

Excel Academy Charter School

Rising 8th Grade Recommended Reading List¹

* Not too Challenging ** Challenging *** Very Challenging

➔ - denotes “hot,” popular titles

Historical Fiction

Suspect Red by L. M. Elliott ** (Illustrated) *This historical novel revisits the anxious, fearful time of the Cold War, when blacklists, political profiling, and guilt by association ruined the lives of thousands of innocent people and deeply divided the nation. A tense, engrossing story that effectively captures the suspicion and paranoia that prevailed during that time in American history.*

➔ **Prisoner B-3087 by Alan Gratz **** *As a Jewish boy in 1930s Poland, Yanek is at the mercy of the Nazis who have taken over. Everything he has, and everyone he loves, have been snatched brutally from him. And then Yanek himself is taken prisoner -- his arm tattooed with the words PRISONER B-3087. He is forced from one nightmarish concentration camp to another, as World War II rages all around him. He encounters evil he could have never imagined, but also sees surprising glimpses of hope amid the horror. He just barely escapes death, only to confront it again seconds later. Can Yanek make it through the terror without losing his hope, his will -- and, most of all, his sense of who he really is inside? Based on an astonishing true story.*

➔ **Projekt 1065 by Alan Gratz **** *Infiltrate. Befriend. Sabotage. World War II is raging. Michael O'Shaunessey, originally from Ireland, now lives in Nazi Germany with his parents. Like the other boys in his school, Michael is a member of the Hitler Youth. But Michael has a secret. He and his parents are spies.*

➔ **Paper Hearts by Meg Wiviott (written in VERSE) **** *An act of defiance. A statement of hope. A crime punishable by death. Making a birthday card in Auschwitz was all of those things. But that is what Zlatka did, in 1944, for her best friend, Fania. She stole and bartered for paper and scissors, secretly creating an origami heart. Then she passed it to every girl at the work tables to sign with their hopes and wishes for happiness, for love, and most of all—for freedom. Fania knew what that heart meant, for herself and all the other girls. And she kept it hidden, through the bitter days in the camp and through the death marches. She kept it always. This novel is based on the true story of Fania and Zlatka, the story of the bond that helped them both to hope for the best in the face of the worst.*

Witness by Karen Hesse * (written in VERSE)** *Leanora Sutter. Esther Hirsh. Merlin Van Tornhout. Johnny Reeves . . . These characters are among the unforgettable cast inhabiting a small Vermont town in 1924. A town that turns against its own when the Ku Klux Klan moves in. No one is safe, especially the two youngest, twelve-year-old Leanora, an African-American girl, and six-year-old Esther, who is Jewish. In this story of a community on the brink of disaster, told through the haunting and impassioned voices of its inhabitants, Newbery Award winner Karen Hesse takes readers into the hearts and minds of those who bear witness.*

➔ **The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd ***** *Set in South Carolina in 1964, The Secret Life of Bees tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the town's fiercest racists, Lily decides they should both escape to Tiburon, South Carolina—a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. There they are taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters who introduce Lily to a mesmerizing world of bees, honey, and the Black Madonna who presides over their household. This is a remarkable story about divine female power and the transforming power of love—a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.*

➔ **Burn Baby Burn by Meg Medina ***** *Nora Lopez is seventeen during the infamous New York summer of 1977, when the city is besieged by arson, a massive blackout, and a serial killer named Son of Sam who shoots young women on the streets. Nora's family life isn't going so well either: her bullying brother, Hector, is growing more threatening by the day, her*

¹ All book descriptions were adapted from www.amazon.com.

mother is helpless and falling behind on the rent, and her father calls only on holidays. All Nora wants is to turn eighteen and be on her own. And while there is a cute new guy who started working with her at the deli, is dating even worth the risk when the killer likes picking off couples who stay out too late?

Saving Juliet by Suzanne Selfors *** *An almost-historical, almost time-travel fantasy surrounding Romeo and Juliet. Mimi runs from her performance as Juliet and finds herself in an odd version of 1594 Verona. Mimi decides to save Juliet from her fate, but her interference in Shakespeare's plot causes unexpected events and plenty of real danger.*

X, A Novel by Ilysa Shabazz *** *This riveting and revealing novel follows the formative years of the man whose words and actions shook the world. Malcolm Little's parents have always told him that he can achieve anything, but from what he can tell, that's a pack of lies—after all, his father's been murdered, his mother's been taken away, and his dreams of becoming a lawyer have gotten him laughed out of school. There's no point in trying, he figures. But Malcolm's efforts to leave the past behind lead him into increasingly dangerous territory. Deep down, he knows that the freedom he's found is only an illusion—and that he can't run forever. X follows Malcolm from his childhood to his imprisonment for theft at age twenty, when he found the faith that would lead him to forge a new path and command a voice that still resonates today.*

➔ **The Help by Kathryn Stockett ***** *Set during the nascent civil rights movement in Jackson, Mississippi, where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan is just home from college in 1962, and, anxious to become a writer, is advised to write about what disturbs her. The budding social activist begins to collect the stories of the black women on whom the country club sets relies. The book Skeeter puts together based on their stories is scathing and shocking, bringing pride and hope to the black community, while giving Skeeter the courage to break down her personal boundaries and pursue her dreams.*

Hold Tight, Don't Let Go by Laura Rose Wagner *** *The vivid story of two teenage cousins, raised as sisters, who survive the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti. After losing the woman who raised them in the tragedy, Magdalie and Nadine must fend for themselves in the aftermath of the quake. The girls are inseparable, making the best of their new circumstances in a refugee camp with an affectionate, lively camaraderie, until Nadine, whose father lives in Miami, sends for her but not Magdalie. As she leaves, Nadine makes a promise she cannot keep: to bring Magdalie to Miami, too. Resourceful Magdalie focuses her efforts on a reunion with Nadine until she realizes her life is in Haiti, and that she must embrace its possibilities for love, friendship, and a future.*

Nonfiction

Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race by Margot Lee Shetterly * *The phenomenal true story of the black female mathematicians at NASA whose calculations helped fuel some of America's greatest achievements in space.*

The Making of a Navy SEAL by Brandon Webb * *Brandon Webb's experiences in the world's most elite sniper corps are the stuff of legend. From his grueling years of training in Naval Special Operations to his combat tours in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan, The Making of a Navy SEAL provides a rare and riveting look at the inner workings of the U.S. military through the eyes of a covert operations specialist. This candid chronicle of his student days, going through the sniper course himself, to his hair-raising close calls with Taliban and al Qaeda forces in the northern Afghanistan wilderness, to his vivid account of designing new sniper standards and training some of the most accomplished snipers of the twenty-first century, Webb provides a rare look at the making of the Special Operations warriors who are at the forefront of today's military.*

→ **The Distance Between Us by Reyna Grande** ** *When her parents make the dangerous and illegal trek across the Mexican border in pursuit of the American dream, Reyna and her siblings are forced to live with their stern grandmother, as they wait for their parents to build the foundation of a new life. But when things don't go quite as planned, Reyna finds herself preparing for her own journey to "El Otro Lado" to live with the man who has haunted her imagination for years: her long-absent father. Both funny and heartbreaking, The Distance Between Us sheds light on the immigrant experience beautifully capturing the struggle that Reyna and her siblings endured while trying to assimilate to a different culture, language, and family life in El Otro Lado.*

Dive! World War II Stories of Sailors and Submarines in the Pacific: The Incredible Story of U.S. Submarines in WWII by Deborah Hopkinson ** *The incredible story of America's little known "war within a war" -- US submarine warfare during World War II. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the US entered World War II in December 1941 with only 44 Naval submarines -- many of them dating from the 1920s. With the Pacific battleship fleet decimated after Pearl Harbor, it was up to the feisty and heroic sailors aboard the US submarines to stop the Japanese invasion across the Pacific.*

→ **The Bite of the Mango by Mariatu Kamara** ** *The astounding story of one girl's journey from war victim to UNICEF Special Representative. As a child in a small rural village in Sierra Leone, Mariatu Kamara lived peacefully surrounded by family and friends. Rumors of rebel attacks were no more than a distant worry. But when 12-year-old Mariatu set out for a neighboring village, she never arrived. Heavily armed rebel soldiers, many no older than children themselves, attacked and tortured Mariatu. . . . Stumbling through the countryside, Mariatu miraculously survived.*

→ **The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates by Wes Moore** ** *Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence?*

→ **LeBron James: The Rise of a Star by David Lee Morgan** ** *The son of an unmarried, teenage mother, LeBron James overcame a culture of drugs, poverty, and violence in the Akron, Ohio, housing projects where he grew up to become a basketball superstar who signed more than \$100 million dollars in promotional contracts before the end of his senior year in high school. Morgan, a sportswriter for the Akron Beacon Journal, offers readers an intimate look at James' life and incredible basketball career, following him to the moment when he became the number-one NBA draft pick.*

→ **Bad Boy by Walter Dean Myers** ** *As a boy, Walter Dean Myers was quick-tempered and physically strong, always ready for a fight. He also read voraciously-he would check out books from the library and carry them home, hidden in brown paper bags in order to avoid other boys' teasing. He aspired to be a writer. But growing up in a poor family in Harlem, his hope for a successful future diminished as he came to realize fully the class and racial struggles that surrounded him. He began*

to doubt himself and the values that he had always relied on, attending high school less and less, turning to the streets and his books for comfort. In a memoir that is gripping, funny, and ultimately unforgettable, Walter Dean Myers travels back to his roots in the magical world of Harlem during the 1940s and 1950s. Here is the story of one of the strongest voices in young people's literature today.

BOMB: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon by Steve Sheinkin ** *In December of 1938, a chemist in a German laboratory made a shocking discovery: When placed next to radioactive material, a Uranium atom split in two. That simple discovery launched a scientific race that spanned three continents. In Great Britain and the United States, Soviet spies worked their way into the scientific community; in Norway, a commando force slipped behind enemy lines to attack German heavy-water manufacturing; and deep in the desert, one brilliant group of scientists was hidden away at a remote site at Los Alamos. This is the story of the plotting, the risk-taking, the deceit, and genius that created the world's most formidable weapon. This is the story of the atomic bomb.*

→ **Port Chicago 50 by Steve Sheinkin **** *On July 17, 1944, a massive explosion rocked the segregated Navy base at Port Chicago, California, killing more than 300 sailors who were at the docks, critically injuring off-duty men in their bunks, and shattering windows up to a mile away. On August 9th, 244 men refused to go back to work until unsafe and unfair conditions at the docks were addressed. When the dust settled, fifty were charged with mutiny, facing decades in jail and even execution. This is a fascinating story of the prejudice that faced black men and women in America's armed forces during World War II.*

Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James Swanson ** *Based on rare archival material, obscure trial manuscripts, and interviews with relatives of the conspirators and the manhunters, CHASING LINCOLN'S KILLER is a fast-paced thriller about the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth: a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia. "This story is true. All the characters are real and were alive during the great manhunt of April 1865. Their words are authentic and come from original sources: letters, manuscripts, trial transcripts, newspapers, government reports, pamphlets, books and other documents. What happened in Washington, D.C., that spring, and in the swamps and rivers, forests and fields of Maryland and Virginia during the next twelve days, is far too incredible to have been made up." So begins this fast-paced thriller that tells the story of the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth and gives a day-by-day account of the wild chase to find this killer and his accomplices.*

Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir to Integrate Little Rock's Central High by Melba Pattillo Beals *** *In 1957, Melba Pattillo turned sixteen. That was also the year she became a warrior on the front lines of a civil rights firestorm. Following the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, Brown v. Board of Education, Melba was one of nine teenagers chosen to integrate Little Rock's Central High School. Throughout her harrowing ordeal, Melba was taunted by her schoolmates and their parents, threatened by a lynch mob's rope, attacked with lighted sticks of dynamite, and injured by acid sprayed in her eyes. But through it all, she acted with dignity and courage, and refused to back down. This is her remarkable story.*

→ **Friday Night Lights by H. G. Bissinger ***** *Return once again to the enduring account of life in the Mojo lane, to the Permian Panthers of Odessa -- the winningest high school football team in Texas history. Odessa is not known to be a town big on dreams, but the Panthers help keep the hopes and dreams of this small, dusty town going. Socially and racially divided, its fragile economy follows the treacherous boom-bust path of the oil business. In bad times, the unemployment rate barrels out of control; in good times, its murder rate skyrockets. But every Friday night from September to December, when the Permian High School Panthers play football, this West Texas town becomes a place where dreams can come true. With frankness and compassion, Bissinger chronicles one of the Panthers' dramatic seasons and shows how single-minded devotion to the team shapes the community and inspires-and sometimes shatters-the teenagers who wear the Panthers' uniforms.*

Joker One by Donovan Campbell *** *After graduating from Princeton, Donovan Campbell wanted to give back to his country, engage in the world, and learn to lead. So he joined the service, becoming a commander of a forty-man infantry platoon called Joker One. Campbell had just months to train and transform a ragtag group of brand-new Marines into a first-rate cohesive fighting unit, men who would become his family. They were assigned to Ramadi, the capital of the Sunni-dominated Anbar province that was an explosion just waiting to happen. And when it did happen—with the chilling cries of "Jihad, Jihad, Jihad!" echoing from minaret to minaret—Campbell and company were there to protect the innocent, battle the insurgents, and*

pick up the pieces. Thrillingly told by the man who led the unit of hard-pressed Marines, Joker One is a gripping tale of leadership and loyalty.

➔ **The Boys of Dunbar by Alejandro Danois ***** *Dunbar High School had one of the most successful basketball programs in the country; in the early 1980s, the Dunbar Poets were arguably the best high school team of all time. Four starting players—Muggsy Bogues, Reggie Williams, David Wingate, and Reggie Lewis—would eventually play in the NBA, an unheard-of success rate. In The Boys of Dunbar, Alejandro Danois revisits the 1981-1982 season with the Poets as the team conquered all its opponents. But more than that, he takes us into the lives of these kids, and especially of Coach Bob Wade, a former NFL player from the same neighborhood who knew that the basketball court, and the lessons his players would learn there, held the key to the future.*

Into Thin Air by John Krakauer *** *A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more--including Krakauer's--in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for Into Thin Air, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster.*

Science Fiction/Fantasy/Adventure / Supernatural Romance

→ **Evernight (series) by Claudia Gray** * Bianca has been uprooted from her happy, uneventful life to start anew at an elite boarding school where her parents will now be professors. Even though Bianca doesn't feel that she is the Evernight type—rich, beautiful, or gifted—she knows that her parents feel this is best for her. She and Lucas Ross share a special connection from the moment they meet and he, like Bianca and a few others, is an outsider. He is a rebel who is on a mission to discover the secret behind Evernight Academy. As the weeks progress, their relationship heats up. What they don't realize, however, is that they each harbor a great secret that could divide them forever. Can their love survive the truth?

→ **Rash by Pete Hautman** * It's late in the twenty-first century, and the United Safer States of America (USSA) has become a nation obsessed with safety. For Bo Marsten, a teenager who grew up in the USSA, it's all good. He knows the harsh laws were created to protect the people. But when Bo's temper flares out of control and he's sentenced to three years of manual labor, he's not so down with the law anymore. Bo's forced to live and work in a factory in the Canadian tundra. The warden running the place is totally out of his mind, and cares little for his inmates' safety. Bo will have to decide what's worse: a society that locks people up for road rage, or a prison where the wrong move could make you polar bear food.

The Game by Monica Hughes * It's the future, and most jobs are done by machines. Now that school is over, Lisse and her friends are consigned to a bleak neighborhood for the permanently unemployed. Then they receive an invitation to the Game—which transports them to a paradise. Is it a dream, or a computer simulation? Each time they play the Game, the new world seems more and more real.

Miles Morales: Spider-Man by Jason Reynolds * Miles Morales is just your average teenager. Dinner every Sunday with his parents, chilling out playing old-school video games with his best friend, Ganke, crushing on brainy, beautiful poet Alicia. He's even got a scholarship spot at the prestigious Brooklyn Visions Academy. Oh yeah, and he's Spider Man. But lately, Miles's spidey-sense has been on the fritz. When a misunderstanding leads to his suspension from school, Miles begins to question his abilities. After all, his dad and uncle were Brooklyn jack-boys with criminal records. Maybe kids like Miles aren't meant to be superheroes. Maybe Miles should take his dad's advice and focus on saving himself.

Black Panther: The Young Prince by Roland Smith * Black Panther. Ruler of Wakanda. Avenger. This is his destiny. But right now, he's simply T'Challa-the young prince.

Internment by Samira Ahmed ** *Rebellions are built on hope.* Set in a horrifying near-future United States, seventeen-year-old Layla Amin and her parents are forced into an internment camp for Muslim American citizens. With the help of newly made friends also trapped within the internment camp, her boyfriend on the outside, and an unexpected alliance, Layla begins a journey to fight for freedom, leading a revolution against the internment camp's Director and his guards.

→ **The Red Queen (series) by Victoria Aveyard** ** Mare Barrow's world is divided by blood--those with common, Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Mare is a Red, scraping by as a thief in a poor, rural village, until a twist of fate throws her in front of the Silver court. Before the king, princes, and all the nobles, she discovers she has an ability of her own. To cover up this impossibility, the king forces her to play the role of a lost Silver princess and betroths her to one of his own sons. As Mare is drawn further into the Silver world, she risks everything and uses her new position to help the Scarlet Guard--a growing Red rebellion--even as her heart tugs her in an impossible direction. One wrong move can lead to her death, but in the dangerous game she plays, the only certainty is betrayal.

→ **Shadow and Bone (series) by Leigh Bardugo** ** Surrounded by enemies, the once-great nation of Ravka has been torn in two by the Shadow Fold, a swath of near impenetrable darkness crawling with monsters who feast on human flesh. Now its fate may rest on the shoulders of one lonely refugee. Alina Starkov has never been good at anything. But when her regiment is attacked on the Fold and her best friend is brutally injured, Alina reveals a dormant power that saves his life--a power that could be the key to setting her war-ravaged country free. Wrenched from everything she knows, Alina is whisked away to the royal court to be trained as a member of the Grisha, the magical elite led by the mysterious Darkling. Yet nothing in this lavish world is what it seems. With darkness looming and an entire kingdom depending on her untamed power, Alina will have to confront the secrets of the Grisha . . . and the secrets of her heart.

→ **Killer of Enemies (series) by Joseph Bruchac** ** Years ago, seventeen-year-old Apache hunter Lozen and her family lived in a world of haves and have-nots. There were the Ones—people so augmented with technology and genetic enhancements that they were barely human—and there was everyone else who served them. Then the Cloud came, and everything changed. Tech stopped working. The world plunged back into a new steam age. The Ones' pets—genetically engineered monsters—turned on them and are now loose on the world. Lozen was not one of the lucky ones, but fate has given her a unique set of survival skills and magical abilities. She hunts, which ensures the safety of her kidnapped family. As Lozen's powers grow, and she connects those powers to an ancient legend of her people, it soon becomes clear as the legendary Killer of Enemies was in the ancient days of the Apache people, Lozen is meant to be a more than a hunter. Lozen is meant to be a hero.

→ **The Selection (series) by Kiera Cass** ** For thirty-five girls, the Selection is the chance of a lifetime. The opportunity to escape the life laid out for them since birth. To be swept up in a world of glittering gowns and priceless jewels. To live in a palace and compete for the heart of gorgeous Prince Maxon. But for America Singer, being Selected is a nightmare. It means turning her back on her secret love with Aspen, who is a caste below her. Leaving her home to enter a fierce competition for a crown she doesn't want. Living in a palace that is constantly threatened by violent rebel attacks. Then America meets Prince Maxon. Gradually, she starts to question all the plans she's made for herself—and realizes that the life she's always dreamed of may not compare to a future she never imagined.

→ **City of Bones (The Mortal Instruments series) by Cassandra Clare** ** When fifteen-year-old Clary Fray heads out to the Pandemonium Club in New York City, she hardly expects to witness a murder—much less a murder committed by three teenagers covered with strange tattoos and brandishing bizarre weapons. Then the body disappears into thin air. It's hard to call the police when the murderers are invisible to everyone else and when there is nothing—not even a smear of blood—to show that a boy has died. Or was he a boy? This is Clary's first meeting with the Shadowhunters, warriors dedicated to ridding the earth of demons. It's also her first encounter with Jace, a Shadowhunter who looks a little like an angel and acts a lot like a jerk. Within twenty-four hours Clary is pulled into Jace's world with a vengeance, when her mother disappears and Clary herself is attacked by a demon.

→ **Blue Bloods (series) by Melissa de la Cruz** ** Schuyler Van Alen is confused about what is happening to her. Her veins are starting to turn blue, and she's starting to crave raw meat. Soon, her world is thrust into an intricate maze of secret societies and bitter intrigue. Schuyler has never been a part of the trendy crowd at her prestigious New York private school. Now, all of a sudden, Jack Force, the most popular guy in school, is showing an interest in her. And when one of the popular girls is found dead, Schuyler and Jack are determined to get to the bottom of it. Schuyler wants to find out the secrets of the mysterious Blue Bloods. But is she putting herself in danger? Melissa de la Cruz's vampire mythology, set against the glitzy backdrop of New York City, is a juicy and intoxicating read.

→ **The Living (series) by Matt de la Pena** ** Shy takes the summer job to make some money. A few months on a luxury cruise liner--how bad can it be? Bikinis, free food, maybe even a girl or two . . . every cruise has a fresh crop of passengers, after all. He'll rake in the tips and be able to help his mom and sister out with the bills. But then, an earthquake more massive than any ever recorded hits California and Shy's life is changed forever. The earthquake is only the beginning. Twenty-four hours and a catastrophic chain of events later, Shy is lost at sea, fighting to survive--and stuck with her. She's blond and she's rich, and never in her life would she have dreamed she'd be adrift in the Pacific Ocean, surrounded by death and completely dependent on a guy like Shy. And Shy hasn't even faced the worst yet.

→ **The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer** ** Matteo Alacrán was not born; he was harvested. His DNA came from El Patrón, lord of a country called Opium--a strip of poppy fields lying between the United States and what was once called Mexico. Matt's first cell split and divided inside a petri dish. Then he was placed in the womb of a cow, where he

continued the miraculous journey from embryo to fetus to baby. He is a boy now, but most consider him a monster--except for El Patrón. El Patrón loves Matt as he loves himself, because Matt is himself. As Matt struggles to understand his existence, he is threatened by a sinister cast of characters, including El Patrón's power-hungry family, and he is surrounded by a dangerous army of bodyguards. Escape is the only chance Matt has to survive. But escape from the Alacrán Estate is no guarantee of freedom, because Matt is marked by his difference in ways he doesn't even suspect.

Catwoman: Soul Stealer (DC Icons series) by Sarah Maas ** *A child of Gotham City's slums, almost 18-year-old Selina Kyle has a rap sheet that includes robbery, gambling, and maintaining her title as the undefeated champion fighter for the Leopards, a girl gang. But everything she does is for her younger half sister Maggie, who suffers from cystic fibrosis. This is an epic shoutout to all the bad girls who know how to have fun.*

Tomorrow, When the War Began (series) by John Marsden ** *When Ellie and her friends go camping, they have no idea they're leaving their old lives behind forever. Despite a less-than-tragic food shortage and a secret crush or two, everything goes as planned. But a week later, they return home to find their houses empty and their pets starving. Something has gone wrong--horribly wrong. Before long, they realize the country has been invaded, and the entire town has been captured--including their families and all their friends. Ellie and the other survivors face an impossible decision: They can flee for the mountains or surrender. Or they can fight.*

→ **The Recruit (CHERUB series) by Robert Muchamore **** *CHERUB agents are all seventeen and under. They wear skate tees and hemp, and look like regular kids. But they're not. They are trained professionals who are sent out on missions to spy on terrorists and international drug dealers. CHERUB agents hack into computers, bug entire houses, and download crucial documents. It is a highly dangerous job. For their safety, these agents DO NOT EXIST. James is the latest CHERUB recruit. He and his sister were recently orphaned, and James has been in a lot of trouble. But he is brilliant in math. And CHERUB needs him. After one hundred days, the grueling training period is over. But the adventure has just begun.*

→ **Ashfall (series) by Mike Mullin **** *Many visitors to Yellowstone National Park don't realize that the boiling hot springs and spraying geysers are caused by an underlying supervolcano, so large that the caldera can only be seen by plane or satellite. And by some scientific measurements, it could be overdue for an eruption. For Alex, being left alone for the weekend means having the freedom to play computer games and hang out with his friends without hassle from his mother. Then the Yellowstone supervolcano erupts, plunging his hometown into a nightmare of darkness, ash, and violence. Alex begins a harrowing trek to search for his family and finds help in Darla, a travel partner he meets along the way. Together they must find the strength and skills to survive and outlast an epic disaster.*

Extraordinary by Nancy Werlin ** *A faerie world is about to die--and one ordinary girl can change its fate. When Phoebe meets Mallory Tolliver, she is irresistibly drawn to her, despite Mallory's odd ways. The two form a sister-like bond until Mallory's handsome brother, Ryland, appears during their junior year, and Phoebe finds herself intensely attracted to him. A dangerous romance begins, but Phoebe soon discovers that Mallory and Ryland are not who they seem. In Extraordinary, National Book Award finalist Nancy Werlin has crafted an enchanting novel of friendship and loyalties, where family history determines the fate of many and a generations-old pact requires a sacrifice of the greatest proportion. With underlying themes of self-discovery and allegiance, there is more to Extraordinary than first meets the eye.*

Impossible by Nancy Werlin ** *Inspired by the classic folk ballad "Scarborough Fair," this is a wonderfully riveting and haunting novel of suspense, romance, and fantasy. Lucy is seventeen when she discovers that she is the latest recipient of a generations-old family curse that requires her to complete three seemingly impossible tasks or risk falling into madness and passing the curse on to the next generation. Unlike her ancestors, though, Lucy has family, friends, and other modern resources to help her out. But will it be enough to conquer this age-old evil?*

→ **Leviathan (series) by Scott Westerfeld **** *This is World War I as never seen before. The story begins the same: on June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife are assassinated, triggering a sequence of alliances that plunges the world into war. But that is where the similarity ends. This global conflict is between the Clankers, who put their faith in machines, and the Darwinists, whose technology is based on the development of new species. After the assassination of his parents, Prince Aleksandar's people turn on him. Accompanied by a small group of loyal servants, the young Clanker flees Austria in a Cyklop Stormwalker, a war machine that walks on two legs. Meanwhile, as Deryn Sharp trains to be an airman with the British Air Service, she prays that no one will discover that she is a girl. She serves on the Leviathan, a massive biological airship that*

resembles an enormous flying whale and functions as a self-contained ecosystem. When it crashes in Switzerland, the two teens cross paths, and suddenly the line between enemy and ally is no longer clearly defined. The ending leaves plenty of room for a sequel, and that's a good thing because readers will be begging for more.

Blood Red Road (series) by Moira Young ** *Saba has spent her whole life in Silverlake, a dried-up wasteland ravaged by constant sandstorms. The Wrecker civilization has long been destroyed, leaving only landfills for Saba and her family to scavenge from. That's fine by her, as long as her beloved twin brother Lugh is around. But when four cloaked horsemen capture Lugh, Saba's world is shattered, and she embarks on a quest to get him back. Suddenly thrown into the lawless, ugly reality of the outside world, Saba discovers she is a fierce fighter, an unbeatable survivor, and a cunning opponent. Teamed up with a handsome daredevil named Jack and a gang of girl revolutionaries called the Free Hawks, Saba's unrelenting search for Lugh stages a showdown that will change the course of her own civilization.*

Feed by M. T. Anderson *** *For Titus and his friends, it started out like any ordinary trip to the moon - a chance to party during spring break and play with some stupid low-grav at the Ricochet Lounge. But that was before the crazy hacker caused all their feeds to malfunction, sending them to the hospital to lie around with nothing inside their heads for days. And it was before Titus met Violet, a beautiful, brainy teenage girl who has decided to fight the feed and its omnipresent ability to categorize human thoughts and desires.*

→ **Ship Breaker and The Drowned Cities by Paolo Bacigalupi ***** *[About Ship Breaker] A fast-paced postapocalyptic adventure set on the American Gulf Coast. Nailer works light crew; his dirty, dangerous job is to crawl deep into the wrecks of the ancient oil tankers that line the beach, scavenging copper wire and turning it over to his crew boss. After a brutal hurricane passes over, Nailer and his friend Pima stumble upon the wreck of a luxurious clipper ship. It's filled with valuable goods—a "Lucky Strike" that could make them rich, if only they can find a safe way to cash it in. Amid the wreckage, a girl barely clings to life. If they help her, she tells them, she can show them a world of privilege that they have never known. But can they trust her?*

→ **Graceling (series) by Kristen Cashore ***** *Kristin Cashore's best-selling, award-winning fantasy Graceling tells the story of the vulnerable yet strong Katsa, a smart, beautiful teenager who lives in a world where selected people are given a Grace, a special talent that can be anything from dancing to swimming. Katsa's is killing. As the king's niece, she is forced to use her extreme skills as his thug. Along the way, Katsa must learn to decipher the true nature of her Grace . . . and how to put it to good use. A thrilling, action-packed fantasy adventure (and steamy romance!) that will resonate deeply with adolescents trying to find their way in the world.*

→ **Little Brother by Cory Doctorow ***** *Marcus, a.k.a "w1n5t0n," is only seventeen years old, but he figures he already knows how the system works—and how to work the system. Smart, fast, and wise to the ways of the networked world, he has no trouble outwitting his high school's intrusive but clumsy surveillance systems. But his whole world changes when he and his friends find themselves caught in the aftermath of a major terrorist attack on San Francisco. In the wrong place at the wrong time, Marcus and his crew are apprehended by the Department of Homeland Security and whisked away to a secret prison where they're mercilessly interrogated for days. When the DHS finally releases them, Marcus discovers that his city has become a police state where every citizen is treated like a potential terrorist. He knows that no one will believe his story, which leaves him only one option: to take down the DHS himself.*

→ **Incarceron (series) by Catherine Fisher ***** *Finn is a 17-year old prisoner of Incarceron. His memories begin and end there. He knows nothing about his heritage except for vague memories that tease at his mind. The teen is determined to escape the prison fashioned centuries ago as a solution to the chaos created by man. Now Incarceron is self-sustaining and self-perpetuating—prisoners are born there and they die there. Legend claims only one man has ever escaped, Sapphique, and Finn is determined to follow in his steps. Claudia, the warden's daughter, lives sequestered in a castle surrounded by servants. But she, too, longs for escape—from a father who frightens her and from betrothal to an insipid prince. Finn and Claudia each discover a crystal key and are amazed to find that they can communicate with each other. As their trust in one another builds, each pledges to help the other. The two stories emerge, intertwine and, by the end, unwind in startling twists.*

→ **Love is the Drug by Alaya Dawn Johnson ***** *Emily Bird was raised not to ask questions. She has perfect hair, the perfect boyfriend, and a perfect Ivy-League future. But a chance meeting with Roosevelt David, a homeland security*

agent, at a party for Washington DC's elite leads to Bird waking up in a hospital, days later, with no memory of the end of the night. Meanwhile, the world has fallen apart: A deadly flu virus is sweeping the nation, forcing quarantines, curfews, even martial law. And Roosevelt is certain that Bird knows something. Something about the virus--something about her parents' top secret scientific work--something she shouldn't know. The only one Bird can trust is Coffee, a quiet, outsider genius. And he believes in Bird. But as Bird and Coffee dig deeper into what really happened that night, Bird finds that she might know more than she remembers. And what she knows could unleash the biggest government scandal in US history.

Every Day by David Levithan *** Every day a different body. Every day a different life. Every day in love with the same girl. There's never any warning about where it will be or who it will be. A has made peace with that, even established guidelines by which to live: Never get too attached. Avoid being noticed. Do not interfere. It's all fine until the morning that A wakes up in the body of Justin and meets Justin's girlfriend, Rhiannon. From that moment, the rules by which A has been living no longer apply. Because finally A has found someone he wants to be with—day in, day out, day after day.

The Weight of Feathers by Anna-Marie McLemore *** The Palomas and the Corbeaus are more than traveling circus performers; the two families have magical bloodlines, and as with all magical acts, they have their secrets. One thing that's not a secret: how much these two families hate each other. Lace Paloma may be new to her family's show, but she knows as well as anyone that the Corbeaus are pure magia negra. Simply touching one could mean death, and she's been taught from birth to keep away. But when disaster strikes the small town where both families are performing, it's a Corbeau boy, Cluck, who saves Lace's life.

➔ **The Host by Stephanie Meyer ***** Melanie Stryder refuses to fade away. The earth has been invaded by a species that take over the minds of human hosts while leaving their bodies intact. Wanderer, the invading "soul" who has been given Melanie's body, didn't expect to find its former tenant refusing to relinquish possession of her mind. As Melanie fills Wanderer's thoughts with visions of Jared, a human who still lives in hiding, Wanderer begins to yearn for a man she's never met. Reluctant allies, Wanderer and Melanie set off to search for the man they both love. Featuring one of the most unusual love triangles in literature, *THE HOST* is a riveting and unforgettable novel about the persistence of love and the essence of what it means to be human.

Delirium (series) by Lauren Oliver *** Lena Haloway is content in her safe, government-managed society. She feels (mostly) relaxed about the future in which her husband and career will be decided, and looks forward to turning 18, when she'll be cured of deliria, a.k.a. love. She tries not to think about her mother's suicide (her last words to Lena were a forbidden "I love you") or the supposed "Invalid" community made up of the uncured just beyond her Portland, Maine, border. There's no real point—she believes her government knows how to best protect its people, and should do so at any cost. But 95 days before her cure, Lena meets Alex, a confident and mysterious young man who makes her heart flutter and her skin turn red-hot. As their romance blossoms, Lena begins to doubt the intentions of those in power, and fears that her world will turn gray should she submit to the procedure.

Eragon (series) by Christopher Paolini *** *Fifteen-year-old Eragon believes that he is merely a poor farm boy—until his destiny as a Dragon Rider is revealed. Gifted with only an ancient sword, a loyal dragon, and sage advice from an old storyteller, Eragon is soon swept into a dangerous tapestry of magic, glory, and power. Now his choices could save—or destroy—the Empire.*

More Happy Than Not by Adam Silvera *** *In the months after his father's suicide, it's been tough for sixteen-year-old Aaron Soto to find happiness again—but he's still gunning for it. With the support of his girlfriend Genevieve and his overworked mom, he's slowly remembering what that might feel like. But grief and the smile-shaped scar on his wrist prevent him from forgetting completely. When Genevieve leaves for a couple of weeks, Aaron spends all his time hanging out with this new guy, Thomas. Aaron's crew notices, and they're not exactly thrilled. But Aaron can't deny the happiness Thomas brings or how Thomas makes him feel safe from himself, despite the tensions their friendship is stirring with his girlfriend and friends. Since Aaron can't stay away from Thomas or turn off his newfound feelings for him, he considers turning to the Leteo Institute's revolutionary memory-alteration procedure to straighten himself out, even if it means forgetting who he truly is. Why does happiness have to be so hard?*

The Scorpio Races by Maggie Stiefvater *** *Some race to win. Others race to survive. It happens at the start of every November: the Scorpio Races. Riders attempt to keep hold of their water horses long enough to make it to the finish line. Some riders live. Others die. At age nineteen, Sean Kendrick is the returning champion. He is a young man of few words, and if he has any fears, he keeps them buried deep, where no one else can see them. Puck Connolly is different. She never meant to ride in the Scorpio Races. But fate hasn't given her much of a choice. So she enters the competition - the first girl ever to do so. She is in no way prepared for what is going to happen.*

Horror and Mystery

→ **Lord Loss (Demonata series) by Darren Shan *** *When sneaky teenaged Grubbs Grady finds himself mysteriously dumped on his aunt's doorstep, he can't help but steal back home to figure out what's going on. Unfortunately, when he arrives, his parents and sister have been horrifically killed in true Shan form: their bodies ripped to shreds by an evil demon named Lord Loss and his vile henchmen. Grubbs somehow manages to escape the fiends and goes to live with his Uncle Dervish, a peculiar dandy who lives in a creepy country mansion whose secrets may hold the key to the murders. Chock-full of family curses, werewolf lore, and stomach-turning gore .*

Shutter by Courtney Alameda ** *A paranormal ghost-hunting story that is a standout in the genre. With the ability to see spiritual auras, Micheline and her tetrachromat crew are the fiercest cadets in the Helsing Corps, an organization with an illustrious history that specializes in dealing with the undead. However, when they aggressively enter a dangerous situation they are unable to control, each of them is infected with a soulchain that will turn deadly if they are unable to break it within seven days. Frightening from the first page, this novel is sure to please horror fans, particularly those familiar with ghost and vampire legends.*

→ **Bad Girls Don't Die (series) by Katie Alender **** *When Alexis's little sister Kasey becomes obsessed with an antique doll, Alexis thinks she is just being her usual weird self. Things get weirder, though, when their house starts changing. Doors open and close by themselves; water boils on the unlit stove; and an unplugged air conditioner blasts cold air. Kasey is changing, too. Her blue eyes go green, she starts using old-fashioned language, and she forgets chunks of time. Most disturbing of all is the dangerous new chip on Kasey's shoulder. The formerly gentle child is gone, and the new Kasey is angry. Alexis is the only one who can stop her sister -- but what if that green-eyed girl isn't even Kasey anymore?*

→ **The Dead Girls of Hysteria Hall by Katie Alender **** *Delia's new house isn't just a house. Long ago, it was the Piven Institute for the Care and Correction of Troubled Females -- an insane asylum nicknamed "Hysteria Hall." However, many of the inmates were not insane, just defiant and strong willed. Kind of like Delia herself. But the house still wants to keep "troubled" girls locked away. So, in the most horrifying way, Delia becomes trapped. And that's when she learns that the house is also haunted.*

→ **Frozen Charlotte by Alex Bell **** *A wondrously haunting and modern thriller, dripping with mystery and madness, secrets and survival, and the chilling sense that the impossible might be all too real.*

Spin by Lamar Giles ** (MYSTERY) *Even in murder, the music lives on. When rising star Paris Secord (aka DJ ParSec) is found dead on her turntables, it sends the local music scene reeling. No one is feeling that grief more than her shunned pre-fame best friend, Kya, and ParSec's chief groupie, Fuse -- two sworn enemies who happened to be the ones who discovered her body. The police have few leads, and when the trail quickly turns cold, the authorities don't seem to be pushing too hard to investigate further. But nobody counted on Paris's deeply loyal fans, ParSec Nation, or the outrage that would drive Fuse and Kya to work together.*

→ **Haunting of Sunshine Girl (series) by Paige McKenzie **** *Shortly after her sixteenth birthday, Sunshine Griffith and her mother Kat move from sunny Austin, Texas, to the rain-drenched town of Ridgemont, Washington. Though Sunshine is adopted, she and her mother have always been close, sharing a special bond filled with laughter and inside jokes. But from the moment they arrive, Sunshine feels her world darken with an eeriness she cannot place. And even if Kat doesn't recognize it, Sunshine knows that something about their new house is just ... creepy.*

→ **Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children (series) by Ransom Riggs **** *A mysterious island. An abandoned orphanage. A strange collection of very curious photographs. It all waits to be discovered in Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, an unforgettable novel that mixes fiction and photography in a thrilling reading experience. As our story opens, a horrific family tragedy sets sixteen-year-old Jacob journeying to a remote island off the coast of Wales, where he discovers the crumbling ruins of Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children. As Jacob explores its abandoned bedrooms and hallways, it becomes clear that the children were more than just peculiar. They may have been dangerous. They may have been quarantined on a deserted island for good reason. And somehow—impossible though it seems—they may still be alive.*

→ **Asylum (series) by Madeline Roux **** *For sixteen-year-old Dan Crawford, the New Hampshire College Prep program is the chance of a lifetime. Except that when Dan arrives, he finds that the usual summer housing has been closed, forcing students to stay in the crumbling Brookline Dorm—formerly a psychiatric hospital. As Dan and his new friends Abby and Jordan start exploring Brookline's twisty halls and hidden basement, they uncover disturbing secrets about what really went on here . . . secrets that link Dan and his friends to the asylum's dark past. Because Brookline was no ordinary mental hospital, and there are some secrets that refuse to stay buried.*

→ **Deadly Little Secret (Touch series) by Laurie Stolarz **** *Some secrets shouldn't be kept... Up until three months ago, everything in sixteen-year-old Camelia's life had been fairly ordinary: decent grades; an okay relationship with her parents; and a pretty cool part-time job at the art studio downtown. But when Ben, the mysterious new guy, starts junior year at her high school, Camelia's life becomes anything but ordinary. Rumored to be somehow responsible for his ex-girlfriend's accidental death, Ben is immediately ostracized by everyone on campus. Except for Camelia.*

→ **Welcome to the Dark House (series) by Laurie Stolarz **** *What's your worst nightmare? For Ivy Jensen, it's the eyes of a killer that haunt her nights. For Parker Bradley, it's bloodthirsty sea serpents that slither in his sleep. And for seven essay contestants, it's their worst nightmares that win them an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at director Justin Blake's latest, confidential project. Ivy doesn't even like scary movies, but she's ready to face her real-world fears. Parker's sympathetic words and perfect smile help keep her spirits up . . . at least for now. Except, things are a little weird. The hostess is a serial-killer look-alike, the dream-stealing Nightmare Elf is lurking about, and the seventh member of the group is missing.*

So Yesterday by Scott Westerfeld ** (MYSTERY) *Ever wonder who was the first kid to keep a wallet on a big chunky chain, or wear way-too-big pants on purpose? What about the mythical first guy who wore his baseball cap backwards? These are the Innovators, the people on the very cusp of cool. Seventeen-year-old Hunter Braque's job is finding them for the retail market. But when a big-money client disappears, Hunter must use all his cool-hunting talents to find her. Along the way he's drawn into a web of brand-name intrigue—a missing cargo of the coolest shoes he's ever seen, ads for products that don't exist, and a shadowy group dedicated to the downfall of consumerism as we know it.*

Lies I Told Michelle Zink ** (MYSTERY) *Grace Fontaine has everything: beauty, money, confidence, and the perfect family. But it's all a lie. Grace has been adopted into a family of thieves who con affluent people out of money, jewelry, art, and anything else of value. Grace has never had any difficulty pulling off a job, but when things start to go wrong on the Fontaines' biggest heist yet, Grace finds herself breaking more and more of the rules designed to keep her from getting caught . . . including the most important one of all: never fall for your mark.*

The Girl from the Well by Rin Chupeco *** *I am where dead children go. Okiku is a lonely soul. She has wandered the world for centuries, freeing the spirits of the murdered-dead. Once a victim herself, she now takes the lives of killers with the vengeance they're due. But releasing innocent ghosts from their ethereal tethers does not bring Okiku peace. Still she drifts on. Such is her existence, until she meets Tark. Evil writhes beneath the moody teen's skin, trapped by a series of intricate tattoos. While his neighbors fear him, Okiku knows the boy is not a monster. Tark needs to be freed from the malevolence that clings to him. There's just one problem: if the demon dies, so does its host.*

→ **I am the Messenger by Markus Zusak *** (MYSTERY)** *Nineteen-year-old cabbie Ed Kennedy has little in life to be proud of: his dad died of alcoholism, and he and his mom have few prospects for success. He has little to do except share a run-down apartment with his faithful yet smelly dog, drive his taxi, and play cards and drink with his amiable yet similarly washed-up friends. Then, after he stops a bank robbery, Ed begins receiving anonymous messages marked in code on playing cards in the mail, and almost immediately his life begins to swerve off its beaten-down path. Usually the messages*

instruct him to be at a certain address at a certain time. So with nothing to lose, Ed embarks on a series of missions as random as a toss of dice: sometimes daredevil, sometimes heartwarmingly safe.

Realistic Fiction including Sports

→ **Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson** * *Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud: "My throat is always sore, my lips raw.... Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter or freeze.... It's like I have some kind of spastic laryngitis." What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute.*

→ **Tyrell (and other titles) by Coe Booth** * *"You don't hardly get to have no kinda childhood in the hood." At 15, Tyrell is trying to keep his little brother in school and safe in their roach-infested shelter in the Bronx. He has dropped out of school, and Moms wants him to sell drugs to make money. But Tyrell is too smart. He doesn't want to end up in prison like his dad. The immediate first-person narrative is pitch perfect.*

We Were Here (and other titles) by Matt de la Pena * *When it happened, Miguel was sent to Juvi. The judge gave him a year in a group home—said he had to write in a journal so some counselor could try to figure out how he thinks. The judge had no idea that he actually did Miguel a favor. Ever since it happened, his mom can't even look at him in the face. Any home besides his would be a better place to live. But Miguel didn't bet on meeting Rondell or Mong or on any of what happened after they broke out. He only thought about Mexico and getting to the border to where he could start over. Forget his mom. Forget his brother. Forget himself. Life usually doesn't work out how you think it will though. And most of the time, running away is the quickest path right back to what you're running from.*

Just Listen (and other titles) by Sarah Dessen * *When Annabel, the youngest of three beautiful sisters, has a bitter falling out with her best friend—the popular and exciting Sophie—she suddenly finds herself isolated and friendless. but then she meets Owen—a loner, passionate about music and his weekly radio show, and always determined to tell the truth. And when they develop a friendship, Annabel is not only introduced to new music but is encouraged to listen to her own inner voice. with owen's help, can Annabel find the courage to speak out about what exactly happened the night her friendship with Sophie came to a screeching halt?*

Payback Time by Carl Deuker * **(and other titles by him)** *Through the eyes of a distinctly non-athletic protagonist—a fat high school journalist named Mitch—veteran sports novelist Deuker reveals the surprising truth behind a mysterious football player named Angel. When Angel shows up Lincoln High, he seems to have no past—or at least not one he is willing to discuss. Though Mitch gets a glimpse of Angel's incredible talent off the field, Angel rarely allows himself to shine on the field. Is he an undercover cop, wonders Mitch? Or an ineligible player? In pursuit of a killer story, Mitch decides to find out just who this player is and what he's done. In the end, the truth surprises everyone.*

The Battle of Jericho (The Jericho Trilogy series) by Sharon Draper * *Sixteen-year-old Jericho is psyched when he and his cousin and best friend, Josh, are invited to pledge for the Warriors of Distinction, the oldest and most exclusive club in school. Just being a pledge wins him the attention of Arielle, one of the hottest girls in his class, whom he's been too shy even to talk to before now. But as the secret initiation rites grow increasingly humiliating and force Jericho to make painful choices, he starts to question whether membership in the Warriors of Distinction is worth it. How far will he have to go to wear the cool black silk Warriors jacket? How high a price will he have to pay to belong? The answers are devastating beyond Jericho's imagination.*

Money Hungry and its sequel Begging for Change by Sharon Flake * *With her brassy voice and saucy attitude, 13-year-old Raspberry Hill emerges as a vivacious heroine. She knows first-hand that living in the housing project is better than being out on the streets, but she and her mother are equally determined to move to a safer neighborhood. That's why Raspberry is so "money hungry," hoarding her savings and doing almost anything ("I wouldn't do nothing bad. Nothing that would hurt people, like selling dope, or shoplifting") to earn a few extra dollars. Her stinginess (well known throughout the school) causes as many problems as solutions. When her money issues begin interfering with her friendships, Raspberry is forced to reexamine her priorities and values.*

Under the Mesquite by Guadalupe Garcia McCall * (written in VERSE) *A resilient Mexican-American girl copes with familial obligation and loss in this free-verse novel. Lupita's first-person tale captures pivotal moments of her high-school years in the border town of Eagle Pass, Texas, with glimpses back at her first six years in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico. When during her freshman year Lupita discovers that her mother has cancer, Lupita sometimes becomes the de facto parental unit for her seven younger siblings.*

→ **Autobiography of My Dead Brother by Walter Dean Myers *** *The thing was that me and Rise were blood brothers, but sometimes I really didn't know him. As Jesse fills his sketchbook with drawings and portraits of Rise, he tries to make sense of the complexities of friendship, loyalty, and loss in a neighborhood plagued by drive-bys, vicious gangs, and abusive cops.*

→ **Patina and other titles in the Track series by Jason Reynolds *** *Ghost. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Four kids from wildly different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. But they are also four kids chosen for an elite middle school track team—a team that could qualify them for the Junior Olympics if they can get their acts together. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves. Patina, or Patty, runs like a flash. She runs for many reasons—to escape the taunts from the kids at the fancy-schmancy new school she's been sent to since she and her little sister had to stop living with their mom. She runs from the reason WHY she's not able to live with her "real" mom any more: her mom has The Sugar, and Patty is terrified that the disease that took her mom's legs will one day take her away forever. So Patty's also running for her mom, who can't. But can you ever really run away from any of this? As the stress builds up, it's building up a pretty bad attitude as well. Coach won't tolerate bad attitude. No day, no way. And now he wants Patty to run relay...where you have to depend on other people? How's she going to do THAT?*

When We Wuz Famous by Greg Takoudes * *Francisco Ortiz, a handsome straight-A student and gifted basketball player from the barrio, wins a full scholarship to an elite boarding school. His future seems promising. But soon after Francisco moves into the dorm, his new classmates assume the worst of him: they pepper him with questions about drugs and gangs. It's all so confusing, made even more complicated when Francisco realizes that back home in the hood, he no longer fits in, though his friends still rely on him to solve their problems. In a desperate attempt to help one of his homies, Francisco makes a terrible decision and becomes everything he fought so hard to rise against.*

→ **The Final Four by Paul Volponi *** *March Madness is in full swing, and there are only four teams left in the NCAA basketball championship. The heavily favored Michigan Spartans and the underdog Troy Trojans meet in the first game in the semifinals, and it's there that the fates of Malcolm, Roko, Crispin, and M.J. intertwine. As the last moments tick down on the game clock, you'll learn how each player went from being a kid who loves to shoot hoops to a powerful force in one of the most important games of the year. Which team will leave the Superdome victorious? In the end it will come down to who has the most skill, the most drive, and the most heart.*

→ **Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertalli **** *Sixteen-year-old and not-so-openly gay Simon Spier prefers to save his drama for the school musical. But when an email falls into the wrong hands, his secret is at risk of being thrust into the spotlight. Now change-averse Simon has to find a way to step out of his comfort zone before he's pushed out—without alienating his friends, compromising himself, or fumbling a shot at happiness with the most confusing, adorable guy he's never met. Incredibly funny and poignant.*

Prom by Laurie Halse Anderson ** *Philadelphia high school who doesn't care about the prom? It's pretty much the only good thing that happens there, and everyone plans to make the most of it—especially Ash's best friend, Natalia, who's the head of the committee and has prom stars in her eyes. Then the faculty advisor is busted for taking the prom money and Ash finds*

herself roped into putting together a gala dance. But she has plenty of help—from her large and loving (if exasperating!) family, from Nat's eccentric grandmother, from the principal, from her fellow classmates. And in making the prom happen, Ash learns some surprising things about making her life happen, too.

→ **Ask Me No Questions by Marina Budhos** ** As part of a U.S. government crackdown on illegal immigration after 9/11, Muslim men were required to register with the government and many were arrested because their visas had long-since expired. Families who had lived and worked in this country were suddenly and forcibly reminded of their illegal status without any likelihood of changing it. For 18-year-old Aisha Hossain, this means the end of her dream of going to college to become a doctor. For 14-year-old Nadira, her younger sister and the story's narrator, it means coming out from behind the shadow of her perfect older sister to reveal her own strength and find a way to reunite her nearly shattered family.

→ **Watched by Marina Budhos** ** Be careful what you say and who you say it to. Anyone might be a watcher. Naeem is a Bangladeshi teenager living in Queens who thinks he can charm his way through anything. But then mistakes catch up with him. So do the cops, who offer him an impossible choice: spy on his Muslim neighbors and report back to them on shady goings-on, or face a police record. Naeem wants to be a hero—a protector. He wants his parents to be proud of him. But as time goes on, the line between informing and entrapping blurs. Is he saving or betraying his community? Inspired by actual surveillance practices in New York City and elsewhere.

→ **Swagger by Carl Deuker** ** (and other titles by him) Excellent basketball action is tautly woven into a plot about teen-coach ethics. Jonas moves with his parents to a new state, just as he's about to enter his senior year in high school and with the promise of a possible college basketball scholarship hanging over his head—if he can keep his grades up and get enough varsity game time.

Tap Out by Eric Devine ** Seventeen-year-old Tony Antioch lives in Pleasant Meadows, a trailer park where questions aren't asked since everyone already knows the answers from their own experience. He dreams of rescuing his mother from her constant stream of abusive boyfriends but in reality can barely duck the punches that are aimed at himself. When Tony is coerced into joining his friend Rob's Mixed Martial Arts class, he is surprised to find that he has a talent that he actually wants to develop.

Bright Lights, Dark City by Stephen Emond (Illustrated) ** A story about first love, first fights, and finding yourself in a messed up world. Walter Wilcox has never been in love. That is, until he meets Naomi, and sparks, and clever jokes, fly. But when his cop dad is caught in a racial profiling scandal, Walter and Naomi, who is African American, are called out at school, home, and online. Can their bond (and mutual love of the Foo Fighters) keep them together?

See No Color by Shannon Gibney ** For as long as she can remember, sixteen-year-old Alex Kirtridge has known two things: 1. She has always been Little Kirtridge, a stellar baseball player, just like her father. 2. She's adopted. But now Alex is questioning who she really is. She's always dreamed of playing pro baseball just like her father, but can she really do it? Does she truly fit in with her white family? Who were her biological parents? What does it mean to be black? If she's going to find answers, Alex has to come to terms with her adoption, her race, and the dreams she thought would always guide her.

Teenie by Christopher Grant ** *High school freshman Martine (Teenie for short) is a good student, with a bright future ahead of her. She's desperate to be accepted into a prestigious study abroad program in Spain so that she can see what life is like beyond the streets of Brooklyn. She wouldn't mind escaping from her strict (though lovable) parents for awhile either. But when the captain of the basketball team starts to pay attention to her after she's pined away for him for months and Cherise, her best friend, meets a guy online, Teenie's mind is on anything but her schoolwork. Teenie's longtime crush isn't what he seemed to be, nor is her best friend's online love. Can Teenie get her act together in time to save her friendship with Cherise, save her grade point average so that she can study in Spain, and save herself from a potentially dangerous relationship?*

→ **Paper Towns by John Green **** *Quentin Jacobsen has spent a lifetime loving the magnificently adventurous Margo Roth Spiegelman from afar. So when she cracks open a window and climbs back into his life—dressed like a ninja and summoning him for an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows. After their all-nighter ends, and a new day breaks, Quentin arrives at school to discover that Margo, always an enigma, has now become a mystery. But Quentin soon learns that there are clues—and they're for him. Urged down a disconnected path, the closer he gets, the less Quentin sees the girl he thought he knew.*

Blank Confession by Pete Hautman ** *- Shayne Blank is the new kid in town—but that doesn't stop him from getting into a lot of trouble very quickly. The other kids don't understand him. He's not afraid of anything. He seems too smart. His background doesn't add up. And when he walks into the police department to confess to a murder, it quickly becomes apparent that nothing is as it seems.*

Saving Francesca by Melina Marchetta ** *Francesca is stuck at St. Sebastians, a boys' school that pretends it's coed by giving the girls their own bathroom. Her only female companions are an ultra-feminist, a rumored slut, and an an impossibly dorky accordion player. The boys are no better, from Thomas who specializes in musical burping to Will, the perpetually frowning, smug moron that Francesca can't seem to stop thinking about. Then there's Francesca's mother, who always thinks she knows what's best for Francesca—until she is suddenly stricken with acute depression, leaving Francesca lost, along, and without an inkling who she really is. Simultaneously humorous, poignant, and impossible to put down, this is the story of a girl who must summon the strength to save her family, her social life and—hardest of all—herself.*

Dairy Queen (series) by Catherine Gilbert Murdock ** *D. J.'s family members don't talk much, especially about the fact that 15-year-old D. J. does all the heavy work on their Wisconsin dairy farm since her father broke his hip and her two older brothers left for college. Nor do they talk about why D. J.'s mom, a teacher, is so busy filling in for the middle-school principal that she's never home. And they never, ever discuss the reason why her brothers haven't called home for more than six months. So when D. J. decides to try out for the Red Bend football team, even though she's been secretly training (and falling for) Brian Nelson, the cute quarterback from Hawley, Red Bend's rival, she becomes the talk of the town. Suddenly, her family has quite a bit to say. This [is a] humorous, romantic romp.*

Dope Sick by Walter Dean Myers ** *A drug deal goes south and a cop has been shot. Lil J's on the run. And he's starting to get dope sick. He'd do anything to change the last twenty-four hours, and when he stumbles into an abandoned building, it actually might be possible. Elements of magical realism intensify this harrowing story about drug use, violence, perceptions of reality, and second chances.*

→ **Lockdown by Walter Dean Myers **** *When I first got to Progress, it freaked me out to be locked in a room and unable to get out. But after a while, when you got to thinking about it, you knew nobody could get in, either. It seems as if the only progress that's going on at Progress juvenile facility is moving from juvy jail to real jail. Reese wants out early, but is he supposed to just sit back and let his friend Toon get jumped? Then Reese gets a second chance when he's picked for the work program at a senior citizens' home. He doesn't mean to keep messing up, but it's not so easy, at Progress or in life.*

Sunrise over Fallujah by Walter Dean Myers ** Robin "Birdy" Perry, a new army recruit from Harlem, isn't quite sure why he joined the army, but he's sure where he's headed: Iraq. Birdy and the others in the Civilian Affairs Battalion are supposed to help secure and stabilize the country and successfully interact with the Iraqi people. Officially, the code name for their maneuvers is Operation Iraqi Freedom. But the young men and women in the CA unit have a simpler name for it: WAR.

→ **Keeper by Mal Peet** ** When Paul Faustino of LA NACION flips on his tape recorder for an exclusive interview with El Gato — the phenomenal goalkeeper who single-handedly brought his team the World Cup — the seasoned reporter quickly learns that this will be no ordinary story. Instead, the legendary El Gato narrates a spellbinding tale that begins in the South American rainforest, where a ghostly but very real mentor, the Keeper, emerges to teach a poor, gawky boy the most thrilling secrets of the game.

The Boy in the Black Suit by Jason Reynolds ** Matt wears a black suit every day. No, not because his mom died—although she did, and it sucks. But he wears the suit for his gig at the local funeral home, which pays way better than the Cluck Bucket, and he needs the income since his dad can't handle the bills (or anything, really) on his own. So while Dad's snagging bottles of whiskey, Matt's snagging fifteen bucks an hour. Not bad. But everything else? Not good. Just when seventeen-year-old Matt thinks he can't handle one more piece of terrible news, he meets a girl who's dealt with a lot more—and who just might be able to clue him in on how to rise up when life keeps knocking him down.

→ **Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds** ** (written in VERSE) An ode to Put the Damn Guns Down, this is National Book Award finalist and New York Times bestseller Jason Reynolds's fiercely stunning novel that takes place in sixty potent seconds—the time it takes a kid to decide whether or not he's going to murder the guy who killed his brother.

When I Was the Greatest by Jason Reynolds ** "A lot of the stuff that gives my neighborhood a bad name, I don't really mess with. The guns and drugs and all that, not really my thing." Nah, not his thing. Ali's got enough going on, between school and boxing and helping out at home. His best friend Noodles, though. Now there's a dude looking for trouble—and, somehow, it's always Ali around to pick up the pieces. But, hey, a guy's gotta look out for his boys, right? Besides, it's all small potatoes; it's not like anyone's getting hurt. And then there's Needles. Needles is Noodles's brother. He's got a syndrome, and gets these ticks and blurts out the wildest, craziest things. It's cool, though: everyone on their street knows he doesn't mean anything by it. In Bed Stuy, New York, a small misunderstanding can escalate into having a price on your head—even if you're totally clean.

→ **Dear Martin by Nic Stone** ** Justyce McAllister is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend—but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Despite leaving his rough neighborhood behind, he can't escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates. Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out. Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up—way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. Justyce and Manny are caught in the crosshairs. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.

The Last Summer of the Death Warriors by Francisco Stork ** When Pancho arrives at St. Anthony's Home, he knows his time there will be short: If his plans succeed, he'll soon be arrested for the murder of his sister's killer. But then he's assigned to help D.Q., whose brain cancer has slowed neither his spirit nor his mouth. D.Q. tells Pancho all about his "Death Warrior's Manifesto," which will help him to live out his last days fully--ideally, he says, with the love of the beautiful Marisol. As Pancho tracks down his sister's murderer, he finds himself falling under the influence of D.Q. and Marisol, who is everything D.Q. said she would be; and he is inexorably drawn to a decision: to honor his sister and her death, or embrace the way of the Death Warrior and choose life.

→ **On the Come Up (and other titles) by Angie Thomas **** *Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. Or at least win her first battle. As the daughter of an underground hip hop legend who died right before he hit big, Bri's got massive shoes to fill. But it's hard to get your come up when you're labeled a hoodlum at school, and your fridge at home is empty after your mom loses her job. So Bri pours her anger and frustration into her first song, which goes viral...for all the wrong reasons. This is the story of fighting for your dreams, even as the odds are stacked against you; and about how, especially for young black people, freedom of speech isn't always free.*

Juvie by Steve Watkins ** *Sadie Windas has always been the responsible one. Not like her older sister, Carla, who leaves her three-year-old daughter, Lulu, with Aunt Sadie while she parties and gets high. But when both sisters are caught up in a drug deal — wrong place, wrong time — it falls to Sadie to confess to a crime she didn't commit to keep Carla out of jail and Lulu out of foster care. Sadie is supposed to get off with a slap on the wrist, but somehow, impossibly, gets sentenced to six months in juvie. As life as Sadie knew it disappears beyond the stark bars of her cell, her anger fills the empty space left behind. Can Sadie forgive Carla for getting her mixed up in this mess and survive her time in juvie with her spirit intact?*

The Fill-in Boyfriend (and other titles) by Kasie West ** *When Gia Montgomery's boyfriend, Bradley, dumps her in the parking lot of her high school prom, she decides to do the unthinkable...convince the cute guy waiting to pick up his sister to pretend to be her boyfriend for the night. The task is simple: two hours, zero commitment, a few white lies. The problem is that days after prom, she can't stop thinking about her fill-in boyfriend. But can Gia turn her fake boyfriend into a real one without exposing her lie and possibly destroying her friendships and her newfound relationship?*

Make Lemonade by Virginia Euwer Wolff ** (written in VERSE) *Virginia Euwer Wolff's groundbreaking novel, written in free verse, tells the story of fourteen-year-old LaVaughn, who is determined to go to college--she just needs the money to get there. When she answers a babysitting ad, LaVaughn meets Jolly, a seventeen-year-old single mother with two kids by different fathers. As she helps Jolly make lemonade out of the lemons her life has given her, LaVaughn learns some lessons outside the classroom.*

→ **He Said, She Said by Kwame Alexander ***** *Sparks will fly in this hip-hop-hot teen novel that mixes social protest and star-crossed romance He says: Omar "T-Diddy" Smalls has got it made—a full football ride to UMiami, hero-worship status at school, and pick of any girl at West Charleston High. She says: Football, shmootball. Here's what Claudia Clarke cares about: Harvard, the poor, the disenfranchised, the hungry, the staggering teen pregnancy rate, investigative journalism . . . the list goes on. She does not have a minute to waste on Mr. T-Diddy Smalls and his harem of bimbos. These two high school seniors together unexpectedly end up leading the biggest social protest this side of the Mississippi—with a lot of help from Facebook and Twitter. The stakes are high, the romance is hot, and when these worlds collide, watch out!*

→ **The Fault in our Stars by John Green ***** *At 16, Hazel Grace Lancaster, a three-year stage IV—cancer survivor, is clinically depressed. To help her deal with this, her doctor sends her to a weekly support group where she meets Augustus Waters, a fellow cancer survivor, and the two fall in love. Both kids are preternaturally intelligent, and Hazel is fascinated with a novel about cancer called *An Imperial Affliction*. Most particularly, she longs to know what happened to its characters after an ambiguous ending. To find out, the enterprising Augustus makes it possible for them to travel to Amsterdam, where *Imperial's* author, an expatriate American, lives. What happens when they meet him must be left to readers to discover. Suffice it to say, it is significant. Beautifully conceived and executed, this story artfully examines the largest possible considerations—life, love, and death—with sensitivity, intelligence, honesty, and integrity. In the process, Green shows his readers what it is like to live with cancer, sometimes no more than a breath or a heartbeat away from death. But it is life that Green spiritedly celebrates here, even while acknowledging its pain. In its every aspect, this novel is a triumph.*

→ **Turtles All the Way Down by John Green ***** *Sixteen-year-old Aza never intended to pursue the mystery of fugitive billionaire Russell Pickett, but there's a hundred-thousand-dollar reward at stake and her Best and Most Fearless Friend, Daisy, is eager to investigate. So together, they navigate the short distance and broad divides that separate them from Russell Pickett's son, Davis. Aza is trying. She is trying to be a good daughter, a good friend, a good student, and maybe even a good detective, while also living within the ever-tightening spiral of her own thoughts.*

How It Went Down by Kekla Magoon *** *When sixteen-year-old Tariq Johnson dies from two gunshot wounds, his community is thrown into an uproar. Tariq was black. The shooter, Jack Franklin, is white. In the aftermath of Tariq's death, everyone has something to say, but no two accounts of the events line up. Day by day, new twists further obscure the truth. Tariq's friends, family, and community struggle to make sense of the tragedy, and to cope with the hole left behind when a life is cut short. In their own words, they grapple for a way to say with certainty: This is how it went down.*

→ **Monster by Walter Dean Myers ***** *"Monster" is what the prosecutor called 16-year-old Steve Harmon for his supposed role in the fatal shooting of a convenience-store owner. But was Steve really the lookout who gave the "all clear" to the murderer, or was he just in the wrong place at the wrong time? In this innovative novel by Walter Dean Myers, the reader becomes both juror and witness during the trial of Steve's life. To calm his nerves as he sits in the courtroom, aspiring filmmaker Steve chronicles the proceedings in movie script format. Interspersed throughout his screenplay are journal writings that provide insight into Steve's life before the murder and his feelings about being held in prison during the trial. "They take away your shoelaces and your belt so you can't kill yourself no matter how bad it is. I guess making you live is part of the punishment."*

Black Enough: Stories of Being Young and Black in America by Ibi Zoloi *** *Black Enough is an essential collection of captivating stories about what it's like to be young and Black in America. Featuring some of the most acclaimed bestselling Black authors writing for teens today.*