

Best Books for Middle School and High School Libraries
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by

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FICTION

Andrews, Jesse. *The Haters*. Harry N. Abrams, 2016. 336p. (10-12)

Best friends and music lovers Wes and Corey have discovered that Jazz camp is really not all that it's cracked up to be. When they meet like-minded Ash, the trio forms a band and escapes the stifling instructors at band camp. The trio embarks on an epic road trip filled with good tunes, hilarious encounters and impromptu gigs.

Arnold, David. *Kids of Appetite*. Viking, 2016. 352p. (9-12)

While struggling with the death of his father, Victor Benucci is welcomed into a ragtag group known as the Kids of Appetite (KOA). With the help of his new friends, Victor begins following clues left behind by his father for scattering his ashes. Along the way, Victor begins to fall for fellow KOA, Madeline, who has her own difficult past. In the midst of this, the group gets caught up in a murder investigation and Victor and Madeline must work together to defend their friends.

Berry, Julie. *The Passion of Dolssa*. Viking, 2016. 478p. (9-12)

In medieval France, Dolssa de Stigata has been declared a heretic by the Catholic Church and is on the run from the ruthless inquisitor Friar Lucien. Near death, Dolssa crosses paths with by Botille Flasucra, a poor match-maker who lives with her two sisters in the small seaside town Bajas. Botille, sensing something special about Dolssa, brings her to Bajas so she can hide from Friar Lucien and heal. As Dolssa recovers, miraculous things begin to happen and the Flasucra sisters and villagers recognize that Dolssa possesses extraordinary gifts and unite to protect her. But the Flasucra sisters are no match for the relentless inquisitors and soon realize their good intentions could put the entire village at risk.

Buxbaum, Julie. *Tell Me Three Things*. Delacorte Press, 2016. 325p. (10-12)

After he elopes, Jessie's father moves her from Chicago to Los Angeles, where she is dropped into a world completely foreign to her. She is struggling to fit in at her elite new prep school when she receives an anonymous email from a fellow student going by Somebody Nobody offering to help her navigate the rough waters of their high school. She begins a friendly correspondence with this unknown person and slowly starts to fit in better both at school and at home with her new stepmother and stepbrother. Jessie becomes certain she has figured out Somebody Nobody's true identity, but it turns out she is very wrong.

Catmull, Katherine. *The Radiant Road*. Dutton Books, 2016. 368p. (7-12)

Clare's mother just died and her father decides to move the two of them to Clare's childhood home in Ireland. Clare hasn't seen the mysterious house built inside a yew tree since she was five years old, but she's never forgotten it. When Clare meets Finn, a strange but captivating young boy, she discovers she comes from a long line of women capable of fairy-making magic. Clare comes to realize that the imaginings and daydreams that have always consumed her are actually real. Clare and Finn embark on an epic adventure to confront their adversary set out to destroy the fairy world.

Cavallaro, Brittany. *A Study in Charlotte*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2016. 321p. (9-12)

Since the days of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, Holmeses and Watsons have joined forces to solve crimes. When Jamie Watson is offered a scholarship at the same Connecticut boarding school Charlotte Holmes attends, he is excited to think that he might befriend her and carry on this longstanding family tradition. He receives a cold reception from Charlotte when he first approaches her, but after a classmate who assaulted her is murdered and Jamie is framed for the crime, they join forces and track down the killer.

Condie, Ally. *Summerlost*. Dutton Books, 2016. 272p. (5-8)

Cedar Lee is spending the summer in her mother's hometown of Iron Creek, a small town renowned for the Summerlost theater festival where the famous movie star Lisette Chamberlain got her start. Cedar's father and younger brother, Ben, were killed a year earlier and Cedar is struggling to move on with her life. Cedar's summer is looking up when she gets a job at the festival and begins a friendship with local boy, Leo, a Lisette Chamberlain superfan and budding entrepreneur.

DiCamillo, Kate. *Raymie Nightingale*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 263p. (5-7)

In the summer of 1975, Raymie has her sights set on winning the Little Miss Central Florida Tire competition. She is convinced that if she does, her father will return home to her and her mother after running off with a dental hygienist. Part of her pageant training involves baton-twirling lessons with two of her competitors, Louisiana and Beverly. The three girls develop a strong bond as they find themselves on one adventure after another, despite the initial impression they have nothing in common.

Federle, Tim. *The Great American Whatever*. Simon & Schuster BFYR, 2016. 278p. (9-12)

Quinn has been struggling with guilt and depression since his beloved older sister died in a car accident just before school let out for Christmas break. She had been sending him a text and he blames himself for distracting her while she was driving. Since the accident, he has been cooped up in his room and barely interacting with anyone. Now it is summer and his friend Geoff is finally able to drag Quinn to a party, where he meets Amir, a college student who catches his eye. Amir and Quinn start dating and Quinn finally begins to feel hopeful about the future.

Garvin, Jeff. *Symptoms of Being Human*. Balzer & Bray, 2016. 352p. (10-12)

Riley Cavanaugh is looking for a fresh start at Park Hills High School after having a tough time at Catholic school. Riley is gender fluid so some days Riley wakes up and identifies as a girl and other days as a boy. Riley starts an anonymous blog to share what it's really like to be a gender fluid teen. Soon the blog becomes an outlet for many gender fluid and LGBT people seeking advice, hope, and a voice. The blog is a worthy cause for Riley until a stranger threatens to reveal Riley's true identity. Can Riley find the strength and courage to come out and risk it all?

Hitchcock, Bonnie-Sue. *The Smell of Other People's Houses*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2016. 240p. (9-12)

Life in a remote Alaskan community in the 1970's isn't always easy for teens Hank, Alyce, Ruth and Dora. Hank has made the drastic decision to take his two brothers and run away from their abusive home. Alyce is struggling with the family duties she's obligated to fulfill despite having dreams of her own. Ruth is carrying a big secret that will change her life forever and Dora is wondering if her life will ever get better even when she gets an unexpected fortune. These four teens have very different backgrounds and little in common, and yet each has a secret that connects them to one another.

Hutchinson, Shaun David. *We Are The Ants*. Simon Pulse, 2016. 464p. (9-12)

Henry's life isn't so great. He's regularly abducted by aliens. His grandmother has Alzheimer's and is quickly declining. His older brother, who dropped out of high school and can't hold down a job, just announced he's going to be a father. His boyfriend committed suicide last year. And his mom struggles as a waitress to keep them all together. So when the aliens show Henry a big red button and tell him that he has to push it to prevent Earth from being blown up, he's not so sure the world is worth saving. He has 144 days to decide.

Johnston, E.K. *Exit, Pursued By A Bear*. Dutton Books, 2016. 243p. (10-12)

Hermione is excited to attend cheer camp with Polly, her co-captain and best friend and their teammates. Her last year of high school is coming up, and she is determined that this will be her cheerleading team's best season ever. Her happy summer takes a turn for the worse when she wakes up in the hospital after a camp dance and discovers that she was drugged and raped and can't remember anything that happened. Once she gets back home and back to school, everyone is extra tentative around her. It doesn't help that there was no evidence at the scene of the crime and her attacker was somebody she knew. She also has to wait to take a pregnancy test and when it is positive, she gets an abortion. With the help of her supportive parents, fiercely loyal best friend, and a dedicated psychiatrist, she slowly starts to mend and learn to trust people again..

King, A.S. *Still Life With Tornado*. Dutton Books, 2016. 295p. (9-12)

Sixteen-year-old Sarah's identity has always been tied to her artistic ability. She has always been known for her art and it has always been assumed that she will study art in college and work as an artist. After she discovers a disturbing secret about her art teacher and her art project is sabotaged, she begins to withdraw from everything and everyone. As she aimlessly wanders her hometown of Philadelphia, she is visited by herself at the ages of 10, 23, and 40, and starts to piece together what is important to her and understand how her brother's estrangement from their family has affected her.

Matson, Morgan. *Unexpected Everything*. Simon & Schuster BFYR, 2016. 519p. 9-12

Andie is the daughter of a Connecticut Congressman and she is accustomed to her life being very orderly and structured so as to maintain just the right appearance to voters. After her father is accused of mismanaging his funds and has to take a leave of absence while he is being investigated, her prestigious summer internship in Washington falls through and she is left floundering. She winds up taking a job as a dog walker and becomes involved with Wyatt, who is spending the summer housesitting for one of her clients. Things become messy when she learns more about Wyatt and why he is in Connecticut and on top of that, she has to deal with drama amongst some of her closest friends.

McGinnis, Mindy. *The Female of the Species*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2016. 341p. (9-12)

Alex Craft's older sister was brutally murdered three years ago. Her killer was never arrested, but the man suspected of the terrible act died soon after. Alex has spent the last few years largely keeping to herself and avoiding her classmates in her small town high school, since she finds it impossible to relate to them. Peekay is the local preacher's daughter who becomes friendly with Alex when the two start volunteering at the local animal shelter for school credit. Jack is the boy who finds himself falling in love with Alex. As Alex finds herself falling in love with Jack and befriending Peekay, her worst traits start to emerge and she has to try not to act on her natural instincts

Medina, Meg. *Burn Baby Burn*. Candlewick Press, 2016. 307p. (9-12)

During the summer of 1977, everyone in New York City is on edge. A killer, who will eventually be known as Son of Sam, is on the loose and has been killing couples in their cars. Nora, who lives in Queens, is just trying to get by until she turns eighteen and graduates from high school, working in a deli and trying her best to avoid her increasingly aggressive and unpredictable brother, Hector. Nora's mother is oblivious to her son's problems and expects Nora to be able to handle everything. As the summer goes on and the killer continues his spree, Nora's life just gets more complicated.

Meyer, Marissa. *Heartless*. Feiwel & Friends, 2016. 464 p. (9-12)

Lady Catherine Pinkerton is beautiful, charming, and desired by every man in Wonderland, including the unmarried King. Though she is likely the future bride to the King of Hearts, all Catherine wants is to open her own bakery so she can continue making delectable treats. Catherine despises the idea of being a court lady and certainly does not want to marry the foolish King, but a lady of her rank and class is expected to. It is her parents dream for her to become Queen of Hearts, but when Catherine meets the handsome and clever court joker, Jest, she is even more torn. This is the wicked tale of the rise of the heartless and terrifying Queen of Hearts.

Niven, Jennifer. *Holding Up the Universe*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 391p. (9-12)

Jack suffers from prosopagnosia, or face blindness. He cannot recognize anyone by their facial features and relies on other attributes to determine who he is interacting with. It is a secret that he has not shared with anyone, including his parents or his two younger brothers, and it is getting harder to keep and causing him a lot of problems.. Libby had been "America's Fattest Teen," a girl who needed to be cut out of her own home in order to get medical attention and then spent the next few years getting healthy and being homeschooled and is now about to be a public school student for the first time in years. When Jack and Libby have their first encounter in the school cafeteria, they end up in a fight, but as they are forced to spend time together, they find that they have much more in common than it would seem.

Sepetys, Ruta. *Salt to the Sea*. Philomel Books, 2016. 400p. (9-12)

This is a fictionalized story based on a truly devastating tragedy of World War II. As World War II is coming to an end in East Prussia, thousands of refugees are fleeing the Prussian countryside in the hopes of making it aboard one of the German military ships evacuating civilians and wounded soldiers. Joana, Florian, and Emilia are making the dangerous trek and fighting to survive the bitter cold, starvation and frequently falling bombs. Alfred, a young German sailor devoted to Hitler, is stationed aboard the Wilhelm Gustloff, one of the ships promised to bring this group finally to safety. The little-known tragedy that was the sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff is told in each of these four distinct voices.

Sheehan, Judy. *I Woke Up Dead at the Mall*. Delacorte Press, 2016. 275p. (8-12)

Sarah wakes up at the Mall of America, clad in a hideous bridesmaid's dress and learns that she died at her father's wedding. The Mall is a place where teens who are murdered can either achieve closure with the help of a "death coach" or exist in a perpetual purgatory. Visits to the living are possible, but not encouraged because of potential problems they can create. As Sarah slowly figures out who killed her and why, she has to make some difficult choices so she can protect her father, whose life is in danger.

Shusterman, Neal. *Scythe*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2016. 448p. (8-12)

Sometime in the not-so-distant future, so much knowledge is uploaded to the cloud that it evolves and becomes the Thunderhead, an omniscient artificial intelligence that solves all of humanity's problems. With no more deaths caused by disease, poverty, or natural disasters, humans live indefinitely. The job of keeping the population in check falls to a new group of people called Scythes, who do so by killing a certain number of people every year. Citra and Rowan, two teenagers trained as apprentices by a Scythe, discover that corruption abounds in their supposedly perfect world.

Spangler, Brie. *Beast*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 330p. (9-12)

In this modern day reimagining of *Beauty and the Beast*, Dylan is a fifteen-year-old who towers over all his classmates and can't seem to stop growing. He is self-conscious about his height and the fact that he is much hairier than all his peers. He is friends with J.P., the most popular boy in his private school, which keeps some bullying at bay, but J.P. can be cruel at times. After Dylan falls off his roof, he is ordered to attend a group for teens who have engaged in self-harm. There he meets Jamie, a transgender girl and he falls hard for her, but there are many barriers to their happiness.

Stork, Francisco X. *The Memory of Light*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2016. 325p. (9-12)

After she learns that her beloved nanny is going to be sent back to her native Mexico, Vicky attempts suicide and wakes up in the hospital. While in the hospital, she has group therapy sessions with other troubled teens and she starts to bond with them. She realizes that her depression has been building since her mother died six years earlier. Her demanding, perfectionist father is pressuring her to return to her everyday life and try to pretend that everything is normal, even though that is not what is best for Vicky.

Telgemeier, Raina. *Ghosts*. Graphix, 2016. 239p. (4-7)

In this graphic novel, Catrina and her family move to a town in northern California because the climate will be helpful to her younger sister, Maya, who has cystic fibrosis. Everyone in Bahia de la Luna seems obsessed with ghosts and Cat soon learns why -- there is a spot in town where the worlds of the living and the dead overlap and ghosts are everywhere. Cat is apprehensive about all the supernatural activity around her, especially after an encounter with a ghost causes Maya to suffer a medical setback, but she eventually comes to embrace her new town and all its spirits.

Umminger, Alison. *American Girls*. Flatiron Books, 2016. 293p. (9-12)

Frustrated with her life, 15-year-old Anna uses her stepmother's credit card to buy a plane ticket to Los Angeles, where her older half-sister Delia lives and is trying to make it as an actress. As punishment, Anna's mother insists that she stay out there until she has earned enough money to repay what she took. She spends her summer working behind the scenes at a television show, researching the Manson Family for a friend of her sister, and getting to know Delia better. Reading about the lives of the Manson girls helps Anna put some of her recent issues into perspective.

Welch, Jenna Evans. *Love and Gelato*. Simon Pulse, 2016. 400p. (7-10)

After her beloved mother dies, Lina is forced to spend the summer in Tuscany with the father she never met. Lina is unsure about her new home in such a strange and foreign place until she's given a journal that her mother had kept when she lived in Italy as a young woman. Set against the backdrop of the enchanting Tuscan countryside, Lina finds herself in the middle of a family mystery that leads her to discover much about herself and those she loves.

Whaley, John Corey. *Highly Illogical Behavior*. Dial Books, 2016. 249p. (9-12)

It has been over three years since 16-year-old Solomon Reed has left his house. Lisa, his former schoolmate, is looking for a project that will get her into the second-best psychology program in the country, so she sets her sights on curing Solomon by befriending him and trying to understand him so she can convince him to venture beyond his own backyard. Solomon slowly warms up to Lisa and her boyfriend, Clark, and starts to feel comfortable letting them into the safe little world he has built for himself, but once he finds out Lisa's motivations, he suffers a tremendous setback.

Wolf, Lauren. *Wolf Hollow*. Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2016. 304p. (5-8)

It's 1943, and though 11-year-old Annabelle is far-removed from the fighting in World War II, the violence abroad casts a shadow on everyone in her rural Pennsylvania town. The arrival of a new student, Betty, throws Annabelle's world into turmoil. Betty is cruel, taunting and threatening those around her. When Betty goes missing, it's immediately blamed on Toby, a local vagabond who is haunted by his memories of World War I. Annabelle, whose family has befriended Toby, sets out to prove Toby's innocence. This beautifully written and emotionally complex novel is packed with themes that will resonate with middle schoolers today, such as bullying, PTSD, xenophobia, and the importance of standing up against injustice.

Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun is Also a Star*. Delacorte, 2016. 384p. (9-12)

Natasha is spending her last day in New York City trying to keep her family from being deported to Jamaica. Meanwhile, Daniel, a self-professed poet, is fulfilling a promise made to his parents and is on his way to an interview for Yale. Both are side-tracked when they meet and sparks fly. Daniel and Natasha's chance meeting is told in alternating points of view, including the voices of the characters they encounter over the course of this one fated day.

NONFICTION

Bascomb, Neal. *Sabotage: The Mission to Destroy Hitler's Atomic Bomb*. Arthur A. Levine, 2016. (7+)

In 1940, Germany invaded Norway and the Nazi occupation of that country began. After learning of Hitler's plans to develop an atomic bomb, the Allies were determined to stop him. A Norwegian hydroelectric power plant produced the essential ingredient the German scientists needed to create the weapon. This suspenseful book, which almost reads like an action movie, recounts the efforts of those in the Norwegian Resistance Movement who worked with the Allies to destroy the plant. They parachuted out of airplanes into the deep Norwegian wilderness, skied cross-country to the plant and survived in the wilderness for month, and evaded the Germans who were alerted to the plan and were trying to stop them. The personal stories of the Norwegian men are told, accompanied by photographs and extensive source notes.

Freedman, Russell. *Vietnam: A History of the War*. Holiday House, 2016. 160p. (6-8)

This book provides an overview of the history of the Vietnam War and its impact around the world. In addition to descriptions of the events that preceded the war, much detail is given to the major battles and events of the war, as well as the antiwar movement in the U.S. Many pictures accompany the text, as well as extensive source notes and a clear and concise timeline.

Jarrow, Gail. *Bubonic Panic: When Plague Invaded America*. Calkins Creek, 2016. 197p. (5-8)

In 1900, a man in San Francisco's Chinatown fell ill with a deadly disease that resembled the bubonic plague. An outbreak soon followed and it took several years for medical professionals to be able to accurately pinpoint the source as fleas on rats who on ships coming into the San Francisco Bay. Prior to that, Chinatown was quarantined and its residents were viewed as causing the epidemic. Other plague outbreaks are discussed in this book.

Marrin, Albert. *Uprooted: The Japanese American Experience During World War II*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. 246p. (6-10)

Over 100,000 Americans of Japanese descent were rounded up by the United States government and forcibly placed in internment camps for four years following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. These people lost their homes and all of their possessions and suffered greatly in the camps. Reparations were offered decades later, after the damage had been done. In addition to showing the impact the imprisonment had on the Japanese-Americans in these camps, the history of World War II is discussed, along with current events and how immigrants are perceived and treated.

Stelson, Caren. *Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story*. Carolrhoda Books, 2016. 144p. (6-8)

This book recounts one woman's experiences as a survivor of the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan on August 9, 1945 when she was a child and how her life was shaped as a result. In addition to her story, information is provided about the causes of World War II and the events that followed.