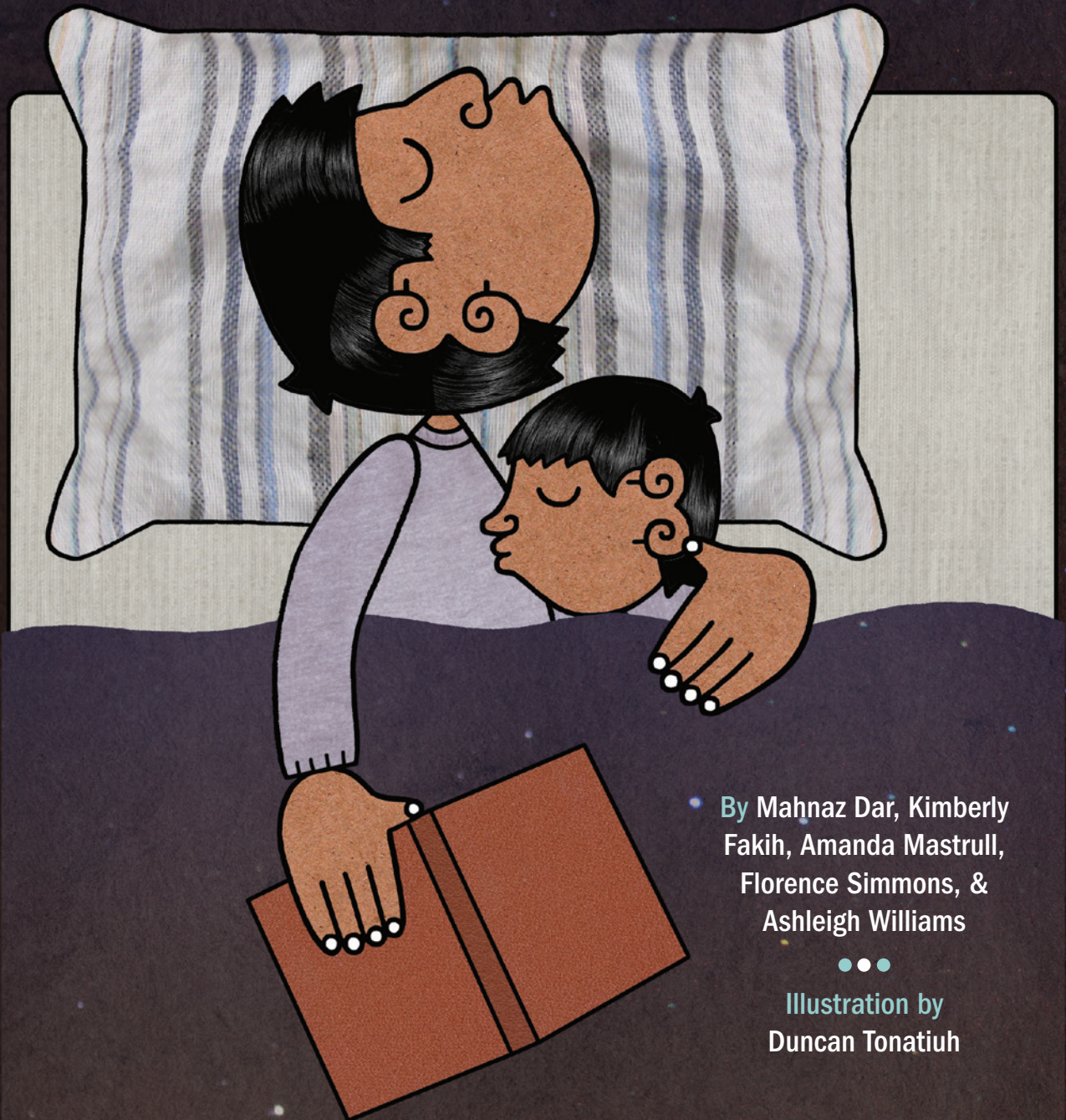


Best Books 2021



By Mahnaz Dar, Kimberly
Fakih, Amanda Mastrull,
Florence Simmons, &
Ashleigh Williams



Illustration by
Duncan Tonatiuh

BOOKS HAVE POWER. WE KNOW THIS. IT'S NO WONDER THAT THEY ARE UNDER ATTACK. It's no wonder that access to these mind-blowing, world-expanding, truth-telling, and life-giving receptacles of knowledge and ideas is being obstructed. But books have power. And though books, especially those featuring characters from marginalized backgrounds, face bans and other challenges, they will persevere. Our belief in the importance of literature is paramount as we present our Best Books list.

After months of deliberation, the editors and our insightful reviewer committee members have selected 139 titles addressing topics—such as climate change, racism, and history—that are more relevant than ever. They also include a balance of fantasy, historical and realistic fiction, and, for the first time in years, a breakout list of poetry. There's a nice sprinkle of story time picks and slice-of-life tales. We hope that these will be helpful resources to meet the needs (and wants) of the children in your libraries and classrooms. And though we know that many of these texts may also come under fire in the future, we're deeply committed, more than ever, to uplifting the books that shine a light on injustice and let children know they're not alone, and that spur readers on to create a better world. After all, books have power.

Picture Books

Jessica Agudelo, Kimberly Fakh, Selenia Paz, Nourreen Qadir-Jafar, Tamara Saarinen

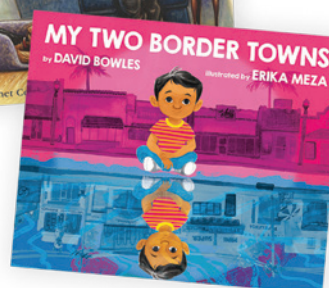
ARONSON, Katelyn. *Clovis Keeps His Cool*. illus. by Eve Farb. Page Street. ISBN 9781645672135. PreS-Gr 3—This book will remind kid lit fans of another book about an unforgettable bull—*Ferdinand*. Toxic masculinity meets its kryptonite, and his name is Clovis, a bull and former linebacker, who takes over his granny's china shop. He has something of a temper, Clovis does, but when he gets bullied, he handles provocation with charm and understanding.

BAPTISTE, Tracy. *Looking for a Jumbie*. illus. by Amber Ren. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. ISBN 9780062970817.

K-Gr 2—A perfect tale for when it starts to get dark, featuring Naya, who is not afraid of much. This vibrant and entertaining picture book is filled with mythical creatures from Caribbean stories, with an endearing heroine at its center.

BATES, Janet Costa. *Time for Bed, Old House*. illus. by A.G. Ford. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536209983. PreS-Gr 2—The rituals of bedtime, as encompassing and timeless as the bonds between generations, elevate a simple story and make it an essential purchase for every collection. The realistic illustrations of Grandpop's old house, its interior, and the outside landscape make this tale even more tender.

BOWLES, David. *My Two Border Towns*. illus. by Erika Meza. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9780593111048. Gr 1-3—In a wistful and generous book, a boy and his father travel between two countries; readers learn firsthand what borders do to families and livelihoods. This is a work meant to ignite conversations.





CHARLES, Tami. *My Day with the Panye.* illus. by Sara Palacios. Candlewick. ISBN 9780763697495.
PreS-Gr 3—A mother is planning a special day for her daughter, Fallon, in the markets of Port-au-Prince. Charles sprinkles Haitian words into the text of this loving book, which is part interpersonal story and part travelogue. There are metaphors for carrying the panje (a large woven basket) that extend to Haiti itself—that it sways under the weight of sad events but is not crushed.



FONTAINE, Valérie. *The Big Bad Wolf in My House.* illus. by Nathalie Dion. Groundwood. ISBN 9781773065014.

PreS-Gr 4—A small girl narrates how life changes drastically after the Big Bad Wolf, her mother's boyfriend, moves into her home. Resonant art casts simple shapes to allow the text to bear the weight of what is said, and what is not. Those who need this book will understand the subtext, and as no community is safe from domestic abuse, the hopeful message will encourage those experiencing similar situations to talk.



GOWLER, Rhonda. *This Magical, Musical Night.* illus. by James Rey Sanchez. little bee. ISBN 9781499811728.

PreS-Gr 2—Like a 21st-century update of Lloyd Moss's virtuoso *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin*, this really is a magical, musical book. Musicians of all skin colors and in all manner of dress, from tux to hijab, chime in from first tune-up to last fabulous note. Share this with children before first concerts, as a primer on orchestras, or even as a course on tuneful collaboration.



HO, Joanna. *Eyes that Kiss in the Corner.* illus. by Dung Ho. HarperCollins. ISBN 9780062915627.
K-Gr 3—A young girl of Asian heritage remarks on the shape and color of the eyes of the light- and dark-skinned girls in her class, and finds beauty in her own features, and in those of her ancestors. The timing of this book provides resonance to a strong message, lyrically told, winningly delivered.



HODGSON, Rob. *When Cloud Became a Cloud.* illus. by author. Penguin Workshop/Rise. ISBN 9780593224915.

PreS-Gr 2—A simplified but terrific tale, perfect for beginning readers or anyone seeking an exciting and funny science story about the water cycle, starring the intrepid Cloud. The book is divided into easy chapters that invite closer inspection of smiling raindrops and other friendly elements, but the facts are sound.



LADEN, Nina. *Dear Little One.* illus. by Melissa Castrillón. S. & S./Paula Wiseman. ISBN 9781534454774.

PreS-Gr 3—Framed as a letter full of love and gratitude from Mother Nature, this book helps readers, alongside the main character, explore flowers, trees, water, animals, deserts, mountains, and stars. The result is a gentle message about celebrating the world's natural beauty in big and small ways—perfect for units on Earth Day or environmentalism.



LAWSON, Jon Arno. *Over the Shop.* illus. by Qin Leng. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536201475.

Gr 3-5—A dedication to trans activists and the inclusion of nonbinary characters allow a simple message of love and acceptance to resonate subtly. In this wordless book, grandparent and child provide a welcome home for two strangers, who set about transforming not just their home but the community. Every meticulously detailed spread offers a heartwarming message of renewal, hope, friendship, and compassion.



LUBY, Brittany. *Mii maanda ezhi-gkendmaanh/This Is How I Know: Niibing, dgwaagig, bboong, mnook-ming dbaadjigaade maanpii mzin'igning/A Book About the Seasons.* illus. by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley. Groundwood. ISBN 9781773063263.

Gr 3-5—This universal guide to the seasons, nature, climate, and beauty invites readers into a beloved locale. Along the way, there are glimpses of Ojibwe culture: the people, languages, and artwork. This bilingual book is written in Anishinaabemowin and English.

MCGINTY, Alice B. *The Water Lady: How Darlene Arviso Helps a Thirsty Navajo Nation.* illus. by Shonto Begay. Random/Schwartz & Wade. ISBN 9780525645009.

Gr 1-4—In these United States, some people wake up thirsty, but there is no water. Darlene is

not only the Water Lady (who delivers water to families on a Navajo Nation reservation); she is also the bearer of news, social connections, and other threads of community life. Begay's watercolors depict a parched landscape full of desert beauty, and a sure path for children wanting to know more about water management in the Navajo Nation and elsewhere.

PAUL, Miranda & Baptiste Paul. *Peace*. illus. by Estelí Meza. NorthSouth. ISBN 9780735844490.

Gr 1-2—This striking, charmingly illustrated picture book informs young readers of the benefits of peace, stresses that it is attainable, and explores how war affects not only humans but also the animals living in the midst of conflict. A valuable, necessary lesson that beautifully defines peace for children and their adults.

QUANG, Phung Nguyen & Huynh Kim Lien. *My First Day*. illus. by authors. Random/Make Me a World. ISBN 9780593306260.

K-Gr 3—A Vietnamese boy sets out on a journey in his little wooden boat on “the great river, Mother Mekong” and delivers a series of firsts that will rivet readers, through open waves, mangrove trees, schools of fish, and water buffalo until he reaches his destination: school, on his very first day. A visually breathtaking expedition filled with highs and lows.

RAMOS, NoNieqa. *Your Mama*. illus. by Jacqueline Alcántara. HarperCollins/Versify. ISBN 9781328631886.

PreS-Gr 2—In a glowing tribute to mothers, here is one hip parent who spends quality time with her child. With long, wavy black hair, large gold hoop earrings, and heeled knee-high boots decorated with red roses, this mama has as much energy as her child. It's a modern salute to motherhood and a valentine to family.

SAMUEL, Sigal. *Osnat and Her Dove: The True Story of the World's First Female Rabbi*. illus. by Vali Mintzi. Levine Querido. ISBN 9781646140374.

Gr 2-4—In language reminiscent of a fairy tale, this loose biography relates the little-known story of the first female rabbi, Osnat Barzani, a Kurdish Jew whose knowledge of the Torah and leadership of a yeshiva in ancient Iraq broke gender barriers.

SRINIVASAN, Divya. *What I Am*. illus. by author. Viking. ISBN 9780593204016.

PreS-Gr 2—A human, a girl, a daughter, a granddaughter—the narrator starts simply and then breaks open the definition of what she is in a head-spinning, eye-opening set of all but intangible opposites. It's surprising, provocative, and to tell the truth, we've never seen any affirmations quite like these.

TALBOTT, Hudson. *A Walk in the Words*. illus. by author. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen. ISBN 9780399548710.

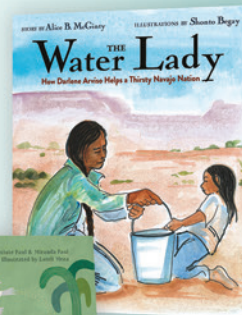
Gr 1-3—With a directness similar to Jordan Scott's *I Talk Like a River*, this story addresses the stigma surrounding dyslexia. While drawing is like breathing for the boy, he knows he is the slowest reader in his class. Talbott brilliantly illuminates the feeling of dyslexia through his watercolor and colored pencil illustrations, offering hope to struggling readers and an avenue of understanding for others.

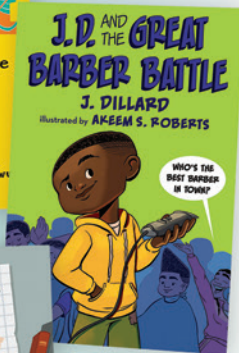
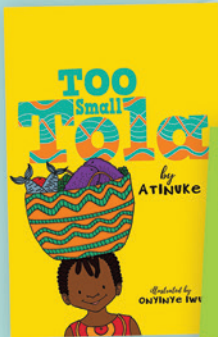
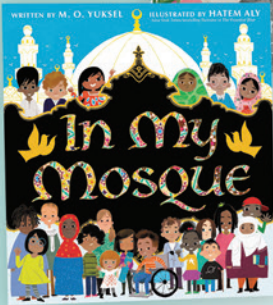
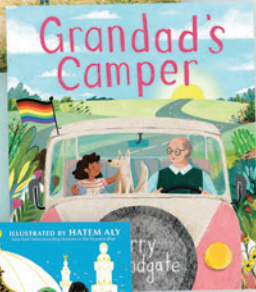
VALDIVIA, Paloma. *Nosotros Means Us: Un cuento bilingüe*. illus. by author. Knopf. ISBN 9780593305140.

PreS-Gr 2—This bilingual picture book opens with a mother sitting in a chair with her child. It can be called a Spanish *Runaway Bunny*, as it cements family bonds in reassuring language and specific, poetic art.

WALKER, Tricia Elam. *Dream Street*. illus. by Ekuia Holmes. Random/Anne Schwartz. ISBN 9780525581109.

K-Gr 3—Meet the residents of Dream Street—the best street in the world—in this uplifting picture book that celebrates the power of possibility. A series of exuberant vignettes become so much more than the sum of their parts. Overflowing with Black joy, this is an invaluable addition to all collections.





WANG, Andrea. *Watercress*. illus. by Jason Chin. Holiday House/Neal Porter. ISBN 9780823446247. PreS-Gr 3—Simple text and serene illustrations pack a strong emotional punch in this picture book. A tightly woven piece of story and watercolor art is exemplified in one spread, where the cornfields of Ohio become the famine-stricken land of China. Who leaves a homeland, and at what cost?

WOODGATE, Harry. *Grandad's Camper*. illus. by author. little bee. ISBN 9781499811933. PreS-Gr 2—Before they became the couple that a child knows as Grandad and Gramps, two young men, waving a rainbow flag from their pink VW bus, they were a romantic duo, traveling the world—or at least Europe—together, camping under the stars. For the hope for new adventures, and the glimpse of intergenerational kindness and understanding, this lovely book should be on every shelf.

YUKSEIL, M.O. *In My Mosque*. illus. by Hatem Aly. HarperCollins. ISBN 9780062978707. PreS-Gr 3—This marvelous, welcoming book on mosques, Muslims, and Islam is a must, offering foundational knowledge on the world's second largest religion in accessible text and sterling illustrations.

Chapter Books

Monisha Blair, Myiesha Speight, Ashleigh Williams, Taylor Worley

ATINUKE. *Too Small Tola*. illus. by Onyinye Iwu. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536211276. Gr 2-4—This slice-of-life chapter book explores Tola's life as a young girl in Lagos, Nigeria. The smallest in her family, she is teased because of her size, but she is reminded through tiny feats of might and bravery (and mathematics) that strength comes from within. Sweet monochrome illustrations bring Tola's bustling world to life and showcase cultural customs alongside examples of healthy communication and blossoming self-confidence.

DILLARD, J. J.D. and the Great Barber Battle. illus. by Akeem S. Roberts. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9780593111529.

Gr 1-3—J.D. is all set to start third grade with a fresh haircut from his mom—until it ends in disaster! J.D. tries his own hand at the clippers and discovers a new talent. Now he is opening up his bedroom barbershop to everyone in town. This laugh-out-loud series debut features a young Black entrepreneur readers will root for, and expressive illustrations that lovingly showcase the diversity of Black hairstyles and the community significance of barbershops.

GALBRAITH, Bree. *Wednesday Wilson Gets Down to Business*. illus. by Morgan Goble. Kids Can. ISBN 9781525303272.

Gr 2-4— Budding entrepreneur Wednesday is looking for a business idea and she is thrust into the perfect one. However, an idea is just the beginning, and Wednesday will need to band together with her little brother and friends if she's going to deliver the product in time. Chock-full of business vocabulary and important life lessons, this hilarious read is sure to please.

JENNINGS, Terry Catusus. *Definitely Dominga: Knight of the Cape*. illus. by Fatima Anaya. S. & S./Aladdin. ISBN 9781534465022.

Gr 1-3—When bullies tell Dominguita that girls can't be knights, she wants to prove them wrong by doing spectacular deeds that are worthy of being recorded and shared with her abuela, who has moved away. This knightly adventure inspired by *Don Quixote* reminds readers that no deed is too small and that everyone has what it takes to be a knight.

QUIGLEY, Dawn. *Jo Jo Makoons: The Used-to-Be Best Friend*. illus. by Tara Audibert. HarperCollins/Heartdrum. ISBN 9780063015371.

Gr 2-5—Jo Jo Makoons Azure is a seven-year-old Ojibwe girl with a sunny attitude. She loves her family (especially her cat Mimi) and life on her reservation. But shifting friendship dynamics and school drama lead to incidents that eventually yield important, heartwarming lessons.

This outstanding chapter book weaves daily kid concerns with engaging information about Ojibwe customs.

SOUNDAR, Chitra. *Sona Sharma, Very Best Big Sister.* illus. by Jen Khatun. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536214826.

Gr 1-3—Sona’s mom is having a baby, and Sona wonders if she’ll be the very best big sister. She struggles with the idea of having a new younger sibling and sharing her belongings and her family’s love. This chapter book offers a look at Hindu baby-welcoming ceremonies and customs, while accurately capturing a new older sibling’s range of emotions.



Middle Grade

Monisha Blair, Myiesha Speight, Ashleigh Williams, Taylor Worley

ALSTON, B.B. *Amari and the Night Brothers.* HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. ISBN 9780062975164.

Gr 3-7—Amari’s older brother has mysteriously disappeared, and the only clue to his whereabouts is a ticking briefcase in his closet. This leads Amari on an adventure to the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs, where she encounters a plethora of fantastical creatures, as well as many friends and foes. This action-packed adventure story brimming with magical creatures, friendship, and a healthy dose of #BlackGirlMagic is guaranteed to thrill fantasy fans.



BARON, Chris. *The Magical Imperfect.* Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250767820.

Gr 3-7—Etan has become selectively mute since his mother left. He spends most of his time with his grandfather in his jewelry shop. Delivering a package outside of his San Francisco neighborhood, Etan befriends Malia, known by kids as “the Creature” because of her eczema. This novel in verse depicts a beautiful friendship, a dose of history, and a pinch of magical realism set against the backdrop of the 6.9 magnitude earthquake that devastated the area in 1989.



BOURNE, Shakirah. *Josephine Against the Sea.* Scholastic. ISBN 9781338642087.

Gr 3-7—Josephine had always successfully scared off her father’s girlfriends by pranking them, but this newest one, Mariss, is not going to be dispatched so easily. Turns out, Mariss is a River Mumma (whom Josephine accidentally summoned), and now Josephine must defeat her before her father pays the price. Featuring a determined heroine and filled with references to creatures from Caribbean mythology, this novel is guaranteed to delight.

BRUCHAC, Joseph. *Rez Dogs.* Dial. ISBN 9780593326213.

Gr 3-8—While her parents are sheltering in place in Boston, Malian, an eighth grade Penacook girl, tries to keep herself and her grandparents safe from COVID-19 on their reservation. In this novel in verse, Bruchac takes a look at life in lockdown through the eyes of a girl coping with boredom, isolation, and the need to find her place. The text addresses residential schools, relocation, and forced sterilization, as well as racial justice and the disproportionate way that COVID-19 spread in marginalized communities.



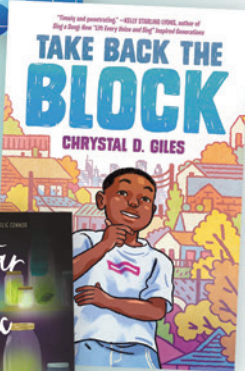
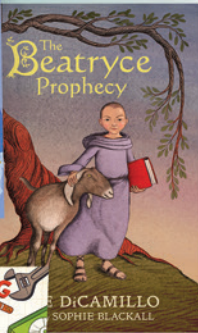
CURRIE, Lindsay. *What Lives in the Woods.* Sourcebooks. ISBN 9781728209753.

Gr 4-7—Amateur sleuth Ginny is disappointed when her summer plans are quashed in favor of her father’s monthlong renovation project of a huge, spooky mansion in Michigan. There’s plenty of lore about Woodmoor Manor, and when Ginny experiences these terrifying supernatural events for herself, she’s plunged into a mystery deeper than she ever imagined. Currie provides thrills and chills in this fast-paced supernatural detective tale.

DAY, Christine. *The Sea in Winter.* HarperCollins/Heartdrum. ISBN 9780062872043.

Gr 3-7—Maisie’s life has been in a tailspin ever since she tore her ACL and had to stop dancing ballet. But with the support of her family, and through a trip to her mother’s Makah community, Maisie works toward rediscovering herself. Day’s second novel deftly explores coping with depression, healing, and learning more about one’s Indigenous heritage when everything else feels adrift.





DEE, Barbara. *Violets Are Blue.* S.&S./Aladdin. ISBN 9781534469181.

Gr 4-8—Wren is going through some difficult changes: Her father left and started a new family, and she and her mother have moved to a new city. She fills her time watching and trying to recreate the special effects makeup of a popular YouTuber. While Wren navigates tween life, her mother is also increasingly secretive. These mysterious actions elegantly unfold in Dee’s well-crafted story, which deftly addresses heavy topics such as parental separation and opioid addiction.

DICAMILLO, Kate. *The Beatryce Prophecy.* illus. by Sophie Blackall. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536213614.

Gr 3-6—The prophecy foretold of a girl who would “unseat a king and bring about a great change.” With the help of a demon goat and the ability to read and write (skills considered illegal for women in this world), Beatryce is poised to do just that. In an impressively slim 250 pages, this gorgeous epic is primed for read-aloud shares. Powerhouses DiCamillo and Blackall weave a medieval tapestry fit for a queen.

EWING, Eve L. *Maya and the Robot.* illus. by Christine Almeda. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9781984814630.

Gr 3-7—Science-loving Maya is facing challenges at school: Her best friends aren’t in her class, and she has the strictest teacher in the fifth grade. Maya soon encounters Ralph, a half-finished robot in her corner store’s back room, which she builds into a friend. Ralph makes life easier—until sabotage throws a wrench into things, literally and figuratively. Ewing’s heartwarming novel blends STEM, social-emotional learning, and the importance of community.

FARUQI, Saadia. *Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero.* HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780062943255.

Gr 5 Up—Twenty years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Yusuf Azeem is entering sixth grade in his small Texas town. He begins drawing connections between how his Muslim American community was treated then and the growing hate in his town stemming from a vocal white nationalist group. Inspired by real events, this novel is a gripping tale of justice, patriotism, and Islamophobia.

FIPPS, Lisa. *Starfish.* Penguin/Nancy Paulsen. ISBN 9781984814500.

Gr 5-8—Eleven-year-old Ellie has been bullied most of her life for being fat. The mean girls are bad enough, but her weight-obsessed mother might be her worst critic. With the encouragement of a new therapist, Ellie learns to confront her attackers. As she breaks down her restrictive, self-imposed rules, Ellie begins to accept the unconditional love she deserves. Fipps’s empowering, feel-good novel in verse shines, especially given the dearth of body-positive examples for young readers.

GILES, Chrystal D. *Take Back the Block.* Random. ISBN 9780593175170.

Gr 3-7—Eleven-year-old Wes Henderson would rather be doing anything else for his birthday than going to a protest. He is ambivalent about the issues his community activist mother holds dear until gentrification causes changes in his own neighborhood of Kensington Oaks, dividing his friend group and the community as a whole. Giles’s debut is a timely coming-of-age story of a Black boy grappling with personal growth and enacting change on a micro and macro level.

HAYDU, Corey Ann. *One Jar of Magic.* HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. ISBN 9780062689856.

Gr 4-7—Expectations are high for 12-year-old Rose Anders, whose father, Wendell, is the most successful magic-catcher in Belling Bright. When magic-catching day does not go as planned for Rose, she suffers an embarrassing letdown. Haydu’s work of magical realism evokes fraught emotions boiling just below the surface of Rose’s “perfect” life. Her first-person narration begins with a confident arrogance that slowly dissipates along with her father’s public geniality.

HIGUERA, Donna Barba. *The Last Cuentista.* Levine Querido. ISBN 9781646140893.

Gr 5 Up—It’s 2061 when 12-year-old Petra Peña and her family board the last spaceship before Earth is destroyed. Petra awakes from her 400-year stasis to find that a group of zealots seeking homogeneity and equality via the eradication of heritage have overtaken the ship. Petra is the only original traveler who retains her memory, and she proves a protector of both people and history. This powerful sci-fi saga boasts massive appeal across age groups.

KUZKI, Shaw. *Soul Lanterns*. Delacorte. ISBN 9780593174340.

Gr 4-7—Twelve-year-old Nozomi was born after the bombing that changed the city of Hiroshima forever, but she witnesses its tragic effects in her community during the annual lantern-floating ceremony to honor the dead. This prompts an intergenerational school art project that opens the students' eyes to the scope of their city's loss. This potent novel explores the long-lasting effects of grief and centers a Japanese perspective that is rarely present in American literature about World War II.

LAROCCA, Rajani. *Red, White, and Whole*. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780063047426.

Gr 3-8—Thirteen-year-old Reha feels conflicted over her Indian American identity because of the expectations of her family, the predominantly white spaces she inhabits during the week, and how to fit into both. When Reha's mother falls seriously ill, the family must come together for an unimaginable future. With tragedy looming, Reha figures out how to unite these parts of herself. This historical fiction novel in verse set in 1983 is a timely, heartrending tale.

LUCAS, Chad. *Thanks a Lot, Universe*. Abrams. ISBN 9781419751028.

Gr 5-8—Newfound friends Brian and Ezra roll with some serious punches at the end of their seventh grade year. Brian's family traumatically fractures, and his anxiety becomes overwhelming. Ezra navigates rapidly changing friendships and struggles to share his sexuality with those close to him. As their bond grows, they see and uplift each other, demonstrating the importance of honest friendships. At times heartbreaking and other times laugh-out-loud funny, this deeply empathetic story radiates hope.

LUKOFF, Kyle. *Too Bright to See*. Dial. ISBN 9780593111154.

Gr 4-7—Living in an old house in Vermont, Bug has always known ghosts. Now, beloved Uncle Roderick may be among them, sending Bug important messages from beyond. Bug also has to deal with the growing distance from best friend Moira, who has decided they both need to shift their focus to boys and makeup, things that Bug just can't relate to. This queer ghost story is a haunting exploration of gender identity and grief that will linger with readers long after the final page.

MBALIA, Kwame, ed. *Black Boy Joy: 17 Stories Celebrating Black Boyhood*. Delacorte. ISBN 9780593379936.

Gr 3-7—With contributions from authors such as Jerry Craft, Varian Johnson, and Jason Reynolds, this collection features stories that cover a wide range of topics, from starting school to winning a space race to embracing who you are. A glowing testament to the joy of Black boyhood.

PARKS, Amy Noelle. *Summer of Brave*. Albert Whitman. ISBN 9780807576601.

Gr 5-8—The summer between seventh and eighth grade challenges Lilla and her friends to be brave. For Lilla, that means speaking up even when sharing her truth is terrifying. As she tries to be honest with her friends and family, she struggles with sexism and harassment in horrible but all-too-common ways. This powerful narrative centering female experiences and #MeToo conversations is essential.

ROYCE, Eden. *Root Magic*. HarperCollins/Walden Pond. ISBN 9780062899576.

Gr 3 Up—After her grandmother passes away, Jez and her twin brother, Jay, get the opportunity to learn the root magic that their family is famous for. These lessons come in handy as Jez is faced with opposition in many forms, from the racist deputy who harasses her family to the dangerous spirits that live nearby. This story's focus on family traditions, friendship, and being true to oneself will both delight and inspire.

SIDDIQUI, Maleeha. *Barakah Beats*. Scholastic. ISBN 9781338702064.

Gr 4-8—When Nimra switches from her small religious school to a public one, her new classmates make assumptions about her faith and she struggles to make friends. She agrees to sing with Barakah Beats, the popular Muslim boy band at school, even though performing goes against her beliefs. In this powerful story of identity and independence, Nimra eventually learns that just as there is no one right way to be a teenager, there is no one right way to practice faith—she must be true to herself.





VENKATRAMAN, Padma. *Born Behind Bars*. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen. ISBN 9780593112472.

Gr 4-7—Nine-year-old Kabir was born in a Chennai jail but is forced to leave his mother behind when he “ages out” of the women’s prison. Nearly sold into labor, Kabir escapes and joins Rani, a young girl who lives on the streets. Together they embark on a quest to find members of Kabir’s family in another Indian state. Kabir’s story is densely packed with examinations of injustice, caste systems, housing insecurity, and more, but is masterfully balanced with epic adventure and a hopeful conclusion.

WALKER, Angharad. *The Ash House*. Scholastic/Chicken House. ISBN 9781338636314.

Gr 5 Up—Eleven-year-old Sol, who has chronic pain, finds himself at the imposing Ash House with little memory of his previous life. The school is devoid of adults, and the young students are inexplicably dedicated to a headmaster who deserted them three years ago and a deep-seated fear of The Doctor. Blending suspense and pervasive dread, this tale stands out from the scary-story crowd. With a cover that delivers on its promise, this is for readers clamoring for “the scariest book you have.”

WANG, Andrea. *The Many Meanings of Meilan*. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9780593111284.

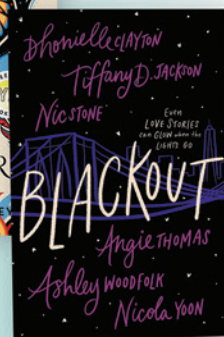
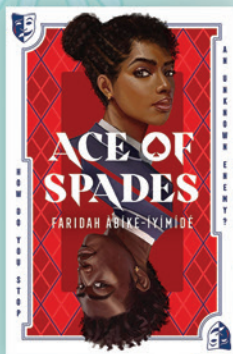
Gr 4-7—Meilan’s extended family’s recent fracturing causes her, her parents, and her grandfather to move to the small town of Rosebud. She attempts to adopt different personalities inspired by the other meanings of her name to adapt to her new environment. This timely middle grade novel about embracing identity regardless of approval and standing up for oneself is a must-read.

WARGA, Jasmine. *The Shape of Thunder*. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. ISBN 9780062956675.

Gr 4-8—Cora’s older sister Mabel was killed in a school shooting perpetrated by the older brother of Cora’s best friend, Quinn. Both girls are desperate to travel back in time to prevent the terrible event from happening. In attempting to do so, they start coming to terms with what has transpired. In this deeply resonant work, Warga expertly tackles grief, trauma, and gun violence.

YA

Emma Carbone, Susannah Goldstein, Ashley Leffel, Amanda Mastrull, Florence Simmons



ABIKE-IYIMIDE, Faridah. *Ace of Spades*. Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250800817.

Gr 9 Up—When the secrets of two prep school seniors are exposed to the school community via anonymous text messages, they must work together to figure out who is targeting them and why, before things turn deadly. This debut thriller addresses systemic racism, structural white supremacy, microaggressions, class distinctions, and LGBTQIA+ identities.

BHUIYAN, Tashie. *Counting Down with You*. Inkyard. ISBN 9781335209979.

Gr 8 Up—Karina, a Bangladeshi American academic superstar, and Ace, a rich white bad boy, engage in a fake relationship that turns out to be very real in this opposites-attract rom-com. The tender love story features candid discussions of mental health, parental expectations, and double standards.

BOULLEY, Angeline. *Firekeeper’s Daughter*. Holt. ISBN 9781250766564.

Gr 9 Up—When Daunis Fontaine finds herself at the center of a far-flung criminal investigation, she has to confront her own family’s past and embrace being a strong Anishinaabe kwe (Ojibwe woman) to discover the truth. Daunis is an Indigenous Nancy Drew in this perfectly plotted mystery with a focus on life in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, and on the Ojibwe reservation.

CLAYTON, Dhoneille & others. *Blackout*. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780063088092.

Gr 9 Up—Powerhouse authors Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, and Nicola Yoon intertwine tales of romance over the course of a New York City blackout. Love is represented in many forms—sizzling and sweet—and these resonant entries featuring different Black characters will have readers longing for summer nights and first love.

FORNA, Namina. *The Gilded Ones*. Delacorte. ISBN 9781984848697.

Gr 7 Up—Deka bleeds not red but gold, the color of impurity, during her village's Ritual of Purity. Because of this anomaly, she is offered an opportunity to join an army of alaki, near-immortals with rare gifts, fighting for the emperor. This debut YA fantasy presents issues of social justice and is full of action and surprises.

GRAY, Ayana. *Beasts of Prey*. Putnam. ISBN 9780593405680.

Gr 9 Up—Two Black teens must work together as they enter the magical Greater Jungle in search of the Shetani, a vicious monster that has terrorized their village for nearly a century. This debut YA fantasy has memorable characters, an expansive world, and tons of adventure.

HE, Joan. *The Ones We're Meant to Find*. Roaring Brook. ISBN 9781250258564.

Gr 9 Up—In a future world ravaged by climate change, sisters Cee and Kasey will do anything to get back to each other in the wake of Cee's disappearance. Sisterly love is leveraged against the greater good in this gripping and eerily plausible sci-fi thriller.

JACKSON, Tiffany D. *White Smoke*. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. ISBN 9780063029095.

Gr 8 Up—Mari has moved with her family to the Midwest for a fresh start from her past substance abuse. Immediately, she finds the neighbors and the house unsettling. As Mari discovers more about the house's history, she begins to believe that it is haunted. Combining the eerie racial overtones of *Get Out* with elements of classic ghost stories, Jackson's novel will leave readers thinking long after the last page is turned.

JEAN, Emiko. *Tokyo Ever After*. Flatiron. ISBN 9781250766601.

Gr 8 Up—When Izumi finds out that her father is the Crown Prince of Japan, she is thrust into the world of the Imperial Court, a family that is not the most inviting, and a royal guard that may steal her heart. Part *Princess Diaries*, part *Crazy Rich Asians*, Izumi's story is decadent coming-of-age romantic fiction.

LEE, Victoria. *A Lesson in Vengeance*. Delacorte. ISBN 9780593305829.

Gr 9 Up—Upon returning to her exclusive boarding school, Felicity has to confront her own dark past and the Dalloway School's infamous history with witchcraft. When her offer to help the mysterious and charismatic Ellis Haley research her novel turns deadly, Felicity will have to decide if she should reject or embrace her own darkness. An atmospheric blend of suspense and gothic horror centering queer characters makes this novel a notable addition to the dark academia canon.

LEVITHAN, David & Jennifer Niven. *Take Me with You When You Go*. Knopf. ISBN 9780525580997.

Gr 8 Up—Ezra wakes one morning to find that his sister, Bea, is gone. No longer able to handle the abuse of their stepfather and the neglect of their mother, Bea leaves home to find their father. Meanwhile, Ezra remains in their abusive household and tries to survive with the support of his boyfriend and his sister's ex-boyfriend. Told through emails between the two, this tale of siblings dealing with abuse and an unsure future will not disappoint fans of realistic fiction.

LO, Malinda. *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*. Dutton. ISBN 9780525555254.

Gr 9 Up—As Lily, a Chinese American teen living in San Francisco's Chinatown in the 1950s, starts to think more seriously about her professional future, a friendship with white classmate Kathleen grows into romance. This novel about first love, sexuality, intersectionality, and self-actualization is meticulously researched and deeply felt.

MCBRIDE, Amber. *Me (Moth)*. Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250780362.

Gr 8 Up—Moth, sole survivor of a car accident that killed her family, and Sani, a Navajo boy with an abusive stepfather, take a road trip to the Navajo reservation where Sani's dad lives. As they drive, Sani tells Moth the origin story of the Navajo, and Moth opens up about her grandfather, who taught her hoodoo. This emotional, educational debut novel in verse builds to a beautiful ending.

MCLEMORE, Anna-Marie. *The Mirror Season*. Feiwel & Friends. ISBN 9781250624123.

Gr 8 Up—Ciela, a pansexual Mexican American girl, and Lock, a white boy who is new to the community, were raped at the same party. Ciela pursues a friendship with Lock to help them





work through their trauma. This lyrical book, full of magical realism and layered characters, is an honest and frank look at consent, power, and the aftermath of assault.

MAFI, Tahereh. *An Emotion of Great Delight*. HarperCollins/Harper. ISBN 9780062972415.
Gr 9 Up—In Persian, Shadi means “full of joy,” but Shadi’s life is filled with personal sorrows because of her father’s failing health, her brother’s recent death, and the ongoing harassment the Muslim community is facing in 2003. Trapped in a morass of grief and isolation, Shadi will have to reclaim her right to happiness and peace if she wants to move forward and pursue a tentative romance. Mafi’s lyrical prose fills this spare story with pathos and optimism.

MANGLE, Bethany. *Prepped*. S. & S./Margaret K. McElderry. ISBN 9781534477506.
Gr 9 Up—All Becca wants to do is find a way out of her survivalist community and live a typical life postgraduation. When her father is in a tragic accident and her community becomes even more extreme, it will take everything Becca has to save herself and her little sister. A compelling glimpse into a fringe lifestyle that will have readers anxiously veering between dread and hope.

O’DONOGHUE, Caroline. *All Our Hidden Gifts*. Candlewick/Walker. ISBN 9781536213942.
Gr 9 Up—Maeve hopes that her uncanny knack for interpreting an old deck of tarot cards will be her ticket to popularity at school. Then her former best friend Lily draws a mysterious card before she goes missing. Maeve must delve into the origins of the cards and her own culpability in the disappearance and, with help from Lily’s genderqueer sibling and new friends, try to get Lily back. Original fantasy elements brilliantly combine with mysticism and folklore for an inventive series starter.

SELZNICK, Brian. *Kaleidoscope*. illus. by author. Scholastic. ISBN 9781338777246.
Gr 6 Up—Every spin of the kaleidoscope fragments one story while bringing another into focus with vignette-like explorations of connection and loss. This illustrated collection combines abstract art and short stories as a variety of characters meditate on grief and love.

SHARPE, Tess. *The Girls I’ve Been*. Putnam. ISBN 9780593353806.
Gr 9 Up—Held hostage with her ex-boyfriend and current girlfriend during a bank robbery, Nora must use skills learned from years spent with her con artist mother to plan an escape. The book alternates between the current robbery and past scams her mother orchestrated, with the two suspenseful plotlines building to a thrilling conclusion.

THOMAS, Angie. *Concrete Rose*. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. ISBN 9780063056534.
Gr 9 Up—In this prequel to *The Hate U Give*, readers learn the backstory of Mav, Starr’s father, and the tough decisions he had to make about fatherhood, relationships, and gang life. With complex characters, sensory language, and high emotional stakes, this book expands on the intricate worldbuilding of Garden Heights and its residents.

VASQUEZ GILLILAND, Raquel. *How Moon Fuentes Fell in Love with the Universe*. S. & S. ISBN 9781534448667.
Gr 9 Up—Moon, a Mexican American photographer, has always played second fiddle to her social media influencer twin. But accompanying her sibling on a cross-country bus trip results in a journey of self-discovery. This poignant coming-of-age story deftly weaves first love, religion, emotional abuse, purity culture, and familial jealousy into a rich narrative.

VELASQUEZ, Elisabet. *When We Make It*. Dial. ISBN 9780593324486.
Gr 8 Up—Sarai, a Puerto Rican teen growing up in Bushwick, Brooklyn, struggles with poverty, her Mami’s mental illness, the gentrification of her neighborhood, and more. Through the poems in this debut novel in verse, Sarai finds her voice as she asks questions and learns to celebrate herself.

WATSON, Renée. *Love Is a Revolution*. Bloomsbury. ISBN 9781547600601.
Gr 7 Up—Nala hopes to have her first brush with summer romance and finds a possible partner in civics-minded Tye Brown. To impress him, the Black girl tells a few lies about her own activism. Watson’s novel features a young woman comfortable in her own skin but who still struggles with self-love. The honest prose is laced with humor, poetic language, and heart.

WILLIAMS-GARCIA, Rita. *A Sitting in St. James.* HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780062367297.
Gr 9 Up—In this stunning portrayal of a white French family who will do anything to maintain their iron grip around the necks of the enslaved Black people on their antebellum Louisiana plantation, Williams-Garcia has crafted an intense saga. Masterly characterization, nuanced machinations, and incisive language are on full display in this novel that also sheds light on current conversations about race and power.

YOON, Nicola. *Instructions for Dancing.* Delacorte. ISBN 9781524718961.
Gr 7 Up—Evie, a romantic turned skeptic, develops the ability to see the beginning, middle, and end of people’s love stories when she sees them kiss. Meanwhile, she is falling in love with X, her partner in a ballroom dancing competition. This romance that centers on a Black love story is sure to pull on readers’ heartstrings.

Nonfiction

Alyssa Annico, Karen Bilton, Abby Bussen, Kimberly Fakh, Kelly Kingrey-Edwards, Mary Lanni, Amanda Mastrull, John Scott, Florence Simmons

AMESCUA, Gloria. *Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughter of the Nahua.* illus. by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams. ISBN 9781419740206.

Gr 1-5—Striking pre-Columbian illustrations provide a vivid play-by-play of the life of Luz Jiménez, who modeled for Diego Rivera and others, but whose ultimate mark was in helping to preserve the stories, language, and traditions of her culture. Essential reading about the impacts of colonialism.

BAPTISTE, Tracey. *African Icons: Ten People Who Shaped History.* illus. by Hillary D. Wilson. Algonquin. ISBN 9781616209001.

Gr 6-10—This spellbinding and impeccably researched collection spotlights 10 historical figures, including writers, kings and queens, and military leaders from the African continent. Wilson’s majestic portraits are the perfect complement to a compendium that fills egregious gaps in the curriculum.

BARONE, Rebecca E.F. *Race to the Bottom of the Earth: Surviving Antarctica.* Holt. ISBN 9781250257802.
Gr 3-6—Four incredible expeditions to the South Pole test men’s mettle as two races, one in 1911 and one in 2018, showcase the risks and triumphs of Antarctic adventure. Meticulous detail, clever juxtaposition of time periods, and well-placed images support a suspenseful and satisfying narrative.

BINFORD, Warren, comp. *Hear My Voice/Escucha mi voz: The Testimonies of Children Detained at the Southern Border of the United States.* illus. by various. Workman. ISBN 9781523513482.

K-Gr 4—More than 60 children at the U.S. border, from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Mexico, give voice to their dreams, current torturous conditions, and lives, shown in evocative but brutal illustrations by 17 Latinx artists, including Yuyi Morales and Raúl the Third. These untold stories can no longer go ignored.

DELARGY, Flora. *Rescuing Titanic: A True Story of Quiet Bravery in the North Atlantic.* illus. by author. Wide Eyed Editions. ISBN 9780711262782.

Gr 3-6—On the fateful night of the *Titanic* disaster, the captain and crew of the *Carpathia* risked their safety to respond to the urgent SOS, saving hundreds of people who would otherwise have perished. Striking illustrations enhance this poignant tale of courage in the face of calamity.

EPSTEIN, Nadine. *RBG’s Brave & Brilliant Women: 33 Jewish Women to Inspire Everyone.* illus. by Bee Johnson. Delacorte. ISBN 9780593377185.

Gr 3-6—Epstein, with the collaboration of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, profiles 33 Jewish women who “transcended what was expected, allowed, or tolerated for a woman of their time.”

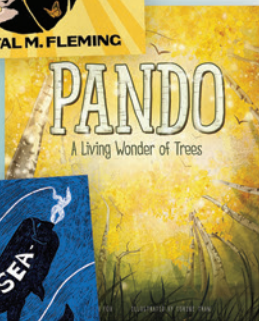




Whether reading from cover to cover or just browsing, kids will find inspiration in the lives of these brave and brilliant women.

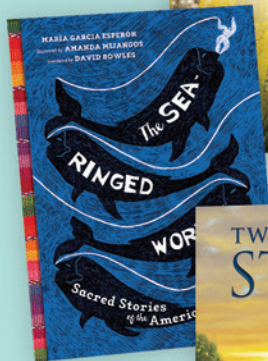
FLEMING, Crystal M. *Rise Up! How You Can Join the Fight Against White Supremacy*. Holt. ISBN 9781250226389.

Gr 6 Up—This engaging narrative examines policing, immigration, pop culture, and sports; how these elements are inextricably linked to the roots of racism; and how racism manifests. The history of resistance to white supremacy is encapsulated in this propulsive volume that also discusses ways young activists can take action.



FOX, Kate Allen. *Pando: A Living Wonder of Trees*. illus. by Turine Viet-Tu Tran. Capstone. ISBN 9781684462773.

PreS-Gr 2—Beneath the surface of the Earth, one of the world's largest living organisms is linked by a system of roots, covering 106 acres in 47,000 Aspen trees that are all but identical. Fox takes lessons from the natural world that are all but unfathomable and creates a perfect tale, gorgeously evoked in the illustrations, that is sure to inspire readers to learn more about the environment and their role within it.



GARCIA ESPERÓN, Maria. *The Sea-Ringed World: Sacred Stories of the Americas*. tr. by David Bowles. illus. by Amanda Mijangos. Levine Querido. ISBN 9781646140152.

Gr 5 Up—The Aztecs called the land from the Andes all the way up to Alaska the Sea-Ringed World. In this vibrant, accessible work, Garcia Esperón conveys in lush language the sacred tales that uncover the heart of these two continents. Mijangos's striking art, rendered in a limited palette, will mesmerize.



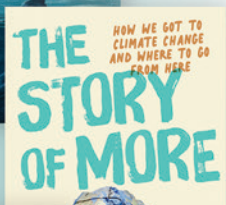
GOTTESFELD, Jeff. *Twenty-One Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*. illus. by Matt Tavares. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536201482.

Gr 3-5—This homage to the nameless fallen soldiers and the sentinels who guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery is not just about a monument. It's a moving, poetic message of selflessness and citizenry that we don't often find in picture books.



HANNAH-JONES, Nikole & Renée Watson. *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water*. illus. by Nikkolas Smith. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9780593307359.

Gr 2-5—An illustrated work on the 1619 Project for young readers, this adaptation begins with a school assignment and quickly immerses readers in beauty and terror. This stunning work offers a glimpse into the history of the Black American experience before and after the slave trade; the elevated language and breathtaking artwork will have a lasting effect.



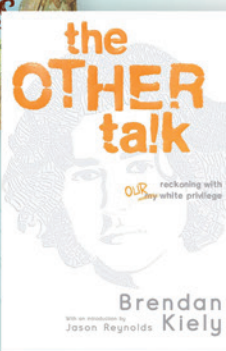
JAHREN, Hope. *The Story of More (Adapted for Young Adults): How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go from Here*. Delacorte. ISBN 9780593381120.

Gr 7-10—Esteemed geochemist Jahren breathes life into the social history and science of climate change by focusing on the latter half of that term: change. This popular science treatise begins with developments over time, from ancient history to the present, in human population, food production, and energy generation and consumption before devoting the final segment to the impact of all this change on our planet.



JUDGE, Lita. *The Wisdom of Trees: How Trees Work Together to Form a Natural Kingdom*. illus. by author. Roaring Brook. ISBN 9781250237071.

Gr 3-5—In poetry and prose, Judge discusses the science, chemistry, and growth of trees—particularly, how they live in community and communicate with one another. The research is thorough, the illustrations lovely, and the poetry lyrical.



KIELY, Brendan. *The Other Talk: Reckoning with Our White Privilege*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy. ISBN 9781534494046.

Gr 8 Up—This important work on white privilege and allyship is a combination of personal narrative, social and political history, and data-based argument. Addressing a vital topic, Kiely's engaging work starts a much-needed conversation about systematic racism and the privilege afforded to white people, while spurring readers to action.

KLEIN, Naomi. *How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other.* adapt. by Rebecca Steffoff. S. & S./Atheneum. ISBN 9781534474529.

Gr 4-8—This detailed exploration of the climate crisis outlines the ways in which capitalism, fossil fuel consumption, and discriminatory ecological policies have contributed to the Earth's current environmental catastrophe, while also celebrating the incredible contributions of activists around the globe. Unflinching, illuminating, and empowering.

LANGELAND, Deidre. *Meltdown: Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster in Fukushima.* Roaring Brook. ISBN 9781626727007.

Gr 4-8—Following the largest earthquake ever measured in Japan, a massive tsunami rocked the coast of Honshu, causing nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant to destabilize and melt down. This triggered a race against time for plant employees to prevent a global disaster. A well-researched and gripping exploration of a tragedy.

LOVELESS, Gina. *Puberty Is Gross but Also Really Awesome.* illus. by Lauri Johnston. Rodale. ISBN 9781984895059.

Gr 5 Up—A modern, gender-inclusive book that discusses various aspects of puberty, from bodily changes to mental health. With straightforward language and a visually appealing layout, this book makes a great health addition for library collections. Teens and tweens will enjoy the comic-book style illustrations and body-positive messaging in this must-have puberty survival guidebook.

MCCANN, Jackie. *If the World Were 100 People: A Visual Guide to Our Global Village.* illus. by Aaron Cushley. Crown. ISBN 9780593310700.

Gr 2-5—Through clear, colorful, inviting infographics and short text that poses big questions about life on Earth, McCann distills the vast world of statistics down to a human scale. Readers will be stirred to discuss the questions raised, conduct additional research, and take informed action. A terrific find for social studies teachers seeking to promote inquiry and active citizenship.

MCDIVITT, Lindsey. *A Plan for the People: Nelson Mandela's Hope for His Nation.* illus. by Charley Palmer. Eerdmans. ISBN 9780802855022.

Gr 2-5—Palmer's powerful paintings complement this inspiring story of sacrifice and loss, devotion and learning, and patience and hard work. McDivitt and Palmer deftly chronicle the ongoing global fight against racism; Mandela's journey makes for a powerful reminder of the ability to change.

MADISON, Megan & Jessica Ralli. *Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race.* illus. by Isabel Roxas. Penguin Workshop/Rise. ISBN 9780593519394.

Toddler-Gr 1—Children and adults can come together to appreciate this book that takes apart the meanings of race and skin color at the foundational level. It's a stepping stone on the path to understanding what it means to be human, with cheerful art and easy-to-understand language.

MAGOON, Kekla. *The Highest Tribute: Thurgood Marshall's Life, Leadership, and Legacy.* illus. by Laura Freeman. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780062912510.

Gr 1-4—Magoon effectively describes Thurgood Marshall's accomplishments, from his childhood to his ascension to the Supreme Court. More than a biography, this is a road map to good citizenship, from dinner table discussions of segregation and unfair laws to consistency in showing up and "doing the right thing." Accessible, engaging, and powerful.

MAGOON, Kekla. *Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to the People.* Candlewick. ISBN 9781536214185.

Gr 7 Up—Through well-documented research and passionate writing, this compelling treatise tells the history of the Black Panther Party. Magoon offers absorbing and balanced background and commentary on the party's founders, including their principles as well as the party's policies and activities, such as providing badly needed social services in Black communities.

MARANISS, Andrew. *Singled Out: The True Story of Glenn Burke.* Philomel. ISBN 9780593116722.

Gr 9 Up—Though this biography of baseball player Glenn Burke, credited with inventing the high five, starts off on an inspirational note, it also examines the ways in which the





homophobic practices of MLB in the 1970s and 1980s brought down his career, sending his life into a tailspin. A captivating sports narrative and a heartrending portrayal of the effects of homophobia.

MARCUS, Leonard S., ed. *You Can't Say That! Writers for Young People Talk About Censorship, Free Expression, and the Stories They Have to Tell.* Candlewick. ISBN 9780763690366.

Gr 7 Up—Introduced by a brief history of the struggle over intellectual freedom in the United States, this anthology documents conversations with authors whose books for young people have been frequently and famously banned. Each conversation is prefaced with an engaging summary of the author's life and work. Those studying freedom of speech will find important primary sources and gain insight into the harmful impact of censorship on individuals and society.

MORRIS, Sandra. *North and South: A Tale of Two Hemispheres.* illus. by author. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536204599.

Gr 2-5—The soft, textured illustrations and unflinching narrative reveal how the seasons in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres impact animals' lives. This informative and engrossing text ends with extensive back matter, including suggestions on how to aid in conservation efforts.

NELSON, S.D. *Crazy Horse and Custer: Born Enemies.* illus. by author. Abrams. ISBN 9781419731938.

Gr 5 Up—Nelson (Standing Rock Sioux) presents the parallel stories of the two leaders and sworn enemies, from childhood to their deaths. With his breathtaking renderings and taut writing, in addition to archival photos and other revelatory primary sources, Nelson sets the historical record straight in this thoroughly researched and gorgeous volume.

NEWELL, Chris. *If You Lived During the Plimoth Thanksgiving.* illus. by Winona Nelson. Scholastic. ISBN 9781338726374.

Gr 2-5—A much-needed, truthful exploration of the Thanksgiving myth that finally addresses its impact from the perspective of the Wampanoag and other tribes who lived in Plimoth thousands of years before the colonization and decimation of their people. Newell (Passamaquoddy Tribe) and Nelson (Leech Lake Band of Minnesota Chippewa) have created a resource that should be part of every school's curriculum.

REYNOLDS, Jason & Ibram X. Kendi. *Stamped (for Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You.* adapt. by Sonja Cherry-Paul. illus. by Rachele Baker. Little, Brown. ISBN 9780316167581.

Gr 4-8—The dark history of racism is made accessible here by Cherry-Paul, an educator who has distilled the work of Kendi and collaborator Reynolds for middle grade readers, giving young antiracists the tools needed to question and dismantle racial inequity. The urgency of the writing compels readers to purposeful action.

SANDLER, Martin W. *Picturing a Nation: The Great Depression's Finest Photographers Introduce America to Itself.* Candlewick. ISBN 9781536215250.

Gr 7 Up—This remarkable work, featuring 140 stunning photographs from the U.S. Farm Security Administration's attempt to document the Great Depression, makes for an important visual record of the era. Along with brief highlights about the photographers and project administrator Roy Stryker's vision to "introduce Americans to America," this monograph also demonstrates the power of photography and belongs in all history collections.

SHEINKIN, Steve. *Fallout: Spies, Superbombs, and the Ultimate Cold War Showdown.* Roaring Brook. ISBN 9781250149015.

Gr 6 Up—With entertaining background stories and unbelievable facts, Sheinkin's latest engrossing narrative covers the U.S. and Soviet arms race up through the Cuban Missile Crisis. This is a nonfiction history lesson disguised as a gripping spy thriller that readers won't be able to put down.

SORELL, Traci. *We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know.* illus. by Frané Lessac. Charlesbridge. ISBN 9781623541927.

Gr 4-6—Students at the Native Nations Community School share presentations about the history,

present, and future of Indigenous communities. Lyrical text and jewel-tone illustrations offer a stirring portrayal of the ongoing fight for Native American recognition and rights.

TAYLOR, Barbara. *Inside Animals.* illus. by Margaux Carpentier. Wide Eyed Editions. ISBN 9780711255081.

Gr 3-6—Educational and entertaining, this title teaches readers about animals. Yes, it's well organized and promotes a curiosity about different parts of animals' bodies in different species. But it's also absolutely thrilling. Chunks of information highlighting important features fuel this winner for strong readers and reluctant ones, too.

TODD, Traci N. *Nina.* illus. by Christian Robinson. Putnam. ISBN 9781524737283.

K-Gr 5—Todd describes how a child with a passion for all music, faced with inequities and injustices, raised her voice. Readers get a strong sense of Nina Simone's talent and impact as a vocalist, musician, and activist. Triumphant, candy-colorful illustrations support the melodious text and reveal details about the era.

WEATHERFORD, Carole Boston. *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre.* illus. by Floyd Cooper. Lerner/Carolrhoda. ISBN 9781541581203.

Gr 3-6—In 1921, a white mob massacred the Black denizens of the Greenwood community in Tulsa, OK (aka Black Wall Street). The incomparable duo relate the events leading up to the massacre, as well as its aftermath. Heart-stopping and heartbreaking.

WONG, Alice, ed. *Disability Visibility (Adapted for Young Adults): 17 First-Person Stories for Today.* Delacorte. ISBN 9780593381670.

Gr 7 Up—In this young adult adaptation of her adult title, editor Wong compiles pieces written by a diverse range of people living with a disability. The well-written works introduce issues of equity and facts of life for disabled people that will be eye-opening for many readers. An essential read that amplifies voices of the disability community.

YELCHIN, Eugene. *The Genius Under the Table: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain.* illus. by author. Candlewick. ISBN 9781536215526.

Gr 5 Up—The Newbery Honor-winning author delivers a heavily illustrated memoir about his family life in 1970s-era Soviet Union and his first steps toward a career in art and writing. Despite a childhood filled with want and struggle, the budding artist was never lacking in love and humor, which he depicts with charm and a little bit of bite in this genius work.

YOO, Paula. *From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry: The Killing of Vincent Chin and the Trial That Galvanized the Asian American Movement.* Norton. ISBN 9781324002871.

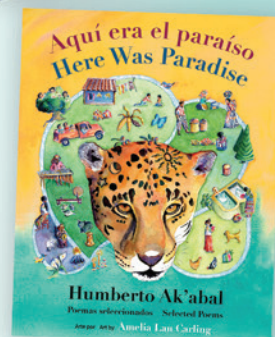
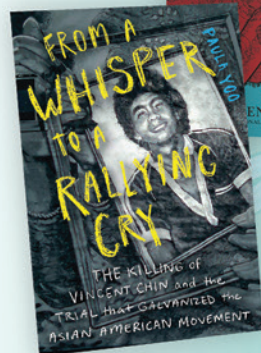
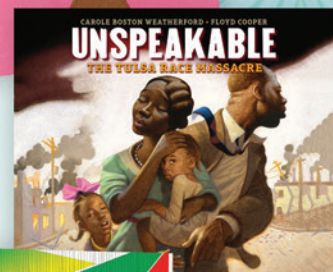
Gr 8 Up—Yoo's work of narrative nonfiction chronicles the brutal 1982 murder of Vincent Chin and the ensuing civil rights trial—the first federal prosecution of a hate crime committed against an Asian American. Readers will be riveted by the multiple accounts from Chin's family and friends, as well as from the lawyers, defendants, and eyewitnesses. Well researched and hard to put down, the work demonstrates how this horrible event connects with today's rise in racism and violence against Asian Americans.

Poetry

Alyssa Annico, Abby Bussen, Shelley Diaz, Amanda Mastrull,
Florence Simmons

AK'ABAL, Humberto. *Aquí era el paraíso/Here Was Paradise: Selección de poemas de Humberto Ak'abal/Selected Poems of Humberto Ak'abal.* illus. by Amelia Lau Carling. Groundwood. ISBN 9781773064956.

Gr 6 Up—The Guatemalan and Mayan poet delves into the past to capture the heart of his childhood home in the Maya K'iche' village of Momostenango, Guatemala. Love, family,



and the power of poetry are all explored in this imagery-laden collection of verses. The earthy illustrations by Guatemalan American artist Lau Carling add to the stirring work and its indelible impact on readers.

FERRADA, María José. *Niños: Poems for the Lost Children of Chile.* illus. by María Elena Valdez. Eerdmans. ISBN 9780802855671.

Gr 3 Up—Of the 3,197 people determined dead or disappeared during the dictatorial rule of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, 34 were children under the age of 14. Each of these poems, translated from the original Spanish, centers on a child: Soledad, who loves raindrops; Hugo, who wished to be a poet; and more. Soft illustrations emphasize the children's innocence. This is a poignant tribute to these young victims of political violence.

GRIMES, Nikki. *Legacy: Women Poets of the Harlem Renaissance.* illus. by various. Bloomsbury. ISBN 9781681199443.

Gr 7 Up—Grimes adeptly uses a poetic form known as the golden shovel to honor and shed light on the lives of women poets during the Harlem Renaissance. She presents each poet's original work, then her own poem in conversation. Each pairing is accompanied by a remarkable illustration by a contemporary Black woman artist.

PRELUTSKY, Jack. *Hard-Boiled Bugs for Breakfast: And Other Tasty Poems.* illus. by Ruth Chan. HarperCollins/Greenwillow. ISBN 9780063019133.

Gr 3-7—Prelutsky's latest covers everything from feelings to unusual beasts and monsters. Chan's expressive black-and-white drawings are just the right touch. Between them, they present a silly, sweet, hilarious, and scrumptious collection with a range of poetic forms. Kids will gobble this up!

SIDMAN, Joyce. *Hello, Earth! Poems to Our Planet.* illus. by Miren Asiain Lora. Eerdmans. ISBN 9780802855282.

Gr 3-5—Newbery Honor-winning poet Sidman was inspired to write this stunning tribute to our planet by Asiain Lora's majestic (and clever) paintings. The verses are spare but stirring. Topics covered range from plate tectonics and continental drift to the human impact on the planet's ecosystems. A subtle but perfect way to encourage children to appreciate their home and their responsibility to it.

WHITNEY, Diana, ed. *You Don't Have to Be Everything: Poems for Girls Becoming Themselves.* illus. by various. Workman. ISBN 9781523510993.

Gr 6 Up—This compilation of 68 poems features a range of formats (from concrete to sonnet) and entries by creators as diverse as Amanda Gorman, Maya Angelou, and Instagram poet Kate Baer. The selections are organized by feelings and emotions ("Loneliness," "Longing," "Rage") and are illustrated by three phenomenal women artists. This volume is meant to be shared not only among young women who are coming of age but also those who support them.

Graphic Novels

Alec Chunn, Mahnaz Dar, Thomas Maluck, Alea Perez

BECKER, Harmony. *Himawari House.* illus. by author. First Second. ISBN 9781250235565.

Gr 9 Up—During a year in Tokyo, Japanese American Nao reconnects with the country she left as a child, wrestles with remastering her mother tongue, and bonds with her roommates, fellow exchange students on journeys of their own. Becker's graceful, expressive illustrations convey the frustration of language and cultural barriers—and the joy of surmounting them.

BROWN, Don. *A Shot in the Arm.* illus. by author. Abrams. ISBN 9781419750014.

Gr 5 Up—Narrated by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, an 18th-century English poet and advocate for inoculation, this well-executed graphic exposé chronicles vaccination innovations throughout history—including the COVID-19 vaccine. Decisive yet playful, the book presents

information succinctly; the artwork is brilliantly rendered, with blue and sepia tones adding a nostalgic wash to the clean, clear layouts.

FUNG, Rosena. *Living with Viola.* illus. by author. Annick. ISBN 9781773215488.

Gr 4-8—Middle school student Livy's worries are so intense, they take the form of Viola, a sinister imaginary twin who sneers at Livy's every misstep. Fung's busy, vibrant illustrations immerse readers in Livy's mindset—her woes and fears yet also her passions and joys as she forges connections. A refreshingly forthright and reassuring depiction of anxiety.

HOWARD, Abby. *The Crossroads at Midnight.* illus. by author. Iron Circus. ISBN 9781945820687.

Gr 7 Up—Howard holds readers spellbound with this collection of horror comics. While the ghouls and monsters are grotesque, it's her ability to plumb feelings of loneliness, helplessness, and alienation that sets this work apart; her grimly realistic black-and-white images and deft use of shading ramp up the scares and heighten the emotion.

KHOR, Shing Yin. *The Legend of Auntie Po.* illus. by author. Penguin/Kokila. ISBN 9780525554882.

Gr 5-8—Thirteen-year-old Mei comes face to face with the power—and limitations—of stories as she and her father, Chinese workers at a lumber camp in the 1880s, navigate anti-Asian sentiment and laws. With expressive, muted watercolors, this multifaceted work of historical fiction creates a delicate and beautiful balance in its depiction of nuanced characters, interpersonal conflicts, and systemic racism.

KING, Thomas. *Borders.* illus. by Natasha Donovan. Little, Brown. ISBN 9780316593069.

Gr 7 Up—When a mother and son refuse to renounce their Blackfoot nationality while attempting a road trip across the Canadian-U.S. border, they find themselves recognized as citizens of nowhere. King and Donovan's golden-hued story of Indigenous endurance is a simple yet powerful reminder of the impact of colonial history.

LEWIS, John & Andrew Aydin. *Run: Book One.* illus. by L. Fury & Nate Powell. Abrams ComicArts. ISBN 9781419730696.

Gr 8 Up—Following the events of the "March" trilogy, civil rights activist Lewis continues to make good trouble. Decades of social progress are threatened by a retaliatory wave of white supremacy, and Lewis's nonviolent methods are causing the movement to challenge and maybe even abandon him in favor of direct action. Fury and Powell's black-and-white artwork captures the frustrations of the long road to justice, as well as the power of a strong moral stance.

LINIERS. *Wildflowers.* illus. by author. Toon. ISBN 9781943145539.

K-Gr 3—In the wake of a plane crash on a seemingly deserted island, three sisters explore the area only to find a series of mysteries and phenomena. Who left behind written messages for them to discover? Why are the plants and animals so strange? This wondrous, colorful journey celebrates the imagination of childhood.

LLOYD, Megan Wagner. *Allergic.* illus. by Michelle Mee Nutter. Scholastic/Graphix. ISBN 9781338568912.

Gr 3-6—Excited about adopting a new puppy, Maggie is horrified to realize she's allergic to dogs—and a host of other animals. As she searches for a pet that won't trigger an allergic reaction, she struggles to find her place in her family and discover a friend group. Warm artwork and colors turn a serious medical topic into a cozy journey for companionship.

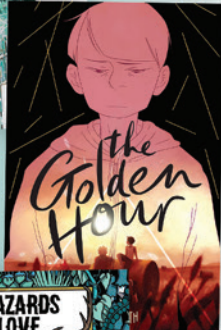
MCKINNEY, L.L. *Nubia: Real One.* illus. by Robin Smith. DC Comics. ISBN 9781401296407.

Gr 8 Up—Living in a world hostile to her and her community, Black teenage superhero Nubia is forced to balance her need for self-preservation with her desire to stand up for those in trouble. Rose-colored artwork belies Nubia's often less than rosy struggles. This poignant, relatable story reminds readers of the sometimes necessary risks of trying to build a better world.

NGUYEN, Trang & Jeet Zdung. *Saving Sorya: Chang and the Sun Bear.* illus. by Jeet Zdung. Dial. ISBN 9780593353639.

Gr 4-6—Inspired by the Nguyen's own experiences as a conservationist, this warm, realistic





story follows a young girl named Chang as she attempts to return a sun bear called Sorya to the wild. Fusing traditional Vietnamese art with manga styles, the lush scenes, stylish overlays, and varied block paneling meld with fact-filled passages for an inventive and engaging blend of fiction and nonfiction.

RIVERA, Lilliam. *Unearthed: A Jessica Cruz Story*. illus. by Steph C. DC Comics. ISBN 978179500519.

Gr 7 Up—Jessica has a lot going for her, but she and her family have a secret: They are undocumented immigrants. ICE raids in her neighborhood cause her anxiety to escalate, and Aztec gods appear to her in dreams, guiding her by turns toward constructive and destructive solutions. Colors radiate off the page and communicate each scene’s emotional tone in this work of self-discovery.

SMITH, Niki. *The Golden Hour*. illus. by author. Little, Brown. ISBN 9780316540377.

Gr 4-7—New friendships and photography help Manuel cope with post-traumatic stress disorder and panic attacks after witnessing gun violence at school. Evocative artwork uses stark color changes and panel bleeds to convey emotion. Depicting resilience, vulnerability, and a blossoming queer romance, this is a stunning portrayal of self-discovery in a rural setting.

STANLEY, Stan. *The Hazards of Love: Vol. 1*. illus. by author. Oni. ISBN 9781620108574.

Gr 8 Up—After being tricked by a hairless cat, queer, nonbinary teen Amparo becomes trapped in the beautiful yet dangerous Bright World. Expressive art, with angular and dramatic line-work, pops on stylish black pages and backgrounds. Rich colors, lush details, and haunting characters conjure up an unforgettable world.

VANDORN, Kaeti. *Monster Friends*. illus. by author. Random/Graphic. ISBN 9781984896827.

Gr 2-5—Following a frightening experience exploring a cave, Reggie, a shape-shifting monster, withdraws from the world, but everything changes when he meets a new pal while house-sitting. Vandorn’s expressive illustrations bring to life a sweetly surreal setting, and her gentle story is threaded with a subtle yet potent message: With a good friend by one’s side, even the most daunting problems can be resolved.

WALDO, Steph. *Tiny Tales: Shell Quest*. illus. by author. HarperAlley. ISBN 9780063067837.

K-Gr 2—In an effort to make friends and fit in with his peers, a shell-less snail seeks a shell. Cheery, earth-tone digital illustrations deftly communicate emotions, while back and front matter and bold block panels help new comics readers find their footing. The greater message of found family is triumphant.

XU, Wendy. *Tidesong*. illus. by author. HarperAlley/Quill Tree. ISBN 9780062955807.

Gr 5-8—When Sophie is sent to her great-aunt’s home to learn magic in preparation for an important exam, she makes a bad first impression. Awkward, inexperienced, and plagued with self-doubt, she pales in comparison to her cousin Sage and to Lir, the water dragon she befriends, but her family and new friend help set her on a path to self-discovery. Gorgeous manga-style artwork and a heartfelt narrative bring this book’s magic to life.



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