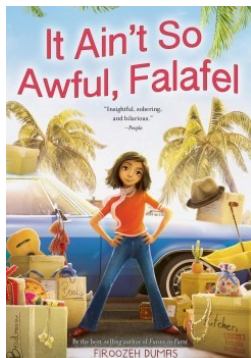


# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

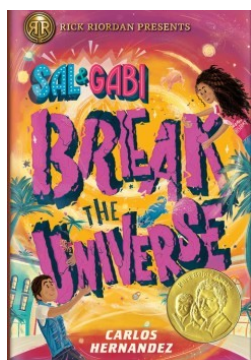
## Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



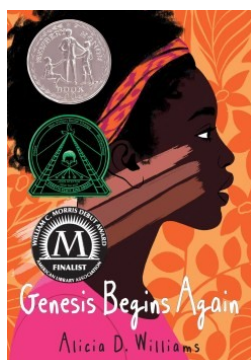
**It Ain't So Awful, Falafel**  
by Firoozeh Dumas, c2016 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.7)

"Eleven-year-old Zomorod, originally from Iran, tells her story of growing up Iranian in Southern California during the Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis of the late 1970s." - Follett



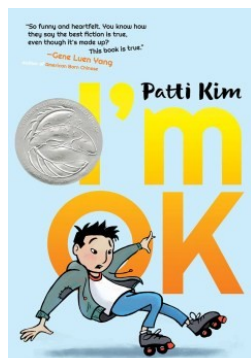
**Sal & Gabi Break the Universe**  
by Carlos Hernandez, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.8)

"In order to heal after his mother's death, thirteen-year-old Sal learns to reach into time and space to retrieve things—and people—from other universes." - Follett



**Genesis Begins Again**  
by Alicia D. Williams, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.5)

"This deeply sensitive and powerful debut novel tells the story of a thirteen-year-old who must overcome internalized racism and a verbally abusive family to finally learn to love herself..." - Pub.



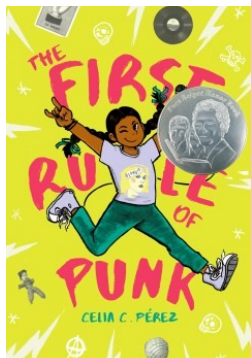
**I'm OK**  
by Patti Kim, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.4)

"OK, a Korean American boy, tries a get rich quick scheme of starting a hair braiding business and winning the school talent competition to hide the fact that he is struggling with the loss of his father and the financial hardships he and his mother must now bear." - Follett

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

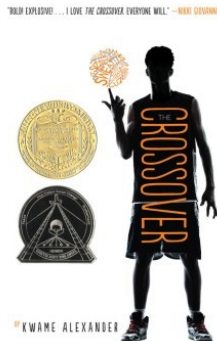
Compiled by Joan Pearce



### The First Rule of Punk

by Celia C. Pérez, c2017 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.5)

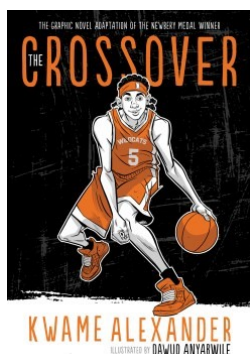
"Twelve-year-old Maria Luisa O'Neill-Morales (who really prefers to be called Malu) reluctantly moves with her Mexican-American mother to Chicago and starts seventh grade with a bang—violating the dress code with her punk rock aesthetic and spurning the middle school's most popular girl in favor of starting a band with a group of like-minded weirdos." - Follett



### The Crossover

by Kwame Alexander, c2014 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.3)

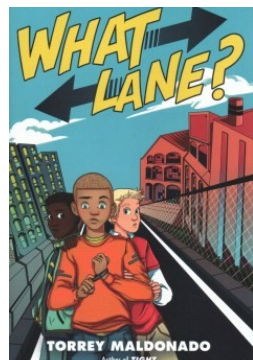
"In this middle grade novel in verse that's *Love That Dog* meets *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* meets *Slam*, twelve-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health." - Pub.



### The Crossover: The Graphic Novel

by Kwame Alexander, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.5)

"Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health." - Follett



### What Lane?

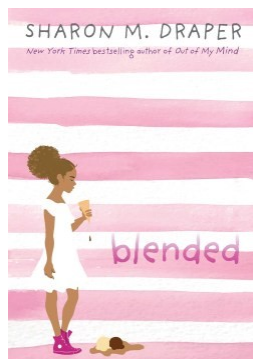
by Torrey Maldonado, c2020 (IL: 5-8)

"STAY IN YOUR LANE." Stephen doesn't want to hear that--he wants to have no lane...Here's the thing, though...As a mixed kid, he feels like he's living in two worlds with different rules--and he's been noticing that strangers treat him differently than his white friends . . . So what'll he do?" - Pub.

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

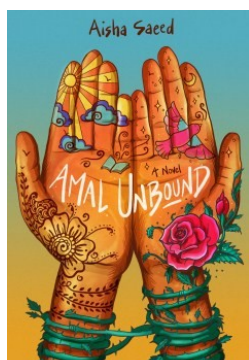
Compiled by Joan Pearce



### Blended

by Sharon Draper, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.0)

"Piano-prodigy Isabella, eleven, whose black father and white mother struggle to share custody, never feels whole, especially as racial tensions affect her school, her parents both become engaged, and she and her stepbrother are stopped by police." - Follett



### Amal Unbound

by Aisha Saeed, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.2)

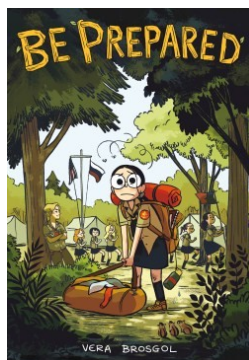
"In Pakistan, Amal holds onto her dream of being a teacher even after becoming an indentured servant to pay off her family's debt to the wealthy and corrupt Khan family." - Follett



### Dragon Pearl

by Yoon Ha Lee, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 7.0)

"Min, a thirteen-year-old girl with fox-magic, stows away on a battle cruiser and impersonates a cadet in order to solve the mystery of what happened to her older brother in the Thousand World Space Forces." - Follett



### Be Prepared

by Vera Brosgol, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 3.2)

Graphic Novel

"All Vera wants to do is fit in—but that's not easy for a Russian girl in the suburbs. Her friends live in fancy houses and their parents can afford to send them to the best summer camps. Vera's single mother can't afford that sort of luxury, but there's one summer camp in her price range—Russian summer camp....And nothing could prepare her for all the 'cool girl' drama, endless Russian history lessons, and outhouses straight out of nightmares!" - Pub.

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

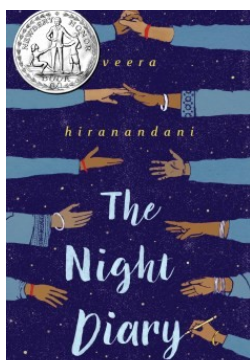
Compiled by Joan Pearce



### **Front Desk**

by Kelly Yang, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.5)

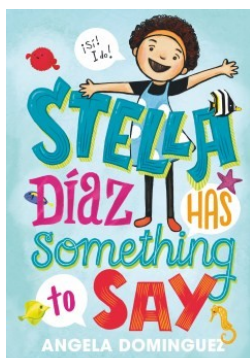
"Recent immigrants from China and desperate for work and money, ten-year-old Mia Tang's parents take a job managing a rundown motel in Southern California, even though the owner, Mr. Yao is a nasty skinflint who exploits them; while her mother (who was an engineer in China) does the cleaning, Mia works the front desk and tries to cope with demanding customers and other recent immigrants--not to mention being only one of two Chinese in her fifth grade class, the other being Mr. Yao's son, Jason." - Follett



### **The Night Diary**

by Veera Hiranandan, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.5)

"Shy twelve-year-old Nisha, forced to flee her home with her Hindu family during the 1947 partition of India, tries to find her voice and make sense of the world falling apart around her by writing to her deceased Muslim mother in the pages of her diary." - Follett



### **Stella Diaz Has Something to Say**

by Angela Dominguez, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.2)

"When a new boy arrives in Stella's class, she really wants to be his friend, but sometimes Stella accidentally speaks Spanish instead of English and pronounces words wrong, which makes her turn roja. Plus, she has to speak in front of her whole class for a big presentation at school! But she better get over her fears soon, because Stella Diaz has something to say!" - Follett



### **Brown Girl Dreaming**

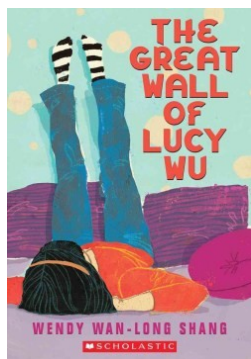
by Jacqueline Woodson, c2014 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.3)

"The author shares her childhood memories and reveals the first sparks that ignited her writing career in free-verse poems about growing up in the North and South." - Pub.

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



### The Great Wall of Lucy Wu

by Wendy Wan Long Shang, c2011 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.6)

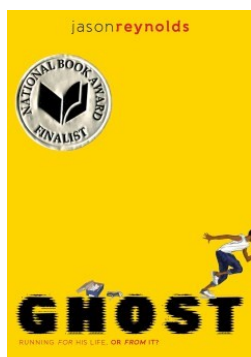
"Eleven-year-old aspiring basketball star and interior designer Lucy Wu is excited about finally having her own bedroom, until she learns that her great-aunt is coming to visit and Lucy will have to share a room with her for several months, shattering her plans for a perfect sixth-grade year." - Follett



### Extra Credit

by Andrew Clements, c2009 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.2)

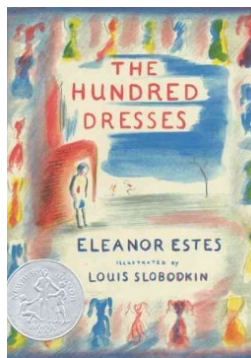
"Three young middle-school-age children, Abby, Amira, and Sadeed, exchange letters back and forth between the prairies of Illinois and the mountains of Afghanistan and begin to bridge a gap across cultural and religious divides." - Follett



### Ghost

by Jason Reynolds, c2016 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.6)

"Ghost, a naturally talented runner and troublemaker, is recruited for an elite middle school track team. He must stay on track, literally and figuratively, to reach his full potential" - Pub.



### The Hundred Dresses

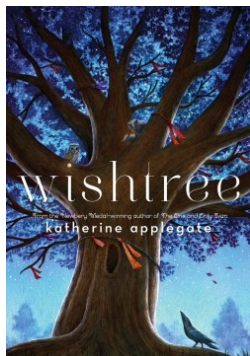
by Eleanor Estes, c1944 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.4)

"Wanda Petronski, a little Polish girl in an American school, is laughed at because she always wears a faded blue dress, until her classmates learn a lesson." - Pub.

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

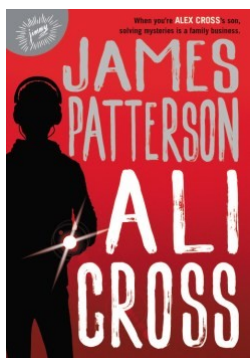
Compiled by Joan Pearce



### Wishtree

by Katherine Applegate, c2017 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.2)

"An old red oak tree tells how he and his crow friend, Bongo, help their human neighbors get along after a threat against an immigrant family is carved into the tree's trunk." - Follett



### Ali Cross

by James Patterson, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.5)

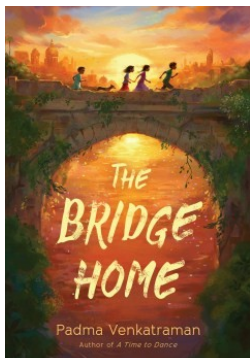
"When his best friend Abraham is reported missing, Ali Cross sets out to find him, but he soon learns that being a kid sleuth isn't easy and clues aren't always what they seem." - Pub.



### Blackbird Fly

by Erin Entrada Kelly, c2015 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.4)

"Bullied at school, eighth-grader Apple, a Filipino American who loves the music of the Beatles, decides to change her life by learning how to play the guitar." - Follett



### The Bridge Home

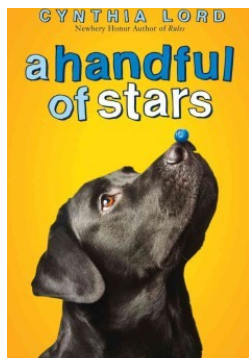
by Padma Venkatraman, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.4)

"Life is harsh in Chennai's teeming streets, so when runaway sisters Viji and Rukku arrive, their prospects look grim. Very quickly, eleven-year-old Viji discovers how vulnerable they are in this uncaring, dangerous world...But when illness strikes, Viji must decide whether to risk seeking help from strangers or to keep holding on to their fragile, hard-fought freedom." - Pub.

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

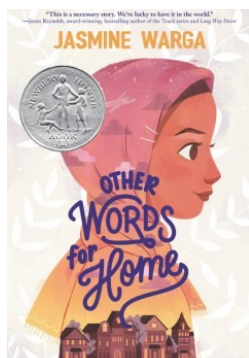
Compiled by Joan Pearce



### A Handful of Stars

by Cynthia Lord, c2015 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.4)

"When her blind dog slips his collar, twelve-year old Lily meets Salma Santiago, a young Hispanic girl whose migrant family are in Maine for the blueberry-picking season, and, based partly on their mutual love of dogs, the two forge a friendship while painting bee boxes for Lily's grandfather--but as the Blueberry Queen pageant approaches Lily and Selma are confronted with some of the hard truths of prejudice and migrant life." - Follett



### Other Words for Home

by Jasmine Warga, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.3)

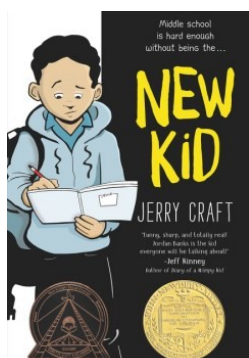
"Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud...But this life also brings unexpected surprises... Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is." - Pub.



### Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky

by Kwame Mbalia, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.8)

"Seventh-grader Tristan Strong tumbles into the MidPass and, with allies John Henry and Brer Rabbit, must entice the god Anansi to come out of hiding and seal the hole Tristan accidentally ripped in the sky." - Follett



### New Kid

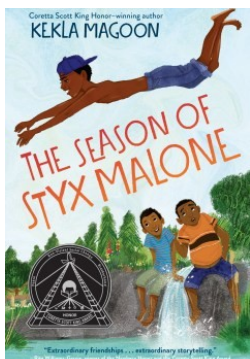
by Jerry Craft, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 3.6)  
Graphic Novel

"Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade....Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his friends and staying true to himself?" - Pub.

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

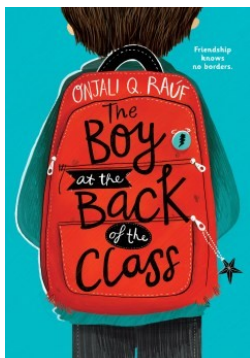
Compiled by Joan Pearce



### The Season of Styx Malone

by Kekla Magoon, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 3.8)

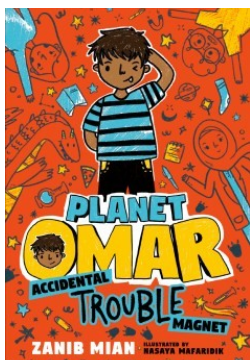
"Caleb Franklin and his younger brother, Bobby Gene, spend an extraordinary summer their new, older neighbor, Styx Malone, a foster boy from the city."  
- Pub.



### The Boy at the Back of the Class

by Onjali Q. Rauf, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.4)

"When quiet, nine-year-old Ahmet arrives in their classroom, a boy and his friends fail to draw him out but try a new plan after learning he is a Syrian refugee." - Follett



### Accidental Trouble Magnet

by Zanib Milan, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.3)

"Welcome to the imaginative brain of Omar! Omar and his family have just moved, and he is NOT excited about starting at a new school...But when Omar makes a new best friend, things start looking up. That is, until a Big Mean Bully named Daniel makes every day a nightmare!...Luckily, Omar's enormous imagination and goofy family help him get through life's ups and downs." - Pub.



### You Don't Know Everyone Jilly P.

by Alex Gino, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.3)

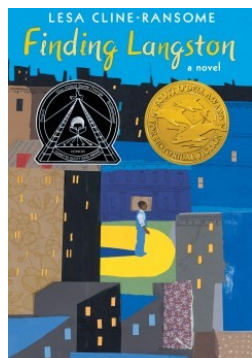
"... when Jilly's sister, Emma, is born deaf, she realizes ... the world is going to treat Jilly, who is white and hearing, differently from Emma...Jilly makes a connection online with another fantasy fan, Derek, who is a Deaf, Black ASL user. She goes to Derek for help with Emma but doesn't always know the best way or time to ask for it...Jilly is starting to learn all the things she doesn't know--and by doing that, she's also working to discover how to support her family and her friends." - Pub.



# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



### Finding Langston

by Lesa Cline-Ransome, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 3.2)

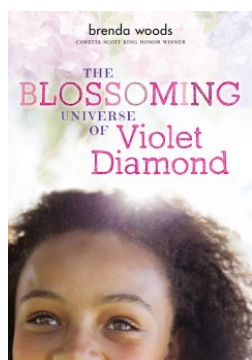
"When 11-year-old Langston's mother dies in 1946, he and his father leave rural Alabama for Chicago's brown belt as a part of what came to be known as the Great Migration...But his new home has one fantastic thing. Unlike the whites-only library in Alabama, the local public library welcomes everyone. There... Langston discovers another Langston, a poet whom he learns inspired his mother enough to name her only son after him." - Pub.



### Stand Up, Yumi Chung!

by Jessica Kim, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.6)

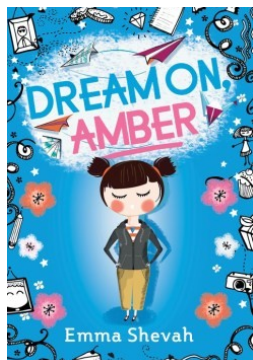
"When eleven-year-old Yumi Chung stumbles into a kids' comedy camp she is mistaken for another student, so she decides to play the part." - Pub.



### The Blossoming Universe of Violet Desmond

by Brenda Woods, c2014 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.6)

"Violet is a smart, funny, brown-eyed, brown-haired girl in a family of blonds. Her mom is white, and her dad, who died before she was born, was black...she decides it's time to learn about her African American heritage. And despite getting off to a rocky start trying to reclaim her dad's side of the family, she can feel her confidence growing as the puzzle pieces of her life finally start coming together." - Pub.



### Dream On, Amber

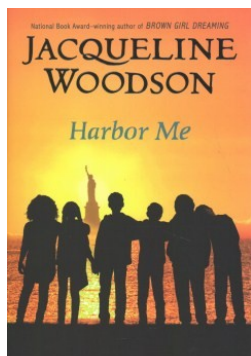
by Emma Shevah, c2014 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.5)

"Amber's Japanese father left when she was little, and her sister Bella was just a baby, so now she fills in the frustrating gap in her life with imagined conversations, and writes letters to Bella that seem to come from their father." - Follett

# Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

## Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



### Harbor Me

by Jacqueline Woodson, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.1)

"When six students are chosen to participate in a weekly talk with no adults allowed, they discover that when they're together, it's safe to share the hopes and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world." - Pub.



### Farah Rocks Fifth Grade

by Susan Darraj, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.8)

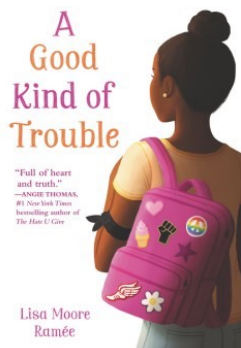
"...when new girl Dana Denver starts tormenting Farah and her younger brother, Samir, she decides she can not leave Samir to face the bully alone, especially since the adults and even Allie do not seem to be taking the matter seriously--so Farah comes up with a plan, one which involves lying to those closest to her." - Follett



### 12 Before 13

by Lisa Greenwald, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.1)

"Inspired by the success of their first birthday bucket list, Ari and her BFF Kaylan set twelve new goals for the next school year...But after a life-changing summer at camp, Ari feels torn between Kaylan and her camp friends. And as she faces down everything from boys to bat mitzvahs, Ari needs to figure out how to be her best self—before her friends come together at her thirteenth birthday party." - Pub.



### A Good Kind of Trouble

by Lisa Moore Ramee, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.5)

"Twelve-year-old Shayla is allergic to trouble. All she wants to do is to follow the rules...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...Shay decides some rules are worth breaking. She starts wearing an armband to school in support of the Black Lives movement. Shay is scared to do the wrong thing, but if she doesn't face her fear, she'll be forever tripping over the next hurdle." - Pub.