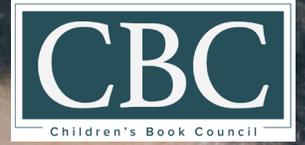


INTERNATIONAL  
**LITERACY**  
ASSOCIATION



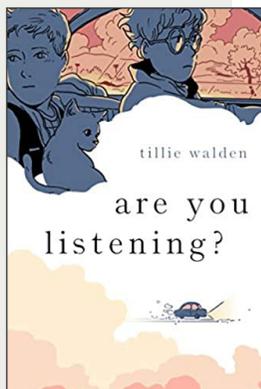
# YOUNG ADULTS' CHOICES

## 2020 Reading List



# What Is the Young Adults' Choices Reading List?

The Young Adults' Choices project began in 1986, funded by a special grant given to the International Literacy Association (ILA), and was supervised by the Association's Literature for Young Adults Committee. Cosponsored by ILA and the Children's Book Council (CBC), the goals of the project are to encourage young people to read; to make teens, educators, librarians and media specialists, and families and caregivers aware of new literature for young adults; and to provide middle and secondary school students with an opportunity to voice their opinions about books being written for them and in whose pages they can find characters and experiences to which they can relate. The books included on this enclosed list reflect themes, topics, and stories young adults value.

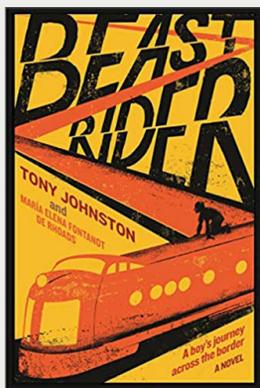


*Are You Listening?*  
Tillie Walden.

## ***Are You Listening?***

**Tillie Walden. Macmillan Children's Book Group/First Second.**

This graphic novel follows two LGBTQIA characters on a road trip, as each struggles to process and grow beyond their respective trauma and grief. Walden's blend of magical realism and raw, relatable heartache lends an element of refreshing unpredictability to this story about the power of friendship and the often painful process of healing after personal tragedy.



*Beast Rider.* Tony Johnston and María Elena Fontanot De Rhoads.

## ***Beast Rider***

**Tony Johnston and María Elena Fontanot De Rhoads. Abrams/Amulet Books.**

When 12-year-old Manuel leaves his home in Mexico to join his brother in Los Angeles, California, he begins a perilous journey. To make it to the border, he becomes a "beast rider," hopping a train in the face of great danger.



*Before They Were Authors: Famous Writers as Kids.*  
Elizabeth Haidle.

## ***Before They Were Authors: Famous Writers as Kids*** **Elizabeth Haidle. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers.**

Ten authors' childhood lives are vividly described in this colorful, graphic format. Writing and reading in many forms are entwined throughout the book including poems, newspapers, animation, drawing, and letters. The historic context, hardships, and daily routines of these legendary authors help readers appreciate the numerous influences on writers.

## ***The Bridge Home***

**Padma Venkatraman. Penguin Young Readers/Nancy Paulsen Books.**

Structured as letters from Viji to her sister, Venkatraman introduces four preteens forced by abuse and neglect into homelessness in India. A tale of survival, this book describes the agonizing choices family and friends must make to protect loved ones. This missive exemplifies the powerful bond between humans and our obligation to help one another cope with and overcome tragedy.

## ***The Cold Is in Her Bones***

**Peternelle van Arsdale. Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry Books.**

Gender roles and feminism are explored in this retelling of the Medusa myth. Milla learns the chilling truth that her new friend, Iris, is afflicted by the demon Hulda. When Iris is taken to quarantine, Milla secretly follows. During the journey, snakes appear in Milla's scalp, giving her the ability to embrace a wild strength and the courage to break the curse.

## ***The Field Guide to the North American Teenager***

**Ben Philippe. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray.**

Norris, a black French Canadian, has to move to Austin, Texas, where he meets someone from each of the major cliques: jocks, nerds, loners. He never actually tries to make friends because he knows he will be going back to Canada where he belongs. Later, he somehow finds himself going to prom where he might actually care what others think.

## ***Five Feet Apart***

**Rachael Lippincott with Mikki Daughtry and Tobias Iaconis. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.**

Controlling Stella and free-spirited Will, both cystic fibrosis patients, meet in the hospital while receiving treatments. Their disease means they can never touch, but that does not stop them from pursuing their love. Will knows he needs to stay away from Stella, so as not to endanger her lung transplant chances, but can he? This is a heartbreaking story of love and loss.

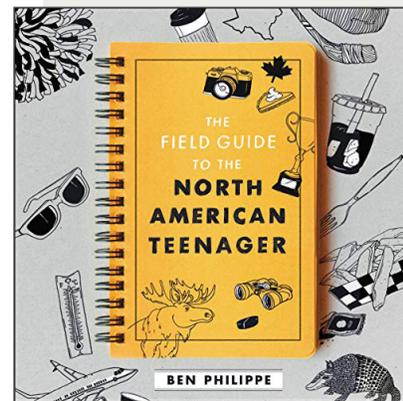
## ***Fly Girls: How Five Daring Women Defied All Odds and Made Aviation History (Young Readers' Edition)***

**Keith O'Brien. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers.**

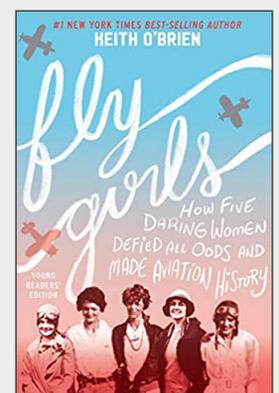
Fly girls refused to follow tradition. The obstacles these women faced in a male-dominated field challenged them to surpass expectations. These accounts are notable for not just what was achieved but also the time in history in which they were achieved. The stories of these five women's lives reads like fiction but is replete with facts about planes, races, and history.



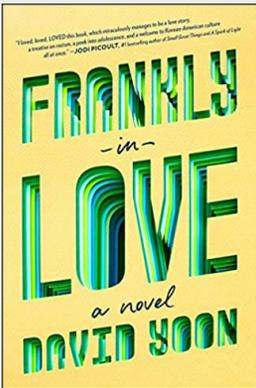
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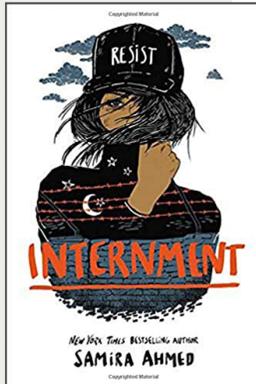


Frankly in Love. David Yoon.

## Frankly in Love

**David Yoon.** Penguin Young Readers/G.P. Putnam's Sons BFYR.

Frank is torn between his love for his fun and nerdy white girlfriend and his conflicting sense of duty to his matchmaking traditionalist parents. A Korean American teen, Frank looks for solutions to get out of his arranged relationship only to discover some surprising things about himself and first loves.



Internment.  
Samira Ahmed.

## The Haunted

**Danielle Vega.** Penguin Young Readers/Razorbill.

A teen refuses therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder and faces major changes. Starting with a clean slate at a new school, Hendricks is unsure whether the visions she sees and voices she hears are reality until her house tries to hurt her brother and her father. She and an unlikely assistant tackle her ghosts together to lay the past to rest.

## Internment

**Samira Ahmed.** Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Ahmed's novel imagines the equivalent of what law-abiding Japanese Americans suffered during World War II for Muslim American citizens today. The Amin family's internment illustrates the consequences of perpetuating a fear of "others," the result of a populace controlled by prejudice. Ultimately, however, this is a message of resistance and hope, a triumph of morality, where community and humanity prevail.



Loki: Where Mischief Lies.  
Mackenzi Lee. Ill. Stephanie Hans.

## Life Sucks: How to Deal With the Way Life Is, Was, and Always Will Be Unfair

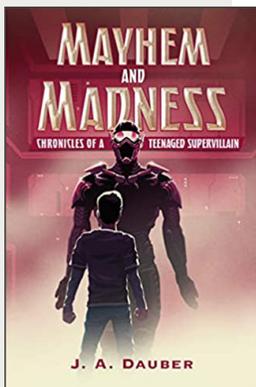
**Michael I. Bennett and Sarah Bennett. Ill. Bridget Gibson.** Penguin Young Readers/Penguin Workshop.

With no-nonsense advice, this father–daughter duo explains just how much high school is a hormonal, stressful, and chaotic storm phase of life that is not really all clichés. You really can be whoever you want once you figure out who that is, and some adults can be helpful as allies.

## \*Loki: Where Mischief Lies

**Mackenzi Lee. Ill. Stephanie Hans.** Disney Book Group/Marvel Press.

Young Loki longs to be seen as respected and heroic, but he lives in the shadow of his brother Thor. His magic makes others suspect villainy; only Amora sees magic as a gift, not a threat.



Mayhem and Madness:  
Chronicles of a Teenaged  
Supervillain. J.A. Dauber.

## Mayhem and Madness: Chronicles of a Teenaged Supervillain

**J.A. Dauber.** Holiday House.

When Bailey discovers a computerized and armored flying suit in a hidden bunker under his home, his life as an average teenager is over. Could the suit have belonged to his father who mysteriously disappeared years ago?

## \**Mirror, Mirror: A Twisted Tale*

Jen Calonita. Disney Book Group/Hyperion.

Readers are transported into the minds and hearts of plucky Snow White and evil Queen Ingrid in this reimagined Disney story. When Snow journeys to retake her rightful place as ruler of the kingdom, she faces seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The dwarves, a charming prince, and an unexpected stranger assist in the quest to restore justice.

## *On the Come Up*

Angie Thomas. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray.

Bri follows in the footsteps of her father, who was murdered, and creates a viral rap about a racial injustice at school. As she attempts to deal with the incident and the community's misconceptions, Bri discovers the power of her voice amplified by the support of those around her. A significant and powerful novel by the author of *The Hate You Give*.

## *Refugee 87*

Ele Fountain. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

"The only thing more dangerous than the journey is not taking it." Two boys endure unimaginable cruelty as they journey from their homeland to freedom in Europe. When Shif and Bini are torn from their families and forced into military service, the only option they have left is to run. This is a great story to build empathy for all refugees.

## *The Revolution of Birdie Randolph*

Brandy Colbert. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Birdie, a black high school sophomore, has a life path paved for her by strict parents who demand academic excellence. Her aunt Carlene and boyfriend, Booker, however, lead her to question what she has always held true. As Birdie makes her own life and love choices, she deals with difficult issues including social justice, addiction, and sexuality.

## *Sea Sirens (A Trot & Cap'n Bill Adventure, Book 1)*

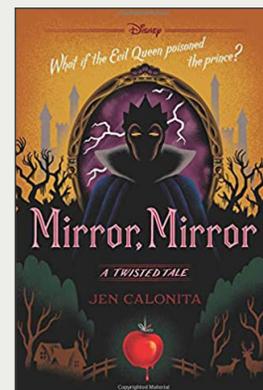
Amy Chu. Ill. Janet K. Lee. Penguin Young Readers/Viking BFYR.

In this exciting graphic novel, a smart and adventurous surfer girl named Trot and her grouchy one-eyed cat, Cap'n Bill, take a dive into a magical world under the sea. In a fantasy world of mermaids, Trot and Cap'n Bill are sucked into underwater deep sea battles between the sea sirens and an evil king.

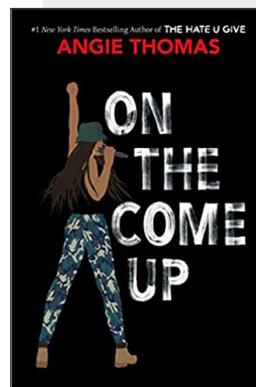
## *SHOUT*

Laurie Halse Anderson. Penguin Young Readers/Viking BFYR.

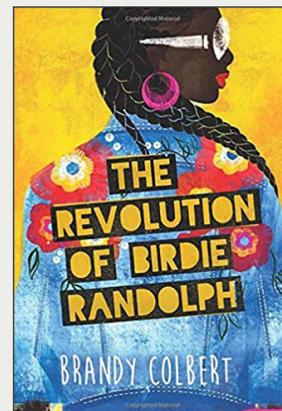
In this striking and intense free verse memoir, Laurie Halse Anderson, the author of the best-selling book *Speak*, tells the personal story about her experience with sexual violence and her path to recovery. This is a memoir from a survivor who refused to be silenced and a powerful call to action for the #MeToo movement.



*Mirror, Mirror: A Twisted Tale.* Jen Calonita.



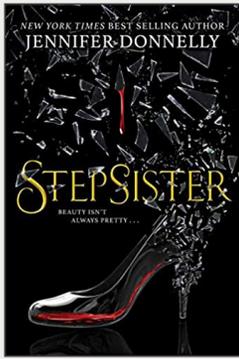
*On the Come Up.* Angie Thomas.



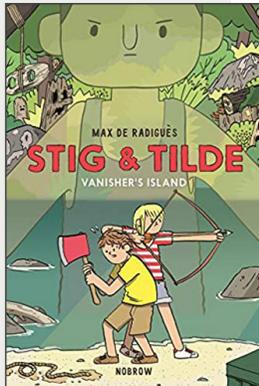
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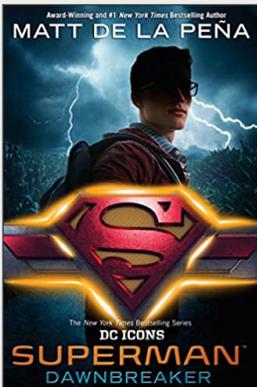
*Sea Sirens (A Trot & Cap'n Bill Adventure, Book 1).* Amy Chu. Ill. Janet K. Lee.



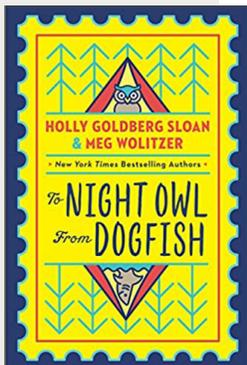
*Stepsister.* Jennifer Donnelly.



*Stig and Tilde: Vanisher's Island.* Max de Radiguès.



*Superman: Dawnbreaker.* Matt de la Peña.



*To Night Owl From Dogfish.* Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer.

## ***The Stars and the Blackness Between Them***

**Junauda Petrus. Penguin Young Readers/Dutton BFYR.**

Told in two strong and distinctive voices, this story takes us through the lives of two 16-year-old girls, Mabel from Minneapolis and Audra from Trinidad, as their friendship develops into a loving black queer relationship. The story unfolds with beautiful, authentic dialogue. Each section begins with a poem that moves readers from season to season using the signs of the zodiac.

## ***Stepsister***

**Jennifer Donnelly. Scholastic Press.**

Isabelle, the ugly stepsister, cuts off her own toes to try unsuccessfully to fit into Cinderella's shoes. The Fates make a bet with Chance and the Fairy Queen offers her a wish in exchange for finding the pieces of her broken heart. Will she change her destiny and prove that beauty is more than skin deep?

## ***\*Stig and Tilde: Vanisher's Island***

**Max de Radiguès. Nobrow/Flying Eye Books.**

In this coming-of-age graphic novel, 14-year-old twins Stig and Tilde gear up for a monthlong "kulku," a local tradition to show that they can survive on their own. Unexpectedly, they are stranded on an unknown island where the sole inhabitant is anything but welcoming. Simple and colorful illustrations convey a range of emotions in this mysterious and creepy story.

## ***Superman: Dawnbreaker***

**Matt de la Peña. Random House Children's Books/Random House BFYR.**

Teenage Clark Kent's powers are beginning to emerge, and he hides them from his classmates, family, and best friend, Lana Lang. But when their small town considers a stop-and-frisk law and immigrants are disappearing, Clark must decide if he is the one to save them all. Teens will love this fresh take on an iconic story.

## ***To Night Owl From Dogfish***

**Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer. Penguin Young Readers/Dial BFYR.**

When Bett's father introduces her to his boyfriend's daughter, Avery, they soon realize they are two very different people. As their parents' relationship begins to fade, the girls' relationship strengthens when they attend summer camp. Told in emails and letters, this novel explores the definition of family.

## **Tyna of the Lake (Gamayun Tales #3)**

**Alexander Utkin. Nobrow/Flying Eye Books.**

This richly illustrated Russian folktale tells the story of Tyna, the daughter of the Water Spirit, as she discovers her true heritage. Using intelligence and ingenuity, Tyna and her friend, the merchant's boy, escape the underwater realm and return to the dry land, his family, and home.

## **Watch Us Rise**

**Renée Watson and Ellen Hagan. Bloomsbury YA.**

Frustrated by their school's failure to address issues of inequality, Jasmine and Chelsea start a blog to take a stand and challenge the status quo. Things escalate when they are targeted by trolls, and they are forced to confront those who would silence their voices.

## **The Water Spirit (Gamayun Tales #2)**

**Alexander Utkin. Nobrow/Flying Eye Books.**

This retelling of a Russian folktale follows a merchant who, after angering the Water Spirit, must sacrifice his 9-year-old son. Raised by his parents and a House Spirit to be brave and intelligent, the boy journeys to the lake, meeting Tyna, the Water Spirit's daughter, along the way. Themes of family, loyalty, and sacrifice are revealed in this beautifully illustrated tale.

## **XL**

**Scott Brown. Random House Children's Books/Alfred A. Knopf BFYR.**

Will has always been small. At 16 years old, he is just shy of five feet tall. The only people who do not judge him by his size are Drew and Monica. But, suddenly, Will has a growth spurt. Will's new stature provides him with everything he has ever wanted until he realizes that it is what is on the inside that matters.

## **You Owe Me a Murder**

**Eileen Cook. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers.**

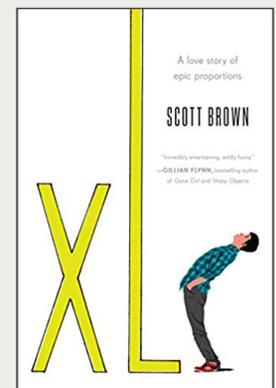
In this psychological mystery, Kim and a group of teens travel to Europe for a 16-day adventure. Things turn dark when Kim meets Nicki on the flight over and unwittingly ends up in a pact. Kim is to kill Nicki's mom in exchange for Nicki killing Kim's ex-boyfriend, Connor. Nicki keeps her end of the bargain, but will Kim?



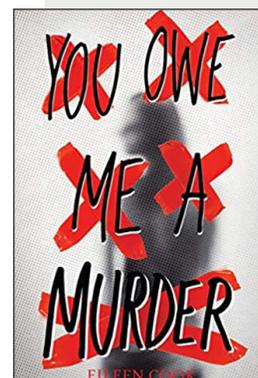
*Tyna of the Lake*  
(Gamayun Tales #3).  
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*Watch Us Rise.* Renée  
Watson and Ellen  
Hagan.



*XL.* Scott Brown.



*You Owe Me a Murder.*  
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\* Titles that received the most votes

# Young Adults' Choices 2020 Reading List

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- Beast Rider.* Tony Johnston and María Elena Fontanot De Rhoads. Abrams/Amulet Books.
- Before They Were Authors: Famous Writers as Kids.* Elizabeth Haidle. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers.
- The Bridge Home.* Padma Venkatraman. Penguin Young Readers/Nancy Paulsen Books.
- The Cold Is in Her Bones.* Peternelle van Arsdale. Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry Books.
- The Field Guide to the North American Teenager.* Ben Philippe. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray.
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- \**Mirror, Mirror: A Twisted Tale.* Jen Calonita. Disney Book Group/Hyperion.
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- Refugee 87.* Ele Fountain. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
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To learn more about the Young Adults' Choices project, please visit [literacyworldwide.org/choices](https://literacyworldwide.org/choices).

## About the Children's Book Council

The Children's Book Council (CBC) is the largest nonprofit trade association for children's book publishers in North America. The CBC offers children's publishers, from smaller independent presses to large international houses, the opportunity to work together on issues of importance to the industry at large, including educational programming, diversity in employment and books, and literacy advocacy. For more information, visit [cbcbooks.org](https://cbcbooks.org).

# Thank You to the 2019–2020 Young Adults' Choices Teams

Project cochairs: **Stephanie Burdic, Omaha, NE, and Lisa Morris-Wilkey, Casa Grande, AZ**

## AREA 1

**Jessica Lorentz Smith (team leader), Bend, OR, and Marina Welmers (team leader trainee), Tucson, AZ**

Amphitheater High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Apollo Middle School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Bend Senior High School (Bend, OR) ▪ Cascade Middle School (Bend, OR) ▪ Emily Gray Junior High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Gallego Primary Fine Arts Magnet School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ High Desert Middle School (Bend, OR) ▪ La Cima Middle School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Los Amigos Technology Academy (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Marana High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Mountain View High School (Bend, OR) ▪ Pacific Crest Middle School (Bend, OR) ▪ Pueblo High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Sabino High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Sahuarita High School (Sahuarita, AZ) ▪ Salpointe Catholic High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Sierra 2–8 School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Summit High School (Bend, OR) ▪ Sunnyside High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Tanque Verde High School (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Twin Peaks K–8 (Tucson, AZ) ▪ Walden Grove High School (Sahuarita, AZ)

## AREA 2

**Aimee Thompson (team leader), Old Orchard Beach, ME**

Kennebunk High School (Kennebunk, ME) ▪ Middle School of the Kennebunks (Kennebunk, ME) ▪ Noble High School (North Berwick, ME) ▪ Noble Middle School (North Berwick, ME) ▪ Old Orchard Beach High School (Old Orchard Beach, ME) ▪ Saco Middle School (Saco, ME)

## AREA 3

**Nina James (team leader), Sarasota, FL**

Booker High School (Sarasota, FL) ▪ McIntosh Middle School (Sarasota, FL) ▪ Riverview High School (Sarasota, FL)

## AREA 4

**Julianne Scullen (team leader), Andover, MN, and Christine Aspegren (team leader trainee), Topeka, KS**

Coon Rapids High School (Coon Rapids, MN) ▪ Coon Rapids Middle School (Coon Rapids, MN) ▪ Northdale Middle School (Coon Rapids, MN) ▪ Washburn Rural High School (Topeka, KS) ▪ Washburn Rural Middle School (Topeka, KS)

## AREA 5

**Cheryl McCall (team leader), Crestwood, KY**

East Oldham Middle School (Crestwood, KY) ▪ North Oldham High School (Goshen, KY) ▪ North Oldham Middle School (Goshen, KY) ▪ Oldham County High School (La Grange, KY) ▪ Oldham County Middle School (La Grange, KY) ▪ South Oldham High School (Crestwood, KY) ▪ South Oldham Middle School (Crestwood, KY)