

Best Books for Middle School and High School Libraries

Presented January 15, 2020

at the Parsippany-Troy Hills Public Library

for the Morris County School Media Association

by

Kristen Comeaux, Head of Children's Services

Kerrie Jones, Teen Librarian

Rose Schulman, Children's Librarian

Parsippany-Troy Hills Public Library System

FICTION

Ahmed, Samira. *Internment*. Little Brown BFYR, 2019. 400p. (Grades 9-12)

Just one year ago Layla Amin was a normal teenager. Now she and her family are on the Muslim registry and they're burning the poetry books her father wrote in the streets. She gets kicked out of school for just kissing her Jewish boyfriend, David, in the halls, she has to obey curfew, and then armed men show up on their doorstep, telling them to pack a bag. Layla and her family are taken to an Internment Camp for Muslim Americans. While her parents tell her to just stay safe and not make waves- she can't do that. With the help of her new friends, and an unexpected alliance with a guard that doesn't believe what's being done is right, Layla is able to smuggle stories of their time at the camp to her boyfriend in the outside world, stirring up protests outside and inside the compound. But the Camp Director plans to ferret out any insubordination, and he'll stop at nothing to keep them silent.

Charbonneau, Joelle. *Verify*. Harper Teen, 2019. 320p. (Grades 7-10)

Meri lives in a digital world. The streets of Chicago are free of crime and paper is a thing of the past, recycled to help combat climate change. So when she's handed a piece of paper with the word "verify" on it, she has to find out what the mysterious word means. Meri is soon transported to another world, one filled with words that the government doesn't want the population to know, and a secret organization that thinks her mother might have been killed for being a part of. With the government hunting down anyone that talks about forgotten words and history, Meri has to figure out how to get the rest of the city to learn about the spreading of misinformation and combat the government keeping the city in the dark.

Chupeco, Rin. *The Never Tilting World*. Harper Teen, 2019.496p. (Grades 9-12)

Every generation has twin goddesses destined to rule over Aeon but the earth stops spinning when one twin breaks the ancient prophecy. The world is split into two - one side lives in permanent darkness while the other struggles to survive the unrelenting scorch of the sun. The only thing separating these two new worlds is the Great Abyss. Each twin has a daughter and each is never told the truth about the past. After seventeen years the girls are drawn to the great abyss by unknown forces. Each daughter sets out on a journey across their brutal lands to the abyss in hopes of fixing their broken world.

Deaver, Mason. *I Wish You All the Best*. PUSH, 2019. 329p. (Grades 9-12)

After Ben, who has started to use they/them pronouns, comes out as nonbinary to their parents, they are kicked out of the house but manage to reconnect with their estranged sister, Hannah, who takes them in and helps them navigate their final year of high school while learning how to embrace their true identity. As Ben grows closer to new friend Nathan and realizes their feelings for him are romantic and may be reciprocated, they have to decide if they are ready for a relationship. When Ben's parents try to re-enter their life, Ben has some difficult choices to make.

DeWoskin, Rachel. *Someday We Will Fly*. Viking, 2019. 353p. (Grades 9-12)

Lilia, her parents, and her baby sister Naomi are ready to leave Poland and move to Shanghai, where as Jews they will be safe from the Nazis. Her parents put on one final acrobatic act in Warsaw, but their performance is raided in the middle and while Lilia, her father, and Naomi are able to escape, her mother is nowhere to be found afterwards and they are forced to travel to Shanghai without her. The trip to Shanghai is arduous and adapting to life in a new country is incredibly difficult, especially because there are so few job opportunities for her father. Lilia goes to school for a while and makes a few friends, including the young janitor, but stops attending when her father and sister grow ill and she needs to make sure they have food and medicine. She makes money showing off her acrobatic dancing in a gentleman's club, but is painfully aware that it cannot go on forever. Lilia never gives up hope that her mother is still alive and on her way to join the family, and somehow her mother is able to track them down.

DiCamillo, Kate. *Beverly, Right Here*. Candlewick Press, 2019. 241p. (Grades 6-8)

In 1979, Beverly Tapinski is fourteen years-old and cannot handle living with her abusive mother anymore. She runs away from home and finds shelter with an older lady named Iola who lives in a trailer park and allows Beverly to live with her in exchange for driving her around. She gets a job at a local seafood restaurant to earn money, even though the restaurant's owner is absent-minded and struggling with his own family issues. She makes friends with a boy named Elmer and has an unforgettable summer full of adventures, but after Iola's son comes to check on her and decides she is no longer fit to live on her own, Beverly has to decide if she is ready to return home.

Faizal, Hafsah. *We Hunt the Flame*. Farrar Straus, and Giroux, 2019. 475p. (Grades 9-12).

Zafira is the Hunter for her people, braving the cursed forest of Arz to hunt for food. She has to hide her identity because if her people would never accept a woman hunting. Nasir is the Prince of Death, assassinating all those that defy his father. They are both tasked with finding a lost artifact that would bring magic back to the land, and Nasir knows he must kill the Hunter to keep it safe for his father. As they travel together through the harsh landscape and combat dark magic, they learn more about themselves and realize that the artifact their searching for might not be what exactly what they thought.

Gemeinhart, Dan. *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*. Henry Holt and Company, 2019. 344p. (Grades 6-8)

Five years ago, Coyote's mother and two sisters were killed in a car accident. Since then, she and her father have been traveling the country nonstop in a converted school bus, trying to put the past behind them, even changing their names so they can start over completely. Once Coyote learns that a special memory box she and her sisters buried in a neighborhood park shortly before the accident is in danger of being lost forever, she has to try and convince her father to take her back to her old Washington hometown. Along with some fellow travelers they pick up along the way, she helps her father understand that she needs to remember her mother and sisters in order to move forward.

Glasgow, Kathleen. *How to Make Friends With the Dark*. Delacorte Press, 2019. 421p (Grades 9-12)

When Tiger's mom unexpectedly dies, her life is turned upside down. It has always been just the two of them but now she is utterly alone. The entire book takes place in the two weeks following her mother's death. With no living known family, she becomes a ward of the state and is shuffled from one foster home to another until a permanent placement can be found. Readers take the journey with Tiger as she struggles to grasp what has happened and learn to accept her new "normal". This first person narrative succeeds in articulating the pain, confusion, loss and emptiness experienced by a sixteen year old girl who has just lost her whole world.

Hawkins, Rachel. *Her Royal Highness*. G. P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2019. 288p. (Grade 7-12)

Millie, an American trying to escape the fact that her sort-of girlfriend is now dating an old ex, escapes to boarding school in Scotland and lands the not-so-pleasant company of a certified princess as a roommate. Princess Flora just wants to go back home, and doesn't mind getting other people in trouble with her if it only means she can get her way. When they get lost together during a camping challenge, the two girls grow closer and become friends. As the school year progresses, Millie and Flora realize their feelings for each other, and Millie has to figure out if a regular, geology-loving girl like her can fit into a princess' life.

Henry, Katie. *Let's Call It a Doomsday*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2019. 386 p. (Grades 9-12)

Ellis' anxiety permeates every aspect of her life, and she feels no one understands her, especially her parents and her younger sister. There isn't even anyone at her Mormon Church that she can relate to, even though her family are active members and she has friends there. She is going to therapy to work through her issues, but she is convinced that the end of the world could come about at any time and she needs to prepare for it. After one of her appointments, she starts talking to another girl, Hannah, who she recognizes from school. As she and Hannah become friendly, the other girl shares that she knows for certain when the world will end and Ellis will do whatever it takes to spread the word. The more Ellis works to prepare for the end of times, the more Hannah seems to avoid her.

Herman, Christine Lynn. *The Devouring Gray*. Disney-Hyperion, 2019. 368p. (Grades 7-12)
Four Paths is a special place protected by its four founding families. Violet Saunders knows nothing about her mother's hometown when they arrive to make a fresh start. It is not long before she realizes the strangeness of the town and that the Saunders family is one of the founding families. Justin Hawthorne is waiting to take over his family's powers while Harper Carlisle seeks revenge for being trapped in the Gray, the underworld of Four Paths. The barrier between the two worlds is sometimes blurred threatening to unleash the monster within. The time is approaching for this new generation of founders to keep the monster within its walls but things are not always as they appear and saving the town means that buried truths may be exposed.

Kemmerer, Brigid. *A Curse So Dark and Lonely*. Bloomsbury, YA, 2019. 496p. (Grades 9-12)
When Harper interrupts what looks like an abduction on the streets of DC, she gets transported to the realm of Emberfall where she meets Rhen, a prince that repeats every year until he can make a girl fall in love with him while turning into a vicious beast. As Harper learns more about the people of Emberfall and the curse, she has to decide if she wants to help save the kingdom or go back to her world and help her family with her father's debt.

Khan, Sabina. *The Love & Lies of Rukhsana Ali*. Scholastic Press, 2019. 326p. (Grades 9-12)
Rukhsana's parents are religious Muslims and very conservative, so she hides her relationship with her girlfriend Ariana from them. When she is caught kissing Ariana, she is sent to stay with family in Bangladesh. While she is happy to spend time with her grandmother, she is sad to be away from home and lying about who she is. While she is in Bangladesh, she learns that she is not leaving until she agrees to an arranged marriage with a man. She finally finds a suitor who is also hiding his sexuality from his parents and agrees to marry him, but ultimately decides she is safer sneaking back home to the United States.

King, A.S. *Dig*. Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2019. 392p. (Grades 10 -12)
In this surreal novel, five teens with very different stories - The Shoveler, The Freak, CanIHelpYou?, Loretta the Flea Circus Mistress, and First-Class Malcolm - are revealed to be cousins who come together at Easter dinner to attempt to fix their dysfunctional family, which has its roots in a potato farm.

King, Amy Sarig. *The Year We Fell From Space*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2019. 262p. (Grades 6-8)
Astronomy enthusiast Liberty, whose father taught her to chart the stars, is having a hard time adjusting to her parents' separation and how drastically her relationship with her father has changed since he moved out. When a meteorite lands in her backyard, she brings it to her attic bedroom and talks to it, and it provides expert advice on how to communicate with her family. This advice comes in handy as she learns that her father started seeing his new girlfriend before the separation was official.

Kwaymullina, Ambelin. *The Things She's Seen*. Knopf, 2019. 208p. (Grades 7-12)

Beth Teller was killed in a car accident and her father is overcome with grief. In his grief, he is still able to see and talk to his daughter. Detective Teller is given a gruesome case to solve and Beth is determined to help solve the mystery. In a small Australian town, a suspicious fire burns down a home for troubled teens and the only evidence left is an unidentified body and mysterious witness. Isobel Catching happened to be wandering the woods outside the home when the fire broke out but, more importantly, she can see Beth. Isobel definitely has a story to tell and it threatens to unearth the truth about this small town.

McCaughrean, Geraldine. *Where the World Ends*. Flatiron Books, 2019. 336p. (Grades 7-12)

This historical novel takes place off the coast of Scotland on a remote island called Hirta. Nine boys and three men set out for the annual bird hunting expedition on a nearby sea stack. They were only supposed to be gone for a few weeks but the boat to bring them home never returns. Surely, the world must have ended because there can be no other explanation as to why they were abandoned. The Warrior Stack, as it is known, is an unforgiving, harsh rock formation that has no wildlife or vegetation. It seems impossible that this group of fowling could survive through the winter.

McGinnis, Mindy. *Heroine*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2019. 419p (Grades 9-12)

Mickey Catalan is heading into her senior year of HS as the star catcher of her softball team. When a car accident leaves Mickey with plates and pins in her leg, her only relief is the OxyContin she is prescribed. It does not take long before she needs more pills to get through the day and she finds herself at the door of an Oxy dealer. With the influence of some fellow addicts she has befriended, Mickey quickly descends into a world stealing and lying to get what she needs. She is surprised at how easy it is to leap from the Oxy pills to heroin. The fall is fast and almost unreal but it is a frightening reality of the opioid epidemic that is sweeping our nation.

Mejia, Kehlor Kay. *We Set the Dark on Fire*. Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins, 2019. 384p. (Grades 9-12)

Daniella Vargas is the top student at Medio School for Girls but she has a secret that could destroy her future. She is not supposed to be here. Her family sacrificed everything to get forged identification papers needed to get her into the Medio School. In their polarized society, the Medio School prepares girls for one of two specific roles. One wife is will run her husband's household and the other will raise his children. Daniella is about to graduate and become the household wife to a prominent politician's son. Once settled into her new role, she is faced with additional challenges including the opportunity to become a spy for the resistance group. Dani must decide if she wants to risk everything that her parents worked for or stand up and fight for equality in Medio.

Menon, Sandhya. *There's Something About Sweetie*. Simon Pulse, 2019. (Grades 7-12)

After being dumped by his girlfriend, Ashish tells his parents to set him up with a suitable girl. They think just because they found the perfect girl for his brother, Rishi, they can do the same for him. His parents even want to pick where they go on their dates, and Ashish agrees, not thinking it will really work. Sweetie Nair is a track star. She's confident. She's also fat. But her mother says that she shouldn't date Ashish until she's thinner. Sweetie doesn't have a problem being fat, but she does have a problem being treated lesser by those around her, so she takes things into her own hands and contacts Ashish. Together, they set out to prove their parents wrong, and take risks for what they love.

Miranda, Megan. *Come Find Me*. Crown, 2019. 327p. (Grades 9-12)

After her mother is murdered and her brother is arrested for the crime, Kennedy has to live with her uncle who doesn't know how to relate to a teenage girl coping with loss. Nolan's brother disappeared without a trace a couple of years ago and his parents have become missing child advocates who run a hotline to help other families in their situation but they are frequently oblivious to Nathan's needs. The teens connect online after Kennedy notices that her brother's radio telescope is picking up strange signals and she posts to a message board looking for answers. At first there seem to be paranormal forces at play, but as they investigate together, it turns out there is a reason for everything and both teens are able to find closure as they learn the truth about their loved ones.

Moreno, Nina. *Don't Date Rosa Santos*. Disney-Hyperion, 2019. 336p. (Grades 9-12)

The women in the Santos family are cursed by the sea. At least, the whole town seems to think so. Growing up, Rosa has always avoided the sea, even living in a coastal Florida town. But as she's trying to decide if she wants to go against her grandmother's wishes and apply for a study abroad program for college in Cuba to finally learn more about the place her grandmother doesn't discuss, the marina in her town is threatened. When Rosa literally collides with a boy who has the sea tattooed on his arm, she has to work with him and her community to save the one place she's always avoided and decide if she can break her family's curse.

Morris, Brittney. *Slay*. Simon Pulse, 2019. 336p. (Grades 9-12)

Keira Johnson is just one of the only Black students at her private school. Her secret life is spent online in a Black-centric, VR roleplaying game called Slay where players duel each other with cards that showcase the black community. When someone is murdered because of the game, the world turns its attention to the community, claiming it's racist and violent. Keira has to deal with keeping her identity a secret while dealing with a real-life troll wanting to sue her for discrimination. Keira just wanted to make a place where she could be her authentic self, but in the process she might lose everything she worked so hard to create.

Moskowitz, Hannah. *Sick Kids in Love*. Entangled Teen, 2019. 317p. (Grades 9-12)

This isn't a story about two dying teenagers. Rather, it is about two high school students living with chronic illnesses, despite the fact that neither of them looks sick. Isabel has rheumatoid arthritis, which limits the activities she can participate in, although her friends never seem to remember that she can't join them for skiing or roller skating. She tries her best to act as though the arthritis doesn't limit her, but when she meets Sasha, who has Gaucher Disease, he helps her see that there is nothing wrong with asking for accommodations when she needs them. Isabel starts to fall for him, which makes her question her decision not to date.

Perkins, Mitali. *Forward Me Back to You*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2019. 415p. (Grades 9-12) (RS)

After Katina is assaulted at school, she travels across the country to stay with Aunt Vee, the relative of a close family friend. Aunt Vee takes her to church, where Katina participates in the youth group. At youth group she meets Robin, who was adopted from India and is the only child of wealthy parents. He lives a life of privilege but wonders about his roots. When they are offered the opportunity to travel to India for the summer and help victims of human trafficking, Katina and Robin both go and learn a lot about themselves while they are away. Robin, now going by Ravi, gets some answers about his birth mother and Katina learns how to find her inner strength.

Pink, Randi. *Girls Like Us*. Feiwel and Friends, 2019. 310p. (Grades 9-12)

In 1972, three very different teenage girls and their immediate families have to figure out how to handle their unexpected pregnancies. Two of the girls, fourteen-year-old Mississippi and seventeen-year-old Sue have nothing in common except for their pregnancies, but they bond when their paths cross at an apartment where unwed mothers are sheltered. A third girl, Ola, tries to deal with her pregnancy using non-medical intervention and suffers tragic consequences. When her sister meets Mississippi and Sue, they form a friendship that lasts them for over forty years and comes in handy when a family member has to deal with an unplanned pregnancy in the present day.

Power, Rory. *Wilder Girls*. Delacorte, 2019. 368p. (Grades 7-12)

Raxter School for Girls has been under quarantined for the past eighteen months. The "Tox" is responsible for the deaths of teachers and students but it was also transforming some students into inhuman creatures. No one dares to go outside the fence for fear of the infected wildlife in the forest. The story is told through the eyes of best friends, Hetty and Byatt. When Byatt disappears, Hetty is determined to find out what happened. She is surprised by the truths she learns throughout her journey and wonders if there is any truth in the Navy's promise to rescue them.

Reynolds, Jason. *Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2019. 188p. (Grades 6-8)

This short story collection shows that after the final bell rings at school, everyone heads off in a different direction and has their own unique experiences, some of which are serious, some of which are humorous. Each chapter focuses on one student or set of students on a different block and how their day progresses after they have completed another day of middle school.

Schrieve, Hal. *Out of Salem*. Seven Stories Press, 2019. 443p. (Grades 7-12)

Z is a genderqueer zombie whose family was killed in a car accident, but the spell their mother cast some time ago saved them from death. Zombies are not exactly welcome in Salem, Oregon, so Z has to maintain a low profile. With no family who they can safely stay with, Z is taken in by Mrs. Dunnington, a longtime family friend and a bookstore owner who happens to be a selkie. Aysel is a werewolf and she is unregistered, which is against the law. She lives in fear of being caught every month when she turns and she is careful to keep her identity hidden, particularly after a therapist who was treating magical beings is found dead and all werewolves are regarded highly dangerous. Aysel and Z strike up a friendship. Along with their friend Tommy, who is also suspected of being magical, they do their best to stop the persecution of werewolves but find themselves in grave danger.

Warga, Jasmine. *Other Words for Home*. Blazer + Bray, 2019. 342p. (Grades 6-8)

As violence in Syria increases, Jude and her pregnant mother make the very difficult decision to leave her father and brother behind and live with her uncle and his family in Ohio. Jude knows some English, but navigating a new country and living with her unfriendly cousin Sarah make things very difficult at first. She slowly becomes accustomed to her new life, communicating with her father via Skype, growing closer to Sarah and befriending Layla, whose parents run a Middle Eastern restaurant in town. She even gets a part in the school play, which is a dream come true for a girl who has hopes of becoming a movie star, but she still has to deal with racism and homesickness. Jude's story is told in verse.

White, Kiersten. *The Guinevere Deception*. Delacorte Press, 2019. 352p. (Grades 7-10)

Guinevere was sent to Camelot to be Arthur's wife and his secret protector. No one but Arthur can know that she grew up being taught thread magic by Merlin, since magic is now forbidden in Camelot, and is not the real princess. Guinevere must navigate the royal court, learn who can be trusted, and try to understand her own past and where she came from. Along the way, Guinevere becomes friends with the Patchwork Knight, a woman named Lancelot disguised as a man to become one of Arthur's Knights, and unwittingly becomes embroiled in a plot to resurrect Arthur's greatest enemy, the Dark Queen.

Yoon, David. *Frankly in Love*. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2019. 432p. (Grades 9-12)

Frank Li knows his Korean-born parents will never approve of him dating anyone who isn't Korean. They disowned his older sister Hanna for dating an African-American man, so when Frank and Brit, who is white, begin a relationship, he knows he has to sneak around to see her. He and family friend Joy, who is also Korean and has a similar dating dilemma, concoct a plan where they pretend to be in a relationship so that both sets of parents will approve. Once Frank realizes that he truly does have romantic feelings for Joy, he breaks up with Brit and his fake relationship becomes real. Unfortunately, it is not all smooth sailing when it turns out that his parents and Joy's parents don't get along as well as he thought they did and he and Joy have to stop seeing each other because of the rift between their once close families. On top of that, Frank learns that his father's health issues are much more serious than he was led to believe and he realizes that a vital part of his life will soon be gone before he has hit his major milestones in life.

NONFICTION

Bausum, Ann. *Viral: The Fight Against AIDS in America*. Penguin Random House, LLC, 2019. 168p. (Grades 9-12)

This book provides a history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in America, how it was affected by the political climate, what activists did to eliminate the stigma surrounding the disease, and advances made by the medical community to help patients. A timeline of events is included.

Carter, Ally. *Dear Ally, How Do You Write a Book?* Scholastic Press, 2019. 326p. (Grades 6-12)
Best-selling author Ally Carter offers advice to aspiring writers who want to know how to write a book and get it published. Other well-known young adult authors provide their expertise as well.

Markham, Lauren. *The Far Away Brothers: Two Teenage Immigrants Making a Life in America*. Delacorte, 2019. 288p. (Grades 7-12)

Over the past few years, El Salvadore has become more and more dangerous. The gangs have grown in numbers as well as power. Seventeen year old twins, Raul and Ernesto Flores, were no exception. Between the pressure to join a gang or fear for what would happen if they didn't was a daily stress. Ernesto was the first to make the journey north. When Raul's life was in imminent danger, he followed his brother. This is a chilling look at what it takes to make it over the border and survive from there. With an older brother already living Oakland, CA. their goal is to find him, make money to spend back home and eventually live their lives in the safety of America's borders. However, things are not always as you envision them. This timely account is an eye-opening experience that depicts the truth about immigration. People don't necessarily want to leave their homes but sometimes have no other options.

Ogle, Rex. *Free Lunch*. Norton Young Reader, 2019. 208p. (Grades 6-8)

Rex Ogle is a young boy living in Alabama struggling with the realities of being poor. He shares the story of his first semester in sixth grade. Rex always viewed school as an escape but now life at school may be almost as bad as life at home. His clothes are too big, his shoes are coming apart, he cannot afford to buy the proper school supplies, his English teacher has an obvious bias against him and his mother signs him up for the free lunch program. He goes hungry often so he struggles with the humiliation of being in the free lunch program and wanting so badly to eat. At home, he is physically and mentally abused by both his mother and stepfather. Some of the stories Rex shares of his life are difficult to read. His desperate need for the love of his mother is just as strong as his physical hunger.

Ortriz, Victoria. *Dissenter on the Bench : Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Life & Work*. Clarion Books, 2019. 199p. (Grades 6-12)

Explores the life of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg by weaving some of her major court cases with information about her life. It provides information on the Constitution as well information on the U.S. Court System.

Parkland Speaks: Survivors from Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Share Their Stories. Edited by Sarah Lerner. Crown, 2019. unpaginated. (Grades 9-12)

In this book, edited by a teacher at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School, are journal entries, personal essays, drawings, photographs, and more, documenting the experiences of students who survived the school shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14, 2018. A lengthy list of resources for those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts, mental illness, and/or PTSD is included, along with updates on each of the students who contributed to this work.

Takei, George. *They Called Us Enemy.* Top Shelf Productions, 2019. 204p. (Grades 9-12)

Actor George Takei shares his family's experience in a concentration camp during World War II, when all Japanese Americans were viewed as the enemy by the American government, even those who had lived in the United States for decades. After being released from the camp, the Takeis were initially homeless, but eventually were able to rebuild their lives to a degree. His story is told in graphic novel format.

Yousafzai, Malala. *We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World.* Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2019. 212p. (Grades 7-12)

Nobel Prize winner Malala shares the stories of young women like herself who were forced to leave their homes to live in a refugee camp or another new country or sometimes several new places. Currently there are 68.5 million people around the world who are considered to be displaced for a variety of reasons. She shares her own story, as well as providing information on how to help refugees

GRAPHIC NOVELS

Andrews, Ryan. *This Was Our Pact.* First Second, 2019. 330p. (Grades 5-8)

Ben and his friends made a pact that on the night of the Autumn Equinox Festival, they will follow the paper lanterns they release into the river until they reach their final destination, no matter what. Annoying Nathaniel insists on tagging along, and after a while he and Ben are the only two boys still on their mission. The boys have a fantastic journey, meeting unusual creatures and seeing amazing sights they never could have imagined, following their lanterns all the while.

Craft, Jerry. *New Kid.* Harper, 2019. 249 p. (Grades 6-9)

Jordan is apprehensive about starting middle school at a private school that is much fancier than what he is accustomed to and he worries that he won't fit in. Over the course of the school year, he deals with racism from some of his fellow students and teachers, but he also makes friends, including some who he never expected to fit in his world.

Greentea, Vera (author). Illustrations by Yana Bogatch. *Grimoire Noir*. First Second, 2019. 275p. (Grades 7-10)

Bucky Orson is trying to find his sister in a town filled with witches. Blackwell is a small town that holds all witches within its borders in order to protect the outside world from their gifts. Girls are the only ones in town that are granted powers so when Bucky Orson's younger sister, Heidi, disappears, he is convinced that the most powerful coven must be responsible. He turns to an old friend for help and she agrees to do what she can to help. Unfortunately, her insight only leads to dead ends. Left to unravel the mystery by himself Bucky uncovers the truth about the town. Many witches want desperately to leave Blackwell behind and live a regular life. The only question left to answer is how far are they willing to go to get what they want.

Rowell, Rainbow (author). Illustrations by Faith Erin Hicks; Sarah Stern. *PumpkinHeads*. First Second, 2019. 224p. (Grades 7-12)

Josiah and Deja have spent the last three autumns working the Succotash Hut at the Pumpkin Patch Jamboree. Friends since day one, they find themselves working their last shift before heading off to college next year. Deja is determined to get Josiah to finally talk to the Fudge Girl he has been crushing on. Their mission includes many stops throughout the patch as they try to find the mysterious girl and pick up yummy snacks along the way. The two friends discover things about each other and themselves that they had not realized in the prior years.

Steinkellner, Emma. *The Okay Witch*. Aladdin, 2019. 271p. (Grades 4-7)

In this graphic novel, thirteen-year-old Moth Hush discovers she is part witch after she inadvertently conjures up magic at school after being bullied. She is befriended by a talking cat who helps her uncover her family's past through her mother's magical diary. She learns that her grandmother and the original coven still live in Hectate, a magical world that her mother fled in order to have regular human experiences. Moth learns how to focus and use her powers wisely so that she can be the best witch possible.

Tau, Shaun. *Cicada*. Levine/Scholastic, 2019. 40p. (Grades 7-12)

This young adult graphic novel follows the sad and lonely life of Cicada working hard in an office environment. He is treated very poorly by his co-workers and physically bullied despite his strong work ethic. After seventeen years of this, he retires and finds himself on the roof of a building ready to end it all. However, he is transformed into a colorful bug and is greeted by a group of cicadas flying by.

Telgemeier, Raina. *Guts*. Graphix, 2019. 211p. Grades 4-7

It doesn't take much to make Raina feel anxious. Trying to figure out the social hierarchy at school is especially perplexing to her. She frequently worries about throwing up, and this is made worse by the fact that her anxiety often manifests as stomach problems. The older she gets, the more anxious she feels. Once her parents send her to a therapist, she learns some healthy coping techniques.

Terciero, Rey. Illustrated by Bre Indigo. *Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy : a Graphic Novel : a Modern Retelling of Little Women*. Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2019. 256p. (Grades 6-9)

Set in modern New York, the March sisters' father is off overseas in a war and their mother is struggling to make ends meet. Told in the passage of a year, we follow Meg as she learns how to not care about what others' think and be true to herself; Jo as she comes to terms with coming out to her family and friends; Beth as she fights cancer and braves performing in front of a crowd; and Amy as she learns how to empathetic and think of others. Together, the sisters learn who they are, and how important it is to be a family.

Wang, Jen. *Stargazing*. First Second, 2019. 224p. (Grades 6-8)

When Christine meets Moon, she isn't sure how to take the artistic, loud, opinionated girl. But soon they become best friends, but Christine is jealous that all of her old friends seem to like Moon the most. When she cruelly lets her other friends know about Moon's crush on their teacher, and Moon has a seizure after, Christine blames herself as her best friend is rushed to the hospital. Soon it's revealed that the Moon has a brain tumor and Christine has to find the strength to be the friend Moon needs during this difficult time.