



BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

2023-2024



The Isles of the Gods by Amie Kaufman (Fantasy)

Selly has salt water in her veins. So, when her father leaves her high and dry in the port of Kirkpool, she has no intention of riding out the winter at home while he sails off to adventure. But any plans to follow him are dashed when a handsome stranger with tell-tale magician's marks on his arm commandeers her ship. He is Prince Leander of Alinor and he needs to cross the Crescent Sea without detection so he can complete a ritual on the sacred Isles of the Gods. Selly has no desire to escort a spoiled prince anywhere, and no time for his entitled demands or his good looks. But what starts as a leisure cruise will lead to acts of treason and sheer terror on the high seas, bringing two countries to the brink of war, two strangers closer than they ever thought possible and stirring two dangerous gods from centuries of slumber...

Finding Junie Kim by Ellen Oh (Realistic Fiction)

Junie Kim just wants to fit in. So, she keeps her head down and tries not to draw attention to herself. But when racist graffiti appears at her middle school, Junie must decide between staying silent or speaking out. Then Junie's history teacher assigns a project and Junie decides to interview her grandparents, learning about their unbelievable experiences as kids during the Korean War. Junie comes to admire her grandma's fierce determination to overcome impossible odds, and her grandpa's unwavering compassion during wartime. And as racism becomes more pervasive at school, Junie taps into the strength of her ancestors and finds the courage to do what is right. Finding Junie Kim is a reminder that within all of us lies the power to overcome hardship and emerge triumphant.

A First Time for Everything by Dan Santat (Memoir)

Dan's always been a good kid. The kind of kid who listens to his teachers, helps his mom with grocery shopping, and stays out of trouble. But being a good kid doesn't stop him from being bullied and feeling like he's invisible, which is why Dan has low expectations when his parents send him on a class trip to Europe. At first, he's right. He's stuck with the same girls from his middle school who love to make fun of him, and he doesn't know why his teacher insisted he come on this trip. But as he travels through France, Germany, Switzerland, and England, a series of first experiences begin to change him--first Fanta, first fondue, first time stealing a bike from German punk rockers... and first love.

Paradise on Fire by Jewell Parker Rhodes (Adventure Fiction)

Addy is haunted by the tragic fire that killed her parents, leaving her to be raised by her grandmother. Years later, Addy's grandmother has enrolled her in a summer wilderness program. There, Addy joins five other Black city kids--each with their own troubles--to spend a summer out west. Deep in the forest the kids learn new (and to them) strange skills: camping, hiking, rock climbing, and how to start and safely put out campfires. Most important, they learn to depend upon each other for companionship and survival. But then comes a devastating forest fire...

I Must Betray You by Ruta Sepetys (Historical Fiction)

Amidst the tyrannical dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu in a country governed by isolation and fear, Cristian is blackmailed by the secret police to become an informer. He's left with only two choices: betray everyone and everything he loves--or use his position to creatively undermine the most notoriously evil dictator in Eastern Europe.

Cristian risks everything to unmask the truth behind the regime, give voice to fellow Romanians, and expose to the world what is happening in his country. He eagerly joins the revolution to fight for change when the time arrives. But what is the cost of freedom?

Project Nought by Chelsey Furedi (Graphic Novel)

Ren Mittal's last memory in the year 1996 is getting on a bus to visit his mystery pen pal Georgia. When he wakes up in 2122, he thinks he might be hallucinating...he's not! Tech conglomerate Chronotech sponsors a time-travel program to help students in 2122 learn what history was really like...from real-life subjects who've been transported into the future...and Ren is one of them. In 2122, Ren's life in the 1990s is practically ancient history--and Ren's not sure how to feel about that. On top of it all, he learns that his memory will be wiped of all things 2122 before he's sent back to the '90s. Adding to Ren's complicated feels, he's forming a crush on his student guide, Mars. And when he crosses paths with the absolute last person he expected to see in the future, he has a bigger problem on his hands: What if Chronotech isn't the benevolent organization they claim to be, and he and his fellow subjects are in great danger.

The Insiders by Mark Oshiro (Science Fiction)

San Francisco and Orangevale may be in the same state, but for Hector Munoz, they might as well be a million miles apart. Back home, being gay didn't mean feeling different. At Hector's new school, he couldn't feel more alone. Most days, Hector just wishes he could disappear. And he does. Right into the janitor's closet. (Yes, he sees the irony.) But one day, when the door closes behind him, Hector discovers he's stumbled into a room that shouldn't be possible. A room that connects him with two new friends from different corners of the country--and opens the door to a life-changing year full of friendship, adventure, and just a little bit of magic.

Whispering Pines by Heidi Lang (Horror)

Rae's father vanished without a trace--and Rae knows what happened to him. But no one believes her when she says that her father didn't run off, that he was actually taken. Now, a year of therapy later, Rae's mother decides they need a fresh start, and so they move to a new town in the hope that life can return to normal. The problem is, there is nothing normal about the town of Whispering Pines. No one knows this better than Caden. He's lived in Whispering Pines his entire life, and he's seen more than his fair share of weird--starting with his own family, as the town is the perfect home base for his mother's ghost hunting business. When several kids go missing and then show up like zombies with their eyes removed, many locals brush it off. Just another day in Whispering Pines. But Caden has a dark secret, one that may explain why someone is stealing eyes. And Rae, who knows how it feels to not be believed, may be just the person Caden needs to help him put things right.

Starfish by Lisa Fipps (Novel in Verse)

Ever since Ellie wore a whale swimsuit and made a big splash at her fifth birthday party, she's been bullied about her weight. To cope, she tries to live by the Fat Girl Rules--like "no making waves," "avoid eating in public," and "don't move so fast that your body jiggles." 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. It's also where she can get away from her pushy mom, who thinks criticizing Ellie's weight will motivate her to diet. Fortunately, Ellie has allies in her dad, her therapist, and her new neighbor, Catalina, who loves Ellie for who she is. 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.

The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes (Mystery)

Avery Grambs has a plan for a better future: survive high school, win a scholarship, and get out. But her fortunes change in an instant when billionaire Tobias Hawthorne dies and leaves Avery virtually his entire fortune. The catch? Avery has no idea why -- or even who Tobias Hawthorne is. To receive her inheritance, Avery must move into sprawling, secret passage-filled Hawthorne House, where every room bears the old man's touch -- and his love of puzzles, riddles, and codes. Unfortunately for Avery, Hawthorne House is also occupied by the family that Tobias Hawthorne just dispossessed. This includes the four Hawthorne grandsons: dangerous, magnetic, brilliant boys who grew up with every expectation that one day, they would inherit billions. Caught in a world of wealth and privilege, with danger around every turn, Avery will have to play the game herself just to survive.

Thanks a Lot, Universe by Chad Lucas (Realistic Fiction)

Brian has always been anxious, whether at home, or in class, or on the basketball court. His dad tries to get him to stand up for himself and his mom helps as much as she can, but after he and his brother are placed in foster care, Brian starts having panic attacks. And he doesn't know if things will ever be "normal" again . . . Ezra's always been popular. He's friends with most of the kids on his basketball team--even Brian, who usually keeps to himself. But now, some of his friends have been acting differently, and Brian seems to be pulling away. 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. But if they can be brave, they might just find the best in themselves--and each other.

Linked by Gordon Korman (Realistic Fiction)

Link, Michael, and Dana live in a quiet town. But it's woken up very quickly when someone sneaks into school and vandalizes it with a swastika. Nobody can believe it. How could such a symbol of hate end up in the middle of their school? Who would do such a thing? Because Michael was the first person to see it, he's the first suspect. Because Link is one of the most popular guys in school, everyone's looking to him to figure it out. And because Dana's the only Jewish girl in the whole town, everyone's treating her more like an outsider than ever. The mystery deepens as more swastikas begin to appear. Some students decide to fight back and start a project to bring people together instead of dividing them further. The closer Link, Michael, and Dana get to the truth, the more there is to face--not just the crimes of the present, but the crimes of the past.