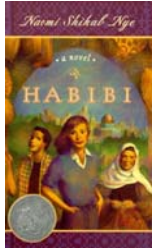


Call it Courage

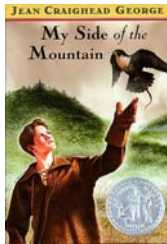
Book Bowl List 2010



Habibi, by Naomi Shihab Nye (Lexile Level: 850)

Genre: Real life/Immigrant's experience

Liyana Abboud, 14, and her family must make a tremendous adjustment when they move to Jerusalem from St. Louis. All she and her younger brother, Rafik, know of their Palestinian father's culture come from his reminiscences of growing up and the fighting they see on television. In Jerusalem, she is the only "outsider" at an Armenian school. The sights, sounds, and smells of Jerusalem drift through the pages and readers glean a sense of the region's troubled history.



My Side of the Mountain, by Jean Craighead George (Lexile Level: 810)

Genre: Adventure/Survival

Every kid thinks about running away at one point or another; few get farther than the end of the block. Young Sam Gribbley gets to the end of the block and keeps going--all the way to the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. There he sets up house in a huge hollowed-out tree, with a falcon and a weasel for companions and his wits as his tool for survival. Sam learns to live off the land, and grows up a little in the process. Blizzards, hunters, loneliness, and fear all battle to drive Sam back to city life, but will his desire for freedom, independence, and adventure be stronger?



The Circuit, by Francesco Jimenez (Interest Level: 5-8)

Genre: Real life/Immigrant's experience

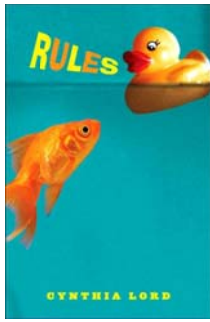
Francisco Jimenez was born in Mexico, entered California illegally as a very young child, and spent his boyhood alternating between migrant farm work and the classroom. This collection of autobiographical short stories was written years later, when Jimenez had become an established professor at Santa Clara University (CA). Jimenez maintains a leisurely pace appropriate to storytelling that can reach a wide audience, giving the images constructed from words time to bloom in the audience's mind before wrapping each tale in a tight, often surprising, close.



Freak the Mighty by Philbrook (Lexile Level: 1000)

Genre: Real life/Bullying

A wonderful story of triumph over imperfection, shame, and loss. Large, awkward, learning-disabled Maxwell Kane, and crippled, undersized Kevin are both mocked by their peers; the cruel taunting they endure is all too realistic and believable. The boys establish a friendship-and a partnership. Kevin defends them with his intelligence, while Max is his friend's "legs," affording him a chance to participate in the larger world.



Rules, by Cynthia Lord (Lexile Level: 780)

Genre: Real life/Family life

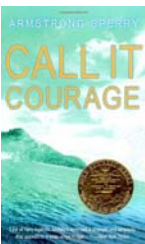
Twelve-year-old Catherine has conflicting feelings about her younger brother, David, who is autistic. While she loves him, she is also embarrassed by his behavior and feels neglected by their parents. In an effort to keep life on an even keel, Catherine creates rules for him (It's okay to hug Mom but not the clerk at the video store). Each chapter title is also a rule, and lots more are interspersed throughout the book. A lovely, warm read, and a great discussion starter.



Touching Spirit Bear, by Ben Mikaelson (F&P Level: Y)

Genre: Adventure/Survival

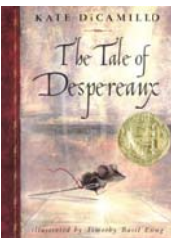
Cole Matthews is a violent teen convicted of viciously beating a classmate, Peter, causing him severe physical problems. Cole elects to participate in Circle Justice, an alternative sentencing program based on Native American practices that results in his being banished to a remote Alaskan Island where he is left to survive for a year. He expects to fake his way through and escape by swimming off the island. But, his encounter with the Spirit Bear leaves him desperately wounded. Cole gradually realizes he must accept responsibility for what he has done. Gross details of eating raw worms, a mouse, etc. will appeal to fans of survival stories.



Call it Courage, by Armstrong Sperry (Lexile Level: 830)

Genre: Adventure/Survival

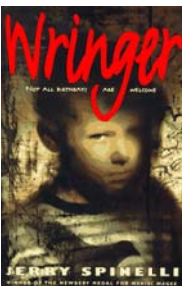
New York Herald Tribune "A boy's character at ten years old is more often influenced by emotion than by reasoning. Something in the conduct of a hero leaps like a spark to light his own spirit. A book with a hero can sometimes bring this about. This is such a book.... It is related with unusual skill, carrying along a reader so rapidly he scarcely realizes how well it is being told... The story is wild enough to be remembered, and it cannot be remembered without doing good."



The Tale of Despereaux, by Kate DiCamillo (Lexile Level: 670)

Genre: Fantasy/Fairy Tale

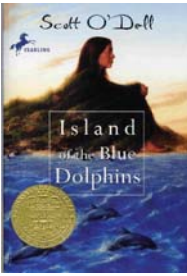
A charming story of unlikely heroes whose destinies intertwine to bring about a joyful resolution. Despereaux is a diminutive mouse who is one of the most endearing of his kind ever to appear in young people's books. His mother, who is French, declares him to be "such the disappointment" at his birth and the rest of his family seems to agree that he is very odd: his ears are too big and his eyes open far too soon and they all expect him to die quickly. Of course, he doesn't. This expanded fairy tale is entertaining, heartening, and, above all, great fun.



Wrinker, by Jerry Spinelli (Lexile Level: 690)

Genre: Real life/Environmental

Palmer dreads his upcoming 10th birthday. In his town, when boys are 10 years old they become "wringers," the boys who wring the necks of wounded pigeons at the annual Pigeon Day shoot. Palmer is sickened by the whole event. To make matters worse, his new buddies--Beans, Mutto, and Henry--have just discovered that Palmer has been hiding a pet pigeon in his room. What will Palmer do? Will he become a wringer to save face, or will he follow his heart?



Island of the Blue Dolphins, by Scott O'Dell (Lexile Level: 900)

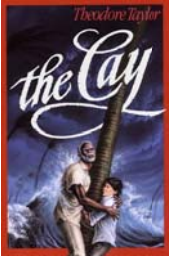
Genre: Survival/Historical fiction

O'Dell was inspired by the real-life story of a 12-year-old American Indian girl, Karana. The author based his book on the life of this remarkable young woman who, during the evacuation of Ghalas-at (an island off the coast of California), jumped ship to stay with her young brother who had been abandoned on the island. He died shortly thereafter, and Karana fended for herself on the island for 18 years. O'Dell tells the miraculous story of how Karana forages on land and in the ocean, clothes herself (in a green-cormorant skirt and an otter cape on special occasions), and secures shelter. Perhaps even more startlingly, she finds strength and serenity living alone on the island.

The Cay, by Theodore Taylor (Lexile Level: 860)

Genre: Survival/Historical fiction

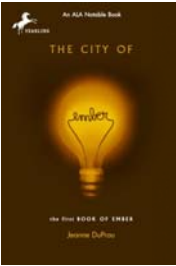
This is a classic novel about racism and a young man's realization that skin color does not matter. Phillip is an 11-year-old living in the West Indies at the start of World War II. He's excited at the idea of being in the war but is taken away by his mother who only wants to return to the safety of Virginia. Their ship is sunk by the Germans, and Phillip and his mother end up on separate life rafts. After being hit on the head with a beam from the sinking ship, Phillip awakens to find himself alone with Timothy, an old black ship hand, and Stew Cat, the ship's tomcat. The three survive on a raft for several days, during which time Phillip loses his eyesight due to the head injury. They eventually come ashore on a small, unpopulated island. Phillip must learn to deal with his blindness and overcome his dislike for Timothy.



City of Ember, by Jeanne DuPrau (Lexile Level: 680)

Genre: Sci-fi/Fantasy

It is always night in the city of Ember. But there is no moon, no stars. The only light during the regular twelve hours of "day" comes from floodlamps that cast a yellowish glow over the streets of the city. Beyond are the pitch-black Unknown Regions, which no one has ever explored because an understanding of fire and electricity has been lost, and with it the idea of a Moveable Light. "Besides," they tell each other, "there is nowhere but here" Among the many other things the people of Ember have forgotten is their past and a direction for their future. For 250 years they have lived pleasantly, because there has been plenty of everything in the vast storerooms. But now there are more and more empty shelves--and more and more times when the lights flicker and go out, leaving them in terrifying blackness for long minutes. What will happen when the generator finally fails?

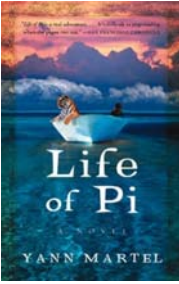


Letters from Rifka, by Karen Hesse (Lexile Level: 660)

Genre: Historical fiction/Immigrant's experience

Twelve-year-old Rifka's journey from the Ukraine to the USA is anything but smooth sailing. She must surmount one obstacle after another in this riveting novel. First she outwits a band of Russian soldiers, enabling her family to escape to Poland. There the family is struck with typhus. Everyone recovers, but Rifka catches ringworm on the next stage of the journey--and is denied passage to America. Rifka's family must leave without her. Told in the form of "letters" written by Rifka, Hesse's vivacious tale colorfully and convincingly refreshes the immigrant experience.





Life of Pi, by Yann Martel (Lexile Level: 830)

Genre: Fantasy /Survival

This novel is a fabulous romp through an imagination by turns ecstatic, cunning, despairing and resilient. The main character, Patel spends a beguiling boyhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper. In his 16th year, he sets sail with his family and some of their menagerie to start a new life in Canada. Halfway to Midway Island, the ship sinks into the Pacific, leaving Pi stranded on a life raft with a hyena, an orangutan, an injured zebra and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. After the beast dispatches the others, Pi is left to survive for 227 days with his large feline companion on the 26-foot-long raft, using all his knowledge, wits and faith to keep himself alive.

Esperanza Rising, by Pam Munoz Ryan (Lexile Level: 750)

Genre: Historical Fiction/Immigrant's experience

Ryan uses the experiences of her own Mexican grandmother as the basis for this compelling story of immigration and assimilation, not only to a new country but also into a different social class. Esperanza's expectation that her 13th birthday will be celebrated with all the material pleasures and folk elements of her previous years is shattered when her father is murdered by bandits. His powerful stepbrothers then hold her mother as a social and economic hostage, wanting to force her remarriage to one of them, and go so far as to burn down the family home. Esperanza's mother then decides to join the cook and gardener and their son as they move to the United States and work in California's agricultural industry.



Drums Girls and Dangerous Pie, by Jordan Sonnenblick

(Lexile Level: 940)

Genre: Real life/School story

Steven Alper is a typical eighth-grader--smarter than some, a better drummer than most, but with the usual girl problems and family trials. Then, on October 7, his five-year-old brother, Jeffrey, falls, has a nosebleed that doesn't stop, and is diagnosed with leukemia. Mrs. Alper's days and nights revolve around getting Jeffrey to his chemotherapy treatments, and Mr. Alper retreats into a shell, coming out only occasionally to weep over the mounting medical bills. Steven becomes the forgotten son, who throws himself into drumming, even as he quits doing his homework and tries to keep his friends from finding out about Jeffrey's illness. But, even in the midst of tragedy, life goes on, love can flower, and the one thing you can always change is yourself.

