

## BBYA 2008 Top Ten with Annotations

Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* . Illus. by Ellen Forney. Little, Brown, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-316-01368-0; \$16.99.

Junior leaves the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white high school, where the only other Native American is the school mascot. Is he choosing his own destiny or betraying his heritage?

Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* . Farrar, Straus & Giroux/Sarah Crichton, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-374-10523-5; \$22.00.

A former child soldier in Sierra Leone recalls the heart-wrenching experiences that transformed him from an innocent twelve-year-old into a cold-blooded killer.

Downham, Jenny. *Before I Die* . Random House/David Fickling, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-385-75155-1; \$15.99.

Tessa, who has terminal cancer, creates a list of ten things she wants to do in the months she has left to live. This fierce and devastating novel explores end-of-life realities with honesty and grace.

Hemphill, Stephanie. *Your Own, Sylvia: A Verse Portrait of Sylvia Plath* . Random House/Alfred A. Knopf, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-375-83799-9; \$15.99.

Most people know little about Plath's biography apart from its tragic ending. Appropriately, this powerful portrait uses verse to shed light on the life of the gifted poet. A 2008 Printz Honor book.

Jones, Lloyd. *Mister Pip* . Dell Publishing/Dial Press, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-385-34106-6; \$20.00.

In the midst of guerrilla warfare, fourteen-year-old Matilda attends school to hear Mr. Watts, the only white inhabitant on her Pacific island, read from Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

Landy, Derek. *Skulduggery Pleasant* . HarperCollins, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-06-123115-5; \$17.99.

When Stephanie inherits her uncle's estate, she also inherits his best friend: a walking, talking, crime-fighting skeleton.

Peet, Mal. *Tamar: A Novel of Espionage, Passion, and Betrayal* . Candlewick, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-7636-3488-9; \$17.99.

This sweeping thriller moves between World War II and the present day as fifteen-year-old Tamar uncovers her grandfather's hidden past as a spy in the Netherlands.

Polly, Matthew. *American Shaolin: Flying Kicks, Buddhist Monks, and the Legend of Iron Crotch: An Odyssey in the New China* . Penguin Group USA/Gotham Books, 2007; ISBN13: 978-1-59240-262-5; \$26.00.

On a quest to transform himself from a scrawny weakling into a kung-fu master, Polly drops out of Princeton and journeys to the legendary Shaolin Temple.

Selznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel* . Illus. by Brian Selznick. Scholastic, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-439-81378-5; \$22.99.

Combining words and black-and-white pictures inspired by silent films, Selznick reveals the connections between a Parisian orphan and an elderly toymaker. The 2008 Caldecott Medal winner.

Tan, Shaun. *The Arrival* . Illus. by Shaun Tan. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine, 2007; ISBN13: 978-0-439-89529-3; \$19.99.

Without a single word, Tan's extraordinary images express the loneliness, sadness, anxiety, and wonder of the immigration experience.

