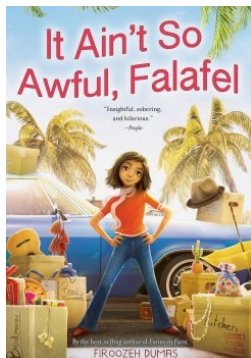


Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

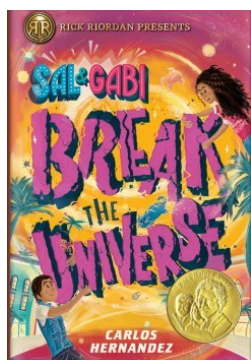
Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



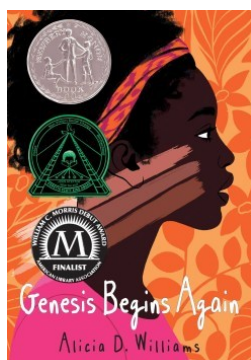
It Ain't So Awful, Falafel
by Firoozeh Dumas, c2016 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.7)

"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



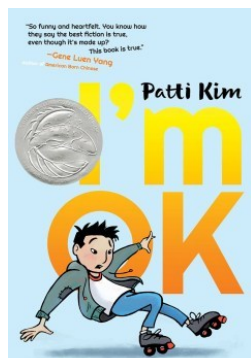
Sal & Gabi Break the Universe
by Carlos Hernandez, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.8)

"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.



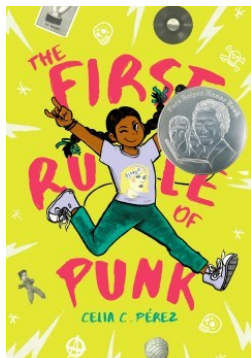
I'm OK
by Patti Kim, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.4)

"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

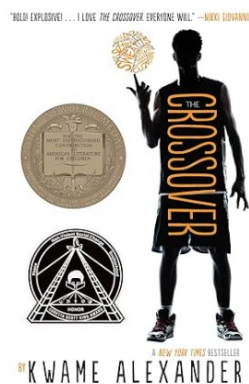
Compiled by Joan Pearce



The First Rule of Punk

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

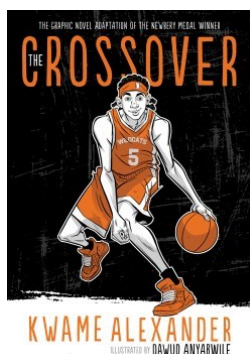
"Twelve-year-old Maria Luisa O'Neill-Morales (who really prefers to be called Malu) reluctantly moves with her Mexican-American mother to Chicago and starts seventh grade with a bang—violating the dress code with her punk rock aesthetic and spurning the middle school's most popular girl in favor of starting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



The Crossover

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

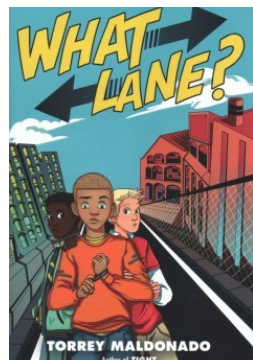
"In this middle grade novel in verse that's *Love That Dog* meets *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* meets *Slam*, twelve-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health." - Pub.



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?

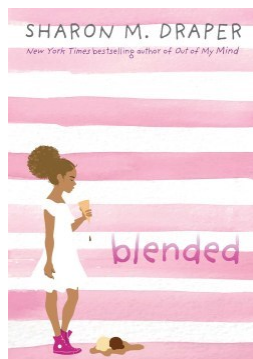
by Torrey Maldonado, c2020 (IL: 5-8)

"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

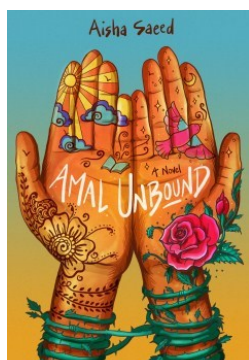
Compiled by Joan Pearce



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)

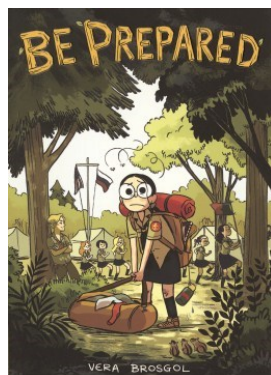
"In Pakistan, Amal holds onto her dream of being a teacher even after becoming an indentured servant to pay off her family's debt to the wealthy and corrupt Khan family." - Follett



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)

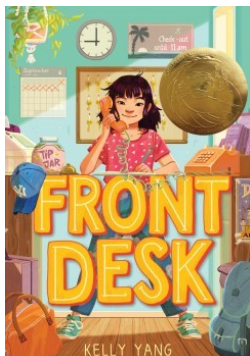
Graphic Novel

"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

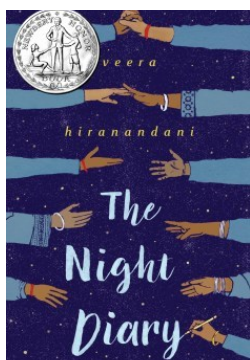
Compiled by Joan Pearce



Front Desk

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

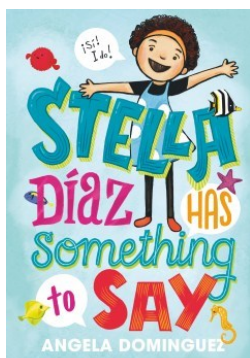
"Recent immigrants from China and desperate for work and money, ten-year-old Mia Tang's parents take a job managing a rundown motel in Southern California, even though the owner, Mr. Yao is a nasty skinflint who exploits them; while her mother (who was an engineer in China) does the cleaning, Mia works 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)

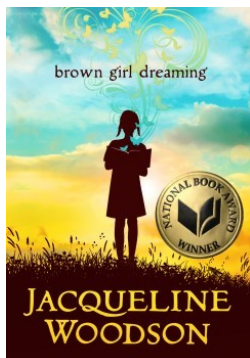
"Shy twelve-year-old Nisha, forced to flee her home with her Hindu family during the 1947 partition of India, tries to find her voice and make sense of the world falling apart around her by writing to her deceased Muslim mother in the pages of her diary." - Follett



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

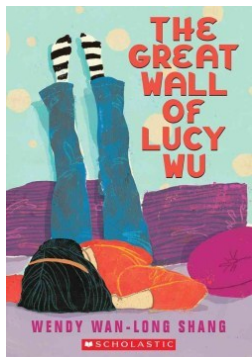
by Jacqueline Woodson, c2014 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.3)

"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

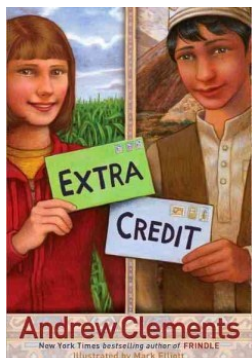
Compiled by Joan Pearce



The Great Wall of Lucy Wu

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

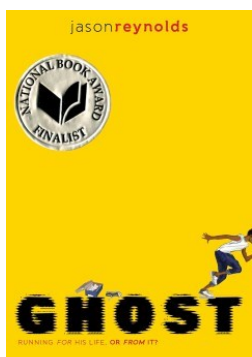
"Eleven-year-old aspiring basketball star and interior designer Lucy Wu is excited about finally having her own bedroom, until she learns that her great-aunt is coming to visit and Lucy will have to share a room with her for several months, shattering her plans for a perfect sixth-grade year." - Follett



Extra Credit

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

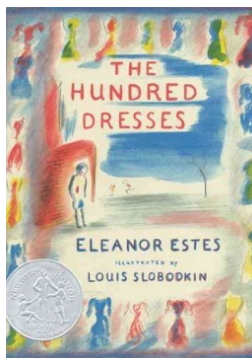
"Three young middle-school-age children, Abby, Amira, and Sadeed, exchange letters back and forth between the prairies of Illinois and the mountains of Afghanistan and begin to bridge a gap across cultural and religious divides." - Follett



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

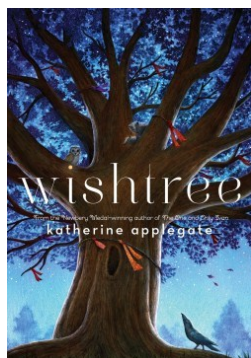
by Eleanor Estes, c1944 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.4)

"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

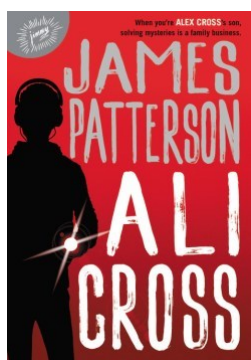
Compiled by Joan Pearce



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)

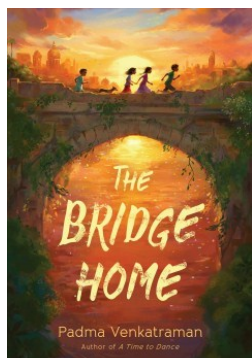
"When his best friend Abraham is reported missing, Ali Cross sets out to find him, but he soon learns that being a kid sleuth isn't easy and clues aren't always what they seem." - Pub.



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

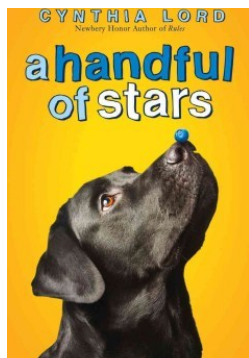
by Padma Venkatraman, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.4)

"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)

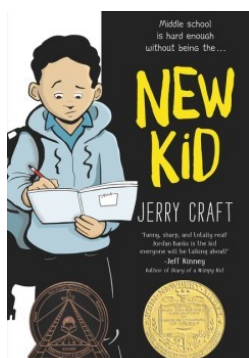
"Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud...But 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

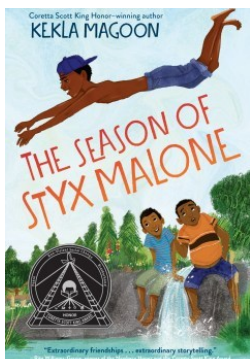
by Jerry Craft, c2019 (IL: 5-8, RL: 3.6)
Graphic Novel

"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

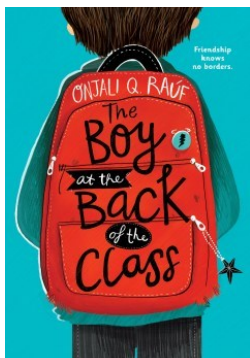
Compiled by Joan Pearce



The Season of Styx Malone

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

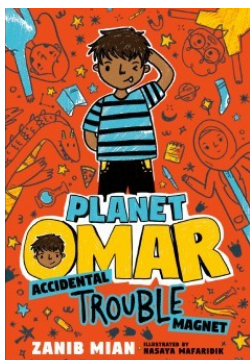
"Caleb Franklin and his younger brother, Bobby Gene, spend an extraordinary summer their new, older neighbor, Styx Malone, a foster boy from the city."
- Pub.



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.

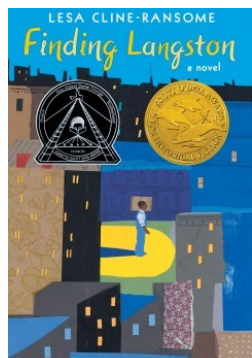
by Alex Gino, c2018 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.3)

"... 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)

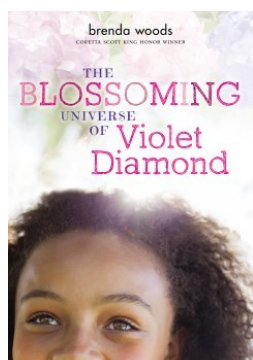
"When 11-year-old Langston's mother dies in 1946, he and his father leave rural Alabama for Chicago's brown belt as a part of what came to be known as the Great Migration...But his new home has one fantastic thing. Unlike the whites-only library in Alabama, the local public library welcomes everyone. 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)

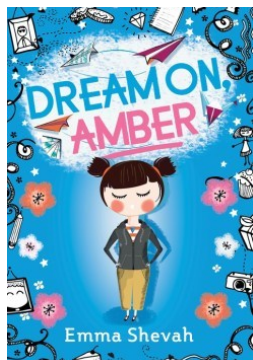
"When eleven-year-old Yumi Chung stumbles into a kids' comedy camp she is mistaken for another student, so she decides to play the part." - Pub.



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

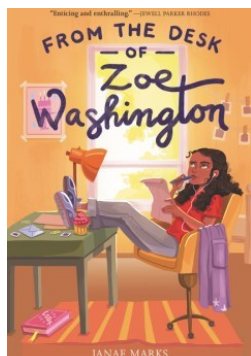
by Emma Shevah, c2014 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.5)

"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



From the Desk of Zoe Washington

by Janae Marks, c2020 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 4.4)

"Avid baker Zoe Washington receives a letter on her twelfth birthday from her biological father, who is in prison for a terrible crime." - Pub.



Storm Runner

by Jennifer Cervantes, c2018 (IL: 5-8, 4-8; RL: 4.4)

"To prevent the Mayan gods from battling each other and destroying the world, thirteen-year-old Zane must unravel an ancient prophecy, stop an evil god, and discover how the physical disability that makes him reliant on a cane also connects him to his father and his ancestry." - Follett



Maya and the Rising Dark

by Rena Barron, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 5-7; RL: 5.6)

"A twelve-year-old girl discovers her father is the keeper of the gateway between our world and The Dark, and when he goes missing she'll need to unlock her own powers and fight a horde of spooky creatures set on starting a war." - Pub.



Paola Santiago and the River of Tears

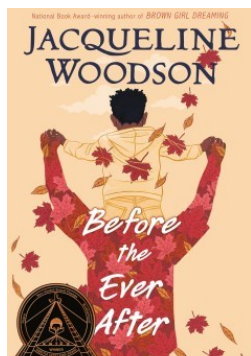
by Tehlor Kay Mejia, c2020 (IL: 3-6; RL: 6.6)

"In Silver Springs, Arizona, her mother's stories of the monstrous La Llorona are thrilling but unbelievable to science-loving Paola until she and her best friends Dante and Emma take a walk through a cactus field near the Gila River." - Follett

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

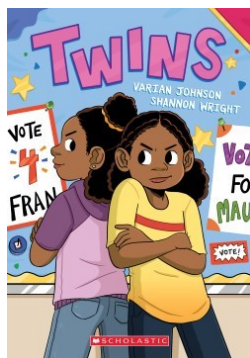
Compiled by Joan Pearce



Before the Ever After

by Jacqueline Woodson, c2020 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.8)

"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." - Follett

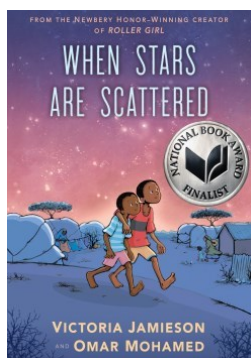


Twins

by Varian Johnson, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 2.8)

Graphic novel

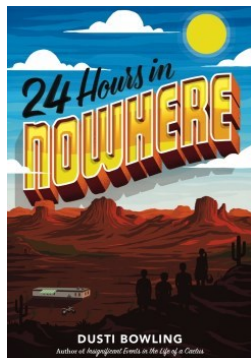
"Maureen and Francine Carter are twins and best friends. They participate in the same clubs, enjoy the same foods, and are partners on all their school projects. But...Maureen and Francine are growing apart and there's nothing Maureen can do to stop it. Are sisters really forever? Or will middle school change things for good?" - Follett



When Stars are Scattered

by Victoria Jamieson c2020 (IL: 5-8, 4-8)

"Omar and his younger brother Hassan live in a refugee camp, and when an opportunity for Omar to get an education comes along, he must decide between going to school every day or caring for his nonverbal brother in this intimate and touching portrayal of family and daily life in a refugee camp." - Pub.



24 Hours in Nowhere

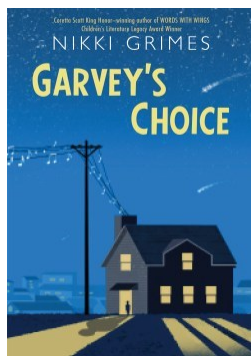
by Dusti Bowling, c2018 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 4.2)

"Thirteen-year-old Gus, having been saved from the bullying of Bo Taylor by Rossi Scott who agreed to trade her dirt bike in exchange for Gus being left alone, agrees to go into Dead Frenchman Mine with Rossi and two other kids to find a piece of gold to buy the bike back; and, while on their adventure, the four bond over how hard life is in their small town of Nowhere, Arizona. - Follett

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Garvey's Choice

by Nikki Grimes c2016 (IL: 5-8, 4-6; RL: 4.5)

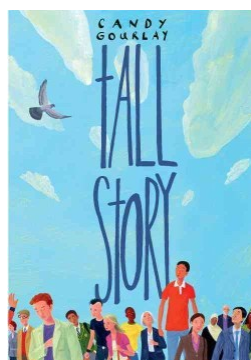
"Preferring science and reading to the sports his father wants him to play, Garvey comforts himself with food and endures bullying before joining the school chorus, where he learns how to accept himself and bond with his father." - Follett



Amina's Voice

by Hena Khan c2017 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 4.6)

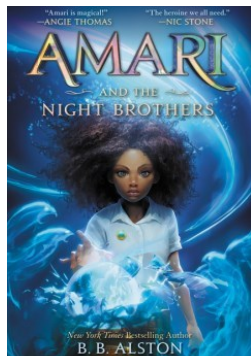
"A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family's vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school after tragedy strikes her community." - Follett



Tall Story

by Candy Gourlay, c2010 (IL: 5-8, 6-9; RL: 4.4)

"Sixteen-year-old Bernardo, who is eight feet tall and suffers from a condition called Gigantism, leaves the Philippines to live with his mother's family in London, much to the delight of his thirteen-year-old half sister Andi, a passionate basketball player." - Follett



Amari and the Night Brothers

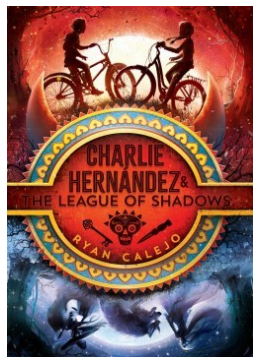
by B.B. Alston, c2021 (IL: 3-6, 3-7; RL: 5.2)

"Thirteen-year-old Amari, a poor African American girl from the projects, gets an invitation from her missing brother to join the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs and join in the fight against an evil magician." - Pub.

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Charlie Hernandez and the League of Shadows
by Ryan Calejo c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 6.2)

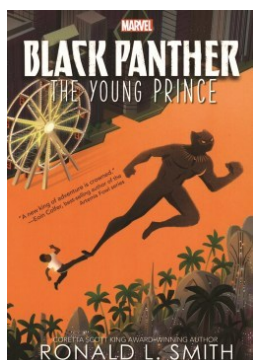
"Steeped in Hispanic folklore since childhood, middle schooler Charlie Hernandez learns the stories are true when, shortly after his parents disappearance, he grows horns and feathers and finds himself at the heart of a battle to save the world." - Pub.



Race to the Sun

by Rebecas Roanhorse, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 3-7; RL: 4.8)

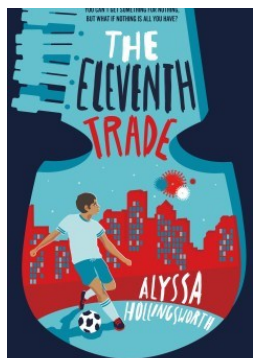
"Guided by her Navajo ancestors, seventh-grader Nizhoni Begay discovers she is descended from a holy woman and destined to become a monsterslayer, starting with the evil businessman who kidnapped her father. Includes glossary of Navajo terms." - Follett



Black Panther: The Young Prince

by Ronald L. Smith, c2019 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.4)

"Life is comfortable for twelve-year-old T'Challa in his home of Wakanda...But as conflict brews near Wakanda, T'Challa's father makes a startling announcement: he's sending T'Challa and his friend M'Baku to school in America...T'Challa realizes he might not be as equipped to handle life in America as he thought. Especially when it comes to navigating new friendships while hiding his true identity as the prince of a powerful nation...When strange things begin happening around school, T'Challa sets out to uncover the source." - Pub.



The Eleventh Trade

by Alyssa Hollingsworth, c2018 (IL: 5-8, 4-6; RL: 4.5)

"They say you can't get something for nothing, but nothing is all Sami has. When his grandfather's most-prized possession—a traditional Afghan instrument called a rebab—is stolen, Sami resolves to get it back. He finds it at a music store, but it costs \$700, and Sami doesn't have even one penny. What he does have is a keychain that has caught the eye of his classmate. If he trades the keychain for something more valuable, could he keep trading until he has \$700? Sami is about to find out." - Follett

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

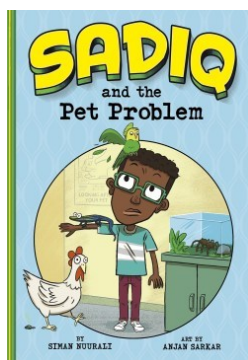
Compiled by Joan Pearce



It All Comes Down to This

by Karen English c2017 (IL: 5-8, RL: 6.4)

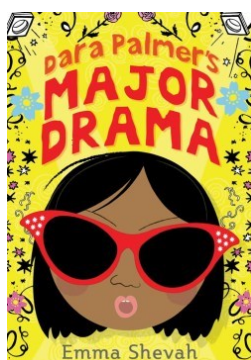
"In the summer of 1965, Sophie's family becomes the first African Americans to move into their upper middle-class neighborhood in Los Angeles. When riots erupt in nearby Watts, she learns that life and her own place in it are a lot more complicated than they had seemed." - Pub.



Sadiq and the Pet Problem

by Simon Nuurali, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

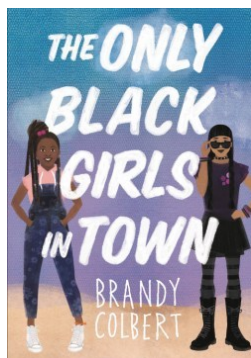
"Sadiq's third grade class decides that they want a classroom pet, and their teacher, Ms. Battersby, is okay with the idea, so the students form a club to decide what kind of pet to get, and to research how to take care of it." - Pub.



Dara Palmer's Major Drama

by Emma Shevah, c2016 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.5)

"Dara Palmer dreams of being an actress, but when she does not get a part in the school play she wonders if it is because of her different looks as an adopted girl from Cambodia, so Dara becomes determined not to let prejudice stop her from being in the spotlight." - Follett



The Only Black Girls in Town

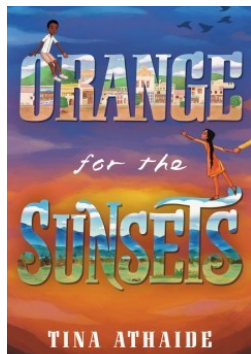
by Lisa Moore Ramee, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 3-7; RL: 4.5)

"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." - Follett

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Orange for the Sunsets

by Tina Athaide, c2019 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.6)

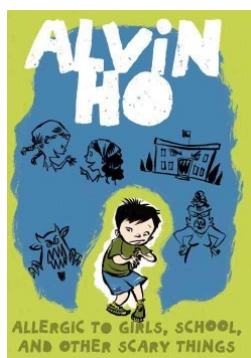
"In alternating voices, friends Asha and Yesofu, one Indian and one African, find their world turned upside-down when Idi Amin decides to expel Asian Indians from Uganda in 1972." - Follett



Nowhere Boy

by Katherine Marsh, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.4)

"Fourteen-year-old Ahmed, a Syrian refugee, and thirteen-year-old Max, an American boy, are bound by a secret that sets them on the adventure of a lifetime." - Follett



Alvin Ho Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things

by Lenore Look, c2008 (IL: 3-6, 2-4; RL: 3.8)

"A young boy in Concord, Massachusetts, who loves superheroes and comes from a long line of brave Chinese farmer-warriors, wants to make friends, but first he must overcome his fear of everything." - Pub.



Black Brother, Black Brother

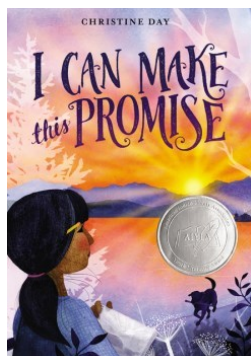
by Jewell Parker Rhodes, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 4-8; RL: 3.4)

"Suspended unjustly from elite Middlefield Prep, Donte Ellison studies fencing with a former champion, hoping to put the racist fencing team captain in his place." - Follett

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

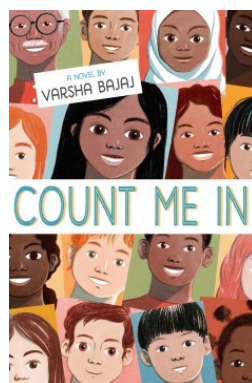
Compiled by Joan Pearce



I Can Make This Promise

by Christine Day, c2019 (IL: 5-8, 3-7; RL: 6.2)

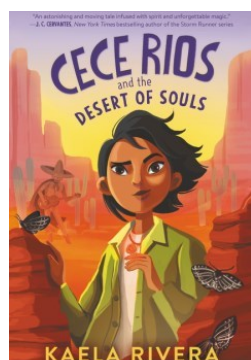
"When twelve-year-old Edie finds letters and photographs in her attic that change everything she thought she knew about her Native American mother's adoption, she realizes she has a lot to learn about her family's history and her own identity." - Follett



Count Me In

by Varsha Bajaj, c2019 (IL: 5-8, 4-8; RL: 4.4)

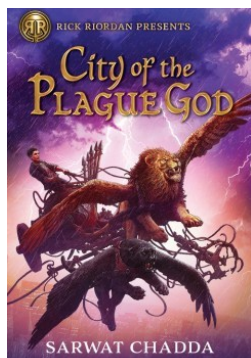
"Told from two viewpoints, sixth-graders Karina and Chris use social media to stand up to racism in Houston, Texas, after an attack puts Karina's Indian American grandfather in the hospital." - Follett



Cece Rios and the Desert of Souls

by Kaela Rivera, c2021 (IL: 5-8, 4-8; RL: 4.6)

"Privately questioning her remote community's superstitions about dangerous powerful spirits in their Devil's Alley home, Cecelia Rios experiments with the forbidden art of bruja to rescue her kidnapped sister." - Follett



City of the Plague God

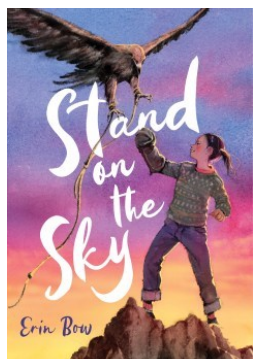
by Sarwat Chadda, c2021 (IL: 5-8, 3-7; RL: 5.4)

"Thirteen-year-old Sikander Aziz has to team up with the hero Gilgamesh in order to stop Nergal, the ancient god of plagues, from wiping out the population of Manhattan in this adventure based on Mesopotamian mythology." - Follett

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Stand on the Sky

by Erin Bow, c2019 (IL: 5-8; RL: 4.6)

"Twelve-year-old Aisulu defies the expectations of her Kazakh family and tradition to train an eagle in order to save her brother, Serik, and prevent her family from giving up their nomadic life forever."

- Follett



The Magic in Changing Your Stars

by Leah Henderson, c2020 (IL: 5-8, 3-7)

"After bungling his audition to play the Scarecrow in The Wiz, fifth-grader Ailey is magically transported to 1930s Harlem where he meets his own grandfather and legendary tap dancer Bill "Bojangles" Robinson."

- Follett



The Last Fallen Star

by Graci Kim, c2021 (IL: 3-6), 5-8

"After thirteen-year-old Hattie Oh casts a dangerous spell so her adopted sister, Riley, will get a share of her inherited magic, Riley must undertake a near-impossible quest to save Hattie from death." - Pub.



So Done

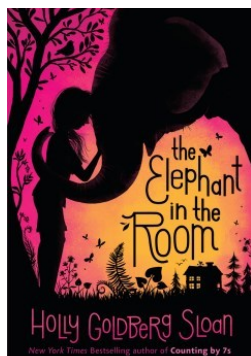
by Paula Chase, c2018 (IL: 5-8, 6-8; RL: 5.8)

"When best friends Metai and Jamila are reunited after a summer apart, their friendship threatens to combust from the pressure of secrets, middle school, and looming auditions for a potentially life-changing new talented-and-gifted program." - Pub.

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

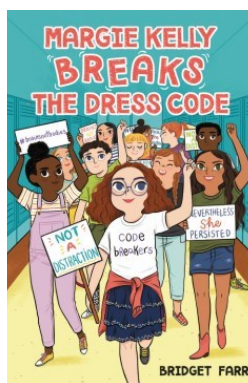
Compiled by Joan Pearce



The Elephant in the Room

by Holly Goldberg Sloan, c2021 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 4.8)

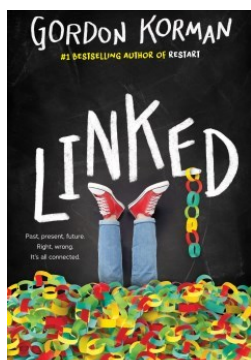
"Missing her mother who has returned to Turkey to resolve an immigration problem, sixth-grader Sila welcomes a very large distraction in her life when she helps a surprising new friend rescue a circus elephant." - Follett



Margie Kelly Breaks the Dress Code

by Bridget Farr, c2021 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 6.5)

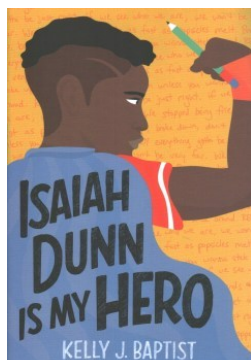
"After her first day of middle school is ruined by a dress code violation, Margie Kelly begins to notice blatant sexism and decides to protest the school's gender inequality." - Follett



Linked

by Gordon Korman, c2021 (IL: 5-8, 4-8; RL: 5.0)

"When swastikas begin appearing all over town, Link, Michael, and Dana, the only Jewish girl in town, must face crimes both past and present to find the truth." - Follett



Isaiah Dunn is my Hero

by Kelly J. Baptist, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.1)

"Isaiah is now the big man of the house. But it's a lot harder than his dad made it look... And when things get really tough, there's Daddy's journal, filled with stories about the amazing Isaiah Dunn, who gets his superhero powers from beans and rice. Isaiah could use those powers right about now!" - Pub.

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



Fly on the Wall

by Remy Lai, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.9)

"Twelve-year-old Henry Khoo embarks on a forbidden journey from Australia to Singapore to prove his independence to his overprotective family, while working out some problems with friends." - Follett



The Best At It

by Maulik Pancholy, c2020 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.0)

"Twelve-year-old Rahul Kapoor, an Indian-American boy growing up in small-town Indiana, struggles to come to terms with his identity, including that he may be gay." - Pub.



Thanks A Lot Universe

by Chad Lucas, c2021 (IL: 5-8; RL: 4.8)

"Brian has always been anxious, whether at home, or in class, or on the basketball court . . . but after he and his brother are placed in foster care, Brian starts having panic attacks . . . Ezra wants to help, but he worries if he's too nice to Brian, his friends will realize that he has a crush on him . . . But when Brian and his brother run away, Ezra has no choice but to take the leap and reach out. Both boys have to decide if they're willing to risk sharing parts of themselves they'd rather hide."



The Barren Grounds

by David A. Robertson, c2020 (IL: 5-8; RL: 4.6)

"Morgan and Eli, two Indigenous children forced away from their families and communities, are brought together in a foster home in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They each feel disconnected, from their culture and each other, and struggle to fit in at school and at their new home—until they find a secret place, walled off in an unfinished attic bedroom. A portal opens to another reality...Ochek welcomes the human children, teaching them traditional ways to survive. But as the need for food becomes desperate, they embark on a dangerous mission." - Follett

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Novels

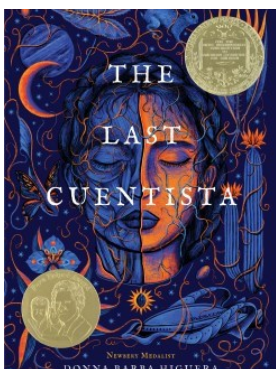
Compiled by Joan Pearce



Swim Team

by Johnie Christmas, c2022 (IL: 4-7, RL: 3.7)

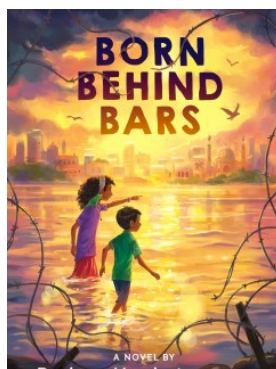
"Bree can't wait for her first day at her new middle school, Enith Brightha, home to the Mighty Manatees--until she's stuck with the only elective that fits her schedule, the dreaded Swim 101. The thought of swimming makes Bree more than a little queasy, yet she's forced to dive headfirst into one of her greatest fears. Lucky for her, Etta, an elderly occupant of her apartment building and former swim team captain, is willing to help." - Follett



The Last Cuentista

by Donna Barbara Higuera, c2021 (IL: Gr. 5+, RL: 6.0)

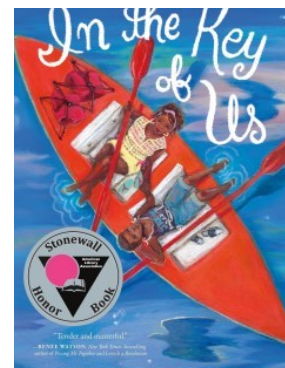
"A girl named Petra Pena, who wanted nothing more than to be a storyteller, like her abuelita. But Petra's world is ending. Earth has been destroyed by a comet, and only a few hundred scientists and their children - among them Petra and her family - have been chosen to journey to a new planet. They are the ones who must carry on the human race. Hundreds of years later, Petra wakes to this new planet - and the discovery that she is the only person who remembers Earth." - Follett



Born Behind Bars

by Padma Venkatraman, c2021 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.5)

"Kabir has been in jail since the day he was born, because his mom is serving time for a crime she didn't commit. He's never met his dad, so the only family he's got are their cellmates, and the only place he feels the least bit free is in the classroom, where his kind teacher regales him with stories of the wonders of the outside world. Then one day a new warden arrives and announces Kabir is too old to stay." - Pub.



In the Key of Us

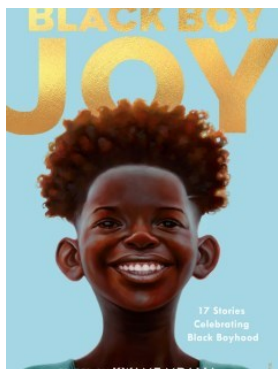
by Mariama Lockington, c2022 (IL: 5-8, RL: ?)

"Still grappling with grief, Andi decides to go to Harmony Music Camp for the summer. It is here among the majority white faces that she meets Zora, a girl who helps her heal and grow in ways she didn't think was possible. Lockington's novel takes readers on a breathtaking, lyrical journey of the complexities of Black girlhood in a story about music, family, and recovery from loss." - Booklist

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

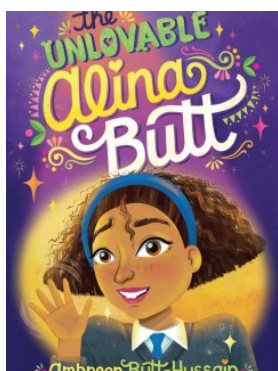
Novels

Compiled by Joan Pearce



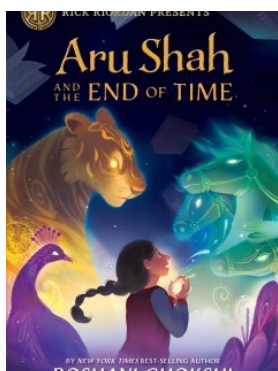
Black Boy Joy (Story Collection)
by Kwame Mbalia, c2021 (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.6)

"Featuring contributions from such critically acclaimed Black authors as Jason Reynolds, Jerry Craft and Kwame Mbalia, this celebration of Black boyhood is told through a brilliant collection of stories, comics and poems." - Pub.



The Unlovable Alina Butt
by Ambreen butt-Hussain, c2023 (IL: 4-6, RL: 5.7)

"Eleven-year-old Alina Butt has changed schools four times already since her family moved to England from Pakistan. Even after all that practice, she doesn't seem to be getting any better at being the new kid. Mocked for her last name and her "weird" lunches, Alina has had enough! Taking a leap of faith to try and stand out for the "right" reasons, Alina auditions for the school play." - Pub.



Series: Aru Shah (called *Pandava Series*)
by Roshani Chokshi

This series is part of the Rick Riordan presents collection." There are three titles in the series as of 2023. A summary for the first title, pictured here, to give you a feel for the series is: "Twelve-year-old Aru stretches the truth to fit in at her private school, but when she is dared to prove an ancient lamp is cursed, she inadvertently frees an ancient demon." (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.7)



Series: Front Desk
by Kelly Yang

As of 2023 there are five titles in this series. The first is called Front Desk and is pictured here. To give you an idea about the series, a summary of the first title is: "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." - Follet (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.5)

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

Fiction

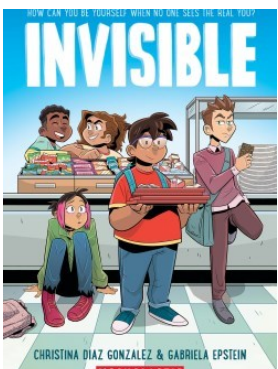
Compiled by Joan Pearce



The Manifestor Prophecy (Nic Blake and the Remarkables)

by Angie Thomas, c2023 (IL: Gr. 5+, RL: 4.1)

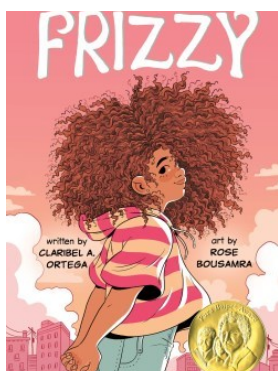
"All Nic Blake wants is to be a powerful Manifestor like her dad. But before she has a chance to convince him to teach her the gift, a series of shocking revelations and terrifying events launch Nic and two friends on a hunt for a powerful magic tool she's never heard of . . . to save her father from imprisonment for a crime she refuses to believe he committed". - Pub.



Invisible

by Christina Gonzalez, c2022 (IL: 4-7, RL: 2.9)

"Can five overlooked kids make one big difference? There's George: the brain, Sara: the loner, Dayara: the tough kid, Nico: the rich kid, and Miguel: the athlete. And they're stuck together when they're forced to complete their school's community service hours. Although they're sure they have nothing in common with one another, some people see them as all the same--just five Spanish-speaking kids. Then..." - Follett (Graphic format)



Frizzy

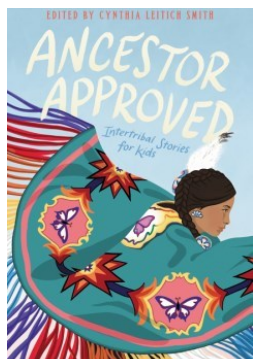
by Claribel Ortega, c2022 (IL: 4-8, RL: 3.0) *Graphic

"Tired of going to the salon to have her curls straightened every weekend, Marlene slowly learns to embrace her natural curly hair with the help of her best friend and favorite aunt." - Pub.

Diverse Characters (Intermediate)

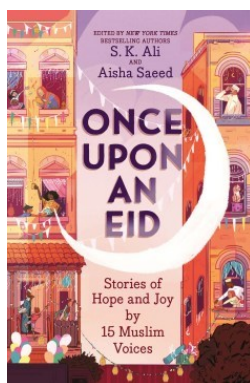
Non-Fiction

Compiled by Joan Pearce



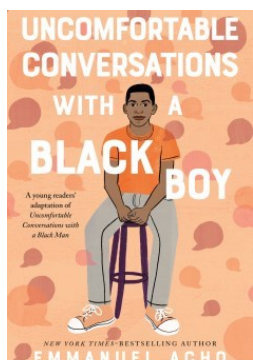
Ancestor Approved *Fiction Story Collection
ed. By Cynthia Leitich Smith, c2021 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 4.5)

"Presents sixteen short stories and two poems that look at the hope, joy, resilience, the strength of community, and Native American pride." - Follett



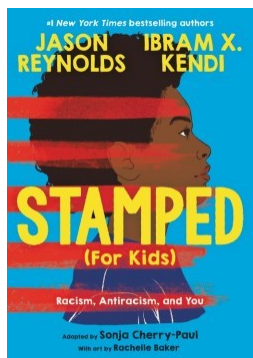
Once Upon an Eid *Fiction Story Collection
ed. by Aisha Saeed, c2020 (IL: 3-6)

"Once Upon an Eid is a collection of short stories that showcases the most brilliant Muslim voices writing today, all about the most joyful holiday of the year: Eid!" - Pub.



Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Boy
by Emmanuel Acho c2021 (IL: 5-8, 6-10; RL: 6.6)

"For awkward questions white and non-black parents don't know how to answer, this is an essential guide to help support communication on how to dismantle racism amongst the youngest generation." - Follett



Stamped (for Kids)
by Jason Reynolds, c2021 (IL: 3-6, 2-8; RL: 6.6)

"Kids will discover where racist ideas came from, identify how they impact America today, and meet those who have fought racism with antiracism. Along the way, they'll learn how to identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their own lives." - Follett