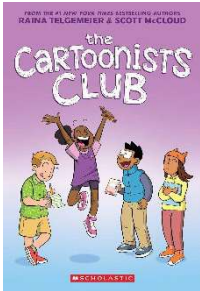
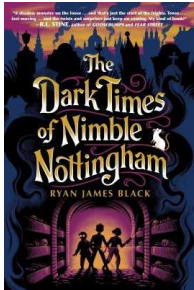
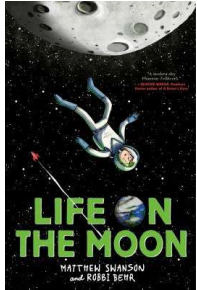
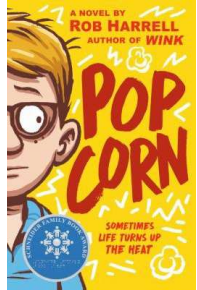
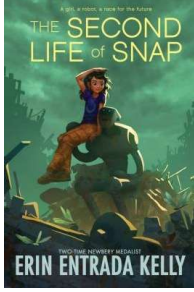
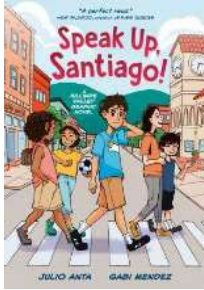
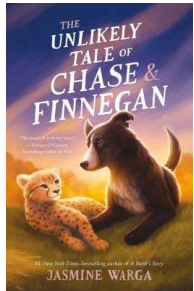


Battle of the Books 2026-2027

And Then, Boom! by Lisa Fipps 	Realistic Fiction/Novel in Verse Joe Oak is used to living on unsteady ground. His mom can't be depended on as she never stays around long once she gets "the itch," and now he and his beloved grandmother find themselves without a home. Fortunately, Joe has an outlet in his journals and drawings and takes comfort from the lessons of comic books—superheroes have a lot of "and then, boom" moments, where everything threatens to go bust but somehow, they land on their feet. And that seems to happen a lot to Joe too, as in this crisis his friend Nick helps them find a home in his trailer park. But things fall apart again when Joe is suddenly left to fend for himself. He doesn't tell anyone he's on his own, as he fears foster care and has hope his mom will come back. But time is running out—bills are piling up, the electricity's been shut off, and the school year's about to end, meaning no more free meals. The struggle to feed himself gets intense, and Joe finds himself dumpster diving for meals. He's never felt so alone—until an emaciated little dog and her two tiny pups cross his path. And fate has even more in store for Joe, because an actual tornado is about to hit home—and just when it seems all is lost, his life turns in a direction that he never could have predicted.
The Cartoonists Club by Raina Telgemeier 	Graphic Novel Makayla is bursting with ideas but doesn't know how to make them into a story. Howard loves to draw, but he struggles to come up with ideas, and his dad thinks comics are a waste of time. Lynda constantly draws in her sketchbook but keeps focusing on what she feels are mistakes, and Art simply loves being creative and is excited to try something new. They come together to form The Cartoonists Club, where kids can learn about making comics and use their creativity and imagination for their own storytelling adventures!
The Dark Times of Nimble Nottingham by Ryan James Black 	Mystery/Historical Fiction/Scary Surviving on the streets of World War II London alone certainly hasn't been easy, but Nimble Nottingham has perfected the art of going it alone—and that's just how he likes it. The only friend he needs is his beloved dog, Winnie. To pass the time between rolling blackouts and bombs falling through the air, Nim spends his days fence-climbing, roof-jumping, and gargoyle-perching...that is when he's not scrounging for food to stave off the ever-present hunger the war has brought to London. So when opportunity strikes in the form of a bomb falling onto the notoriously creepy Gravenhurst Manor, Nim knows he has to get inside and find whatever spoils he can get his hands on to sell for food. Get in. Get out. Quick as a flash. At least, that was the plan until Mouse—a member of a local street gang called the Dead End Kids—shows up and invites himself along for the heist. Inside, Mouse and Nim encounter far more than just crumbling walls and shattered windows. Beneath Gravenhurst Manor lies a secret room and inside that room is a locked safe. Nim, inspired by the <i>Hardy Boys</i> adventures he used to read at Waifs and Strays orphanage, knows that something this protected has to be valuable, and so he cracks the safe and unknowingly unleashes a monster. A shadow creature is now loose on the streets of London, and it's up to Nim, Mouse, and a band of unattended children to end its reign of terror.

Elf Dog and Owl Head by M. T. Anderson 	Fantasy Clay has had his fill of home life. A global plague has brought the world to a screeching halt, and with little to look forward to but a summer of video-calling friends, vying with annoying sisters for the family computer, and tuning out his parents' financial worries, he's only too happy to retreat to the woods. From the moment the elegant little dog with the ornate collar appears like an apparition among the trees, Clay sees something uncanny in her. With this mysterious Elphinore as guide, he'll glimpse ancient secrets folded all but invisibly into the forest. Each day the dog leads Clay down paths he never knew existed, deeper into the unknown. But they aren't alone in their surreal adventures. There are traps and terrors in the woods, too, and if Clay isn't careful, he might stray off the path and lose his way forever.
Life on the Moon by Matthew Swanson 	Science Fiction/Fantasy <i>The first rule of life on the moon is: There is no life on the moon. The second rule is: Don't ask questions.</i> 12-year-old Leo gets a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to join the very first Moon colony. He's excited to be part of the top-secret mission, but things quickly go off the rails. Right after his family lands on the Moon, Leo's dad is called off on an urgent mission from which he never returns. The authorities claim the mission never existed, and Leo's dad is accused of desertion. Leo goes looking for his dad and discovers far more than he bargained for. Everyone in the colony insists there's NO life on the Moon. But Leo's explorations reveal a landscape brimming with extraordinary creatures--with baffling behaviors and beliefs. Leo's big question is: why keep Moon life a secret? Who stands to gain? And how can he find a way to save his new Moon friends before the lie becomes a reality?
The Partition Project by Saadia Faruqi 	Realistic Fiction Twelve-year-old Maha Raheem is confident, smart, and singularly convinced that nothing matters but facts and journalism. Her comfortable life is turned awry when her Dadi comes from Pakistan to live with her family. Maha must give up her room and is charged with "babysitting" her grandmother, but this inconvenience soon turns into an opportunity. Dadi's memories of the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 spark Maha's interest and turn into a documentary project for her media studies class. Dadi opens up Maha's world to Pakistani cooking, the rituals of Ramzan, and a descriptive picture of her childhood in Ludhiana. Through Dadi and other South Asian immigrants in the community, Maha learns about her identity and heritage. Meanwhile, she must also learn to be a better friend, sister, and less judgmental classmate.
Popcorn by Rob Harrell 	Realistic Fiction Andrew's just trying to make it through Picture Day, which is easier said than done when it seems like the whole world is out to get him . . . But as Andrew goes through the school day, and as one thing after another goes wrong, that little kernel of worry in his stomach is getting hotter and hotter, until it threatens to pop and turn into a public panic attack, his worst fear. He tries to keep his anxiety at bay, but the news that his grandmother with Alzheimer's is missing is too much

The Second Life of Snap by Erin Entrada Kelly 	Survival/Science Fiction Bright Valley Subsidized Camp #5 is not a perfect place to live. It's dusty, there are no trees to provide respite from the beating sun, the trailers are falling apart, and the water supply is heavily rationed. But to twelve-year-old Zuzu Santos and her three best friends, Bright Valley is home. When Zuzu's dad loses his job at Lockwood, the corporation that controls everything from rations to education, he isn't given money or food or water as severance, but a dated, first-generation robot. They do not provide a working charging station. Zuzu names the robot Snap, and he soon becomes part of the Bright Valley family. But Snap's battery is dwindling every day, and though Snap is prepared for his inevitable reset, Zuzu isn't. She would do whatever it takes to keep Snap alive. The problem is, Snap would do the same for Zuzu and her friends, no matter the cost.
Speak Up, Santiago by Julio Anta 	Graphic Novel How can you speak up if you don't have the words? Santi is excited to spend the summer in Hillside Valley, meeting the local kids, eating his Abuela's delicious food, exploring! There's just one problem-Santi doesn't speak Spanish that well and it feels like everyone he meets in Hillside does. There's Sol (she's a soccer player who really loves books), Willie, (the artist), Alejandro (Santi's unofficial tour guide!), and Nico (Alejandro's brother and blue belt in karate). In between all of their adventures in Hillside, Santi can't help but worry about his Spanish-what if he can't keep up?! Does that mean he's not Colombian enough? Will Santi find his confidence and his voice? Or will his worries cost him his new friendships...and the chance to play in Hillside's summer soccer tournament?!
A Strange Thing Happened in Cherry Hall by Jasmine Warga 	Mystery During spring break of sixth grade, Rami feels isolated and unseen: his once-close friends have rejected him, and he wonders more and more about the father who abandoned him when he was two. Meanwhile, his mother's workplace, an art museum, has been rocked by the sudden, unexplained theft of a painting. Determined to solve the mystery and prove his worth, Rami finds himself face-to-face with what seems to be the ghost of a young girl who has forgotten her own identity. With the help of new friend Veda, Rami must make sense of the missing painting, the nameless girl, and his own feelings of loss.
The Unlikely Tale of Chase & Finnegan by Jasmine Warga 	Animal Fiction Finnegan is a rescue dog with a broken heart. Chase is a newly orphaned cheetah cub. The two animals couldn't be more different. But one day, they are brought together for the unlikelyst of reasons: Finnegan must help Chase gain the confidence she needs to perform as part of an educational program for children at a zoo. Finnegan and Chase have each suffered losses and have trouble trusting. Yet somehow, they are just what the other needs. But if Finnegan isn't able to help Chase overcome her fears, he won't just be letting Chase down--he could be risking his new home as well.

**With Twice the Love,
Dessie Mei**
by Justina Chen



Realistic Fiction

On Dessie Mei Breedlove's first day at a new school in the middle of her sixth-grade year, who does she see? A classmate who looks exactly like her. As in: Dessie and Donna Lee have the exact same glossy black hair. The exact same brown eyes. The exact same cheeky smile.

A secret DNA test reveals the shocking truth: Dessie and Donna are identical twins, adopted from the same orphanage in China, then separated into two different families: one white, the other Taiwanese American. The Breedloves and the Lees.

Making up for lost time, the girls throw themselves into their newfound sisterhood, relishing every similarity. Cats or dogs (dogs!). Sweet or savory (both!). Favorite band (A2Z, duh!). But the small differences between the girls soon create tension...and when crisis strikes, Dessie must figure out who she is, where she belongs, and what it truly means to be a sister.