver" incident from his sixth grade year. The incident has labeled him with a reputation of "psychopath-in-the-making." Kyle's concerned therapist mother gives him a back-to-school gift: a book titled *Happy Kid! A Young Person's Guide to a Satisfying Relationship and a Happy and Meaning-Filled Life!* But Kyle doesn't think he needs the book to help him have satisfying relationships or a happy and meaning-filled life-- until his mom sweetens the deal by offering him money for every chapter he reads. The first day of school begins with Kyle saying hello to teachers, upperclassmen, the school bully and even girls. He is mistakenly placed in AP classes, which sets Kyle even further on the outside, and adds more problems to his already complicated life. Kyle starts to believe the book is sending him messages and feels he needs to follow the advice and wisdom of the self-help book.

This life-changing self-help book has a plan of it's own to guide seventh-grader Kyle from his negative self image to a more happier person at Bert P. Trots Middle School and it may have a plan for you, too.

**Reviews:**

Booklist. 4/01/06

Horn Book. Fall 2006 (\*Starred Review)

Kirkus Review. 04/01/06

Kliatt. 05/01/06

School Library Journal. 7/01/06

**Other Books by the Author:**

*A Girl, a Boy, and a Monster Cat.*

*A Girl, a Boy and Three Robbers.* (Published 07/08)

*The Hero of Ticonderoga.*

*Saving the Planet & Stuff.*

*A Year with Butch and Spike.*

**STANDING AGAINST THE WIND**  
**TRACI L. JONES**

Jones, Traci L. *Standing Against the Wind*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York. 2006. 192p. Grades 6 and up.

**Annotation:**

Shy eighth-grader Patrice works to overcome the obstacles of her inner-city neighborhood, while helping a boy find his own way out of trouble.

**Booktalk:**

Patrice has been uprooted from her happy Georgia home, where she was loved by her grandmother, and now lives in the Chicago projects where she and her older sister are stuck with their Auntie Mae in a crowded apartment while their mother does jail time. Now she finds herself surrounded with gangs, drug runners and girls who think only about boys and that does not include Patrice, who is a shy and studious girl. Each day she must endure the taunts and treats from the neighborhood thugs.

Then Patrice learns of a scholarship that may be the answer to her prayers and get her out of the projects forever. She is surprised when Monty, a gang leader, protects her and becomes her friend. It will take courage and ingenuity from Patrice, along with Monty's help, to find a way to get to her imprisoned and uncaring to sign the scholarship application and Patrice's ticket to her future. Along the way, Monty, impressed by Patrice's steadfastness, starts to wonder if he too can have a future away from the gang life he has always known.

For a glimpse into a grim inner-city neighborhood read Traci L. Jones' gripping story of a contemporary kid who works to make her dreams come true in *Standing Against the Wind*.

**Reviews:**

Booklist. July 2006

School Library Journal. November 2006

**Author Website:**

[www.traciljones.com](http://www.traciljones.com)

**Related Books on Topic:**

Flake, Sharon. *Bang!* Hyperion Books for Children, 2005.

A teenage boy must face the harsh realities of inner city life, a disintegrating family, and destructive temptations as he struggles to find his identity as a young man.

Flake, Sharon. *The Broken Bike Boy and the Queen of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street*. Hyperion, 2007.

Ten-year-old Queen learns valuable life lessons about being a good friend when Leroy, a new kid in the neighborhood, comes to Queen's school.

Grimes, Nikki. *The Road to Paris*. Putnam, 2006.

Inconsolable at being separated from her older brother, 8-year-old Paris is apprehensive about her new foster family. Just as she learns to trust them, she faces a life-changing decision.

McDonald, Janet. *Brother Hood*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

16-year-old Nate, an academically gifted student who attends an exclusive private boarding school, straddles two cultures as he returns home for occasional visits to see his family and “gangsta crew” in Harlem, New York.

McDonald, Janet. *Chill Wind*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002.

Afraid that she will have nowhere to go when her welfare checks are stopped, 19-year-old high school dropout Aisha tries to figure out how she can support herself and her two young children in New York City.

McDonald, Janet. *Twists and Turns*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

With the help of a couple of successful friends, 18-year-old and 19-year-old Teesha and Keeba try to capitalize on their talents by opening a hair salon in the run-down Brooklyn housing project where they live.

McDonald, Janet. *Project Girl*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999.

The author tells the story of her struggles to reconcile her ghetto background and the world of private schools, wealthy classmates, and important jobs offered to her because of her academic talent.

Smith, Sherri L. *Sparrow*. Delacorte Press, 2006.

After the death of the beloved grandmother who raised her, high-school student Kendall Washington travels to New Orleans, expecting to be taken in by her only living relative, an aunt, but the reunion does not go as planned.

**MONKEY TOWN: THE SUMMER OF THE SCOPES TRIAL**  
**RONALD KIDD**

Kidd, Ronald. *Monkey Town: The Summer of the Scopes Trial*. New York. Simon & Schuster. 2006. 272p. Grades 6-9.

**Annotation:**

In the summer of 1925, 15-year old Frances Robinson finds herself caught up in national events, as her father and other city leaders decide to bring publicity to their small town in the form of a science vs. religion "Monkey Trial".

**Booktalk:**

Summer 1925, school is out and the hot days are here. Everybody in Dayton, Tennessee knows where to go to get a nice cold Coca-Cola and talk about the latest news around town, Robinson's Drug Store. Fifteen year-old Frances Robinson helps her dad work the fountains at the store, in between tennis lessons with her science teacher, Mr. Johnny Scopes (who she has a crush on, but don't tell that to Myrna Maxwell.) This looks to be the perfect summer, until her father asks Mr. Scopes to come down to the drug store to talk about his job.

At the store is the Mayor, the School Superintendent, and others. They ask Johnny if he has ever talked about evolution in class. To be honest, Johnny doesn't remember, but it's in the state science textbooks so he must have. The town elders light up. They ask Johnny if he'd be willing to go on trial to challenge the recent state law against the teaching of evolution. The way they see it, the ACLU has promised to pay for his defense, and it would bring all sorts of publicity to Dayton. Why, it would be great for business and the town and it would be a win-win situation. Who cares who wins the case, and even if Johnny "loses", he wouldn't lose his job.

It all seems like a great idea, plus famous people like William Jennings Bryan are coming to little Dayton. But soon Frances notices things she doesn't like: her beloved teacher being attacked and vilified, her friends and neighbors turning on each other, and worst of all, her father showing a side of himself that Frances doesn't think she likes.

How will the trial play out? And how will Frances and her family and friends be forever changed? Read *Monkey Trial* and find out.

**Reviews:**

Booklist. 12/15/2005

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books. 02/2006

Horn Book. 03/04/2006

Kirkus Review. 12/15/2005 (\*Starred Review)

KLIATT. 1/2006

School Library Journal. 02/2006 (\*Starred Review)

VOYA. 02/2006

**Author Website:**

[www.ronaldkidd.com](http://www.ronaldkidd.com)

**Related Web Sites on Topic:**

PBS: American Experience – Monkey Trial

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/monkeytrial/>

This site ties in with the PBS program, available on DVD, examining the Scopes Trial. A teacher's guide is available. Archived recordings of popular songs recorded during the trial are also featured.

University of Missouri-Kansas City Law School's Scopes Trial Page

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/scopes.htm>

Part of the University's "Famous Trials" website, this site is an extensive overview of everything dealing with the trial. It includes photographs, newspaper articles, related trials, and other events of 1925. Even videos taken at the trial and a Jeopardy styled game to test your knowledge is available.

**Related Books on Topic:**

Bryant, Jennifer. *Ringside 1925: Views From the Scopes Trial: a Novel*. New York: Knopf. 2008. Visitors, spectators, and residents of Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925 describe, in a series of free-verse poems, the Scopes "monkey trial" and its effects on that small town and its citizens.

Whiting, Jim. *The Scopes Monkey Trial (Monumental Milestones Series)*. New York: Mitchell Lane. 2006. Examines the 1925 trial in which John T. Scopes was accused of violating a recently passed Tennessee state law preventing the teaching of the theory of evolution.

**Awards or Honors:**

New York Public Library Recommended Books for Teens 2007

Tayshas (Texas) Reading Recommended Book for Young Adult 2007-2008

Tennessee Volunteer State Book Awards Nominee Young Adult 2008-2009

## **BORN TO ROCK GORDON KORMAN**

Korman, Gordon. *Born to Rock*. Hyperion Books: New York. 2006. 261p. Grades 7 and up.

### **Annotation:**

Young Republican Leo Caraway discovers that his biological father is the lead singer in the punk rock group Purge and becomes a roadie to learn more about his father.

### **Booktalk:**

*The thing about a cavity search is this: it has nothing to do with the dentist. If only it did.*

*They can give it polite names, like "additional inspection" or "supplemental investigation." But the fact is, you're bent over, grabbing your ankles, while some total stranger has his fingers in a very private place where nobody should be rummaging around.*

*Don't get me wrong. It doesn't scar you for life. You don't suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome. But no one who has been through it is ever quite the same again. The experience is just--big.*

*I'll go even further than that. There are two kinds of people in this world--those who have had a cavity search, and those who haven't. This is the story of how I wound up in the wrong category.*

Thus, Leo Caraway begins the ultimate life journey. Leo has never questioned his parentage, but when a school field trip requires his birth certificate, Leo discovers that his father, the one he lives with, is NOT his real father. Leo's biological father is Marion X. McMurphy. Leo Caraway, young Republican, a leader in his class, a soon-to-be Harvard student, discovers that Marion X. McMurphy is the real name for KING MAGGOT, lead singer of the most popular, most destructive punk rock band ever to grace a stage.

At first, Leo is not interested in who his bio-father is, but a turn of events and the possible loss of his Harvard scholarship lead him to seek out his famous father in hopes of getting money. Instead, what he gets is an eye opening look at drugs (not his own), sex (again, not his own) and rock and roll. He finds that his father is strange and his uncle is stranger still, and his introduction as a roadie is a surprising experience and an ending that won't disappoint you.

You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll cringe as you follow Leo through his harrowing adventures as a roadie with the punk rock band Purge.

**Reviews:**

Publisher's Weekly. 5/8/2006

Hornbook. 10/1/2006

School Library Journal. 6/1/2006

Booklist. 3/1/2006

VOYA. 6/1/2006

## RULES CYNTHIA LORD

Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. Scholastic Press: New York. 2006. 200p. Grades 4-7.

### **Annotation:**

Twelve-year old Catherine just wants to live a "normal" existence which seems impossible because of the demands of living with her autistic brother.

### **Booktalk:**

Chew with your mouth closed.

Say thank you when someone gives you a present (even if you don't like it).

If someone says "hi", say "hi" back.

When you want to get out of answering something, distract the questioner with another question.

Not everything worth keeping has to be useful.

If the bathroom door is closed, knock (especially if Catherine has a friend over).

Sometimes people laugh when they like you. But sometimes they laugh to hurt you.

No toys in the fish tank.

These are just a few of the rules that Catherine writes in her sketchbook for her autistic brother, David. Catherine hopes that by keeping a list of rules for David it will help bring some normalcy into her life. Catherine desperately wants to become friends with the new girl next door, but she is afraid that David will ruin everything.

When Catherine becomes friends with Jason, a boy at David's occupational therapy sessions, she has to choose between her new cool friend and her handicapped friend. It is through this process that Catherine begins to learn what being "normal" really means. Read *Rules* to follow Catherine on her journey of self-discovery.

### **Reviews:**

Booklist. 02/15/2006

Kirkus Review. 03/01/2006

Publisher's Weekly. 04/17/2006

Library Media Connection. 10/2006

School Library Journal. 04/01/2006

### **Author Website:**

[www.cynthialord.com](http://www.cynthialord.com)

### **Related Books on Topic:**

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. New York: Putnam. 2004.

A twelve-year old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to his autistic sister.

Martin, Ann. *A Corner of the Universe*. New York: Scholastic Press. 2002.

The summer that Hattie turns twelve, she meets the childlike uncle she never knew and becomes friends with a girl who works at the carnival that comes to Hattie's small town.

Creech, Sharon. *Granny Torelli Makes Soup*. New York: Joanna Colter Books. 2003.

With the help of her wise old grandmother, twelve-year old Rosie manages to work out some problems in her relationship with her best friend Bailey, the boy next door.

Philbrick, Rodman. *Freak the Mighty*. New York: Scholastic. 1993.

At the beginning of eighth grade, learning disabled Max and his new friend Freak, whose birth defect has affected his body, but not his brilliant mind, find that, when, they combine forces they make a powerful team.

**Awards or Honors:**

Newbery Medal/Honor 2007

Schneider Family Book Award 2007

**HEAT**  
**MIKE LUPICA**

Lupica, Mike. *Heat*. Philomel: New York. 2006. 220p. Grades 5-8.

**Annotation:**

Michael Arroyo dreams of taking his baseball team to the Little League World Series while he and his brother try to survive without their father and avoid social services to keep from being separated.

**Booktalk:**

12-year-old Michael Arroyo is a poor Cuban immigrant with big dreams. His hero is the major league pitcher and fellow Cuban El Grande. Michael wants to be just like him-- but first he wants to pitch his team to the Little League World Series.

*Heat* is a coming-of-age baseball novel by Mike Lupica and aptly titled. Michael's fastballs can be clocked at over 80 miles per hour, so he's definitely capable of throwing some heat. But sadly, Michael is also feeling the heat in his difficult home life. He lost his mother to cancer at a young age, and his father died of a heart attack just a few months after coming to America with Michael and his 17-year-old brother Carlos, leaving the boys to fend for themselves. The only two people outside of their family who know of Michael's secret are his best friend Manny and his neighbor, Mrs. Cora. If the authorities found out about Michael's father's death, Michael and his brother might have to go into foster care or, even worse, be sent back to Cuba. If this isn't enough to worry about, a coach from an opposing team signs a petition to have Michael removed from his team until he can obtain his birth certificate from Cuba.

*Heat* by Mike Lupica is a fast-paced sports story that is upbeat and fun to read. It has heart and will appeal to sports and non-sports fans alike.

**Reviews:**

Booklist. September 2006

School Library Journal. May 2006

**Author Website:**

[www.mikelupicabooks.com](http://www.mikelupicabooks.com)

**Related Books on Topic:**

Gantz, Alan. *Samurai Shortstop*. Dial Books, 2006.

While obtaining a Western education at a prestigious Japanese boarding school in 1890, 16-year-old Toyo also receives traditional samurai training which has profound effects on both his baseball game and his relationship with his father.

Haven, Paul. *Two Hot Dogs with Everything*. Yearling Book, 2006.

Although everyone credits him and his superstitions for the Slugger's first winning streak in 108 baseball seasons, 11-year-old Danny Gurkin believes that his discovery of a secret from the team's past may be the real reason behind the ball club's success.

Mosher, Howard Frank. *Waiting for Teddy Williams*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

Ethan "E.A." Allen, a boy raised in the remote village of Kingdom Common, Vermont, by his honky-tonk mother and crippled grandmother, shares the town's obsession with baseball and the Boston Red Sox. With the coaching of Teddy Williams, a mystery man who arrives in town one day, E. A. becomes the pitcher who breaks the team's long-time losing streak.

Murphy, Claire Rudolf. *Free Radical*. Clarion Books, 2002.

In Fairbanks, Alaska, in the middle of the summer Little League baseball season, 15-year-old Luke is stunned when his mother confesses that she is wanted by the FBI for her role in the death of a student during an anti-Vietnam War protest 30 years ago.

Ritter, John H. *The Boy Who Saved Baseball*. Puffin Books, 2005.

The fate of a small California town rests on the outcome of one baseball game, and Tom Gallagher hopes to lead his team to victory with the secrets of the now disgraced player, Dante Del Gato.

Turner, Ann. *Hard Hit*. Scholastic Press, 2006.

A rising high school baseball star faces his most difficult challenge when his father is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

### **Other Books by the Author**

#### Comeback Kids Series:

*Two-minute Drill*. Philomel Books, 2007.

Brainy Scott, a great kicker who otherwise struggles with football, and star quarterback Chris, who has dyslexia, team up to help each other succeed in both football and school.

*Hot Hand*. Walden Media, 2007.

In the wake of his parents' separation, 10-year-old Billy seems to have continual conflicts with his father, who is also his basketball coach, but his quiet, younger brother Ben, a piano prodigy, is having even more trouble adjusting, and only Billy seems to notice.

*Travel Team*. Philomel Books, 2004.

After he is cut from his travel basketball team—the very same team that his father once led to national prominence—12-year-old Danny Walker forms his own team of cast-offs that might have a shot at victory.

*Miracle on 49<sup>th</sup> Street.* Puffin Books, 2006.

12-year-old Molly is surprised to learn from her dying mother that Josh Cameron, a star player with the Boston Celtics and media darling, is her father, and once she gets to know him, Molly comes to realize why her mom kept his identity a secret for so long.

*Summer Ball.* Philomel, 2007.

13-year-old Danny must prove himself all over again for a disapproving coach and against new rivals at a summer basketball camp. Sequel to *Travel Team*.

*The Big Field.* Philomel Books, 2008.

When 14-year-old baseball player Hutch feels threatened by the arrival of a new teammate named Darryl, he tries to work through his insecurities about both Darryl and his remote and silent father, who was once a great ballplayer too.

**JEREMY FINK AND THE MEANING OF LIFE**  
**WENDY MASS**

Mass, Wendy. *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*. Little, Brown: New York. 2006. 304p. Grades 5-7.

**Annotation:**

As his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday approaches, Jeremy receives a mysterious box labeled “the Meaning of Life”, and he and his friend Lizzy go in search of the four keys, hoping that Jeremy will be able to open the box on his birthday.

**Booktalk:**

Jeremy Fink is twelve and his life is about to change forever. Jeremy likes security: he always stays within four blocks of his apartment and he never takes the subway. His best friend Lizzy, who lives in his building, is the total opposite, always looking for adventure.

Just before his thirteenth birthday, Jeremy Fink opens a mysterious package to discover a locked box, which was prepared by his father before his death five years earlier. According to the inscription on the box, it contains the meaning of life. And Jeremy is supposed to open it for his birthday. The box has four locks and each lock takes a unique key. But the keys are not with the box.

During this time, Lizzy is plotting how to find the keys. All this sleuthing requires Jeremy to ride the subway, go to places farther than four blocks away, and to visit people he doesn't know. At Lizzy's urging they follow the clues from the letter that came with the box. After being caught breaking into an office space, looking for more clues and keys, they are sentenced to perform community service for an eccentric elderly gentleman. This man sends them to various people to return items they had pawned with his father many years before. Upon each visit they learn a life-truth from the person they are visiting.

Join Jeremy and Lizzy on their journey to find the meaning of life.

**Reviews:**

Hornbook. 1/1/2007

Publisher's Weekly. 12/11/2006 (\*Starred Review)

Booklist. 12/15/2006

School Library Journal. 12/01/2006

Kirkus. 10/15/2006

**Author Website:**

[www.wendymass.com](http://www.wendymass.com)

**Related Books on Topic:**

Hobbs, Valerie. *Sheep*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2006.

A young border collie acquires a series of owners after a fire destroys the farm where he was born, as he seeks a home and longs to fulfill his life's purpose of shepherding sheep.

Powell, Randy. *Swiss Miss*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2008.

Milo is in fifth grade when his mother and philosopher father get divorced. When he is in tenth grade, his mother marries wealthy businessman and Milo is still a bit of a loner, looking for the meaning of life.

**Other Books by the Author:**

*Leap Day*. New York: Little, Brown. 2004.

Josie Taylor turns sixteen on her fourth real birthday, having been born on February 29<sup>th</sup>.

*A Mango-Shaped Space*. New York: Little, Brown. 2003.

Thirteen-year-old Mia Winchell appears to be the most normal kid in her family; however, she hasn't told anyone that sounds, numbers, and letters have color for her.

*Twice Upon a Time #1: Rapunzel, the One with All the Hair*. New York: Scholastic, 2005.

Rapunzel is having the ultimate bad-hair day but things begin to change when she crosses paths with Prince Benjamin.

*Twice Upon a Time #2: Sleeping Beauty, the One Who Took the Really Long Nap*. New York: Scholastic, 2006.

Princess Rose is cursed by a fairy, pricks her finger, and takes a one-hundred-year nap.

*Heaven Looks a Lot Like the Mall*. New York: Little, Brown, 2007.

This is the story of Tessa, a spunky heroine, who is unhappy with life and hasn't always made the right choices, but who needs to discover what makes life worth living.

**Awards or Honors:**

*Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* was:

- ✓ chosen as VOYA's Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers 2007
- ✓ nominated for the 2009 Grand Canyon Reader Award (formerly the Arizona Young Readers' Award)
- ✓ nominated for the 2008-2009 Pennsylvania Young Readers' Choice Award
- ✓ chosen as a Book Sense pick
- ✓ selected for the 2007-2008 Texas Lone Star Reading List
- ✓ named a Junior Library Guild Premier Selection

*A Mango-Shaped Space* was:

- ✓ awarded the 2004 Schneider Family Book Award in the middle-grade category by the American Library Association.
- ✓ awarded the 2005 Great Lakes Great Book Award from the great state of Michigan!

- ✓ named in the 2004 YA Top 40 by the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association
- ✓ nominated for the 2005 New Hampshire's Great Stone Face Award and the Iowa Teen Award; for the 2006 Virginia's Young Reader Award, Nevada Young Readers' Award, and Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award, and the South Carolina Young Adult Book Award 2006-2007
- ✓ a VOYA Top Shelf selection 2003
- ✓ an autumn 2003 Children's Book Sense 76 pick
- ✓ listed as a 2004 & 2005 New York Public Library's Best Books for the Teen Age
- ✓ a Bank Street Books top 35 children's books of the last 35 years

**DAIRY QUEEN**  
**CATHERINE GILBERT MURDOCK**

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. *Dairy Queen*. Houghton Mifflin: Boston. 2006. 288p.  
Grades 6 and up.

**Annotation:**

Sixteen-year old D.J. decides to try out for her school's football team after she has spent the summer helping the rival team's quarterback and running her family's farm.

**Booktalk:**

Sixteen-year old D.J. Schwenk is the only daughter in a dairy farming family. Her two older brothers are both college all-star football players and her younger brother is not only non-athletic, but also uncommunicative. D.J.'s father is recovering from surgery and her mother is busy being the principal of an elementary school. Her best friend Amber seems to be drifting away without explanation. So it falls on D.J.'s shoulders to keep the family farm running-- and if that wasn't enough responsibility, the coach of the rival high school's football team (and a close family friend), asks D.J. to help toughen up his quarterback, Brian.

After spending the summer training Brian, D.J. decides to try out for her own school's football team. Expectations are high for D.J., not only because of her brothers' phenomenal success on the football field, but also because she is a girl playing a "boy's" sport. Can D.J. overcome a host of obstacles in her journey to be a success, not only as a football player, but as well as a daughter, sister, and friend?

**Reviews:**

Booklist. 04/01/2006

Kirkus Review. 04/05/2006 (\*Starred Review)

Publishers Weekly. 05/15/2006 (\*Starred Review)

Horn Book. 10/01/2006

School Library Journal. 04/01/2006

**Author Website:**

[www.catherinemurdock.com](http://www.catherinemurdock.com)

**Related Books on Topic:**

Lantz, Francess L. *The Day Joanie Frankenhauser Became A Boy*. New York: Dutton. 2005.

Tired of gender stereotyping at home, in the classroom and especially on the football field, ten-year old Joanie pretends to be a boy when her family moves to a new town, but soon finds there are unexpected consequences.

Murdock, Catherine. *The Off Season*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 2007.

High school junior D.J. Schwenk staggers under the weight of caring for her badly injured brother, her responsibilities on the dairy farm, a changing relationship with her friend Brian, and her own athletic aspirations.

**Other Books by the Author:**

*Princess Ben*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. 2008.

**THE HEIGHTS, THE DEPTHS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN**  
**SALLY NEMETH**

Nemeth, Sally. *The Heights, the Depths, and Everything in Between*. New York: Knopf, 2006. 272p. Grades 5-8.

**Annotation:**

Lucy, who is six feet tall, and her best friend Jake, who is four feet short, don't care that everyone makes fun of them, until they get to middle school and their friendship is tested in an unexpected way

**Booktalk:**

"When we were little, my best friend Jake and I saw eye-to-eye. Then I grew, and he didn't. I grew a lot. He didn't grow at all. He never really will. He's a dwarf, and I'm a freak of nature. I swear, you should see us. He looks like everyone else except he's got these short arms and legs and stands about four feet tall. I'm thirteen years old and five-foot-ten. Since fourth grade, I've been the tallest girl in my class, but at five-foot-ten I'm taller than all the boys too. It's ridiculous. And Jake and me together? It's no wonder that we turn heads. Heck, I'd look too. I don't think I'd yell, 'Hey, look everybody, the circus is in town!' but that's just me. Unlike some people, I was taught some manners."

"Oh, yeah - my name. Lucy. Lucy Small. Yep - I'm five-foot-ten, and my last name is Small. Jake's last name is Little. Lucy Small and Jake Little. Other people think it's kind of tragic. I think it's hilarious. What choice do I have? In grade school, on the playground, the girls would jump rope, singing, 'Lucy Small, Lucy Small, Lucy Small is ten feet tall.'" Jake had a worse time of it, but even he saw the humor. It's true what they say: you gotta laugh, or all you do is cry."

Lucy and Jake set off for Junior High like any other two red-blooded American kids complete with family problems, social ridicule, physical awkwardness, and teenage angst. Lucy tells the story of their changing friendship with humor, love and understanding.

**Reviews:**

Horn Book Guide. April 1, 2007

Publishers Weekly Annex Reviews. September 4, 2006

Booklist. July 1, 2006

Praise from Little People of America: Nemeth tells a compelling story about two kids who want to find friends, want to be loved, and want to be accepted...And she never hints that Jake ever feels sorry for himself because of his dwarfism. Instead, the dwarfism just exists, a part of his life, as he pursues the same goals that every other middle schooler pursues." Little People of America, LPA TODAY

**Author Website:**

<http://sallynemeth.com>

**Related Web Sites on Topic:**

Little People of America

<http://www.lpaonline.org>

Little People of America (LPA) is a nonprofit organization that provides support and information to people of short stature and their families.

**LIFE AS WE KNEW IT**  
**SUSAN BETH PFEFFER**

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. *Life As We Knew It*. Harcourt. 2006. 337p. Grades 6-8.

**Annotation:**

After a meteor hits the moon, 16 year-old Miranda and her family must learn to survive the natural disasters that follow.

**Booktalk:**

**Spring**

**May 7<sup>th</sup>**

I talked to dad and his new wife, Lisa, today. They are expecting a baby in December. They want me to be the baby's godmother. I hope Lisa changes her mind so I won't have to deal with it. Everyone is talking about this moon thing. It's like the most talked about thing at school, home and around town.

**May 18<sup>th</sup>**

At 9:30, we began watching the sky. And then it hit. Even though we knew it was going to happen, it was still a shock. The moon is smack in the middle of the sky, way too big, way too visible. You could see the details on the craters even without binoculars. Mom tried to call Matt at college and Grandma in Las Vegas but kept getting a busy signal. CNN is reporting flooding due to tidal waves caused by the tilt of the moon. My cell phone won't work; the TV reception keeps going in and out so we can't get the latest news. Things are getting scary. I wish I could get a hold of Dad, and Matt and Grandma and know that they were okay. Mom wants us to try and get some sleep.

**May 19<sup>th</sup>**

The TV connection has been restored for now. According to the news, there are widespread tsunamis and more flooding due to the moon controlling the tides. Mom took us to the grocery store to get as many canned good as we could pile in our carts. She had already gone to the bank to cash out our accounts and filled all the vehicles up with gas. She is really starting to scare me maybe something really bad is happening. I hope Dad and Matt and Grandma are okay. After we got home from the store and had stored all the food in the pantry, Mom thanked us and started crying. I know now things are bad.

**Summer**

**June 11<sup>th</sup>**

It has rained for the last couple of days, hard rain, and bad thunderstorms with horrible lightning. Thank goodness the electricity didn't go out. Mom got the mail today, all we get is bills. No letters or catalogs. Jonny is going to baseball camp in a couple of weeks. The camp has its own farm with chickens and milk cows At least Jonny will be getting enough to eat, and one least mouth for us to feed.

**June 25<sup>th</sup>**

Gas is \$12 a gallon. So driving is out of the picture unless an emergency, the bikes are the main transportation now. It has turned so hot, it's unbearable outside. Our food supply is getting low. I think Mom was counting the cans in the pantry this morning. Maybe it would be a good idea to cut down to 2 meals a day. This is no doubt the worse summer of my life.

Written in diary form, we the readers live through the chain of horrific occurrences described in 16-year-old Miranda's journal. Life goes from bad to worse for the family as they struggle to survive in a world where daily food, warmth and keeping your sanity is getting harder and harder each passing day. Miranda knows her life will never be the same again.

Read *Life As We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer to discover the most essential tools for surviving and how Miranda's priorities changed for her family and the simple pleasures of life she appreciated.

**Reviews:**

Booklist. 09/01/06 (\*Starred Review)

Horn Book. 04/01/07 (\*Starred Review)

Kirkus Review. 09/15/06

Publishers Weekly. 10/16/06 (\*Starred Review)

School Library Journal. 10/01/06

Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA).10/01/06

**Related Books on Topic:**

Non-Fiction:

Jordan, Shirley. *America's Greatest Natural Disasters: Moments in History*. Perfection Learning. 2003. Grades 5-8.

Vaughan, Jenny. *Natural Disasters*. Franklin Watts. 1999. Grades 6-8.

Fiction:

Kehret, Peg. *Earthquake Terror*. Puffin Books. Grades 5-8.

**Other Books by the Author:**

*The Dead and the Gone*

*Revenge of the Aztecs*

*The Riddle Streak*

**EVERLOST**  
**NEAL SHUSTERMAN**

Shusterman, Neal. *Everlost*. Simon & Schuster: New York. 2006. 336p. Grades 8 and up.

**Annotation:**

After a fatal car crash, Nick and Allie find themselves stranded between life and death in the world of the “everlost.”

**Booktalk:**

Crash! The sound of the impact echoes through the silent forest. Nick and Allie fly through the windshields of their families’ cars. Neither Allie nor Nick was wearing a seat belt; Allie had removed her belt to adjust her blouse, and Nick was the fifth passenger in a car equipped for four.

Now the world has gone dark. Allie feels herself floating through a tunnel. The wind in the tunnel picks up speed, and she moves faster and faster toward the point of light. In the rush toward the tunnel’s end, Allie is suddenly bumped and thrown off course. She grabs and realizes she has bumped someone—someone about her size. Nick and Allie spin wildly. Falling from the black tunnel, they plummet to the forest floor. Exhausted, they fall asleep for a long, long time.

Eventually they awaken to find a younger boy watching them. He wants new playmates; he has been alone in the forest so long. Slowly with the help of the boy, Nick and Allie realize they are in a place between life and death. They had died in the accident but did not arrive at their final destination. Nick and Allie are Afterlights in Everlost.

Mary Hightower, the Queen of Snots, writes, “Waking up in Everlost is like jumping into a cold pool. It’s a shock at first, but once you’re in the water is fine.”

Everlost presents new challenges to Allie and Nick. Everlost and the living world exist together. The living world looks ephemeral and ghostly while Everlost is solid. Afterlights will sink in the ground unless there has been a death on the spot they are standing. There are others in Everlost; however, there are no adults—only children and monsters.

Mary Hightower writes, “To date no grown-up has ever been documented to cross into Everlost. The reason is quite obvious...adults always think they know exactly where they’re going, even if they don’t, so they all wind up somewhere.”

Journey through Everlost with Nick and Allie. Meet Mary Hightower; confront the Haunter; battle the McGill; discover special powers. Will Nick and Allie always be “everlost” or will they find the way to their eternal destination?

**Reviews:**

Booklist. 9/15/2006  
Horn Book Guide. Spring, 2006  
Horn Book Magazine. November/December, 2006  
Kirkus. 10/1/2006  
Library Media Connection. February, 2007  
Publisher's Weekly. 11/6/2006  
School Library Journal. 10/1/2006  
VOYA. 10/1/2006

**Author Website:**

[www.storyman.com](http://www.storyman.com)

Neal Shusterman's website contains biographical information as well as information about books, games, film and television, and author visits. Visitors can also listen to readings from his books and participate in a discussion forum.

**Related Books on Topic:**

Zevin, Gabrielle. *Elsewhere*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York. 2005.  
After fifteen-year-old Liz Hall is hit by a taxi and killed, she finds herself in a place that is both like and unlike Earth, where she must adjust to her new status and figure out how to "live."

Soto, Gary. *The Afterlife*. Harcourt: New York. 2003.  
A senior at East Fresno High School lives on as a ghost after his brutal murder in the restroom of a club where he had gone to dance.

Wallace, Rich. *Restless*. Viking: New York. 2003.  
Frank, a teenaged ghost who has not been able to move on to a higher realm in the afterlife, tries to connect with his younger brother Herbie, a high school senior who was eight years old when Frank died.

Stroud, Jonathan. *The Leap*. Hyperion Paperbacks: New York. 2004.  
After her best friend, Max, drowns, grief-stricken Charlie discovers that she can enter a mysterious afterlife when she is dreaming, and as she tries desperately to find Max, she puts herself in grave danger from which only her brother can save her.

**Other Books by the Author:**

*The Shadow Club*. Little, Brown: New York. 1988.  
*Dissidents*. Little, Brown: New York. 1989.  
*Speeding Bullet*. Little, Brown: New York. 1991.  
*What Daddy Did*. Little, Brown: New York. 1991.  
*The Eyes of Kid Midas*. Little, Brown: New York. 1992.  
*Darkness Creeping*. Lowell House: New York. 1993.  
*Scorpion Shards*. Tor: New York. 1995.  
*Mindquakes*. Tor: New York. 1996.  
*The Darkside of Nowhere*. Little, Brown: New York. 1997.

*Mindtwisters*. Tor Kids: New York. 1997.  
*Downsiders*. Simon and Schuster: New York. 1999.  
*Thief of Souls*. Tor: New York.. 1999.  
*Mindbenders*. Tor Kids: New York. 1999.  
*Mindstorms*. Tor: New York. 2002.  
*The Shadow Club Rising*. Dutton: New York. 2002.  
*Shattered Sky*. Tor: New York. 2002.  
*Big Cool City*. Persea Books: New York. 2002.  
*Full Tilt*. Simon and Schuster: New York. 2003.  
*The Schwa Was Here*. Dutton: New York. 2004.  
*Dread Locks*. Dutton: New York. 2005.  
*Red Riders Hood*. Dutton: New York. 2005.  
*Ugly Duckling*. Dutton: New York. 2006.  
*Unwind*. Simon and Schuster: New York. 2007.

**Awards or Honors:**

Georgia Peach Book Award for Teen Readers, 2007-2008 Nominee.

**NOTES FROM THE MIDNIGHT DRIVER**  
**JORDAN SONNENBLICK**

Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Notes from the Midnight Driver*. Scholastic Press: New York. 2006. 261p. Grades 7 and up.

**Annotation:**

Alex's drinking and driving stunt leads him to a community service project that pairs him with the meanest bully in the Egbert P. Memorial Home for the Aged and gives him a lesson in responsibility.

**Booktalk:**

*"One measly little car crash. And suddenly I'm a convicted criminal."*

Sixteen-year-old Alex is unhappy with his current family situation. His parents have divorced, his mother has left him alone to go out on a date, and his father is currently dating Alex's teacher from the third grade. Could life be any more impossible?

Yep, it could. With a little help from a bottle of booze, Alex manages to gain a DUI, decapitate a \$500 yard gnome and get 100 hours of community service from Judge Judy.

Life is not fair.

Alex is pretty sure life is really unfair when he is assigned 100 hours of community service in a nearby senior center. But wait, life gets better...or worse...for Alex when he is assigned Sol Lewis, the meanest bully in Egbert P. Memorial Home for the Aged. Sol doesn't want Alex any more than Alex wants him. It's a bumpy road for Alex until he plays his guitar for Sol and finds out that Sol is an expert at music, guitars, and even sometimes life in general.

Join Alex in his bumpy ride through life's toughest lesson in *Notes From the Midnight Driver* by Jordan Sonnenblick.

**Reviews:**

Publisher's Weekly. 10/8/2006

Hornbook. 10/1/2006

School Library Journal. 10/1/2006

Booklist. 10/1/2006

VOYA. 9/1/2006

**RUNAWAY**  
**WENDELIN VAN DRAANEN**

Van Draanen, Wendelin. *Runaway*. Knopf. 2006. 256p. Grades 6-8.

**Annotation:**

Twelve-year old Holly lives on the streets, documenting her life in a journal, after her mother dies of a drug overdose and she runs away from an abusive foster home.

**Booktalk:**

*May 17<sup>th</sup>. It's cold. It's late. I'm trapped in here, trying to sleep under this sorry excuse for a blanket, and I've just got to tell you—you don't know squat. You think you know what I'm going through, you think you know how I can "cope," but you're just like everybody else: clueless.*

*"It's a cold, hard, cruel fact that my mother loved heroin more than she loved me."*

Holly lives on the streets. In two years, she's been in five foster homes, and when her most recent home becomes abusive, Holly has had enough. Whenever she's run away in the past, she's always been found quickly and placed back in foster care. This time she's successful, and writes about her daily life as a runaway in her journal. Holly's trials include finding food, hopping trains, sleeping in parks, and near misses with social workers and police.

This urban survival story will grip you from start to finish. Holly is a smart and stubborn twelve year-old whose voice will ring true with middle school students. Be sure to check out *Runaway* by Wendelin Van Draanen.

**Author Website:**

<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/vandraanen/>

The author's website contains biographical information and special sections on her successful Shredderman and Sammy Keyes series.

**Reviews:**

Booklist. 9/1/2006

Horn Book Guide. 4/1/2007

Publisher's Weekly. 10/23/2006

School Library Journal. 9/1/2006

VOYA. 12/1/06

## **THE RULES OF SURVIVAL**

### **NANCY WERLIN**

Werlin, Nancy. *The Rules of Survival*. Dial Books: New York. 2006. 259p. Grades 7 and up.

#### **Annotation:**

Child abuse, more psychological than physical, has taught Matthew that his fear and terror can help in saving himself and his sisters from their psychotic mother.

#### **Booktalk:**

Matthew is writing a letter to his younger sister, Emmy, about what has happened to them, from the time he was four and first understood what his job was in their frightening and unpredictable family, until now, when he is eighteen, and getting ready to leave her and Callie for the first time.

It was Matthew's solemn hope that Emmy would not remember the terror that they lived through. Fortunately, the night Callie and Matthew thought Nikki was going to kill them, Emmy was asleep in the back seat of the car, as she deliberately drove on the wrong side of the road, heading directly into oncoming traffic. "Tell me you love me best", our mother said. Her voice was once more calm, and her hands on the wheel of the car were steady. "Convince me, Matthew." I wanted to. I wanted to! But my throat had closed up. I couldn't speak – couldn't say what she wanted – couldn't -! The oncoming car swerved out of our way, honking madly, missing us by inches. "Mom!" Callie yelled. "Mom, of course we love you -!" A horn blared, long and hard. Another oncoming car swerved out of our path, but there was another behind it – coming straight on – too close – "I love you!" I screamed. "You're the best mother in the world!" Our mother swerved back into our own lane, and laughed.

Our mother said, breathlessly, "Oh, now that was fun. Wasn't that fun, guys? Sort of like a roller coaster." She laughed again.

God's honest truth, Emmy: I don't think I was ever able to look at our mother and just see her. Instead, I'd see in my memory the things she did over the years and the expression on her face when she did them. So I could never quite believe that strangers didn't run screaming down the street at the very sight of her.

But they didn't.

What they lived through taught Matthew to be sure of nothing about other people; it taught him to understand that there are people in this world who mean you harm. And it taught him that the survivor gets to tell the story.

## **MATTHEW'S RULES OF SURVIVAL:**

1. Sometimes, the people who mean you harm are the ones who say they love you.
2. Fear is your friend. When you feel it, act.
3. Protect the little ones.
4. If you coped before, you can cope now.
5. Always remember: In the end, the survivor gets to tell the story.

### **Reviews:**

BCCB. Recommended 9/06

Booklist. 8/06 (\*Starred Review)

Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literature. 4/07

Kirkus. 7/15/06 (\*Starred Review)

Kliatt. 10/06 (\*Starred Review)

Publisher's Weekly. 10/9/06

VOYA. (Perfect 10) 9/06

Audio review. Horn Book. March/April 08

### **Author Website:**

[www.nancywerlin.com](http://www.nancywerlin.com)

Website includes a teacher's guide and a book discussion guide by Dr. Joni Richards Bodart and Nancy Werlin.

Subject areas for discussion include: Family relationships; violence; child abuse; abuse, physical; abuse, emotional; mental illness; problem parents; secrets; intimidation; friendship; fear; anger; divorce and separation; love; dysfunctional families; lying and deceit; manipulation; self knowledge; survival.

### **Other Books by the Author:**

*Are You Alone on Purpose?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

A moving portrait of two remarkable teenagers coming to grips with their unhappy circumstances and, one is convinced, triumphing in the end. Nancy Werlin's first novel.

*Black Mirror: A Novel.* New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2001.

Frances's brother, Daniel, has committed suicide, and she can't help thinking it is somehow her fault. In trying to understand, she soon finds herself in the middle of a puzzle too ominous to ignore.

*Double Helix.* New York: Dial, 2004.

A suspense thriller set in the contemporary world of biotechnology; it explores identity, intimacy, and the complicated ethics of genetic engineering. It is a love story about Eli and his girlfriend, but also a family story about a father and his son.

*The Killer's Cousin.* New York: Delacorte Press, 1998.

Recently acquitted of murder, 17-year-old Daniel has moved to Massachusetts where he finds a new residence with his aunt and uncle. But his attic apartment doesn't feel like

shelter and the behavior of his cousin, Lily, keeps getting more threatening. The more he learns about Lily, the harder it is to avoid thinking about his past.

*Locked Inside*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2000.

Kidnapped, locked inside an empty basement cell, Marnie is forced to confront painful truths about herself and her famous mother as she desperately tries to escape her jailer. How little her cyber-adventure game has prepared her for this real-life dungeon!

**Awards for *The Rules for Survival*:**

A 2006 National Book Award finalist, *Young People's Literature*.

A *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize finalist.

An ALA Best Books for Young Adults: Top Ten Choice.

An ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Teen Readers.

A *School Library Journal* Best Book of 2006.

A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Children's Book of 2006.

A *VOYA Review* Editor's Choice for 2006.

A Top Ten *BookSense* Winter 2006-2007 Children's Book Pick.

A Texas Tayshas reading list selection for 2007-2008.

A *Kansas City Star* Noteworthy Book of 2006.

A New York Public Library Best Book for the Teen-Age.

2007-2008 Rhode Island Teen Book Award nominee.

A Capitol Choices Noteworthy Book selection, 2007.

A Junior Library Guild selection.

Cybils Young Adult Book Award finalist, 2007 (online community award).

JHunt Young Adult Book award nominee 2007 (online community award).

A Virginia Readers' Choice list selection for 2008-2009.

A Missouri Gateway Readers Award list selection for 2008-2009.

An Iowa High School Book Award 2008-2009 Master List selection.

A South Carolina Book Award 2008-2009 Master List selection.

A Tennessee Volunteer State Book Awards selection, 2008-2009.

A Washington State Evergreen Master List selection for 2009.

A Sequoyah Young Adult Award Master List selection for 2009. (Oklahoma Young Adult choice award)