



**Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award
2017-2018 Booktalk Scripts
Grades 6-8**



***Sasquatch in the Paint* by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar & Raymond Obstfeld**

Imagine growing 6 inches over the summer. That's what happened to Theo Rollins and suddenly everyone is looking at him differently. The basketball coach wants to change him from a science geek into a basketball star. Only Theo hasn't played much and isn't very good. Watching him play, a girl calls him "Sasquatch" and it sticks as the other players give him a hard time and the schools "Aca-lympic" team wants him kicked off because he isn't pulling his weight. Then to top it all off, he's accused of stealing. Follow Theo's journey and root for him to survive 8th grade.

Author Website: <https://kareemabduljabbar.com/books/>

Book Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5JQOc2_sJo

***Soar* by Joan Bauer**

Baseball is Jeremiah's life, but he can't play because of a heart transplant. His father has to move to a town that lives and breathes baseball and Jeremiah is super excited. He starts at the middle school but they don't have a baseball team. Scandals have been brewing with the coaches at the high school and middle school. Jeremiah can't bear to see baseball banned, so he volunteers to coach. Even though he can't play, he's committed to be the best coach he can be! Can he steer the team to victory, or will the team fall apart?

Author Website: <http://joanbauer.com/>

Author Interview: <http://mrschureads.blogspot.com/2016/01/soar-by-joan-bauer.html>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2meh6h7BaE>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xFebt-NIU0>

***Awkward* by Svetlana Chmakova**

Going to a new school can be difficult. Going to a new middle school can be even harder. Join Peppi in this graphic novel as she gives insights into surviving middle school and also how to bounce back from those mistakes we make. After all, middle school can be rather...awkward.

Author Website: <http://svetlania.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RD1Zv2FdfmA>

***Chasing Secrets* by Gennifer Choldenko**

Lizzie never felt comfortable at the posh school or fancy parties of San Francisco society. She preferred to help her father with his many patients. Medicine in the 1900's was still a mystery and she had stumbled onto an extremely deadly disease of epidemic proportions. Politics,

prejudice and rumors of a plague could have destroyed the city.

Author Website: <http://genniferholdenko.com/>

***Choosing Courage* by Peter Collier**

Read the true stories of the valiant men and women who have received either the Medal of Honor, the highest award given to military personnel, or one of the citizen's equivalent awards. Short sidebars also give insights and context into the historical events at the time of each recipient's award.

Congressional Medal of Honor Society Website: <http://www.cmohs.org/>

***House of Secrets* by Chris Columbus & Ned Vizzini**

Something is terribly wrong at their father's work and the family must move to an elaborate but creepy estate in San Francisco that previously belonged to an eccentric author. The three siblings soon realize the characters and plots of those books are coming to life right before their eyes. Join the adventures with the Walker children as they encounter a WWI pilot, gruesome pirates and a shapeshifting sorceress while trying to find their way home and save their parents.

Author Interview from USA Today - 03/2013:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/books/2013/03/26/chris-columbus-house-of-secrets-trailer-interview/2010651/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29BUyTajg7M>

***The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club* by Phillip Hoose**

Are you brave enough to take the chance? Knud and his friends watched helplessly as Hitler and his Nazis took over Denmark. They had to do something. The boys in the Churchill gang tried everything to stop them, from stealing weapons to acts of arson. Based on a true story, follow the exploits of this group of brave resisters.

Author Website: <http://www.philliphoose.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjkJfhUOfAg>

***Bubonic Panic: When Plague Invaded America* by Gail Jarrow**

It's the Bubonic Plague!! The very words sound dark, creepy, sinister and scary. This ancient disease wiped-out millions of people in the Middle Ages. Where did it come from? What are the symptoms? Can I get it? Follow scientists as they trace this medical mystery through the centuries and across the continents. Everything you wanted to know about the Bubonic Plague but were too petrified to ask.

Author Website: <http://gailjarrow.com/>

***Girl vs. Boy Band: The Right Track* by Harmony Jones**

Imagine sharing your house with the hot British boy band, Abbey Road!!! This is NOT a dream come true for twelve-year-old Lark. She is homesick for the quiet life in Tennessee. When her parents divorced, she and her mom moved to Los Angeles so Mom could start her own record label. Now the British invasion changes everything. All is a whirlwind of meetings, photo ops and rehearsals. The three boys may be great musicians, but they act their age being goofy, raucous and eating everything in sight. Mom, totally absorbed by the boys, ignores her needs. Lark, truly talented as a musician and singer song writer, is extremely shy. Fortunately, Lark has her best friend Mimi and the support of Teddy Reese who is helping her overcome her stage fright. Things turn ugly when Lark discovers that one of the Brits has stolen **her** song! Will Lark take a stand for her own work? Will Lark's mother finally understand her?

Publisher Website about the Author: <http://www.bloomsbury.com/author/harmony-jones>

***Slacker* by Gordon Korman**

Hey, my life was perfect before I nearly burned the house down. But the aliens were SO ready to be blasted away. Then, there was this funny noise, "This is the Sycamore Fire Department." I was cooked. Gaming is my chosen lifestyle. I've arranged my life to do that, doing just enough work to get by. Now my parents have ordered me, Cameron Boxer, to find an interest that doesn't have a screen! They want me to PARTICIPATE, to be INVOLVED! Out of desperation I form a fake club, but kids believe everything they see online and now the Positive Action Club is the most popular one at school. Kids love doing things like building a habitat for a beaver, painting the YMCA pool, and helping senior citizens. All the kids think I am a hero. Help!!!!

Author Website: <http://gordonkorman.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNu-tVgY60k>

***The Seventh Most Important Thing* by Shelley Pearsall**

In the heat of the moment, a poor decision by Arthur gets him arrested. When the judge reluctantly grants him community service instead of sending him to juvie, Arthur isn't so sure it is the best decision since his assignment is to collect junk for the man he severely injured. When the man becomes extremely picky and specific about the "junk" he is to collect, Arthur is ready to quit until he discovers what it is being used to create.

Author Website: <http://cathiepelletier.com/index.html>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXxHe9zw-o>

***Echo* by Pam Muñoz Ryan**

This story starts as any good story does, with a fairy tale. Otto meets three sisters alone in the forest. They give him a harmonica and state that they have to use it to save three lives before they are allowed to leave their wooded prison.

Years later, Friedrich is in Germany as Hitler is coming to power. Treated differently, because of a birthmark on his face, he finds out that he has a talent with a harmonica. Soon thereafter, his father is taken away for speaking out against Hitler. Can Friedrich save his father?

Shortly after, Mike and Frankie are orphans in Philadelphia until they are temporarily adopted. Mike realizes that he's got to find a way to make a living to take care of his brother. Could he get into the Philadelphia Harmonica Band and stop looking for the worst in everything?

Ivy and her family are moving into a house! But what happened to the people who lived there before them. Were they Japanese spies? And why can't Ivy attend the same school as her neighbors?

Just as it begins, the fairy tale weaves all these stories back together. Even though it is filled with cliffhangers, all of our characters must take a lesson from the sisters, "Your fate is not yet sealed, even in the darkest night, a star will shine, a bell will chime, a path will be revealed."

Author Website: <http://www.pammunozryan.com/>

Discussion Guide: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/discussion-guide-novels-pam-munoz-ryan/>

***Deadly Flowers: A Ninja's Tale* by Sarah L. Thomson**

Kata is training to be a "deadly flower," a ninja. She knows that if she succeeds, she will be sent out on her first mission. A successful mission will connect her to a master to serve, or so she thinks...except her first mission is to kill a small boy. When she can't do it, she ends up the keeper of a cursed pearl that binds a demon. Kata is now on the run with Ichiro and Saiko, the boy she was assigned to kill and his sister. Can she trust them? Can they fight off the monsters, spirits, and humans that are after the pearl?

Author Website: <http://www.sarahlthomson.com/>

Author Interview: <https://litpick.com/author/sarah-thomson>

***The One Safe Place* by Tania Unsworth**

Devin has always lived on an isolated farm with his grandfather. When his grandfather dies, Devon can no longer run the farm and decides to go to the city. Once there he ends up living on the streets where he is befriended by Kit. She shows him how to survive, barely. One day they meet a boy who offers to take them to a place where there is food and safety...or is there? Once there Devon realizes that something is wrong. Where do the others go for a day and why do they come back changed? Who are the many old adults coming by and looking them over? Why is there an electrified fence around the place? This is the book for you if you like creepy dystopian fiction.

Author Website: <http://taniaunsworth.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfjlyJEzVH8>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFct4znVMuk>

Author Insights: <http://algonquinyoungreaders.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Unsworth-AE41.pdf>

***Wolf Hollow* by Lauren Wolk**

Step back into Pennsylvania during the 1940s in this historical fiction novel. Meet well developed characters from a rural town that face bullying, gossip, and tragedy in the community. The students in the book show courage and are set to solve the situation if they can, but will the real truth be unearthed and will anyone believe it?

Author web site: <http://www.laurenwolk.com/home.html>

Book Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJ_QGff9ev4