

1998 Best Books for Young Adults

This annual list of books compiled by a committee of the Young Adult Library Services Association consists of fiction and nonfiction appropriate for young adults ages twelve to eighteen. Selected on the basis of each book's proven or potential appeal and value to young adults, the titles, published from late 1996 through 1997, span a variety of subjects as well as a broad range of reading levels.

Nonfiction

Appelt, Kathi. *Just People and Other Poems for Young Readers & Pen/Pen/Poem: A Young Writer's Way to Begin.* illus. Absey, 5706 Root Rd., Ste. #5, Spring, TX 77389, \$11.95 (1-888842-07-5).

Want to write your own original poetry? These poems and commentaries on them can help you get started.

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Growing Up in Coal Country.* Houghton, \$15.95 (0-395-77847-6).

The harsh life of immigrant workers in the Pennsylvania coal mines is vividly brought to life in this haunting photo-essay.

Bernstein, Sara Tuvel. *The Seamstress.* Putnam, \$24.95 (0-399-14322-X).

A powerful and engrossing story of twelve-year-old Seren Tuvel's lifesaving decision to walk out of her classroom in war-torn Romania and into a new life.

Bitton-Jackson, Livia. *I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust.* Simon & Schuster, \$17 (0-689-81022-9).

Thirteen when she and her family were sent to Auschwitz, Bitton-Jackson vividly describes the horrors they faced.

Buck, Rinker. *Flight of Passage.* Hyperion; dist. by Little, Brown, \$23.95 (0-7868-6100-2).

In this true coming-of-age adventure, two teenage brothers pilot a Piper Cub from New York to San Diego.

Chadwick, Douglas and Sartore, Joel. *The Company We Keep: America's Endangered Species.* National Geographic Society, \$27.50 (0-7922-3310-7).

The world's endangered and threatened plants and animals are featured in stunning photographs and fascinating text.

Chang, Pang-Mei Natasha. *Bound Feet & Western Dress.* Doubleday, \$22.95 (0-385-47963-8).

This engrossing memoir, based on the life of the author's Chinese aunt, as told to the author during her own search for identity, is a tale of survival and struggle amid a sea of tradition.

Corbett, Sara. *Venus to the Hoop.* Doubleday, \$23.95 (0-385-548682-0).

An exciting account of the extraordinary young American athletes who won basketball gold at the Atlanta Olympics.

Del Cazo, Nick and others. *The Triumphant Spirit: Portraits & Stories of Holocaust Survivors . . . Their Messages of Hope & Compassion.* Triumphant Spirit, P.O. Box 19129, Denver, CO 80219, \$45 (0-9655260-0-3); paper, \$29.95 (0-9655260-1-1).

Current photographs of Holocaust survivors, who have not only survived but have also thrived, accompany brief sketches of their lives from Hitler's ghettos and camps to today.

Dyer, Daniel. *Jack London: A Biography*. Scholastic, \$17.95 (0-590-22216-3).

This exciting portrait of the author of *The Call of the Wild* focuses on London's true-life adventures riding the rails, dogsledding during the Yukon gold rush, and sailing the South Seas.

Elders, Joycelyn and Chanoff, David. *Joycelyn Elders, M.D.: From Sharecropper's Daughter to Surgeon General of the United States of America*. Morrow, \$25.95 (0-688-14722-4).

Overcoming poverty and prejudice in a small farm town in Arkansas, Elders succeeds in becoming a dedicated doctor, advocating for the poor, and serving as a controversial U.S. Surgeon General.

Fogle, Bruce. *Encyclopedia of the Cat*. DK, \$34.47 (0-7894-1970-X).

This complete and colorful guide to the history, lore, and literature of cats includes lots of photos as well as tips on cat care.

Fradin, Dennis B. *Planet Hunters: The Search for Other Worlds*. Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry, \$19.95 (0-689-81323-6).

Are we alone in space? Explore the universe with those who have sought answers and contact since A.D. 100.

Giblin, James Cross. *Charles A. Lindbergh: A Human Hero*. illus. Clarion, \$20 (0-395-63389-3).

Lucky Lindy became an American hero when he made the first nonstop transatlantic flight, but he fell into disgrace after being accused of sympathizing with the Nazis.

Glenn, Mel. *Jump Ball: A Basketball Season in Poems*. Dutton/Lodestar, \$15.99 (0-525-67554-X).

The rhythm of basketball permeates a series of poems that tell the story of the Tower High School team's winning season.

Glenn, Mel. *The Taking of Room 114*. Dutton/Lodestar, \$16.99 (0-525-67548-5).

First-person narrative poems focus on the last day of high school, when a distraught history teacher holds his seniors hostage.

The Human Mind Explained: An Owner's Guide to the Mysteries of the Mind. Ed. by Susan Greenfield. Holt, \$40 (0-8050-4499-X).

The ultimate handbook of the brain. Full-color graphics and clear explanations bring within reach an understanding of the most complex human system.

Imaginary Animals. Ed. by Charles Sullivan. illus. Abrams, \$22.95 (0-312-86239-3).

Meet talking cats, purple cows, "long-legety" beasties, wicked dragons, and other fantastic creatures in this beautifully illustrated book of incredible poetry.

In a Sacred Manner I Live: Native American Wisdom. Ed. by Neil Philip. illus. Clarion, \$20 (0-395-84981-0).

Prayers, poems, essays, and photographs portray the deep spirituality of Native American life in this visually handsome volume

Jiang, Ji-li. *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*. HarperCollins, \$14.85 (0-06-027585-5); lib. ed., \$14.89 (0-06-027586-3).

Ji-li Jiang's quiet, prosperous way of life is destroyed during the turmoil and tragedy of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*. Villard, \$24 (0-679-45752-6).

Courage, cowardice, foolishness, and high adventure marked the 1996 rival expeditions' efforts to reach the summit of Everest when everything went terribly wrong.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Harlem*. Illus. by Christopher Myers. Scholastic, \$16.95 (0-590-54340-7).

The sights and sounds of Harlem are vividly portrayed in this striking volume of colorful illustrations and melodious verse.

Poetry after Lunch: Poems to Read Aloud. Ed. by Joyce Armstrong Carroll and Edward E. Wilson. Absey, 5706 Root Rd., Ste. #5, Spring, TX 77389, \$17.95 (1-888842-03-2).

This collection of poems offers attractive entries, some appealing to the eye, others to the ear, for pleasure reading aloud after lunch—or anytime.

Steger, Will and Bowermaster, Jon. *Over the Top of the World: Explorer Will Steger's Trek across the Arctic*. illus. Scholastic, \$17.95 (0-590-84860-7).

The account of Steger's breathtaking 1995 Arctic adventure includes dazzling photos and details of human and canine party members.

Tate, Sonsyrea. *Little X: Growing Up in the Nation of Islam*. Harper San Francisco, \$22 (0-06-251134-3).

Sonsyrea, who was raised in a Nation of Islam family, honestly describes life in the strict religious community.

Tillage, Leon Walter. *Leon's Story*. Illus. by Susan L. Roth. Farrar, \$14 (0-374-34379-9).

Tillage tells the story of his life as the son of a southern sharecropper, who was killed by the KKK, and of the changes brought about by the civil rights movement.

Fiction

Alexander, Lloyd. *The Iron Ring*. Dutton, \$16.99 (0-525-45597-3).

High adventure in a quest for honor, as young King Tamar loses everything in a dice game and enters a battle between good and evil while trying to resolve his debt.

Berg, Elizabeth. *Joy School*. Random, \$19 (0-679-44943-4).

Teenage Katie deals with the complexities of an unstable home when she falls in love with a young married man.

Bloor, Edward. *Tangerine*. Harcourt, \$17 (0-15-201246-X).

Is Tangerine, Florida, like the Bermuda Triangle? A sinkhole swallows the middle school, lightning strikes repeatedly, underground fires burn endlessly—and all newcomer Paul Fisher wants to do is play soccer, despite his thick glasses, his parents' indifference, and his evil brother.

Brooks, Martha. *Bone Dance*. Orchard, \$16.95 (0-531-30021-8); lib. ed., \$17.99 (0-531-33021-4).

When Alexandra inherits a log cabin in the wilderness from a father she never met, she goes there to make sense of their relationship—and meets Lonny.

Carter, Alden R. *Bull Catcher*. Scholastic, \$15.95 (0-590-50958-6).

"Bull" Larsen hopes to cap his high-school baseball career with a college scholarship and then a move to the pros, but, like his love life, Bull's baseball dreams don't turn out as expected.

Cook, Karen. *What Girls Learn*. Pantheon, \$23 (0-679-44828-4).

When two sister go with their divorced mother from their southern home to live with their mother's boyfriend in the North, he becomes their caretaker after their mother's death.

Cooney, Caroline B. *What Child Is This? A Christmas Story*. Delacorte, \$14.95 (0-385-32317-4).

Several teens discover the true meaning of Christmas.

Cormier, Robert. *Tenderness*. Delacorte, \$16.95 (0-385-32286-0).

Fifteen-year-old Lori loves eighteen-year-old serial killer Eric Poole.

Creech, Sharon. *Chasing Redbird*. HarperCollins, \$14.95 (0-06-026987-1); lib. ed., \$14.89 (0-06-026988-X).

Zinny, at odds with her siblings, escapes the chaos by restoring a historic trail and unearths fascinating information about her family.

De Lint, Charles. *Trader*. Tor; dist. by St. Martin's, \$24.95 (0-312-85847-7).

Max, a guitar maker, discovers he has lost his identity to another man and, determined to get it back, is drawn into a dream world, where spirits are not what they seem.

Deuker, Carl. *Painting the Black*. Houghton, \$14.96 (0-395-82848-1).

While catching for Josh during pitching practice, Ryan decides to try out for the team but finds himself in an ethical dilemma when he discovers his friend has a serious flaw.

Dorris, Michael. *The Window*. Hyperion; dist. by Little, Brown, \$14.95 (0-7868-0301-0).

After being moved from one foster home to another, eleven-year-old Rayona Taylor learns the importance of family when she's finally sent to live with relatives she doesn't know in Kentucky.

Draper, Sharon M. *Forged by Fire*. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, \$16 (0-689-80699-X).

Gerald, who has struggled his entire life to survive in spite of his drug-addicted mother, now must protect his sister from an abusive stepfather.

Fleischman, Paul. *Seedfolks*. Illus. by Judy Pedersen. HarperCollins/Joanna Cotler, \$13.95 (0-06-027471-9); lib. ed., \$13.89 (0-06-027472-7).

Urban neighbors splintered by race, economy, ethnicity, and age join hands in an empty lot to make a garden.

Griffin, Adele. *Sons of Liberty*. Hyperion; dist. by Little, Brown, \$14.95 (0-7868-0351-7); lib. ed., \$14.89 (0-7868-2292-9).

Thirteen-year-old Rock is torn about running away from his controlling father, but older brother Cliff sees flight as the only way to deal with those kooky, bizarre midnights working on the roof.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Leaving Fishers*. Simon & Schuster, \$17 (0-689-81125-X).

Dorry has just moved to Indianapolis and has no friends—until she joins a church group called Fishers of Men. Soon she is no longer making her own decisions.

Hayes, Daniel. *Flyers*. Simon & Schuster, \$16 (0-689-80372-9).

While shooting a horror film for a school project, Gabe and his friends see unusual sightings in their neighborhood that lead to more than a ghost.

Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*. Scholastic, \$15.95 (0-590-36080-9).

In a story told through simple, elegant poetry, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo fights to hold on to her dreams in the face of family tragedy and the crushing hardships of the dust-bowl years in Oklahoma.

Hogan, James P. *Bug Park*. Baen; dist. by Simon & Schuster, \$22 (0-671-87773-9).

Teenagers Kevin and Taki, who have created the interactive computer game Bug Park, must use the game and their impressive computer skills to save Kevin's father from a murder plot.

Howe, James. *The Watcher*. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, \$15 (0-689-80186-6).

A lonely, troubled girl lives in an elaborate fantasy world.

Kelton, Elmer. *Cloudy in the West*. Tor/Forge; dist. by St. Martin's, \$21.95 (0-312-86239-3). When twelve-year-old Joey flees his East Texas farm to escape the deadly intentions of his stepmother and her lover, he finds adventure and danger in the company of outlaws and his wastrel cousin.

Kerner, Elizabeth. *Song in the Silence*. Tor; dist. by St. Martin's, \$22.95 (0-312-85780-2).

Vibrant young Lanen Kaelar is compelled to leave the farm on which she was raised to seek out the awe-inspiring dragons that she's dreamed of since childhood.

Kindl, Patrice. *The Woman in the Wall*. Houghton, \$14.95 (0-395-83014-1).

Painfully and obsessively shy, Anna comes of age in a world of her own, which she builds within the walls of her family's Victorian house.

Klause, Annette Curtis. *Blood and Chocolate*. Delacorte, \$16.95 (0-385-32305-0).

Beautiful teenage werewolf Vivian falls in love with Aiden, a human—a meat-boy—and longs to share her secret with him.

Krisher, Trudy. *Kinship*. Delacorte, \$15.95 (0-385-32272-0).

Fifteen-year-old Pert longs for a permanently stable home, which she believes she will have if her absentee father returns. Then "Daddy" comes home.

Lantz, Francess. *Someone to Love*. Avon, \$14 (0-380-97477-0).

In letters to her soon-to-be-adopted sibling, Sara explains how, defying her parents, she becomes friends with the birth mother, Iris, and ruins everything.

Leaving Home. Ed. by Hazel Rochman and Darlene Z. McCampbell. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-06-024873-4); lib. ed., \$15.89 (0-06-024874-2).

Leaving whatever one considers home can cause many emotions, as experienced in this collection of short stories, poems, and essays.

Lee, Marie G. *Necessary Roughness*. HarperCollins, \$14.95 (0-06-025124-7); lib. ed., \$14.89 (0-06-025130-1).

For Chan, it's football, and for his twin sister, Young, it's her flute, as the two try to adapt to small-town Minnesota life after moving from L.A. Where does their Korean heritage fit in?

Levenkron, Steven. *The Luckiest Girl in the World*. Scribner, \$20 (0-684-82604-6).

Fifteen-year-old figure skater Katie Roskova inflicts pain on herself when she can't manage her feelings about her absent father, her overbearing mother, the pressures of her sport, and her school life.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. HarperCollins, \$14.95 (0-06-027510-3); lib. ed., \$14.89 (0-06-027511-1).

Imagine this: Cinderella's real problem isn't her cruel stepmother and stepsisters, it's just that she cannot refuse a direct command from anyone!

Maxwell, Robin. *Secret Diary of Anne Boleyn*. Arcade, \$23.95 (1-55970-375-X).

Elizabeth, England's monarch, receives her mother's secret diary and becomes acquainted with a mother she has never known.

Mazer, Norma Fox. *When She Was Good*. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine, \$16.95 (0-590-13506-6).

Seventeen-year-old Em remembers what it was like living with her emotionally disturbed, abused sister, Pamela.

McDonald, Joyce. *Swallowing Stones*. Delacorte, \$15.95 (0-385-32309-3).

Depression, guilt, and fear plague Michael's dreams after a stray bullet from his rifle kills a man.

McKinley, Robin. *Rose Daughter*. Greenwillow, \$16 (0-688-15439-5).

Beauty, who possesses the gift of growing roses, is compelled to stay at the Beast's castle and help him bring his magnificent garden, the heart of his magical kingdom, back to life.

McLaren, Clemence. *Inside the Walls of Troy*. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, \$16 (0-689-31820-0).

The beautiful Helen and the prophetess Cassandra describe, from their respective viewpoints, the events that led to the great Trojan War.

Meyer, Carolyn. *Jubilee Journey*. Harcourt/Gulliver, \$12 (0-15-201377-6).

Young biracial Emily is shocked out of her feelings of comfort as she discovers she needs to come to terms with her racial identity when she visits her African American family in Texas.

Napoli, Donna Jo. *Stones in Water*. Dutton, \$15.99 (0-525-45842-5).

Abducted by Nazis from a movie house near his home in Venice, Roberto finds himself a slave laborer in German work camps, until he escapes in the frozen Ukraine and struggles to return home.

Nix, Garth. *Shade's Children*. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-06-027324-0); lib. ed., \$15.89 (0-06-027325-9).

The few remaining human children must find and destroy the "Grand Projector" in order to release themselves from the mutant rulers of Earth.

No Easy Answers: Short Stories about Teenagers Making Tough Choices. Ed. by Donald R. Gallo.

Delacorte, \$16.95 (0-385-32290-9).

Teens face tough ethical and moral choices in this collection of sixteen stories.

Nolan, Han. *Dancing on the Edge*. Harcourt, \$16 (0-15-201648-1).

After her psychic grandmother tells her that her father has melted, Miracle McCloy, obsessed with finding him, sets out in search of self and the truth.

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Habibi*. Simon & Schuster, \$16 (0-689-80149-1).

Fourteen-year-old Palestinian American Liyana Abboud must learn to fit into a new world and understand the political conflicts when her family moves from St. Louis to Jerusalem.

Orr, Wendy. *Peeling the Onion*. Holiday, \$15.95 (0-8234-1289-X).

Anna struggles to recover her health and her life after a car accident shatters her body and leaves her brain damaged.

Oughton, Jerrie. *The War in Georgia*. Houghton, \$14.95 (0-395-81568-1).

Orphaned Shanta Cola Morgan must reconcile her feelings of loss and confusion about not being part of a "real" family in a small southern town during World War II.

Paulsen, Gary. *The Schernoff Discoveries*. Delacorte, \$15.95 (0-385-32194-5).

Everybody knows a Harold Schernoff—the nerd, the geek. In this laugh-out-loud tale, Harold and his buddy team up for everything—from scientifically retrieving golf balls to designing that first kiss.

Penman, Sharon Kay. *The Queen's Man*. Holt, \$23 (0-8050-3885-X).

Young Justin de Quincey finds himself in a viper's nest of murderous nobles and false allies when the queen chooses him to discover the truth about her son, who's gone missing on his return from the Crusades.

Pullman, Philip. *The Subtle Knife*. Knopf, \$20 (0-679-87925-0).

Will and Lyra are pulled into a parallel world, where they must fight the shadowy specters, as angels and witches aid them in their quest for the truth about dust.

Reynolds, Marjorie. *The Starlite Drive-In*. Morrow, \$23 (0-688-15389-5).

Thirteen-year-old Callie falls hard for the romantic drifter who disrupts the lives of her lonely mother and bitter father.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Outrageously Alice*. Simon & Schuster/Atheneum, \$15 (0-689-80354-0).

The irrepressible Alice, now in eighth grade, suffers an identity crisis that leads to outrageous experiments with her appearance and behavior.

Rinaldi, Ann. *Acquaintance with Darkness*. Harcourt/Gulliver, \$16 (0-15-201294-X).

After her mother's death, fourteen-year-old Emily Pigbrush must go to live with her uncle, a doctor she suspects is a grave robber.

Shoup, Barbara. *Stranded in Harmony*. Hyperion; dist. by Little, Brown, \$17.95 (0-7868-0287-1).

How can Lucas, a high-school senior, loosen the grip of his parents, his girlfriend, and his best friend, all of whom want him to live up to their expectations?

Shusterman, Neal. *The Dark Side of Nowhere*. Little, Brown, \$15.95 (0-316-78907-0). Feeling trapped and bored in his normal, peaceful hometown, Jason slowly learns that he and most of the townspeople are aliens.

Skurzynski, Gloria. *Virtual War*. Simon & Schuster, \$16 (0-689-81374-0).

In this quick read, genetically engineered soldiers prepare for a virtual war. Even in cyberspace, adolescents rebel and there are FLKs (funny-looking kids).

Soto, Gary. *Buried Onions*. Harcourt, \$17 (0-15-201333-4).

Mexican American Eddie tries desperately to escape his violence-infested life in Fresno, California.

Thomas, Rob. *Doing Time: Notes from the Undergrad*. Simon & Schuster, \$16 (0-698-80958-1).

Ten high school students doing mandatory community service in order to graduate give 10 different voices and viewpoints to the enterprise.

Wersba, Barbara. *Whistle Me Home*. Holt, \$14.95 (0-8095-4850-2).

Tomboy Noli and TJ are friends and almost a couple, and Noli is totally shocked when she discovers that he is gay.

Williams, Carol Lynch. *The True Colors of Caitlynn Jackson*. Delacorte, \$14.95 (0-385-32249-6).

Caitlynn and her sister, forced to fend for themselves when their mother storms out and never returns, take off on their bikes to search for a grandmother they barely know.

Working Days: Short Stories about Teenagers at Work. Ed. by Anne Mazer. Persea; dist. by Braziller, \$17.95 (0-89255-223-9); paper, \$6.95 (0-89255-224-7).

Fifteen short stories about teenagers finding their way in the world of work.

Yee, Paul. *Breakaway*. Douglas & McIntyre/Groundwood; dist. by Publishers Group West, \$14.95 (0-88899-289-0).

Eighteen-year-old Kwok Wong desperately wants to play soccer and attend the university—it's his way out of his Chinese family's traditions and their dirt-poor farm.

Best Books for Young Adults, 1998, committee members:

Karlan Sick, chair, New York Public Library; Darlene Basone, Walnut Hills High School, Cincinnati, OH; Jane Byczek, Hinsdale (IL) Public Library; Sandra Farrell, Free Library of Philadelphia; Carol Fox, Washington School, El Dorado, KS; Nancy Guidry, Santa Monica (CA) Public Library; Eunice Harper, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore; Claudine Jackson, Kansas City (MO) Public Library; Holly Koelling, Denver Public Library; Kathleen Krahnke, Northland Public Library, Pittsburgh; Kimberly Lafferty, Issaquah Library (WA); Betty Lazarus, Ridgwood Preparatory School, Metairie, LA; Joy Lowe, Louisiana Tech. University, Reston; Suzanne Manczuk, West Windsor Plainsboro (NJ) Middle School; Edward Sullivan, New York Public Library, and Sally Estes, Booklist consultant.