

# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Bullying & Teasing Through the Reading of Novels (Intermediate)

## Note:

The interest and reading levels listed in this bibliography are those given by the publishers. If the reviewing journals gave a different interest level(s) for a title then this was indicated after the publisher's interest level. I find the interest levels given by the reviewing journals to be more accurate.

The summaries, which are also from the publishers, are to give you a quick overview of each title. Note that some of the titles fit the theme loosely and others more tightly. The titles also range from "light-hearted" to more serious in nature.

If a student needs the support of a digital copy, talk with your Learning Support Teacher, as ARC-BC is able to "rush" order digital titles they don't currently have in their collection. A very small number of the titles may also be available in an audiobook format, accessible through searching in Destiny. Your Teacher-Librarian can help you check for this.

If the LRC has 10+ copies of a title this was listed beside the title to provide you with the further flexibility of bringing in some titles to be used in a lit circle format.

*Joan Pearce, April 2024*

# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Bullying & Teasing (Intermediate)

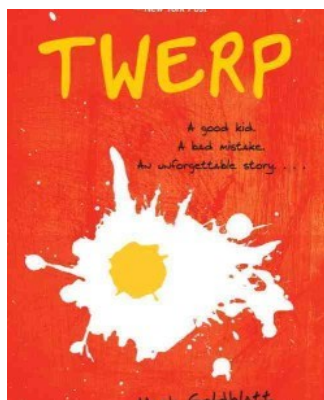
Compiled by Joan Pearce  
Novels



## **The Tornado** \*LRC has 12

by Jake Burt, c2019 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 5.6)

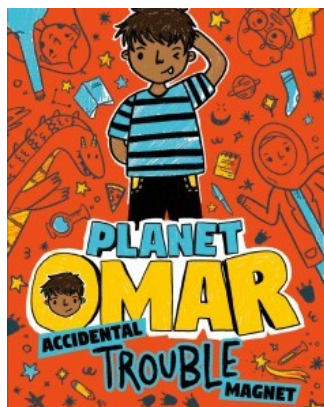
"Bell Kirby is an expert at systems, whether he's designing the world's most elaborate habitat for his pet chinchilla, re-creating Leonardo da Vinci's greatest inventions in his garage, or avoiding Parker Hellickson, the most diabolical bully Village Green Elementary has ever seen. Since third grade, Parker has tormented Bell, who's spent two long years devising a finely tuned system that keeps him out of Parker's way. Sure, it means that Bell can't get a drink when he wants to, can't play with his best friend on the playground, and can't tell his parents about his day, but at least he's safe.. Until..." - Pub.



## **Twerp**

by Mark Goldblatt, c2013 (IL: 3-6, 6-8; RL: 4.5)

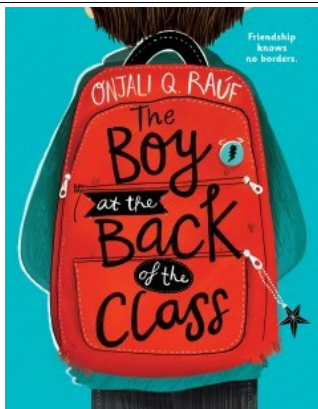
"It's not like I meant for him to get hurt....Julian Twerski isn't a bully. He's just made a big mistake. So when he returns to school after a weeklong suspension, his English teacher offers him a deal- if he keeps a journal and writes about the terrible incident that got him and his friends suspended, he can get out of writing a report on Shakespeare. Julian jumps at the chance. And so begins his account of life in sixth grade... Lurking in the background, though, is the one story he can't bring himself to tell, the one story his teacher most wants to hear." - Pub.



## **Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet**

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

"Omar and his family have just moved, and he is NOT excited about starting at a new school. What if the work is too hard or the kids are mean or the teacher is a zombie alien?! 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! Daniel even tells Omar that all Muslims are going to be kicked out of the country . . . Could that possibly be true?" - Pub.



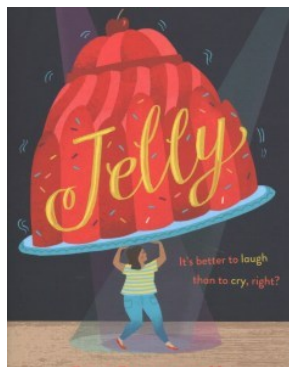
## **The Boy at the Back of the Class** \*LRC has 24

by Onjali Q. Rauf, c2019 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 5.4)

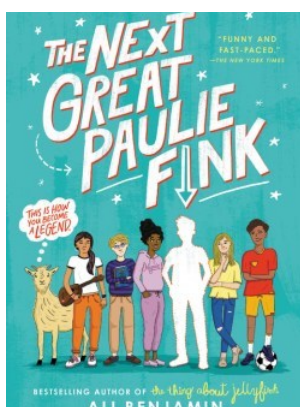
"There used to be an empty chair at the back of Mrs. Khan's classroom, but on the third Tuesday of the school year a new kid fills it: nine-year-old Ahmet, a Syrian refugee. The whole class is curious about this new boy--he doesn't seem to smile, and he doesn't talk much. But after learning that Ahmet fled a Very Real War" and was separated from his family along the way, a determined group of his classmates band together to concoct the Greatest Idea in the World--a magnificent plan to reunite Ahmet with his loved ones " - Pub.

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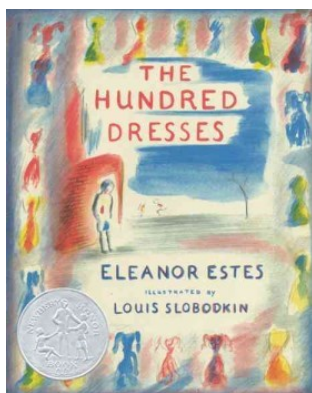
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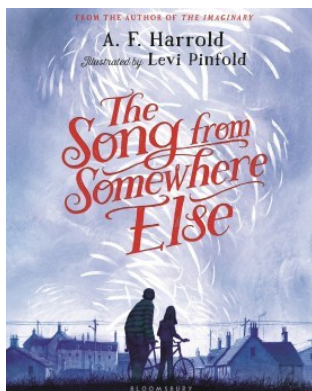
**Jelly** by Jo Cotterill, c2018 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 4.1)  
"Angelica (Jelly for short) is the queen of comedy at school. She has a personality as big as she is, and everyone loves her impressions. But Jelly isn't as confident as she pretends to be. No one knows her deepest thoughts and feelings. She keeps those hidden away in a secret notebook. Then her mom's new boyfriend, Lennon, arrives. He's kind and perceptive, and he is the first person to realize that Jelly is playing a part. Jelly shares her poetry with him and he convinces her to perform one of her poems as a song at the school talent show. Can Jelly risk letting people see the real her? What if it all goes wrong?" - Follett



**The Next Great Paulie Fink** \*LRC has 36  
by Ali Benjamin, c2019 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.9)  
"Led by new student Caitlyn, seventh-graders at a tiny rural school in Vermont create a reality-show inspired competition to determine who will replace the school's legendary class clown, Paulie Fink." - Follett



**The Hundred Dresses** \*LRC has 12  
by Eleanor Estes, c1944, 2004 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.4)  
"Eleanor Estes's *The Hundred Dresses* won a Newbery Honor in 1945 and has never been out of print since. At the heart of the story is Wanda Petronski, a Polish girl in a Connecticut school who is ridiculed by her classmates for wearing the same faded blue dress every day. Wanda claims she has one hundred dresses at home, but everyone knows she doesn't and bullies her mercilessly. The class feels terrible when Wanda is pulled out of the school, but by that time it's too late for apologies. Maddie, one of Wanda's classmates, ultimately decides that she is "never going to stand by and say nothing again" - Pub.

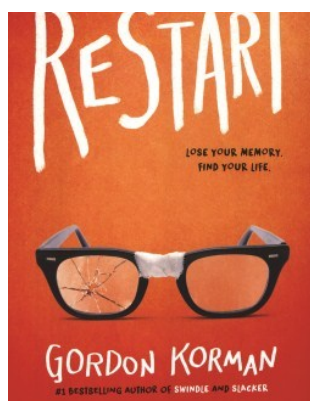


**The Song From Somewhere Else** \*LRC has 12  
by A.F. Harrold, c2017 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 5.3)  
"Frank thought her summer couldn't get any worse--until big, weird, smelly Nick Underbridge rescues her from a bully, and she winds up at his house. Frank quickly realizes there's more to Nick than meets the eye. When she's at his house, she hears the strangest, most beautiful music, music which leads her to a mysterious, hidden door. Beyond the door are amazing creatures that she never even dreamed could be real. For the first time in forever, Frank feels happy...and she and Nick start to become friends." - Pub.



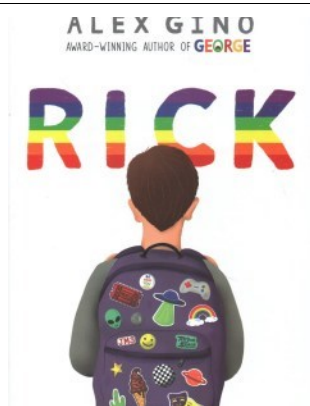
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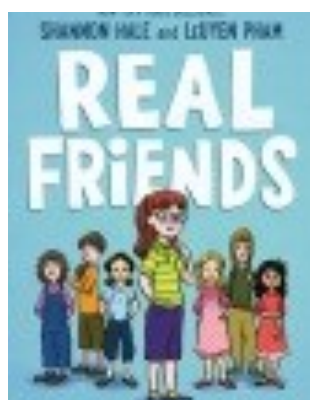
### **Restart** \*LRC has 24

by Gordon Korman, c2017 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 5.1)  
"Chase does not remember falling off the roof, in fact he does not remember anything about himself, and when he gets back to middle school he begins to learn who he was through the reactions of the other kids—trouble is, he really is not sure he likes the Chase that is being revealed, but can he take the opportunity amnesia has provided and restart his life?" - Follett



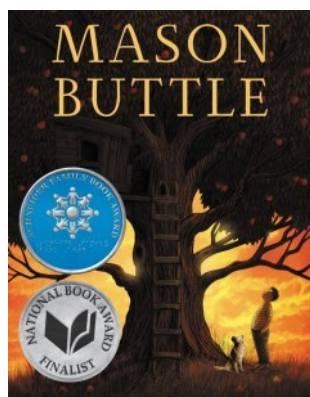
### **Rick**

by Alex Gino, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 3-7)  
"Ricks gone along with his best friend Jeff even when Jeff acted like a bully and a jerk. But now Rick wants his own life to be... understood. Even if it means breaking some old friendships and making some new ones. As they did in their ground-breaking novel *George*, in *Rick*, award-winning author Alex Gino explores what it means to search for your own place in the world... and all the steps you and the people around you need to take in order to get where you need to be." - Pub.



### **Real Friends** \*LRC has 12

by Shannon Hale, c2017 (IL: 3-6, RL: 3.7)  
"Shannon and Adrienne have been best friends ever since they were little. But one day, Adrienne starts hanging out with Jen, the most popular girl in class and the leader of a circle of friends called The Group. Everyone in The Group wants to be Jen's #1, and some girls would do anything to stay on top . . . even if it means bullying others. Now every day is like a roller coaster for Shannon. Will she and Adrienne stay friends? Can she stand up for herself? And is she in The Group--or out?" - Pub.

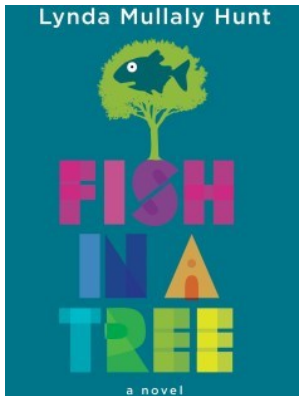


### **The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle** \*LRC has 12

by Leslie Connor, c2018 (IL: 3-6, 5-7; RL: 2.7?)  
"Mason Buttle is the biggest, sweatiest kid in his grade, and everyone knows he can barely read or write. Mason's learning disabilities are compounded by grief. Fifteen months ago, Mason's best friend, Benny Kilmartin, turned up dead in the Buttle family's orchard. An investigation drags on, and Mason, honest as the day is long, can't understand why Lieutenant Baird won't believe the story Mason has told about that day. Both Mason and his new friend, tiny Calvin Chumsky, are relentlessly bullied by the other boys in their neighborhood, so they create ." - Follett

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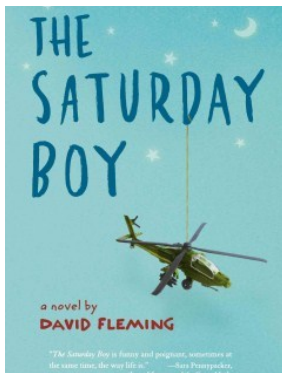
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## **Fish In a Tree** \*LRC has 11

by Lynda Mullaly Hunt, c2018 (IL: 5-8, 4-7; RL: 4.2)

"Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid." Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright..." - Amazon.ca



## **The Saturday Boy**

by David Fleming, c2013 (IL: 5-8, RL: 4.6)

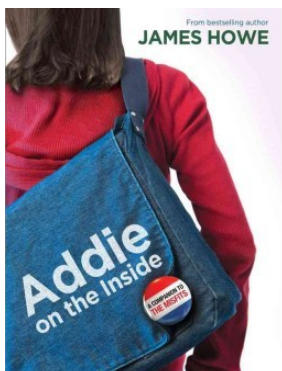
"Every school day seems to bring more trouble to eleven-year-old Derek, whose former best friend bullies him, while at home he deals with the long absence of his father, a Blackhawk helicopter pilot, and his mother's sudden moodiness." - Follett



## **Hurricane Child**

by Kacen Callendar, c2018 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 5.3)

"Born on Water Island in the Virgin Islands during a hurricane, which is considered bad luck, twelve-year-old Caroline falls in love with another girl--and together they set out in a hurricane to find Caroline's missing mother." - Follett



## **Addie on the Inside**

by James Howe, c2011 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.0)

"Outspoken thirteen-year-old Addie Carle learns about love, loss, and staying true to herself as she navigates seventh grade, enjoys a visit from her grandmother, fights with her boyfriend, and endures gossip and meanness from her former best friend." - Follett

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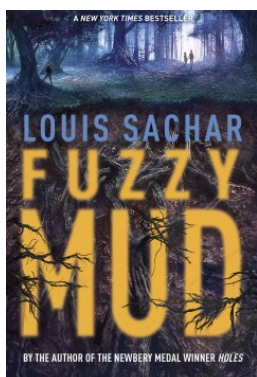
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## Blackbird Fly

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



## Fuzzy Mud

by Louis Sachar, c2015 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.0)

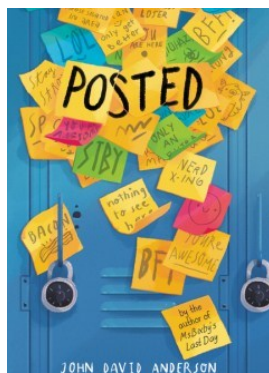
"Two middle-grade kids take a shortcut home from school and discover what looks like fuzzy mud but is actually a substance with the potential to wreak havoc on the entire world." - Follett



## George \*LRC has 12

by Alex Gino, c2015 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 5.0)

"When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl. George 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. George 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, George comes up with a plan. Not just so she can be Charlotte -- but so everyone can know who she is, once and for all." - Pub.



## Posted \*LRC has 24

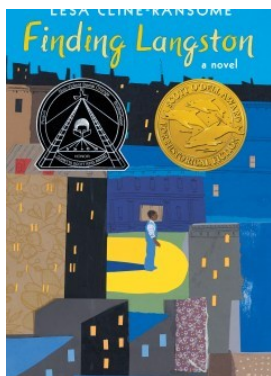
by John David Anderson, c2017 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.1)

"[A] humorous, poignant, and original contemporary story about bullying, broken friendships, social media, and the failures of communication between kids... When cell phones are banned at Branton Middle School, Frost and his friends Deedee, Wolf, and Bench come up with a new way to communicate: leaving sticky notes for each other all around the school. It catches on, and soon all the kids in school are leaving notes—though for every kind and friendly one, there is a cutting and cruel one as well." - P.



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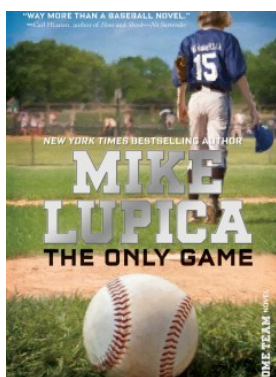
## **Finding Langston**

by Lesa Cline-Ransome, c2018 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; 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. It's lonely in the small apartment with just the two of them, and at school Langston is bullied. But his new home has one fantastic thing. Unlike the whites-only library in Alabama, the local public library welcomes everyone. There, hiding out after school, Langston discovers another Langston, a poet..." - Pub.



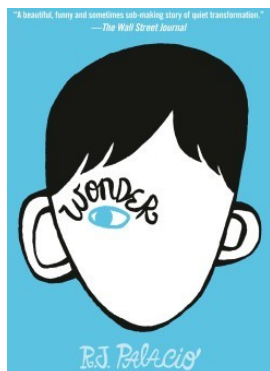
## **Farah Rocks Fifth Grade**

by Susan Muaddi Darraj, c2020 (IL: 3-6, RL: 4.8)  
"Fifth-grader Farah Hajjar and her best friend Allie Liu are hoping to go to the Magnet Academy for their middle school years, instead of Harbortown Elementary/Middle School; but 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



## **The Only Game \*LRC has 12**

by Mike Lupica, c2015 (IL: 3-6, 4-6; RL: 5.5)  
"Sixth grade is supposed to be the year that Jack Callahan leads his team to a record-shattering season and the Little League World Series, but after the death of his brother he loses interest in baseball and only Cassie, star of the girls' softball team, seems to understand." - Follett

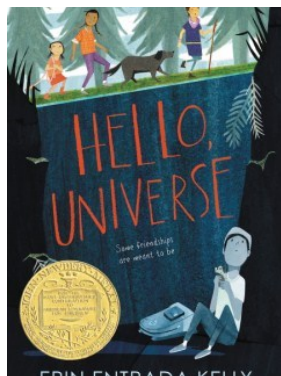


## **Wonder \*LRC has 33**

by R.J. Palacio, c2012 (IL: 3-6, 5-8; RL: 4.8)  
"Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan, which entails enduring the taunts and fear of his classmates as he struggles to be seen as just another student." - Follett

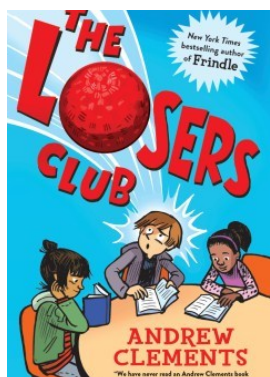
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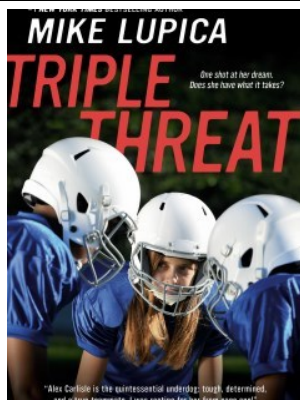
## Hello Universe

by Erin Entrada Kelly, c2017 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.7)  
"The lives of four misfits are intertwined when a bully's prank lands shy Virgil at the bottom of a well and Valencia, Kaori, and Gen band together in an epic quest to find and rescue him." - Follett



## The Losers Club

by Andrew Clements, c2017 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.5)  
"Alec, a sixth-grade bookworm always in trouble for reading instead of listening and participating in class, starts a book club, solely to have a place to read, and discovers that real life, although messy, can be as exciting as the stories in his favorite books." - Follett



## Triple Threat

by Mike Lupica, c2020 (IL: 5-8, RL: 5.0)  
"Twelve-year-old Alex Carlisle loves football almost as much as she loves her father but when she joins the Orville Middle School football team, not all of the boys, or parents, are pleased." - Pub.



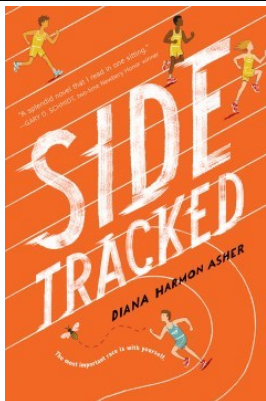
## Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen!

by Sarah Kapit, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.0)  
"Eleven-year-old knuckleball pitcher Vivy Cohen, who has autism, becomes pen pals with her favorite Major League baseball player after writing a letter to him as an assignment for her social skills class." - Follett



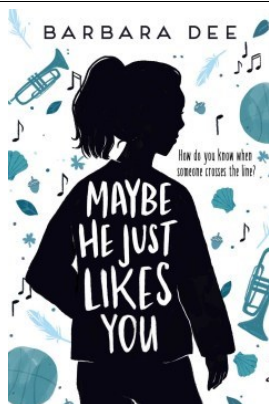
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## Sidetracked

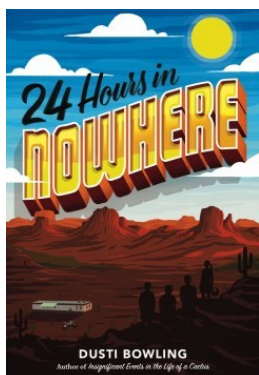
by Diana Harmon Asher, c2017 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.4)  
"Seventh-grader Joseph Friedman is friendless and puny, with ADD to boot. He spends most of his time avoiding the class bully and hiding out in the Resource Room. But the Resource Room teacher encourages (i.e., practically forces) him to join the school cross country team, and he meets Heather, a new student who's tough and athletic and refuses to be pushed around by anybody." - Pub.



## Maybe He Just Likes You

by Barbara Dee, c2019 (IL: 5-8, 4-8; RL: 4.2)

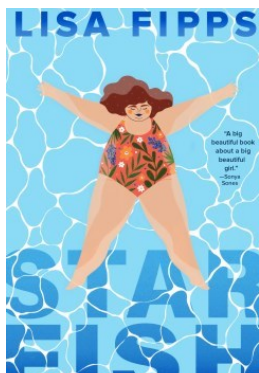
"When boys in her class start touching seventh-grader Mila and making her feel uncomfortable, she does not want to tell her friends or mother until she reaches her breaking point." - Pub.



## 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



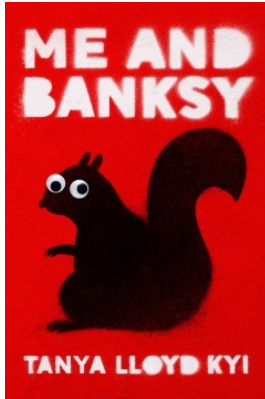
## Starfish

by Lisa Fipps, c2021 (IL: 5-8; RL: 4.7)

"Ever since Ellie wore a whale swimsuit and made a big splash at her fifth birthday party, she's been bullied about her weight...And she's found her safe space—her swimming pool—where she feels weightless in a fat-obsessed world. In the water, she can stretch herself out like a starfish and take up all the room she wants...Ellie has allies in her dad, her therapist, and her new neighbor...With this support buoying her, Ellie might finally be able to cast aside the Fat Girl Rules and starfish in real life—by unapologetically being her own fabulous self." - Pub.

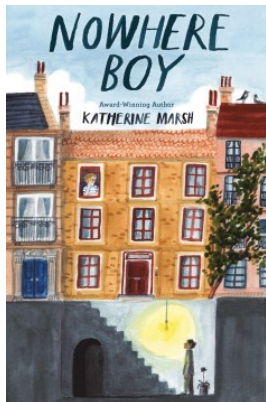
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## Me and Banksy

by Tanya Lloyd Kyi, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 3.8)  
"Dominica's private school is covered in cameras, and someone is hacking into them and posting embarrassing moments for the whole school to see...When Dominica quickly changes her shirt from inside out in what she thinks is the privacy of a quiet corner in the library, she's shocked—and embarrassed—to discover a video has captured this and is currently circulating amongst her schoolmates. So mortifying, especially since over the past three years, they've had a half-dozen school talks about social media safety." - Pub.



## Nowhere Boy

by Katherine Marsh, c2018 (IL: 5-8, 4-8; RL: 5.4)

"A timely, poignant tale of family, sacrifice and the friendship between a young Syrian refugee and an American boy living in Brussels." - Pub.



## Black Brother, Black Brother

by Jewell Parkier Rhodes, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 5-8; RL: 3.4)  
"Sometimes, 12-year-old Donte wishes he were invisible...When he's bullied and framed by the captain of the fencing team, "King" Alan, he's suspended from school and arrested. Terrified, searching for a place where he belongs, Donte joins a local youth center and meets former Olympic fencer Arden Jones. With Arden's help, he begins training as a competitive fencer...As Donte hones his fencing skills and grows closer to achieving his goal, he learns the fight for justice is far from over. Now Donte must confront his bullies, racism, and the corrupt systems of power that led to his arrest." - Pub.



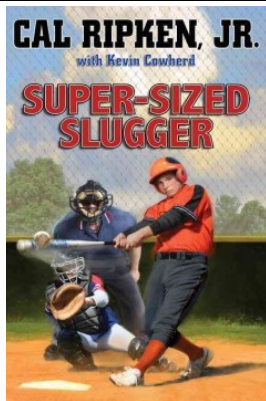
## Slob

by Ellen Potter, c2020 (IL: 3-6, 4-7, 6-8; RL: 5.0)

"Twelve-year-old Owen Birnbaum is the fattest kid in school. But he also invents cool contraptions...But inventor or not, there is a lot Owen can't figure out...it will take a revelation, not a cool invention, for Owen to see that the answer is not in the past, but the present. That no matter how large he is on the outside, he doesn't have to feel small on the inside." - Pub.

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## Super Slugger

by Cal Ripken Jr., c2012 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 5.2)

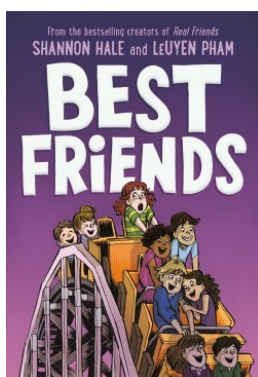
"Thirteen-year-old Cody Parker moves to Baltimore, Maryland, where as a fat eighth-grader, he has to deal with brutal teasing from a baseball teammate, and his school is beset by a rash of mysterious thefts that threaten to sideline Cody and ruin a golden season for his team." - Follett



## The Best At It

by Maulik Pancholy, c2019 (IL: 5-8, 3-7; RL: 4.0)

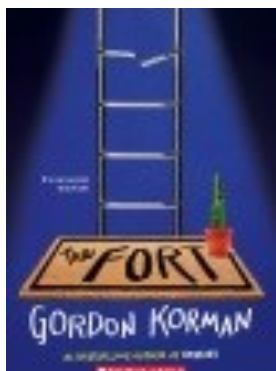
"Rahul Kapoor is heading into seventh grade in a small town in Indiana. The start of middle school is making him feel increasingly anxious, so his favorite person in the whole world, his grandfather, Bhai, gives him some well-meaning advice: Find one thing you're really good at and become the BEST at it...but what if he discovers he isn't the best at anything?" - Pub.



## Best Friends

by Shannon Hale, c2019 (IL: 3-6, 4-7; RL: 4.6)

"Sixth grade is supposed to be perfect. Shannon's got a sure spot in the in-crowd called The Group, and her best friend is their leader. Jen, the most popular girl in school. But the rules are always changing, and Shannon has to scramble to keep up. She never knows which TV shows are cool, what songs to listen to, and which boys she's allowed to talk to. Who makes these rules, anyway? And does Shannon have to follow them?" - Follett



## The Fort

by Gordon Korman, c2022 (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.7)

"The morning after Hurricane Leo rips through the town of Canaan, residents awaken to widespread destruction -- power outages, downed branches, uprooted trees, broken windows and damaged roofs. Four eighth-grade friends -- Evan, Jason, Mitchell, and CJ -- meet to explore the devastation. The tight-knit group is dismayed to find that Evan has brought along a stray -- Ricky, who is new to their town and school, and doesn't have any friends yet. Ricky is the one to find the strange trap door that's appeared in the middle of the woods -- the door to an old bomb shelter, unearthed by the hurricane. Inside..." - Amazon



# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Bullying & Teasing (Intermediate)

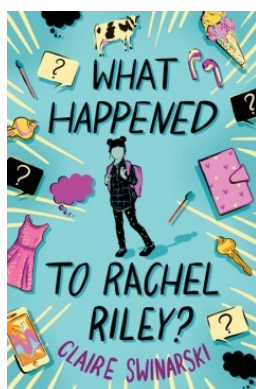
Compiled by Joan Pearce  
Novels



## **It Wasn't Me**

by Dana Alison Levy, c2020 (IL: 5-8, RL: ?)

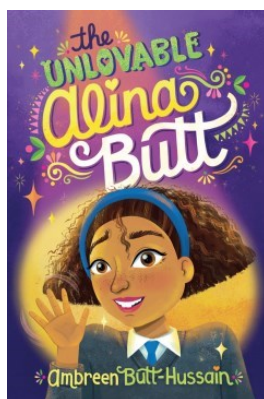
“When Theo's photography project is mysteriously vandalized at school there are five suspected students who all say "it wasn't me." Theo just wants to forget about the humiliating incident but his favorite teacher is determined to get to the bottom of it and has the six of them come into school over vacation to talk. She calls it "Justice Circle." The six students&the Nerd, the Princess, the Jock, the Screw Up, the Weirdo, and the Nobody&think of it as detention. AKA their worst nightmare. That is until they realize they might get along after all, despite...” - F.



## **What Happened to Rachel Riley?**

by Claire Swinarski, c2023 (IL: Gr. 5+ , RL: 5.9)

“Anna Hunt may be the new girl at East Middle School, but she can already tell there's something off about her eighth-grade class. Rachel Riley, who just last year was one of the most popular girls in school, has become a social outcast. But no one, including Rachel Riley herself, will tell Anna why. As a die-hard podcast enthusiast, Anna knows there's always more to a story than meets the eye. So she decides to put her fact-seeking skills to the test and create her own podcast around the question that won't stop running through her head: What happened...”



## **The Unlovable Alina Butt**

by Ambreen Butt-Hussain, c2023 (IL: 4-7, RL: 5.7)

“Fitting in at a new school is hard enough, but when you're an awkward, big-nosed, nerdy Pakistani girl with a funny last name, it can seem impossible. 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. “ - Follett