

Golden Dome A List

## **NARROW ESCAPES**

### **Dusti Bowling** **THE CANYON'S EDGE**

On the one-year anniversary of her mother's death and Nora's birthday, Nora and her father go exploring a canyon in the Arizona desert to try to return to normal. Then a flash flood rips through the canyon sweeping away Nora's father and all their supplies. Not only does Nora have to face the expected dangers of surviving alone in a canyon, but she also struggles to deal with PTSD from the events of a year before.

An action-packed story told in verse, *The Canyon's Edge* follows Nora's struggle with survival from the harsh elements of the Arizona desert and the trauma, fear, and anxiety she experiences since she tragically lost her mother. The events of what happened a year ago are interwoven with the present as Nora deals with her doubts, anger, and grief while searching for her missing father.

### **Christina Soontornvat** **ALL THIRTEEN: THE INCREDIBLE RESCUE OF THE THAI BOYS' SOCCER TEAM**

When the 13 members of the Wild Boars soccer team decided to explore some caves after practice, they never dreamed that they would soon become trapped deep below the ground with no way out. This book chronicles the 18 harrowing days that the boys and their coach were stuck deep underground and the herculean efforts that were made to rescue them. A page-turner that combines science, spectacular photographs, cultural insights, and heart stopping suspense into a story that readers won't want to put down!

### **Uri Shulevitz.** **CHANCE: ESCAPE FROM THE HOLOCAUST: MEMOIRS OF A REFUGEE CHILDHOOD**

Shulevitz, known for his award-winning work in picture books, tells the story of his family's escape from Poland in 1938 after their home was destroyed by Nazi bombs. This first-hand account covers his life from ages 4 to 14, as the family travels through Poland to a work camp in the Soviet Union, then finally, at the war's end, to Paris. This story of survival against all odds is illustrated by the author and is as brutal as it is inspiring.

## **WE'RE NOT FROM HERE**

### **Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed** **WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED**

Omar and his younger brother Hassan escaped war-torn Somalia and for much of their young lives have called Dadaab, a refugee camp, home. Life there is hard. Families live for years in the camp, in hopes that some nation will allow them to emigrate and build a new life. Omar is resilient and resourceful, but without parents, he is also responsible for the care of his non-verbal brother. Can he continue to hold on to hope, shoulder responsibility, and take all the right steps to find them both a new place to call home - even as he can only watch as dear friends become resigned to a refugee life?

### **Salazar, Aida.** **LAND OF CRANES**

Betita, a young Latinx girl, lover of poetry and Aztec stories, is facing the unthinkable. After escaping violence in Mexico, Betita and her family seek sanctuary in Los Angeles. When her father is picked up by ICE and deported, Betita and her pregnant mother are adrift. Then both are detained in a family detention camp and face isolation and inhumane conditions. Betita finds community among camp detainees and volunteers and uses her poetry to hold onto hope that her family will be reunited.

### **Park, Linda Sue** **PRAIRIE LOTUS**

In 1880, Hanna and her father leave heartache and tragedy behind in Los Angeles to settle in the Dakota Territory. Hanna has big goals: to finish her education (her mother's dream for her) and to help her father establish a successful shop in the small prairie town. She also has a secret dream: to make a friend. Given her spirited intelligence, her talent as a seamstress, and her kind heart, there should be little to stand in her way - but Hanna's mother was Asian, and racism is as real on the prairie as it had been in Los Angeles, making her dreams nearly impossible, if not dangerous, to reach.

## **WHO AM I?**

### **Callender, Kacen.** **KING AND THE DRAGONFLIES**

Twelve-year-old King believes that after his older brother, Khalid, died, he turned into a dragonfly. Before Khalid's death, he warned King to distance himself from his best friend, Sandy, who was rumored to be gay - since being gay in small-town Louisiana was a disaster. King, confused about his own sexuality, puts his friendship with Sandy aside - and then Sandy goes missing. The whole town turns out to find him, but it is King who discovers him camping out in King's backyard. Both boys are struggling - King from grief

over his brother's death and Sandy from an abusive father who cannot accept that Sandy is gay. By rekindling their friendship, King and Sandy confront hard truths and lean on one another as they come to terms with their changing identities.

**Nuanez, J.M.M**  
**BIRDIE AND ME**

After their Mama dies, Jack and her younger brother Birdie need a new place to call home. At first, they move in with fun-loving Uncle Carl, who not only provides them with all the Honey Bunny Buns they can possibly want, but also embraces the non-gender-conforming Birdie for who he is. Uncle Carl soon proves unreliable though, and Jack and Birdie are sent to live with quieter, more practical, and more conformist Uncle Jack, who tries to change Birdie to protect him from bullies. Jack and Birdie will have none of it though, and eventually - together with both uncles - they build back a family filled with hope, humor, and acceptance of each other - with Honey Bunny Buns.

**Sara Pennypacker**  
**HERE IN THE REAL WORLD**

Ware's ultra-efficient mother and sports-loving father worry that Ware spends too much time alone – so Ware, whose passions are solitude and medieval history, is sent to spend the summer at the community rec center to have “Meaningful Social Relationships.” Instead, Ware slips across the street to a ruined church, where he meets the prickly and suspicious Jolene, who is planting a papaya garden on the abandoned ground. The two form a bond, helping each other as Ware begins to convert portions of the shattered building into his version of a medieval castle – and both later join forces with bird-loving Ashley, who wants to save migrating cranes. Their homemade kingdom can't last – but Ware learns to accept himself and others, and all ultimately discover that though the real world can be bleak, there are still kind people and heroes in it.

**Cynthia L. Copeland**  
**CUB**

Cindy compares her life in junior high school in 1972 to a typical episode of *Wild Kingdom*: the students are either predators or the prey. Those unlucky ones who are the prey develop survival strategies to avoid being hunted. Cindy borrows her survival strategy from the opossum. She simply plays dead. When the mean kids descend upon her, she ignores their taunts and teases until they tire of her. Then they move on to their next victim.

All this changes when Cindy becomes a cub reporter for the local newspaper. Her love of writing and photography help her give up her quiet, subdued existence, and she finds herself at the forefront as she tracks down stories. Her self-confidence builds as she becomes a young journalist. Based on the author's experiences.

## **WITCHES AND DEMONS**

**Stefan Bachmann**

### **CINDERS AND SPARROWS**

After spending her childhood in an orphanage, Zita has just received word that she's the last living heir to a remote mountaintop castle, where her family, a long line of witches, has resided for centuries. After arriving at her ancestral home, Zita quickly begins to question the circumstances of her family's untimely deaths. Unfortunately, the Castle's other residents seem to be either under an enchantment or determined to do her harm. Unsure of whom to trust, Zita must rely on her wits and newly discovered powers to uncover the dark forces working against her before all is lost.

**Kat Leyh**

### **SNAPDRAGON**

When social outcast Snapdragon suspects her missing dog might be at the home of a spooky, reclusive neighbor, her protective instincts give her the boost she needs to face the suspected dognapper - who everyone says is a witch. Turns out, Good Boy (the now three-legged dog), is safe and sound, and Snapdragon might just have more in common with the neighborhood "witch" than she'd bargained for! Full of twists, turns, and a smidge of magic, this graphic novel serves as a reminder that the best things come from embracing our differences. A testament to the transformative power of friendship and love.

**Gavriel Savit**

### **THE WAY BACK**

When Death comes for Bluma's grandmother in the little town of Tupik, he gets more than he bargained for, and in the ensuing scuffle, leaves behind his most prized and relied-upon implement - a silver spoon. Upon discovering the spoon, Bluma realizes she now has the means to travel to the Far Country beyond the town cemetery to find the House of Death and reclaim what she has lost.

At the same time, across town, Yehuda Leib is fleeing home in the dead of night. Rumors are whispered in the village that his ominous and greatly feared father has returned and is on the hunt for his son. Yehuda too comes face to face with Death, and is sent into the Far Country, a world inhabited by demons and spirits sprung from Jewish folklore. As the two children's paths collide, they must work together to barter and bargain their way back to the mortal world, and towards the truth.

A tour-de-force of storytelling steeped in Jewish folklore and traditions.

## **WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE**

**Kimberly Brubaker Bradley**

### **FIGHTING WORDS**

Ten-year old Della has a hard story to tell and she knows it - but she starts with the easy parts. Della and her older sister Suki have been recently placed in foster care since they do not know their fathers; their mother is in prison after a motel fire while cooking meth; and they escaped from their mother's boyfriend, Clifton, who abused them. In Della's words, "that's bad, but it's not even close to the worst...some things are almost impossible to talk about because they're things no one wants to know." Della does find the courage to talk about the worst things, and along the way finds that she is stronger than she thought.

Kimberly Brubaker Bradley tackles tough topics throughout this book, but does it with honesty, humor, and hope.

**Jacqueline Woodson**

### **BEFORE THE EVER AFTER**

In this novel in verse, 12-year-old ZJ's larger-than-life father, a football star, is suffering from what is clearly chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), the crippling and often lethal neurological ailment that has afflicted many NFL players. As ZJ's dad's condition deteriorates, ZJ and his family are forced to come to terms with a situation that will never get better - the new ever after - though ZJ is supported both by his enduring love for his dad and the loyalty of his three best friends.

**Jewell Parker Rhodes**

### **BLACK BROTHER, BLACK BROTHER**

Due to the color of his skin, life for 12-year-old Donte is far more complicated and less fair than that of the other students at his wealthy prep school. Donte comes from a bi-racial family and - unlike his older brother whose skin tone is light, leading people to assume he is white - Donte's skin is dark, making the two appear to be not related at all. After an incident that leads to Donte's unfair arrest and suspension from school, he becomes determined to overcome his nemesis, the school bully, by beating him at his own game - fencing. With the help of a supportive coach, his brother, and a few new friends, Donte prepares to prove that he can overcome one of the biggest challenges of his life.

## **IN THEIR SHOES...**

**Barbara Dee**

### **MY LIFE IN THE FISH TANK**

Zinny's older brother Gabriel, after a frightening car crash, is diagnosed with bipolar disorder and sent to a rehabilitation clinic for treatment. The diagnosis affects his entire family, all of whom struggle to come to terms with Gabriel's mental illness. His mother, for example, urges Zinny and siblings to keep the entire episode "private" – that is, a not-to-be-talked-about secret. Zinny's understanding develops with help from unexpected quarters: among these the Lunch Club run by the school guidance counselor, a love of marine biology, and a tank of crayfish.

A sensitive, realistic, and hopeful account of mental illness and its impact on families.

**Shelley Pearsall**

### **THINGS SEEN FROM ABOVE**

April Boxer wants to escape the drama and trauma of sixth-grade lunch period, so she volunteers to be a Bench Buddy, helping to monitor the fourth-grade recess. There she encounters Joey Byrd, a reclusive fourth grader with some odd behaviors. Sometimes he simply closes his eyes and lies down in the middle of the playground. On other days he scuffs his feet in the bark mulch, seeming to perform a dance as he scuffles, skips and jumps around the other students at recess.

April is intrigued and – with some help from the school janitor, who takes her up on the roof - she begins to see Joey's spectacular talent and understand his actions.

At the heart of this story are people's perceptions and the way in which changing your perceptions can change your life.

**Pixley, Marcella.**

### **TROWBRIDGE ROAD**

Set in the early 80s at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, *Trowbridge Road* immerses us in the lives of pre-teens June Bug and Ziggy. June Bug is struggling with the loss of her dad to AIDS and a mother battling depression and a germ phobia. Ziggy moves in down the street to live with Nana Jean after troubles of his own at school and with a mother not ready to settle down. The two kids fall into an easy friendship and escape their troubles through their wild imaginations and trips to the "9th dimension" where their problems can be wished away. June Bug narrates the book with a poetic quality and readers will fall in love with these sweet, troubled kids and a loving grandmother with an open heart and arms.

## **Cancer, Square Dancing, and FARTS**

**Harrell, Rob**

### **WINK**

Ross Maloy thought he'd spend 7th grade just trying to survive middle school – but it turns out he's got to survive a rare form of eye cancer first. Flying under the radar is difficult when you're medically required to wear a cowboy hat to school. Ross decides that if he's going to be thrust into the spotlight, he'd rather it was for his epic comic strip (*Batpig*) or for his musical prowess than for looking like a goopy-eyed cowboy. Under the tutelage of a rock-n'-roll-loving radiation tech, Ross decides to start a band. With the odds stacked against him, he relies on his friends (and sometimes on his enemies) to make what could have been a killer year into something truly memorable.

**Donna Barba Higuera**

### **LUPE WONG WON'T DANCE**

Lupe Wong is a star athlete and dreams of meeting her hero, Fu Li Hernandez, a pro baseball player of Chinese and Mexican-American ancestry just like her. And she might get her chance - all she has to do is get straight As. It's looking good until the final gym unit is announced: square dancing. Lupe, horrified, tries everything she can to get the unit canceled - from researching the racist history of the music to protesting the required compliance to traditional gender roles. Nothing seems to work. Will Lupe learn to dance or give up her chance to meet Fu Li?

Lupe's comical voice and unique perspective shine through in this story about friendship, activism, diversity, and personal growth.

**K.A Holt**

### **BENBEE AND THE TEACHER GRIEFER**

For Ben Bellows and his three fellow classmates, nothing could be worse than having to spend time in summer school because they didn't pass the language arts section of the "FARTS" (Florida Rigorous Academic Assessment Test). As their new teacher Ms. J soon finds out, each student will go to great lengths to avoid reading aloud in class (one tries to flush her book down the toilet!). The kids make a deal with Ms. J - for every minute they read aloud, she will let them play their favorite online video game, Sandbox. When the school administration hears of this unorthodox plan, Ben B and his classmates have to work together to save their teacher's job. Creatively designed and told in multiple voices.

## **Tigers, Lots of Money, and Scary Plants**

**Tae Keller**

### **WHEN YOU TRAP A TIGER**

Lily's *halmoni* (Korean for grandmother) has stolen something. Something important. From someone unusual, a large, talking tiger - the trickster from Halmoni's stories. And now Halmoni is acting strangely - is it an illness or perhaps a curse? When the tiger offers to cure Halmoni for the return of what has been stolen, Lily has to decide -- should she make the deal and trust the tiger?

**Stacy McAnulty**

### **MILLIONAIRES FOR THE MONTH**

Felix Rannells and Benji Porter are on a sixth-grade field trip when they find a missing wallet. The wallet belongs to billionaire Laura Friendly. After helping themselves to \$20 (after all, what's \$20 to a billionaire?), they return the wallet to its rightful owner. Laura Friendly issues a challenge to the boys in order to teach them a lesson: if they can spend \$5,368,709.12 in a month, then each boy will receive ten million dollars. Of course, there are many rules that the boys have to follow in order to win this challenge, including not telling anyone it. Soon what at first seems to be an easy and fun mission becomes difficult as their relationship with others, their values, and the pressure of keeping things quiet increases.

This novel not only has an entertaining premise of spending an insane amount of money in a month, but also deals with friendship, privilege, and perspective around money.

**Kenneth Oppel**

### **BLOOM**

First the rain came. Shortly after the strange downpour, the plants began to grow. The black vines were the ultimate invasive species. They grew quickly and overwhelmed everything in their vicinity....including humans.

Initially the vines were just a nuisance but then they began to produce toxic pollen that disabled most folks. Then the plants began to feed.

In an island community on Canada's west coast the plants seemed unstoppable, but there were three teens who seemed to be immune to the plants' effects. Prior to the plants' arrival, Anaya, Petra and Seth suffered from debilitating allergies, but these allergies disappeared during the odd downpour. There seems to have been some weird connection to the alien plants.

The trio race to find answers, battle the deadly plants - and quite possibly save the human race.