

If You Liked

WONDER (1)

By R. J. Palacio

Thoughtful Realistic Fiction
from the Youth Department

Abbott, Tony. **Firegirl.** 2006

"It almost began to feel as if there was a person in there." That's what Tom finds himself thinking as he gets to know more about Jessica, a burn victim who is new to his middle school. Other kids keep away from her, and make up stories about her. Is anyone, including Tom, brave enough to meet the real person?

Auch, Mary Jane. **One-handed catch.** 2006

When Norman loses his hand in a meatgrinder accident at his dad's store, he's afraid his two biggest dreams are gone forever: playing baseball and being an artist. Then there are the smaller things: the way people look at him—trying to tie his shoes—riding a bike—looking at himself. Luckily, he has a sense of humor and a lot of courage.

Baskin, Nora Raleigh. **Anything but typical.** 2009

Jason Blake is stuck in a world of neurotypicals. He's anything but. "Autistic spectrum disorder" is his diagnosis; for him, everything is louder, brighter, scratchier. He doesn't talk much, but he writes. This is Jason's attempt to share his world with others and to tell the story of how he might have made a friend.

Draper, Sharon. **Out of my mind.** 2010

Melody Brooks was born with cerebral palsy. Now in fifth grade, she is confined to a wheelchair and cannot speak. Her life is transformed when she gets a computer that finally allows her to "talk"—and Melody has a LOT to say! She's not happy with her situation and she intends to change things.

Graff, Lisa. **The thing about Georgie.** 2006

Georgie's life is pretty typical: friends, enemies, homework, good parents. His life is also atypical: Georgie is a dwarf. Most of the time, he's okay with his life. Now a new baby is forcing him to face a lot of hard questions: can he be a big brother? How will he feel when his sibling outgrows him? Will his parents love their "normal" kid more than they love him?

Hamilton, Virginia. **Bluish.** 1999.

Her name is Natalie, but everyone calls her Bluish: that's what color she is. Her skin is pale, her veins show, she wears a hat to cover her bald head. She's in remission from cancer. Everyone is a little frightened of her, but Dreenie is also fascinated. Is it possible to befriend someone who is so different?

Lean, Sarah. **A dog called Homeless.** 2012.

Callie Fisher sees her dead mother everywhere. She and her mother talk, even though Callie has quit speaking to everyone else. Then she meets a homeless man, an enormous dog, and a deaf and blind boy. Perhaps things can change. Perhaps her family can be put back together. Perhaps Callie will talk again. Perhaps.

Lord, Cynthia. **Rules.** 2006

Catherine loves her brother, David, but she would give almost anything for a normal family life. David isn't like most people; he needs lots of rules so he knows how to interact with others: "If someone says 'hi,' you say 'hi' back;" "If the bathroom door is closed, knock;" "Follow the rules." She also has rules for herself: "Sometimes you've gotta work with what you've got"—but what if you're tired of working with what you've got?

Lynch, Chris. **Scratch and the Sniffs.** 1997.

"I look like a kid in a wheelchair. You got something to say about that?" Wolfgang has attitude. He has guts. He doesn't have talent—and yet somehow he's put himself in charge of a band and is performing as the lead singer. Attitude and guts might not be enough. . .

Marsden, John. **So much to tell you.** 1989.

A horrific incident left Marina's face disfigured by acid. She hasn't spoken since. In the journal required by her English teacher, Marina records her first year at Warrington boarding school and her efforts to deal with the past that has literally scarred her for life.

Reedy, Trent. **Words in the dust.** 2011

Zuleikha was born with a cleft lip; other kids call her "Donkeyface." Her father's second wife has made it clear that she has no value. It will be difficult to marry her off. Education is out of the question. Then the American soldiers come to Afghanistan and they offer Zuleikha facial surgery and the opportunity for a more hopeful future. Will her father agree?

Roos, Stephen. **The gypsies never came.** 2001

Until this year, sixth grade, Augie's deformed "little hand" hasn't made much difference in his life. This year, it has. He's not part of the Little League team; he's not invited to birthday parties; his best friend has a new best friend. When a strange girl moves to town and tells Augie he's just like her, and that the gypsies will come for both of them, he almost believes it.

Sachs, Marilyn. **The bears' house.** 1971.

Fran Ellen smells bad. She sucks her thumb. She spends most of her time imagining life in the "Bears' House" at the back of the classroom—it's so much easier than her real life. If you missed this when you were younger, read it now.

Seidler, Tor. **The silent spillbills.** 1998

Dedicated birdwatcher Katerina Farnsworth doesn't talk much. It isn't because she stuck-up. It's because she stutters and she's tired of being mocked and imitated. It will take something big to make her talk in front of an audience, and that something has come along: the local spillbill population is threatened and Katerina is the perfect person to plead their cause.



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Arnold, Elana K. **A Boy Called Bat.** 2017.
Bixby Alexander Tam (BAT) loves animals. Sometimes he feels more calm and comfortable with animals than he does with people. When his veterinarian mom brings home an orphaned newborn skunk, Bat immediately loves the helpless baby and knows he must find a way to keep him longer than his mom had planned. Readers will enjoy this story about a caring boy on the autism spectrum and his unique animal friend!

Bowling, Dusti. **Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus.** 2017.

Aven, who is born without arms, moves with her adopted family to Arizona to run a theme park and starts at a new school. After struggling to fit in, she ends up befriendng a boy named Connor who has Tourette's syndrome. As time goes on, Aven discovers some secrets at the theme park that will affect her personally.

Dee, Barbara. **Halfway Normal.** 2017.

For the past two years, Norah has been in treatment for leukemia. Now she's ready to go back to school and be normal. That means she doesn't want anyone to know she has been sick. But how do you keep a giant secret? (And is seventh grade ever normal?)

Dooley, Sarah. **Free Verse.** 2016.

Completely alone in the world after her brother's death, Sasha is first placed in foster care and then with distant relatives. She avoids interaction with others but slowly learns to reconnect with the world, both through the people she meets and the poetry she begins to write. Then another tragedy strikes.

Erskine, Kathryn. **Mockingbird.** 2010.

After her brother's death in a school shooting, ten-year-old Caitlin and her father struggle with their loss. It is even more difficult because Caitlin has Asperger's Syndrome and her brother was her guide for interacting with other people. Caitlin needs to learn to navigate the world on her own.

Foster, Stewart. **Bubble.** 2017.

Joe's autoimmune disease doesn't allow him to leave his superclean, isolated hospital room. His visitors are limited to his sister, hospital staff, and (once a year) a BBC film crew. Henry, his best friend, has the same

disease and lives half a world away. Henry's going outside into the world, thanks to a special suit from NASA. Will Joe's world ever expand beyond the walls of his room?

Fry, Erin. **Losing It.** 2012.

When 14-year-old Bennett's dad has a stroke, the boy realizes they both need to make some changes. This leads him to join the school cross-country team to lose weight and get in shape. This moving story about overcoming obstacles will have you cheering!

Gemeinhart, Dan. **The Honest Truth.** 2015.

Mark has cancer, and time is running out. He has always wanted to climb Mt. Rainier, and this is his chance. This dying boy is determined to take on a dangerous mountain alone, in the middle of a raging blizzard, even though it will take his last little bit of strength.

Green, Tim. **Left Out.** 2016.

Landon Dorch is the biggest kid in seventh grade. He's a natural for the football team. He's also deaf, and despite cochlear implants, can't always hear all the directions and can't speak clearly. His team and the coach aren't making things easy, but a new friend may help.

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. **Fish in a Tree.** 2015.

Ally's dyslexia makes her feel like a loser until a new teacher in a new school sees beyond her troublemaking behavior. Ally also meets two other kids who don't quite follow all the rules and the three of them form a triumvirate that may challenge their classmates' assumptions about what is and isn't "smart."

Kumin, Maxine. **Lizzie!** 2014.

Lizzie is intelligent, funny, curious, and paralyzed from the waist down. She loves animals, and that's why she spends as much time as possible at Henry's Petting Zoo. When she notices something odd going on there, she can't leave it alone. Thanks to her curiosity, she uncovers a crime and finds herself in grave danger. Her wheelchair won't stop her. Unscrupulous criminals might!

Lambert, Mary E. **Family Game Night & Other Catastrophes.** 2017.

When a moldy, mildewy, GIANT stack of newspapers collapses on top of Annabelle's little sister, it's like the beginning of an avalanche of stuff that might break her family apart. Annabelle's mother is a hoarder. Annabelle is so embarrassed by her mom and the state of her home, she has made a 5-mile radius rule: no friends within 5 miles of her house. Then there comes a day when the 5-mile radius rule gets broken. Can Annabelle handle one more catastrophe without doing something crazy--just like her mom?

Morris, Chad and Shelly Brown. **Mustaches for Maddie.** 2017.

Maddie loves everything funny, and she thinks mustaches are hilarious--that's why she has a collection to wear at school. She doesn't mind if people think she's weird. Then her arm starts doing weird things on its own, and she is diagnosed with a brain tumor. Based on a real person, Maddie is many things: courageous, scared, angry, determined.

Orenstein, Denise Gosliner. **Dirt.** 2017.

Yonder hasn't spoken since her mother died. She's not being properly taken care of by her father. She's having a terrible time with bullies at school. Then one day her neighbor's filthy pony "Dirt" shows up at Yonder's house and finds his way straight to her heart. Dirt seems to understand what she's thinking or feeling all of the time. When Yonder finds Dirt's life at risk she discovers a strength she never knew she had in order to save him and in turn ends up changing her own life.

Pla, Sally J. **The Someday Birds.** 2017.

Charlie and his siblings make a cross-country car trip to be with their father, who's undergoing brain surgery. It's a wild ride, thanks to an eccentric babysitter, a boy-crazy sister, obnoxious twin brothers, and Charlie himself, who is on the autism scale and also has been diagnosed with OCD. There's also a mystery: who is this babysitter, anyway?

Sloan, Holly Goldberg. **Short.** 2017.

Julia, who is short for her age, is forced by her mother to audition for *The Wizard of Oz*. After she gets chosen to play one of the Munchkins and a Winged Monkey, she soon realizes her love for the theater and begins to grow in more ways than one.

Swartz, Elly D. **Finding Perfect.** 2016.

Since her mother left for a new job, Molly has found herself trying desperately to make everything in life perfect. She washes her hands multiple times, she constantly counts by twos and fours, she cleans and organizes her room daily, and she measures the spaces between her glass figurines so they will be perfectly aligned. If she doesn't do these things, she knows something awful will happen to her little brother. This is a scary but ultimately hopeful novel about a twelve-year-old struggling with OCD.

Thompson, Lisa. **The Goldfish Boy.** 2017.

Matthew has Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and hasn't left his room in weeks. He passes his time by watching the neighbors and writing down what they are doing. When the toddler next door disappears, Matthew just might hold the key to solving the

mystery, but exposing his secrets is too much for him to bear.

Vrabel, Beth. **A Blind Guide to Normal.** 2016.

For years, Richie Raymond has been top dog at the Addison School for the Blind. He's famous for his jokes and everyone wants to be his friend. Then he starts eighth grade in a "normal" school where he makes an enemy immediately and makes friends who tell him the truth about himself: in his heart, he's not a comedian. He's a boy who is angry and scared.

Vrabel, Beth. **A Blind Guide to Stinkville.** 2015.

Alice's family moves from Seattle to Sinkville, often called "Stinkville," and her life changes drastically. Twelve-year-old Alice is legally blind. She has albinism and the eye problems that can go along with it. She always felt comfortable in Seattle, but in a new town it's hard to convince people that she is just a regular girl.

Weeks, Sarah & Gita Varadarajan. **Save Me a Seat.** 2016.

Ravi and Joe are complete opposites. Ravi, who is from India, is short and very smart. Joe is tall and has a learning disability. In alternating first person chapters, the two tell their story of teaming up to outsmart the class bully.



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