



YRCA 2018 BOOK TALKS

Junior Division

***Fuzzy Mud* – Louis Sachar**

They got lost.

The world got scared.

The mud got fuzzy.

Tamaya and Marshall normally walk home together but that day was anything but normal. **That day** they were forced to take a short cut through the woods to avoid getting beat up by Chad, the school bully.

What happens when two kids on the run, stumble onto science gone wrong?

Read *Fuzzy Mud* and find out.

Noteworthy: Louis Sachar also wrote Holes which was made into a movie.

***Masterminds* – Gordon Korman**

Life for Eli and his friends is pretty sweet. Their small town, Serenity, New Mexico is consistently rated the best place in the nation to live. No crime, no poverty, no unemployment. They bike around town, play water polo in the sunshine, and hang out. It's the perfect life.

But one day when Eli and his friend Randy decide to bike a bit further than usual, past the town's limits, Eli collapses in agonizing pain. The bizarre chain of events which follows, including Randy's mysterious disappearance, leads Eli and his friends to suspect that all in Serenity is not what it seems. When their investigation uncovers a terrifying secret that turns their worlds upside down, they realize that no adult can be trusted. Including, or maybe *especially*, their own parents.

The perfect life? Or the perfect lie?

Noteworthy: Canadian author, Gordon Korman, wrote and published his first book when he was in 7th grade! He has had a number of previously nominated YRCA books.

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The Terrible Two – Mac Barnett

I'm Miles Murphy. I'm not "the smart kid, or the kid who has cool shoes." I'm not "the kid who knows everything about old cars, or current events, or World War I." I'm not the "chess kid, basketball kid, student-government kid. Kid who organizes canned-food drives. Front-row kid. Back-row kid...Kid who's allowed to see R-rated movies. Kid who isn't allowed to see R-rated movies but says he does and just makes up their plots based on the previews."

No. I am Miles Murphy, the prankster. I was the best prankster in my old school, and I am determined to be the best prankster at my new school too. Only...I just showed up on my first day to see the best prank ever—and I didn't do it. That can't be right—if I'm not the school prankster, I'm nobody. So now I have to figure out who did it, and beat them at their own game.

Noteworthy: This book is the first in a series, and a movie version is also being made.

Crenshaw – Katherine Applegate

It's really embarrassing when your imaginary friend keeps showing up without warning. Oh wait, it's worse when you're in fifth grade and you HAVE an imaginary friend, as Jackson does.

Jackson's imaginary friend is a cat named Crenshaw. He's very large, he's very outspoken, and well, he's IMAGINARY! He has come back into Jackson's life to help him, just like he did the other times.

This time, Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent. And not much for food, either. His parents, his little sister, and their dog may have to live in their minivan. Again.

Crenshaw keeps telling Jackson to tell the truth to the person that matters the most of all. But what is the truth and who is the person that matters the most of all? And is an imaginary friend really enough to save this family from losing everything?

Read *Crenshaw* for all the answers!

Noteworthy: Katherine Applegate also wrote The One and Only Ivan which was a YRCA book in 2015.

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***The War That Saved My Life* – Kimberly Brubaker Bradley**

The year is 1939 and WW2 is becoming very real and very close.

11 year old Ada lives in a small apartment in London, England with her little brother Jamie and her mom. Sounds normal enough, but it's anything but – Ada's mom is ashamed of her because she was born with a foot twisted out of shape. Ada's mother is a cruel woman – she never lets Ada go outside, won't let her go to school, won't teach her how to read or walk, and locks her in a cupboard under the sink for hours.

One evening, Ada hears from Jamie that all the children are leaving London because of the danger of bomb raids. She is determined to go and secretly teaches herself to walk so she can escape with her brother.

The two of them finally make it to the English countryside and begin a new life with Susan Smith, who's never had children of her own. Everything is challenging and new – from new crutches to discovering a German spy to being treated like a normal little girl – but then one day her mother comes to take them back to a dreadful, dreary existence....and Ada is determined NOT to go back....ever.

Noteworthy: This book has a sequel called The War I Finally Won.

***Circus Mirandus* – Cassie Beasley**

Do you believe in magic? Micah Tuttle does. At least, he believes the stories that his Grandpa Ephraim tells him about Circus Mirandus, a magical place where people fly, animals can talk, do math or turn themselves invisible, and where the most powerful magician of all lives—the Man Who Bends Light.

Many years ago, this powerful magician promised young Grandpa Ephraim a single miracle, as long as it was in his power to make it happen. Grandpa Ephraim never collected his miracle, but now he is sick, and horrible Aunt Gertrudis has come to live with them. Aunt Gertrudis doesn't like Micah, and she doesn't believe any of the stories about the magical circus. In desperation, Micah and his friend Jenny search for Circus Mirandus—they've got to get that miracle to save his grandfather's life. But after 80 years, will the Light Bender keep his promise?

Noteworthy: This is the author's first novel. It is similar to Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

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Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer – Kelly Jones

Do you like chickens? Well I have three words for you – how about *super power chickens*? In this book, Sophie is feeling pretty bummed out about having to move from the big city of Los Angeles to a small farm in the middle of nowhere where she doesn't know a soul.... And she's feeling sad and missing her Abuelita [*pronounced: a-bwe-leeta*] who passed away a little while ago.

But... things start looking up....and more than a little strange... when she discovers several really special chickens on the farm. One hen can even move objects with just the power of her little chicken brain.... When a local farmer tries to steal Sophie's chickens, she is determined to keep them safe. Will Sophie overcome loneliness, fear, and prejudice in order to prove that she can stand up for herself?

Noteworthy: This story is uniquely told through Sophie's letters, a long distance chicken-care course, and lots of great drawings and diagrams.

Roller Girl – Victoria Jamieson

Show trailer: <https://youtu.be/9r4zLaJrMWY>

Alternate book talk if not able to show video:

When Astrid first heard about roller derby, she knew it was the thing for her: skating fast, hitting your opponent and scoring for the win! Roller Derby camp was going to be the best thing ever. The best ever until her best friend Nicole decides to go to dance camp instead. The best ever until Astrid realizes she can't skate or keep up with the class, at all. The best ever until she lies to her mom about her whole summer and her mom finds out. So is this the worst summer ever or does Astrid find a Rainbow in all of these dark clouds?

Noteworthy: The author, Victoria Jamieson, is a real-life roller girl in Portland, Oregon. If you liked Smile and Drama, you'll love Roller Girl!

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Intermediate Division

***Saint Anything* – Sarah Dessen**

“I was used to being invisible. People rarely saw me, and if they did, they never looked close. I wasn’t shiny and charming like my brother, stunning and graceful like my mother, or smart and dynamic like my friends. That’s the thing, though. You always think you want to be noticed. Until you are.”

Sydney’s family seems to have it all, until her older brother Peyton drives home drunk and hits a boy on a bike. The boy is paralyzed from the waist down and Peyton is sent to jail. Everything changes – Sydney’s mom is obsessed with Peyton, her dad is barely around, and Sydney has to switch from her prestigious private school to a large public school.

Who would have guessed that pizza and lollipops would set her on the road to friendship, romance, and healing?

Noteworthy: Sarah Dessen is the author of a number of previous YRCA-nominated books: The Moon and More, What Happened to Goodbye, Along for the Ride, and Dreamland.

***Goodbye Stranger* – Rebecca Stead**

Bridge is starting grade seven with her friends Tab and Em, and it’s like the forces of the universe are pulling them apart. The first assignment in school is to finish the sentence, “Love is ___?” Seriously?! Then, everyone has to join a club. And your classmates actually mark your assignments. Em is curvy and joins soccer, Tab is all about languages and social justice, and Bridge just joins the last club she came across.

You know how it is in grade seven. Pretty soon you start hearing too much information about everyone and you know you have to join the action but don’t know how. Texted photos, grandparents divorcing, crazy bets, and sneaky friends are just too much to take; it would be so much easier to take your cat ears and hide.

Noteworthy: Rebecca Stead is the winner of many book awards for her four novels, including previous YRCA book Liar and Spy!

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Nimona – Noelle Stevenson

IMAGE 1: Nimona is an impulsive young shapeshifter with a knack for villainy. Lord Ballister Blackheart is a villain with a vendetta. As sidekick and supervillain, Nimona and Lord Blackheart are about to wreak some serious havoc.



IMAGE 2: Their mission: prove to the kingdom that Sir Ambrosius Goldenloin and his buddies at the Institution of Law Enforcement and Heroics aren't the heroes everyone thinks they are.



IMAGE 3: But as small acts of mischief escalate into a vicious battle, Lord Blackheart realizes that Nimona's powers are as murky and mysterious as her past.



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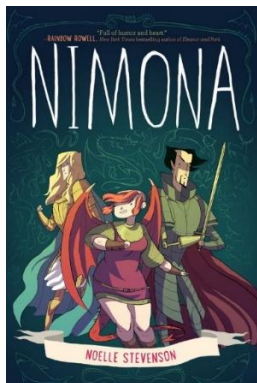
IMAGE 4: And her unpredictable wild side might be more dangerous than he is willing to admit.



IMAGE 5: Will Nimona be able to help Lord Blackheart be the number one villain and ruler of the kingdom? Will she get to destroy to her heart's content? Will she manage to turn into a shark in every chapter?



IMAGE 6: Find out by reading *Nimona* by Noelle Stevenson!



Noteworthy: *Nimona* was first published as a webcomic before being published as a graphic novel. It is scheduled to be released as an animated feature film in 2020.

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Magnus Chase and the Sword of Summer – Rick Riordan

You'd think that losing your home and knowing your mother died under mysterious circumstances would be plenty of trouble for one teenager to handle. Add to that 2 years of living on the streets of Boston and dodging the police. Oh, and if that isn't enough, try discovering on your 16th birthday that your uncle is hunting you down to fulfill some stupid family destiny that's all tied up with the Norse Gods of Asgard. Yeah, that's what I said, Gods of Asgard...you know, Odin, Thor, The Halls of Valhalla.

Apparently I'm supposed to find this magical weapon that's my birthright (whatever) and prevent Ragnarok, which is, like, only the Vikings' version of Doomsday...no biggie...So yeah, I can handle this, if only I didn't have to die a fiery death first!

Noteworthy: This is the first novel in Rick Riordan's new trilogy Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard, and is based on Norse mythology.

Illuminae – Amie Kaufman & Jay Kristoff

This morning, Kady thought breaking up with her boyfriend was going to be the worst part of her day.

This afternoon, her planet was invaded and she's forced to escape with Ezra, the ex-boyfriend she swore she'd never speak to again.

The year is 2575, and two rival mega corporations are at war over Kady's planet. A planet that's little more than an ice-covered speck at the edge of the universe.

There was no warning before the invasion – just fire and bullets flying by as people tried to flee. Kady and Ezra are forced to fight their way onto an evacuating fleet, with an enemy warship in pursuit.

But this is only the beginning. Things are about to get worse. Much worse.

Noteworthy: Illuminae by Amie Kaufman & Jay Kristoff is told through a fascinating dossier of hacked documents, including emails, military files, and medical reports, and is the first book in a heart-stopping, high-octane trilogy.

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The Blackthorn Key – Kevin Sands

There is a killer loose in London.

I'm Christopher Rowe. I'm an Apprentice and that means I belong to a Guild Master. My Master is Benedict Blackthorn, Apothecary.

Four have died in the last month.

An apothecary workshop is an amazing place with much to learn. It is also the most dangerous place on earth. Each workshop is a stockpile of ingredients. Use them right and these ingredients heal; use too much, or mix the wrong ones together, and these same ingredients will kill you without warning. It's a lethal business being an apothecary.

The killer is hunting Apothecaries.

To prevent prying eyes from discovering what each Master knows, ciphers are used. My master has left me a message. It's a puzzle he needs me to solve. It comes with a warning "Tell No One."

There is a killer loose in London, and he's looking for you.

Noteworthy: Kevin Sands is a fellow Canadian, and this is his first book. The series continues with Mark of the Plague and The Assassin's Curse.

The Darkest Part of the Forest – Holly Black

Fairfold isn't like other towns. It exists right on the edge of a dark forest filled with Fae and other mysterious folk. These aren't the kind fairies you read about in bedtime stories. They're dangerous and unpredictable, have strange rules and their gifts are never quite what they seem.

Hazel and her brother Ben grew up in this strange town. From the start their lives have been anything but ordinary. While growing up they went on dangerous quests and had amazing adventures. They were once close but now they are as different as night and day.

At the centre of the chaos of their lives is Severin. He's a Fairy prince cursed to sleep for all eternity in a glass coffin in the darkest part of the forest. He's slept for generations until one day... he mysteriously woke. Now something monstrous is menacing the hapless people of Fairfold.

Noteworthy: Holly Black also co-wrote The Iron Trial, which was last year's YRCA Intermediate Division winner. Can she repeat this year with this retelling of Sleeping Beauty?!

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***The Nest* – Kenneth Oppel**

She was very blurry, not at all human looking. There were huge dark eyes, and a kind of mane made of light, and when she spoke, I couldn't see a mouth moving, but I felt her words, like a breeze against my face, and I understood her completely.

"We've come because of the baby," she said. "We've come to help."

Show this trailer after intro: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZdbWYGHJ80>

Alternate book talk if not able to show video:

For some kids summer is a sun-soaked season of fun. But for Steve, it's just another season of worries. Worries about his sick newborn baby brother who is fighting to survive, worries about his parents who are struggling to cope, even worries about the wasp's nest looming ominously from the eaves.

After a curious wasp from the hive stings Steve, he develops the ability to speak to the hive's queen in his dreams. When she offers to "fix" the baby, Steve thinks his prayers have been answered.

All he has to do is say "Yes." But "yes" is a powerful word. It is also a dangerous one. And once it is uttered, can it be taken back?

Noteworthy: Kenneth Oppel wrote his first book when he was in high school, and had it published because Roald Dahl read and liked it! He also wrote Boundless, a YRCA nominated book last year.

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Senior Division

Carry On – Rainbow Rowell

When Simon's roommate Baz is around, Simon spends all his time watching his back. But when Baz doesn't show up at the start of a new term, Simon ends up spending all of his time wondering where Baz is and if he's ok. It doesn't help that Simon barely has control over his own incredible magical strength or that the insidious humdrum, the greatest threat to the world of mages, presents as a nine-year-old version of Simon. Or that The Mage (the school's headmaster and Simon's mentor) is never around to help either.

Noteworthy: Rainbow Rowell also wrote Fangirl, the story of Cath, who struggled through moving away to college. Cath took the story of Simon Snow, the world's greatest magician, in a whole new direction through her fan fiction.... Carry On is that story.

Finding Audrey – Sophie Kinsella

Audrey wears sunglasses – ALL THE TIME! She hasn't gone out of the house for ages. Until she meets Linus. Linus helps Audrey face her fears in a way no one else could. What happened to make Audrey afraid of the world? And does it really matter?

What matters is not looking back, not talking about it, and not wasting one second more of our lives!

Noteworthy: Finding Audrey by Sophie Kinsella is the author's first YA book. She also wrote the Shopaholic series.

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***I Was Here* – Gayle Forman**

The day Meg's email arrived in Cody's inbox, Cody thought it was a joke. "I regret to inform you that I have had to take my own life. This decision was mine alone to make. It's not your fault."

Meg and Cody were best friends, and they had their future planned out; they would go to college together and finally escape their dead-end small town and everything that they hate about it. But then Cody couldn't afford to go, and Meg headed off to Tacoma with a full scholarship.

When Cody heads to Meg's dorm to pack up Meg's belongings, she discovers a version of Meg that no one knew existed. Encrypted data files? Missing emails? What happened to Meg?

Noteworthy: Movie rights to I Was Here were picked up just one month after the book was released. The book is similar to If I Stay by the same author.

***We Are All Made of Molecules* – Susin Nielsen**

When normal goes sideways, what do you do?

Stewart is smart, crazy smart, but in Ashley's eyes he's a geek and worst of all has become the biggest annoyance of her life! Ashley is beautiful, the popular "it" girl, but in Stewart's eyes she's just plain miserable and cares only about herself.

Their worlds collide when their two families are thrown together, and Stewart and Ashley are caught right smack dab in the middle of it all.

Funny but serious, happy but heartbreaking, all of us can relate to what these two go through. You'll like them both and they'll both drive you crazy. Will they struggle and fall or will they find a way to navigate through it all?

No matter how different we are, we still share one thing that can bring us together – molecules!

Noteworthy: Susin Nielsen also wrote The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen, a previous YRCA book.

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Between the World and Me – Ta-Nehisi Coates

IMAGE 1: This is Ta-Nehisi [pronounced tah-nuh-hah-see] Coates. He wrote this book, *Between the World and Me*, as a letter to his son. It was written as a response to the sense of powerlessness and fear that Ta-Nehisi feels in the world today.

It reads: I write to you in your 15th year. I am writing to you because this was the year you saw ...



IMAGE 2: Eric Garner choked to death for selling cigarettes,



IMAGE 3: because you know now that Renisha McBride was shot for seeking help,



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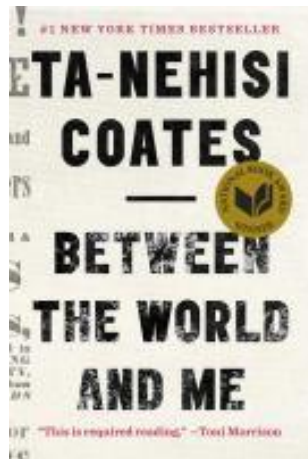
IMAGE 4: that John Crawford was shot down for browsing in a department store.



IMAGE 5: And you have seen men in uniform drive by and murder Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old child that they were oath bound to protect.



IMAGE 6: This is happening now. This title will resonate with all those who have experienced racism personally or seen it in the lives of friends or on the news.



Noteworthy: Coates wrote *Between the World and Me* after a meeting with US President Barack Obama. It was a finalist for the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction.

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Red Queen – Victoria Aveyard

17-year-old Mare Barrow's world is divided by blood. Those with common Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Mare is a Red, scraping by as a thief in a poor rural village, until a twist of fate throws her in front of the Silver court. There, before the King, princes, and all the nobles, she discovers that she has an ability of her own. To cover up this impossibility, the King forces her to play the role of a lost Silver princess.

As Mare is drawn further into the Silver world, she uses her new position to help the Scarlet Guard – a growing Red rebellion – even as her heart tugs her in an impossible direction. One wrong move can lead to her death, but in the dangerous game she is playing, the only certainty is betrayal.

Noteworthy: This first book in the Red Queen series has been described as “Game of Thrones meets Hunger Games meets X-Men”, and a film version is in the works.

A Court of Thorns and Roses – Sarah J. Maas

My father's fingers trembled as he grasped my gloved hands, but his eyes became clearer and bolder than I'd seen them in years. “You were always too good for here, Feyre (*pronounced: Fey-ruh*).” He squeezed my hands. “If you ever escape, ever convince them that you've paid the debt, don't return.” I hadn't expected a heart-wrenching good-bye, but I hadn't imagined this, either.

Beyond, the beast was just a shadow. A life for a life – but what if the life offered as payment also meant losing three others? The thought alone was enough to steel me, anchor me.

So I shrugged off his grip and left as I followed the beast to the night-shrouded woods. Every step toward the line of trees was too swift, too light, too soon carrying me to whatever torment and misery awaited. I didn't dare look back to the cottage.

Noteworthy: This book is in the works to being made into a movie!

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Six of Crows – Leigh Bardugo

When the score of a lifetime presents itself, criminal mastermind Kaz Brekker assembles a crack team of talented outcasts. Their mission: to rescue a prisoner from the most secure prison in the world, so that the secrets he holds can be exploited by the right people. As Kaz and his compatriots put together a daring plan, they contend with old grudges, mistrust, lingering secrets, and deadly rivalries.

Show this trailer after intro: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSC39371rMg>

Alternate book talk if not able to show video:

Criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker has been offered wealth beyond his wildest dreams. But to claim it, he'll have to pull off a seemingly impossible heist:

- break into the notorious Ice Court (a military stronghold that has never been breached)
- retrieve a hostage (who could unleash magical havoc on the world)
- survive long enough to collect his reward (and spend it)

Kaz needs a crew desperate enough to take on this suicide mission and dangerous enough to get the job done - and he knows exactly who: six of the deadliest outcasts the city has to offer. Together, they just might be unstoppable - if they don't kill each other first.

Noteworthy: This book is set in the same world as the Grisha books by the same author, but is set in the future and a different location. Shadow and Bone, book 1 of the Grisha trilogy, was a YRCA nominated book in 2015.