

**CYRM Resource Book
Intermediate Nominees
(Grades 3-6)
2009-2010**

A Crooked Kind of Perfect

by Linda Urban

Random House, 2007

A Friendship for Today

by Patricia McKissack

Scholastic, 2007

No Talking

by Andrew Clements

Simon & Schuster, 2007



California Young Reader Medal
Intermediate Ballot
2009-2010

_____ *A Crooked Kind of
Perfect*

_____ *A Friendship for Today*

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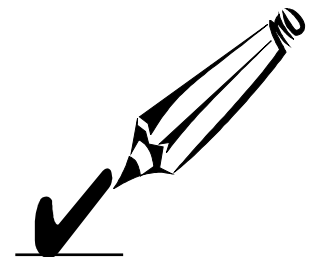
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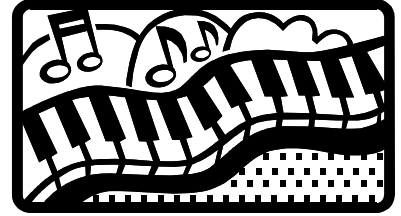
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_____ *No Talking*



A Crooked Kind of Perfect

by Linda Urban



Synopsis

Zoe Elias just knows she was meant to be a child prodigy on the piano. But her path to realizing this dream (by getting a piano) is forced into many detours by external forces, especially her dad and the Perfectone D-60 organ he buys. Zoe's home appears to be a typical American family at first. But readers soon learn her father rarely leaves the house and her mother is rarely home as the breadwinner of the family. The confusion of sixth grade along with a growing interest in boys only complicate Zoe's life more. Zoe learns to soften her disappointments with sarcasm and spot-on impersonations of her organ teacher. She must go with the flow, even when it leads in the wrong direction. But life has a way of working out to everyone's satisfaction.

Hooks

- Do you play a musical instrument? If yes, who chose the instrument? If no, what instrument would you like to play?
- Have you ever wanted something so badly that you were willing to work extra hard for it? Tell about it.
- Have you ever been in a performance? How did your body feel before it? During? After?
- Almost everyone has something they are afraid of. Have your fears ever kept you from doing something you wanted to do?

Meet the Author—Linda Urban



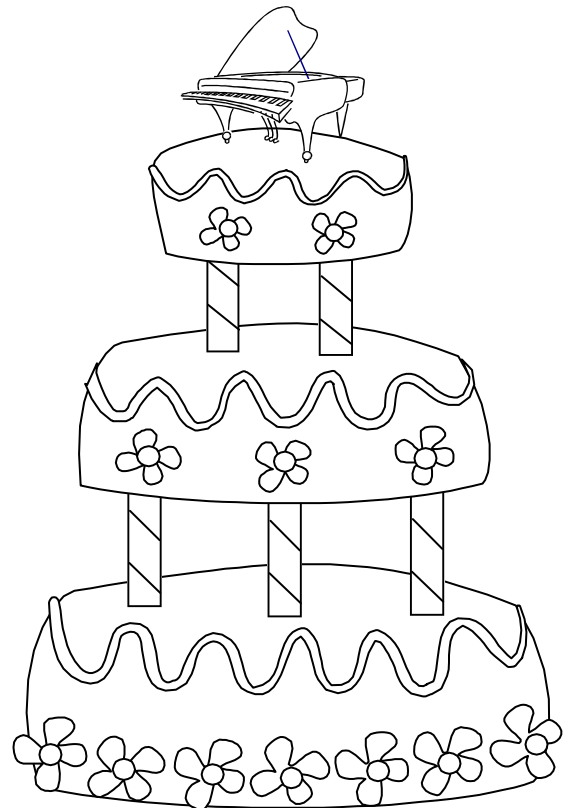
From a young age, growing up in a suburb of Detroit, Linda Urban was writing poems, plays, and short stories. An early memory of Urban's is when she won a prize for her short story, *Superbox*, about a crime-fighting shoebox. When Urban got to read the story aloud to her classmates, she realized that her writing could make people cheer and laugh.

Even though Urban found out that not everyone will always like what you write, she never stopped writing. After college, Urban used her literary talents to work in advertising and marketing. This landed her a career at a large, independent bookstore in Southern California as their marketing director. While working there, Urban had the opportunity to meet many authors while organizing author visits and book signings. And guess what? She found out that even famous, well-respected authors worry that people might not like their work. This made Urban think that she might want to pursue writing full-time. Finally, it was having a child and reading children's stories to her daughter, that pushed her to writing children's books full-time.

A Crooked Kind of Perfect is Urban's first published children's book. Her picture book, *Mouse Was Mad*, was released in 2009.

Information from:

<http://www.lindaurbanbooks.com/about.html>





Music Instruction and Study

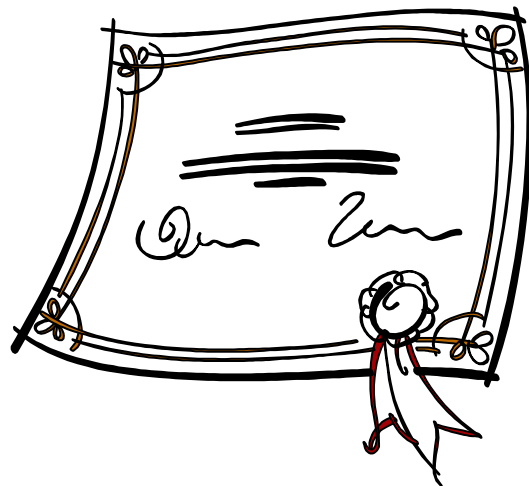
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- MacLachlan, Patricia. *The Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt*. HarperTrophy, 1990.
- Namioka, Lensey. *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear*. Houghton Mifflin, 1996.
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Agoraphobia

- Hurwitz, Johanna. *Law of Gravity*. Scholastic, 1978.
- Spinelli, Jerry. *Love, Stargirl*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.
- Weeks, Sarah. *So B It*. Laura Geringer Books, 2005.

Humorous Stories

- Denslow, Sharon Phillips. *Georgie Lee*. Greenwillow, 2002.
- Horvath, Polly. *The Pepins and Their Problems*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004.
- Paulsen, Gary. *Harris and Me: A Summer Remembered*. Harcourt, 2007.
- Schmidt, Gary D. *The Wednesday Wars*. Clarion, 2007.



Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *A Crooked Kind of Perfect*



- Read this definition of agoraphobia. Do you think Zoe’s dad is agoraphobic? Support your answer using examples from the story:

Agoraphobia -- People with agoraphobia often have a hard time feeling safe in any public place, especially places where crowds gather. Commonly feared places and situations are elevators, sporting events, lines, bridges, public transportation, driving, shopping malls and airplanes. The fears can be so overwhelming that some people are essentially trapped in their own homes — it's the only place they feel truly safe, so they don't venture out into public at all.

-- Mayo Clinic, Tools for
Healthier Lives

- Everyone has faults and/or irritating habits. Some are harder to live with than others. Has your loyalty to a friend or family member ever been pushed to its limits because of that person’s personal faults? Tell about it.
- Explain some of the things most kids do that Zoe missed out on because of her dad’s condition. Use examples from the book where possible.
- Think of a time when fear kept you from doing something you wanted or needed to do. What was the fear? Did you avoid the task or event? Or did you push yourself through the fear. How did you feel about yourself afterwards?
- In spite of all his Living Room University degrees, Zoe’s dad never had a job. There are many adults in our society who don’t have jobs. How do these adults without jobs live? What are the consequences for family members? Discuss the consequences and different living situations they may have.

A Friendship for Today

by Patricia McKissack



Synopsis

In 1954, twelve-year-old Rosemary Patterson is about to make history. Although all the children from her segregated black school in Missouri will attend integrated schools, Rosemary ends up being one of only two African American students enrolled in her sixth grade class. But before school starts, her best friend, and the only other African American student in the sixth grade, is hospitalized with polio. Rosemary must face all the stares and whispers alone. Ironically, the girl who has shown her the most cruelty becomes an unlikely ally, then friend. Although the tolerance and change seen among the children seems almost too good to be true, we find out at the end that it is based on the experience of the author.

Hooks

- What is prejudice? (Make sure all understand it is judging without or before knowing something). Have you heard or seen people who are prejudiced?
- Prejudice isn't always about people. Some people harbor prejudices about things. Some adults are prejudiced against video games. Some children are prejudiced against vegetables. Think about your own likes and dislikes. Is there anything you are prejudiced about? Something you decided you didn't like without knowing anything about it?
- Have you ever not liked someone when you first met them, but ended up becoming good friends later? How accurate are your "first impressions?"
- Are there groups of friends, sometimes called cliques, at your school? Can anyone join in? What "rules" apply to cliques at your school?



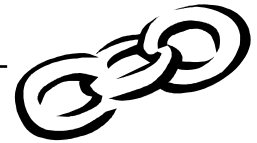
Meet the Author—Patricia McKissack

Patricia McKissack was born in Smyrna, Tennessee in 1944. She worked as a teacher and an editor of children's books before becoming a full-time author of children's books. With her husband, Frederick McKissack, Patricia has written over 100 books about the African-American experience. She and her husband have written picture books, easy-to-read titles, biographies and juvenile fiction.

Patricia McKissack has also written several fiction titles on her own, including *A Friendship for Today*. "When I'm writing fiction, I think the book through first. I walk around with a manuscript in my head a year or sometimes longer—until I have very clearly in my mind a beginning, a middle, and an end. This doesn't mean that I won't change an ending or a setting or even a central character, but I can't work until I know where I'm going."

In addition to being an author, McKissack is also an accomplished storyteller, serving on the board of the National Storytelling Association for six years. McKissack and her husband currently reside in St. Louis, Missouri. They have three grown children and four grandchildren.

Information from: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/contributor.jsp?id=3372>



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The 1950s

- Cameron, Ann. *The Secret Life of Amanda K. Woods*. Frances Foster Books, 1998.
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Rosen, Sybil. *Speed of Light*. Atheneum, 1999.
Testa, Maria. *Becoming Joe DiMaggio*. Candlewick Press, 2002.

Divorce

- Bateson, Catherine. *Rain May and Captain Daniel*. University of Queensland Press, 2002.
Bauer, Joan. *Stand Tall*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002.
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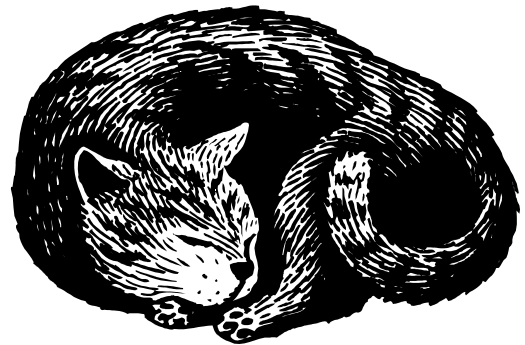
Segregation/Integration

- Bausum, Ann. *Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement*. National Geographic, 2006.
Freedman, Russell. *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. Holiday House, 2006.
McKissack, Patricia C. *Abby Takes a Stand*. Puffin, 2006.
Walvoord, Linda. *Rosetta, Rosetta, Sit By Me!* Marshall Cavendish, 2004.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions For *A Friendship for Today*

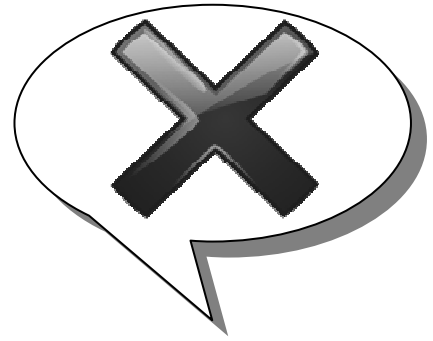


- Which character do you think changed the most in this story? Give examples from the beginning, middle and end of the book to support the big changes made by that character.
- After Miss Jean went back to Kentucky, Rosemary's dad wanted to come back to his wife. Do you think Rosemary's mom made the right decision to finish the divorce instead of letting Rosemary's dad come home? Explain your opinion.
- Sometimes Rosemary thinks Grace is mad at her. As she gets to know Grace better, Rosemary realizes that Grace isn't mad at her, she's embarrassed about something to do with her family. Have you ever been embarrassed by someone in your family? What was it that embarrassed you? How did you deal with it? Did you let the person know they had embarrassed you?
- Draw a picture of how you imagined Rags, the cat. Rags was a cat owned by the author when she was young. Rags in this book is based 100% on her cat. (The book is dedicated to Rags). She rescued Rags from the railroad tracks. Have you ever tried to save a wounded animal? Or do you know someone who did? How did the animal get hurt? What was done to help it? Did it survive? Tell the story. If you've never known this to happen, make up your own story about a wounded animal helped by a person, maybe you!



No Talking

by Andrew Clements



Synopsis

After doing a research paper and oral report about India, Dave is intrigued by the idea of being silent and decides to try it out. He never expects to get the reactions and feeling of power that silence brings. When he talks about taking a vow of silence on the bus, it turns into a contest between the 5th grade boys and the 5th grade girls. At first their teachers, who nicknamed this group The Unshushables, revel in the wonderful silence. But they soon discover silence has its drawbacks in the classroom, and demand that the students start talking again. Of course, the students don't cooperate, and they learn a lot about themselves in the process.



Hooks

- How does it feel if someone won't talk to you?
- Have you ever gotten in trouble for talking in the classroom? What were the consequences?
- Have you ever tried to go without talking for a day?
- Why do teachers often want kids to stop talking?
- What do you talk about with your friends?



Meet the Author—Andrew Clements

Born in 1949 in Camden, New Jersey, Andrew Clements credits his parents for sparking his love of reading and books. “My parents were avid readers and they gave that love of books and reading to me and to all my brothers and sisters. I didn’t think about being a writer at all back then, but I did love to read. I’m certain there’s a link between reading good books and becoming a writer. I don’t know a single writer who wasn’t a reader first.” Quiet summers in a cabin on a lake in Maine allowed Clements to “think like a writer.”

Clements has had many jobs before landing in his successful career as an author of children’s and young adult books. After teaching for seven years in the Chicago area, Clements and his family packed up and moved to New York City so he could pursue a career as a singer-songwriter. When that didn’t pan out, he worked for a small publisher specializing in how-to books. Later, while working at a friend’s company that imported children’s picture books from Europe, Clements started writing a book about a boy who invents a word. This went on to become Clements’ first published book, *Frindle*.

Andrew Clements has gone on to write many books for children and young adults. When asked how he’s able to write so many books Clements replies, “the answer is simple: one word at a time.”

Information from: <http://www.andrewclements.com/bio.html>





Contests/Competition

- Coombs, Kate. *The Runaway Princess*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.
Feinstein, John. *Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery*. Yearling, 2005.
Konigsburg, E. L. *The View from Saturday*. Aladdin, 1996.
Lin, Grace. *The Year of the Dog*. Little Brown, 2007.
Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *The Mozart Season*. Square Fish, 2007.

Silence

- Fleischman, Paul. *The Half-A-Moon Inn*. HarperCollins, 1991.
Konigsburg, E. L. *Silent to the Bone*. Simon Pulse, 2004.
Lowry, Lois. *The Silent Boy*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003.
Mourlevat, Jean-Claude. *The Pull of the Ocean*. Delacourt, 2006.
Paterson, Katherine. *Flip-Flop Girl*. Puffin, 1996.
Williams-Garcia, Rita. *No Laughter Here*. Amistad, 2003.

School Life

- Brown, Devin. *Not Exactly Normal*. Eerdmans, 2006.
Ellis, Ann Dee. *This Is What I Did*. Little, Brown, 2007.
Himmelblau, Linda. *The Trouble Begins*. Delacorte, 2005.
Schmidt, Gary D. *The Wednesday Wars*. Clarion, 2007.
Tarshis, Lauren. *Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree*. Puffin, 2007.



Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *No Talking*



- Write a note to a friend telling them something important that you would normally tell them out loud. Write it the way you would speak, using excitement as well as writing words the way you use them, like *gonna* and *s'posed to*.
- Were the students disrespectful when they disobeyed the principal's order to start talking? Why or why not?
- Dave and Lynsey's classmates found a certain amount of personal power through choosing not to talk. Why do you think this happened? Explain your answer.
- When and where do you do your best thinking? David and Lynsey were pleased to find they spent more time thinking when they were silent. Why do you think they liked it?

