



The Pinballs

By Betsy Byars

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The Pinballs By Betsy Byars

"What else is on your 'Bad Things' list?" Carlie urged.

"Nothing. I've just got the appendectomy so far."

"Well, write down two broken legs," Carlie suggested. "I wouldn't exactly call them the fun event of the year." She paused. "If it was me, I'd make that number two and three, wouldn't you, Thomas J? Number two, right leg. Number three, left."

After all, when your own father drives over your legs, you really should account for both of them. Harvey has other lists, too, lists of people he is afraid of and of gifts he got that he didn't want. Carlie has it figured that his problem, like her own and Thomas J's, is that he is a pinball. Pinballs don't get to settle where they want.

But under the influence of their foster parents and each other, Carlie's cynicism is eclipsed by her determination to bring Harvey out of his despondency; and the earnest Thomas J begins to find his own identity. Even Carlie is willing to conclude that the three are not pinballs, after all.

Betsy Byars' upbeat story of children disappointed by their parents is often funny and always poignant.

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