

Nayeri, Daniel

**Everything Sad is Untrue**

Ancient Iranian history and modern Iranian refugee trauma collide with the bullying behaviors of a bunch of Oklahoma middle schoolers. In the middle is Khosrou (whom everyone calls “Daniel”) who hopes that understanding might come from the stories he needs desperately to tell. (MG; 2021 winner of the Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature)

Nix, Garth—**The Left-Handed Booksellers of London**

London, 1983. Susan Arkshaw arrives seeking her mysterious father. The first person she asks for help is turned to dust by an incredibly attractive member of a magical family charged with keeping the Old World from seeping into the modern one. It soon becomes clear that Susan is deeply involved—but how? (YA)

Parsons, Ash

**Girls Save the World in This One**

June, Imani, and Siggy are devoted friends and superfans of the zombie apocalypse show *Human Wasteland*. Today is the day they get to meet the actors at ZombieCon. It should be the best day ever, but instead, all hell breaks loose when an actual zombie outbreak hits. June and company are about to find out what they are really made of. (YA)

Reynolds, Jason—**Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You**

In this “not a history book” packed with history, Reynolds lays out the ideologies and politics that have driven 400 years of systematic oppression of the Black people in the United States. Accessible and briskly told, this book is packed with information. (MG)

Thomas, Aiden—**Cemetery Boys**

Faced with his family’s inability to accept his identity, trans boy Yadriel sets out to prove himself a real brujo by summoning a ghost. It is his success, calling up the ghost of his school’s resident bad boy Julian Diaz, that leaves Yadriel in a truly complicated situation that he may not be able—or want—to get out of. (YA; Oregon author)

Torres Sanchez, Jenny  
**We Are Not From Here**

Life in Guatemala has become too dangerous for three teens. Forced to flee into the night, Pulga, Chico, and Pequeña take a harrowing journey following La Bestia, a system of trains promising to lead them to the U.S. border. Both helped and brutalized along the way by strangers, the trio press ever forward, even as despair and desperation chase them. (YA)

Deborah Wiles—**Kent State**

May 4, 1970. Kent State University. Amid the turmoil of protests against the Vietnam War, the National Guard is called in and shots are fired. When the air clears, four students are dead. Told in spare verse, Wiles explores what is known and not known, letting multiple voices explore this notorious American tragedy. (YA)

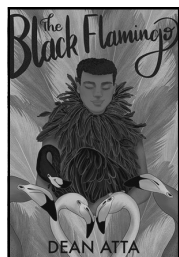
Zoboi, Ibi—**Punching the Air**

Artist and poet Amal Shahid finds his life upended, convicted of a crime he did not commit and sent to juvenile prison. Amal fights to manage his rage, maintain his humanity, and bring the truth to light in a system stacked against him on many fronts. This powerful story is told in verse by powerhouse author Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam, who lived a parallel story as part of the Exonerated Five. (YA)

2021  
Book Rave

Best books for middle and high school-aged readers, chosen by Oregon’s young adult librarians





MG=Middle  
grade selection

YA=Young  
adult selection

Acevedo, Elizabeth

**Clap When You Land**

Camino Rios and Yahaira Rios live an ocean apart, unaware of one another until their much adored shared father falls from the sky and dies in a plane crash. As Papi’s secrets are unraveled, the event that changes both their lives brings them slowly face to face with a new understanding of family and the future. (YA)

**Arnold, Elena—Red Hood**

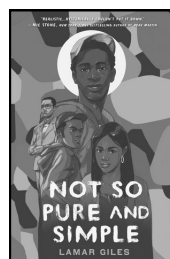
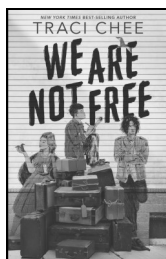
In this blood-soaked indictment of toxic masculinity, generations of women find their strength hunting wolves in the woods. Bisou Martel lives quietly with her grandmother in Seattle until a chance encounter leaves one boy dead and Bisou reeling as her extraordinary family legacy is slowly revealed to her. Gorgeously written and deeply disturbing. (YA)

**Atta, Dean—The Black Flamingo**

This deft novel in verse takes the reader along through Michael’s experience growing to understand his identity as a mixed-race gay teen growing up in England. Michael truly takes flight as he enters university and discovers his drag alter-ego, The Black Flamingo. A heartfelt and beautiful origin story. (YA)

**Callender, Kacen—Felix Ever After**

Art student Felix Love grapples with feelings of being on the outside of things as black, queer, transgender person, complex feelings about being abandoned by his mother, and misunderstood by his father. When an unknown fellow student creates a gallery of pre-transition photos labeled with Felix’s dead name and then starts sending transphobic messages, Felix makes a plan for revenge that leads down a whole new path of self-discovery. (YA)



**Chee, Traci—We Are Not Free**

A tight-knit group of 14 Nisei, second-generation Japanese-Americans, are ripped from their lives in Japantown, San Francisco to be imprisoned by the American government during World War II. With their lives turned upside down, they grow closer than ever, rallying to counter the racism and injustice in this vividly told story. (MG/YA)

**Fleming, Candace—The Rise and Fall of Charles Lindberg**

Charles Lindberg, the strangely determined fellow who flew The Spirit of St. Louis across the Atlantic, was also an unapologetic Nazi sympathizer, anti-Semite, and fervent proponent of Eugenics, which proposed to improve humanity through selective breeding. Despite the sympathy generated by the tragic kidnapping and murder of his child, his larger legacy of one of using his fame and influence to promote hate. This well-researched book lays it out in a way that is both simple and chilling. (MG/YA)

**Giles, Lamar—Not So Pure and Simple**

Wild to get close to the girl of his dreams, Del makes a spontaneous decision to follow her to the altar at their church and sign up for a Purity Pledge class. Then things get complicated as Del and a fellow Purity Pledger strike a deal in an attempt to get both of them what they want most. (YA)

**Jewell, Tiffany—This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work**

Directed at young people wondering how to talk to the racist adults in their lives, this book provides a primer on identities, real history, and anti-racism work in an accessible format. (MG)



Khorram, Adib

**Darius the Great Deserves Better**

The companion novel to the award-winning *Darius the Great Is Not Okay* finds Darius with a boyfriend, a coveted internship, a place on the soccer team—and the growing realization that it’s not all he thought it would be. Things are further disrupted by a visit from his grandmothers and a new bout of uncertainty about where his truly fits. (YA; Oregon setting)

**Little Badger, Darcie—Elatsoe**

In a slightly parallel America where magic and myth are very real, Lipan Apache Elatsoe (Ellie) can raise the ghosts of dead animals and talk to spirits. After her beloved cousin is murdered, he visits her with news that send her on a while journey to Willowbee, Texas seeking answers and justice. Quirky and witty, this story blends mystery, legend, and the paranormal like no other. (MG/YA)

**Longo, Jennifer—What I Carry**

Muir is a foster kid, heading to her final placement before aging out. Committed to traveling light, Muir is taken off guard by her solidly kind foster parent and the pull to form a real connection with new classmates Kira and Sean. Even as she settles into life in this island community near Seattle, Muir complex history and nature compel her to push back and fight to preserve the independence she craves. (YA)

**Mendez, Yamile Saied—Furia**

Camila Hassan, dutiful Argentinian daughter, has been keeping something from her controlling family—her alter-ego as La Furia, a brilliant soccer player with the chance to lead her team to an international championship. But moving forward may mean leaving her family and her first love in the tatters. (YA)