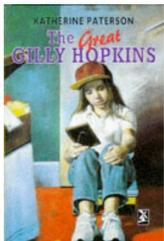




*Crenshaw*  
Katherine Applegate

Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent. And not much for food, either. His parents, his little sister, and their dog may have to live in their minivan. Again.

Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, he's outspoken, and he's imaginary. He has come back into Jackson's life to help him. But is an imaginary friend enough to save this family from losing everything?



*The Great Gilly Hopkins*  
Katherine Paterson

Watch out world!

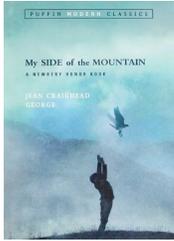
The Great Gilly Hopkins is looking for a home. She's a foster kid who's been angry, lonely, and hurting for so long that she's always ready for a fight. Be on the lookout for her best barracuda smile, the one she saves for well-meaning social workers. Watch out for her most fearful look, a cross between Dracula and Godzilla, used especially to scare shy foster brothers. Don't be fooled by her "Who me?" expression, guaranteed to trick foster parents, teachers, and anyone who gets in her way.

It's Gilly Hopkins vs. the world! And so far, Gilly seems to be winning. But what she doesn't realize is that every time she wins, she really loses, until she discovers a love as formidable as any enemy she's ever known.



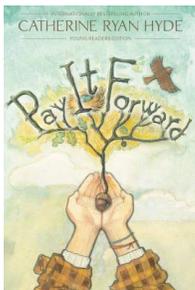
*Almost Home*  
Nora Raleigh Baskin

Leah Baer has been shuffled to and from various parents and households for years, and now she's back at her father's house with his new wife. This latest move seems as though it might be a lasting one, but Leah feels out of place both at home and at school. Then an unconventional boy named Will befriends Leah and persuades her to try acting to express her ideas and feelings. As Leah begins to learn more about herself, she also begins to see how she fits in her family members' lives, and gradually finds out what it means to be home.



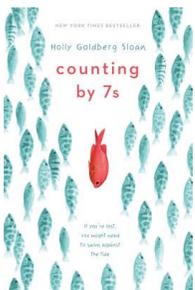
*My Side of the Mountain*  
Jean Craighead George

Terribly unhappy in his family's crowded New York City apartment, Sam Gibley runs away to the solitude and danger of the mountains, where he finds a side of himself he never knew.



*Pay it Forward*  
Catherine Ryan Hyde

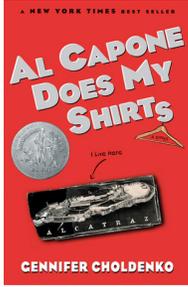
Twelve-year-old Trevor McKinney accepts his social studies teacher's challenge: come up with a plan to change the world. His idea is simple: Do a good deed for three people and ask them to "pay it forward" to three others in need. He envisions a vast movement of kindness and goodwill spreading beyond his small California town and across the world. The project, however, appears to falter. Jerry, a bum who receives some allowance money from Trevor, returns to a life of dissolution. Trevor wants his pretty, hardworking mother—a woman who raised him lovingly despite struggles with alcoholism—to marry his teacher, Reuben St. Clair. Reuben is a scarred, bitter, untrusting man with a disfiguring injury from Vietnam. He seems to come alive only when in front of his class. For a time that matchmaking brings nothing but problems. Ultimately, though, unusual things start to happen. Crime rates dip across the nation, and nobody seems to know why. Then a journalist tracks down the source: an epidemic of random acts of kindness.



*Counting by 7s*  
Holly Goldberg Sloan

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life... until now.

Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is *not* a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.



## *Al Capone Does My Shirts*

Gennifer Choldenko

Today I moved to a twelve-acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd, and surrounded by water. I'm not the only kid who lives here. There's my sister, Natalie, except she doesn't count. And there are twenty-three other kids who live on the island because their dads work as guards or cooks or doctors or electricians for the prison, like my dad does. Plus, there are a ton of murderers, rapists, hit men, con men, stickup men, embezzlers, connivers, burglars, kidnapers and maybe even an innocent man or two, though I doubt it. The convicts we have are the kind other prisons don't want. I never knew prisons could be picky, but I guess they can. You get to Alcatraz by being the worst of the worst. Unless you're me. I came here because my mother said I had to.