

### **All of the Above**

**By Shelley Pearsall**

**AR book level: 5.3**

**Synopsis:** In a moment of frustration with his unmotivated class Mr. Collins issues a challenge. He proposes that they build the world's largest tetrahedron and get into the Guinness Book of World Records. The story of the four students who work together is told from each perspective in first person along with comments from the teacher and comments and recipes from one of the parents.

### **Confessions from the Principal's Chair**

**By Anna Myers**

**AR book level: 4.8**

**Synopsis:** Fourteen-year-old Robin was a follower. When she followed her group and participated in a cruel prank, her mother had had enough. Moving them to Oklahoma was the worst punishment for Robin or so she thought. On her first day at her new school, Robin is mistaken for a substitute principal (interesting?) and finds out that bullying happens even in Prairie Dog Town, OK.

### **Counting on grace**

**By Elizabeth Winthrop**

**AR book level: 4.5**

**Synopsis:** Twelve year olds Grace and Arthur help their teacher and a photographer prove illegal child labor practices in Vermont during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century's in cotton mills.

### **Gossamer**

**By Lois Lowry**

**AR book level: 4.4**

**Synopsis:** In this fantasy tale, Lois Lowry beautifully describes the work of "dream givers," creatures who have the awesome job of "bestowing" dreams on sleeping humans to help them get through their daily lives when awake. Littlest One, new to this responsibility, can't seem to quit talking and asking questions as she makes a serious effort to learn her job, selflessly giving of herself in an effort to help the dreamers in the house she is assigned. Will her constant questioning get her into trouble with the forces that attempt to block the delivery of sweet dreams, or help her to learn to guide her dreamers toward more hopeful lives?

### **Hattie Big Sky**

**By Kirby Larson**

**AR book level: 4.4**

**Synopsis:** Hattie Brooks is a sixteen year old orphan who inherits a homestead claim in Vida, Montana, from her uncle in 1917. She has always wanted a home of her own and she sees this as a chance to finally belong somewhere. Her efforts to prove the homestead before the deadline in 10 months while coping with the effects of World War I on her community and her school friend Charlie who is stationed in France are described in both letters and first person narrative.

### **Jumping the Scratch**

**By Sara Weeks**

**AR book level: 5.2**

**Synopsis:** Jamie has had a string of bad luck and just when he thinks his life couldn't get worse, it does. He has to move from Battle Creek to Traverse City with his mother to help his aunt Saphy who had a freak accident at work that left her unable to be alone because she has no short term memory. This move is difficult in itself and something happens to Jamie that he wants desperately to forget, but he struggles throughout the story to do just that.

## Listen

**By Stephanie Tolan**

**AR book level: 5.4**

**Synopsis:** The summer Charley had been dreading becomes a summer of healing, not only of her leg that was damaged in the accident, but of her heart that has been wounded since her mother's death. The feral dog that was just a nuisance to some, is the catalyst for love, trust and family renewal.

## The Mailbox

**By Audrey Shafer**

**AR book level: 5.0**

**Synopsis:** Twelve-year-old Gabe Culligan Pace has had a rough life, but things have evened out really nicely for him lately. In his early years Gabe was a foster kid, shuttled from place to place without a home. Then his social worker found his long-lost Uncle Vernon, and things were looking good. Uncle Vernon is kind of crusty. He has a prosthetic leg and a gruff manner, but it's obvious that he and his nephew get along really well. You can't blame Gabe for not knowing that Vernon would have secrets, secrets from his Vietnam War days. Then one day, Gabe comes home from school, his first day of sixth-grade, and Uncle Vernon is dead on the floor. The next morning Gabe goes to school like usual and tries not to think about what to do. When he gets home, there's a note in the mailbox. On one side it says, "I have a secret". On the other side it says, "Do not be afraid." But when Gabe comes into the house and finds that his uncle's body has disappeared, he is afraid, very afraid. Throughout the rest of the book Gabe has to navigate new territory and situations, and his main mission is to stay safe and out of the foster-care system. He does all this while grieving for his uncle and wondering if Vernon's death was his fault in any way.

## One-Handed Catch

**By Mary Jane Auch**

**AR book level: 4.2**

**Synopsis:** After losing his hand in a meat grinder, Norman learns to do for himself again and works hard to obtain his long desire to play baseball and to draw.

## Rules

**By Cynthia Lord**

**AR book level: 3.9**

**Synopsis:** Twelve-year-old Catherine is a dedicated sister to her younger brother David who faces the daily challenges that autism brings. However, Catherine learns that perhaps the "rules" she is constantly preaching about to David need to be applied to her own life when she makes friends with a wheel-chair-bound boy who must communicate without talking. Is she afraid to introduce him to some of her friends for fear that he, and therefore she, will be seen as "different" around those she is trying to fit in with?

## Singing Hands.

**By Delia Ray**

**AR book level: 5.9**

**Synopsis:** Gussie Davis is determined to take on the world in her own way, regardless of the fact that she has deaf parents and two sisters who sometimes try to cramp her unique style. Has Gussie finally gone too far this time, she thinks regretfully, as she is forced to miss her dream trip into the exciting world where regular hearing people (or *ears*) live? Perhaps her mom and dad care more about her father's deaf church congregation than their own daughter!

### **The Wright 3**

**By Blue Balliett**

**AR book level: 5.7**

**Synopsis:** Sixth-grade sleuths Petra and Calder, along with friend Tommy, work to save Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural treasure the Robie House from destruction and investigate the mysterious circumstances surrounding the house.

### **Yellow Star**

**By Jennifer Roy**

**AR book level: 4.3**

**Synopsis:** Sylvia Perlmutter, a young Jewish girl, her older sister Dora, and their parents are forced into the Lodz, Poland ghetto in 1939, along with 270,000 other Jews. Sylvia and her family members experience starvation, beatings, and threat of execution during the years in the ghetto. Young Sylvia experiences total boredom, fear, and extreme loneliness. This book is told in free verse from young Sylvia's point of view. While over a quarter-million Jews entered the ghetto, as stated earlier, only 800 were left alive when liberation came in 1945. Twelve of them were children. Jennifer Roy's aunt Sylvia was one of those children.