

Character Matters for Grades 4 - 6

Citizenship

Avi Poppy.

Poppy the deer mouse urges her family to move next to a field of corn big enough to feed them all forever, but Mr. Ocax, a terrifying owl, has other ideas.

Clements, Andrew Frindle.

When he decides to turn his fifth-grade teacher's love of the dictionary around on her, clever Nick Allen invents a new word and begins a chain of events that quickly moves beyond his control.

Fleischman, Paul Seedfolks.

One by one, a number of people of varying ages and backgrounds transform a trash-filled inner-city lot into a productive and beautiful garden, and in doing so, the gardeners are themselves transformed.

Kehret, Peg Cages.

After losing an acting role and fighting with her alcoholic stepfather, Kit is arrested for shoplifting and ordered to work, as part of her sentence, at an animal shelter.

Lowry, Lois Number the Stars.

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

McSwigan, Marie Snow Treasure.

A group of Norwegian children hurtle down a mountain on sleds, running straight through a Nazi camp while concealing gold they are trying to remove from the country.

Miles, Miska Pony in the Schoolhouse.

Amy has two great desires--to have a horse and to no longer be teased by a boy at school.

Wilson, Nancy Hope Old People, Frogs, and Albert.

Fourth-grader Albert is afraid of the old people at the nursing home near his school, until he goes to visit Mr. Spear, the elderly man who has helped him with his reading.

Fairness

DeClements, Barthe Nothing's Fair in Fifth Grade.

A fifth-grade class repelled by the overweight new student, who has serious home problems, finally learns to accept her.

DeFelice, Cynthia Weasel.

Alone in the frontier wilderness in the winter of 1839 while his father is recovering from an injury, eleven-year-old Nathan runs afoul of the renegade killer known as Weasel and makes a surprising discovery about the concept of revenge.

Jaffe, Nina The Cow of No Color: Riddle Stories and Justice Tales from Around the World.

In each of these stories, collected from around the world, a character faces a problem situation which requires that he make a decision about what is fair or just.

Slote, Alfred The Trading Game.

During a summer of baseball and baseball card trading, eleven-year-old Andy makes discoveries about his father, his grandfather, who played professional baseball, and himself.

Honesty

Adler, C.S. Winning.

Vicky is thrilled to be on the eighth-grade tennis team, until she realizes that her new playing partner, Brenda, is ruthless about winning and will even cheat to do so.

Bawden, Nina Humbug.

When eight-year-old Cora is sent to stay next door with the seemingly pleasant woman called Aunt Sunday, she is tormented by Aunt Sunday's mean-spirited, deceitful daughter, but finds an ally in Aunt Sunday's elderly mother.

Bowen, Fred Winnners Take All.

When Kyle fakes a catch, his baseball team goes on to win the league championship, but Kyle doesn't feel good about winning by cheating. Includes a section on the sportsmanship of Christy Mathewson, a pitcher who played professional baseball in the early 1900s.

Choldenko, Gennifer Notes from a Liar and Her Dog.

Eleven-year-old Ant, stuck in a family that she does not like, copes by pretending that her "real" parents are coming to rescue her, by loving her dog Pistachio, by volunteering at the zoo, and by bending the truth and telling lies.

Coville, Bruce The Skull of Truth.

Charlie, a sixth-grader with a compulsion to tell lies, acquires a mysterious skull that forces its owner to tell only the truth, causing some awkward moments before he understands its power.

DeClements, Barthe Five Finger Discount.

Ten-year-old Jerry's attempts to adjust to his new school and make new friends are complicated by his determination to keep secret the fact that his father is serving time in the local prison for theft.

DeClements, Barthe Liar, Liar.

Sixth-grader Gretchen and her friends begin to have problems when a new girl starts telling some very believable, but untrue, stories.

Eyerly, Jeannette Angel Baker, Thief.

Fifteen-year-old Angel, released on probation to a foster family after being convicted of shoplifting, is anxious to make a fresh start and to be accepted by her new family and friends.

Hurwitz, Johanna The Cold and Hot Winter.

Fifth-grader Derek and his best friend Rory are delighted when their neighbor's niece Bolivia comes to town for another visit, until a lot of missing objects make Derek begin to doubt Rory's honesty.

Lowry, Lois Your Move, J.P.!

Lovestruck J.P. finds himself doing all sorts of weird things to impress his new interest, but his life becomes very complicated when a simple lie gets out of control.

Myers, Bill My Life as Dinosaur Dental Floss.

Bumbling but brilliant Wally McDoogie learns that honesty is the best policy after a practical joke snowballs into near disaster involving terrorists, tourists, television news, and the President.

Pfeffer, Susan Beth The Pizza Puzzle.

Distracted by her worries that her parents may get a divorce, Taryn gets in trouble with her seventh-grade English teacher and is caught up in an increasingly complicated series of lies.

Sachs, Marilyn Amy Moves In.

Amy, a habitual liar, finds that making friends in a new neighborhood is easier if she tells the truth.

Kindness

Bishop, Claire Twenty and Ten.

Twenty school children hide ten Jewish children from the Nazis during the occupation of France during World War II.

Carlson, Natalie Savage The Family Under the Bridge.

An old tramp, adopted by three fatherless children when their mother hides them under a bridge on the Seine, finds a home for mother and children and a job for himself.

Caudill, Rebecca The Best-Loved Doll.

For a doll contest at a party, a little girl chooses to enter a doll that seems least likely to win a prize, but it does win a very special one.

Cooper, Ilene Queen of the Sixth Grade.

After helping her supposed best friend Veronica found the sixth grade's secret club, the Awesome Kennedy Girls, Robin accidentally gets on her wrong side and discovers how bossy and cruel Veronica really is.

Curtis, Christopher Paul Bud, Not Buddy.

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man he believes to be his father--the renowned bandleader, H.E. Calloway of Grand Rapids.

DiCamillo, Kate Because of Winn-Dixie.

Ten-year-old India Opal Buloni describes her first summer in the town of Naomi, Florida, and all the good things that happen to her because of her big ugly dog Winn-Dixie.

Fitzhugh, Louise Harriet the Spy.

Harriet, a sixth-grader who wants to become a writer, constantly carries her notebook with her so that she may record her observations about, and reactions to, the people around her.

Griffith, Helen Caitlin's Holiday.

When her new doll comes alive, Caitlin's delight turns to frustration as the doll displays a nasty temperament.

Horvath, Polly The Trolls.

Eccentric Aunt Sally comes from Canada to babysit the Anderson children while their parents are on a trip to Paris, and every night the bedtime story adds another piece to a very suspect family history.

King-Smith, Dick Martin's Mice.

A farm cat who doesn't want to catch mice keeps a family of them as pets in the barn; but then he is given away to a townswoman and acquires a new perspective.

Vail, Rachel Daring to Be Abigail.

During her summer at Camp Nashaquitsa, eleven-year-old Abby tries to reinvent herself, while worrying about her mother, missing her dead father, and getting to know her equally self-conscious bunkmates.

Loyalty

Adler, C.S. Winning.

Vicky is thrilled to be on the eighth-grade tennis team, until she realizes that her new playing partner, Brenda, is ruthless about winning and will even cheat to do so.

Blackwood, Gary The Shakespeare Stealer.

A young orphan boy is ordered by his master to infiltrate Shakespeare's acting troupe in order to steal the script of "Hamlet," but he discovers instead the meaning of friendship and loyalty.

Burnford, Sheila The Incredible Journey.

A Siamese cat, an old bull terrier, and a young Labrador retriever travel together 250 miles through the Canadian wilderness to find their family.

Warner, Sally Dog Years.

After his father is imprisoned, twelve-year-old Case switches to a new school, where he makes

some important discoveries about friendship and honesty.

White, E.B. Charlotte's Web.

Charlotte, a spider, is able to save the life of her friend Wilbur, a pig, by writing messages in her web.

Respect

Blume, Judy Blubber.

Jill goes along with the rest of the fifth-grade class in tormenting a classmate and then finds out what it's like when she, too, becomes a target.

Byars, Betsy The Summer of the Swans.

Sara becomes involved in an intense search for Charlie, her retarded brother, when he wanders off.

Christopher, Matt Olympic Dream.

When overweight fourteen-year-old video whiz Doug Cannon is introduced to the sport of cycling, he begins a transformation that leads him to health and self-respect.

Cohen, Barbara Thank You, Jackie Robinson.

A fatherless white boy, who shares with an old black man an enthusiasm for Jackie Robinson, takes a ball autographed by Jackie to his elderly friend's deathbed.

Curtis, Christopher The Watsons Go to Birmingham--1963.

The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963.

Estes, Eleanor The Hundred Dresses.

Wanda, a poor girl with only one dress, is teased by her classmates when she insists she has a hundred dresses at home.

Fenner, Carol Randall's Wall.

Artistically talented but socially underprivileged, a fifth-grade boy has built a wall of defense to protect himself from the pain of human relationships--a wall which begins to crumble when a dynamic and compassionate classmate decides to interfere in his life.

Lee, Marie F is for Fabuloso.

Seventh-grader Jin-Ha finds her adjustment to life in America complicated by her mother's difficulty in learning to speak English.

Lord, Bette In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson.

In 1947, a Chinese child comes to Brooklyn where she becomes Americanized at school, in her apartment building, and by her love for baseball.

Mills, Claudia Standing Up to Mr. O.

Twelve-year-old Maggie comes to dread biology class because her favorite teacher is insisting that she dissect a worm, an assignment that makes her feel very squeamish and awakens her to the question of animal rights.

Skinner, David The Wrecker.

Theo, the boy genius, enlists Michael, the new kid, as his ally in a secret plan to "wreck" the bully of the eighth grade once and for all.

Taylor, Mildred Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.

A black family living in the South during the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which the children don't understand.

Responsibility

Bauer, Marion Dane On My Honor.

When his best friend drowns while they are both swimming in a treacherous river that they had promised never to go near, Joel is devastated and terrified at having to tell both sets of parents the terrible consequences of their disobedience.

Carter, Alden Between a Rock and a Hard Place.

Although neither fifteen-year-old Mark Severson nor his diabetic cousin Randy is looking forward to the canoe trip that is a family rite of passage, they begin to enjoy themselves as they make their way through Minnesota's lake country, until the trip becomes a fight for survival.

Clements, Andrew The Landry News.

A fifth-grader starts a newspaper with an editorial that prompts her burned-out classroom teacher to really begin teaching again, but he is later threatened with disciplinary action as a result.

Clifford, Eth Family for Sale.

When their mother goes away for two weeks, five siblings take turns being in charge.

Fox, Paula One-Eyed Cat.

An eleven-year-old shoots a stray cat with his new air rifle, subsequently suffers from guilt, and eventually assumes responsibility.

Gardiner, John Stone Fox.

Little Willie hopes to pay the back taxes on his grandfather's farm with the purse from a dog sled race he enters.

Hopper, Nancy The Truth or Dare Trap.

As the summer progresses, Meg's feelings for the popular leader of her crowd of girls change as the group's activities become less fun and more dangerous.

Kinsey-Warnock, Natalie In the Language of Loons.

During the summer that Arlis spends with his grandparents in Vermont, his grandfather teaches him about loons, cross-country running, and responsibility, and when he returns home everyone finds out how much he has changed.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds Shiloh.

When he finds a lost beagle in the hills behind his West Virginia home, Marty tries to hide it from his family and the dog's real owner, a mean-spirited man known to shoot deer out of season and to mistreat his dogs.

Pearson, Gayle The Secret Box.

A trip to San Francisco's Chinatown, a dog's funeral, and a shoplifting incident reveal some previously unknown "secrets" and affect the relationships between twelve-year-old Taylor and thirteen-year-old Lindsey and their respective older brothers.

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