

The Best Man by Richard Peck

“Boys aren’t too interested in weddings.” That’s what 6th grader, Archer Magill says, despite the fact that he has already been in two. We first meet Archer after the wedding of two of his role-models (his uncle and his favorite teacher), but we won’t hear that story until later. Instead, we get to reminisce along with him about the first wedding he was in as a first grader and what a “train wreck” that was due to a rather embarrassing wardrobe malfunction (involving a lack of underwear).

We get to watch Archer navigate through his fifth grade year with all of its ups and downs with lots of humor, some heartache, and more love than anything else. A heartwarming and wholesome story that will leave the reader feeling satisfied and content.

As for that second wedding? Archer managed to stay fully dressed for that one. He was the best man, after all.

The Bicycle Spy by Yona Zeldis McDonough

Marcel loves to ride his bicycle through the streets of his town in France. He makes bread deliveries for his parent’s bakery. Marcel dreams of riding in the Tour De France, a famous bike race. But, since the German occupation of his country, all races have been cancelled. There are soldiers everywhere, stopping people with their checkpoints and questions. Marcel is stopped everyday as he makes his deliveries. Then, during one of his trips, Marcel learns that his family is in danger. His parents are members of the French resistance, a group dedicated to defeating the Germans. Marcel’s bike rides became more risky by the day, and soon he will have to ride to save many more lives than just his own.

The Bolds by Julian Clary

The Bolds are your typical family-- two parents, two children. They have a nice house, both parents have good jobs and they love to have fun. They love to laugh. There is one small difference--they are hyenas. They have fur and keep their tails tucked in tight. For years they have pretended to be humans but now their neighbors are getting suspicious. Are the Bolds really the Bolds? Don’t you think they act like... um...you know like ... animals? What can they do but to try and act normal. Surprise encounters, new friends and with a little luck maybe all of this will blow over. Let’s hope the Bolds will come out on top.

The Courage Test

by James Preller

Will doesn't have any choice, he does not want to go camping but, his father drags him along anyway. He wanted to play baseball this summer. Instead, he's following the route that Lewis and Clark took as they explored the wilderness. Boring!! However, Will senses something isn't right. Why did his father decide on this trip so suddenly? The trip isn't all bad. He meets exciting strangers, has a few thrills. Thrills like whitewater rapids, high mountain cliffs and a bear. That bear was scary! What do you do when you meet an angry bear? Will finds out about courage. A little courage may help you out during life's little tests.

The Curse of the Boggin: The Library

by D.J. MacHale

There's a place where the spirits tell their tales. Tales of unexplained mysteries, ghosts and bogeymen. They all have a story to tell, so come to The Library, if you have the key. Marcus has a key and he needs to get into that library to find some answers. What is The Library, exactly, and why are these creepy things trying to take the key from him? Why does the Boggin want the key?

Marcus is having strange dreams and seeing awful things happen to other people. A strange man in a bathrobe is haunting him, fires rage and then just disappear. What is happening-- is it real or is he going nuts?

Marcus hopes The Library has the answer before the terror gets worse.

Flying Lessons & Other Stories edited by Ellen Oh

Tiny baby Lingsi was sold to the Li family only after Mrs Li promised the baby's mother to teach Lingsi to read upon her sixth birthday. Lingsi served the Li family as she grew. On Lingsi's sixth birthday the promise had to be honored or the Li family would suffer a curse from the broken promise. So it came to be that Lingsi would be tutored alongside the Li's son FuDing.

For six years Lingsi was tutored with the treacherous and cruel FuDung. All studies ceased when the Li family began to make preparations for their son's marriage. But who would marry FuDung? Why was Lingsi really bought? Was her purpose really more than just a servant?

The answers to these questions and more can be discovered in *The Difficult Path* by Grace Lin. This is just one story in a collaboration of ten award winning authors in a dynamic collection of short stories. Some told in verse, some in diary form, all gripping from the beginning.

A brief bio is included on each of the contributing writers:

Kwame Alexander

Kelly J. Bapstist

Susan Chainani

Matt de la Pena

Tim Federle

Grace Lin
Meg Medina

Walter Dean Meyers
Ellen Oh
Tim Tingle
Jacqueline Woodson

Garvey's Choice by Nikki Grimes

Garvey feels he isn't the son his Father wanted. His father wants him to excel in sports but Garvey isn't good at sports. Garvey likes science fiction, astronomy, and reading. He also likes music and singing. A new friend encourages him to join the school chorus and Garvey gets to sing a solo. This novel is written in Tanka, an ancient poetry form which consists of five lines. The poetry style captures the many moods, feelings, and music of Garvey's world. Get to know Garvey by reading "Garvey's Choice" and hear the music of his story for yourself.

Ghost by Jason Reynolds

It seems like Castle Crenshaw has been running for most of his life---mostly from his experiences growing up in a tough neighborhood. He gives himself the nickname "Ghost" after he and his mother manage to run away from the most terrifying experience of all... now his father is in prison—and that's a good thing.

Ghost runs so fast that when a local track coach sees him sprint across the park, he's determined to sign him up for the team. But maybe Ghost doesn't want to be part of a team---all of those kids know more about track than he does, and there's all those rules he'll need to follow, that just seem to slow him down...

There comes a time when you need to stop running away from the life you've had, and learn how to run toward a better life. Can Ghost learn this lesson in time?

Ghosts by Raina Telgemeier.

Catrina's family is moving to northern California, hoping the cool sea air will make it easier for her little sister Maya to breathe, despite her cystic fibrosis. Moving is never easy. Leaving friends and favorite things behind, while having to navigate an entirely new place can be daunting- frightening even. For Katrina, her new home in Bahia de la Luna is even more so. On their first day in town, the sisters meet Carlos, a neighbor boy who explains that their new town is full of GHOSTS. He explains they're not scary, but actually the spirits of lost loved ones, returning to visit. Maya is thrilled and insists on learning more, but Katrina is freaked out. When an encounter with an honest-to-god ghost puts Maya in the hospital, Katrina refuses to hear any more about them, or from Carlos. But Dia de los Muertos is approaching, and Maya's prognosis isn't improving. Katrina can no longer ignore her fears, and must learn to face them, both otherworldly and right at home.

If the Magic Fits

by Susan Maupin Schmid

Darling Dimple has heard the old stories of Princess Mariposa's castle and how it was built by dragons tricked into being shackled on the tower and turned to stone by magic. But in her job as pot scrubber in the under-cellar of the castle, there's no time to think about that. Soon Darling gets a new job as Under-presser (ironer!) for the Princess's clothes in the upper-attic, and it's there that she discovers an old closet full of 100 gorgeous dresses, all numbered and waiting to be tried on. Not only are they beautiful, but they are magical, and when Darling slips one on, she transforms into another woman in the castle. And that's when her adventures begin. Filled with palace intrigue and conspiracy, imposters, weddings, magical canaries and mice, and of course, lots and lots of amazing dresses, this is a great start to a new series.

Isabel Feeney, Star Reporter by Beth Fantaskey

The time: 1926. The Location: Chicago.

10 year old Isabel Feeney is a newsgirl selling copies of the Tribune on the streets of Chicago--an unusual pursuit for a young girl during this era in a time of gangsters, corruption and guns.

As she hits the streets everyday trying to make a meager living for herself and her family, Isabel dreams of becoming a journalist. Her idol is the famous crime reporter Maude Collier. Isabel wants to write for the Tribune, not just sell it.

Isabel gets her chance to do some sleuthing as one of her customers, Miss Giddings, becomes the prime suspect in the murder of her gangster boyfriend. Isabel arrived on the scene just after the gun went off. Convinced of Miss Giddings innocence, Isabel sets out to prove it. Starting her own investigation, she tracks down clues and teams up with her idol reporter, Maude Collins. As Isabel starts to unravel the-who done it mystery, she becomes the target of someone who wants to silence her.

Will Isabel be able to prove that Miss Giddings is innocent? Will her dream of becoming a crime reporter become reality? Is Maude Collins really an ally? Will Isabel be silenced? Discover the answers to these questions and more in Isabel Feeney, Star Reporter.

Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary by John David Anderson

Eighteen kids,
one year of poems,
one school set to close.
Two yellow bulldozers
crouched outside,
ready to eat the building

in one greedy gulp.

But whose idea was it to close the school, anyway? Can the students possibly figure out a way to change their minds?

But look out, bulldozers.
Ms. Hill's fifth-grade class
has plans for you.
They're going to speak up
and work together
to save their school.

Ideas are put forward, committees formed, and plans put into practice, all described by the students in the class by way of the poems they're writing for the time capsule that will be buried to commemorate the closing of the school. Along the way, each student reveals a lot about themselves, and about their fellow fifth-graders. As you read, you'll discover that there's a lot more going on in everyone's life than just a school closing. You'll find yourself deciding which students are your favorites, and which ones are not...

Will the class be able to save their precious school? Whether they succeed or not, you'll be glad you got to know the students of the last fifth-grade of Emerson Elementary!

Ms. Bixby's Last Day

by John David Anderson

Imagine the most incredible sixth grade teacher ever. Then you find out she has cancer.

Three of Ms. Bixby's students, Topher, Steve, and Brand set out to plan the most amazing last day before she goes in for treatment. Plans change suddenly when they find she has already entered the hospital.

In an amazing journey told from the boy's differing perspectives, the boys hatch an incredible plan to show their appreciation, gratitude and love for Ms. Bixby.

This fast paced plot weaves the boy's memories, experiences and interactions with each other and their beloved Ms. Bixby into a funny, heart wrenching narrative. Their adventures are a touching and moving testament how one teacher can impact her students beyond the classroom.

Find out how they create the perfect "last day" complete with cheesecake, French fries, and Beethoven, surrounded by trees, laughter, and "Au revoir" but never good-bye.

Mutt's Promise by Julie Salamon

Mr. Thomas, the farmer, didn't particularly want a dog, but Mutt was special. She was a stray and she was brave, therefore she won his heart and the heart of Gilberto, the migrant worker's son. When Mutt has four puppies, Gilberto is in his glory. The happiness does not last though. Gilberto's family must move on and the puppies are left behind. Two of the puppies get adopted by a nice family, but the other two (Luna and Chief) end up in a terrible, scary place where they are not treated very well: a puppy mill. Adventure ensues as these feisty puppies hatch a plan of escape and find their way to freedom.

Mutt's promise to her puppies was that they would find their true purpose in life. Does their mother's promise come true for Luna and Chief? Will they ever be reunited with Gilberto?

Save Me a Seat by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan

Ravi Suryanarayanan is a rock star among elementary students... or, at least he was back home in India. He excels at math, English, and sports- especially cricket. He knows the proper way to address teachers, and brings a shiny tiffin box full of savory homemade curry for lunch every day.

But now that he's at school in New Jersey, nothing he does seems to be working out right. His teacher can't pronounce his FIRST name right, never mind his last, he gets laughed at for standing to answer questions, and nobody seems to be able to understand his English, even though he's been speaking it since he was small. His lone bright spot at school is the only other Indian boy, Dillon Samreen, who is also the most popular boy in class. Ravi is certain they will be best friends.

Joe knows better. Joe has been at Albert Einstein Elementary School his whole life, and he knows that Dillon Samreen is trouble. Up until this year, Joe had two best friends, but they've moved away, and now Joe is alone to deal with Dillon's bullying. His bright spot is getting time out of class with Miss Frost, who helps him with his lessons.

Now, Joe shares his time with Miss Frost with Ravi, who does not seem to appreciate it, or to be picking up what a bully Dillon is. As Joe watches, Ravi is soon taking his place as Dillon's favorite target. Is there anything Joe can do to help him, or himself? Both Joe and Ravi will need to look at things differently to make things better, together.

Scar Island by Dan Gemeinhart

Meet Jonathan Grisby. He's done something terrible, we just don't know what that is quite yet. This unspeakable act that he's committed has landed him at Slabhenge

Reformatory School, which is situated on a remote island and also happens to be a former insane asylum. The outlook is grim from the outset. The building is falling apart, food is scarce and all of the authority figures are abusive and cruel. The boys that are being held here have little hope, until the day when a freak accident takes all of the adults out of the picture. It's any delinquent teenagers dream: no rules! However, a pecking order soon takes form (think Lord of the Flies) and the boys seem to be little better off than they were before.

Filled with suspense and adventure, Scar Island is a true page turner. Judge for yourself if Jonathan Grisby's punishment fit his crime.

The Secret Life of Lincoln Jones by Wendelin Van Draanen

Sixth-grader Lincoln Jones is new to town. His mom finally found the strength to get out of an abusive relationship and they've moved north and into a dive apartment in the not-so-great part of town. That wouldn't be so bad, but his mom won't let him stay home alone after school. So every weekday, Lincoln walks the twelve blocks to Brookside where she works. And Lincoln will do anything to keep his afterschool time at Brookside secret from his classmates. He's already got enough troubles being the new kid with a southern accent, imagine what they'd say if they found out he was spending his afternoons with elderly memory-care patients like the naked, dancing Ruby Hobbs and Debbie, who shouts across the room to ask his name every day. While his mother works as a caregiver, Lincoln does his schoolwork and writes stories in his ever-present notebook. But when a nosy classmate by the name of Kandi Kane seems to be stalking him, Lincoln begins to worry. What he learns is that other people have secrets of their own. Tough subjects about aging and fitting in are handled with humor and compassion.

The Unlikely Adventures of Mabel Jones by Will Mabbitt

Have you ever been kidnapped right out of your own bed by a crew of scurvy pirates? A sack pulled over your head, and next, you're thrown over a shoulder and dragged out of this world into a world where wolves, pigs, goats, and even a silent loris sail the seas in search of ill-gotten treasure???

No????

Ah! Then you must never have committed The Deed. The sacred Deed which shows you are a pirate in the making...

Unfortunately for Mabel Jones, she did commit the deed---unlike all of you clean, healthy, and innocent children, Mabel Jones is guilty. Yes, she picked her nose...and then she ate it!!!! Ewwwwww!

Pulled out of her bedroom onto the pirate ship The Feroshus Maggot, Mabel must serve its terrifying captain, (the cruel and selfish wolf, Idryys Ebenezer Split) so that she can stay alive long enough to find her way home. Can she survive the Greasy Pole of Certain

Death? The Cadaverous Lobster Tavern? The Unremitting Drip? All of this while still dressed in pajamas???

Mabel is brave, smart, and she has a talent which the pirates lack...she can read. Come along with Mabel Jones, and find out if she can make her way back to her own bedroom!

When Friendship Followed Me Home by Paul Griffin

Ben Coffin knows better than to get too close with people. As a former foster kid, he knows people leave. He prefers to spend his time with the people in science fiction books, reading each afternoon down at the Coney Island library. He's such a regular, the librarian there even sets aside new books she thinks he'll like without his asking. Then in one afternoon, Ben finds a lost dog he names Flip, and meets Halley (like the comet), a rainbow-hued girl at the library. Halley is the librarian's daughter, but he has missed meeting her because she's been busy with cancer treatments, now mercifully over. Ben suddenly finds himself with two excellent companions, and with their help, sets out to begin a Reading Dogs program at the library. But just as everything is beginning to go right for once, Ben faces a tragedy at home, leading him face to face with violence and homelessness. His ties to Halley and her family seem more important and yet more fragile than ever. But with Flip by his side and more people behind him than he realizes, Ben is able to face each challenge as it comes, and come out on top.

Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk

Life in the countryside of Pennsylvania was quiet and mostly uncomplicated for eleven year old Annabelle until Betty Glengarry came to town. The year is 1943 and the fighting of World War II rages on far away from the rural life of Wolf Hollow. It was said Betty was sent away from the city to live with her grandparents because she was "incorrigible", an impossibly long word Annabelle has to look up in the dictionary at school. *Incorrigible* means delinquent, not manageable, and unruly. Betty soon shows herself to be a mean-spirited bully. Along with Annabelle, others become the object of Betty's attacks. Annabelle's story will grip you with the intensity of action and stark contrasts of kindness and cruelty. Reading this book could very well change your life.