

2026 Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award--Novel List

| Author | Title | Publisher | Genre | Interest Level by Grade | Synopsis | |
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| Baptist, Kelly J. | <i>Eb & Flow</i> | Crown | Novel in Verse | 5-8 | Ebony and De’Kari (aka Flow) do not get along. How could they when their cafeteria scuffle ended with De’Kari’s ruined shoes, Ebony on the ground, and both of them with ten days of at-home suspension? Now Eb and Flow have two weeks to think about and explain their behavior--to their families, to each other, and ultimately to themselves. | |
| Bow, Erin | <i>Simon Sort of Says</i> | Disney Hyperion | Realistic Fiction | 5-8 | Two years after a tragedy saddles him with viral fame, twelve-year-old Simon O’Keeffe and his family move to Grin And Bear It, Nebraska, where the internet and cell phones are banned so astrophysicists can scan the sky for signs of alien life, and where, with the help of two new friends, a puppy, and a giant radio telescope, Simon plans to restart the narrative of his life. | |
| Green, Tim | <i>Final Season</i> | HarperCollins | Sports Fiction | 4-8 | When his NFL dad is diagnosed with ALS, middle school quarterback Ben Redd is determined to have a winning season, which may be his final as he watches the heavy toll the incurable disease is taking on his dad. | |
| Krampien, Celia | <i>The Bellwoods Game</i> | Atheneum Books | Horror | 4-7 | When it’s her turn to play the Bellwoods Game, a tradition for sixth graders to save the town for another year--or so the story goes--Bailee enters into the woods on Halloween night with two other players and discovers something sinister is at play. | |
| Lai, Remy | <i>Ghost Book</i> | Henry Holt | Graphic Novel | 4-7 | July Chen has always been able to see ghosts, but her father insists that they are not real, forcing her to pretend the ghost don’t exist. Now, it’s Hungry Ghost Month, when the Underworld Gates open and dangerous ghosts prowl the world of the living and also terrorize the regular ghosts. When July saves the ghost boy William from being devoured, he becomes her first friend and also the catalyst for a great adventure. | |
| Lerner, Jarrett | <i>A Work in Progress</i> | Aladdin | Novel in Verse | 4-7 | Hiding himself in baggy jeans and oversized hoodies, Will resorts to increasingly drastic measures to transform his appearance in an effort to win over his crush, until he meets someone who helps him see his body and all it contains as an ever-evolving work in progress. | |
| Lincoln, Beth | <i>The Swifts: A Dictionary of Scoundrels</i> | Dutton Books | Mystery | 4-7 | When someone gives Arch-Aunt Schadenfreude a deadly push down the stairs during the Swift Family Reunion, Shenanigan Swift, who has a penchant for mischief, decides to become a detective and solve this mysterious case. | |
| Maldonado, Torrey | <i>Hands</i> | Nancy Paulson | Realistic Fiction | 5-8 | Twelve-year-old Trevor has an adult problem to deal with: how to protect himself, his sisters, and his mother from his abusive stepfather (currently in prison) and he thinks the way to do that is to take up boxing--although he would really rather draw. | |
| Marsh, Katherine | <i>Medusa: The Myth of Monsters</i> | Clarion | Fantasy | 4-7 | A descendant of a legendary monster, Ava is sent to the Accademia del Forte in Venice after an altercation with a classmate, where she must learn to control her emotions, especially when she unearths a terrible secret that could change the world forever. | |
| Martin, Pedro | <i>Mexikid</i> | Dial Books | Graphic Memoir | 5-8 | Pedro Martin has grown up hearing stories about his abuelito--his legendary crime-fighting grandfather who was once a part of the Mexican Revolution! But that doesn’t mean Pedro is excited at the news that Abuelito is coming to live with their family. After all, Pedro has 8 brothers and sisters and the house is crowded enough! Still, Pedro piles into the Winnebago with his family for a road trip to Mexico to bring Abuelito home, and what follows is the trip of a lifetime, one filled with laughs and heartache. | |
| Moulton, Deke | <i>Don’t Want to Be You Monster</i> | Tundra | Horror | 5-8 | A pair of vampire brothers hide their true nature from the humans in their town. When vampires are blamed for a series of murders in town, the brothers must set aside their differences to try to find out what is really happening. | |

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| Ostertag, Molly Knox & Bouma, Xanthe | <i>D&D Dungeon Club: Roll Call</i> | HarperAlley | Graphic Novel | 4-8 | <p>Middle school is a dungeon... At least, that's how Jess sees it. Luckily, she and her best friend Olivia know how to escape into the sprawling worlds of their own imaginations with the fantasy roleplaying game, Dungeons & Dragons. Olivia runs the game, and Jess is the solo party member, playing a take-no-prisoners, lone-wolf fighter of her own design named Sir Corius.</p> <p>But when Olivia wants to add new players to their group, Jess finds herself struggling to share their game--and her best friend. Will their epic campaign withstand all this change, or has their adventure--and their friendship--finally come to an end?</p> |
| Pla, Sally J. | <i>The Fire, The Water, and Maddie Mc</i> | Quill Tree Books | Realistic Fiction | 5-8 | <p>Thirteen-year-old neurodivergent Maudie spends an eventful summer in California with her father, where she struggles with whether to share a terrible secret about life with her mom and stepdad.</p> |
| Polonsky, Ami | <i>World Made of Glass</i> | Little, Brown | Realistic Fiction | 6-8 | <p>Iris tries to act normal at school, going through the motions and joking around with her friends. But how can she, when her dad is dying of a virus that's off-limits to talk about? When she knows that soon all she'll have left of her kind, loving dad are memories, photos, and a binder full of the poems they used to exchange?</p> <p>In a sea of rage and grief, Iris resolves to speak out against the rampant fear, misinformation, and prejudice surrounding AIDS--and find the pieces of Dad that she never knew before. Along the way, Iris might just find new sides to herself.</p> |
| Sheinkin, Steve | <i>Impossible Escape: A True Story of Survival and Heroism in Nazi Europe</i> | Roaring Books | WWII Nonfiction | 7-8 | <p>In 1944, teenager Rudolf "Rudi" Vrba and his friend, Alfred Wetzler, plan a daring escape from the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, knowing they must warn the world of what the Nazis are doing to their Jewish family and friends. Meanwhile, in Hungary, Gerta Sidonová, a schoolmate of Rudi's, hides with her Jewish family under alternate identities--but the Hungarian government is close to caving to the German Nazis, and if they don't get out soon Gerta and her family may be given up to capture.</p> |
| Swinarski, Claire | <i>What Happened to Rachel Riley?</i> | Quill Tree Books | Realistic Fiction | 6-8 | <p>Anna Hunt is the new girl at East Middle School, but she knows something weird is going on with the eighth-grade class. Last year, Rachel Riley was one of the most popular girls in school, but now she is a total social outcast, and no one will tell Anna why. When Anna's Social Issues class is assigned a project on a topic of their choosing, aspiring podcaster Anna decides to investigate what happened to Rachel Riley.</p> |
| Tafolla, Carmen | <i>Warrior Girl</i> | Nancy Paulson | Novel in Verse | 5-7 | <p>Celina and her family are bilingual and follow both Mexican and American traditions. Celina revels in her Mexican heritage, but once she starts school it feels like the world wants her to erase that part of her identity. Fortunately, she's got an army of family and three fabulous new friends behind her to fight the ignorance. But it's her Gramma who's her biggest inspiration, encouraging Celina to build a shield of joy around herself.</p> |
| Tang, Betty C. | <i>Parachute Kids</i> | Graphix | Graphic Novel | 4-8 | <p>After their two-week family tour of Los Angeles, ten-year-old Feng Li Lin and her older brother and sister learn they will remain in California while their parents return to Taiwan, forcing them to navigate a new school, a new language, bullies, racism, and the pressures of running a household.</p> |
| Thompson, Pari | <i>Greenwild: The World Behind the Door</i> | Farrar, Straus & Giroux | Fantasy | 4-6 | <p>On the run after her mother disappears, eleven-year-old Daisy Thistledown steps through a mysterious hidden doorway and enters the realm of Greenwild, where she must uncover the truth about who she really is to save this land of magic and amazing natural wonders from being destroyed.</p> |
| Yee, Lisa & Santat, D. | <i>The Misfits: A Royal Conundrum</i> | Random House | Mystery | 4-7 | <p>When a notorious thief is out for priceless treasure (gems! cats! general decorum!)--who are you gonna call? An elite team of crime-fighting underdogs, that's who! The Misfits are on the case!</p> |