

### **SMALL STEPS**

Armpit, enjoying his newfound freedom after a stint in a juvenile detention facility, is trying to do the right things with his life. However, when an old friend shows up with a get-rich-quick scheme, Armpit gets involved. His unlikely friendship with Ginny, a 10-year-old with cerebral palsy, complicates his situation, but in the end Ginny might be the only one who can really save Armpit. (MS)

*By Louis Sachar*

### **I DON'T WANT TO BE CRAZY**

This memoir, written in prose, follows the author through her college experience. She offers insight into her growing anxiety disorder—which impacts every aspect of her life—and describes strategies that help her manage and overcome her challenges. Includes anxiety disorder resource list. (HS)

*By Samantha Schutz*

### **CRUISE CONTROL**

Paul, high school superstar, experiences frustration with his younger brother's profound disabilities, his distant father, and a growing apprehension about the future. Paul's rage causes fights and conflicts, but with the support of some strong friends, he learns to use his anger in a positive way. (MS)

*By Terry Trueman*

### **INSIDE OUT**

Sixteen-year-old Zach gets taken hostage by two armed teens in a Spokane coffee shop while waiting for his mother to bring him the antipsychotic medication he needs to manage his schizophrenia. As time passes, Zach begins to spiral into an alternate reality and must fight to stay connected to what's really happening. (MS)

*By Terry Trueman*

**MS** = Appropriate for readers in middle and high school  
**HS** = Appropriate for readers in high school

Researched and compiled by E. Rockefeller, 1/2007



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## What's so special about my needs?

*Books for teens celebrating the diversity of abilities.*

### MY THIRTEENTH WINTER

*By Samantha Abeel*

In this memoir, Samantha Abeel describes how it feels growing up with the learning disability dyscalculia. Her frustration at being labeled “dumb” by teachers and ridiculed by peers is articulately described, and her brave and riveting story concludes with both triumph and trepidation. (HS)

### AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS

*By Jennifer Choldenko*

It's 1935, and twelve-year-old Moose Flanagan's family has just to Alcatraz, where his father has found work. Moose isn't thrilled about the move, but with the help of the warden's daughter, he is able to find a place for himself and come to terms with his younger sister's Autism. (MS)

### FADE TO BLACK

*By Alex Flinn*

HIV-positive Alejandro is brutally attacked in the high school parking lot. The only witness is Daria, a fellow student who has Downs Syndrome. Alternately told from Alejandro's and Daria's point of view, this story highlights the complexities surrounding prejudice and acts of hatred. (MS)

### TENDING TO GRACE

*By Kimberly Newton Fusco*

Cornelia keeps to herself because of her debilitating stuttering problem. Left with an introverted relative so her mother—and mom's boyfriend—can head out west, Cornelia and her new caretaker struggle to make a family, confronting the past as they move into the future. (MS)

### KICKED OUT

*By Beth Goobie*

Dime feels unloved and unappreciated by her family, so she acts out and does the opposite of everything her parents ask her to do. After moving in with her older brother Darren, a quadriplegic, she learns that self-love and responsibility are crucial for a productive life. (MS)

### INVISIBLE

*By Pete Hautman*

Obsessed with his model railroad and friendship with high school star athlete Andy, Dougie is a sixteen-year-old loner with a dark past. Peers ridicule him and eventually resort to violence in reaction to his unusual behavior and unique needs as his mental illness spirals out of control. (MS)

### SWEETBLOOD

*By Pete Hautman*

Feeling connected to the world of the undead—because her life is sustained through medication—sixteen-year-old Lucy Szabo dives into vampire lore, where she finds friends who seem to understand her pain. A near-death experience forces Lucy to reevaluate her lifestyle and make some changes in her Diabetes maintenance. (HS)

### STITCHES

*By Glen Huser*

Bullied unmercifully, Travis faces daily taunts and violence due to his. Supported by a few teachers and his one constant friend Chantelle, who has a disease that has left her disfigured, he finds joy in puppetry. As the bullying intensifies, Travis learns differences can be a burden and a gift. (MS)

### ACCIDENTS OF NATURE

*By Harriet McBryde Johnson*

During the summer of 1970, seventeen-year-old Jean attends a camp for youth with disabilities. When her cabin performs a skit that switches the roles of people with disabilities and those without, the girls get into trouble, but the experience leaves Jean with a new sense of identity and power. (MS)

### EASY FOR YOU TO SAY: GANDAS FOR TEENS LIVING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS OR DISABILITY

*By Miriam Kaufman*

Written by a doctor for teens, this nonfiction book answers questions asked by real teens about all aspects of life with an illness or disability. Kaufman doesn't avoid tough questions; she provides real-life answers and solutions that will benefit both teens and their caregivers. (MS)

### STONER & SPAZ

*By Ron Koertge*

An unlikely friendship between Ben, who has cerebral palsy, and Colleen, a drug addict, leads to a more promising future for both teens. As their relationship develops, Ben becomes engrossed in a new neighbor's film project and the idea of film school, which stresses his connection to Colleen. (HS)

### THE FALCONMASTER

*By Robin L. La Fevers*

Shunned due to his bad leg and missing eye, young Wat spends much of his time alone in the woods. After rescuing two falcons and meeting a forest-dwelling stranger, Wat learns to harness the mystical forces of nature and make the most of his strengths. (MS)

### RULES

*By Cynthia Lord*

12-year-old Catherine finds herself in charge of her younger brother more often than she would choose, and his unusual behavior—caused by his Autism—makes her feel alienated. A friendship with an older teen boy (14-year-old Jason, a wheelchair-bound paraplegic), combined with her expanding interest in art, helps her see other peoples' needs in a new way. (MS)

### THE SIBLING SLAM BOOK

*Edited by Don J. Meyer*

Written for teens who have a sibling with unique abilities, this book highlights the emotions associated with loving someone who is differently-abled. There is an overall hopefulness to the text, as over eighty youths share their stories, challenges, triumphs, and love for their families. (MS)

### UNDER THE WOLF, UNDER THE DOG

*By Adam Rapp*

Steve Nugent has recently lost his mother to breast cancer and his older brother to suicide. Now in a facility for troubled youth, he uses writing to explore his path into destructive and dangerous behavior as well as to find a place within the society of his group home. (HS)