

Best Books for Middle School and High School Libraries
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by

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FICTION

Albertalli, Becky. *Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda*. Balzer + Bray, 2015. 303p. (8-12)

Simon has a problem. He is being blackmailed by a fellow student. If Simon doesn't help Martin with his girl problem, then Martin will out him by spreading around his personal emails with Blue, an anonymous boy from his school who he's quickly falling in love with. Simon has to deal with Martin's threats, while coming to terms with his growing attraction to Blue.

Alender, Katie. *The Dead Girls of Hysteria Hall*. Point/Scholastic, 2015. 329p. (7-12)

Delia inherited a house from her Great-Aunt. The house used to be an insane asylum for troubled girls. She and her family decide to spend the summer there, getting the house ready to sell. What they don't know is that the house is evil, and it has no intention of allowing Delia to leave.

Arnold, David. *Mosquitoland*. Viking, 2015. 342p. (9-12)

Mim resents the fact that her father and stepmother moved her to Mississippi from her home in Ohio and she is not adapting well. She has recently been diagnosed with a mental illness that requires prescription medication and she is also coping with her feelings about the impending birth of her half-sister. She hasn't been able to get in touch with her mother, who is still in Ohio, so she steals her stepmother's emergency cash and hops on a bus. She also stops taking her prescription. Her journey is not a smooth one by any means, though she does make a couple new friends along the way who help her out of some sticky situations. She finally makes her way back home, only to discover that her mother is in a rehab facility and is in no shape to parent her.

Aveyard, Victoria. *Red Queen*. HarperTeen, 2015. 383p. (9-12)

Mare's world is divided by blood: red and silver. Mare and her family are lowly Reds, destined to serve the Silver Elite whose supernatural abilities make them nearly gods. Mare steals what she can to help her family survive, but when her best friend is conscripted into the army, she gambles everything to win his freedom. She winds up in the royal palace itself where, in front of the king and court, she discovers a superhuman power she was unaware of.

Benjamin, Ali. *The Thing About Jellyfish*. Little Brown, 2015. 343p. (4-7)

After Suzy's parents got divorced, and her best friend Franny died, Suzy stopped talking almost entirely. Following a class field trip to the aquarium, Suzy becomes obsessed with the idea that a sting from a rare jellyfish caused Franny to drown. Her research into the jellyfish is a distraction from her grief and guilt, as we learn in flashbacks that Suzy and Franny had a huge falling out and were no longer speaking. Eventually a new friendship helps Suzy find her voice.

Benway, Robin. *Emmy and Oliver*. HarperTeen, 2015. 343p. (9-12)

When close friends and neighbors Emmy and Oliver were in the second grade, Oliver's father kidnapped him and went on the lam. Ten years later, Oliver has been found. After he returns home to his mother, he has a hard time adjusting to his old life, including his stepfather and half sisters. He is also grappling with his feelings towards his father, who he still loves. When Oliver first comes back, Emmy isn't sure how to act around her old friend, but after spending time together, she develops romantic feelings for him.

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Chasing Secrets*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2015. 278p. (5-7)

Lizzie is a thirteen year-old girl who is fascinated by science and medicine and loves to accompany her physician father on house calls. Unfortunately for her, the year is 1900, and the her father is the only person who encourages her interests. After a plague breaks out in their hometown of San Francisco, Chinatown is quarantined off, so that no one can go in or out. Jing, the family's cook, is trapped in the quarantine. After hearing mysterious sounds in the servants' quarters, Lizzie discovers that Jing's secret son, Noah is trapped in her family's home until his father can return.

Dessen, Sarah. *Saint Anything*. Viking, 2015. 417p. (9-12)

Sydney is used to living in her brother Peyton's shadow. He went from being a golden boy to a troubled teen and most of her parents' energy has been directed towards him. After he drives drunk and paralyzes a teenage boy, he is sent to jail and Sydney is left with a distant father and a mother who is still hyperfocused on Peyton, even though he is behind bars. Sydney switches from her elite private school to the public school to get a fresh start, and she ends up meeting brother and sister Mac and Layla, whose family pizza parlor becomes her second home and whose family becomes her second family. It seems like things are picking up for her, but then things get turned around and she has to prove to her mother that she is not her brother and is not going to make the same mistakes he did.

Graff, Lisa. *Lost in the Sun*. Philomel, 2015. 289p. (4-8)

Sixth-grader Trent hasn't really dealt with the guilt he feels from being involved in a freak sports accident that ended up causing his classmate's death. He's also hurt and upset at his father, who has left his mom and his brothers to start a new family with his new wife. The only way Trent knows how to express these complex emotions is through angry outbursts, which further isolates him from his dad and his old friends. Fallon Little, the school outcast who has a mysterious scar across her face, befriends Trent and helps him learn to process his emotions and move on with his life.

Gregorio, I.W. *None of the Above*. Balzer + Bray, 2015. 328p. (10-12)

Kristin is a normal, popular teenager. She has a lot of friends and was even named homecoming queen. But when she decides to have sex with her boyfriend, her first time isn't what she expected. A visit to the doctor changes her life when she learns that she is intersex. She has Androgen Insensitivity Disorder, which makes her female externally but genetically male. She tried to keep it a secret, but soon the secret is out and Kristin has to deal with more than one serious issue.

Haydu, Corey Ann. *Making Pretty*. Katherine Tegan Books, 2015. 359p. (9-12)

Montana is the daughter of a multiple-divorced plastic surgeon known for falling in love too quickly and a desire to "improve" his daughters. She meets Karissa, the cool and spunky twenty-three year old in acting class. Montana's summer gets more complicated when Karissa begins dating her father. Montana has to figure out herself and what lies ahead in her future.

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen, 2015. 276p. (4-7)

Ally is a tough, quick-witted kid who's been labeled a troublemaker by previous teachers and called "slow" by her classmates. But her new teacher sees that Ally is a gifted artist and that her troubles with reading are caused by dyslexia. As she develops friendships with Keisha and Albert, talented classmates who also think outside by the box but don't quite fit in, Ally learns that great minds *don't* think alike.

Jamieson, Victoria. *Roller Girl*. Penguin/Dial Books, 2015. 240p. (4-8)

Best friends Astrid and Nicole have always done everything together, which is why Astrid is stunned when Nicole announces she'd rather attend dance camp than go to roller derby camp with Astrid. Roller derby turns out to be a lot harder than Astrid thought, but she finds strong female role models among the older skaters and her fellow campers. As she gets more deeply involved with the derby community, her friendship with Nicole becomes more complicated, especially when Nicole befriends the school's mean girl. A great graphic novel to recommend to fans of Raina Telgemeier.

Jean, Emiko. *We'll Never Be Apart*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 279 p (9-12)

Alice Monroe wakes in a mental hospital after a fire that kills her boyfriend. She begins searching for her twin sister, also a patient in the hospital, because she holds her responsible for what happened. Chase, another patient, tried to help her search, but Alice is unprepared for what she finds.

Juby, Susan. *The Truth Commission*. Viking, 2015. 309p. (9-12)

Normandy Pale and her two best friends form the Truth Commission at their art school to help squelch rumors. Their primary method of getting to the truth involves asking very direct questions of the people who are being talked about, which is not always welcomed. Normandy is also trying to get at the truth at home, where her older sister Keira, a successful graphic novelist, is acting stranger and moodier than usual after suddenly taking a leave from college.

King, A.S. *I Crawl Through It*. Hachette, 2015. 319p. (9-12)

Stanzi can split herself in two and spends most of her time in a lab coat dissecting things. Gustav is building an invisible helicopter. China swallowed herself and now lives inside-out. Lansdale is a compulsive liar whose hair grows a foot every time she lies. This surrealist novel shows how four teenagers cope with trauma, pressure, and their own intelligence.

Kinsella, Sophie. *Finding Audrey*. Delacorte Press, 2015. 286p. (6-8)

Audrey is suffering from an anxiety disorder after an unspecified incident at school. Even though her parents are supportive of her, she wears sunglasses all the time and does not leave the house except to attend her therapy sessions with Dr. Sarah. After her brother's gaming partner Linus starts spending time at the house, Audrey begins to realize that not all outsiders are to be feared and that she might be able to actually confront one of the girls who bullied her.

Kurtagich, Dawn. *The Dead House*. Hachette, 2015. 401p. (9-12)

Two girls live in the same body. No one is sure if it's a type of mental illness or if there really are two different girls. One comes out during the day, the other, at night. When one of the girls, the day girl, Carly, goes missing, Kaitlyn, the night girl has to find out what happened. Her doctor suggests it might be the two personalities joining as one, but it might be something else...something supernatural.

Leaver, Trisha. *The Secrets We Keep*. Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2015. 294p. (9-12)

Ella and Maddy are identical twins who have grown apart. The sisters are in a car accident and Maddy dies. Ella allows her parents to believe that she is the one who died and she takes upon the identity of Maddy. As she lives Maddy's life, she finds her sister had secrets and Ella has to constantly lie to preserve her identity. Now, Ella must decide if she is going to confess to her deceit or will she continue to pretend to be her sister.

Lindstrom, Eric. *Not If I See You First*. Little, Brown and Company, 2015. 310p. (8-12)

Parker lost her sight in a car accident when she was seven years old. Her mother, who was driving, was killed in the same accident. She is now sixteen and is fiercely independent, encouraged by her father to pursue anything she wants, including running. After his sudden death, her aunt, uncle, and cousins move into her house and she feels like she has no control over her life. As she struggles with her grief, she is also troubled by the reappearance of a former friend who breached her trust several years ago.

Lord, Cynthia. *A Handful of Stars*. Scholastic Press, 2015. 184p. (5-7)

Lily lives with her grandparents and blind dog, Lucky in a small town in Maine. One day, Lucky leads her to a girl named Salma, a migrant blueberry picker who lives in a nearby camp and the girls form a friendship. Lily helps Salma compete in the Blueberry Queen Pageant, but it means she is shifting her loyalties away from her old friend Hannah, who she has been drifting apart from who is also competing in the pageant. Lily struggles with change, but all Salma knows is change because her family moves so often. She helps Lily see that it is okay to try something different every so often.

Mackler, Carolyn. *Infinite In Between*. HarperTeen, 2015. 462p. (9-12)

At their high school freshman orientation, five teens are randomly put into a group and decide that for their mandatory activity, they are going to write letters to their future selves and dig the letters out when they graduate. Over the next four years, this freshman group interacts with each other at times as they change and grow, but they come together at graduation when one member of their group is in crisis.

Milford, Kate. *Greenglass House*. Clarion Books, 2014. 376p. (5-7)

Milo's parents own and operate Greenglass House, a smuggler's inn in a remote area. On a snowy night just before Christmas, the inn unexpectedly fills up with mysterious strangers. When the guests complain that their belongings are being stolen from their rooms, Milo and his companion Meddy investigate, revealing the secrets of the inn's past and how their guests are connected to the inn and to each other.

Niven, Jennifer. *All the Bright Places*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2015. 378p. (9-12)

Theo and Violet meet on top of the school bell tower as each of them contemplates jumping, but neither making that final step. Theo is fascinated by death, each day thinking of new ways to take his own life. Violet lost her sister in a car accident almost a year before. They start spending time together, and, little by little, Violet learns how to live from a boy who wants to die.

Oliver, Lauren. *Vanishing Girls*. Harper, 2015. 357p. (9-12)

Dara and Nick are sisters and they were best friends, until they were in a terrible car accident. Now they are no longer speaking and have to start living in the same house after several months apart. Dara avoids Nick at first, and then runs away right before a family dinner. In the midst of her family drama, Nick begins following the case of another missing girl, this one a child. She finds herself drawn to the investigation and by the end of the book, the young girl has been found thanks to her efforts. Dara's whereabouts are also revealed.

Oppel, Kenneth. *The Nest*. Simon & Schuster, 2015. 244p. (5-7)

Steve's new baby brother is very sick; he might not even live. So when mysterious talking wasps visit him in his dreams and tell him they can help his brother, Steve is relieved at first. But when he learns exactly how the wasps plan to "fix" the baby, he must learn to embrace imperfection--even his own--and fight back. Jon Klassen's black and white illustrations help set the mood for this sparse yet effective psychological thriller.

Rowell, Rebecca. *Carry On*. St. Martin's, 2015. 522p. (7-12)

Simon Snow, the Chosen One, is his last year at Watford, a boarding school for witches and wizards. His roommate Baz is possibly a vampire, definitely Simon's sworn enemy--and secretly in love with Simon. There's also his brilliant friend Penelope, a mysterious headmaster/mentor, and an enemy that threatens the entire magical world. It all may remind you of another famous boy wizard, but Rowell expands on the world she created in 2013's *Fangirl* to create a fresh and smart look at the issues of sexual identity, politics, and class structure.

Ruby, Laura. *Bone Gap*. Balzer+Bray, 2015. 345p. (9-12)

When Roza went missing, people in Bone Gap believed she had just left as suddenly as she'd come. No one believed her friend Finn, who saw her being taken because he could not describe her kidnapper in detail. Roza's disappearance still haunts Finn, because no one is looking for her, not even his brother, Sean, who is supposed to love her. He must find Roza and bring her back. But Roza is being held captive by a mysterious man, who wants only one thing: for Roza to love him back.

Schmidt, Gary D. *Orbiting Jupiter*. Clarion, 2015. 183p. (6-12)

When Jack's parents take in a foster child, they tell Jack there are a few things he needs to know about his new foster brother. When Joseph, an 8th grader, was in juvenile detention, he tried to kill a teacher; also, he has an infant daughter he's never seen but desperately wants to meet. Most of the people at school--kids and adults--are ready to write off Joseph based on these facts alone, but Jack, his parents, and a few fantastic teachers reach out to learn the whole story behind Joseph's tragic past.

Sedgwick, Marcus. *The Ghosts of Heaven*. Roaring Brook Press, 2015. 359p. (9-12)

Four stories linked by spirals. A free verse story of a young girl whose cave-drawings are discovering an early form of writing. A seventeenth century tale about a witch hunt targeting an innocent girl. A 1920s insane asylum where a mad poet's obsession with spirals overwhelms both him and the doctor taking care of him. A spaceship voyaging to settle another world for the first time, but something on board isn't quite right.

Shusterman, Neal. *Challenger Deep*. HarperTeen, 2015. 308p. (8-12)

Caden Bosch has a secret: he lives a double life. In one life, he's your typical high school student. In the other, he's part of a crew sailing towards the deepest place on earth: Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench. Recently, these two lives seem to be crossing each other, and if he can't stop it the consequences may be disastrous.

Smith, Andrew. *The Alex Crow*. Dutton Books, 2015. 317p. (9-12)

Ariel is a teenage refugee who has lived through unspeakable violence. He has been adopted by an American family in West Virginia and now he and his new brother are spending their summer at Camp Merrie-Seymour, which is run by their father's company. While Ariel is at the rather unusual camp, an extremely unstable man named Leonard is on a deadly mission that leads him to Ariel and his bunkmates. As these stories unfold, the reader also learns of a failed 19th century Arctic expedition and how it also connects to Camp Merrie-Seymour.

Stead, Rebecca. *Goodbye Stranger*. Random House/Wendy Lamb Books, 2015. 289p. (6-9)

Bridge, Emily, and Tabitha have been best friends who have made it to seventh grade by following one simple rule: no fighting. But when Emily's new boyfriend asks her to text him a sexy picture that then gets passed around the school, Bridge discovers that people are complicated, and sometimes it's hard to know how best to help a friend.

Stevenson, Noelle. *Nimona*. HarperCollins, 2015. 272p. (7-12)

Nimona is a spunky teenage shapeshifter, and the new sidekick to Lord Ballister Blackheart, science enthusiast and supervillain in a medieval-ish realm. Or maybe not. His relationship with the realm's hero, Sir Ambrosius Goldenloin, is pretty complicated. And when The Institution of Law Enforcement and Heroics, whom Blackheart has been fighting for years, turns out to be behind some pretty nefarious stuff, does that make Blackheart a hero? This funny webcomic-turned-graphic-novel turns science and fantasy conventions upside down.

Suma, Nova Ren. *The Walls Around Us*. Algonquin Young Readers, 2015. 336p. (9-12)

Violet and Orianna are serious ballerinas and best friends. Their lives change following a violent incident that sends Orianna away. Amber is already within the walls of Aurora Hills Detention Center when Orianna arrives. Ori is different; people say she's innocent. But someone is responsible for the murder of two teenage girls. Within the two girls' stories, we learn the truth about Ori.

Tahir, Sabaa. *An Ember in the Ashes*. Razorbill/Penguin, 2015. 446p. (9-12)

Laia has to save her brother from the clutches of the Martials. A free girl who turns into a spy slave she undergoes a tumultuous journey to find her brother. At the school, she meets Elias who is more than just a soldier. Laia realizes she's in more than she bargained for. This mission could also take her life.

Tromly, Stephanie. *Trouble is a Friend of Mine*. Kathy Dawson Books, 2015. 334p. (9-12)

After her parents divorce, Zoe and her mother move from New York City to the suburbs. Zoe is bored and lonely in her new home until an unusual boy named Digby shows up at her front door out of the blue and ropes her into his investigations of a missing local girl and the strange cult in Zoe's neighborhood.

Wallach, Tommy. *We All Looked Up*. Simon & Schuster BFYR, 2015. 370p. (9-12)

There is a 66.6% chance an asteroid will hit the earth in a few weeks and everyone reacts to the news differently. Some people want to carry on as though nothing is changing while others see the news as an opportunity to do whatever they want. Four very different teens find their lives intersecting as the end of world is drawing near. Told in alternating point of views, this book includes alcohol and drug use, as well as sexually active teens.

Warga, Jasmine. *My Heart and Other Black Holes*. Balzer+Bray. 302p. (9-12)

Aysel lived with her father up until three years ago, when he committed a violent crime and was sent to prison. Since then, she has been living with her mother, stepfather, and half-siblings and feeling like an outcast. She has been contemplating suicide and finds a website where she is paired with a suicide partner, a teenage boy named Roman who lives nearby. After Aysel meets Roman and starts spending time with him, she starts to have a change of heart, but she is having a hard time convincing Roman that maybe death is not the answer. A list of resources for people in crisis is included at the end of the book.

Yoon, Nicola. *Everything, Everything*. Delacorte, 2015. 310p. (10+)

Madeline has a rare disease that makes her allergic to the entire world, so she hasn't left her house in 17 years. She accepts that her life consists of nothing besides her mom, her nurse, and her books--until a new boy named Olly moves next door. As Olly and Madeline fall in love through text messages and emails, Madeline decides she's no longer content to live her life vicariously and wants to experience the world firsthand--even if it kills her.

NONFICTION

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 229p. (5-8)

In 1907, a typhoid outbreak is traced to Mary Mallon, a cook in New York. Because she is a carrier who has never felt ill, she refuses to believe that she poses a risk to anyone and is arrested and forced into quarantine at a hospital.

Bausum, Ann. *Stonewall: Breaking Out In the Fight For Gay Rights*. Viking, 2015. 100p. (9-12)

A then-common police raid on the gay nightclub, the Stonewall Inn, becomes a setting for riots and a growing desire for gay rights. In the days following, the emotion sparked by the raid continues to rise as the outraged LGBT community continued to protest. Stonewall became a rallying cry against the oppression felt by thousands of gays and lesbians throughout the city. The book also describes the gay pride movement of the 1970s, the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 90s, and the cultural shift of the 2000s.

Brown, Don. *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina & New Orleans*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 96p. (7-12)

Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, Don Brown explores the storm and its terrible impact on New Orleans in graphic form. Brown's haunting watercolors illustrate quotes from survivors and news stories. Brown doesn't pull punches when it comes to portraying the scope of the disaster or how failure of leadership made a bad situation even worse.

Frydenborg, Kay. *Chocolate: Sweet Science & Dark Secrets of the World's Favorite Treat*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 252p. (6-9)

This book provides an in-depth look at the history and industry of chocolate, including the use of slave labor in its production, how growing cacao affects the environment, and how purchasing Fair Trade products helps the growers. Recipes are included.

Seiple, Samantha. *Lincoln's Spymaster: Allen Pinkerton, America's First Private Eye*. Scholastic Press, 2015. 211p. (6-10)

Allen Pinkerton ran the nation's first detective agency and was a pioneer in investigation by operating at all hours of the day and night, using both male and female operatives, and having his employees go undercover as part of their job. Pinkerton's most famous client was Abraham Lincoln, but he continued to run his business after the President's assassination, unsuccessfully trying to capture Jesse James.

Sheinkin, Steve. *Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War*. Roaring Brook Press, 2015. 370p. (7-12)

Long before Edward Snowden made a name for himself by sharing classified government documents he thought the American public should be aware of, there was Daniel Ellsberg. Ellsberg was a military analyst for the Pentagon during the Vietnam War and even spent two years working in Vietnam, observing the military in action. In 1969, after he comes across a document known as the Pentagon Papers detailing the ways the government mishandled the war, he leaked the information to the press and was subsequently charged with espionage.

Thrash, Maggie. *Honor Girl: A Graphic Memoir*. Candlewick, 2015. 269p. (9-12)

Fifteen-year-old Maggie prepares to spend another uneventful summer at Camp Bellflower for Girls, where nothing much has changed since 1922. But Maggie surprises herself when she falls in love for the first time--with Erin, her older (female) counselor. She spends the summer dealing with her new feelings; her fellow campers' reactions (both positive and negative); and vying with her rival to win the camp's riflery award.