

Sugar and Ice by Kate Messner

For Claire Boucher, life is all about skating on the frozen cow pond and in the annual Maple Show right before the big pancake breakfast on her family's maple farm. But all that changes when Claire is offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity—a scholarship to train with the elite skaters in Lake Placid.

Tossed into a world where competition is fierce and some of her fellow skaters are mean girls on ice, Claire wonders how her sweet dream come true could have such sharp edges. Should she give up? Or can she find the strength to stand up to the people who want her to fail—and the courage to decide which dream she wants to follow?

A Tale Dark and Grimm by Adam Gidwitz

“Once upon a time, fairy tales were awesome. I know, I know. You don't believe me. I don't blame you. A little while ago, I wouldn't have believed it myself. Little girls in red caps skipping around the forest? Awesome? I don't think so.

But then I started to read them. The real, Grimm ones. Very few little girls in red caps in those.

Well, there's one. But she gets eaten.

You see, there's another story in Grimm's Fairy Tales. It is the story of two children—a girl named Gretel and a boy named Hansel—traveling through a magical and terrifying world. It is the story of two children striving, and failing, and then not failing. It is the story of two children finding out the meanings of things.

(But) before I go on, a word of warning: Grimm's stories—the ones that weren't changed for little kids—are violent and bloody. And what you're going to hear now, the one true tale in the Tales of Grimm, is as violent and bloody as you can imagine.

Really.

So if such things bother you, we should probably stop right now.

You see, the land of Grimm can be a harrowing place. But it is worth exploring. For, in life, it is in the darkest zones one finds the brightest beauty and the most luminous wisdom.

And, of course, the most blood.”

A Tale Dark and Grimm----not for the faint of heart...

Big Nate: In a Class By Himself by Lincoln Peirce

Nate Wright is having his worst school day ever. Everything goes wrong as he accumulates one detention after another.

After eating a fortune cookie containing the message, “You will surpass all others”, Nate forms a plan that includes setting the record for consuming cafeteria green beans,

and catching the eye, and heart, of the “popular girl”, Jenny. As each antic backfires, Nate’s miseries increase.

If you loved “Diary of a Wimpy Kid”, you’re going to love Big Nate, and Peirce’s comic strip characters are a delight. So how does Nate’s day end? Read it and laugh!

The Adventures of Nanny Piggins by R.A. Spratt

After repeated applicants had declined to take the job, Mr. Green was desperate to hire a nanny (as cheaply as possible, of course)...desperate enough to hire the smartly dressed pig who now stood on his doorstep. Her only credentials, his three children subsequently learned, were that she had been repeatedly blasted from a cannon during her years with the circus.

The children soon fell madly in love with Nanny Piggins. She had an insatiable urge to stuff herself and her charges with all things chocolate, and she thought it a barbaric practice to force children to go to school... especially in those awful, unfashionable uniforms. She was confident in the notion that her employer’s money was better spent taking the children to amusement parks and the beach. Her showdown with Headmaster Pimplestock marks only the first of many hilarious escapades distinguishing her career as nanny to the Green children, who couldn’t believe their luck.

Emily’s Fortune by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

When 8-year-old Emily Wiggins suddenly became an orphan, she and her pet turtle, Rufus, wondered where they could go. Her kindly neighbors, the Misses Ready, Aim and Fire, arranged for her to take the stage to Redbud to live with an aunt-by-marriage. Emily remembered Aunt Hilda as having a kind face and arms that hugged her tight.

However, Miss Catchum, rounder-up of orphans, strays and roustabouts, had other ideas. She got a big bonus for every child she placed with their closest blood relative: in this, case, Emily’s cold-hearted Uncle Victor. He had the eyes of a weasel, the growl of a bear, and a gold tooth that gleamed when he smiled, generally at the sight of someone else’s money.

How the ding dong dickens will Emily and Rufus escape the clutches of Miss Cathcum and Uncle Victor and arrive safely in Redbud, with her fortune intact?

The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester by Barbara O’Connor

Just as he was drifting off to sleep, Owen heard the faint clatter of the train approaching in the distance. It got louder and louder, and then he heard something else... a thud, the creak of splitting wood, a tumbling sound... something had fallen off the train in the woods! He couldn’t wait till morning, so he could go and explore. Maybe he’d get his buddies, Travis and Stumpy, to go with him...but they had to keep it a secret from bossy, know-it-all Viola next door!

The boys couldn’t believe what they found... It was big and red and made of metal. One

end was rounded, like the nose of an airplane. It had a small propeller and short, stubby wings. There was an enclosed compartment with large, bubble-shaped windows. On the side of this marvelous, mysterious object, painted in black letters, was a name: Water Wonder 4000.

Guinea Dog by Patrick Jennings

Rufus desperately wanted a dog. Rufus' dad was full of reasons why he couldn't have one. They whine, they drool, they lick other dogs, they eat dead things, they have to be walked in all kinds of weather, they stop every two seconds to sniff...the list went on and on. His mom tried to cheer him up by bringing home, of all things, a guinea pig. How lame was that...about as much fun as a pet fern! And he'd be the laughing stock of all his dog-owning friends, with their macho retrievers and Rottweilers. When Fido (he'd named her after the dog he'd never have) escaped from her cage and followed him to school, Rufus tried to pretend he didn't know her.

But Fido was no ordinary guinea pig. What was it about her that ultimately found Rufus' friends all pleading with their parents to buy them guinea pigs, as well?

Hide and Seek by Katy Grant

14-year-old Chase felt a charge of excitement when he found his first geocache! It had clearly been muggled (tampered with)...the lid was loose, and dirt and leaves had gotten inside. There were lots of treasures in the box...toy soldiers, a strand of beads, some Allen wrenches, a duck call and some other stuff. When Chase pulled out the logbook, preparing to write his entry and leave some trinkets of his own in exchange, he noticed something odd. The last thing recorded wasn't a log...it was a message: HELP WE NE. What in the world was that supposed to mean?

With the help of his GPS, his devoted dog, Dexter, and lots of thinking outside the box, Chase was able to track down the source and help a family in serious trouble... but not without lots of danger and cliff-hanging adventure along the way!

Saving Sky by Diane Stanley

“My name is Sky Brightman. I live on our ranch in New Mexico. We use solar energy, have gardens and horses. We don't have internet or television. There are terrorist attacks often in the world now. When there is a terrorist attack, my aunt Pat phones us to let us know. Aunt Pat phoned last week to tell us about the oil refineries and petrochemical plants in Louisiana being destroyed. And in our area too, things have been very frightening and difficult. I have seen people turn on others who appear different or who from different ethnic backgrounds. Now, I hear that Homeland security agents in our area are taking citizens away and detaining them in prisons. My family and I decided to help my classmate Kareem and hide him at our ranch. ...Read more about what happens in “Saving Sky”.

After All, You're Callie Boone by Connie Mack

It's summer now and for 11 year old Callie Boone, everything is going wrong! Her best friend since first grade has dumped her and she gets banned from the pool for breaking the rules.

So she is stuck at home with her weird family doing chores. A new neighbor skater boy named "Hoot" moves in next door and seeks her friendship. Callie worries that others will think

Hoot is her boyfriend. The summer before sixth grade is all about changes for Callie. Will Callie be able to take the changes and make it through?

On The Blue Comet by Rosemary Wells

Who would think that it would be possible to travel through time and space aboard a Lionel model train? But that's just what Oscar Ogilvie of Cairo, Illinois did. It's 1931 and the hard times of the Great Depression have hit hard. Oscar and his dad enjoyed many years in their home at the end of Lucifer Street with their grand set up of Lionel trains in their basement.

But in 1931, the Hard Times of the Great Depression have hit hard. They have to sell their house and Oscar's Dad leaves for California. Oscar has to go live with his Aunt Carmen and his young, thumb-sucking cousin Willa Sue. Things in Oscar's world greatly improve when Mr. Applegate walks by Aunt Carmen's house carrying "The Fireside Book of Poetry" checked out from The Cairo Public library. Join Oscar on his time travel adventure riding the rails and meeting famous people in his search to find his Dad and his way home. And-- you might just find yourself memorizing the words of the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling.

Museum of Thieves by Liam Tanner

Welcome to the city of Jewel. Jewel is strict society where all children under age 12 must wear long thin silver guard chains until they are twelve years of age. It is the blessed Guardians that keep the children safe in this land by use of strict control. Children who misbehave are made to wear the heavy gold punishment chains. The punishment chains are no stranger to Goldie Roth who is about to be separated from her guard chains now that she is 12 years old. The ceremony is stopped and Goldie manages to escape. She finds safe hiding in the Museum of Dunt; a strange and living museum of history. In the museum she meets a young boy who also ran away called Toadspit, and others including: Olga Ciavolga, Herro Dan, Sinew, "Morg" the Slaughterbird, a Brizzlehoud called "Broo". In the museum - what lies beyond the "dirty gate"? Will Goldie and her new friends be able to save the people of Jewel?

Frozen In Time by Ali Sparks

What would you do if you had to spend a long boring summer at your Uncle's house out in the countryside?

That is just what happens to Rachel and Ben Corder. And if things weren't already boring enough, the TV blows up and it seems like it will never stop raining! But all of a sudden, the rain stops and the sun comes out. Rachel and Ben explore the gardens – and what do they find?

An underground shelter buried long ago. Inside the shelter they find rooms and supplies -- canned food and stacks and stacks of toilet paper! But these things are old fashioned looking. Then they step into the next room. It feels cold. They notice two torpedo- like tubes. Rachel screams! There is a body within each tube! One is a girl and one is a boy. Eventually they discover that the two children are cryogenically frozen and were supposed to be that way for a short time only. But it is now more than 50 years later and Freddy and Polly wake up to find a very strange and new world. "Frozen in Time" is an action- packed adventure full of mystery and many humorous moments you will not want to put down.

Dream of Night by Heather Henson

Middle-aged Jess DiLima is finding it harder to respond to the phone calls in the middle of the night summoning her to another rescue by the Humane Society of abused and neglected horses. But she can't resist taking on a former race horse named Dream of Night who is terrified of people because of the terrible cruelty he has suffered. When Jess returns to her farm with Dream of Night she has the additional responsibility of a new foster child, Shiloh, who, like Dream of Night, has been removed from a violent domestic life and has been bounced from one unsatisfactory foster home to another. Both Dream of Night and Shiloh arrive at Jess's home full of anger, need and mistrust. Can Jess, using infinite patience and care help Dream of Night and Shiloh find their ways out of darkness to the hope and promise of a happier future?

Fast and the Furriest by Andy Behrens

Kevin Pugh, 12, and his dog Cromwell are the ultimate pair of couch potatoes. Kevin's father, Howie, a former player for the Chicago Bears, encourages Kevin to play football, but Kevin is only interested in the video game form of the sport. One day in his basement retreat while flipping through tv channels, Kevin happens upon the Purina Incredible Dog Challenge, a dog agility competition. Much to Kevin's surprise Cromwell, referred by Kevin as "part beagle, part potato chip", sits up, takes notice and is mesmerized by the stunning performance of Jody and her dog Shasta. As a result, Cromwell is soon acting

totally out of character. Cromwell asks to be taken for walks and attempts to jump through a hanging hoop in his back yard. Kevin's father, Howie, then insists he attend football camp for the summer. When Kevin's kicked out for injuring another player in practice he surreptitiously signs up Cromwell for agility training with Elka, the "dog-whisperer" trainer at Paw Patch. This is enthusiastically financed by best friend Zach, and Team Cromwell is born. After crashing his way through classes at Paw Patch, Cromwell surprisingly manages to win his first competition.

Is it possible to transform couch potatoes Kevin and Cromwell into champions to beat rivals Jody and Shasta in the Midwest Kennel Club Championship and win his family over to support them in their kind of sport?

Masters of Disaster by Gary Paulsen

After reading books like Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Treasure Island, and Hatchet, Henry Mosley tells his best friends Reed Hamner and Riley Dolen that the three of them are the most boring 12 year olds on the planet. Henry decides they need to become men of action and adventure and find out what they are made of and in the process impress girls. A bid to set the world record for the most forward airborne somersault on a bike is the first in a series of disasters that lands Reed in places filled with unmentionable types of goo. They venture into the wilderness and encounter escaped zoo animals, discover all retired bulls aren't docile and learn that housedogs don't make good sled dogs. Through each mishap Henry, Reed and Riley maintain their enthusiasm and certainly won't be considered boring by anyone.

The Strange Case of Origami Yoda by Tom Angleberger

Most of his sixth grade classmates think Dwight is weird but admit he does make cool origami, including a finger puppet of Yoda. When some students at the McQuarrie Middle School are faced with one question after another Dwight offers answers via his Origami Yoda. Origami Yoda appears to be able to predict the future and has advice that helps the students in puzzling situations. Before Dwight's friend Tommy can ask a girl to dance at a school function without making a fool of himself he wants to know if he can trust Origami Yoda's advice. To answer his question Tommy enlists the aid of fellow students to track down the results of Origami Yoda's advice; the ensuing chapters tell of those results.

Middle school can be a series of sand traps, some of them very funny to the observer, and if Origami Yoda's advice is useful, why not take it, even if that advice does come from a green paper finger puppet?

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper

Melody, a ten year old with cerebral palsy, is trapped in a body that leaves her unable to walk or to talk. Melody's parents are convinced she's intelligent and ignore a doctor's advice to institutionalize her at an early age. Mrs. Valencia, a next door neighbor who baby-sits Melody, sees the potential in her and challenges her physical abilities along with creating new ways for her to learn. Melody is sent to public school but because she can't verbally communicate, no one is aware of all the information locked in her brain. Melody is a collector of words: "cathedral, pomegranate, silky and iridescent" to name a few; all are precious to her. Melody's special needs class's introduction to "inclusion class" is a mixture of encountering children who are friendly to her special needs classmates and others who are openly cruel. As years go by Melody's ability to communicate progresses from a communications board to eventually a talking computer, and she's able to prove her high intelligence to the point of qualifying for the school's quiz bowl team.

This isn't a book with a "happily ever after" ending, but it leaves you admiring a character who is determined to overcome the limitations of a disability and to stand up to the hurtful attitudes she encounters in the public life she wants to be part of.

This book is great for opening discussions in families, in school, or in library book groups. One person will read it and recommend it to others: you won't be able to keep it on the shelf!

The Shadows (The Books of Elsewhere) by Jacqueline West

Eleven year old Olive has just moved into a weird, crumbling old mansion. What a place to explore! And all those antique paintings that line the walls, why do they seem so eerie? A secret attic room, three creepy cats and a pair of funny old-fashioned glasses, all add up to a fast moving adventure. When Olive puts on those glasses, she can see into... well, into places that she shouldn't go. Did that spot, in that painting, just move? Yes, yes it did! What is going on? The battle begins.

Ghost Dog Secrets by Peg Kehret

Randy notices the chained German shepherd on his way to school. The weather is cold and icy and there's no shelter for the dog. After school, Randy goes to check the dog. The shepherd looks young but his ribs are showing. There's no food or water around either. Randy buys a couple of hot dogs to feed the shepherd and decides to feed him again the next day. That night, Randy has a strange encounter--- a ghost dog appears in his room. The ghost dog wants Randy to follow but where? The ghost takes Randy to the shepherd that he had fed. Does the ghost dog want Randy to help the shepherd? Maybe, he's just got to take the dog to save it. Is Randy rescuing this dog or stealing it?

Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School: We The Children by Andrew Clements

Benjamin Pratt's school is going to be torn down to make way for an amusement park. The wrecking ball comes as soon as classes end for the summer. Ben should be happy but odd things are happening. First, the old janitor, Mr. Keane, gives Ben an old gold coin. The coin says the school belongs to the children, the school must be defended. Ben must swear to defend the school. Second, the new janitor Mr. Lyman, seems to be following Ben everywhere. He wants to know if Mr. Keane gave anything to Ben. Enlisting his super-smart friend Jill, these two students have twenty-eight days to find the clues and solve the mystery. Can they save the school against all the odds? Ben and Jill will have to work fast because Mr. Lyman is also on the hunt.

Magic Below Stairs by Caroline Stevermer

Frederick Lincoln is a good boy who works hard and does what he's told. He's living in an orphanage when he is selected to be a footboy for the local wizard. He will be living with the other servants below stairs. Unknown to Frederick is the fact that he is accompanied by a brownie whose name is Billy Bly. The wizard has forbidden any magical creatures in his home but that won't stop Billy Bly. He doesn't want to leave Frederick. More magic might be what they need as it is soon discovered that the manor is under a hidden curse-- a curse so deep and ugly that it may take all of them to break it. But , first ,they have to find it.

The Crowfield Curse by Pat Walsh

England, The winter of 1347

William, age fourteen, works as a servant at Crowfield Abbey, in exchange for room and board. Gathering firewood one day, he discovers a hobgoblin caught in a trap and rescues it. The hob tells William that he can only be seen by those with the sight. This is a gift William did not know he possessed. This boy walks the line between the real world and the magical fey world. The hob has told William of the dark curse put upon the abbey and of the magical being buried in the snow. Now comes the clash of good and evil ,dark and light, for the fey war is coming. William must stand strong and believe in himself to survive.

Cosmic by Frank Cottrell Boyce

Have you ever wished you could be someone other than who you are? Someone more confident, someone more athletic, or maybe even—someone older? Well, Liam Digby has the “older” thing in spades---he’s only 12 years old, but is already over 6 feet tall! (back when he was 7, and really starting to grow, his dad told his mom—“this isn’t a growth spurt—it’s a mutation!”) And it’s not just his height—Liam’s already shaving, and actually does get mistaken for a grownup. Which can be pretty cool when a car salesman gives you the keys to that sick red sportscar, and tells you to take it for a test drive. But what happens when you’ve earned yourself a spot on a trip to outer space by winning a “World’s Greatest Dad” contest, and you’re now the only “grownup” on a rocketship that’s 200,000 miles from Earth, and seriously off-course? Read “Cosmic” for a lot of laughs, and for some serious thinking about the stars, the earth, and the people that we live with---especially our dads.

Saving Zasha by Randi Barrow

"Maybe the soldier you found wasn't alone. Or he told you something important before he died. Or he still had his dog with him. His German dog," Katia said.

It’s 1945, and the war with Germany is finally over. Mikhail, 13, and his family are struggling to survive in their rural Russian community, where everything German is hated and Mikhail’s father is missing in action. An injured soldier had just enough time to entrust the care of his German shepherd to Mikhail before dying, and he and his family are determined to keep and protect this gentle, beautiful dog. But German shepherds are being shot on sight by people who see them as symbols of Hitler’s Germany, and anyone who owns one is considered a traitor to Russia.

Will Mikhail and his family be able to keep Zasha safe, especially with the nosey Katia asking so many questions? Read *Saving Zasha* to find out.