



# Young Reader's Choice Award

## YRCA Nominees 2017

### Book Profiles

#### **Junior Division**

##### ***El Deafo – Cece Bell***

**What's it about?** The Phonic Ear gives Cece the ability to hear--sometimes things she shouldn't--but also isolates her from her classmates. She really just wants to fit in and find a true friend, someone who appreciates her as she is. After some trouble, she is finally able to harness the power of the Phonic Ear and become "El Deafo, Listener for All." And more importantly, declare a place for herself in the world and find the friend she's longed for.

**What kind of book is it?** Autobiography; graphic novel; Self-acceptance/self-esteem; real life

**Reviews:** *Bell's book should be an inspiration for those who are "different," and it should help others to understand just what being different means. Required reading isn't always fun reading. "El Deafo" should be the first and is definitely the second.*

**Similar to...** Smile, Wonder

##### ***The Circus Dogs of Prague – Rachelle Delaney* CANADIAN AUTHOR SERIES**

**What's it about?** JR and his friends are on their way to Prague with his human, George, and George's Russian girlfriend, Nadya, where they plan to take in the sights and meet Nadya's brother, a circus performer. But something is amiss at the circus-- the animals are unhappy. Not only that, but a fancy new circus is coming to town, threatening to put everyone out of a job. It's up to JR and the embassy dogs to save the show, with the help of some unlikely accomplices.

**What kind of book is it?** Animal stories; adventure; mystery

**Reviews:** None

**Similar to...** The One and Only Ivan; The metro dogs of Moscow; Unleashed

## **Absolutely Almost – Lisa Graff**

**What's it about?** Ten-year-old Albie has never been the smartest, tallest, best at gym, greatest artist, or most musical in his class, as his parents keep reminding him, but new nanny Calista helps him uncover his strengths and take pride in himself.

**What kind of book is it?** Self-acceptance/self-esteem; real life; multicultural; families

**Reviews:** *Graff's gentle story invokes evergreen themes of coming to appreciate one's strengths (and weaknesses), and stands out for its thoughtful, moving portrait of a boy who learns to keep moving forward, taking on the world at his own speed.*

**Similar to...** Wonder, Fourteenth Goldfish, Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life

## **New Kid – Tim Green**

**What's it about?** A troubled kid finds his bearings in a new school after a baseball coach offers him a spot on the team. Written by former NFL defensive end.

**What kind of book is it?** Sports; gritty; real life; family

**Reviews:** *"Exciting, romantic and thought-provoking, this book scores a home run." - Kirkus Reviews (starred review)*

**Similar to...** Mike Lupica or Dan Gutman books

## **The Fourteenth Goldfish – Jennifer Holm**

**What's it about?** Ellie's scientist grandfather has discovered a way to reverse aging, and consequently has turned into a teenager - which makes for complicated relationships when he moves in with Ellie and her mother, his daughter.

**What kind of book is it?** Witty; families; short (190 pages); sci-fi; introspective; aging

**Reviews:** *Experiencing life in another person's shoes is a familiar motif in children's books...But here the change is permanent. Grandpa Melvin isn't suddenly going to go back to his adult self...Youth, old age, life, death, love, possibilities and — oh yes — goldfish all come together in this warm, witty and wise novel... A great choice for book groups and class discussions as well as individual reading.*

**Similar to...** Smile; Tuck Everlasting

## **Rain Reign – Ann M. Martin**

**What's it about?** Rose Howard is obsessed with homonyms. She's thrilled that her own name is a homonym, and she purposely gave her dog Rain a name with two homonyms (Reign, Rein), which, according to Rose's rules of homonyms, is very special. Not everyone understands Rose's obsessions, her rules, and the other things that make her "different" - not her teachers, not other kids, and not her single father.

When a storm hits their rural town, rivers overflow, the roads are flooded, and Rain goes missing. Rose's father shouldn't have let Rain out. Now Rose has to find her dog, even if it means leaving her routines and safe places to search.

**What kind of book is it?** Asperger's/autism; dogs; families; real life; emotional

**Reviews:** *Though Rose's story is often heartbreaking, her matter-of-fact narration provides moments of humor. Readers will empathize with Rose, who finds strength and empowerment through her unique way of looking at the world.*

**Similar to...** Counting by 7s; Ribs; Mockingbird; Rules

## **Loot – Jude Watson**

**What's it about?** When Alfie McQuinn, the notorious jewel thief, is killed on a job, his last words to his son, March, are to "find jewels" and this instruction leads the boy to Jules, the twin sister he never knew he had--and the perfect partner to carry on the family business.

**What kind of book is it?** Families; action packed; thriller

**Reviews:** *The high level of suspense, ultra-short chapters, and fast pace will hook readers of all stripes.*

**Similar to...** The 39 Clues, Swindle

## **The Thickety: A Path Begins – J.A. White SERIES**

**What's it about?** When twelve-year-old Kara discovers her mother's grimoire in the dangerous forest, she must decide if she'll use it, even though such magic is forbidden.

**What kind of book is it?** Magic; fantasy; good vs evil; religion; dark; horror (best for older readers)

**Reviews:** *The spellbinding story, lashings of suspense and stalwart heroine will draw in fantasy fans and keep them reading until the bitter ending.*

**Similar to...** Fablehaven; Savvy; Inkheart; Reckless

## Intermediate Division

### *The Crossover* – Kwame Alexander

**What's it about?** Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health.

**What kind of book is it?** Sports; families; real life; novel in verse; multicultural; emotional

**Reviews:** *The poems dodge and weave with the speed of a point guard driving for the basket, mixing basketball action with vocabulary-themed poems, newspaper clippings, and Josh's sincere first-person accounts that swing from moments of swagger-worthy triumph to profound pain. This verse novel delivers a real emotional punch before the final buzzer.*

**Similar to...** Brown Girl Dreaming; Rocket Man; Home of the Brave

### *The Night Gardener* – Jonathan Auxier CANADIAN AUTHOR

**What's it about?** When orphaned Irish siblings Molly and Kip arrive to work as servants at a creepy, crumbling English manor house, they discover that the house and its inhabitants are not what they seem. Soon the siblings are confronted by a mysterious stranger and the secrets of the cursed house will change their lives forever.

**What kind of book is it?** Families; mystery; Gothic; thriller; plot-driven, fast-paced

**Reviews:** *Lots of creepiness, memorable characters, a worthy message, Arrasmith's atmospheric drawings and touches of humor amid the horror make this cautionary tale one readers will not soon forget.*

**Similar to...** The Greenglass House, Coraline, A Series of Unfortunate Events, The Nest

### *The Iron Trial* – Holly Black and Cassandra Clare SERIES

**What's it about?** 12-year-old Callum Hunt has been warned about the dangers of magic for as long as he can remember by his father, a former mage, who blames the Magisterium, a magic academy, for the death of his wife. Despite Cal's best attempts to fail the entrance exam into that academy, his inherent magical ability gets him accepted, and he begins the first of five years of his training.

**What kind of book is it?** Coming of age; magic; fantasy; plot-driven

**Reviews:** *The third-person narration, filtered through Callum's delightfully insecure-and-overcompensating-with-snarky-bravado perspective, carries a tone that will likely have readers chortling in recognition.*

**Similar to...** Harry Potter; The Novice

## **Deep Blue – Jennifer Donnelly** SERIES

**What's it about?** Uncovering an ancient evil, Serafina, a mermaid of the Mediterranean Sea, searches for five other mermaid heroines, who are scattered across the six seas, to save their hidden world.

**What kind of book is it?** Fantasy; magic; adventure; Plot-driven; World-building

**Reviews:** *The story is appropriately cinematic, and perhaps with a few songs added to the mix, could be adapted into an animated Disney hit... This series opener raises far more questions than it answers, but it lays a promising groundwork for the forthcoming volumes.*

**Similar to...** Fallen, Of Poseidon

## **Outside In – Sarah Ellis** CANADIAN AUTHOR

**What's it about?** Lynn's life is full, school, outlet shopping with her friends, and dealing with her free-spirited mother, one day Lynn meets a mysterious girl named Blossom. Blossom's family lives secretly in a bunker beneath a city reservoir. The two girls become friends, but Lynn must tell no one that Blossoms exists. Can Lynn keep their secret without lying to her mother and her friends?

**What kind of book is it?** Friendship; secrets; real life; quirky, character-driven

**Reviews:** *More than a thoughtful ode to found family, this slim, sweet novel challenges readers to look anew at the ones they have.*

**Similar to...** The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen, Liar and Spy, Because of Mr. Terupt

## **Skink No Surrender – Carl Hiaasen**

**What's it about?** With the help of an eccentric ex-governor, a teenaged boy searches for his missing cousin in the Florida wilds.

**What kind of book is it?** Ecofiction; adventure; funny

**Reviews:** *Hiaasen's fierce love for the wilds of Florida, his fundamental commitment to decency and his penchant for the bizarre are all on full display in this, a read as agreeable as his hero is... Reluctant readers (especially guys) will surrender themselves to this page-turner.*

**Similar to...** Other Carl Hiaasen books

## **Greenglass House – Kate Milford**

**What's it about?** At Greenglass House, a smuggler's inn, twelve-year-old Milo, the innkeepers' adopted son, plans to spend his winter holidays relaxing but soon guests are arriving with strange stories about the house sending Milo and Meddy, the cook's daughter, on an adventure.

**What kind of book is it?** Adventure; mystery; fantasy; RPGs

**Reviews:** *Milo's world seems comfortably contemporary; the current history of his parallel world is mostly background that's revealed at the close. An abundantly diverting mystery seasoned with mild fantasy and just a little steampunk... An enchanting, empowering, and cozy read.*

**Similar to...** The Mysterious Benedict Society; The Westing Game

## **The Boundless – Kenneth Oppel CANADIAN AUTHOR**

**What's it about?** Will Everett wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but after his family's fortunes change, he finds himself with a first-class ticket for The Boundless: the longest, most glamorous locomotive in the world. But its maiden voyage won't be a smooth ride for Will. After witnessing a murder during a station stop, he barely makes it back onto the train, then must work his way from the caboose forward to his father in first class--with the murderer and his cronies on his tail.

**What kind of book is it?** Historical fiction; adventure; thriller; social justice

**Reviews:** *With its imaginative plot, cast of colorful, well-rounded characters, and nonstop action, Oppel's latest is a delight to read from the first page right through the satisfying conclusion.*

**Similar to...** Airman

## Senior Division

### *Through the Woods – Emily Carroll*

**What's it about?** A collection of five mysterious, spine-tingling graphic short stories.

**What kind of book is it?** Horror, fantasy, graphic novel, short stories, fairy tales, ghosts

**Reviews:** *This is a beautifully rendered but deeply chilling collection of vignettes that will be most appreciated by teens and adults who are fans of fairy tales, horror, and the things that hide in the dark.*

**Similar to...** Edgar Allen Poe, Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark

### *In Real Life – Cory Doctorow and Jen Wang*

**What's it about?** Immersing herself in an online role-playing game where she enjoys fantasy heroics, Anda confronts a difficult choice when she befriends a disadvantaged Chinese kid who works illegally to collect valuable objects and sell them to other players for real money.

**What kind of book is it?** Social justice; gamer culture; fantasy/real life

**Reviews:** *The combination of girls-only gaming; gorgeous, stylized artwork; and a meaningful, sophisticated message about online gaming makes this a surefire hit for readers everywhere, especially girls.*

**Similar to...** Lumberjanes, Boxers and Saints

### *To All the Boys I've Loved Before – Jenny Han*

**What's it about?** Lara Jean writes love letters to all the boys she has loved and then hides them in a hatbox until one day those letters are accidentally sent.

**What kind of book is it?** Romance, chick lit, multicultural, real life

**Reviews:** *Most teens will guess the outcome but enjoy the many twists and turns along the way in this lyrical novel. Readers will remember the Song sisters and the boys in their lives long after the final page turn... Short chapters and a convincing romance keep the story sailing as Lara Jean learns, at long last, to take charge. A wonderful choice for fans of Sarah Dessen and Stephanie Perkins.*

**Similar to...** Peace, love and baby ducks, Gossip girl, Clique novels

## **The Young Elites – Marie Lu**

**What's it about?** Adelina Amouteru survived the blood fever, a deadly illness that killed many, but left others with strange markings and supernatural powers. Cast out by her family, Adelina joins the secret society of the Young Elites and discovers her own dangerous abilities.

**What kind of book is it?** Fantasy, fast paced, intricate, world building

**Reviews:** *Brimming with engaging battles-physical and emotional-and meticulous backdrops, Lu's new series will be a surefire hit with old and new fans alike.*

**Similar to...** Legend, The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave, Graceling

## **Since You've Been Gone – Morgan Matson**

**What's it about?** Quiet Emily's sociable and daring best friend, Sloane, has disappeared leaving nothing but a random list of bizarre tasks for her to complete, but with unexpected help from popular classmate Frank Porter, Emily gives them a try.

**What kind of book is it?** Friendship, families, real life

**Reviews:** *...this is a thoroughly enjoyable book with a terrific romantic subplot and an ending that ties up the loose ends believably and satisfyingly.*

**Similar to...** Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants, Sarah Dessen, Maureen Johnson

## **I'll Give You the Sun – Jandy Nelson**

**What's it about?** A story of first love, family, loss, and betrayal told from different points in time, and in separate voices, by artists Jude and her twin brother Noah.

**What kind of book is it?** LGBTQ, real life, emotional, multiple perspectives, families

**Reviews:** *In an electric style evoking the highly visual imaginations of the young narrators, Nelson captures the fraught, antagonistic, yet deeply loving relationship Jude and Noah share... Readers are meant to feel big things, and they will—Nelson's novel brims with emotion (grief, longing, and love in particular) as Noah, Jude, and the broken individuals in their lives find ways to heal.*

**Similar to...** How to save a life, Eleanor and Park, Will Grayson Will Grayson



## **Panic – Lauren Oliver**

**What's it about?** In the poor town of Carp, New York, a group of teens enters a high-stakes game that involves a series of secretive, possibly deadly challenges throughout the summer, with the winner receiving more than 50,000 dollars--enough money to start a new life.

**What kind of book is it?** Thriller, games, friendship, secrets, dystopian

**Reviews:** *Readers will understand how the deliberately built characters would and could do just about anything for a shot at getting out. The only thing more terrifying than the game itself is not getting the chance to play it.*

**Similar to...** The Hunger Games

## **Four – Veronica Roth**

**What's it about?** A collection of four pre-Divergent stories plus three additional scenes from Divergent, all told from Tobias's point of view, that follow Tobias's transfer from Abnegation to Dauntless, his Dauntless initiation, the first clues that a foul plan is brewing in the leadership of two factions, and the weeks after he meets Tris Prior.

**What kind of book is it?** Dystopian, Science fiction, world building, suspenseful

**Reviews:** *For those who were brokenhearted to find themselves at the last page of Allegiant, this brief look back through Four's eyes will be a welcome trip down memory lane... Sufficient information is interwoven to make the world accessible to new readers, while fans will find a surreptitious thrill digging into a taciturn hero's back story.*

**Similar to...** Red Queen, Hunger Games, City of Bones, The Young Elites