

Golden Dome 2022-2023

Alston, B.B. *Amari and the Night Brothers*. Balzer + Bray. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-0-062-97516-4

When Amari loses her scholarship at the private school where she's bullied and disparaged for being black and poor, she finds that she has an alternative: an invitation to a magical training camp from the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs. She's sure that this may be the key to finding her missing brother, Quinton - whom everyone except Amari has accepted as dead. As Amari starts to discover her own magic, she forges new friendships and finds new challenges in the form of evil and corruption within the organization. Can she find her brother and save herself at the same time? Grade 4 and up.

Applegate, Katherine. *Willodeen*. Feiwel and Friends. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-1-1250-14740-0

Orphaned Willodeen feels more comfortable with nature than with the villagers of Perchance, and this gives her a unique perspective as to how and why the local environment is disastrously changing. The villagers have killed all the warthog-like screechers; there are increasing droughts and deadly wildfires; and now even the annual migration of the beloved hummingbirds is threatened. Willodeen believes that all these events are related and sets out with her new friend, Connor, to solve the environmental mystery and restore the balance of nature. Grade 4 and up.

Bailar, Schuyler. *Obie Is Man Enough*. Crown. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-5933-7946-2

Obie, a competitive swimmer, has always relied on the support of his swim coach - but when his coach decides that transgender swimmers have no place on the team, Obie has to find the courage to join a new team, get back in the pool, and face the former friends and mentors who are determined to shame him for simply being himself. Grade 6 and up.

Barone, Rebecca E.F. *Race to the Bottom of the Earth: Surviving Antarctica*. Henry Holt. \$19.99. ISBN: 978-1-250-25780-2

In 1910, Englishman Robert Scott and Norwegian Roald Amundsen embarked on a perilous race to be the first to reach the South Pole. In 2018, another pair of explorers competed to be the first to cross Antarctica solo. Author Rebecca E.F. Barone writes in depth about their parallel quests. Filled with photographs and maps, this nonfiction adventure will keep readers at the edge of their seats. Grade 5 and up.

Braden, Ann. *Flight of the Puffin*. Nancy Paulsen Books. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-1-9848-1606-1

How far can a simple act of kindness travel? When Libby sends a postcard from her home in Vermont to a stranger on the other side of the country, she has no idea what effects it will have and how ripples will bounce back to positively impact her own community. An uplifting tale about empathy and overcoming preconceived ideas about yourself and others. Grade 5 and up.

Burke, Cliff. *An Occasionally Happy Family*. Clarion Books. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-358-32567-3

Theo Ripley - an indoor kid who would rather spend his days playing video games and drawing comics than exploring the Texas wilderness - hates the idea of a family camping trip to Big Bend National Park during the hottest month of the year. Even so, Theo and his well-

organized older sister Laura reluctantly embark with their science-teacher dad on a road trip that they won't soon forget. The wild bears, naked French tourists, and other surprises seem tame in comparison to the surprise their dad eventually springs on them - he has a girlfriend and the real purpose of the trip is for her to meet his family. The trip couldn't possibly get any worse, could it? Grade 5 and up.

Faruqi, Saadia. *Yusuf Azeem is Not a Hero*. Quill Tree Books. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-06-294325-5

Middle school can be hard, but Yusuf Azeem isn't going to let it get the best of him. Instead he's looking forward to competing in the annual Texas Robotics Competition. However, only ten minutes into the first day of school, he finds a hostile note in his locker which says, "You suck." It's the twentieth anniversary of 9/11 and although Yusuf and his family have lived in Frey, Texas since Yusuf was born, they and the rest of the town's Muslim-American community begin to be targets of hate. Yusuf just wants focus on getting his school's robotics team into the state competition but the actions of the school bully, son of a white nationalist, cause Yusuf to make some brave and challenging decisions. Grade 5 and up.

Fipps, Lisa. *Starfish*. Nancy Paulsen Books. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-1-984-81450-0

In this novel in verse, eleven-year-old Ellie, who has always been a fat kid, confronts bullies at school and her own obsessive mother while coming to terms with her big, beautiful body. She finds allies along the way, including a new neighborhood friend, an understanding therapist, and a supportive father, but in a fat-obsessed world, it's a struggle to let go of her "Fat Girl Rules." How will Ellie learn to stand up to those who judge her by appearances and show them her fabulous self? Grade 5 and up.

Freeman, Megan. *Alone*. Aladdin. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-1-5344-6756-9

After sneaking out of the house for an overnight with friends, twelve-year old Maddie awakens to find herself alone. Everyone else in the town has been mysteriously evacuated, leaving Maddie behind. Now she and her neighbor's abandoned dog, George, must find food, clean water, fuel, and a way to try to communicate with her missing family. Surely, someone will come back to get her – but as the months pass, Maddie has to deal with the realization that there may not be a rescue forthcoming and she must face the challenges of her new life alone. Grade 5 and up.

Higuera, Donna Barba. *The Last Cuentista*. Levine Querido. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-1-64614-089-3

Storytelling changes a new world in this enthralling mix of Mexican folklore and science-fiction adventure. Halley's comet is about to destroy the Earth, so 14-year-old Petra and family have embarked on one of three spaceships on a 300+-year journey to the distant planet Sagan. When Petra awakes from stasis, however, she finds that the ship has been taken over by the sinister Collective, her family has been purged, and the remaining survivors have had their memories reprogrammed. Petra resists reprogramming – and eventually, through her retellings of her grandmother's *cuentos*, helps other young passengers in a plan to escape. Grade 5 and up.

Khor, Shing Yin. *The Legend of Auntie Po*. Kokila. \$22.99. ISBN: 978-0-52555-488-2

It's 1885 and 13-year old Mei is the pie-baking, storytelling daughter of the head cook in a Sierra Nevada logging camp. As Chinese immigrants, she and her father find their lives clouded by racism and the ramifications of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Even the respect of the

camp foreman and Mei's close relationship with his daughter, Bea, can't change their difficult and painful reality. However, as Mei entertains the camp children by reimagining the myth of Paul Bunyan in the form of feisty larger-than-life Chinese matriarch Auntie Po, she begins to imagine rewriting her own story too. A brave and hopeful graphic novel. Grade 5 and up.

LaRocca, Rajani. *Red, White, and Whole*. Quill Tree Books. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-0630-4742-6

A first-generation American, Reha performs a balancing act between school and home, trying to fit in with her American peers while adhering to her Indian parents' values and high expectations. When her mother is diagnosed with leukemia, Reha's world is turned upside down and it becomes even more important to be the daughter her mother expects and deserves. Grade 5 and up.

Little Badger, Darcie. *A Snake Falls to Earth*. Levine Querido. \$18.99. ISBN: 978-1-6461-4092-3

Oli is a cottonmouth (yes, the snake) who lives in the Reflecting World, a world still connected to our own, where animal people can shift between animal and humanoid forms. When his friend Ami, an ancient toad, falls ill, Oli must travel to Earth to find a cure. Fortunately, he's not alone - he has the help of twin coyotes, a mischievous mockingbird, and a human girl named Nina. It's a race against time in this magical, mythical story about environmental stewardship. Grade 7 and up.

Lucas, Chad. *Thanks a Lot, Universe*. Harry N. Abrams. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-1-4917-5102-8

Turning 13 is a milestone that traditionally is celebrated with cake and presents - but on Brian's 13th birthday, he's greeted with the news that his dad is now on the run from the law and his mom has tried to commit suicide. This leaves Brian and younger brother Richie at the mercy of the foster-care system. Brian grapples with anxiety and panic attacks while trying to navigate family trauma, life as a 7th-grader, and questionable foster parents, though he gets help from a savvy teacher, her son, and her son's girlfriend, and from basketball teammate Ezra (who secretly has a crush on Brian). A coming-of-age story that deals understandingly with difficult issues. Grade 6 and up.

Mills, Claudia. *The Lost Language*. Margaret Ferguson Books. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-8234-5038-1

Can a dying language - or a dying friendship - be saved? Betsy, known as Bumble, and her domineering best friend Lizard have been inseparable for years, but when their quest to save a dying language in an attempt to please Betsy's career-obsessed linguistics professor mother goes sideways, the two begin to part ways. As Betsy begins to find herself and make other friends, Lizard, jealous, retaliates with a painful act of betrayal. All ultimately reach a new understanding. A compassionate novel in verse. Grade 6 and up.

Palacio, R.J. *Pony*. Alfred A. Knopf. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-0-5535-0811-6

Soon after twelve-year-old Silas witnesses the kidnapping of his photographer father by three mysterious horsemen, a strange pony that had accompanied them returns unattended to their cabin. Silas believes that the pony will lead him to his father, and so sets out on a dangerous rescue mission along with his ghostly companion, Mittenwool. Grade 5 and up.

Reynolds, Jason, Ibram X, Kendi, and Sonja Cherry-Paul. *Stamped (For Kids)*. Little, Brown. \$15.99. ISBN: 978-0-3161-6758-1

How did our government's founders and other famous historical figures think about race? How do these ideas affect society today? This book, subtitled "Racism, Antiracism, and You," gives middle-grade readers the means to discuss the ways in which racism is woven into the fabric of our nation, and how our perspective on race has been informed by deeply entrenched societal prejudices. A necessary and inspiring read. Grade 4 and up.

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Amber & Clay*. Candlewick. \$22.99. ISBN: 978-1-5362-0122-2

Set in ancient Greece, this brilliantly crafted, mostly-in-verse, novel tells the interlinked stories of Rhaskos, a red-headed Thracian slave boy – as common as clay - and Melisto, daughter of a wealthy family in Athens, as precious as amber. The two are bound together through Rhaskos's mother, Thratta, sold to become Melisto's nurse. Melisto spends much of the story as a ghost: sent at the age of ten to serve the goddess Artemis as a bear girl, Melisto is killed by a lightning strike. Her shade is then bound by Thratta to find her son and set him free. The story is told not only in the voices of Rhaskos, Thratta, and Melisto, but also in those of various gods – among them a very chatty Hermes – and the philosopher Sokrates. Rich, fascinating, and thought-provoking. Grade 6 and up.

Schmidt, Gary D. *Just Like That*. Clarion Books. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-544-08477-3

Set in 1968, Meryl Lee Kowalski, struggling with grief following the death of her best friend in a car accident, is sent to St. Elene's Preparatory School for Girls in Maine. There she deals with unwelcoming and entitled classmates and disapproving teachers, but is supported by Dr. Nora McKnockater, the school's redoubtable headmistress. Meryl Lee also befriends Matt Coffin, a young teen on the run from pursuing criminals and from trauma of his own, now taken in by Dr. McKnockater, who gives him his first true home. A poignant, warm, heartbreaking – and sometimes funny – story about people finding themselves and each other. Grade 5 and up.

Sheinkin, Steve. *Fallout*. Roaring Brook Press. \$19.99. ISBN: 978-1250149015

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union has heated up, and the world is the closest it has ever been to nuclear annihilation. Subtitled "Spies, Superbombs, and the Ultimate Cold War Showdown," this fascinating and gripping non-fiction story details how two superpowers pushed each other to the brink of catastrophe in 1962 and how luck, even more than diplomacy, prevented it from happening. Grade 6 and up.

Ursu, Anne. *The Troubled Girls of Dragomir Academy*. Walden Pond Press. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-0-0622-7512-7

Marya's brother Luka is being tested for magical potential and, if chosen, will become a sorcerer, trained to use magic to help in the war against "The Dread," a mysterious force that wipes out entire villages. When Marya accidentally botches her brother's chances, she puts her family's future in peril, and is remanded to Dragomir Academy, a reform school in the far north, where she must find her own way, build new allegiances, and combat the patriarchal establishment. Grade 5 and up.

Uss, Christina. *Erik vs. Everything*. Clarion Books. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-3581-2671-3

In the extended Sheepflattener family, members of which live by such personal mottos as *Pride*, *Conquer*, and *Trounce*, nine-year-old Erik's pick for himself is *Avoid Stuff*. He's not lazy; he's just got some fears (piano lessons) and phobias (ringing phones), plus he hasn't really found something he's good at. But unlike Erik, the rest of the loving, loyal Sheepflattener family embraces (wholeheartedly, and a bit outrageously) their Viking heritage, and despite his protests, Erik's older sister and his cousins – with a little help from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* - soon set out to help him overcome his fears and find his inner Viking. Grade 4 and up.

Valenti, Karla Arenas. *Loteria*. Alfred A. Knopf. \$16.00. ISBN: 978-0-593-17696-2

Life and Death's annual card game of Loteria puts eleven-year-old Clara's life on the line as she desperately tries to rescue her young cousin from the mythical kingdom of Aztlan. Unbeknownst to Clara, the outcome of the game will determine her ultimate fate. Magical realism paired with philosophy in a Mesoamerican setting. Grade 5 and up.

Venable, Colleen AF, and Stephanie Yue. *Katie the Catsitter*. Random House. \$12.99. ISBN: 978-1-9848-9563-9

Many families have a cat or two, but Katie's mysterious neighbor Madeline Lang has 217! When Katie is hired as a catsitter, she assumes she will be spending her evenings pouring bowls of kitty crunchies and emptying litter boxes – but these are no ordinary cats. Each has a specialty, from lock-picking to computer-hacking, to say nothing of ordering pizza, shopping for jet engines, and stealing furniture. Little does Katie know that she is about to get involved in one of the biggest superhero vs. villain battles to hit NYC. Who really is the Mousetress and does Katie have what it takes to save the day? Grade 4 and up.

Yelchin, Eugene. *The Genius Under the Table: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. Candlewick. \$16.99 ISBN: 978-1-5362-1552-6

What was it like to grow up in the Soviet Union during the Cold War? According to Yelchin's memoir, it meant living in a tiny apartment with his parents, his perfect ice-skating brother, and his cantankerous grandmother, all under the critical eye of a KGB spy who shares their kitchen and bathroom. The family has just one sleeping space, so Eugene is housed under the dining table, where he discovers what he loves the most - drawing. Unbeknownst to the family, Eugene spends his nights covering the underside of the table with art. Full of irony and wit, this is a compelling and serious look at a very different sort of childhood. Grade 4 and up.