

1. Artemis Fowl – Eoin Colfer

Artemis Fowl is a 12-year-old genius, a millionaire, and... a criminal mastermind. While most kids are doing homework, Artemis is cracking an ancient code from a secret fairy “Bible” that describes a whole underground world of magical creatures. When he kidnaps Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon fairy police, he thinks he’s pulling off the perfect heist and restoring his family’s stolen fortune.

But the fairies are not cute or harmless. They have advanced tech, powerful magic, and a full tactical team ready to storm Artemis’s mansion and rescue Holly. As the night turns into a battle of wits, tech, and magic, Artemis has to stay three steps ahead of some of the cleverest creatures on earth—or lose everything.

2. Hatchet – Gary Paulsen

Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson is flying alone in a small bush plane to visit his dad in northern Canada when the unthinkable happens: the pilot has a heart attack, and the plane crashes into a remote lake. Brian survives, but he’s completely alone in the wilderness with only the clothes on his back and a small hatchet his mom gave him.

At first, Brian expects rescue any minute. But as days become weeks, he realizes no one is coming soon. He must learn how to build shelter, find food, protect himself from animals, and endure storms, injuries, and crushing loneliness. Along the way, he changes—from an unsure, angry kid dealing with his parents’ divorce into someone tougher, more observant, and determined to survive no matter what.

3. *Among the Hidden* — Margaret Peterson Haddix

In a society controlled by strict population laws, families are only allowed two children. Twelve-year-old Luke Garner is a hidden third child—forced to live his entire life out of sight, unable to go outside or be seen by anyone but his family. Luke believes he is totally alone until he spots a face in the window of a nearby house... a face that shouldn’t exist.

The girl he meets, Jen, is another hidden child—but she refuses to live in fear. She’s bold, outspoken, and determined to fight for their freedom. As Luke gets pulled into her world of secret meetings and rebellion, he must decide between staying safe in hiding or risking everything for a chance at a real life.

4. *Peak* — Roland Smith

Fourteen-year-old Peak Marcello loves climbing skyscrapers and rock walls—maybe a little too much. After he gets arrested for scaling a tall building, Peak is sent to live with his distant father, a famous climber who runs a commercial expedition company in the Himalayas.

Without warning, Peak is swept into a dangerous plan: attempt to be the **youngest person ever to summit Mount Everest**. As he trains at high altitude, faces deadly storms, navigates shifting ice, and bonds with a Nepalese boy named Sun-jo, Peak learns what it truly means to push limits, face fear, and decide who he wants to be.

A gripping survival adventure set on the world's highest mountain.

5. *Freak the Mighty* — Rodman Philbrick

Max is huge for his age, quiet, and often underestimated. Kevin ("Freak") is tiny, brilliant, and fearless, but his medical condition weakens his body. Alone, neither boy quite fits in. Together, they become **Freak the Mighty**—an unstoppable team that uses strength, imagination, and brains to take on bullies, explore their town, and tackle challenges bigger than themselves.

Their friendship transforms them both, giving Max confidence and helping Kevin escape his physical limitations through storytelling and quests. Funny, moving, and filled with heart, the story explores loyalty, bravery, and the power of friendship.