

Books 5th and 6th Graders Will Enjoy

Beasley, Kate. **Lions and Liars**. (JUV BEASL)

Fifth-grader Frederick is sent to a disciplinary camp where he and his terrifying troop mates have just started forging a friendship when they learn a Category 5 hurricane is headed their way.

Blankman, Anne. **Blackbird Girls**. (JUV BLANK)

On a spring morning, neighbors Valentina Kaplan and Oksana Savchenko wake up to an angry red sky. A reactor at the nuclear power plant where their fathers work--Chernobyl--has exploded. Before they know it, the two girls, who've always been enemies, find themselves on a train bound for Leningrad to stay with Valentina's estranged grandmother, Rita Grigorievna. In their new lives in Leningrad, they begin to learn what it means to trust another person.

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. **The War that Saved my Life**. (JUV BRADI)

A young disabled girl and her brother are evacuated from London to the English countryside during World War II, where they find life to be much sweeter away from their abusive mother.

Bowling, Dusti. **Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus**. (JUV BOWLI)

New friends and a mystery help Aven, thirteen, adjust to middle school and life at a dying western theme park in a new state, where her being born armless presents many challenges.

Callender, Kacen. **King and the Dragonflies**. (JUV CALLE)

In a small but turbulent Louisiana town, one boy's grief takes him beyond the bayous of his backyard, to learn that there is no right way to be yourself.

Colbert, Brandy. **The Only Black Girls in Town**. (JUV COLBE)

In a predominately white California beach town, the only two black seventh-graders, Alberta and Edie, find hidden journals that uncover family secrets and speak to race relations in the past.

Day, Christine. **The Sea in Winter**. (JUV DAY)

After an injury sidelines her dreams of becoming a ballet star, Maisie is not excited for her blended family's midwinter road trip along the coast, near the Makah community where her mother grew up.

DiCamillo, Kate. **Raymie Nightingale**. (JUV DICAM)

Hoping that if she wins a local beauty pageant her father will come home, Raymie practices twirling a baton and performing good deeds as she is drawn into an unlikely friendship with a drama queen and a saboteur.

Fipps, Lisa. **Starfish**. (JUV FIPPS)

Bullied and shamed her whole life for being fat, twelve-year-old Ellie finally gains the confidence to stand up for herself, with the help of some wonderful new allies.

Gemeinhart, Dan. **The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise**. (JUV GEMEI)

Twelve-year-old Coyote and her father rush to Poplin Springs, Washington, in their old school bus save a memory box buried in a park that will soon be demolished.

Gino, Alex. **Melissa's Story**. (JUV GINO)

When people look at Melissa, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl. Melissa thinks she'll have to keep this a secret forever. Then her teacher announces that their class play is going to be Charlotte's Web. Melissa really, really, REALLY wants to play Charlotte. But the teacher says she can't even try out for the part . . . because she's a boy. With the help of her best friend, Kelly, Melissa comes up with a plan. Not just so she can be Charlotte -- but so everyone can know who she is, once and for all.

Harrell, Rob. **Wink**. (JUV HARRE)

After being diagnosed with a rare eye cancer, twelve-year-old Ross discovers how music, art, and true friends can push him through treatment and survive middle school.

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. **Fish in a Tree**. (JUV HUNT)

Ally's greatest fear is that everyone will find out she is as dumb as they think she is because she still doesn't know how to read.

Kelly, Erin Entrada. **We Dream of Space**. (JUV KELLY)

Cash, Fitch, and Bird Thomas are three siblings in seventh grade together in Park, Delaware. In 1986, as the country waits expectantly for the launch of the Space Shuttle Challenger, they each struggle with their own personal anxieties. Cash, who loves basketball but has a newly broken wrist, is in danger of failing seventh grade for the second time. Fitch spends every afternoon playing Major Havoc at the arcade on Main. And Bird, his twelve-year-old twin, dreams of being NASA's first female shuttle commander. The Thomas children exist in their own orbits, circling a tense and unpredictable household, with little in common except an enthusiastic science teacher named Ms. Salonga. As the launch of the Challenger approaches, Ms. Salonga gives her students a project; they are separated into spacecraft crews and must create and complete a mission. When the fated day finally arrives, it changes all of their lives and brings them together in unexpected ways.

Kim, Jessica. **Stand up, Yumi Chung!** (JUV KIM)

When eleven-year-old Yumi Chung stumbles into a kids' comedy camp she is mistaken for another student, so she decides to play the part.

LaRocca, Rajani. **Red, White, and Whole**. (JUV LAROC)

Reha feels torn between two worlds: school, where she's the only Indian American student, and home, with her family's traditions and holidays. But Reha's parents don't understand why she's conflicted--they only notice when Reha doesn't meet their strict expectations. Reha feels disconnected from her mother, or Amma, although their names are linked--Reha means "star" and Punam means "moon"--But they are a universe apart.

LeZotte, Ann Clare. **Show me a sign**. (JUV LEZOT)

It is 1805 and Mary Lambert has always felt safe among the deaf community of Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard where practically everyone communicates in a shared sign language, but recent events have shattered her life; her brother George has died, land disputes between English settlers and the Wampanoag people are becoming increasingly bitter, and a "scientist" determined to discover the origins of the islands' widespread deafness has decided she makes the perfect "live specimen"--and kidnapped her.

Lock, Katherine and Melleby, Nicole. **This is our Rainbow: 16 stories of her, him, them, and us.** (JUV THIS)

Featuring contributions from Eric Bell, Katherine Locke and A.J. Sass, this first LGBTQA+ anthology for middle-grade readers presents stories of queer fantasy, historical and contemporary stories for every letter of the acronym.

Lukoff, Kyle. **Too Bright to See.** (JUV LUKOF)

In the summer before middle school, eleven-year-old Bug must contend with best friend Moira suddenly caring about clothes, makeup, and boys; a ghost haunting; and the truth about Bug's gender identity.

Nayeri, Daniel. **Everything Sad is untrue.** (JUV NAYER)

At the front of a middle school classroom in Oklahoma, a boy named Khosrou (whom everyone calls "Daniel") stands, trying to tell a story. His story. But no one believes a word he says. To them he is a dark-skinned, hairy-armed boy with a big butt whose lunch smells funny; who makes things up and talks about poop too much. But Khosrou's stories, stretching back years, and decades, and centuries, are beautiful, and terrifying, from the moment his family fled Iran in the middle of the night with the secret police moments behind them, back to the sad, cement refugee camps of Italy and further back to the fields near the river Aras, where rain-soaked flowers bled red like the yolk of sunset burst over everything, and further back still to the Jasmine-scented city of Isfahan

Mbalia, Kwame. **Black Boy Joy.** (JUV BLACK)

From seventeen acclaimed Black male and nonbinary authors comes a vibrant collection of stories, comics, and poems about the power of joy and the wonders of Black boyhood.

Medina, Meg. **Merci Suárez Changes Gears.** (JUV MEDIN)

Merci Suárez knew that sixth grade would be different, but she had no idea just how different. For starters, Merci has never been like the other kids at her private school in Florida, because she and her older brother, Roli, are scholarship students. They don't have a big house or a fancy boat, and they have to do extra community service to make up for their free tuition. So when bossy Edna Santos sets her sights on the new boy who happens to be Merci's school-assigned Sunshine Buddy, Merci becomes the target of Edna's jealousy.

Myers, Alison Green. **A Bird Will Soar.** (JUV MYERS)

After a tornado, Axel, who loves birds, finds an injured eaglet, and helps to rescue it--and also helps to resolve the problems in his broken family, and draw his father back home.

Ogle, Rex. **Free Lunch.** (JUV 362.709 OGLE)

Free Lunch is the story of Rex Ogle's first semester in sixth grade. Rex and his baby brother often went hungry, wore secondhand clothes, and were short of school supplies, and Rex was on his school's free lunch program. Grounded in the immediacy of physical hunger and the humiliation of having to announce it every day in the school lunch line, Rex's is a compelling story of a more profound hunger -- that of a child for his parents' love and care.

Palacio, R.J. **Pony**. (JUV PALAC)

Twelve-year-old Silas is awoken in the dead of night by three menacing horsemen who take his father away. Silas is left shaken, scared, and alone, except for the presence of his companion, Mittenwool...who happens to be a ghost. When a pony shows up at his door, Silas makes the courageous decision to leave his home and embark on a perilous journey to find his father. Along the way, he will face his fears to unlock the secrets of his past and explore the unfathomable mysteries of the world around him.

Park, Linda Sue. **Prairie Lotus**. (JUV PARK)

In Dakota Territory in the 1880s, half-Chinese Hanna and her white father face racism and resistance to change as they try to make a home for themselves.

Ramée, Lisa Moore. **A Good Kind of Trouble**. (JUV RAMEE)

Twelve-year-old Shayla is allergic to trouble. All she wants to do is to follow the rules. (Oh, and she'd also like to make it through seventh grade with her best friendships intact, learn to run track, and have a cute boy see past her giant forehead.) But in junior high, it's like all the rules have changed. Now she's suddenly questioning who her best friends are and some people at school are saying she's not black enough. Wait, what? Shay's sister, Hana, is involved in Black Lives Matter, but Shay doesn't think that's for her. After experiencing a powerful protest, though, Shay decides some rules are worth breaking.

Reynolds, Jason. **Look Both Ways**. (JUV REYNO)

Jason Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and weaves them into one funny, poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. **Esperanza Rising**. (JUV RYAN)

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. **Echo**. (JUV RYAN)

Lost in the Black Forest, Otto meets three mysterious sisters and finds himself entwined in a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica--and decades later three children, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California find themselves caught up in the same thread of destiny in the darkest days of the twentieth century, struggling to keep their families intact, and tied together by the music of the same harmonica.

Saeed, Aisha. **Amal Unbound**. (JUV SAEED)

Twelve-year-old Amal's dream of becoming a teacher one day is dashed in an instant when she accidentally insults a member of her Pakistani village's ruling family. As punishment for her behavior, she is forced to leave her heartbroken family behind and go work at their estate.

Stead, Rebecca. **The List of Things That Will Not Change**. (JUV STEAD)

Despite her parents' divorce, her father's coming out as gay, and his plans to marry his boyfriend, ten-year-old Bea is reassured by her parents' unconditional love, excited about getting a stepsister, and haunted by something she did last summer at her father's lake house.

Weeks, Sarah and Varadarajan, Gita. **Save Me a Seat**. (JUV WEEKS)

Ravi has just moved to the United States from India and has always been at the top of his class; Joe has lived in the same town his whole life and has learning problems--but when their lives intersect in the first week of fifth grade they are brought together by a common enemy (the biggest bully in their class) and the need to take control of their lives.

Woodson, Jacqueline. **Before the Ever After**. (JUV WOODS)

ZJ's friends Ollie, Darry and Daniel help him cope when his father, a beloved professional football player, suffers severe headaches and memory loss that spell the end of his career.