



Young Reader's Choice Award

YRCA 2017 BOOK TALKS

Junior Division

The Thickety: A Path Begins – J.A. White

When Kara Westfall was six years old, her mother was convicted of the worst of all crimes: witchcraft. Since that horrible night, Kara and her family have been shunned by the people of their village, who believe that nothing is more evil than magic - except, perhaps, the dark forest. It has many names; this place. Sometimes it is called the Dark Wood or Sordyr's Realm but mostly it's called the Thickety.

Everything changes the day a strange bird snatches Kara's locket - the only thing she has left of her mother. Desperate to get her locket back, she chases the bird into the forbidden Thickety, where she discovers a strange book called a grimoire. As the grimoire triggers a series of terrifying events, she realizes that magic is power and power can be deadly.

Rain Reign – Ann M. Martin

When Rain lays her head in Rose's lap and looks into her eyes, Rose feels good. Rose doesn't always feel good.

Rose has high-functioning autism. She is obsessed with rules, numbers and especially homonyms and hits herself when her frustrations become too much.

One evening, Rose's father brings home a stray dog. Rose names her Rain which is a homonym, of course. Rain disappears during a hurricane and when Rose finally finds Rain at an animal shelter, she also finds that Rain is not hers anymore. Rain belongs to a family named Henderson, the original owners, and rules are rules and Rose must follow them.

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The Circus Dogs of Prague – Rachelle Delaney

J.R. the Jack Russell terrier is off on a hilarious adventure with his three dog friends and his human George. They are visiting a daring trapeze artist at the Circus Sergei in Prague.

Like most Jack Russells, all JR wants is to keep everyone happy. Except cats. He HATES cats. So when JR and his friends arrive at the circus, his terrier senses go crazy! The animals are unhappy. The boxing kangaroo won't box, the dancing chimp won't dance. Not only that but a fancy new circus is coming to town, threatening to put everyone out of a job!

Will JR and the dogs be able to save the show? If only it didn't all depend on that pesky cat!

The Fourteenth Goldfish – Jennifer Holm

Have you ever felt awkward in school? Ellie knows what that is like.

Her grandfather has discovered the secret of youth and is now trapped in the body of an 11 year old!

Now that he's forced to go to her middle school, things are going to get even stranger...Why? ... Because although he looks young, he's still Grandpa and still says things like "What do you know anyways? You're just a kid." and "Three dollars for a school lunch? This is a bargain!"

Ellie's Grandpa hatches a plan to sneak into his old lab and swipe what he needs to continue his research. Meanwhile, Ellie comes to admire the grandfather she has barely known. She listens to his stories of famous scientists and discovers her own passion for science.

The End? Or is it just the beginning? You decide.

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Loot – Jude Watson

What if your dad was the greatest jewel thief in the world - But he just died on the job.

And then you find out your mom was a jewel thief too - But she also died on the job.

And then you find out you have a twin sister - that you didn't even know about - and you have no idea where she is ...

Then you find out you've just inherited a fatal curse linked to jewels that your dad and mom stole and unless you can find your twin sister and these jewels before your 13th birthday ... you're next on the list!

All you have to help you is the wisdom your dad lived by:

- Never trust a guy who says "trust me"
- If people were meant to look back – they'd be owls
- Do it any way you want, but don't do it stupid
- No matter how good you are, remember this Sometimes you get caught.

Absolutely Almost – Lisa Graff

Albie struggles with living up to his parents' expectations. He is also a hero unlike any you have ever seen before.

Albie is *not* extraordinary in any way!

Try as he might he's just not good at anything. Reading and writing is tough. Math's a headache. He's not the world's greatest artist and he's not going to win any awards for his wit.

When he finds himself with a new babysitter, a girl named Calista who loves art, he's initially skeptical. She soon wins him over though, and good thing too since there are a lot of confusing things going on in his life.

One day he's popular and another day, he's not. He's been kicked out of his old school thanks to his grades. Then there's the fact that his best friend is part of a reality show - and well, things aren't easy for Albie. But sometimes, when you're not the best at anything, you can make it up to people by simply being the best kind of person.

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New Kid – Tim Green

(read in a sportscaster voice) Well, here we are at the championship game, the score is tied thanks to Tommy Rust who hit a two run homer in the third. Now he's back up to bat with bases loaded, bottom of the last inning, this could be the game winning hit, this is what he's been dreaming of, ...

(switch to normal voice) Then Tommy sees his dad and he knows he won't ever know the final score of the game – it's time to run, not play ball. For as long as he can remember, Tommy and his dad have been on the run, changing towns, changing names, changing friends, and never being able to finish a season of baseball. Now he's Brock, the boy called Tommy is history; there's a new house, new school, new baseball team and a new coach to impress. Only this time the coach is just about as mysterious as his own dad. Will Brock be here long enough to see the end of the season – or will his father make him the new kid in yet another town?

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El Deafo – Cece Bell

(READ TITLE AT END)

IMAGE 1: “I was a regular little kid. I played with my mom’s stuff”, I wore my favorite clothes over and over again and annoyed my brother and sister.



IMAGE 2: But one day I got sick. And everything changed.

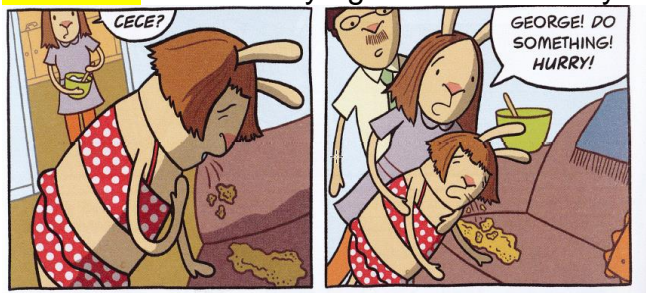


IMAGE 3: “Everything is so quiet.” I could no longer hear.

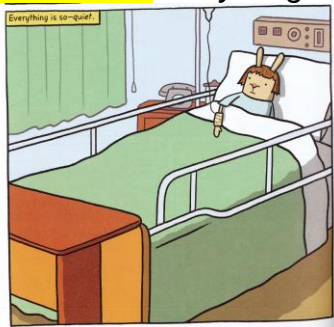


IMAGE 4: I have to wear the dreaded phonic ear just so I can hear a little.



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IMAGE 5: I think I'm saying "I'll have a coke." But it comes out "I'll have a goat." I don't want a goat!



IMAGE 6: Sometimes it helps me hear too much. Ew!



IMAGE 7: (show cover again) One day I discover that being deaf is a superpower. I'm El Deafo, Listener for All. Read about my adventures as **El Deafo**, a graphic novel based on the real story of the author Cece Bell.

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Intermediate Division

***The Crossover* – Kwame Alexander**

Dribbling At the top of the key,

I'm MOVING & GROOVING, POPPING and ROCKING – Why you BUMPING, man?
C'mon, Why you LOCKING?

Be careful now, 'cause I'm Criss CROSSING – FLOSSING – BOSSING – flipping and
my dipping will leave you S L I P P I N G on the floor, while I SWOOP in to the finish
with a fierce finger roll . . . Straight in the hole: Swoooooooooooooosh.

Josh Bell is my name. But Filthy McNasty is my claim to fame. Folks call me that 'cause
my game's acclaimed, so downright dirty, it'll put you to shame.

My hair is long, my height's tall. See, I'm the next Kevin Durant, LeBron, and Chris Paul.

Remember the greats, my dad likes to gloat: I balled with Magic and The Goat.

But tricks are for kids, I quickly reply. Don't need your pets - my game's so fly.

Mom says, Your dad's old school, like an ol' Chevette. You're fresh and new, like a red
Corvette.

Your game so sweet, it's a crêpes suzette. Each time you play, it's nothing but net.

If anyone else called me fresh and sweet, I'd burn mad as a flame. But I know she's
only talking about my game.

See, when I play ball, I'm on fire. When I shoot, I inspire. The hoop's for sale, and
man... I'm the buyer.

***Book trailer available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppfOEp73H3s>

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Deep Blue – Jennifer Donnelly

Deep in the black mountains, deep in the Romanian night, deep beneath the cold, dark waters of the ancient Olt, the river witches sing.

*Daughter of Merrow, leave your sleep,
The ways of childhood no more to keep.
The dream will die, a nightmare rise,
Sleep no more, child, open your eyes.
Wake now, child, find the five
While there's time, keep hope alive.*

Serafina, heir to one of the oldest civilizations of merfolk, sees this warning in a dream. It seems something is stirring, as if waking from a long sleep. Something ancient, something evil. With dreams as her only guide, Sera must find the five others scattered across the six seas. Only they can save the world.

Greenglass House – Kate Milford

It's winter break at Greenglass House. At this time of year, when the snow starts to swirl and the wind begins to howl, the creaky old smuggler's inn becomes a cozy and quiet refuge from the storm. Innkeepers, Mr. and Mrs. Pine and their 12-year-old adopted son, Milo, are looking forward to an uneventful, relaxing season. The inn rarely has guests in winter, but on the first frosty night of vacation, out of nowhere, the guest bell rings. Then it rings again. And again. Soon Milo's home is overrun with odd, secretive guests, each one with a strange story that somehow connects them to the rambling old house.

When things start going missing and guests are heard sneaking through the halls at night, suspicions and tempers start to rise. It is up to Milo and Meddy, the cook's daughter, to decode clues and unravel the tangle of secrets shared by Greenglass House, its mysterious guests – and themselves.

The Iron Trial – Holly Black and Cassandra Clare

Other kids in Cal's class were afraid of the dark, monsters under the bed, zombies, or murderers with giant axes. Cal was afraid of magicians and he was even more afraid he was one.

Cal was warned to stay away from magic. He knows it could get him killed. It's because of magic that his mother died. If he fails the Iron Trial, everything will be fine. But he passes and the greatest mage of all chooses him as an apprentice.

Cal is ripped from his home, separated from his father, and sent to the underground school known as the Magisterium, a place his father says is worse than death. Along with his fellow apprentices Tamara and Aaron, Cal will learn the secrets of magic while encountering chaos, danger, and the rise of an evil enemy.

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***Outside In* – Sarah Ellis**

What if you could just invent your family, your home, your life?

Lynn's life was saved after she choked on a Werther's Original Toffee, by a girl who just disappeared into the crowd at the bus stop. Lynn waits at the bus stop every day hoping to thank her and miraculously, one day, the girl sits down beside her. Her name is Blossom.

Blossom lives beneath a city reservoir as part of a very unusual family that Lynn learns to love. But how can Lynn bring her world and Blossom's world together without catastrophe?

***The Boundless* – Kenneth Oppel**

The longest, most glamorous locomotive in the world is making its maiden trip across Canada! But with a circus, some magic, an escape artist, a few kinks in the time/space continuum, a funeral, a murder, and a revenge scheme that has percolated for years – it's anything but a smooth ride.

On the passenger list is Will Everett who witnesses a murder at the wrong end of the train; the gorgeous Maren - a teenage tightrope-walker who leads him across the 987 cars; Cornelius van Horne - the moneybags behind this titanic locomotive who lies in a booby-trapped coffin in the funeral car; and the dastardly Brogan - a ruthless crook who will stop at nothing to get *in* that funeral car. It's Canadian Pacific railway history at its best, so watch your step, stow your bags and climb aboard **THE BOUNDLESS!**

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

Skink – he's a one-eyed Vietnam vet and the ex-governor of Florida who takes the role of "eco warrior" to a whole new level with his own unique brand of "swamp justice". Eccentric doesn't even begin to describe him or the variety of objects he ends up inserting in his empty eye socket....

Richard – he just wants to find his stubborn, sassy cousin Malley, who has disappeared – it seems she would do anything to avoid boarding school – including running off with a very questionable acquaintance she met online...

Together, Skink and Richard take off on a road trip across Florida following Malley's cryptic cellphone clues. Richard learns to drive (Skink had his foot run over by a semi trying to save a baby skunk), learns to appreciate the delicacy of roadkill (the only meat Skink will eat) and survives a hurricane, flying bullets, crazy pigs, giant gators, rogue canoes, handcuffs... you know what? Just read the book – Skink No Surrender!

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***The Night Gardener* – Jonathan Auxier**

Do you like scary stories?

Do you love a story that means you can't sleep without the lights on, even though you're a teenager?

If you thrill at the thought of what goes bump in the night and IF you will wake up with your very soul intact - then *The Night Gardener* is the book for you.

Follow the harrowing tale of Irish orphans, Kip and Molly, who find themselves as servants in a creepy, crumbling English manor, located in the ominously named "sour woods". Things go from bad to worse when Kip discovers a "Molly sized" grave, beckoning for a new victim. Will Kip be able to get through to Molly in time? Will they survive the night gardener?

Read and find out.....Oh... and keep the lights on.

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Senior Division

Four – Veronica Roth

Four stories of accepting challenges that life throws at you and mastering your fears!

Four stories that show how hard it can be to fit into a world that tries to limit who you are and what you can be.

Four stories that show it's possible to change your destiny when you unleash your full potential.

Four stories that show that being different is *not* a curse.

Join “Four” as he takes the biggest decisions of his life, conquers his fears, uncovers a sinister threat and fights for all that he cares about.

Will you be strong enough to join him on his journey?

Four is a prequel to the Divergent series

I'll Give You the Sun – Jandy Nelson

“We were all heading for each other on a collision course, no matter what. Maybe some people are just meant to be in the same story.”

Noah is quiet; an artist. Jude is popular; a daredevil. They are twins - two halves of the same coin.

Noah begins the story - the early years when he and Jude were so close, they were basically inseparable. Jude tells the second half - the later years when it had all changed. When their Mom was dead and they could barely speak to one another.

They each have half the story and if they find their way back to one another, they just might be able to remake the world.

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The Young Elites – Marie Lu

“I’m going to die tomorrow morning.

That’s what the Inquisitors tell me when they visit my cell. I’ve been in here for weeks – I know this only because I’ve been counting the number of times my meals come.

One day. Two days.

Four days. A week.

Two weeks.

Three.

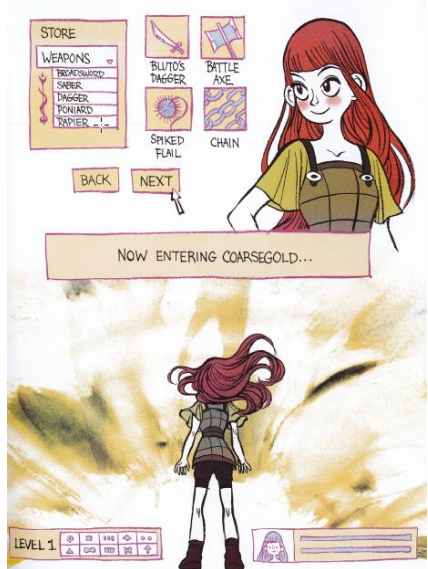
I stopped counting after that. The hours run together, an endless train of nothingness, filled with different slants of light and the shiver of cold, wet stone...”

Adelina is a survivor of the blood fever that swept through her nation when she was a child. While she and her younger sister both survived, Adelina was left with marks to remind her and everyone else that she is an abomination, cursed by the gods – that she is a *malfetto*. Her black hair turned silver, her lashes went pale, and she was left with only a jagged scar where her left eye used to be. For some survivors of the blood fever, scars are not the only thing separating them from the rest of society. Some *malfettos* are believed to possess mysterious and powerful gifts. Faceless, nameless and feared by the crown, they have come to be known as the Young Elites.

In Real Life – Cory Doctorow and Jen Wang

(READ TITLE AT THE END)

IMAGE 1 - Online, Anda is a leader, a warrior, a hero.



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IMAGE 2 - In real life, Anda is an average kid, playing a video game in her bedroom.

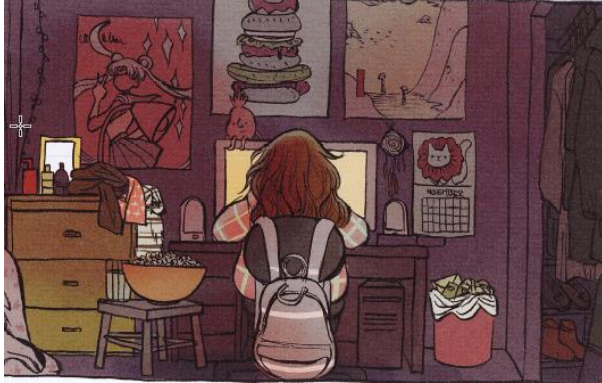


IMAGE 3 – Online, she goes on missions and even makes money going on raids and killing gold farmers.



IMAGE 4 - In real life, she's having a blast playing this awesome game!



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IMAGE 5 – Online, she meets a player named Raymond and finds out being a gold farmer in a videogame is a job in China.

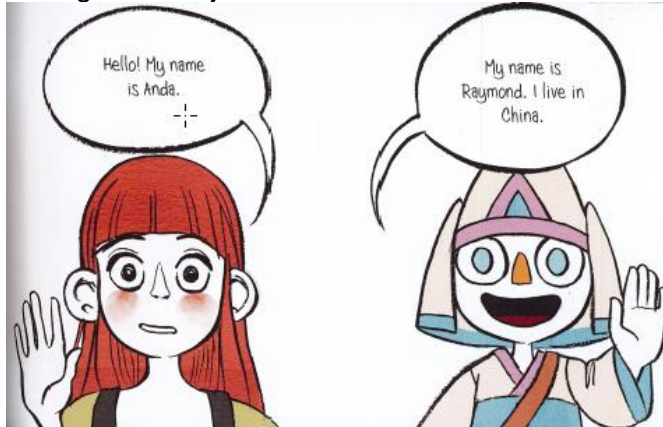


IMAGE 6 - In real life, she finds out that it's not as much fun as it seems.



IMAGE 7 – (book cover)

This is a novel about the joys of gaming and some truths you'd probably rather not know.
In Real Life by Cory Doctorow and Jen Wang

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

Lara Jean keeps her love letters that she's never going to send in a special box. For her eyes only! Or...so she thought.

But surprise! Someone mails the letters and Lara Jean's life spins out of control.

She agrees to be Peter's pretend girlfriend to make his ex know they are over and let the other love letter recipients think Lara Jean is not interested in them.

But Peter is so much fun to be around, very cute and a really nice guy!

Could this be real love? We shall see.

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***Panic* – Lauren Oliver**

\$67,000! Sixty-seven thousand dollars! What would you do with \$67,000? How on earth would you get that kind of money?

Well, in the dead-beat town of Carp, New York, graduating seniors play a legendary game. A game called Panic. A game that knows all your fears and uses them against you. A game of life and death. Everyone playing Panic has a secret, a reason to stay in the game when their gut is telling them to quit before it's too late.

But everyone also knows that the winner takes it all: \$67,000.

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

1. Kiss a stranger
2. Ride a dern horse, ya cowpoke
3. The backless dress and somewhere to wear it.
4. Hug a Jamie
5. Sleep under the stars
6. Apple picking at night

These are just some of the things on the “to do” list that Emily mysteriously received in a letter from Sloane. Wait...What?

Sloane, her best friend, the one who just disappeared one day without a trace. It was Sloane who had yanked Emily out of her shell and made life 100% more interesting. It was supposed to be an epic summer but now all she has is 13 Sloane-inspired tasks that Emily would normally never do. What if they could bring her friend back? You never know until you try.

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***Through the Woods* – Emily Carroll**

(READ TITLE AT THE END)

IMAGE 1: Seven days ago our father left us while he went hunting. He left my older sister in charge of me and my younger sister.

My older sister said a man in a wide brimmed hat came to the door. In the morning, her cloak had disappeared.



IMAGE 2: And so had my sister.

There were no tracks in the snow. I searched every dark corner of our house. But I could not find her.

The next night, my younger sister also disappeared.



IMAGE 3: This morning, I am alone.

And I know that a man in a wide brimmed hat will come for me.



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IMAGE FOUR: Except... he is no man.

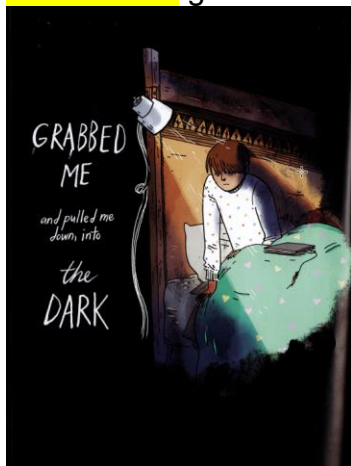


This is the type of story in this collection. They are for the person who wonders

IMAGE FIVE: "What if I reached out...just past the edge of the bed and something waiting there,



IMAGE SIX: grabbed me and pulled me down into the dark".



Through the Woods by Emily Carroll, a collection of haunting visual stories.