

Kirkus Reviews

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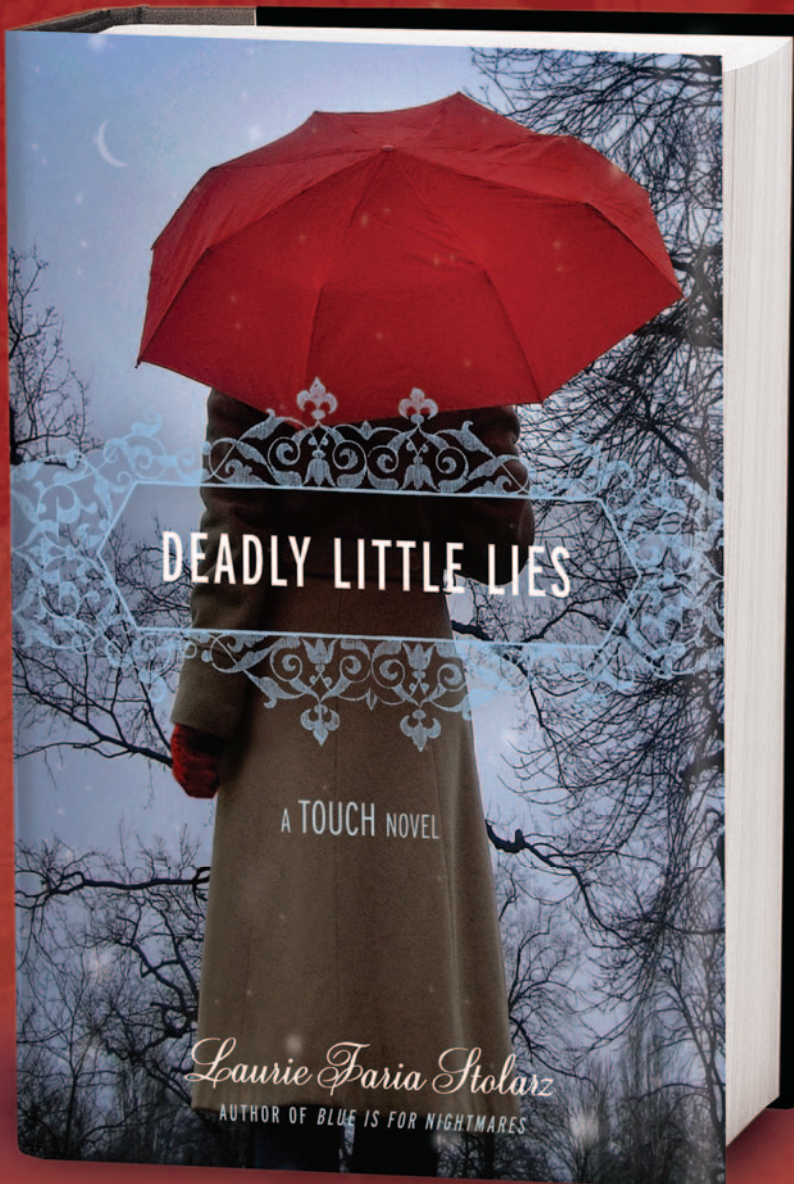
From the author of *Bleed* and *Blue Is for Nightmares*
comes the second book in the **TOUCH** series

IF THE TRUTH HURTS. . . .

Deadly Little Lies

Last fall, Camelia fell for Ben, the enigmatic new boy at school who turned out to be gifted with psychometry, the ability to sense the future through touch. Now, when it seems that he may have transferred his gift to her, Ben pushes her away. However, when Camelia starts dating her co-worker Adam, secrets from both boys' pasts threaten her safety yet again!

HC ed. 978-1-4231-1145-0 • \$16.99



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SOME SECRETS SHOULDN'T BE KEPT. . . .

Deadly Little Secret

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Pbk ed. 978-1-4231-1198-6 • \$8.99

A

boy with Asperger's navigates the sociopolitical minefield that is a law firm in *Marcelo in the Real World* by Francisco X. Stork. A girl with a facial disfigurement makes her way through an emotionally fraught familial maze in *North of Beautiful* by Justina Chen Headley. A human "monster" finds a path to moral grace in *Fire* by Kristin Cashore. A racially integrated women's band tours the uneasy landscape of World War II-era America in *Sweethearts of Rhythm* by Marilyn Nelson and illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. These books and more made us read and think in a year distinguished by great books for teens. In this look back, Jim Murphy tells us about his visits to two different battlefields, Antietam and the trenches of Europe. And three novelists—Brian Katcher and debut authors Nick Burd and Malinda Lo—muse on how far we've come on the road to equality and acceptance for LGBTQ teens and the literature that reflects their lives.

This look back is a walk through 2009's top YA titles you won't regret.

—The Editors



Wintergirls

Laurie Halse Anderson

Viking / March / 9780670011100 / \$17.99

On the very first page of this lyrical, haunting novel, 18-year-old Lia learns that her former best friend, Cassie, is dead—"found in a motel room, alone." Although they had not spoken for six months, Cassie had left 33 cell-phone messages for Lia the night before she died. The two teens had been engaged in a chilling contest to see who could stay thinner. Laurie Halse Anderson constructs an interior monologue that makes readers privy to the thoughts Lia attempts to repress and the ways in which Cassie continues to haunt her. "I didn't want to write *Wintergirls*," says Anderson. "I was afraid of confronting the demons that made me feel bad about my body for decades. When I realized how many of my readers were plagued by the same demons, I picked up the sharpest sword I have—my pen—and wrote the book. All demons were slain." In a starred review, *Kirkus* said, "In broken, symbolic and gut-wrenching prose, Lia narrates her hopeless story of the destructive behaviors that control her every action and thought. Anderson perfectly captures the isolation and motivations of the anorexic without ever suggesting that depression and eating disorders are simply things to 'get over.'" (*Ages 12 & up*)

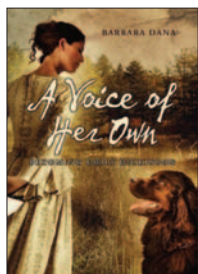


Serendipity Market

Penny Blubaugh

HarperTeen / March / 9780061468759; 9780061468766 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$17.89

With prose as magical as the events it describes, Penny Blubaugh's debut novel is a feast for the senses, brimming with richly textured scenery, beguiling characters and heartwarming sentiment. When the world spins off-center, Mama Inez, along with her feline sidekick Toby, calls on friends around the world to convene at the Serendipity Market. Each must bring a tale to tell, the sharing of which will restore harmony in humanity and equilibrium in nature. The stories, nine in all, are playfully retooled versions of old favorites: shadows of "Cinderella," "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod" and "The Princess and the Pea" all make an appearance at Mama Inez's end-of-the-world gathering. "There's obviously something to these stories if they've withstood the test of time," says Blubaugh. The book sprang to life after she reworked "Jack and the Beanstalk" for a class at Vermont College for Fine Arts, where she earned her MFA. She found herself irresistibly compelled to continue. "These were fun stories to write. It was really interesting to explore them through someone else's eyes, rather than the characters you always see." (*Ages 12 & up*)



A Voice of Her Own: Becoming Emily Dickinson

Barbara Dana

HarperTeen / February / 9780060287047; 9780060287054 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$17.89

Inspired by a "spunky young writer with an ability to really look at things with her own eyes and dare to feel," actress, playwright and author Barbara Dana set off on a decade-long odyssey to bring the youth and young adulthood of Emily Dickinson to light. The author's meticulous research, which yielded this playful homage as well a collection of Dickinson-themed essays for adults (*Wider Than the Sky*, 2007), will be readily apparent to readers, who are rewarded with a vivid envisioning of the poet's formative years. Dana evokes the insecurities and hormones of adolescence with a painful accuracy that will resonate with modern-day teenagers, while fans of the playful philosophy that characterized Dickinson's poetry will enjoy the language and tone Dana adopts in the novel. "She felt the difficulties, struggles and tragedies of this world, and its joys, very, very deeply," says Dana. It's quite likely that Dana's readers will too. (*Ages 12 & up*)



The Maze Runner

James Dashner

Delacorte / October / 9780385737944; 9780385907026 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$19.99

Warning: Not for claustrophobics, or those who worry about being killed by techno-demons in the night. An elevator door opens and an amnesiac boy stumbles out into the Glade, a sanctuary—as glades have been since antiquity—surrounded by a devious, humongous maze. In the Glade, Thomas, the newcomer, finds a company of similarly amnesiac boys, some of them residents for up to two years, with their own rules and a decision-making Council. Defeating the maze is foremost and made especially difficult by its population of Grievors—half-machine, half-animal horrors—that patrol its corridors. James Dashner’s moody, complex narrative manages to maintain a jet-propelled, jaw-wiring intensity. “*The Maze Runner* was heavily influenced by two books I loved when growing up—*Ender’s Game* and *Lord of the Flies*,” says Dashner. “Throw in *Holes* and the television show *Lost*, and you get the flavor of the story—frightening but hopeful.” The characters prove a gutsy bunch who use their heads. “The boys show an uncanny, gritty determination not to give up in the face of obstacles,” says the author. “Something I hope all of us would do when it came down to it.” (*Ages 12 & up*)



Mare's War

Tanita S. Davis

Knopf / June / 9780375857140; 9780375957147 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$19.99

Family history isn’t always what it seems in this sophomore novel by Tanita S. Davis, in which she explores the history of African-American women who served during World War II. Suffering the “World’s Worst Road Trip,” sisters Octavia and Tali Boylen soon find their cross-country misery interrupted when their feisty grandmother Mare tells of running away from home and winding up in the African-American 6888th U.S. Army Postal Battalion. “I never heard any of this history in school,” says Davis. “I wanted to be able to give teens who aren’t as interested in history a way into the story. Sometimes I think history is intimidating to young adults, because even 60 years ago is so removed from our contemporary world.” Mare was inspired by both Davis’ maternal grandmother, whom she remembers as “a tart-tongued smart-aleck,” and her glamorous paternal grandmother. The author hopes her fictional creation will inspire some soul-searching on the part of her readers too. “I’d like this book to remind readers of all ages and genders that they have choices,” she says. “We’re all on the same journey, making the same mistakes, and we can always learn from each other.” (*Ages 12 & up*)



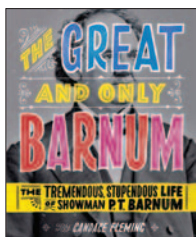
Sacred Scars (A Resurrection of Magic, Book 2)

Kathleen Duey

Illustrated by Sheila Rayyan

Atheneum / August / 9780689840951 / \$17.99

In the second installment of the Resurrection of Magic trilogy, Kathleen Duey digs deeper into a darkened world of underground tunnels and chambers, where even the lanterns fill the room with soot instead of light. Here Sadima plots her escape from the evil Somiss, while centuries later Hahp makes a pact with his friend Gerrard to destroy the academy of magic. The conflict is growing between the Eridians, who shun magic as an oppressor of the poor, and the Wizards, who will stop at nothing to restore its power. In Duey’s fictional city of Limòri, knowledge is power and cooperation is its only hope for survival. The characters follow advice Duey once received from an educator who had escaped from war-torn Vietnam: “The only thing you own is what you know. Anything else you own can be taken away from you.” Politically charged and morally complex, *Sacred Scars* provides a literary escape, but not from reality. “Children are aware in first-world countries that they’re sheltered and that the majority of the world has life and death things happening all the time,” says Duey. “Throughout history people their age were already running the world.” (*Ages 13 & up*)



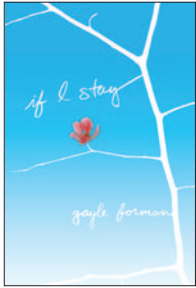
The Great and Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life of Showman P.T. Barnum

Candace Fleming

Illustrated by Ray Fenwick

Schwartz & Wade/Random / September / 9780375841972; 9780375945977 (Lib. Ed.) / \$18.99; \$21.99

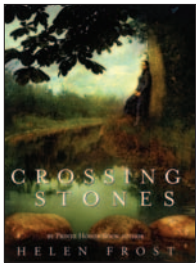
Unlike Ebenezer Scrooge, when P.T. Barnum’s audiences said, “Humbug!,” they were loving every minute of it. He understood, like great magicians, that his congregations were happy to be bamboozled as long as there was serious entertainment involved. Nonetheless, there was plenty of real-life strangeness involved in his circuses, and biographer Candace Fleming serves them up—bearded ladies, mermaids, living skeletons—with brio. “Delving into the life of P.T. Barnum inspired some truly hands-on research,” she says. “I headed to the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wis., where I learned to play the steam calliope *and* to cover my ears while doing so. I rode an elephant, won and wore a red rubber nose and even walked the tightrope. OK, OK, the tightrope was only two feet off the ground. Still, that’s what biography is about—living bits and pieces of other peoples’ lives within your own. Who says research can’t be fun?” Fleming’s narrative is fun and sharp, with the kind of clarity that doesn’t shrink from Barnum’s weaknesses—his love of lucre, boozing and exploiting the vulnerable—but also nods to his public-spirited, even generous, soul. With its busy wealth of period illustrations, the book has all the magical appeal of the Big Top. (*Ages 10 & up*)



If I Stay

Gayle Forman
Dutton / April / 9780525421030 / \$16.99

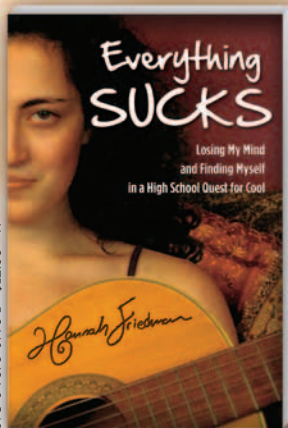
Mia is in the back of the car listening to *Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 3*, the piece she'd planned to practice if it were not a snow day, when the car is "eviscerated" by another driver, killing her family. First-time author Gayle Forman fluidly moves from Mia's present, where she lies in a coma, to flashbacks, each of which contributes to Mia's decision about whether to go and join her family, or stay with her music, her boyfriend Adam and her loving grandparents. Forman was haunted by a question. "What would you do if something catastrophic happened to your family," she says. "And you yourself were hovering between life and death yet were somehow cognizant of what had happened and were able to choose whether to go with your family or keep on living?" The author says she obsessed with this thought for years with no real plans to write about it, until "one day, out of the blue, this 17-year-old cello player arrives to answer that question for me. The writing process was as spontaneous as Mia's arrival. I had no outline, no idea of where the story would take me, or what Mia's ultimate choice would be until I was well into the book." (*Ages 12 & up*)



Crossing Stones

Helen Frost
Farrar, Straus and Giroux / September / 9780374316532 / \$16.99

"Who I am remains to be seen," says Muriel, the convention-bucking teen of this moving bildungsroman set in rural 1917 Michigan. "And I alone intend to be the one to see it." Printz Honor award-winner Helen Frost deftly relates this tale of the toll war exacts on families through intricately wrought poems told from the perspective of Muriel, her brother and their dear friend as they grow through loss to find love and inner strength at a turbulent time in U.S. history. Frost says she finds this era moving because "the combination of events was potent—the war, the suffrage movement and the flu epidemic"—here all powerfully affecting her characters' lives—"were closely bound together." Asked whether she thinks girls today can relate to the pressures that Muriel faced, to marry and shun a vocation, Frost says she wonders that herself. "It is true, however, that in the generation that came of age during World War I, so many men were killed in the war that many women did remain single and often discovered surprising advantages to that," she says. "They led the way for women in subsequent generations to see that they had a choice in this matter." (*Ages 12 & up*)



978-0-7573-0775-1 • \$12.95 • TP

Welcome inside the head of Hannah Friedman—her fresh voice, biting wit and captivating writing details the teenage years in all of their cringe-worthy absurdity.

In this brutally funny and provocatively honest memoir, Friedman details her ambitious attempts to forgo a life of absurd obscurity in exchange for one of glamorous popularity—this is a good choice for discussion.

—School Library Journal, Sept. 2009

Friedman is a talented storyteller and her hopeful ending . . . should inspire.

—Publishers Weekly, Aug. 2009

Louder Than Words.

A new teen memoir series



978-0-7573-1413-1 • 7.95 • TP

What happens to you when you lose your mother, then your father is tragically murdered?

This isn't a sad tale but one of recovery on beating the odds. Recommended for those who want to read real issues by teens.

—YA Books Central, Sept. '09



978-0-7573-1414-8 • 7.95 • TP

What's it like to be sick an entire year and life doesn't turn out the way you expect?

Readers will enjoy hearing about the brighter side of the tunnel.

—TeenReads.com, Aug. '09



978-0-7573-1412-4 • 7.95 • TP

Marni pulls out her hair—including her eyelashes and eyebrows—and people are noticing.

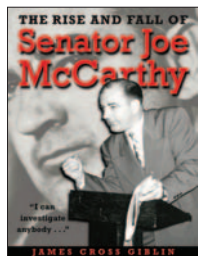
This frank, brutal story of her struggle with trichotillomania is thought-provoking, realistic and—most importantly—hopeful.

—TeenReads.com, Aug. '09

Truth is more fascinating than fiction.

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The Rise and Fall of Senator Joe McCarthy

James Cross Giblin

Clarion / December / 9780618610587 / \$22.00

It takes a strong man to keep an even keel when writing a biography of Joseph McCarthy, to keep from reducing that blot on the American political landscape to anything but a caricature of himself. But veteran biographer James Cross Giblin maintains a cool but portentous voice as he charts the Wisconsin senator's progress from ambitious and power-hungry to mercenary. "On television one night, when I was in the middle of researching *The Rise and Fall of Senator Joe McCarthy*, was James Cagney's classic gangster film noir from 1949, *White Heat*," says Giblin. "I thought to myself, 'That's what the McCarthy biography should be like—fast-paced, action-filled, with crackling, authentic dialogue and the look and feel of a film noir, shadowy, tense and ominous.' Later, when I first saw the jacket design, I was delighted—it looked exactly like a film-noir poster from McCarthy's heyday." Laced with a good selection of political cartoons and photographs, Giblin's story of the senator, who saw a pinko in every pot and a communist in every garage, is an enveloping, sorry tale of ignorance, lying, bullying and twisting facts. Sadly, there's plenty of resonance in today's politics to keep McCarthy's story relevant for years to come. (Ages 14 & up)

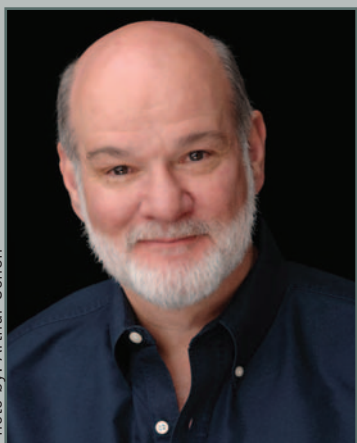


Photo by: Arthur Cohen

War and Peace

This year, acclaimed author **Jim Murphy** published a book about "the bloodiest single day in American history" and another one about a miraculous peace in the midst of the Great War. He talked with us about **the lessons that can be learned from both events.**

This year, you have two books at either extreme of the spectrum of war. Was this planned?

The manuscripts were finished almost at the same time, but I had the idea in 1992 for *A Savage Thunder* and didn't start writing it until 2006 or 2007. I also wanted to write about African-Americans in World War I. Suddenly I realized that Walter Dean Myers and Michael Cooper had each done a book about them. I kept doing research and kept running into the truce. It struck me as such a complete and amazing miracle—over 100,000 soldiers doing this spontaneous act without authority from the officers.

Were there any striking similarities or contrasts between the books?

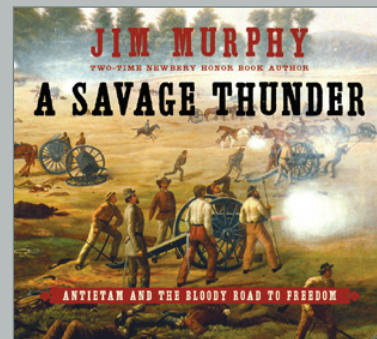
In both situations there was a real rush to go to war, to defend their beliefs, on all sides. There's a certain nobility and sacrifice on both sides that's genuine. In both wars, the savagery of the fighting surprised everyone. There were brand new weapons in both wars, and no one knew how to equip the soldiers to shield them properly.

Do you think that one impulse—the drive toward war versus a longing for peace—is stronger than the other?

My real sense is that most people are of a peaceful nature. They want peace because that means things are calm and they don't get hurt and their kids don't get hurt. But I also believe that people are constantly fearful that whatever they might have could disappear. And governments instinctively know that. Instead of presenting citizens with rational reasons for going to war, they say, "Here's what they're doing, and here's why we should go to war." If you lay out a rational approach, you'll get rational questions back. It's easier to create fear, and they'll have people overriding their instincts.

What do you hope young people will take from reading these books?

I don't shy away from describing what happens in battle. I'm direct about the injuries someone would sustain—not for cheap thrills, but because I want readers to realize that real war is not like a video game. There are consequences. My books are not antiwar but not pro-war either. As a country is moving toward war, I want kids to think, "Wait a minute, are the issues big enough to put my life on the line or for my friends to put their lives on the line?" War is generally fought by young people. I'd like them to pause and think about the issues and who's involved.

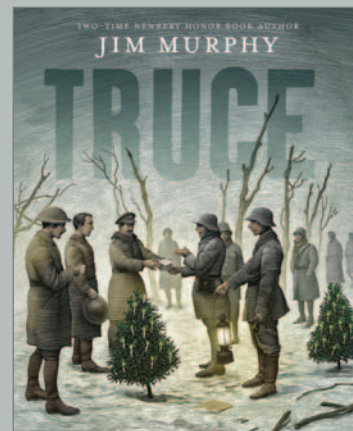


A Savage Thunder: Antietam and the Bloody Road to Freedom

McElderry / July

9780689876332 / \$19.99

(Ages 10 & up)

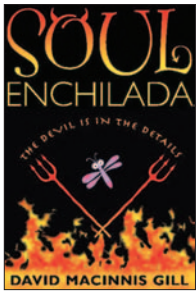


Truce: The Day the Soldiers Stopped Fighting

Scholastic / October

9780545130493 / \$19.99

(Ages 10 & up)



Soul Enchilada

David Macinnis Gill
Greenwillow / April / 9780061673016; 9780061673023 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$17.89

A 1958 Cadillac Biarritz is all Eunice Smoot has left of her family. Now that the devil has come for both her soul and car, she's going to do anything in her power to keep both. Her ally is a car-wash worker with connections to the paranormal world. "Teens always want to know, where did you get *this* idea? Meaning a novel about a high-school dropout who races the devil for her soul and a 1958 Cadillac," says Gill. "Each year, my writers' group has a contest to tell the most original Halloween story. We give one another 'seeds' to start the creative process. My seeds for the story that led eventually to the creation of *Soul Enchilada* were a chocolate crucifix, the anti-ghost and blistered roses. I added a phrase of my own to the mix: 'Repossession is 9/10ths of the law.' The first image that came to mind was of a young man holding a pair of Twix bars to fend off a vampire. Next, when banks repossess cars, they send a repo agent. Of course, Lucifer would send his own agent. Finally, the setting. What better time for a Halloween story than during Dia de los Muertos?" (*Ages 12 & up*)



King of the Screwups

K.L. Going
Harcourt / April / 9780152062583 / \$17.00

In her latest subversion of the teen-angst novel, Printz Honor-winning author K.L. Going explores the humor originating in the masculine ideal—and adds high heels, feather boas and a touch of lipstick. Her hero is Liam Geller, a handsome high-schooler whose success with sports and girls belies the fact that he's really a geek at heart. When this perpetual "screwup" is kicked out of the house, he moves in with Aunt Pete, his glam-rocking, cross-dressing, bachelor uncle. "The novel is full of fashion, glam rock and mayhem," says Going. "What more could you ask for?" In reality, this unpredictable, frankly hilarious romp has a lot to say about stereotypes, gender roles and acceptance. "Readers have to think more when we give them these unexpected characters," says Going. "The stereotype of the rich, popular, shallow teen is one that has been perpetuated ad nauseum, so I wanted to turn it on its head. Liam is the type of character you can't help developing a little crush on. He gets in trouble a lot, but he's also extremely innocent and he accepts others easily because he knows what it's like to be judged." (*Ages 12 & up*)

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The Lost Conspiracy

Frances Hardinge

HarperCollins / September / 9780060880415; 9780060880422 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$17.89

Looks can be deceiving in magical places, especially ones as fraught as the island of Gullstruck, where everyone takes young Hathin for granted while giving her oracle sister Arilou plenty of room to operate. Gullstruck is a place awash with birds that eat souls and eagles that steal children, where volcanoes are alive and where things have devolved into a Hobbesian war of each against all—and, more particularly, of colonists against native people. Frances Hardinge says that the book came to her in bits and pieces while on a yearlong trip around the world, during which she read folk tales, visited ancient temples and “fell in love with volcanoes.” When she returned home, she says that “Gullstruck was not so much one coherent location in my head as a huge jumble of enthusiastic ideas.” In that setting, Hathin comes into

her own, learning of her abilities and that Gullstruck is a place of rather amazing secrets—some of which remain. “When I end a book,” says Hardinge, “I like to leave the reader with a sense that the world within it has not resolved all its problems and ground to a contented halt, and that the main characters’ lives will continue after the last page—perhaps to encounter more adventures.” (*Ages 12 & up*)



North of Beautiful

Justina Chen

Headley

Little, Brown

February

9780316025058

\$16.99

Her beauty flawed by a large birthmark on her face, Terra rushes to complete high school and escape the depressing limits of home. Justina Chen Headley gives her significant challenges: an abusive cartographer father (“I wanted a profession that symbolized control, and what is more controlling than mapping the world?”), a shallow boyfriend and a loving mother consoling herself with overeating. Searching for her own True North, Terra pushes the boundaries imposed by her father. “I knew Terra’s voice from the very start of the writing process,” says Headley. “But the entry into Terra’s story was a bit more circuitous, a meandering route while I got her to trust me.” The contours of Terra’s landscape emerge for readers through her art and her new friendship with adopted Asian goth teen Jacob and his globetrotting mother. A beautiful and unexpected trip to China brings the two teens and their mothers into unmapped territory, recovery and possibly redemption: “The attempt to change—the admission to self that you have done wrong and that you can do better—is almost as important as the change itself,” says Headley, adding that Terra learns that she “could ask for more and for better” from family and friends, in what *Kirkus* called a “complex and deeply felt read.” (*Ages 13 & up*)

WOULD SHE LIE TO YOU?

Justine Larbalestier

LIAR

978-1-59990-305-7 • HC • \$16.99

★ “[A] dark, gripping page-turner.” —*KIRKUS REVIEWS*, STARRED REVIEW

★ “[A] chilling story . . . will have readers’ hearts racing.” —*SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL*, STARRED REVIEW

★ “Readers will be guessing and theorizing long after they’ve finished.” —*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*, STARRED REVIEW

“Marvelous. Micah is wonderfully complex, both irritating and immensely likable.” —*BOOKLIST*

“Compulsive reading.” —*THE HORN BOOK*

“Intriguing and deftly handled.” —*THE BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN’S BOOKS*

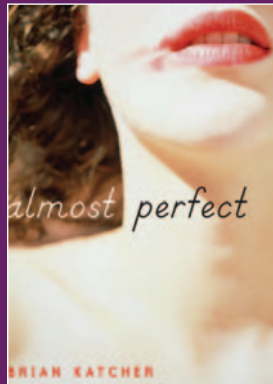
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Secret Lovers

Three Standout LGBTQ Novels



Almost Perfect
Brian Katcher
Delacorte / October
9780385736640;
9780385906203 (Lib. Ed.)
\$17.99; \$20.99
(Ages 14 & up)



Ash
Malinda Lo
Little, Brown
September
9780316040099 / \$16.99
(Ages 12 & up)



The Vast Fields of Ordinary
Nick Burd
Dial / May
9780803733404
\$16.99
(Ages 14 & up)

It's been 40 years since John Donovan's *I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip* (Harper & Row, 1969) explored the idea of a boy's attraction to his male best friend, and more than a quarter-century since Nancy Garden's lesbian love story, *Annie on My Mind* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982). But, as George Nicholson, an agent at Sterling Lord and a former publisher of children's books at both Viking and Bantam Doubleday Dell, says, "It's like having an African-American president, in that we've come so far, but we still have so far to go...People say, 'If you recognize gay marriage, it will break down marriage as a union.' None of those arguments makes sense to me. It's always about fear, of course."

A trio of exceptional novels examines aspects of LGBTQ love. In Nick Burd's *The Vast Fields of Ordinary* and Brian Katcher's *Almost Perfect*, the small-town setting molds the prevailing attitudes. For Burd's gay hero, Dade Hamilton, that means keeping his trysts with star football player Pablo a secret, which edges Dade toward a relationship with the dangerous Alex. "I never imagined that so many people, both straight and gay, would identify with the book," says Burd. "The fact that they have only goes to prove what I've believed for so long—that everyone knows what it's like to be lonely. The funny part is that when you realize this, so much of that loneliness disappears."

In *Almost Perfect*, straight high-school senior Logan Witherspoon has also been jilted, and he becomes infatuated with new student Sage Hendricks. "Katcher flawlessly channels the worried and confused voice of a straight teenage boy in this honest and uncompromising take on transgender love," said *Kirkus* in a starred review. "I hope this will allow readers to understand what a difficult path girls like Sage must travel," says Katcher. "And help people to be a little more accepting."

Malinda Lo's *Ash* gives readers a Cinderella who favors the royal huntress Kaisa over the prince, with an appropriately happy fairy-tale ending. "*Ash* was a labor of love in many ways," says Lo. "It allowed me to think deeply about what love truly is. I even think it helped me to recognize love when it came into my life. *Ash* will always be particularly meaningful to me."

At one point, the fairy Sidhean tells Ash, "Once, a long time ago, when magic was stronger in this land, our two races were much closer than they are now." Lo suggests that there was once greater acceptance and fluidity between what can be imagined and what can come true. Perhaps it's a target to aim for—a culture that can readily accept Ash's relationship with the huntress.



Liar
 Justine Larbalestier
 Bloomsbury / September / 9781599903057 / \$16.99

Micah may have animal rather than human DNA. She may have killed her little brother. She may be responsible for the death of a classmate. Or she may not. There is only one truth she is willing to tell—she is a compulsive liar. Micah may live in New York and have a cute boyfriend, but this is no romantic urban fantasy. It’s a terrifying ride through the mind of a conniving, amoral possible sociopath. “I’ve been fascinated by the idea of *Liar* since Justine first mentioned it several years ago,” says Melanie Cecka, editorial director of Bloomsbury Children’s Books. “A story narrated by a compulsive liar sounded almost playful, and I envisioned the editorial process unfolding like a chess game. Knowing I was dealing with an unreliable narrator, I’d be extra careful to detect the truths from the lies, and have the story

figured out long before I reached the end of the novel. Wrong. It turns out that ‘playful’ didn’t come close to capturing the story’s psychological gymnastics. It was clear almost immediately that Micah was the one in control, and no amount of guesswork or speculation on my part would give me an editorial edge.” (*Ages 14 & up*)

“A lyrical tale of...first love.”*

The *New York Times* Bestseller

shiver
 maggie stiefvater

★ “Stiefvater skillfully increases the tension throughout; her take on werewolves is interesting and original.”
 —**Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“Elegant writing that is especially intuitive about the animal world sets this apart.”—*Booklist*

“Stiefvater melds the worlds of fantasy and reality quite convincingly....*Shiver* is beautifully written, even poetic at times.”—*BookPage*

Ages 13 and up • 304 pages • 0-545-12326-7 • \$17.99

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**Up Close:
 Harper Lee**
 Kerry Madden
 Viking / March
 9780670010950
 \$16.99

What’s a biographer to do in attempting to chronicle the life of one of America’s

most famous reclusive authors, one who gave her last interview in 1964? For Kerry Madden, the answer was to get closer to the source. “Sitting at my computer and Googling Harper Lee was not acceptable,” she says. “I had to go to Alabama and meet the people who knew her and lived around her.” To better understand the woman who wrote the 1960 classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Madden traveled down Alabama’s back roads and interviewed everyone from college historians to schoolchildren, encountering wry characters like Truman Capote’s cousin and Lee’s sister, Alice, along the way. “It was like going to the well of stories,” says Madden. “I love the interview process and the story-telling magic that can happen by letting conversations occur naturally without time constraints. A story takes as long as it takes to tell, especially in the South. I loved stories about her sense of humor and the courage it’s taken to just be herself—‘Nelle’—all these years and not ‘Harper Lee.’ She created the life she wanted on her own terms without apology or excuses.” (*Ages 12 & up*)



Eyes Like Stars

Lisa Mantchev
Feiwel & Friends / July / 9780312380960 / \$16.99

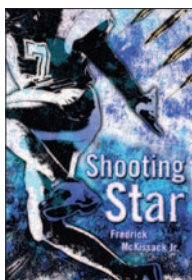
Debut novelist Lisa Mantchev clearly knows her way around the stage. As 17-year-old Bertie fights for her right to remain at the Théâtre Illuminata, the only home she has ever known, she incorporates elements of the theatrical canon via *The Complete Works of the Stage* (aka “The Book”) that literally binds the cast of characters—from H.C. Andersen to Shakespeare—to the stage. Thespians and theater initiates alike will be riveted by Bertie’s race to prove her place in the theater and discover the details of her own story. “There is a breathless hush that comes at the beginning of every play, just after the house lights go down but before the curtain goes up,” says Mantchev. “In that moment, a bridge is built between reality and fantasy, between ‘what is’ and ‘what might be.’ And it is in this tiny, timeless place where fairies live, pirates sail the painted seas and a blue-haired girl named Beatrice Shakespeare Smith was born.” Jean Feiwel, senior vice president and publishing director for Macmillan Children’s, adds, “I like the idea of fairies that swear and are naughty and wrecking things. [Bertie] is really kind of spoiled rotten, petulant and obnoxious, but then all of that attitude gets focused into determination and industriousness.” (Ages 12-16)



Years of Dust

Albert Marrin
Dutton / August / 9780525420774 / \$22.99

For James Madison Book Award winner Albert Marrin, his book about the Dust Bowl began before he was born. “In 1934, there was a large dust storm that carried the dust all the way from the plains to New York City,” says the author. “My father described to me this huge column of dust that caught the sun rays so that it was actually glittering in the sky. That image always stuck with me.” Of course, history paints a much grimmer picture of those lean, desperate years, and former teacher Marrin uses all of his storytelling skills in weaving together the known science and ecology facts about the disaster and its impact on the human experience. “The book is really a cautionary tale in many ways,” he says. “It wasn’t only this fascination with this time in American history that drew me but also that there were lessons to be learned. These weather patterns have persisted for thousands of years, with times of very intense heat and drought. The geologic record is filled with it. If you know that nature behaves in a certain way, you have to act accordingly. If you don’t, you can never win.” (Ages 12 & up)



Shooting Star

Fredrick McKissack Jr.
Atheneum / August / 9781416947455 / \$16.99

The choices we make are just as important as the games we play—that’s the message of Fredrick McKissack Jr.’s first young adult novel. Protagonist Jomo Rodgers is a talented varsity football player faced with the decision of his life when jealousy of his bigger, badder friend Jayson gets the better of him. “It’s about a young man deciding whether to take performance-enhancing drugs,” says the author, who relied on his experience with private schools and high-school football. “Jomo has an ethos that is telling him that it’s wrong, but it’s countered by all these people telling him [that] if he were just a little bigger, a little stronger, he could be a great player. He starts to rationalize that choice, and in the end, he has to deal with the consequences.” The son of award-winning authors Fred and Patricia McKissack, the author learned much about YA writing from his parents while carving out his own distinct style. “If you want to raise the ire of my mother, just ask when she’s going to write something serious,” he says. “She’ll say, ‘I’m writing for your kids. Is that serious enough for you?’” (Ages 12 & up)



Riot

Walter Dean Myers
Egmont USA / September / 9781606840009; 9781606840429 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$19.99

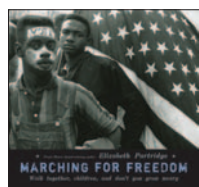
Walter Dean Myers is fascinated by history, especially a past that figures only in the footnotes. One episode that caught his eye long ago was a series of anti-draft riots that took place in New York City during the summer of 1863, pitting pro-Southern sympathizers and Irish gangs against African-Americans and Union soldiers fresh from the killing fields of Gettysburg. Fifteen-year-old Claire is both African-American and Irish American and is torn between the two opposing camps, sympathetic both to those outraged that the rich could buy their way out of military service and to those appalled by the racial injustices of the era. “As an African-American of mixed-race heritage, I’ve often thought of identity issues,” says Myers. “The Draft Riots brought racial issues as an isolated concept to the forefront for the first time and clearly outlined, for those who were paying attention, the impending struggles of Reconstruction.” Billed as a novel but set in the form of a screenplay, *Riot*’s vivid presentation of that time of struggle ably introduces young readers to the sometimes unsettling complexities of the nation’s past. And not just the past. “I know lots of Claires,” says Myers. “The history of America’s racial identity is played over and over again.” (Ages 11 & up)



Sweethearts of Rhythm: The Story of the Greatest All-Girl Swing Band in the World

Marilyn Nelson
Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney
Dial / October / 9780803731875 / \$21.99

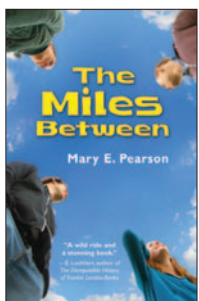
In 1937, in remote Piney Woods, Miss., Laurence C. Jones organized the all-girl swing band whose incredible story poet Marilyn Nelson and illustrator Jerry Pinkney wed their multi-award-winning talents to tell. Teens will marvel at this dazzling combination of melodic verse and exquisitely vibrant pen-and-watercolor illustrations as they discover the inspirational tale of the Sweethearts, a racially diverse band of women whose musicianship and style helped them break into the male-dominated 1940s jazz world, as they toured the United States and brought swing to World War II troops abroad. Pinkney says he employed collage for the first time in many years in an attempt to depict the great “democracy in that music” and to “try to capture visually the kind of tempo and mood and color that you find in swing.” Nelson hopes that from the Sweethearts’ tale her readers will “learn about this small story as well as the larger story of that awful decade,” and also “consider the possibility that art enables us to survive even the most difficult times.” In a starred review, *Kirkus* called *Sweethearts of Rhythm* a “stellar integration of art and text.” (*Ages 10 & up*)



Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary

Elizabeth Partridge
Viking / October / 9780670011896 / \$19.99

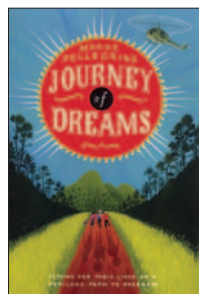
Some books originate with words while others are born from images. For her latest, National Book Award finalist Elizabeth Partridge discovered a treasure trove of photographs about the 1965 civil-rights marches in Alabama by photojournalist Matt Herron and was off on a journey through history. “I don’t feel that this is my book,” Partridge says. “It belongs to the people I interviewed who were kids and young adults during the protest, and to the photographers who captured it.” While the book accurately reflects the shocking prejudice marchers experienced, it also shows the astounding bravery of the young people who took part in the protest, a theme that ultimately became the book’s foundation. “Realizing that it was kids and young adults who made the march successful was a real moment for me,” says Partridge. “The adults had too much to lose—their homes, their jobs, their lives. The kids could march and sing and protest and fill the jails. I’m not a courageous person myself, so I’m awed by their courage. I don’t believe this protest would have succeeded without them. I wanted to shout about their achievements from the rooftops.” (*Ages 10 & up*)



The Miles Between

Mary E. Pearson
Henry Holt / September / 9780805088281 / \$16.99

Three classmates join emotionally damaged 17-year-old Destiny as she plays hooky and embarks—in a “found” car—on a search for “One day where the world makes sense...Just one single fair day.” This year, Oct. 19—the tenth anniversary of the date she was first sent away to boarding school—promises to be unique, if not fair. Car-ride therapy, self-revelation and serendipitous events allow Destiny’s back story to emerge, piece by painful piece. “I would get the scenes out of sequence and wonder where or how they would fit in,” says Mary E. Pearson. “I realized I was going to have two stories here, the one Destiny was willing to reveal and the one she wasn’t. I loved the challenge of writing with an unreliable narrator, and I wanted the reader to experience that undercurrent too. Are Destiny’s long-absent parents as callous as she would have us believe? Is fairness possible?” As happy coincidences accumulate, readers are unsure what is true. Destiny’s companions challenge her detachment and veracity, leading to an emotional and explosive denouement—though, says Pearson, “the ‘twist,’ as I have heard some readers call it, was whispered all along.” (*Ages 14 & up*)



Journey of Dreams

Marge Pellegrino
Frances Lincoln / August / 9781847800619 / \$15.95

Before she began working with Central American refugees, “I hadn’t thought about the difference between an immigrant and a refugee,” says Marge Pellegrino. How, she wondered, “could American kids understand why refugee students were in their schools and communities?” After listening to many stories of hardship and heartbreak, Pellegrino began writing the story of Tomasa, a young Guatemalan girl forced to flee a bloody civil war and make the perilous journey to safety in the United States. As Tomasa’s voice continued to “whisper” in Pellegrino’s ear, a vibrant cast of characters—Tomasa’s family and village friends—emerged around the character. Tomasa’s story, which the author explains is “fictional but informed by real families,” seemed so real to some of Pellegrino’s co-workers that many were convinced they knew the very child her character was based on. The author hopes that young readers who meet Tomasa will be “more open to people of other cultures...that they’ll understand that the reasons people may flee their homelands might be beyond our own experience...that they’ll be less likely to judge and more willing to find out more...and that people will have a glimpse of what it is to be resilient.” (*Ages 12 & up*)

SECOND LOOK

A baker's dozen of previously featured books that received *Kirkus* starred reviews



Fire

Kristin Cashore
Dial / October / 9780803734616 / \$17.99
First appeared: BEA/ALA Big Book Guide

"A jewel-toned companion to *Graceling* (2008) inverts the trope of the exotic, gifted, irresistible fantasy heroine...Fire, last of the human monsters, must constantly use her mind-altering abilities to protect herself from the frenzied desire and resentful distrust of man and beast alike...Fresh, hopeful, tragic and glorious." (Ages 14 & up)



Catching Fire

Suzanne Collins
Scholastic / September / 9780439023498 / \$17.99
First appeared: Fall Preview

"Action, intrigue, romance and some amount of hope in a story readers will find completely engrossing. Collins weaves in enough background for this novel to stand alone, but it will be a far richer experience for those who have read the first installment (*The Hunger Games*, 2008)." (Ages 12 & up)



Solace of the Road

Siobhan Dowd
David Fickling/Random / October / 9780375849718; 9780375949715 (Lib. Ed.) / \$17.99; \$20.99
First appeared: Fall Preview

"Holly, a 15-year-old ward of the state, is placed with foster parents who... can't break through the barrier she has constructed around herself...[her] insights and observations are completely plausible, as is her voyage of discovery, described in lovely, pitch-perfect language. A last gift from Dowd." (Ages 12 & up)



Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice

Phillip Hoose
Melanie Kroupa/FSG / January / 9780374313227 / \$19.95
First appeared: Nonfiction Spotlight

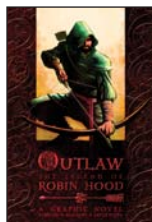
"A teenager in the 1950s, Colvin was the first African-American to refuse to give up her seat on the bus in Montgomery, Ala....Hoose's frank examination of Colvin's life includes sizable passages in her own words, allowing readers to learn about the events of the time from a unique and personal perspective." (Ages 12 & up)



Genius of Common Sense: Jane Jacobs and the Story of The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Glenna Lang and Marjory Wunsch
Godine / April / 9781567923841 / \$17.95
First appeared: Nonfiction Spotlight

"At a time when city planners were determined to conquer urban blight by destroying buildings and uprooting communities, Jacobs argued for a vision of cities as vibrant, functioning systems...Wunsch and Lang have done readers a service in introducing her so effectively." (Ages 12 & up)



Outlaw: The Legend of Robin Hood

Tony Lee
Illustrated by Sam Hart, color by Artur Fujita
Candlewick / September / 9780763643997; 9780763644000 (paper) / \$21.99; \$11.99
First appeared: Graphic Spotlight

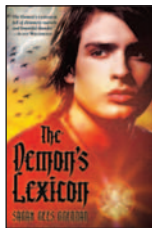
"Lee infuses the age-old tale with snarky dialogue and a whiplash-inducing pace...Hart's drawings and Fujita's coloring elevate this 21st-century version head and shoulders above the rest...This modern reincarnation of one of history's most beloved outlaws is sure to become the stuff of legend." (Ages 10 & up)



Purple Heart

Patricia McCormick
Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins / September / 9780061730900; 9780061730917 (Lib. Ed.) / \$16.99; \$17.89
First appeared: Fall Preview

"Private Matt Duffy wakes up in the infirmary to receive the prized Purple Heart for his valor in Iraq...[McCormick] tenderly calculates the guilt and trepidation that infect Matt's mind, and when he returns to patrol, what he finds on the streets of Iraq will either make him or break him." (Ages 12 & up)



The Demon's Lexicon

Sarah Rees Brennan
McElderry / June / 9781416963790; 9781416963806 (paper) / \$17.99; \$9.99
First appeared: Fall Preview/Debut Fiction pick

"A fresh voice dancing between wicked humor and crepuscular sumptuousness invigorates this urban fantasy...From the pitch-perfect opening paragraph to the heartbreaking final pages, the narrative peels back layers of revelation, deftly ratcheting up the tension and horror to a series of shattering climaxes." (Ages 12 & up)



Last Night I Sang to the Monster

Benjamin Alire Sáenz
Cinco Puntos / September / 9781933693583 / \$16.95
First appeared: Fall Preview

"Sáenz's poetic narrative will captivate readers from the first sentence to the last paragraph of this beautifully written novel, which explores the painful journey of an adolescent through the labyrinth of addiction and alcoholism." (Ages 14 & up)



Almost Astronauts

Tanya Lee Stone
Candlewick / February / 9780763636111; 9780763645021 (paper) \$24.99; \$17.99
First appeared: Nonfiction Spotlight

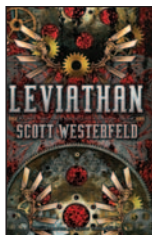
"The fascinating, dramatic story of the 'Mercury 13,' a group of women aviators who proved to be as courageous, intelligent and fit as any man, but who were nonetheless barred from NASA's astronaut program...Handsomely illustrated with photographs, this empowering story will leave readers inspired." (Ages 10 & up)



Creature of the Night

Kate Thompson
Roaring Brook / March / 9781596435117 / \$17.95
First appeared: Mysteries & Thrillers

"A thief and a liar at 14, Bobby is furious with his mother for moving the family to the sticks to get him away from the trouble he's been up to in Dublin...[his] first-person narration never shortchanges his wrongdoing or the family pattern of irresponsibility...this novel scintillates." (Ages 14 & up)



Leviathan

Scott Westerfeld
Illustrated by Keith Thompson
Simon & Schuster / October / 9781416971733 / \$19.99
First appeared: BEA/ALA Big Book Guide

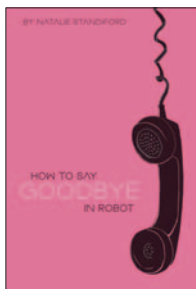
"[T]he growing hostilities of what is soon to become the Great War throw an Austrian schoolboy and a British airman together, and Darwinists and Clankers must work together if they all want to survive...The setting begs comparisons to Hayao Miyazaki, Kenneth Oppel and Naomi Novik, but this work will stand—or fly—on its own." (Ages 12-15)



The Eternal Smile

Gene Luen Yang and Derek Kirk Kim
First Second / April / 9781596431560 / \$16.95 paperback
First appeared: Spring & Summer Preview

"Three tales evince very different realities and viewpoints, though all are tied together by [a] common thread...Begging for multiple readings, this exceptionally clever examination of fantasy and perception is one to be pored over and ruminated upon." (Ages 14 & up)



How to Say Goodbye in Robot

Natalie Standiford
Scholastic / October / 9780545107082 / \$17.99

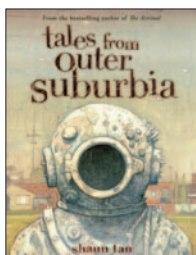
Beatrice, a high-school senior, has plenty of experience saying goodbye due to her family's many moves. At her new school in Maryland, she meets loner Jonah. Jonah's had his issues with saying goodbye as well—he never got to say it to his mother, who died in a car accident, or his brother, Matthew, believed dead but actually hidden in an institution by their heartless father. Upon the discovery that Matthew is alive, Jonah hatches a plan to break him free and live happily ever after. The plan fails, and Beatrice finds herself saying an unexpected, unwilling goodbye to Jonah. "I've been surprised at how many people have written to tell me that they've had a relationship like Jonah and Bea's," says Natalie Standiford. "I've gotten e-mails from strangers pouring their hearts out about friendships more intense than any romance. Some are very sad stories, but I'm glad to know readers have connected with the characters so deeply." Though readers may expect Jonah and Beatrice to fall in love, Standiford chose to keep their friendship platonic, showing that a boy and a girl don't have to kiss to be fervently, meaningfully attached. (*Ages 12 & up*)



Marcelo in the Real World

Francisco X. Stork
Levine/Scholastic / March / 9780545054744 / \$17.99

Welcome to Marcelo's head. It is an unusual mindscape, for Marcelo lives in a world somewhere on the autistic spectrum. Sympathetically drawn by lawyer and author Francisco X. Stork, Marcelo's is a refreshingly ingenuous, literal way of seeing and an ideal foil for his father's disingenuous law practice where Marcelo has been drafted for a summer job. "*Marcelo in the Real World* started as the story of a mother who discovers the journals of her 17-year-old son a year after his death," says Stork. "As I incorporated fragments of those journals into the book, I was drawn by the young author whose goodness and unique perceptions seemed so out of place with many aspects of our modern world." Away from the safety of his private school, thrust into the nasty world of office politics and legal shenanigans, Marcelo wrestles with the fundamentals. "The right note sounds right and the wrong note sounds wrong" works as well for the ethically curious Marcelo as it does for his new friend, a young, jazz-composing woman, someone who challenges his most elemental self-awareness—"It is possible that I am not able to love." So should everyone ponder such questions. (*Ages 14 & up*)



Tales from Outer Suburbia

Shaun Tan
Levine/Scholastic / February / 9780545055871 / \$19.99

In a starred review of these 15 interconnected stories set against the vast suburbs, *Kirkus* said, "Tan brings magic to places where magic rarely happens in books. These are fairy tales for modern times, in which there is valor, love and wisdom—without dragons and castles." Instead the book features a Zen water buffalo that vanishes when the residents forget him, a leaf-like foreign-exchange student who is called Eric by his host family and a herd of dogs that take revenge on an abusive owner. The palette and media are as wide-ranging as the characters, but the circumscribed blocks and endless sidewalks unite them all. "Like an exhibition of paintings, an ensemble of different stories can also evoke a single collective concept, something greater than the sum of its parts," says Arthur Levine, editorial director of Arthur A. Levine Books and vice president of Scholastic, quoting Shaun Tan's own words about creating this collection. "This was an opportunity to explore the juxtaposition of 'the mundane and the extraordinary' which not only informs [Tan's] memories of growing up in isolated Perth, but which continue to reveal themselves to him in what I think is a particularly wonderful, gasp- and laugh-inducing way." (*Ages 12 & up*)



Same Difference

Siobhan Vivian
PUSH/Scholastic / March / 9780545004077 / \$17.99

Vampires and werewolves might own today's book market, but Siobhan Vivian knows there is always a place for stories about everyday life. "I love writing stories about real girls with real problems," she says. "I received a letter from a girl who felt as if I'd written *Same Difference* just for her. It was the best compliment I'd ever received." After her best friend gets a boyfriend, 16-year-old Emily isn't so interested in spending her summer lazing around the pool in her native Cherry Hill, N.J. A summer art institute in Philadelphia gives Emily the opportunity to get away for a few hours a day. New friends and the chance to develop her artistic talents also give Emily a fresh perspective on her own identity. "I saw a YouTube video where two girls acted out parts of *Same Difference* for a school project," says Vivian. "I forwarded their video to the director of the summer art program on which the book is based, and the school gave each girl a full scholarship to take art classes. The girls have said that the experience changed the direction of their lives as much as it did mine." (*Ages 14 & up*)



Funny How Things Change

Melissa Wyatt

Farrar, Straus and Giroux / April / 9780374302337 / \$16.95

The mountain mining town of Dwyer, W.Va., is a place people flee as soon as they get the chance. Remy, an aspiring auto mechanic newly graduated from high school, has plans to move to Pennsylvania with his girlfriend when she matriculates at college. All of Remy's plans are thrown into a tailspin when he meets a charismatic outsider and finds out that his father is willing to give up an important piece of their family history in order to fund Remy's future. Wyatt shows that Remy's journey lies not in leaving home, but seeing how it has made him into the man he is. "I have to admit I didn't much like West Virginia the first time I saw it," says Wyatt. "But it was that appalled suburban sense of 'Why would anyone stay here?' that drove the writing of this book. That powerful connection to place is something I think we're losing in our mobile society. During the writing, the story started to ask its own questions, many of them about differing perceptions of worth. I ended feeling very fierce about Remy and other kids like him who don't share the ambitions of college-bound teens but who deserve equally to have their stories told." (*Ages 14 & up*)



Once Was Lost

Sara Zarr

Little, Brown / October / 9780316036047 / \$16.99

"In the summer of 2002, Elizabeth Smart, a teen in my community, was kidnapped," says Sara Zarr. The author began writing a story about a pastor's daughter whose life and faith are affected by the kidnapping of another girl in her small community and by her own mother's removal to a rehab center for alcoholism. The story, told from 15-year-old Sam's point of view, is engrossing both for its central intrigue and for its strikingly authentic depiction of a teen's tumultuous inner life. "Near the end, I realized what would make the mystery gripping was not having all these whodunit details cluttering things up," says Zarr. "But focusing on the emotional intensity of Sam's crisis." Like Sam, Zarr grapples with her own questions of faith and doubt. "The parts where I feel most connected to Sam are the ones in which she's longing for a tangible connection to the stories she's grown up on," says the author. "At some point you can't help but crave an actual, physical experience—a voice, a touch, a body—or to be a firsthand witness to a miracle." Readers will benefit from Zarr's most recent act of faith, which *Kirkus* described as a "rare combination of in-depth character study and gripping mystery." (*Ages 12 & up*)

Kirkus Supplements

Molly Brown, Senior Editor, Special Projects
molly.brown@kirkusreviews.com
646.654.7277

Eric Liebetrau, Managing Editor
eliebetrau@kirkusreview.com
646-654-4686

Elaine Szewczyk, Editor
eszewczyk@kirkusreviews.com

Vicky Smith, Children's Editor
vicky.smith@kirkusreviews.com

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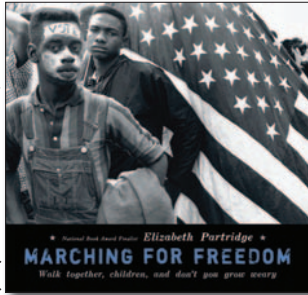
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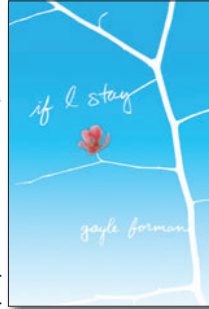
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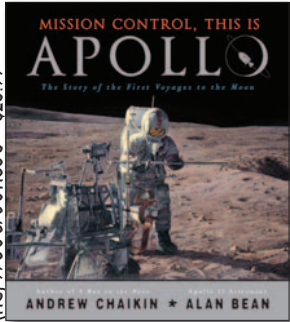
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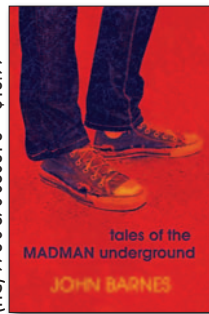
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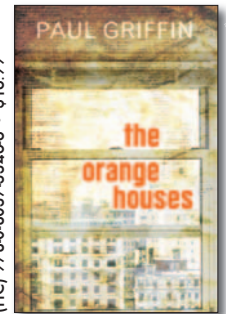
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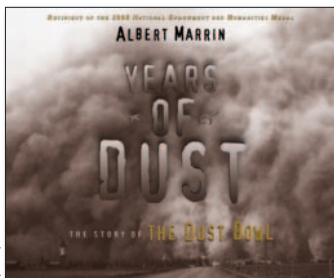
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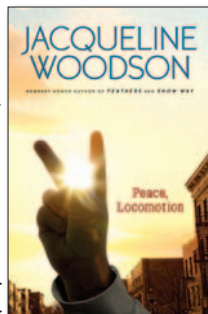
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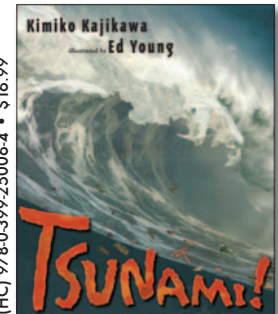
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