



# Battle of the Books 2024 - 2025



## Play Like a Girl by Misty Wilson (Graphic Memoir)

Misty never shies away from a challenge, on or off the field. So, when the boys tell her she can’t play football, there’s only one thing to do: join their team and show them what she’s got. But the training is rougher than she thought—and so are the other guys, who aren’t thrilled about having a girl on their team. Middle school isn’t so easy, either. Misty wants to fit in with the popular kids, but they think a girl playing football is “weird.” Even her best friend doesn’t get it. Can Misty find a way to score points with her teammates, make new friends, and show everyone—including herself—what it means to play like a girl?

## The Mona Lisa Vanishes by Nicholas Day (Non-fiction)

On a hot August day in Paris, just over a century ago, a desperate guard burst into the office of the director of the Louvre and shouted, *La Joconde, c’est partie!* The *Mona Lisa*, she’s gone! No one knew who was behind the heist. Was it an international gang of thieves? Was it an art-hungry American millionaire? Was it the young Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, who was about to remake the very art of painting? Travel back to an extraordinary period of revolutionary change: turn-of-the-century Paris. Walk its backstreets. Meet the infamous thieves—and detectives—of the era. And then slip back further in time and follow Leonardo da Vinci, painter of the *Mona Lisa*, through his dazzling, wondrously weird life. Discover the secret at the heart of the *Mona Lisa*—the most famous painting in the world should never have existed at all.

## Zachary Ying and the Dragon Emperor by Xiran Jay Zhao (Fantasy)

Zachary Ying never had many opportunities to learn about his Chinese heritage. His single mom was busy enough making sure they got by, and his schools never taught anything except Western history and myths. So, Zack is woefully unprepared when he discovers he was born to host the spirit of the First Emperor of China for a vital mission: sealing the leaking portal to the Chinese underworld before the upcoming Ghost Month blows it wide open. The mission takes an immediate wrong turn when the First Emperor botches his attempt to possess Zack’s body and binds to Zack’s AR gaming headset instead, leading to a battle where Zack’s mom’s soul gets taken by demons. Now, with one of history’s most infamous tyrants yapping in his headset, Zack must journey across China to heist magical artifacts and defeat figures from history and myth, all while learning to wield the emperor’s incredible water dragon powers. And if Zack can’t finish the mission in time, the spirits of the underworld will flood into the mortal realm, and he could lose his mom forever.

## The Clackity by Lora Senf (Horror)

Evie Von Rathe lives in Blight Harbor—the seventh-most haunted town in America—with her Aunt Desdemona, the local paranormal expert. Des doesn’t have many rules except one: Stay out of the abandoned slaughterhouse at the edge of town. But when her aunt disappears into the building, Evie goes searching for her. There she meets The Clackity, a creature who lives in the shadows and seams of the slaughterhouse. The Clackity makes a deal with Evie to help get Des back in exchange for the ghost of John Jeffrey Pope, a serial killer who stalked Blight Harbor a hundred years earlier. Evie reluctantly embarks on a journey into a strange otherworld filled with hungry witches, penny-eyed ghosts, and a memory-thief, all while being pursued by a dead man whose only goal is to add Evie to his collection of lost souls. Will she ever find Des, or is The Clackity planning something far more sinister?

## Invisible by Christina Diaz Gonzalez (Graphic Novel)

Can five overlooked kids make one big difference? 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 they meet someone who truly needs their help, and they must decide whether they are each willing to expose their own secrets to help . . . or if remaining invisible is the only way to survive middle school.

**Shot Clock by Caron Butler (Sports Fiction)**

Tony loves basketball. But the game changed recently when his best friend, Dante, a hoops phenom, was killed by a police officer. Tony hopes he can carry on Dante’s legacy by making the Sabres, the AAU basketball team Dante took to two national championships. Tony doesn’t make the team, but Coach James likes what he sees from Tony at tryouts and offers him another chance: join the team as the statistician. With his community reeling and the team just finding its footing on the court, can Tony find a path to healing while helping to bring the Sabres a championship?

**Wildoak by C.C. Harrington (Historical Fiction)**

Maggie Stephens's stutter makes school especially hard. She will do almost anything to avoid speaking in class or calling attention to herself. So when her unsympathetic father threatens to send her away for so-called "treatment," she reluctantly agrees to her mother's intervention plan: a few weeks in the fresh air of Wildoak Forest, visiting a grandfather she hardly knows. It is there, in an extraordinary twist of fate, that she encounters an abandoned snow leopard cub, an exotic gift to a wealthy Londoner that proved too wild to domesticate. But once the cub's presence is discovered by others, danger follows, and Maggie soon realizes that time is running out, not only for the leopard, but for herself and the forest as well.

**Wrecker by Carl Hiassen (Mystery)**

Valdez Jones VIII calls himself Wrecker because his great-great-great-great-great-grandfather salvaged shipwrecks for a living. So, is it destiny, irony, or just bad luck when Wrecker comes across a speedboat that has run hard aground on a sand flat? The men in the boat don't want Wrecker to call for help—in fact, they'll pay him to forget he ever saw them. Wrecker would be happy to forget, but he keeps seeing these men all over Key West—at the marina, in the cemetery, even right outside his own door. And now they want more than his silence—they want a lookout. He'll have to dive deep into their shady dealings to figure out a way to escape *this* tangled net. . . .

**Spells for Lost Things by Jenna Evans Welch (Romance)**

Willow has never felt like she belonged anywhere and is convinced that the only way to find a true home is to travel the world. But her plans to act on her dream are put on hold when her aloof and often absent mother drags Willow to Salem, Massachusetts, to wrap up the affairs of an aunt Willow didn’t even know she had. An aunt who may or may not have been a witch. There, she meets Mason, a loner who’s always felt out of place and has been in and out of foster homes his entire life. He’s been classified as one of the runaways, constantly searching for ways to make it back to his mom; even if she can’t take care of him, it’s his job to try and take care of her. Isn’t it? Naturally pulled to one another, Willow and Mason set out across Salem to discover the secret past of Willow’s mother, her aunt, and the ambiguous history of her family. During all of this, the two can’t help but act on their connection. But with the amount of baggage between them—and Willow’s growing conviction her family might be cursed—can they manage to hold onto each other?

**Simon Sort of Says by Erin Bow (Realistic Fiction)**

Simon O’Keeffe’s biggest claim to fame *should* be the time his dad accidentally gave a squirrel a holy sacrament. Or maybe the alpaca disaster that went viral on YouTube. But the story the whole world wants to tell about Simon is the one he’d do anything to forget: the one starring Simon as a famous survivor of gun violence at school. Two years after the infamous event, twelve-year-old Simon and his family move to the National Quiet Zone—the only place in America where the internet is banned. Instead of talking about Simon, the astronomers who flock to the area are busy listening for signs of life in space. And when Simon makes a friend who’s determined to give the scientists what they’re looking for, he’ll finally have the chance to spin a new story for the world to tell.

**Bhai for Now by Maleeha Siddiqui (Realistic Fiction)**

Ashar is busy with the ice hockey team, studying to get into the best school, and hanging out with his friends. Shaheer and his father are always moving, following his dad's jobs. Shaheer has given up hope of finding a place where he can put down roots, a place that feels like home. The two boys have nothing in common. But when they meet on Shaheer's first day at his new school, it’s like looking in a mirror. They quickly figure out that they're twins, separated as babies. And they are determined to do whatever it takes—including secretly switching identities—to get to know the parent they've been separated from. This is the story of two long-lost brothers who, while they might not like each other, just might need each other. Bhai for Now is by turns heartwarming and hilarious, and with an unforgettable Muslim family and friendship story at its core.

**Air by Monica Roe (Realistic Fiction)**

Twelve-year-old Emmie is working to raise money for a tricked-out wheelchair to get serious about WCMX, when a mishap on a poorly designed ramp at school throws her plans into a tailspin. Instead of replacing the ramp, her school provides her with a kind but unwelcome aide—and, seeing a golden media opportunity, launches a public fundraiser for her new wheels. Emmie loves her close-knit rural town, but she can’t shake the feeling that her goals—and her choices—suddenly aren’t hers anymore. With the help of her best friends, Emmie makes a plan to get her dreams off the ground—and show her community what she wants, what she has to give, and how ready she is to do it on her own terms.