



Read. Vote. Repeat.

YRCA 2024 Book Profiles

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YRCA 2024 Junior Book Profiles

Rez Dogs by Joseph Bruchac

What's it about? Due to a stay-at-home order during the Covid pandemic, eighth grader Malian is at the Wabanaki reservation with her grandparents and a mysterious dog for months.

Read-alikes:

- *Garvey in the Dark* by Nikki Grimes
- *New From Here* by Kelly Yang
- *When the World Turned Upside Down* by K. Ibura

If you like realistic fiction, stories told in verse, Indigenous characters, and history then you will like this book!

Something interesting: The author Joseph Bruchac was a heavyweight wrestler, and devoted martial arts student. He has published poetry, novels and short stories.

Reading level: 820L

Suggested age: Grades 3 to 8 (School Library Journal)

Starfish by Lisa Fipps

What's it about? Written in free verse, *Starfish* follows the self-acceptance journey of Ellie, a girl who has been bullied relentlessly for her weight, even by her own mother.

Read-alikes:

- *Fat Chance, Charlie Vega* by Crystal Maldonado
- *Chunky* by Yehudi Mercado
- *Taking Up Space* by Alyson Gerber
- *Dumplin'* by Julie Murphy

If you like books about real-life experiences and body acceptance then you will like this book!

Something interesting: On her website, *Starfish* author Lisa Fipps says that her elbows ache when she sneezes!

Reading level: HL630L

Suggested age: Grades 5 to 8 (School Library Journal)



Educators Guide:

http://images.randomhouse.com/teachers_guides/9781984814500.pdf

The Accidental Apprentice by Amanda Foody

What's it about? A young mushroom farmer unwittingly bonds with a beast and has to enter a dangerous exam in order to go back home.

Read-alikes:

- *The Boy, the Wolf, and the Stars* by Shivaun Plozza
- *Eva Evergreen, Semi-Magical Witch* by Julie Abe
- *Jinx* by Sage Blackwood

If you like adventures with animals, magic and friendship, this is the book for you!

Something interesting: In the story when people bond with beasts, their beast lives as a gold tattoo on their skin unless they're called out to their physical form.

Reading level: 750L

Suggested age: Grade 3 to 7 (Simon & Schuster)

The Last Cuentista by Donna Barb Higuera

What's it about? Petra Peña wakes up on a new planet hundreds of years after Earth has been destroyed and only she can remember the past.

Read-alikes:

- *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle
- *The 100* by Kass Morgan
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness

If you like diverse characters, dystopia, and science fiction, you'll love this book!

Something interesting: As a child, Donna Barba Higuera preferred spending recess hiding in the janitor's closet with a good book. Her favourite hobbies were calling dial-a-story (a number you can call to hear recorded stories) over and over again, and sneaking into a restricted cemetery to weave her own spooky tales using the crumbling headstones as inspiration.

Reading level: 730L



Suggested age: Grades 5 and up (School Library Journal)

***The Lion of Mars* by Jennifer Holm**

What's it about? A group of youth living in a Martian colony must choose whether to heed or disregard the warnings of the adults in their community as an unknown virus begins to claim lives.

Read-alikes:

- *Packing for Mars for Kids* by Mary Roach
- *Space Case* by Stuart Gibbs
- *Mars Evacuees* by Sophia McDougall

If you like science fiction and action-adventure stories from space, you'll be sure to like this book!

Something interesting: Jennifer Holm collaborates with her brother, Matthew Holm, on graphic novel series including *Babymouse* and *Squish!*

Reading level: 530L

Suggested age: Grade 6 to 8 (Penguin Random House)

Educators Guide:

https://images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9780593121818_7615.pdf

***Unplugged* by Gordon Korman**

What's it about? Spoiled brat Jett Baranov is sent to a tech-free wellness retreat and finds himself knee deep in mystery, intrigue, and chaos. Oh yes, and alligators!

Read-alikes:

- *Masterminds* by Gordan Korman
- *Squeeze Me* by Carl Hiaasen
- *Across the Desert* by Dusti Bowling

If you like: fast-paced adventures, mysteries, and friendship told from different perspectives, you'll like this book.

Something interesting: Gordan Korman wrote his first book when he was 12 years old, and his first book was published when he was 14!



Reading level: 750L

Suggested age: Grades 3 to 5 (School Library Journal)

***Finding Junie Kim* by Ellen Oh**

What's it about? When Junie Kim's middle school is vandalized with racist graffiti, she must decide whether to keep her head down or fight for change.

Read-alikes:

- *Linked* by Gordon Korman
- *Punching the Air* by Ibi Aanu Zobi with Yusef Salaam
- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- *Prairie Lotus* by Linda Sue Park

If you like diverse characters, historical fiction, and thought-provoking stories, you'll love this book.

Something interesting: Ellen Oh founded the non-profit We Need Diverse Books that aims to promote diversity in children's literature and publishing. She has also written books based on Korean folklore and Korean shamanism.

Reading level: 4.7 (ATOS)

Suggested age: Grade 5 to 8 (School Library Journal)

***Pony* by R.J. Palacio**

What's it about? When his father is taken away by armed outlaws, twelve-year-old Silas sets out with his only friend – a ghost named Mittenwool – on a mysterious pony to search for him.

Read-alikes:

- *The Journey of Little Charlie* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- *Hollow Chest* by Brita Sandstrom
- *Ghosts Come Rising* by Adam Perry

If you like ghostly historical fiction that blurs the line between fantasy and reality, where a young person must set out on a haunting journey to discover themselves, *Pony* might be calling to you.



Something interesting: R.J. Palacio's book *Wonder* inspired the Choose Kind movement and was adapted into a movie starring Owen Wilson, Julia Roberts, and Jacob Tremblay.

Reading level: 740L

Suggested age: Grade 5-8 (Booklist)

Educators Guide:

https://images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9780553508116_8192.pdf

YRCA 2024 Intermediate Book Profiles

***Blackout* by Dhonielle Clayton**

What's it about? An interconnected short story collection written by six authors that celebrate Black teen love.

Read-alikes:

- *Love Radio* by Ebony LaDelle
- *We Deserve Monuments* by Jas Hammonds
- *A Phoenix First Must Burn* Edited by Patrice Caldwell

If you like romance, anthologies, and New York City, you will love this book.

Something interesting: This book came about after Dhonielle Clayton had a conversation with her niece who asked why she didn't see big love stories for Black girls on TV. Dhonielle then texted her writer friends and convinced them to all write this book together. It was a way for them to all connect with each other during the first year of the pandemic.

Reading level: HL650L

Suggested age: Grade 8+ (School Library Journal)

Educators Guide:

<https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7af9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/teaching-guides/TG-9780063088092.pdf>

***Tokyo Ever After* by Emiko Jean**

What's it about? Izumi learns her father is the Crown Prince of Japan and goes to Japan to meet him.



Read-alikes:

- *XOXO* by Axie Oh
- *American Royals* by Katharine McGee
- *Loveboat, Taipei* by Abigail Hing Wen

If you like secret royalty, Japan, friendship, and romance, then you will like this book!

Something interesting: Emiko Jean has worked many different jobs: florist, candlemaker, elementary math teacher, and working at a zoo.

Reading level: 4.3 (ATOS)

Suggested age: Grade 8+ (School Library Journal)

***Zara Hossain is Here* by Sabina Khan**

What's it about? Zara Hossain is a queer, Muslim immigrant in her senior year of high school who must deal with racist violence and harassment, which may lead to her family moving back to Pakistan.

Read-alikes:

- *You Truly Assumed* by Laila Sabreen
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *Saints and Misfits* by S.K. Ali
- *Love, Hate & Other Filters* by Samira Ahmed

If you like realistic fiction, social justice, LGBTQIA+ books, then you will like this book!

Something interesting: Sabina Khan writes about Muslim teens who straddle cultures. She was born in Germany, spent her teens in Bangladesh and lived in Macao, Illinois, and Texas before settling in British Columbia with her husband and two daughters.

Reading level: 780L

Suggested age: Grade 7+ (School Library Journal)

***Six Crimson Cranes* by Elizabeth Lim**

What's it about? A princess is exiled and cursed to never speak again, for with every word she utters one of her brothers will die.

Read-alikes:



- *Spin the Dawn* by Elizabeth Lim
- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas
- *The Cruel Prince* by Holly Black
- *The Poppy War* by R.F. Kuang

If you like fairytales, fantasy, magic, and retellings, you'll love this book.

Something interesting: *Six Crimson Cranes* is based on the fairytale "The Wild Swans" by Hans Christian Andersen with elements of Chinese and Japanese folklore mixed in.

Reading level: HL710L

Suggested age: Grades 7 + (School Library Journal)

***A Snake Falls to Earth* by Darcie Little Badger**

What's it about? A Lipan girl from Earth and a cottonmouth shapeshifter from the land of spirits and monsters must work together to protect the people they love.

Read-alikes:

- *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline
- *Lakelore* by Anna-Marie McLemore
- *Each of Us a Desert* by Mark Oshiro
- *Shadows Cast by Stars* by Catherine Knutsson

If you like diverse characters, found family, magic, monsters, mythology, and secret worlds, you'll love this book.

Something interesting: Darcie Little Badger is the author of *Elatsoe*, a 2023 YRCA nominee. She has also written for Marvel Comics including *Marvel's Voices: Heritage*, *The United States of Captain America*, and *Marvel's Voice: Indigenous Voices*.

Reading level: HL710L

Suggested age: Grade 7 to 10 (School Library Journal)

***Too Bright to See* by Kyle Lukoff**

What's it about? "It's about a kid being haunted by the ghost of their dead uncle into figuring out something important!" (Author's description)

Read-alikes:



- *The Ship We Built* by Lexie Bean
- *Hazel Bly and the Deep Blue Sea* by Ashley Herring Blake
- *Frankie & Bug* by Gayle Forman

If **you like** ghost stories, stories about figuring out who you are, and stories with LGBTQIA+ characters, you will like this book!

Something interesting: Kyle Lukoff had always wanted to write a ghost story using the first sentence of a short story his dad wrote when he was young. He also wanted to write a book about a trans boy, and then realized that they could be the same book.

Reading level: 790L

Suggested age: Grade 4-7 (School Library Journal)

Educators Guide:

http://images.randomhouse.com/teachers_guides/9780593111154.pdf

***Me (Moth)* by Amber McBride**

What's it about? While on a summer road trip, Moth and Sani must find a way to come to terms with the trauma they carry, perhaps through finding each other.

Read-alikes:

- *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo
- *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander
- *Chlorine Sky* by Mahogany Browne

If **you like** books written in verse, books that talk about grief, and realistic stories with a supernatural element, you will love this.

Something interesting: Amber McBride raises her own bees! *Me (Moth)* is deliberately structured around the four-part life cycle of a moth.

Reading Level: HL750L

Suggested age: Grade 8+ (School Library Journal)

Educators Guide: <https://amber-mcbride.com/things/>

***The Bones of Ruin* by Sarah Raughley**



What's it about? In Victorian London, Iris, an immortal tightrope dancer, becomes a warrior for a secret society in the fight-to-the-death Tournament of Freaks hoping to discover her identity.

Read-alikes:

- *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi
- *Legendborn* by Tracy Deonn
- *Clockwork Angel* by Cassandra Clare

If you like historical fantasy books that have suspense, secret societies, hidden heritage, supernatural abilities, apocalyptic adventure with a hint of romance.

Something interesting: Sarah Raughley is a Black Canadian author who grew up in Southern Ontario writing stories. She is a huge fangirl of anything from manga to sci-fi fantasy TV to Japanese role-playing games, all of which have largely inspired her writing.

Reading level: HL710L

Suggested age: Grade 9+ (Simon & Schuster)

YRCA 2024 Senior Book Profiles

***Ace of Spades* by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé**

What's it about? Two grade 12 students find themselves the target of a cruel and anonymous social media bully named “Aces.”

Read-alikes:

- *Legendborn* by Tracy Deonn
- *Felix Ever After* by Kacen Callender
- *The Taking of Jake Livingston* by Ryan Douglass
- *Pretty Little Liars* by Sara Shepard

If you like young adult mystery-thrillers with LGBTQIA+ first-person characters, you'll like this book.

Something interesting: Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé went to an all-girls Catholic school in London from age 11 to 18 and the experience, she writes, was “eventful.”

Reading level: HL740L

Suggested age: Grade 9+ (School Library Journal)



***Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley**

What's it about? Daunis must solve the mystery behind a murder and deadly new drug in her community using her knowledge of chemistry and Ojibwe medicine, while finding out what it means to be a strong Ojibwe woman.

Read-alikes:

- *Son of a Trickster* by Eden Robinson
- *Harvest House* by Cynthia Leitich Smith
- *Elatsoe* by Darcie Little Badger

If you like crime thrillers, suspense, and hockey then you will like this book!

Something interesting: Boulley spent ten years working on this story. The four-act structure is based on the four parts of the medicine wheel. Barack and Michelle Obama's production company, Higher Ground, purchased the rights to adapt *Firekeeper's Daughter* into a TV series, which will be released on Netflix.

Reading level: HL720L

Suggested Age: Grade 9+ (School Library Journal)

***Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo**

What's it about? Set in 1950s San Francisco, Lily Hu comes to terms with being a lesbian while dealing with racial discrimination against Chinese-Americans.

Read-alikes:

- *The Henna Wars* by Adiba Jaigirdar
- *The Music of What Happens* by Bill Konigsberg
- *Lies We Tell Ourselves* by Robin Talley
- *Like a Love Story* by Abdi Nazemian

If you like diverse characters, historical fiction, and queer love stories, this book is for you.

Something interesting: *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* won the National Book Award, the Stonewall Book Award, the Asian Pacific American Award for Literature, a Michael L. Printz Honor, and was an LA Times Book Prize Finalist.



Reading level: 900L

Suggested age: Grades 9+ (School Library Journal)

***You'll be the Death of Me* by Karen M. McManus**

What's it about? Three classmates ditch school and become embroiled in a murder investigation when they find the dead body of a fellow student.

Read-alikes:

- *One of Us is Lying* by Karen M. McManus
- *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* by Holly Jackson
- *They Wish They Were Us* by Jessica Goodman
- *The Inheritance Games* by Jennifer Barnes

If you like intricately plotted mysteries, thrillers, and suspense, you'll love this book.

Something interesting: Karen M. McManus is considered the queen of Young Adult Mysteries. Her first novel, *One of Us is Lying*, spent over 130 weeks in the New York Time's bestseller list. A TV series adaptation was released in October 2021. Karen's award-winning books have been translated into over forty languages.

Reading level: HL750L

Suggested age: Grade 8 to 12 (Booklist)

***The Prison Healer* by Lynette Noni**

What's it about? Kiva is a 16-year-old prisoner who must undergo the Trial by Ordeal, keep the sickly rebel queen alive, and try to solve a deadly plague sweeping through her prison.

Read-alikes:

- *Throne of Glass* by Sarah J Maas
- *Defy the Night* by Brigid Kemmerer
- *This Woven Kingdom* by Tahereh Mafi

If you like fantasy books that take place in prison, trials to the death, and romance, then you will like this book.

Something interesting: Zalindov prison is inspired by a real prison in Australia – Lynette went on a tour there and went into the tunnels under the prison, in some places



having to canoe across partially submerged tunnels. After that she knew she had to set a story in a place like that.

Reading level: Grade 7-9 (no Lexile)

Suggested age: Grade 8+ (School Library Journal)

***Better Than the Movies* by Lynn Painter**

What's it about? Romcom-obsessed Liz Buxbaum's childhood crush has moved back to town and she has to enlist the help of her bad boy neighbor to get his attention.

Read-alikes:

- *The Rest of the Story* by Sarah Dessen
- *Tell Me Three Things* by Julie Buxbaum
- *Today Tonight Tomorrow* by Rachel Lynn Solomon

If you like romcoms, playlists, and sweet romances, you will like this book!

Something interesting: You can read the party scene from Wes's point of view on [Lynn Painter's website](#) and you can [listen to the playlist on Spotify](#).

Reading level: HL750L

Suggested age: Grade 9+ (School Library Journal)

***Concrete Rose* by Angie Thomas**

What's it about? Seventeen-year-old Maverick Carter's life is upended when he finds out that he's the father of a three-month-old baby, and must choose between his duty to the King Lords gang and being the father his son deserves.

Read-alikes:

- *Dear Yvette* by Simone Ni-Ni
- *The First Part Last* by Angela Johnson
- *Dear Justyce* by Nick Stone

If you like coming-of-age stories, realistic fiction, and books about social justice, this is for you.

Something interesting: *Concrete Rose* is a prequel to *The Hate U Give* and tells the story of young Maverick "Mav" Carter, the father of *The Hate U Give*'s protagonist Starr



Carter.

Reading level: HL500L

Suggested age: Grade 9+ (School Library Journal)

Educator's guide: <https://harperstacks.com/pages/resources>

***Iron Widow* by Xiran Jay Zhao**

What's it about? Following a brutal act of vengeance, Zetian unexpectedly becomes an Iron Widow, a much-feared female battle pilot in the patriarchal society of Huaxia.

Read-alikes:

- *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card
- *A Thousand Steps Into Night* by Traci Chee
- *The Poppy War* by R.F. Kuang
- *Gearbreakers* by Zoe Hana Mikuta

If you like Asian-inspired fantasy, strong LGBTQIA+ female characters, romantic subplots, alt-history science fiction, and dystopian world building you will love *Iron Widow*.

Something interesting: The author took the name of her main character from history. Unprecedented in Chinese history, Wu Zetian subsequently founded and ruled as female emperor of the Wu Zhou dynasty of China from 690 to 705.

Reading level: HL830L

Suggested age: Grades 9+ (School Library Journal)