



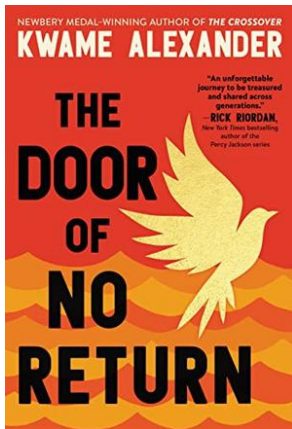
**Vermont's
Grade 4-8
Kids-Choice
Book Award**



VERMONT

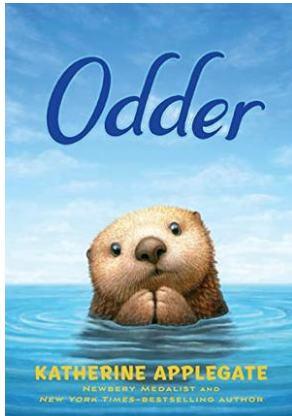
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES
libraries.vermont.gov

2023-2024 Nominees **Annotated List**



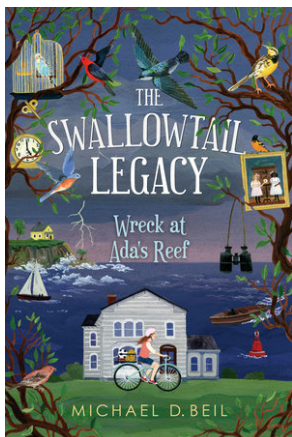
Alexander, Kwame. *The Door of No Return*. Little, Brown, 416 pp. ISBN: 978-0-316-44186-5.

Until the unthinkable happened, Kofi spent his carefree days swimming in the river Offin, playing oware with his grandfather, and trying to avoid his bully of a cousin. Kofi had been warned by his family to be careful around the water at night and that there are “Things about the water that you don’t know,” but one night Kofi ignores their warnings and goes for a late-night swim - and this mistake sends him on a journey of no return. This novel in verse is the first in a trilogy, starting in the West African Asante Kingdom of Ghana. Kofi’s journey will draw you in and break your heart - but this is a story that must not be missed.



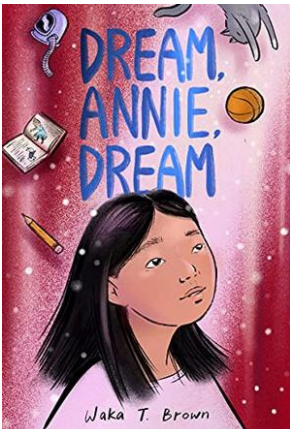
Applegate, Katherine. *Odder. Feiwei & Friends*, 288 pp. ISBN: 978-1-25014-742-4.

Mischievous and inquisitive Odder spends her days in the Pacific waters off the coast of Monterey Bay, California. When one of her adventures leads to trouble, Odder must rely on the human scientists at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Center for help. This gentle tale, based on the real Monterey Bay Aquarium Center Otter Rehabilitation Program, will have readers falling in love with Odder as they learn about her resilient species and the steps being taken to ensure their survival.



Beil, Michael D. *The Swallowtail Legacy: Wreck at Ada's Reef*. Pixel+Ink/Holiday House, 320 pp. ISBN: 978-1-64595-048-6.

Twelve-year-old Lark Heron-Finch and her blended family visit Swallowtail Island off the shores of Lake Erie for the summer. While there -with the help of nonagenarian Dinah, Swallowtail's oldest resident - Lark uncovers clues connected to a decades-old boat accident, revealing secrets about the island's inhabitants and Lark's own family. This compelling mystery will hook readers with its letters, reports, art, and maps.



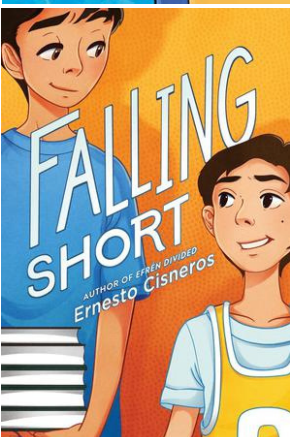
Brown, Waka T. *Dream, Annie, Dream*. Quill Tree Books/HarperCollins, 352 pp. ISBN: 978-0-06-301716-0.

As the daughter of Japanese immigrants, Annie Enoway has been raised to dream big – of starring roles in the theater, for example, or of taking her basketball skills to the NBA. But when Annie is passed over in favor of her best friend Jessica for lead roles in *Annie* and *The King and I*, her faith in her dreams begins to falter. Soon she finds herself navigating changing friendships, racial bias, and the opinions of others about what she can and cannot do as an Asian-American girl. Come cheer Annie on as she chases her big dreams in this inspiring coming-of-age story.



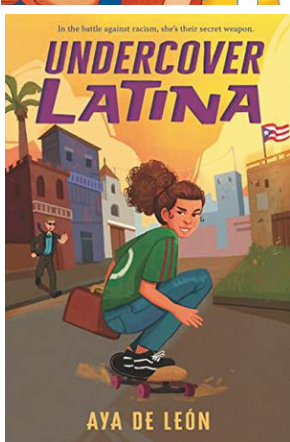
Christmas, Johnnie. *Swim Team*. HarperAlley, 256 pp. ISBN: 978-0-06305-677-1.

After starting at a new school in southern FL, Bree learns that the only elective that fits into her schedule will require her to face her biggest fear - the swimming pool. With the help of a spunky senior-citizen neighbor with a background in swimming and a new group of friends, Bree discovers a budding passion. Along the way she learns about the inequalities that people of color have had to endure in order to compete in a sport where they were not always welcome.



Cisneros, Ernesto. *Falling Short*. Quill Tree Books, 304 pp. ISBN: 978-0-06288-172-4.

Isaac and Marco have always had each other's backs. Whether at school or at home, their friendship is as solid as a rock. Now that they are in middle school, their different strengths send them down different paths. Marco finds friends in his college-track classes, while Isaac is embraced by the basketball team. Can they still lift each other up while facing the new challenges that come from this next phase in their lives?



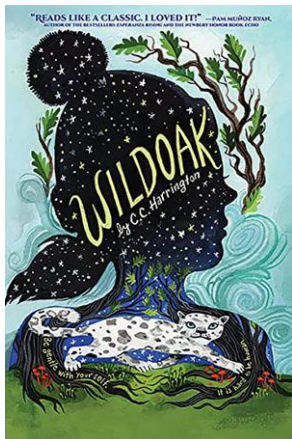
De Leon, Aya. *Undercover Latina*. Candlewick, 325 pp. ISBN: 978-1-53622-374-3.

Andréa Hernández-Baldoquín comes from a family of spies, but not just any spies. Her parents are part of an organization that specifically protects people of color. At fourteen, Andrea is finally given the opportunity for a mission of her own. Her assignment: to go undercover as a white girl and befriend the son of a white supremacist. Soon, however, complications arise as Andrea tackles issues of romance, friendship, and racial history and identity. A great spy novel that asks the reader to think about the systemic racism that exists in our country.



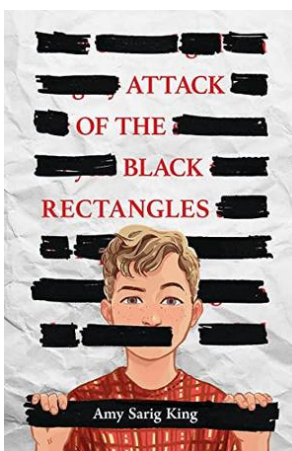
Griffith, Evan. *Manatee Summer*. Quill Tree Books, 288 pp. ISBN: 978-0-06309-491-8.

Peter is looking forward to a summer of adventures with his best friend Tommy, recording nature finds in their shared discovery journal and searching for the elusive manatees that are said to inhabit the canals near his Florida home. Peter's plans take a hit when he is given the responsibility of caretaking his increasingly forgetful grandfather while his mother works. Despite Peter's new normal, he manages to discover a manatee – and when the manatee is injured by a speed boat, Peter embraces the role as her protector and begins a fight that will impact him and his community for years to come.



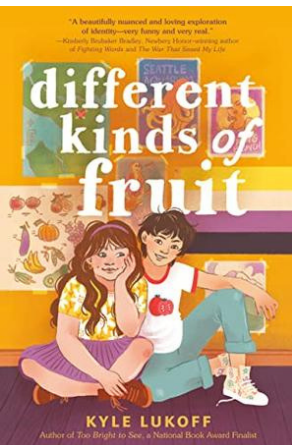
Harrington, C.C. *Wildoak*. Scholastic, 288 pp. ISBN: 978-1-33880-386-0.

Maggie, who suffers from a debilitating stutter, is sent to stay with her grandfather – and there, in nearby Wildoak Forest, she finds Rumpus, an abandoned snow leopard cub. Told in the alternating voices of Maggie and Rumpus, this is a wonderful story of compassion, conservation, and ultimately, hope for the future.



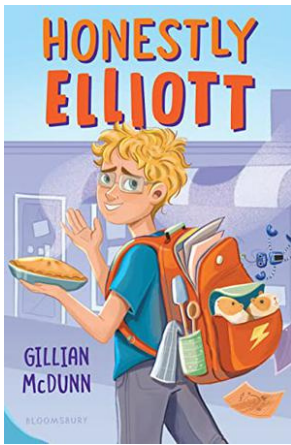
King, A.S. *Attack of the Black Rectangles*. Scholastic, 272 pp. ISBN: 978-1-33868-052-2.

When Mac and friends discover that portions of their classroom reading copies of *The Devil's Arithmetic* have phrases blacked out, they come up against teacher Laura Sett, who believes that "I am here to protect all of us from the ugly world." Should schools censor what kids read? It's a timely issue with a lot of opportunities for discussion.



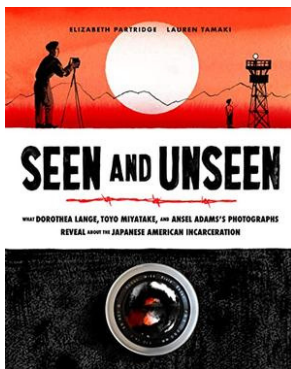
Lukoff, Kyle. *Different Kinds of Fruit*. Dial Books, 320 pp. ISBN: 978-0-59311-118-5.

Bailey, the new kid in Annabelle's class, is cool, fashionable, funny, and non-binary - which is something new to Annabelle's small-town community. She is fascinated with Bailey, but as their friendship progresses, questions arise. Why is Annabelle's father being so weird about it? Why does the presence of one preteen have such an impact on him and other community members? Annabelle is open to learning and willing to lead the way to a more inclusive town, a town with room for different kinds of fruit.



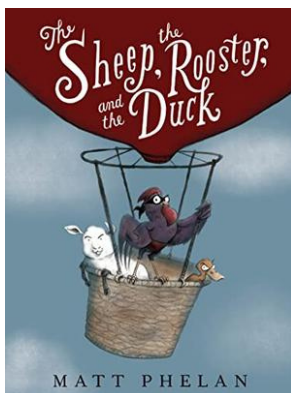
McDunn, Gillian. *Honestly Elliott*. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 288 pp. ISBN: 978-1-54760-625-2.

Elliott is being thrown a lot of curveballs all at once: his parents' divorce, a new half-sibling on the horizon, and a best friend that just moved away. Along with all of this, he is trying his best to manage the impulsivity and disorganization that accompany his ADHD, which is making for a very challenging school year. When his teacher assigns the class a project to create a business, he ends up partnered with Maribel, a popular and fastidious girl who, on the surface, seems to be his polar opposite. It turns out that both Maribel and Elliott share a love of cooking - a mutual interest that spawns not only their Desperation Pie business, but an unexpected friendship.



Partridge, Elizabeth. *Seen and Unseen*. Chronicle Books, 132 pp. ISBN: 978-1-45216-510-3.

The story of the World War II incarceration of Japanese-Americans in internment camps is told through the eyes of three very different photographers: Dorothea Lange, who opposed to the camps; Toyo Miyatake, a professional photographer and camp inmate; and Ansel Adams, who favored Japanese-American imprisonment. This creatively designed book combines original photographs with drawings, quotations, text, and reproductions of historical documents, to tell a powerful story of a shameful episode in American history.



Phelan, Matt. *The Sheep, the Rooster, and the Duck*. Greenwillow, 240 pp. ISBN: 978-0-06291-100-1.

Diplomat and inventor Benjamin Franklin, visiting France, relies on his young butler, ten-year-old Emile, to handle his household. After discovering an unlikely spy in the house, Emile is swept up in a swashbuckling adventure across France. Allied with the legendary Sheep, Rooster, and Duck, veterans of the Montgolfiers' first hot-air balloon flight, and daring Aeronaut Sophie, Emile reluctantly joins the fight to keep Benjamin's inventions from falling into dangerous hands. Graphic novel fans will adore this perilous (and hilarious) romp through 18th-century France.



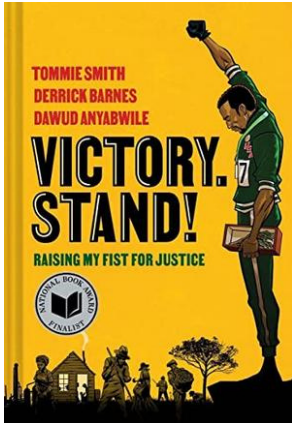
Roe, Monica. *Air*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 272 pp. ISBN: 978-0-37438-865-2.

Emmie is gritty in more ways than one. Not only is she strong, fierce, and independent, she's not afraid to get literal grit in her elbows while pursuing her chosen sport: she's an aspiring extreme wheelchair athlete. She was born with spina bifida, but took her parents at their word - she can do anything other kids can do. In order to truly compete, though, she needs a new wheelchair. Emmie is earning money for one through her own home business - but when some well-meaning community members learn of her goal, Emmie struggles with how and when to accept help, while remaining true to herself.



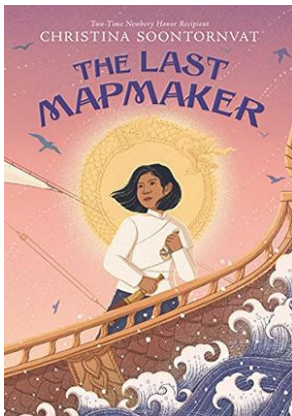
Senf, Lora. *The Clackity*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 288 pp. ISBN: 978-1-66590-267-0.

Coraline meets Alice in Wonderland in this spooky tale. Evie Von Rathe and her aunt, Desdemona, live in Blight Harbor – the seventh-most-haunted town in America. When Desdemona disappears in the town's creepy abandoned slaughterhouse, it's up to Evie to face her fears (and breathe through her anxiety), confront a murderous ghost, and rescue her aunt from the supernatural Clackity.



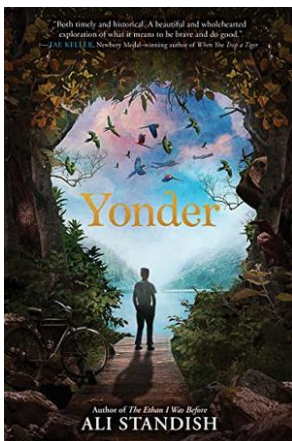
Smith, Tommie, et al. *Victory. Stand!* Norton Young Readers, 208 pp. ISBN: 978-1-32405-215-9.

Victory. Stand! is the powerhouse graphic memoir of athlete and activist Dr. Tommie Smith. Even as a child, one of fourteen born to a sharecropping family in rural Texas, Smith was competitive runner. As a teen, he was recruited by prestigious colleges, willing to offer him a place on their team, but not the privileges or even basic necessities offered other students. To compete in the 1968 Olympics, Smith and his fellow black athletes faced death threats and violence – and they would return home to poverty and oppression. All leads up to the iconic act of resistance that took place on that year's Olympic podium and the price Smith and teammates paid for taking their stand. This gripping story serves as a call for continued work toward racial justice.



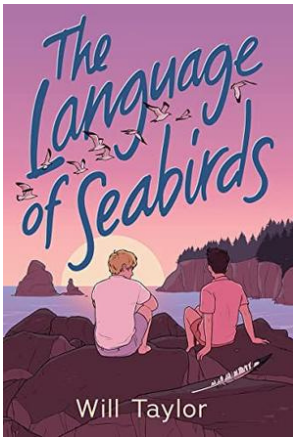
Soontornvat, Christina. *The Last Mapmaker*. Candlewick, 368 pp. ISBN: 978-1-5362-0495-7.

Set in a rich, Thai-inspired fantasy world, this is the story of twelve-year-old Sai who could have a bright future if she sticks with her job as assistant to Paiyoon, the Mangkon Royal Navy's Master Mapmaker. But Sai has secrets. Born into poverty with a conman for a father, Sai constantly struggles to keep her origins a secret. When Paiyoon and Sai are asked to join a mapping expedition to the Southern Seas, Sai sees an opportunity to change her luck - but will have to decide who to trust and what sacrifices she is willing to make to chase her dreams.



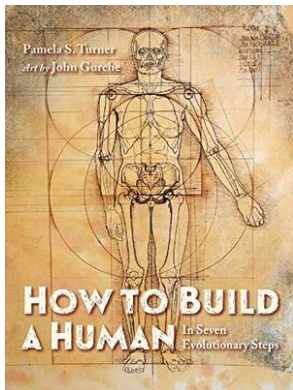
Standish, Ali. *Yonder*. HarperCollins, 368 pp. ISBN: 978-0-06298-568-2.

Hero! That's what everyone called Jack Bailey the day he dove into flood waters to rescue twin toddlers. To Danny Timmons, Jack Bailey seems fearless - always brave and kind despite losing his mother at an early age, and living with an abusive father. When Jack, beaten and injured, is taken in by Danny's parents, he regales Danny with tales of Yonder- a land of peace and plenty where rainbow-colored jewel birds fill the sky. When Jack goes missing, Danny searches for answers, suspecting everyone from the town bully to Jack's father and even the Town Sheriff of hiding the truth. With Jack gone and Danny's father off to fight in the World War II, Danny must find his own strength to face injustice – and to form his own opinions of what it means to be a hero.



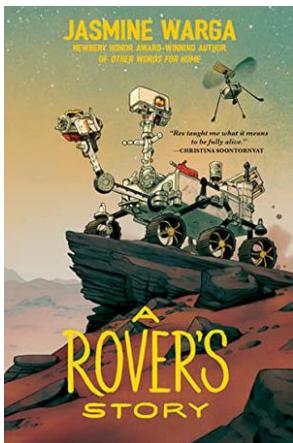
Taylor, Will. *The Language of Seabirds*. Scholastic, 256 pp. ISBN: 978-1-33875-373-8.

After his parents' recent separation, Jeremy and his dad head to a cabin on the Oregon coast while his mom moves out of their house. The vacation is not a success – Jeremy's father, coping with grief by drinking, becomes increasingly distant, critical, and curt. Things take a turn for the better, though, when Jeremy sees a boy running on the beach and meets Evan, with whom he forms a bond. This is a bittersweet story about a first crush – and about finding yourself, even when it seems that your family has come unmoored.



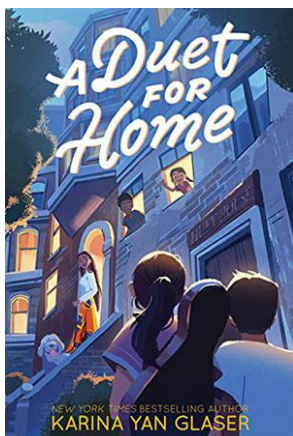
Turner, Pamela. *How to Build a Human*. Charlesbridge, 176 pp. ISBN: 978-1-62354-250-4.

In this entertaining, up-to-date, and utterly fascinating account of human evolution, Pamela Turner traces the history of our species in seven steps from “We Stand Up” through “We Smash Rocks,” “We Invent Barbecue,” and “We Become Storytellers.” Substantive reader-friendly science with wit, humor, and some very cool footnotes.



Warga, Jasmine. *A Rover's Story*. Balzer + Bray, 320 pp. ISBN: 978-0-06311-392-3.

Meet Resilience - Res for short - a Mars Rover. His designers, including Middle Eastern roboticist Rania, don't realize that there's more to Res than expected: he experiences emotions, appreciates music, makes friends with other robots, and most importantly, decides the fate of his own mission. The story is told through journal-like entries and letters to Res from Rania's daughter, Sophie. Be prepared to fall in love with this hilarious and sweet Rover, and his sidekick, the helicopter drone Fly.



Yan Glaser, Karina. *A Duet for Home*. Clarion Books, 368 pp. ISBN: 978-0-54487-640-8.

Huey House, a homeless shelter, is home for Tyrell and his mother while she is out of work, and now for June and family, after the traumatic loss of her father leaves them adrift. Both kids find solace in classical music and connect over music lessons with a persnickety neighbor. When proposed changes to the city's homelessness policies threaten the housing program, June and Tyrell rally the residents of Huey House to fight for the organization that has meant so much to them.



Yee, Lisa. Maizy Chen's Last Chance. Random House, 288 pp. ISBN: 978-1-98483-025-8.

Maizy Chen is reluctantly spending the summer in Last Chance, Minnesota, where her grandparents – the only Asian-Americans in town - run the Golden Palace Restaurant. During poker-playing sessions with her dying Grandpa (Opa), Maizy learns about the historical challenges that have faced Chinese immigrants - and that are still on-going. When Bud, the restaurant's iconic bear statue, is stolen and then vandalized with hate speech, Maizy finds unexpected friends in Last Chance as she investigates the crime. This story reminds us that a caring community can overcome the hateful words and actions - and that there's always room for food and celebration.



Yee, Reimena. My Aunt Is a Monster. Random House Graphic, 336 pp. ISBN: 978-0-59312-546-5.

Orphaned Safia Haziz, who is blind, is taken in by her aunt, Lady Whimsy - a.k.a. the World's Greatest Adventurer - who has been turned into a blue-furred monster by a mysterious curse. When Lady Whimsy's arch-nemesis, Pineapple Tart, resurfaces, Safia and Aunt Whimsy set off to track her down via ocean cruise and jungle exploration. This vivid and colorful graphic novel is a delightful romp.