

Awkward by Svetlana Chmakova

Peppi Torres knows that her first day as a “new kid” in middle school is going to be difficult, but when she starts out by tripping into a not-so-popular boy, and then getting teased about being his “nerder girlfriend”, it becomes downright AWKWARD.

Peppi tries to manage the crisis by:

- * pushing away any of the boy’s attempts at friendship to make sure no one thinks she “likes” him, and
- * joining the art club, to get to know kids who like the same things she does.

But, she’s feeling guilty about being mean to someone who was just trying to be nice to her, and her beloved art club is being threatened with closure due to a “prank” they pulled on their rivals, the science club. Will Peppi’s first year at Berrybrook Middle School end as awkwardly as it began, or will she figure out a way to smooth things out?

Once you start reading *Awkward*, you won’t want to put it down until you find out!

The Fog Diver by Joel Ross

Imagine a time on Earth where deadly mists cover the land, and all but the highest mountaintops are uninhabitable. In this world, the rich and powerful live in beautiful houses on the high ground, while the poor struggle to survive on the lower slopes. Poorest of all are the ones who must make their living by entering the mists to recover leftover scraps from the world that existed there before, to sell to the scrap merchants above. It is children who seem to be able to resist the poison of the mist longer than the adults, so into the mists they go to support their families....

Thirteen-year-old Chess and his crew of fellow children sail in a rickety air ship just above the mist, with Chess “diving” into the fog to retrieve items for sale. Thanks to the expertise of the crew and the fact that Chess seems to resist the poison of the mist more easily than anyone else, they run a fairly successful business.

But things are changing---Mrs. E, the woman who has been the closest thing to a mother the crew has ever known, is becoming ill, and they must leave their usual hunting grounds to find a cure for her. Maybe even worse, the powerful Lord Kodoc has taken notice of Chess’s abilities---and seems determined to make him a captive.

Will Chess and the crew manage to evade the powerful warships of Lord Kodoc in time to find a cure for Mrs. E? If you like non-stop action and wonderful characters who inhabit a fully imagined world, you will love **The Fog Diver**.

Nightbird by Alice Hoffman

They say there's a monster in Sidwell, Massachusetts. They say it has enormous black wings, and that it flies only at night.

Twig, who lives alone with her mother in the house her family has occupied for generations, knows that the stories are true. She knows that it's up to her to make sure no one gets close enough to their family to guess at the secrets they conceal.

But Twig is getting older, and it's getting harder to hold herself apart from the world around her. Life is meant to be lived, isn't it?

So, when a new family moves into the old property next door, Twig secretly defies her mother to make a friend---and sets into motion a series of events that will change their futures forever...

Nightbird is a story of love, of anger, of curses, and of blessings---will Twig's actions ruin her family's precarious existence, or will they bring about healing and forgiveness? Read Nightbird to find out.

Castle Hangnail by Ursula Vernon

Castle Hangnail has a vacancy. It is in need of a wicked witch. Molly applies for the position. She is twelve years old and very polite. Polite!! Wicked witches need to be evil, rude and demanding. Molly does not look like witch material, but Castle Hangnail needs a new master right now. A castle with no master will be decommissioned and the castle minions will have no home. Maybe, with the minions help, Molly will fit the bill.

Lost in the Sun by Lisa Graff

When Trent was in fifth grade a terrible accident occurred. Sixth grade in a new school will be a new start for him. Despite a new year, anger issues and guilty feelings are making Trent act horribly. He pushes everyone in his life away, he doesn't want anyone to like him. How can he have a nice life when that other boy died?

The Big Dark by Rodman Philbrick

A massive solar flare has knocked out the entire power grid all across America. No power, no communication, no water, cars don't start. Panic sets in as Charlie's small New Hampshire town starts to break down into chaos. When the power went down, people helped each other and shared. Now, civilized behavior is beginning to shatter. Who can you trust? Who can help? Charlie's mother has diabetes, she needs medication to survive. Charlie has to decide what to do.

Some Kind of Courage - Dan Gemeinhart

"I aint never shot a man, sir, and I hope I never do. But I'm gonna get my horse back." It's 1890, and young Joseph Johnson has suffered some terrible losses. First, his mother and little sister succumb to typhoid fever; then his kindly pa dies in a wagon accident. All he has left in the world is his beloved painted pony, Sarah, given to him when he was 4 years old. Joseph has been left in the dubious care of Mr. Grissom, a grizzled old drunk, who sells Joseph's Sarah to an unscrupulous horse trader. From thence begins an amazing odyssey, as Joseph sets out to recover his horse, always just a day's journey away from reaching his goal. Along the way he joins up with a Chinese boy named Ah-Kee...neither can speak the other's language, but they endure many hardships and experience many adventures together on their quest, including scaring off a mama grizzly and delivering a baby. A wonderfully imagined picture of the Old West and one boy's indomitable spirit... superb writing, filled with humor as well as heart...and a satisfying ending.

Teddy Mars: Almost a World Record Breaker – Molly B. Burnham

From the time 10-year-old Teddy Mars discovered an old copy of the *Guinness Book of World Records* behind the couch, he was obsessed. Teddy's five older siblings all had some badge of distinction or other, but there seemed to be nothing about Teddy to set him apart; this was going to be his claim to fame! His many attempts at record-breaking all led to failure, such as when he tried to rake the world's largest leaf pile and got sabotaged by the wind. But his greatest nemesis of all was his little brother Jake, whose idea of idolizing him was getting into all his things and destroying them. This ultimately led to his moving out of their room into a tent in the backyard. Teddy's next door neighbor, known to Teddy and his friends as Grumpy Pigeon Man, kept homing pigeons in a large outdoor loft...fascinating, but a little creepy. But once the old man enlisted Teddy's help to care for the birds, it opened up a whole new world of understanding for Teddy and his friends. Very amusing, with an endearing protagonist.

The Doublecross by Jackson Pearce

Imagine coming from a family with a history of spying. Not just any spies, but members of the elite *Sub Rosa Society*, a government funded organization! Meet 12 year old Hale, who comes from such a family. Hale has tough shoes to fill, since his parents are known as “The Team” in this elite organization. However, even “The Team” can run into trouble. When his parents disappear during a top secret mission, Hale’s opportunity to do real spy work comes sooner than he could have imagined. Teaming up with his sister and unlikely league agents, Hale works as a junior double agent to try to unravel the mystery of his parent’s disappearance, sort out the good from the bad and pass his junior level spy test. Sharpen your best detective skills, and hang on through this wild, who done it mystery adventure.

Seven Dead Pirates by Linda Bailey

Lewis Dearborn’s life transforms after the death of his great grandfather. His parents inherit the great grandfather’s historic mansion, with one catch:....they must live in the mansion for a year before the estate may be sold. Lewis claims the tower room with an ocean view and life takes a ghostly turn. He soon finds there’s more to be discovered than windows that won’t latch, fishy odors, and strange noises that are hard to ignore. Indeed, he seems to have inherited seven pirate ghosts who perished two centuries ago, and a mission to help these feisty ghosts to cross over from the land of the living.... Lewis also discovers that the pirates become visible when they are scared or upset. *How can he keep their presence secret as he walks the crew across town to where their ship sits in a museum, waiting to ferry them to the underworld? Who else will discover his secret?*

A Night Divided by Jennifer Nielsen

The year- 1961

The month – August

The place- Germany

Almost overnight, The Berlin Wall was erected and families were divided.

Fast forward four years and meet 12 year old Gerta Lowe. Gerta’s family has been separated during this span of time. Her father and older brother were stuck in West Berlin, while she remained in East Berlin with her mother and younger brother. One morning at the market Gerta sees her father on the other side of the wall performing a strange dance. Through dance, Gerta’s father sends a message.

Though it takes time for Gerta to decode the meaning, she finally realizes he is telling her to escape. Gerta processes what this means and realizes the danger it poses for the family. Many have died trying to escape. Her desire to reunite her family is strong and her determination is unyielding. Follow Gerta as she plans her dangerous journey. How can a 12 year old escape soldiers, machine guns and tanks? How can she expect her mother and brother to join on this life threatening mission? Can Gerta succeed where many have failed? Read this heart stopping account of a child’s determination to bring her family together.

Pack of Dorks by Beth Vrabel

Lucy and her best friend Becky have a plan. They are going to kiss their boyfriends behind the shed at recess. But at the last second, Lucy wants to change her mind. She doesn't quite, but she doesn't put her heart into that kiss either, and her boyfriend Tom can tell, but he gives her the dime store ring anyway. That night her mom's gives birth to her new baby sister, but something isn't quite ok with the baby, though nobody's really telling Lucy what. She forgets that ring at the hospital, and when she comes back to school a few days later, just like that, Lucy is an outcast. Becky plays mean girl, Tom isn't her boyfriend anymore, and Lucy has to find a new crowd to sit with at lunch, the dorks. With her super cool granny helping her navigate the messiness of 4th grade cliques and friendships and a great cast of characters, you'll be glad you got to know this pack of dorks.

Nooks and Crannies by Jessica Lawson

Poor poor Tabitha Crum. Not a friend in the world except a pet mouse, and her parents are just absolutely horrible to her. But she does find some refuge in reading mysteries, which is a good thing, because just when her parents suddenly announce they have to leave (and are leaving Tabitha to be a scullery maid at the school), she and five other kids receive a mysterious invitation to a very wealthy Countess's house. Her parents leap on this opportunity and drag Tabitha along. Turns out the Countess, a very mysterious figure, is looking for someone. Let the mysteries begin! Is the Countess who she says she is? Where are all of the other kids disappearing to? What was that noise? Tabitha is on the case, and we're rooting for her to solve this terrific mystery.

Pax by Sara Pennypacker

Pax is the word for peace in Latin. Through the ancient and modern world, the word pax has many associations. In this book, Pax is the name given to an orphaned fox kit adopted by a boy named Peter. In the beginning of the story, Peter is made to return the tame fox to the wild because his father has enlisted in the military. Peter is sent to live with his grandfather 300 miles away. As soon as he arrives, Peter knows his place is with Pax. So instead of starting at his new school at his grandfather's house, Peter packs his backpack for the long journey back to find Pax. Meanwhile, Pax is learning the ways of the wild the forest. Can Peter find his way back to Pax in a land where war is breaking out? With the help of a new friend, Peter may just discover the way that leads to Pax.

Soar by Joan Bauer

Jeremiah is a huge baseball fan. Nobody knows his exact birthdate or who his Mother is. He was nine months old when he was found sitting in his baby chair chewing on a stuffed eagle in the snack room of Computer Partners Ltd. A note was left that said: "pleez tek car of him Bcaz he my best boy I know yur good!" Jeremiah was found by

Walt Lopper a computer engineer with a heart as big as his brain. Walt eventually adopted Jeremiah. When Jeremiah was eight years old he was diagnosed with a serious heart condition that would lead to a heart transplant. Jeremiah had to give up playing baseball but not the game he loves. A new consulting job takes Jeremiah and Walter to Hillcrest, Ohio home of the champion Hornets High School baseball team. Soon after Jeremiah arrives in Hillcrest, tragedy and scandal threaten the future of baseball in the town. Join Jeremiah and his new friends on this page turning adventure to bring baseball back to Hillcrest and make the newly formed Hillcrest Junior High Eagles baseball team soar!

Escape from Baxters' Barn by Rebecca Bond

If you were a cow, you'd be better off living with Old MacDonald, or in the dell with the farmer and his wife—anywhere else but in the Baxter brothers' barn!

The animals who *do* live in Baxters' barn are snug and happy until they learn from Burdock the one-eyed cat that Dewey, one of the brothers, is planning something terrible, something that puts them all in danger. Together they must come up with a way to escape the barn.

Can Burdock, Figgy Piggy, Nanny the goat and her kid, Fluff the sheep, Mrs. Brown the cow, and the two draft horses Pull and Tug work together? Can they get out of the locked barn in time?

The tension mounts as Dewey sets his plan in motion and each animal is forced to find its inner strength. Their fear is palpable, but so is the coziness of the barn with the rain on the roof and smell of hay and old wood. When they must leave, will they be ready?

Short chapters and warm black-and-white pen-and-ink drawings will engage readers, who will be cheering for these lovable animals who want nothing more than a safe home and each other.

When Mischief Came to Town by Katrina Nannestad

Wedged between a goat who nibbles at her braid and a cage full of pecking geese, ten-year-old Inge Maria Jensen is traveling by boat from Copenhagen to the Danish island of Bornholm. It's 1911. Her mother has died, and she is headed to live with a grandmother she has never met.

When Inge arrives, the island is not at all like the bustling city she grew up in, and her stern grandmother seems nothing like her lively, loving mother. Life is quiet, filled with chores and boring visits with grumpy old neighbors. Even worse is her new school, where there's no fun to be had, not even in music or at recess. She seeks solace in her beloved book of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales.

But even in her grief, Inge Maria is curious about her new surroundings and isn't able to contain her inner joy and zest for life, which sometimes causes her trouble.

How was she to know she shouldn't feed her grandmother's pig prunes? And how could she stop herself from leaving her seat and hopping like a bunny when she was carried away by the song in music class?

Perhaps Inge is just what the island of Bornholm needs.

Filled with humor, love, and acceptance, this gem of a book begs to be read aloud, and the spunky character of Inge is one all readers will long remember.

Pugs of the Frozen North

By Philip Reeve

Abandoned after his ship is crushed by a flash-frozen sea, Shen finds himself alone on the ice with only 66 sweater-clad pugs. Determined to get himself AND all the dogs to safety, Shen finds shelter in a small seaside village, where a girl named Sika explains everything. True Winter, she tells him, comes only once in a lifetime, and signals the start of The Great Northern Race, where competitors try to reach the Snowfather, who will grant the winner one wish. Sika has her grandfather's sled but no dogs, so the two join forces, harness all 66 pugs, and set off. They face a monstrous Kraken, a Yeti noodle bar that is not what it seems, and a range of competitors with different strategies for winning the race... including cheating. Can our two heroes survive? What wish do they want granted? And can pugs really win an epic race across the frozen north? Find out, in Pugs of the Frozen North!

Roller Girl

By Victoria Jamieson

Ladies and Gentlemen! Your roller derby skaters tonight are: Thrilla Godzilla, Illegally Blonde, Rainbow Bite, Napoleon Blownapart, Braidy Punch, Slay Miserables, and... Astrid.

Astrid is looking forward to another summer spent with her best friend, Nicole. They've done everything together since 1st grade. But when Astrid signs up for Roller Derby Camp, expecting Nicole to join her, she's in for a shock. Nicole is already signed up for dance camp, along with their grade's mean girl, and seems more interested in boys than skates. Now, Astrid faces a long summer of drills, training, bruises & falls, all without her best friend. But as the weeks go by, Astrid learns how not to fall over (usually), how to make a proper war face, and even makes a new friend. But former-best-friend drama and a summer of secrets from her mom catch up, and now Astrid must decide what she wants, and WHO she wants to be.

Blackthorn Key

By Kevin Sands

“I found it.

“Master Benedict said he wasn’t the least bit surprised. According to him, there were several times over the past three years when he was sure I’d finally discovered it. Yet it wasn’t until the day before my 14th birthday that it came to me so clearly, I thought God himself had whispered it in my ear. “My master believes occasions like this should be remembered. So, as he ordered, I’ve written down my formula. My master suggested the title.

The Stupidest Idea in the Universe

By Christopher Rowe,
Apprentice to Master Benedict Blackthorn, Apothecary

Method of manufacture:

Snoop through your master’s private notes. Find a recipe, its words locked behind a secret code, and decipher it. Next, steal the needed ingredients from your master’s stores. Finally— and this is the most important step— go to your best friend, a boy of stout character and poor judgment equal to your own, and speak these words: Let’s build a canon.”

Christopher Rowe rather enjoys his life as an Apothecary’s apprentice, uncovering the mysteries of different items and chemicals, and finding plenty of mischief along the way. But when a series of murders across the city strikes too close to home, Christopher is drawn into a world of cults and puzzles, and must use all his training to solve his master’s secrets... and possibly save the world.