
Realistic Fiction

K-2

Boelts, Maribeth. *Those Shoes*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2007. Jeremy longs for a new pair of cool high-tops, but Grandma says they cost too much. The thrift shop has a pair, but Jeremy hides that fact that they pinch his feet. Then he sees Antonio, whose shoes are in worse shape, and he makes a difficult decision.

Harrington, Janice N. *Roberto Walks Home*. New York: Viking, 2008. Based on the characters and art style of Ezra Jack Keats' books, this urban tale depicts Roberto's anger and reconciliation with his older brother. When his brother, Miguel, forgets to pick Roberto up after school, Roberto heads home and sees Miguel playing hoops with the big boys. At home, Roberto vents his disappointment, dreams of revenge, and eventually accepts his brother's apology.

3-4

Cox, Judy. *Puppy Power*. New York: Holiday House, 2008. Third-grade Fran is a boisterous bully, but although she is bright, she cannot see how others perceive her. Parallel sub-plots show Fran struggling with her undisciplined Newfoundland puppy, and with a recalcitrant kindergarten reading-buddy. She will lose the puppy and the starring role in the class play if she doesn't shape up.

Knudsen, Mike. *Raymond and Graham: Dancing Dudes*. New York: Viking, 2008. In a series of hilarious episodes, Graham routinely advises his best friend Raymond on the rules of manliness in fourth grade. Their sincerity and innocence make them likeable characters as they navigate poem-writing, the class Valentine party, liking girls, the school "maturation program," and a class square dance.

5-6

Butler, Dori Hillestad. *The Truth About Truman School*. Morton Grove, IL: Whitman, 2008. Middle school journalist Zebby, disgusted with the restraints of her school newspaper, launches an online newspaper with her friend Amr. Anyone can post to it, provided it is "the truth as you see it." As the website heats up, cyber-bullying and character defamation begin to smolder. Intrigue builds on two fronts, as the reader tries to determine both the source of the inflammatory postings, and what "rules" are really appropriate.

Smith, Hope Anita. *Keeping the Night Watch*. New York: Henry Holt, 2008. A series of blank-verse poems paints a vivid picture of an African-American family trying to re-adjust when Daddy returns home. Told from the perspective of thirteen-year-old C.J., the rest of the family learns to forgive, but C.J.'s heart is hardened against his father's betrayal. Gentle nudges from Momma and Grandmomma are kind, but ultimately it is C.J.'s battle within himself that is eloquently played out.