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## Character

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### K-2

Kvasnosky, Laura McGee. **ZELDA AND IVY: THE RUNAWAYS**. Candlewick Press, 2006.

In this beginning chapter book divided into three episodes, the Fox sisters discover that running out to hide in the yard will not save them from yet another lunch of cucumber sandwiches, that it's not a good idea to put something you'll miss into a time capsule, and that a sprinkle of "creative juices" made from a secret formula can dispel the most stubborn case of writer's block. **Winner of Geisel Beginning Reader Award 2007.**

Look Lenore. **UNCLE PETER'S AMAZING CHINESE WEDDING**. Atheneum, 2006.

Jenny's favorite uncle is getting married; she loves being his "special girl" and is having difficulty with the idea of sharing him with a new aunt. Students will relate to the character's feelings of jealousy and of being left out. The story comes to a satisfying end when the bride acknowledges the special place that Jenny holds in Uncle Peter's life and heart by giving her a symbolic job at the end of their traditional Chinese wedding. This character would pair well with Lilly from Kevin Henkes' *LILLY'S BIG DAY*.

### 3-4

Jenkins, Emily. **TOYS GO OUT: BEING THE ADVENTURES OF A KNOWLEDGEABLE STINGRAY, A TOUGHY LITTLE BUFFALO, AND SOMEONE CALLED PLASTIC**. Schwartz & Wade Books, 2006.

This "secret-lives-of-toys" story relates the experiences of three engaging toy best friends: Lumphy the buffalo, plush StingRay, and Plastic. In six interconnected chapters, these characters face concerns and situations kids will respond to--shy Lumphy's fear of the washing machine, gentle Plastic's identity crisis, and know-it-all StingRay's embarrassing bathtub experience. Reminiscent of *Toy Story* and *The Doll People*.

Patterson, Nancy Ruth. **THE WINNER'S WALK**. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

Nine-year-old Case fears that he's the only one in his family not cut out to be a winner. He is looking for his moment in the spotlight. When Case finds a stray dog with special abilities, he finally hears the applause that he has craved. His winning days are short-lived, however, when he learns that Noah is a service dog for a disabled girl. Case faces a difficult decision. Readers will root for this sympathetic, appealing hero.

### 5-6

Codell, Esme Raji. **VIVE LA PARIS**. Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.

This companion to Codell's *Sahara Special* is narrated by African-American Paris McCray, a fifth-grader in Miss Pointy's class. Filled with charm and perseverance, she handles each problem in her life with courage and wit—her older brother Michael's encounters with a younger, female bully; her misunderstanding about the yellow star given to her by her piano teacher who is a Holocaust survivor. Paris's character will appeal to readers who, like her, are trying to find out where they fit in a confusing, sometimes unkind, world.

Patron, Susan. **THE HIGHER POWER OF LUCKY**. Atheneum, 2006.

Afraid that her legal guardian plans to abandon her to return to France, ten-year-old Lucky Trimble decides to run away while also continuing to seek the Higher Power that will bring stability to her life. Students will be drawn to the character of Lucky who is a true heroine because she's not perfect: she does some cowardly things but works to make them right. Lucky is joined by a strong cast of fellow characters including her best friend Lincoln who has a fixation with tying knots and five-year-old Miles who lives on cookies and endless oral readings of *Are You My Mother?* **Winner of Newbery Medal 2007.**