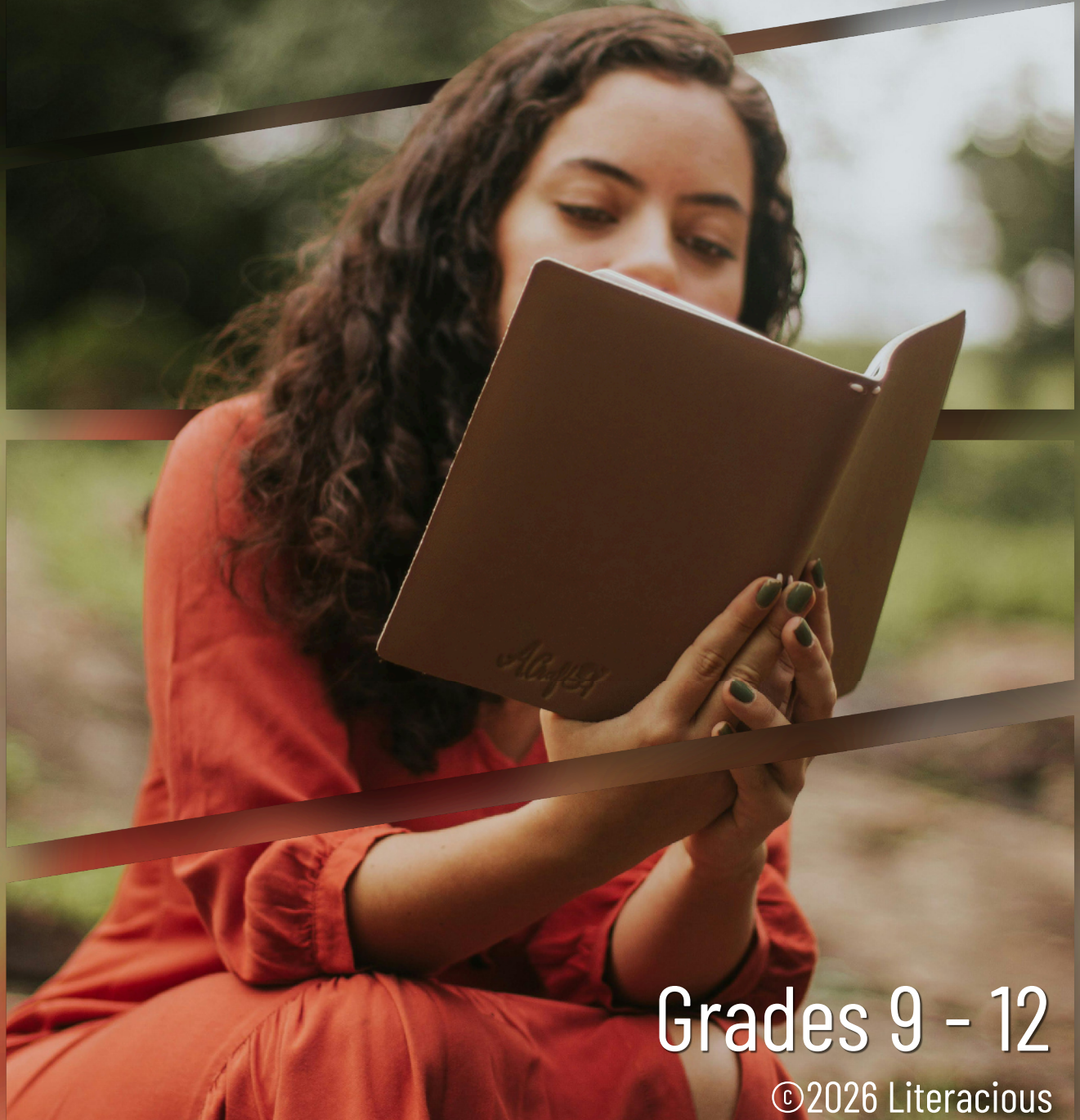


Summer Reading Guide



Grades 9 - 12

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Bear Reader.

If you love to read, but find it difficult to pick up a book for fun during the school year, take advantage of the next few months to find something that you want to read with no strings attached - no homework, no response to the chapter, no pop quizzes, and no tests. Read what you want, when you want. And if it takes you all summer to read a book, that's okay. It's also okay to inhale books as fast as you can while the time allows. Find what works for you.

I've pulled some titles that have been published over the past few years from a variety of formats and genres and I hope you find something that works. If not, don't hesitate to stop by your local library or independent bookstore, or BookTok or Bookstagram to find something! If you're finding it difficult to sit down and read a novel, try an audiobook or a graphic novel instead. If you keep picking your phone up to scroll instead of read, why not try downloading a digital book (check out your local library for access to free titles!).

However you choose to read this summer, I hope you find some amazing books that speak to you!

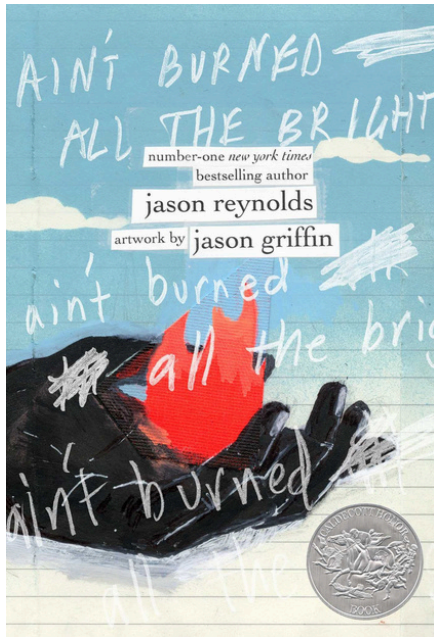
Happy Reading,

Laura

This summer reading guide contains affiliate links, meaning I'll receive a commission if you purchase through my links, at no extra cost. Please read the [full disclosure](#) for more information.

Different Formats

Looking for a book with an interesting format like audio, novel in verse, and more? Check out these!



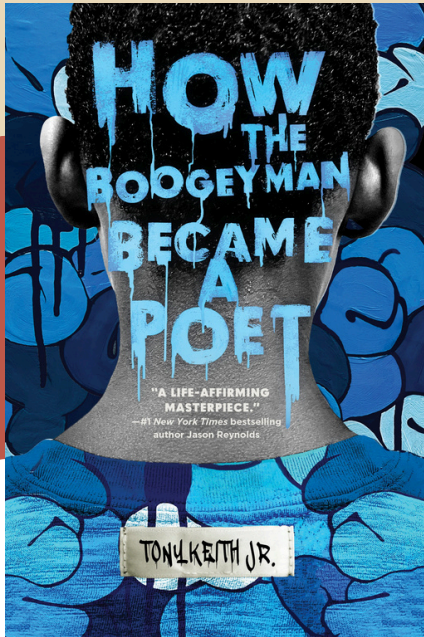
Ain't Burned All the Bright by Jason Reynolds and Jason Griffin

Jason Reynolds and his best bud, Jason Griffin, had a mind-meld. And they decided to tackle it, in one fell swoop, in about ten sentences, and 300 pages of art, this piece, this contemplation-manifesto-fierce-vulnerable-gorgeous-terrifying-WhatIsWrongWithHumans-hope-filled-hopeful-searing-Eye-Poppingly-Illustrated-tender-heartbreaking-how-The-HECK-did-They-Come-UP-with-This project about oxygen. And all of the symbolism attached to that word, especially NOW.



Home Is Not a Country by Safia Elhillo

Nima wishes she were someone else. She doesn't feel understood by her mother, who grew up in a different land. She doesn't feel accepted in her suburban town; yet somehow, she isn't different enough to belong elsewhere. Her best friend, Haitham, is the only person with whom she can truly be herself. Until she can't, and suddenly her only refuge is gone. As the ground is pulled out from under her, Nima must grapple with the phantom of a life not chosen—the name her parents meant to give her at birth—Yasmeen. But that other name, that other girl, might be more real than Nima knows. And the life Nima wishes were someone else's. . . is one she will need to fight for with a fierceness she never knew she possessed.



How the Boogeyman Became a Poet by Tony Keith Jr.

Tony dreams about life after high school, where his poetic voice can find freedom on the stage and page. But the Boogeyman has been following Tony since he was six years old. First, the Boogeyman was after his Blackness, but Tony has learned It knows more than that: Tony wants to be the first in his family to attend college, but there's no path to follow. He also has feelings for boys, desires that don't align with the script he thinks is set for him and his girlfriend, Blu.

Despite a supportive network of family and friends, Tony doesn't breathe a word to anyone about his feelings. As he grapples with his sexuality and moves from high school to college, he struggles with loneliness while finding solace in gay chat rooms and writing poetry.



Lunar New Year Love Story by Gene Luen Yang and LeUyen Pham

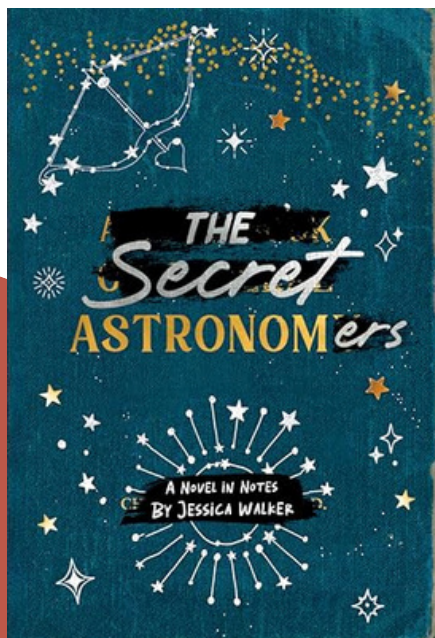
Val is ready to give up on love. It's led to nothing but secrets and heartbreak, and she's pretty sure she's cursed—no one in her family, for generations, has ever had any luck with love.

But then a chance encounter with a pair of cute lion dancers sparks something in Val. Is it real love? Could this be her chance to break the family curse? Or is she destined to live with a broken heart forever?

The Secret Astronomers by Jessica Walker

When a recent transfer student starts keeping her diary in the oldest textbook at the Green Bank High School library, the last thing she expects is to receive a response. Thus begins a sweeping tale of unlikely friendship and long-buried secrets between two secret pen pals at a rural West Virginia high school.

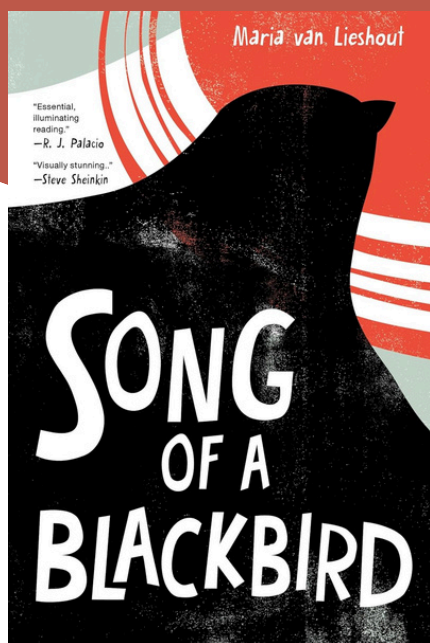
Copernicus is adrift and searching for answers after the sudden death of her mother, and leaving her cosmopolitan life in San Francisco behind. Kepler is a small-town girl with straight A's and big plans to be the first person in her family to go to college, despite her family's modest means. The two girls are so different from one another but united in their goal to solve a mystery that has riddled Green Bank for decades.



Song of a Blackbird by Maria van Lieshout

In 1943 Amsterdam, Emma Bergsma's world changes when she witnesses Jewish families being forcibly deported to concentration camps. That pivotal moment lights a fire within her, and she decides to join the Dutch Resistance. Before long, Emma is drawn into a clandestine world of printing presses and counterfeiters, with thousands of lives on the line.

In 2011 Amsterdam, teenage Annick's world has changed as well. A search for a bone marrow donor for her beloved oma leads to a shocking revelation: her grandmother was secretly adopted as a child. The only clues to finding their lost family are a series of art prints hanging on the wall—each signed by a mysterious "Emma B."

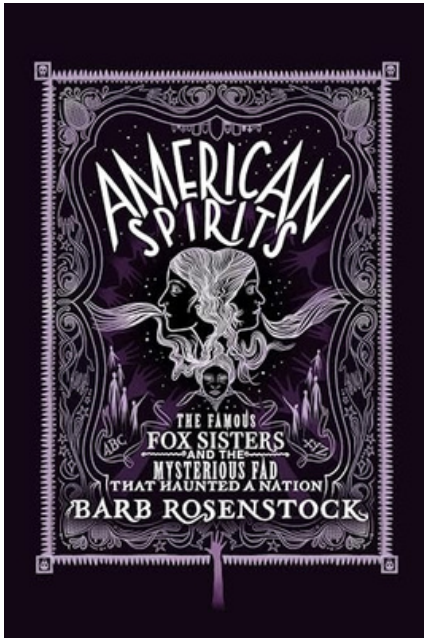


Narrative Nonfiction

Learn something new with these books about fascinating subjects written in an appealing format.

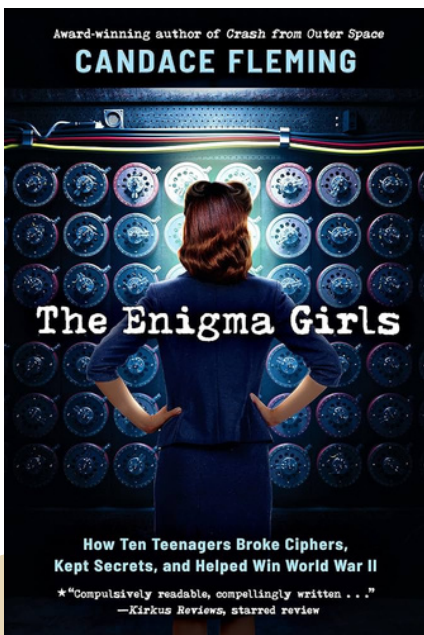
American Spirits: The Famous Fox Sisters and the Mysterious Fad that Haunted a Nation by Barb Rosenstock

Rap. Rap. Rap. The eerie sound was first heard in March of 1848 at the home of the Fox family in Hydesville, New York. The family's two daughters, Kate and Maggie, soon discovered that they could communicate with the spirit that was making these uncanny noises; he told them he had been a traveling peddler who had been murdered. This strange incident, and the ones that followed, generated a media frenzy beyond anything the Fox sisters could have imagined. Kate and Maggie, managed (or perhaps manipulated) by their elder sister Leah, became famous spirit mediums, giving public exhibitions, and advising other celebrities of their day. But were the Fox sisters legitimate?



The Enigma Girls: How Ten Teenagers Broke Ciphers, Kept Secrets, and Helped Win World War II by Candace Fleming

"You are to report to Station X at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, in four days time....That is all you need to know." This was the terse telegram hundreds of young women throughout the British Isles received in the spring of 1941, as World War II raged. As they arrived at Station X, a sprawling mansion in a state of disrepair surrounded by Spartan-looking huts with little chimneys coughing out thick smoke—these young people had no idea what kind of work they were stepping into. Who had recommended them? Why had they been chosen? Most would never learn all the answers to these questions.



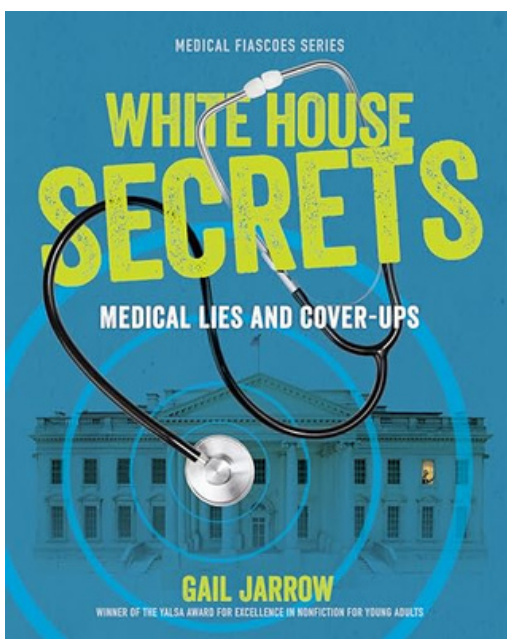
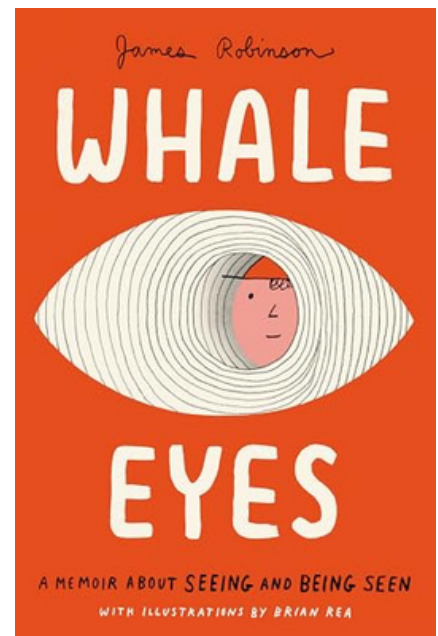


Impossible Escape: A True Story of Survival and Heroism in Nazi Europe by Steve Sheinkin

It is 1944. A teenager named Rudolf (Rudi) Vrba has made up his mind. After barely surviving nearly two years in the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, he knows he must escape. Even if death is more likely. Rudi has learned the terrible secret hidden behind the heavily guarded fences of concentration camps across Nazi-occupied Europe: the methodical mass killing of Jewish prisoners. As trains full of people arrive daily, Rudi knows that the murders won't stop until he reveals the truth to the world—and that each day that passes means more lives are lost.

Whale Eyes: A Memoir About Seeing and Being Seen by James Robinson

Told through an experimental mix of intimate anecdotes and interactive visuals, this book immerses readers in James's experiences growing up with strabismus, allowing them to see the world through one eye at a time. Readers will get lost as they chase words. They'll stare into this book while taking a vision test. They'll hold it upside down as they practice "pretend-reading"...and they'll follow an unlikely trail toward discovering the power of words.

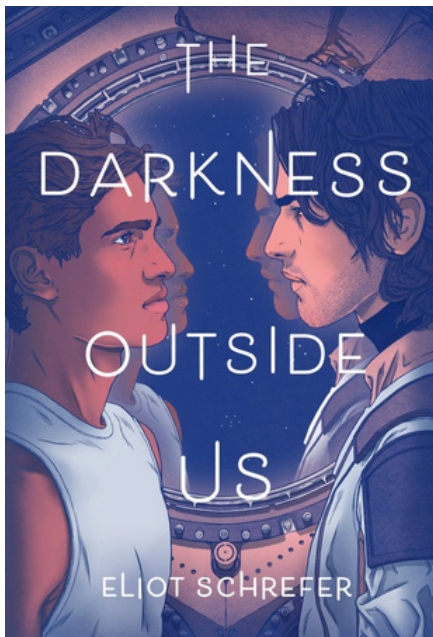


White House Secrets: Medical Lies and Cover-Ups by Gail Jarrow

Did you know President Woodrow Wilson suffered a paralyzing stroke that his wife and doctors concealed for months? Or that Mrs. Wilson took total charge of his presidential duties? Neither did the American public. Did you know President John F. Kennedy suffered from Addison's disease and was heavily medicated for years? Neither did most people. Too often when a president is sick or dying, he and the people around him have hidden his condition from the public, wanting to project an image of strength and power.

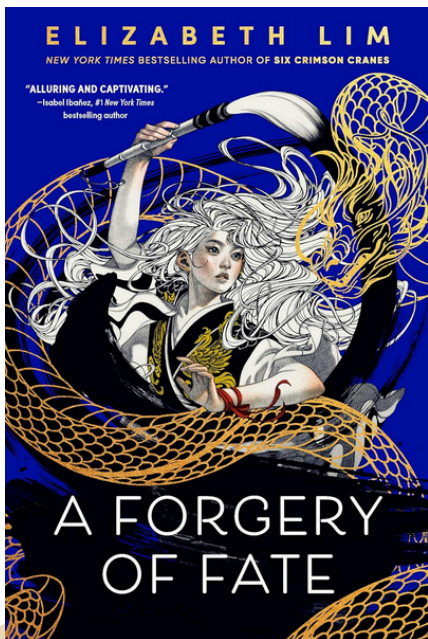
Fantasy & Science Fiction

Whether you're looking for magic or scientific advancement, you'll find something to love with these titles.



The Darkness Outside Us by Eliot Schrefer

Two boys, alone in space. Sworn enemies sent on the same rescue mission. Ambrose wakes up on the Coordinated Endeavor with no memory of a launch. There's more that doesn't add up: evidence indicates strangers have been on board, the ship's operating system is voiced by his mother, and his handsome, brooding shipmate has barricaded himself away. But nothing will stop Ambrose from making his mission succeed—not when he's rescuing his own sister. In order to survive the ship's secrets, Ambrose and Kodiak will need to work together and learn to trust each other . . . especially once they discover what they are truly up against. Love might be the only way to survive.



A Forgery of Fate by Elizabeth Lim

Truyan Saigas didn't choose to become a con artist, but after her father is lost at sea, it's up to her to support her mother and two younger sisters. A gifted art forger, Tru has the unique ability to paint the future, but even such magic is not enough to put her family back together again, or stave off the gangsters demanding payment in blood for her mother's gambling debts. Left with few options, Tru agrees to a marriage contract with a mysterious dragon lord. He offers a fresh start for her mother and sisters and elusive answers about her father's disappearance, but in exchange, she must join him in his desolate undersea palace. And she must assist him in a plot to infiltrate the tyrannical Dragon King's inner circle...

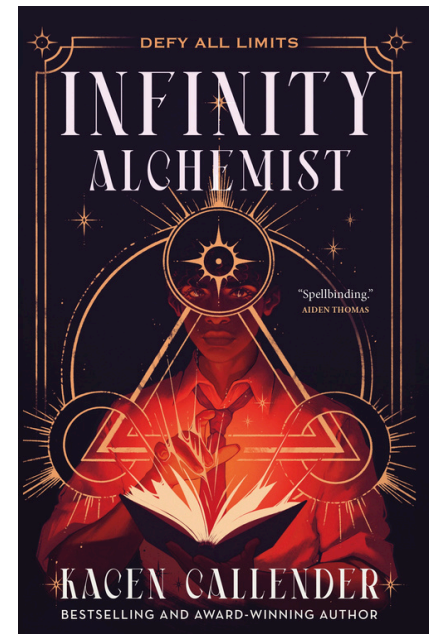


Heir by Sabaa Tahir

Growing up in the Kegari slums, AIZ has seen her share of suffering. An old tragedy fuels her need for vengeance, but it is love of her people that propels her. Banished from her people for an unforgivable crime, SIRSHA is a down-on-her-luck tracker who uses magic to trace her marks. QUIL is the crown prince of the Empire and nephew of a venerated empress, but he's loath to take the throne when his aunt steps down. Beloved storyteller Sabaa Tahir interweaves the lives of three young people as they grapple with power, treachery, love, and the devastating consequences of unchecked greed, on a journey that may cost them their lives—and their hearts. Literally.

Infinity Alchemist by Kacen Callender

Only an elite few are legally permitted to study the science of magic—so when Ash is rejected by Lancaster College of Alchemic Science, he takes a job as the school's groundskeeper instead, forced to learn alchemy in secret. When he's discovered by the condescending and brilliant apprentice Ramsay Thorne, Ash is sure he's about to be arrested—but instead of calling the reds, Ramsay surprises Ash by making him an offer: Ramsay will keep Ash's secret if he helps her find the legendary Book of Source, a sacred text that gives its reader extraordinary power.

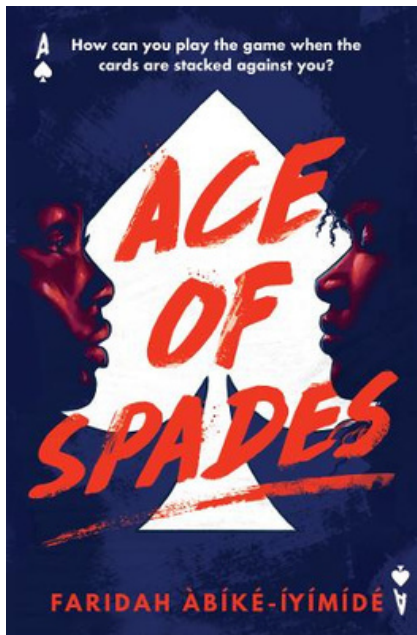


The Last Bookstore On Earth by Lily Braun-Arnold

The world is about to end. Again. Ever since the first Storm wreaked havoc on civilization as we know it, seventeen-year-old Liz Flannery has been holed up in an abandoned bookstore in suburban New Jersey where she used to work, trading books for supplies with the few remaining survivors. It's the one place left that feels safe to her. Until she learns that another earth-shattering Storm is coming . . . and everything changes.

Thriller

Looking for a suspenseful read that keeps you turning the page? Check out these thrillers!



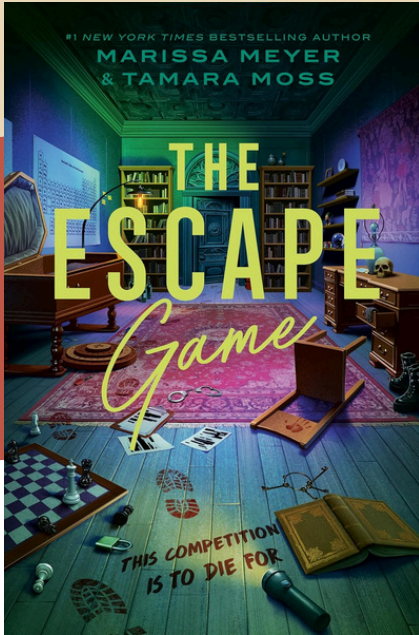
Ace of Spades by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé

When two Niveus Private Academy students, Devon Richards and Chiamaka Adebayo, are selected to be part of the elite school's senior class prefects, it looks like their year is off to an amazing start. After all, not only does it look great on college applications, but it officially puts each of them in the running for valedictorian, too. Shortly after the announcement is made, though, someone who goes by Aces begins using anonymous text messages to reveal secrets about the two of them that turn their lives upside down and threaten every aspect of their carefully planned futures.



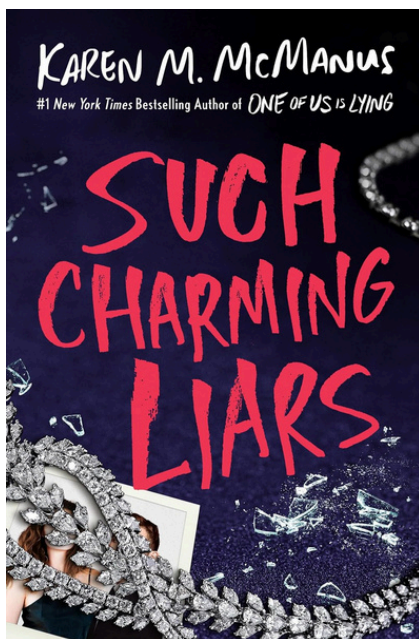
Burn Down, Rise Up by Vincent Tirado

For over a year, the Bronx has been plagued by sudden disappearances that no one can explain. Sixteen-year-old Raquel does her best to ignore it. After all, the police only look for the white kids. But when her crush Charlize's cousin goes missing, Raquel starts to pay attention—especially when her own mom comes down with a mysterious illness that seems linked to the disappearances. Raquel and Charlize team up to investigate, but they soon discover that everything is tied to a terrifying urban legend called the Echo Game. And if the friends want to save their home and everyone they love, they will have to play the game and destroy the evil at its heart—or die trying.



The Escape Game by Marissa Meyer & Tamara Moss

Six months ago, season four of *The Escape Game* ended in horror when contestant Alicia Angelos was found murdered on set. Now season five is underway, and new contestants are ready to put their skills to the test solving the show's trickiest escape rooms. There's Adi, the cryptographer; Carter, the math whiz; Beck, the wannabe game master; and . . . Sierra Angelos, the girl who got away with her sister's murder. Or so everyone believes. But Sierra's not just here to win. She's here for justice. When the contestants begin uncovering clues that hint at the identity of Alicia's true killer, it becomes clear that the stakes aren't high just in this competition—they're deadly.



Such Charming Liars by Karen M. McManus

When mother-daughter grifters set out on their final job, the heist turns deadly—and dangerously personal—in this twisty thriller!



Looking for Smoke by K. A. Cobell

K. A. Cobell weaves loss, betrayal, and complex characters into a thriller that will illuminate, surprise, and engage readers until the final word.

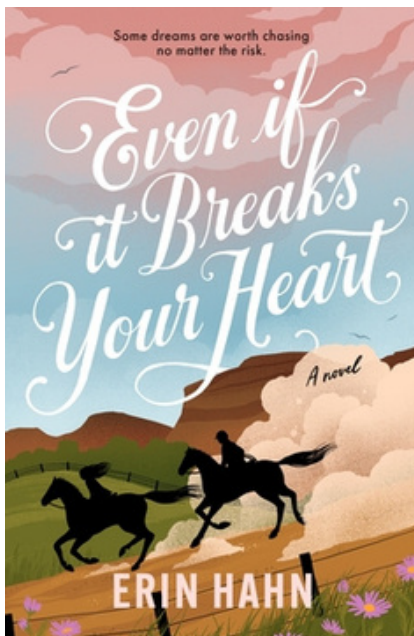
Can't-Miss Titles

These are can't-miss titles that you've got to add to your "to be read" list right away!



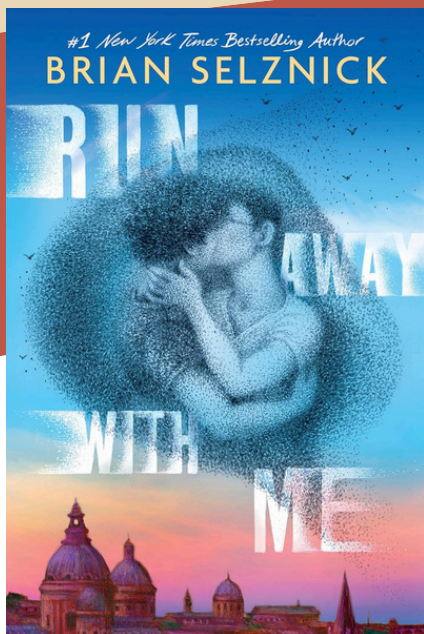
Aisle Nine by Ian X. Cho

Even though the world is filled with portals to hell and bloodthirsty demons pop out of them on the reg, Jasper spends his days and nights working as a check-out clerk at the Here For You discount mart. Sure, there's even a hell portal in aisle nine, which means he could be maimed, dismembered, or even eaten whole during every shift, but at least at the mart he can be near his crush, Kyle Kuan. That she doesn't seem to even notice that he exists seems about right to Jasper, because Jasper can't remember anything that happened to him before his accident five months ago, either.



Even If It Breaks Your Heart by Erin Hahn

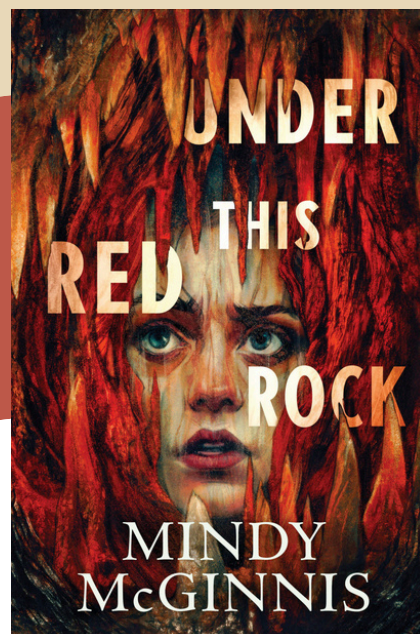
The only thing keeping nineteen-year-old Case Michaels together after the death of his best friend, Walker, is a list Walker left behind of things he wants Case to accomplish in his absence. So far, though, Case hasn't even been able to continue riding bulls in the rodeo circuit, something he's done his entire life, balking at the thought of competing without Walker by his side. But the list? Case is determined to follow it to the letter— and he follows it all the way to Winnie Sutton. Eighteen-year-old Winnie Sutton just wants to keep her family together. She graduated high school early to work long shifts at the Michaels family ranch so she can support her younger siblings. Until the day she crashes headfirst into Case Michaels. Case sees her riding skills and immediately ropes her into competing for the ranch and becoming his friend.



Run Away With Me by Brian Selznick

Danny is spending his sixteenth summer in Rome. As his mother spends the day at work in a mysterious museum, he wanders the ancient sites and streets. Soon after his arrival, he encounters a shadow... who becomes a voice... who becomes a boy his age. Angelo.

Soon Danny and Angelo are spending as much time as they can together, piecing together stories of the city while only gradually letting their own histories be shared. Attraction leads to affection, and affection leads to both an intimate closeness and a profound fear of what happens next. Danny has never really had a home, or known the love of another boy. Angelo seems to have more experience... but he also has secrets just out of Danny's reach.



Under This Red Rock by Mindy McGinnis

Neely's monsters don't always follow her rules, so when the little girl under her bed, the man in her closet, and the disembodied voice that shadows her every move become louder, she knows she's in trouble. With a history of mental illness in her family and the suicide of her older brother heavy on her mind, Neely takes a job as a tour guide in the one place her monsters can't follow—the caverns. There . . . she meets Mila. Mila is everything Neely isn't—beautiful, strong, and confident. As the two become closer, Neely's innocent crush grows into something more. When a midnight staff party exposes Neely to drugs, she follows Mila's lead... only to have her hallucinations escalate. When Mila is found brutally murdered in the caverns, Neely has to admit that her memories of that night are vague at best. With her monsters now out in the open and her grip on reality slipping, Neely must figure out who killed Mila . . . and face the possibility that it might have been her.

PRINTABLE 9TH - 12TH GRADE SUMMER READING LIST

Different Formats

- *Ain't Burned All the Bright* by Jason Reynolds and Jason Griffin
- *Home Is Not a Country* by Safia Elhillo
- *How the Boogeyman Became a Poet* by Tony Keith Jr.
- *Lunar New Year Love Story* by Gene Luen Yang and LeUyen Pham
- *The Secret Astronomers* by Jessica Walker
- *Song of a Blackbird* by Maria van Lieshout

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