We've all heard the mantra “follow your dreams.” But what happens when you’re told the opposite?

11-year-old Félicie Milliner has always been told that dreams are not meant to be followed. She escapes from an orphanage in Brittany, France to go to Paris with her best friend Victor.

She then takes a leap of faith that lands her in the Opera Ballet School, but will she be able to make it with no former training?

“Leap!” is the story of two orphans who were left at an orphanage on the same day.

Victor is a stereotypical klutzy, misunderstood genius. Félicie is the well-used character of an indestructible feisty ginger.

The film fast-forwards several years and past more than 400 escape plans to 1884, with Félicie and Victor on the rooftop of the orphanage with some wings inspired by a chicken. And off to Paris they go!

The animation is practically flawless, aside from a few moments where the ballet looks choppy and like a more modern form of dance.

Each and every character has their own individual physical personality, including their posture and how they dress.

The clothing seems mostly accurate for the 1880's, except for the ballet students, whose skirts could have been a bit fuller.

The plot is generally very interesting and upbeat, although some of the concepts border on being cliché.

For example, Félicie’s unspoken motto of “follow your dreams” has been used over and over again in both everyday life and in the entertainment industry.

The storyline is fictional, but the only thing that is not physically possible is Victor’s invention of the “chicken wings,” which he creates to fly.

Despite the few faults in the movie, “Leap!” is a very enjoyable experience and a good movie to bring the whole family to.

Punishment camp brings friends together

Journey into the world of “Ruby and Olivia,” by Rachel Hawkins, where the two girls meet the Live Oak House and Camp Chrysalis.

Ruby is eccentric and adventurous. Olivia is organized and a good girl.

When both girls get sent to Camp Chrysalis and get involved with cleaning a abandoned creepy old house in their town, what could go wrong?

Olivia is a twin and it’s always been “Emma and Olivia,” but when she takes the fall for her sister’s shoplifting, her good girl reputation is tarnished, so for her summer going into seventh grade she has to go three times a week to Camp Chrysalis, a camp for delinquents.

Ruby has always been adventurous and causing trouble, and she used to be best friends with Emma.

Ruby is definitely not friends with Olivia, but when she gets involved with a glitter prank, she also has to go to Camp Chrysalis.

On the first day of camp, they get way too bright pink shirts with creepy smiley faces. That’s also when they find out the mission of the summer will be cleaning and cataloging Live Oak House.

Live Oak House is a old mansion on the edge of town with a big live oak in the middle of it. As they tour the house on the first day Ruby and Olivia hear a sad sounding music box coming from a tiny door.

They think they are just hearing things so they don’t think much of it.

As they keep cleaning and making a list of the things they find, they actually start to have fun in the mansion.

There is everything there from creepy dolls to taxidermy animals.

As camp goes on, though, both girls keep hearing and seeing creepy things in the house. They decide they will have to put their grudges aside and work together to solve the big mystery of Live Oak House.

Will they become friends and work together to solve the mystery or will it all fall apart?
**Jake shows how to fake it ‘til you make it**

**Drones will deliver emergency medicine in Tanzania**

Eventually, Jake has to come clean, but you’ll have to read the book to find out how that goes!

This book is a very empowering story for young readers and teaches them the life lesson that, if you just be yourself, things work out for the better.

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who is just starting middle school because it makes the right transition.

My brother, who is in the 6th grade, also read the book and enjoyed much more than I could.

“Jake the Fake” is an enjoyable comedy for young readers ready for that transition into middle school!

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**A poetic approach to finding your way in life**

**Seventh grade girl, Beatrix Lee, has an interesting year in “The Way to Bea,” by Kat Yeh.**

Bea is a poet who really likes to write haikus. Both of her parents are very creative. Bea’s mom is an artist and her dad is a comic book writer and artist. At the beginning of the school year Beatris loses her best friend, Sammie to three other girls and ends up having no one to hang out with during the day. When she doesn’t have anyone to eat lunch with she finds the Broadside office where the school newspaper kids meet and she tries to hide in there where no one will see her. She finds out she’s not the only one with that idea. The office is where she meets new people who change her experiences and the things she does at school. After going to the newspaper office multiple times, Bea starts to go there for lunch every day to hang out and see if she can find a place to fit in. When you read “The Way to Bea,” you will realize it is a challenging story to follow and is probably better for middle schoolers to read and is more relatable for them.

Author Kat Yeh does a good job of writing about realistic characters and telling stories about discovering the kinds of relationships you might have as you get older.

In the spirit of something Beatris Lee would write, here is a review Haiku:

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Friends, school, poetry
Middle school friends come and go
Will she find her place?
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**By Abigail Morris, 13, a CK Reporter from Aurora**
Bishop Archibald Cole called it ‘another sad chapter in the history of our beloved nation, Sierra Leone,’ as he wrote about the massive mudslide that buried homes and killed perhaps 400 people.

The West African nation has long had a sad history: It was one of the main points where slaves left Africa for the Americas with their compatriots. And, as it owes its modern history to the fact that much of the world turned its back on the slave trade: The nation was formed by freed slaves in 1787, which gave the nation’s capital its name, ‘Freetown,’ and explains why English is the official language of the British colony.

Great Britain left in 1961, making Sierra Leone an independent nation, but there were still troubles. A Civil war raged on for 10 years in the 1990s, and Sierra Leone was one of the regions hit by the deadly disease ebola in the 2010s. The neighborhood had no protection against flooding and houses there were not sturdy. The soil in these areas was not tested, he said, and there were no rules about safe building or to make sure there were sturdy roads leading into and out of these poor neighborhoods. As other nations offer aid and workers continue to dig through the mud to recover bodies, many in Sierra Leone are blaming poor planning and a lack of safe housing rules for the tragedy.

In an article in the Sierra Leone Telegraph, Bishop Cole said that people desperate to find homes were being allowed to build in areas that were not safe.

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The Path to Freedom

Chapter Seven: The First Battle of Saratoga

(Seth and Sylvie Van Gelder have gone with the local militia to help the Americans stop General Burgoyne’s invasion. Now the two armies have become face-to-face on the hillside over the Hudson River near the town of Saratoga.)

“...filed the edges of his hoof and put some grease on it, to keep it from splitting.”

The young rifelman said, as he came into the circle, sat on a log, and took a dish of peas and salt pork from Sylvie.

“You thank Miss;” he said to her, then continued to talk to Luke. “I smeared some grease on his cuts, too, to keep out the flies. We’ll get a farrier to replace that shoe as soon as things quiet down a little.”

It had been a day and a half since the battle, a bloody clash that went throughout the day until it became too dark for the soldiers to see each other. Burgoyne had not won, but his rearguard was now on the hillside, sticking to the positions where they had been when the fighting ended.

Morgan’s men had stayed on the battlefield the whole next day, ready for a second fight with the British, thinking they’d attack again once it was light and the fog had lifted.

But nothing had happened and now the American’s had begun to repair equipment and bury their dead, still keeping an eye out for the enemy.

Of the half dozen riflemen most often at Sylvie’s fire, two were missing, killed when the group had crossed a field and been surprised by British forces hidden by the thick brush.

Meanwhile, Luke blamed himself for poor Jonathan’s injuries. The wagons were nowhere near the fighting, but the sounds of gunfire shook the entire area.

Luke had staked out the horses in a meadow near the camp, close enough to each other that they could touch noses, but not so close that they would get tangled in each other’s ropes.

It worked well enough through the musketry early on, when the British first attacked. The battle was far down the hill from their campsite, and Jonathan shivered at the sounds but kept close to David, whose calmness seemed to help control his fear.

But when the cannons began to fire that afternoon, Jonathan panicked and bolted, pulling his stake from the ground and disappearing into the woods at the far edge of the clearing.

Luke had been watching; He put David on a lead line and the two of them followed Jonathan’s trail of crushed bushes and deep hoof prints until it was nearly too dark to see. Finally, they found him standing, shivering, in a small pond of water, his rope tangled around a tree.

Somehow, he had lost a shoe, and he had small tears in his skin from running through the branches of the forest, but with the gunfire far behind them and beginning to die down with the evening, David’s presence calmed him again and Luke was able to lead the pair back to camp.

Tim, who had been a blacksmith in Virginia before the war, volunteered to do some doctoring on the still-shaken horse, once he was no longer required to stand guard.

Now he reached for a sourdough biscuit to go with his pease porridge. “Miss Sylvie, you are a wonder!” he said. “I’ve never eaten better on this battlefield than we ever did at home!”

The other three riflemen grunted their agreement, and Seth Baker spoke up, pointing at Luke to emphasize his point.

“You need to keep those horses close by.”

“Artillery lost nearly all theirs yesterday and they’ll be looking to get more. They come poking around here, you just let us know.”

“Those two are too good a pair to be taken off and shot for just hauling cannons around. ”

Those two are too good a pair to be taken off and shot for just hauling cannons around. “That’s right,” Tim agreed. “Nobody’s taking Jonny and Davey while we’re around, especially not the artillery.”

“Seth cleared his throat before asking a difficult question. “Have you heard from your pa yet?”

Sylvie smiled. “He sent word he’s all right. I don’t know what he’s getting to eat or when he’ll get back to camp, but he got through the fighting.”

“Porkoner regulators are still on patrol,” Seth said, “but I don’t think they’ll keep their militia out much longer.”

“Don’t you worry about him, Missy,” one of the other men said. “If they have him standing watch, it means he’s healthy. He’ll come home soon as he can.”

When their meal was finished, Morgan’s men began casting bullets for their rifles. Unlike muskets, each rifle needed its own bullets, cast from the custom mold that the gunsmith had made it.

Meanwhile, Luke joined the other wagoneers, workers and many of the women on the battlefield, gathering up ammunition pouches and powder horns from the dead soldiers who had still not been buried.

Both sides were short of powder and shot, and it wouldn’t do to let anything go to waste. Some were also picking up muskets that were not too badly damaged, and Luke thought how much easier it would be to load them into a cart, but he used Jonathan’s hoof as an excuse to keep the horses safely in camp, not down where they could be taken from him by...