

## 2020 Best Fiction for Young Adults

The members of the Best Fiction for Young Adults Blogging Team are: Coordinator, Kimmie DePinto, High Plains Library District, Greeley, CO; Jodi Kruse R.A. Long High School Library, Longview, WA; Michael Fleming, Juanita High School, Kirkland, WA; Isaiah West, Alexandria Library, Alexandria, VA; Molly Dettmann, Norman North High School, Norman, OK; Alicia Abdul, Albany High School, Albany, NY; Laura Giunta Garden City Public Library, Garden City, NY; Stephanie Charlefour, Keene, NH; Barbara, CA; Audrey Hopkins, Oak Lawn Public Library, Dallas, TX; Ness Shortley, Horton Middle School, Pittsboro, NC; Molly Wetta, Santa Barbara Public Library, Santa Barbara CA, and with the help of administrative assistant Molly Moore, Bishop, GA.

**\*denotes Top Ten (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/2020-top-ten-best-fiction>)**

---

*All Eyes on Us.* By Kit Frick. Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry, \$17.99 (9781534404403). Frick creates an intense thriller as tension builds between Rosalie and Amanda, both of whom are dating Carter Shaw, the heir to a real-estate empire. After the two girls receive anonymous threats, they team up to end the charade and reveal the mastermind.

*All the Bad Apples.* By Moira Fowley-Doyle. Penguin/Kathy Dawson, \$17.99 (9780525552741). After Deena's seventeenth birthday, she's forced to reconcile her own coming out with the death of her sister—who, clues suggest, might still be alive. Now it's up to Deena to uncover the truth and break an age-old family curse of "bad apples."

*The Art of Breaking Things.* By Laura Sibson. Viking, \$18.99 (9780451481115). Skye has a reputation for being a party girl who will get with just about anyone. What no one knows is that her drug and alcohol use helps her forget a secret about her mother's fiancé and her fears about what he might do to her little sister.

*Aurora Rising.* By Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff. Knopf, \$18.99 (9781524720964). In 2380, Tyler Jones, a graduating cadet of the Aurora Academy, rescues Aurora, who wakes with new, mysterious powers after being in cryo-sleep for over 200 years. Together, along with a squad of misfits, they go on a mission to uncover the truth about Aurora.

*Birthday.* By Meredith Russo. Flatiron, \$18.99 (9781250129833). Eric and Morgan are best friends who check in every year, from ages 13 to 18, on their shared birthday. Eric struggles with his family relationships, football, and feelings for Morgan, while Morgan struggles with the death of her mother and with making the decision to live as her true self.

*The Bone Houses.* By Emily Lloyd-Jones. Little, Brown, \$17.99 (9780316418416). Ryn manages a graveyard, hewing closely to the old superstitions about how to make sure the dead stay dead. But when Ellis, a mapmaker, comes to town, the "bone houses" become more active than ever.

*Butterfly Yellow.* By Thanh Hà Lai. Harper, \$17.99 (9780062229212). It's 1981, and Hằng has taken a perilous journey by fishing boat from Việt Nam to Amarillo, Texas, to find her little brother, Linh. Her arrival is not as welcome as she had hoped, since Linh appears to have forgotten her.

Call It What You Want. By Brigid Kemmerer. Bloomsbury, \$18.99 (9781681198095).

Rob and Maegan connect romantically after peeling back the layers of hurt they and their families have experienced. Rob's dad embezzled money and is now incapacitated after a failed suicide attempt, while Maegan's label as a cheater leaves her ostracized. Paired on a school project, they bond through shared struggles.

Color Me In. By Natasha Diaz. Delacorte, \$17.99 (9780525578239).

Neveah Levitz is caught between the worlds of her African American mother and her Jewish father, who are battling through a nasty divorce. As she finds herself identifying more with her Jamaican heritage, her father pressures her to also embrace her Jewishness.

A Curse So Dark and Lonely. By Brigid Kemmerer. Bloomsbury, \$18.99 (9781681195087).

Harper is kidnapped from Washington, D.C., and brought to the fairy-tale kingdom of Emberfall, where a prince named Rhen has been cursed for over three centuries to relive the same year—in which he turns into a monster each time—and the curse won't be broken until he falls in love.

Dig. By A. S. King. Dutton, \$17.99 (9781101994917).

The Hemmings grandchildren dig through their own warped identities and personal tragedies, which stem from their dysfunctional family's start under their deeply flawed grandparents, Gottfried and Marla.

The Disasters. By M. K. England. 2018. HarperTeen, \$17.99 (9780062657671).

After Nax is kicked out of Ellis Station Academy, a terrorist group attacks the school, and he—along with three other students who wash out of the academy—is framed for it, forcing him to find out who was really behind the attack.

The Downstairs Girl. By Stacey Lee. Putnam, \$17.99 (9781524740955).

In this masterful concoction of historical fiction that mirrors contemporary social issues, Jo Kuan is a Chinese American girl living in the periphery of Southern society in 1890. When she begins using a pseudonym to write a witty advice column, she discovers more about herself.

Echo North. By Joanna Ruth Meyer. Page Street, \$17.99 (9781624147159).

In this retelling of the Norwegian fairy-tale, "East of the Sun, West of the Moon," a girl named Echo, disfigured from a childhood accident, makes a deal with a mysterious wolf to live with him for one year in an enchanted house in order to save her father.

\*The Field Guide to the North American Teenager. By Ben Philippe. HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray, \$18.99 (9780062824110).

After his mother gets a new job as a professor at the University of Texas, Norris, a Black French Canadian who has lived in Montreal his whole life, has to adjust to high school in Austin, Texas.

Forward Me Back to You. By Mitali Perkins. Farrar, \$17.99 (9780374304928).

After struggling with a violent sexual episode at her school where she was not supported, Kat moves, finds a new group of friends, and takes a trip to work with trafficked girls in India, where she finds the strength to help others while helping herself.

The Fountains of Silence. By Ruta Sepetys. \$18.99 (9780399160318).

Shining a light on the Spanish Civil War, Sepetys introduces Daniel, an 18-year-old American, and Ana, a native whose family has suffered under the Franco regime, whose romance takes center stage in this rich introduction to hidden history.

Full Disclosure. By Camryn Garrett. Knopf, \$18.99 (9781984829955).

Simone Garcia-Hampton is HIV positive. After her secret gets out at school, she transfers, hoping to start over, but when she begins dating a boy and getting notes threatening to expose her, she must decide whether to keep running or face everyone head on.

Genesis Begins Again. By Alicia D. Williams. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy, \$17.99 (9781481465809).

Genesis struggles to accept herself as others call her names and her father's alcoholism leads to insecurities, but when a music teacher encourages her talent, the positive begins to outweigh the negative, allowing Genesis to throw out the list of things she hates about herself.

\*Girls on the Verge. By Sharon Biggs Waller. Holt, \$17.99 (9781250151698).

After learning she is pregnant from her first sexual encounter, Camille is forced to make a decision. When she runs out of options in her Texas hometown, she, Annabelle, and her disapproving best friend, Bea, set off on a road trip to get an abortion.

The Good Luck Girls. By Charlotte Nicole Davis. Tor Teen, \$17.99 (9781250299703).

Certain girls in Arketta are sold as children to work at welcome houses where, after being branded and educated, they become prostitutes on their sixteenth birthdays. Clementine's first encounter leads to murder—and an escape—but can she and her squad survive?

\*Heroine. By Mindy McGinnis. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen, \$17.99 (9780062847195).

After Mickey Catalan, a star athlete, is sidelined by a car crash, she relies on pain medicine to help her recover faster. When she discovers that it isn't enough, Mickey spirals out of control, and her need for relief leads her to lie, steal, and shoot up.

Her Royal Highness. By Rachel Hawkins. Putnam, \$17.99 (9781524738266).

After discovering her sort-of girlfriend kissing someone else, Millie decides to forego senior year at her Texas high school and attend a fancy boarding school. There, she's forced to room with an actual Scottish princess. Falling in love with her would be a terrible idea, though. Right?

How Not to Ask a Boy to Prom. By S. J. Goslee. Brook, \$17.99 (9781626724013).

Nolan's sister decides to find him a boyfriend for prom, but when she forces him to attempt a "promposal" on his crush, things go sideways, and Bern, an unsuspecting ally, saves him. As the two fake their way to prom, they find that fake dating feels a lot like the real thing.

How to be Remy Cameron. By Julian Winters. Interlude, \$17.99 (9781945053801).

Remy Cameron has been assigned labels. He is gay, he is Black, he is a brother, he is a friend. What happens if these labels don't feel right to him? What if they aren't enough? Through an introspective narrative, Remy finds himself.

How to Make Friends with the Dark. By Kathleen Glasgow. Delacorte, \$18.99 (9781101934753).

Tiger Tolliver's last communication with her mother was an argument about an ugly dress. After her mother dies of an aneurysm, Tiger doesn't know who her father is or any relatives who can keep her. Facing overwhelming guilt and grief, she will have to "make friends with the dark."

I Love You So Mochi. By Sarah Kuhn. Scholastic, \$17.99 (9781338302882).

Kimi's quest for self-discovery takes her to Japan, where during spring break she visits her estranged grandparents, falls in love, and finds her true, creative path, divergent from her mother's wishes.

The Infinite Noise. By Lauren Shippen. Tor Teen, \$17.99 (9781250297518).

When Caleb's mood swings become too much for him, he starts therapy. There, he finds that he is an Atypical, a person with heightened abilities. After his ability draws him to Adam, he begins to feel an unexplained connection. Can Adam help Caleb control this superpower?

Internment. By Samira Ahmed. Brown, \$17.99 (9780316522694).

In America's not-so-distant future, Muslim citizens are forced into internment camps, including 17-year-old Layla and her parents. Once there, Layla, with the help of fellow internees and an unlikely alliance with a guard, leads a resistance movement inside the camp.

It's a Whole Spiel: Love, Latkes, and Other Jewish Stories. Ed. by Katherine Locke and Laura Silverman. Knopf, \$17.99 (9780525646167).

A selection of #OwnVoices short stories about Jewish identities, from a variety of authors.

I Wish You All the Best. By Mason Deaver. Scholastic/Push, \$17.99 (9781338306125).

After they come out as nonbinary, Ben's parents kick them out of the house, leading them to move in with their estranged sister. As Ben grapples with anxiety and depression, they navigate complicated family dynamics, moving to a new city, and falling in love for the first time

The Kingdom. By Jess Rothenberg. Holt, \$18.99 (9781250293855).

Ana is a Fantasist—a human-android hybrid—engineered to bring pleasure to guests of the high-tech theme park the Kingdom. Designed for docility and no independent thought, Ana and her six Fantasist sisters shock the country as they begin going homicidal and suicidal.

Last Bus to Everland. By Sophie Cameron. Roaring Brook, \$17.99 (9781250149930).

Brody's brother is an overachiever, his sister is a star, and he feels like a side character in his own life—until a cute boy named Nico introduces him to "Everland." Now Brody must decide if he would rather live in the real world or in a fantasy.

The Light at the Bottom of the World. By London Shah. Disney/Hyperion, \$17.99 (9781368036887).

At the end of the twenty-first century, humans live beneath the water. Leyla McQueen gets picked to participate in an obstacle course with 99 other people, and if she wins, she can pick any prize—and free her father, who has been jailed on false charges.

\*Like a Love Story. By Abdi Nazemian. HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray, \$17.99 (9780062839367).

Three teens—an Iranian youth hiding his sexuality for fear of death, an openly gay photographer, and an aspiring fashion designer with an HIV-positive uncle—all find love, along with their voices, as activists in 1989 New York during the height of the AIDS crisis.

Love from A to Z. By S. K. Ali. Simon & Schuster/Salaam Reads, \$18.99 (9781534442726).

Zayneb and Adam, similarly fascinated with marvels and oddities, are serendipitously thrown together as they both visit Doha, Qatar, during their spring break.

\*Lovely War. By Julie Berry. Viking, \$18.99 (9780451469939).

Aphrodite leads her legal self-defense in front of Hephaestus and Ares to justify her infidelity. Her proof? The love stories—that she helped create—of two couples during WWI. When her tale is done, both lives and love will be different in this beautiful book.

The Lying Woods. By Ashley Elston. 2018. Disney/Hyperion, \$17.99 (9781368014786).

Owen Foster lives a life of luxury at his boarding school—until it all comes crashing down in this slow-burn mystery. When he finds out that his father has been stealing his clients' money and has now vanished,

Owen moves home to live among people from whom his father stole.

*The Merciful Crow*. By Margaret Owen. Holt, \$18.99 (9781250191922).

Fie, who belongs to the lowest Crow caste of mercy killers and undertakers, finds herself on a quest with Jasimir the prince and Hawk warrior Tavin. On the way, they encounter ferocious magic and a plot to kill the king in this action-packed adventure fantasy.

*Michigan vs. the Boys*. By Carrie S. Allen. Can/KCP Loft, \$17.99 (9781525301483).

How far are you willing to go for your sport? Michigan must figure out the answer to this question when her high school cuts the girls' hockey team. After deciding to try out for the boys' team, Michigan will have to endure more than she thought to play the game she loves.

*The Music of What Happens*. By Bill Konigsberg. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine, \$17.99 (9781338215502).

A coming-of-age story about gay teens Max and Jordan, who find themselves manning a food truck. Both have their struggles but learn a lot about themselves and life through "the music of what happens."

*The Never Tilting World*. By Rin Chupeco. \$17.99 (9780062821799).

Twin goddesses separated on a planet broken into halves—never-ending day and never-ending night—go on their own journeys to find out what really happened when their world was cracked open.

\**On the Come Up*. By Angie Thomas. HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray, \$18.99 (9780062498564).

Bri, an aspiring rapper who wants to step out of the shadow of her famous but dead father, helps her family survive after her mother loses her job.

\**Patron Saints of Nothing*. By Randy Ribay. Penguin/Kokila, \$17.99 (9780525554912).

After Jay, a Filipino American high school senior gets word that his once-close cousin and pen pal Jun is dead, he travels to the Philippines to uncover the truth.

\**Pet*. By Akwaeke Emezi. Random/Make Me a World, \$17.99 (9780525647072).

Pet lives in a world without monsters, or so she thinks. After a monster shows itself to her, she must work to uncover the secrets her world has been hiding and to protect people she loves.

*Rayne & Delilah's Midnite Matinee*. By Jeff Zentner. Crown, \$17.99 (9781524720209).

Delia and Josie run a late-night horror show on the local cable station, but with different reasons for running the show, their friendship clearly takes precedence. As the next chapter in their lives approaches, humorous and serious hijinks ensue.

*The Revolution of Birdie Randolph*. By Brandy Colbert. Little, Brown, \$17.99 (9780316448567).

Dove has controlling parents, so when she begins dating a boy who was in juvie and her aunt comes back from rehab, Dove needs to decide who she is and wants to become.

*Sick Kids in Love*. By Hannah Moskowitz. Entangled, \$17.99 (9781640637320).

Isabel has a long list of reasons why she doesn't date, including her chronic illness, rheumatoid arthritis. But when she meets another sick kid while getting her monthly infusion, she finds she may be willing to bend—or break—her one rule.

*Ship of Smoke and Steel*. By Django Wexler. Tor Teen, \$17.99 (9780765397249).

Isoka, a street thief pressured by a government spy with unbreakable leverage, is sent to steal the ghost ship Soliton, a world in itself with unexplainable magic and politics, about which very little is known. Alliances must be formed, just for survival.

SLAY. By Brittney Morris. Simon & Schuster/Simon Pulse, \$18.99 (9781534445420).

Kiera is a 17-year-old Black gamer who, in response to a gaming industry that often excludes marginalized individuals, built an RPG that celebrates all things "black excellence." Her identity is a secret in the real world, until a troll infiltrates the game to destroy it.

Someday We Will Fly. By Rachel DeWoskin. Viking, \$17.99 (9780670014965).

During WWII, 15-year-old Lillia, forced to leave her mother behind, flees Warsaw, Poland, with her father and baby sister. As Jewish refugees, they come to live in Shanghai, China, which is occupied by Japan.

Sorcery of Thorns. By Margaret Rogerson. Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry, \$17.99 (9781481497619).

Elisabeth is a foundling raised at one of the great libraries. Wishing to be a warden, she protects the world from the dangerous magical grimoires. She knows, as do all people, that magicians are evil, so when she gets caught up in a case of magical sabotage, things get hairy.

Sorry for Your Loss. By Jessie Ann Foley. HarperTeen, \$17.99 (9780062571915).

Pup, the youngest of eight children in a boisterous but close-knit family, is rarely noticed and doesn't seem to mind. His unexpected success at a photography assignment leads him to look at his friendships, his family, and the tragic death of his brother in a whole new light.

Spin. By Lamar Giles. Scholastic, \$17.99 (9781338219210).

After aspiring DJ Paris Secord is found murdered, two of her estranged friends, Fuse and Kya, must work together to figure out who killed Paris before her underground fandom, Dark Nation, ends them.

\*The Stars and the Blackness between Them. By Junauda Petrus. Dutton, \$17.99 (9780525555483).

After Audre's relationship with a young woman is exposed, her mother sends her away from Trinidad to live with her father in Minneapolis. There she connects with Mabel, who is suffering from a life-threatening illness. Told in alternating viewpoints, this is a moving novel of discovering how to live and love.

Start Here. By Trish Doller. Simon & Schuster/Simon Pulse, \$18.99 (9781481479912).

Willa and Taylor were supposed to spend the summer after high school graduation sailing from Ohio to Key West with their best friend, Finley. But after Finley dies of leukemia, they must figure out how to take the trip without her, despite their estrangement.

Stepsister. By Jennifer Donnelly. Scholastic, \$17.99 (9781338268461)

In a race between Fate and Chance, Isabelle, one of Cinderella's stepsisters, forges her own destiny with the help of a Fairy Queen and her gifts. In Grimm-fairy-tale fashion, she must find the lost pieces of her heart to not only survive but save her family.

Stronger, Faster, and More Beautiful. By Arwen Elys Dayton. 2018. Delacorte, \$18.99 (9780525580959).

Six short stories are connected by a world where the possibilities of body and genetic modification become darker and more advanced with each tale.

There Will Come A Darkness. By Katy Rose Pool. Holt, \$18.99 (9781250211750).

A gambler on the run, a prince in disguise, an assassin, and a warrior cross paths as a 100-year-old prophecy unfolds, foretelling an age of darkness and massive social upheaval.

Thirteen Doorways, Wolves behind Them All. By Laura Ruby. HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray, \$17.99 (9780062317643).

During the Great Depression and into WWII, Frankie and her younger sister are left at an orphanage in

Chicago by their father as secrets are revealed through the eyes of a ghost, who narrates this tale of heartbreak, tragedy, and hope.

*This Time Will Be Different.* By Misa Sugiura. HarperTeen, \$17.99 (9780062473448).

CJ, a dedicated underachiever, finds purpose in protecting her grandfather's flower shop from the venture capitalist who employs her mother and in protecting her best friend, Emily, from the girl who didn't just break Emily's heart but outed her.

*Voices: The Final Hours of Joan of Arc.* By David Elliott. HMH, \$17.99 (9781328987594).

Using historical poetic forms and excerpts from two trials—with concrete poetry blended in—Elliott brings Joan of Arc's story vividly to life. The sparse verse elicits a visceral response, while Joan is portrayed as an empowered individual, despite her youth.

*War Girls.* By Tochi Onyebuchi. Razorbill, \$17.99 (9780451481672).

The year 2172 has not brought peace to war-torn Nigeria and Biafra. Onyii is both a fierce warrior on behalf of the Biafrans and a tender soul whose adopted sister, Ify, is Nigerian. Their relationship is strained when Ify is returned to her Nigerian home to be weaponized against the Biafrans.

*We Are Lost and Found.* By Helene Dunbar. Sourcebooks/Fire, \$17.99 (9781492681045).

Set in 1980s New York City, this title examines identity and sexuality during a time when exploring such things could be dangerous. All Michael wants to do is fall and love and lose his virginity without catching something. Is that too much to ask?

*The Weight of Our Sky.* By Hanna Alkaf. Simon & Schuster/Salaam Reads, \$18.99 (9781534426085).

When a race riot between the Malays and Chinese breaks out in 1969 Malaysia, Melati—who is Malay—must survive while overcoming her OCD and searching for her mother. She is aided by a Chinese family, forming a bond with them and, particularly, their teenage son Vince.

*We Set the Dark on Fire.* By Tehlor Kay Mejia. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen, \$17.99 (9780062691316).

After Dani's graduation from the Medio School for Girls, where she trained to become a politician's wife, a stranger opens her eyes to the privilege, oppressiveness, and excess of the ruling class, and she must decide whether to live forever in a gilded cage or take a stand.

*When the Ground Is Hard.* By Malla Nunn. Putnam, \$17.99 (9780525515579).

Adele has worked hard to be the perfect daughter and student at the Keziah Christian Academy in Swaziland, so her rapid loss of status among the wealthy girls is a blow to her pride. It isn't until she is forced to room with Lottie Diamond that she begins to discover what is truly important.

*Where I End and You Begin.* By Preston Norton. Disney/Hyperion, \$17.99 (9781484798355).

Ezra wants nothing more than to ask his forever crush, Imogen, to prom, but he has to get past Imogen's intense, Ezra-tormenting best friend, Wynonna. After a solar eclipse causes Ezra and Wynonna to switch bodies, they make a deal with each other to get their dream prom dates.

*Within These Lines.* By Stephanie Morrill. Blink, \$17.99 (9780310765233).

Through alternating voices of Italian girl, Evalina, and Japanese boy, Taichi, Morrill weaves a tale of the Japanese internment at California's Manzanar Relocation Camp that separates a couple fighting to be reunited.

*\*With the Fire on High.* By Elizabeth Acevedo. HarperTeen, \$17.99 (9780062662835).

As both a senior in high school and a mother, Emoni must balance her last year at school with her culinary aspirations, as well as also her obligations to her daughter and grandmother. When Malachi and a new

cooking elective enter the picture, Emoni's strengths begin to shine bright.

*You Asked for Perfect*. By Laura Silverman. Sourcebooks/Fire, \$10.99 (9781492658276).

Ariel's whole life has revolved around creating the perfect high school resume, and when he fails a calculus quiz, handsome Amir agrees to tutor him. As a romance begins, everything Ariel has built starts to crumble, and he isn't sure what is worth holding onto.