

Alexie, Sherman. **The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian.** Junior leaves the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white high school, where the only other Native American is the school mascot. Is he choosing his own destiny or betraying his heritage.

Alexie, Sherman. "Flight." Illustration by the author.

Alexie, Sherman. **Flight.** Just as a cop’s bullet stops his wild shooting spree, Zits, an orphan who is half Native American, finds himself transported through space and time and into another body.

Anderson, Laurie Halse. "Twisted." Illustration by the author.

Anderson, Laurie Halse. **Twisted.** Tyler begins his senior year transformed on the outside, going from geeky video gamer to buff hottie, but he still struggles internally with problems at home.

Asher, Jay. "Thirteen Reasons Why." Illustration by the author.

Asher, Jay. **Thirteen Reasons Why.** When Clay receives a package of cassette tapes that explain his classmate’s suicide, he is forced to consider how his own actions, and those of others, may have contributed to her decision.

Beah, Ishmael. "A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier." Illustration by the author.

Beah, Ishmael. **A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier.** A former child soldier in Sierra Leone recalls the heart-wrenching experiences that transformed him from an innocent 12-year-old into a cold-blooded killer.

Brande, Robin. "Evolution, Me, and Other Freaks of Nature." Illustration by the author.

Brande, Robin. **Evolution, Me, and Other Freaks of Nature.** Timely, explosive issues come to the fore when Mena Reece, shunned by her church’s fundamentalist Christians, finds a kindred spirit in her quirky, brilliant lab partner.

Brooks, Martha. "Mistik Lake." Illustration by the author.

Brooks, Martha. **Mistik Lake.** Seventeen-year-old Odella, an Icelandic Canadian, struggles to unlock the secrets behind her mother’s abandonment in this lyrical coming-of-age novel.

Burgess, Melvin. "Bloodsong." Illustration by the author.

Burgess, Melvin. **Bloodsong.** The heroic Sigurd slays a dragon, descends into the underworld, and rules over a tenuous peace in a post-Apocalyptic Britain peopled with genetic mutants.

Cameron, Peter. "Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You." Illustration by the author.

Cameron, Peter. **Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You.** Jaded, aloof James is tired of almost everything in his life. His perspective shifts when he attempts to connect with a co-worker and makes a grave error in judgment.

Carey, Janet Lee. "Dragon's Keep." Illustration by the author.

Carey, Janet Lee. **Dragon’s Keep.** Princess Rosalind’s atrocity—a dragon’s claw where her finger should be—makes her beautiful to Lord Faul, the fierce dragon who enslaves her in exchange for her people’s safety.

Carey, Mike. "The Re-Gifters." Illustration by the author.

Carey, Mike. **The Re-Gifters.** Illus. by Sonny Liew and Mark Hempel. Panels that explode with martial arts power energize this graphic novel about Dixie, who almost lets her killer crush on a boy in her hapkido studio ruin her shot at tournament glory.

Cassidy, Anne. "Looking for JJ." Illustration by the author.

Cassidy, Anne. **Looking for JJ.** Recently released murderer JJ, a British teen whose childhood crime stirred a media frenzy, fears that her past will be discovered despite her new identity.

Castellucci, Cecil. **Beige.** Prim, proper Katy relaxes into a new identity when she is forced to live in L.A. with her father, a punk rocker and recovering addict.

Clarke, Judith. "One Whole and Perfect Day." Illustration by the author.

Clarke, Judith. **One Whole and Perfect Day.** Lily, the sensible one in her quirky Australian family, longs to fit in with her classmates even while belittling their shallow interests. Then grandpa goes berserk and Lily falls in love. A 2008 Printz Honor book.

Compestine, Ying Chang. "Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party." Illustration by the author.

Compestine, Ying Chang. **Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party.** China’s Cultural Revolution drastically alters the lives of Ling and her family as political oppression and violence sweeps away their comfortable, middle-class existence.

Crisler, Curtis L. "Tough Boy Sonatas." Illustration by the author.

Crisler, Curtis L. **Tough Boy Sonatas.** Poems about boys growing up poor and black vividly show the constant threats of ghetto life, as well as the positive relationships that help sustain them.

Cross, Shauna. "Derby Girl." Illustration by the author.

Cross, Shauna. **Derby Girl.** Bliss, a smart, athletic Texas teen, forges an identity apart from her beauty-pagent–obsessed mother by secretly joining a roller derby team.

Cullen, Lynn. "I Am Rembrandt's Daughter." Illustration by the author.

Cullen, Lynn. **I Am Rembrandt’s Daughter.** Cornelia, illegitimate daughter of the great artist Rembrandt, strives to escape her life of poverty and low social status.

DeWitt, Lauren. "The Deep: The Extraordinary Creatures of the Abyss." Illustration by the author.

**The Deep: The Extraordinary Creatures of the Abyss.** Amazing photographs and essays by scientists introduce the strange, beautiful, and sometimes terrifying deep-sea creatures that live in the largest, most mysterious ecosystem on the planet.

Dowd, Siobhan. "A Swift Pure Cry." Illustration by the author.

Dowd, Siobhan. **A Swift Pure Cry.** Coolbar, Ireland, is a village full of secrets, and Shell is not about to reveal hers until suspicion falls on the wrong person.

Downham, Jenny. "Before I Die." Illustration by the author.

Downham, Jenny. **Before I Die.** Tessa, who has terminal cancer, creates a list of ten things she wants to do in the months she has left to live. This fierce and devastating novel explores end-of-life realities with honesty and grace.

Doyle, Larry. "I Love You, Beth Cooper." Illustration by the author.

Doyle, Larry. **I Love You, Beth Cooper.** In this offbeat, bawdy romance, Denis declares his love for a high school cheerleader in his valedictory speech—and lives with the consequences.

Ellis, Ann Dee. "This Is What I Did." Illustration by the author.

Ellis, Ann Dee. **This Is What I Did.** Logan, whose family has moved to a new neighborhood where he is bullied, won’t talk about a disturbing incident from his past until encouraged by a counselor.

Felin, M. Sindy. "Touching Snow." Illustration by the author.

Felin, M. Sindy. **Touching Snow.** Thirteen-year-old Karina, a member of a large immigrant family from Haiti, deals with growing up in an abusive and dysfunctional home dominated by her horrifying stepfather.

Fradin, Judith Bloom and Dennis Brindell Fradin. "Jane Addams: Champion of Democracy." Illustration by the author.

Fradin, Judith Bloom and Dennis Brindell Fradin. **Jane Addams: Champion of Democracy.** In a time when women had little

control over their lives, Addams became a powerful force for good by helping the poor and disadvantaged and fighting for peace.

Friesen, Gayle. "For Now." Illustration by the author.

Friesen, Gayle. **For Now.** Sarcastic Jes and her blended family are back, and their lives are shaken up again when her mother announces that she is pregnant. This follow-up to Losing Forever (2002) stands alone.

Gipi. "Notes for a War Story." Illustration by the author.

Gipi. **Notes for a War Story.** Three young men struggle to survive the aftermath of war. The senseless violence of their underground crime ring comes through powerfully in this graphic novel’s nonlinear storyline and dark, gritty images.

Grey, Christopher. "Leonardo's Shadow: Or, My Astonishing Life as Leonardo da Vinci's Servant." Illustration by the author.

Grey, Christopher. **Leonardo’s Shadow: Or, My Astonishing Life as Leonardo da Vinci’s Servant.** Young Giacomo, servant to Leonardo da Vinci, seeks to understand his past while caring for and contending with the brilliant, cantankerous artist in fifteenth-century Milan.

Hale, Shannon. "Book of a Thousand Days." Illustration by the author.

Hale, Shannon. **Book of a Thousand Days.** Themes of friendship and loyalty elevate this fairy-tale romance, in which sensible, loyal maid Dashti serves a harsh sentence alongside Lady Saren, who has refused an arranged marriage.

Helfer, Andrew. "Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography." Illustration by the author.

Helfer, Andrew. **Malcolm X: A Graphic Biography.** The events and controversies of Malcolm X’s life, culminating in his assassination, are presented with unblinking realism in a bold, graphic-novel format.

Hemphill, Stephanie. "Your Own, Sylvia: A Verse Portrait of Sylvia Plath." Illustration by the author.

Hemphill, Stephanie. **Your Own, Sylvia: A Verse Portrait of Sylvia Plath.** Most people know little about Plath’s biography apart from its tragic ending. Appropriately, this powerful portrait uses verse to shed light on the life of the gifted poet. A 2008 Printz Honor book.

Hinds, Gareth. "Beowulf." Illustration by the author.

Hinds, Gareth. **Beowulf.** Hinds’ graphic novel captures the passion and violence of the original Anglo-Saxon saga through masterful illustrations and a respectfully adapted text.

Hornby, Nick. "Slam." Illustration by the author.

Hornby, Nick. **Slam.** Stunned by his girlfriend’s pregnancy, Sam seeks direction from his (possibly) imagined conversations with skater idol Tony Hawk.

Hosseini, Khaled. "A Thousand Splendid Suns." Illustration by the author.

Hosseini, Khaled. **A Thousand Splendid Suns.** Two women born a generation apart witness the destruction of home and family in wartorn Kabul, testing the limits of their strength and courage.

Jenkins, A.M. "Repossessed." Illustration by the author.

Jenkins, A.M. **Repossessed.** Even after escaping from hell, adolescence is a wild ride for this demon! A 2008 Printz Honor book.

Jocelyn, Marthe. "How It Happened in Peach Hill." Illustration by the author.

Jocelyn, Marthe. **How It Happened in Peach Hill.** Annie gather information for her mother’s séances by playing the village idiot. Then she meets Sammy, and now all she wants is to be a normal girl.

Johnston, Tony. **Bone by Bone by Bone.** David’s interracial friendship with Malcolm is forbidden by David’s father, a small-town doctor who threatens to shoot any black person who comes into their house.

Jones, Lloyd. "Mister Pip." Illustration by the author.

Jones, Lloyd. **Mister Pip.** In the midst of guerrilla warfare, 14-year-old Matilda attends school to hear Mr. Watts, the only white inhabitant on her Pacific island, read from Dickens’ Great Expectations.

Key, Watt. "Alabama Moon." Illustration by the author.

Key, Watt. **Alabama Moon.** Moon, having lived in isolation in Alabama’s deep woods until his father’s death, sets out for Alaska and discovers how little he knows about the outside world.

Klass, David. "Firestorm." Illustration by the author.

Klass, David. **Firestorm.** Everything Jack thinks he knows about his world is wrong in this science fiction adventure set in the present day.

Knox, Elizabeth. "Dreamquake: Book Two of the Dreamhunter Duet." Illustration by the author.

Knox, Elizabeth. **Dreamquake: Book Two of the Dreamhunter Duet.** In the second volume of the Dreamhunter Duet, Laura searches for master dreams to reverse the effects of a government conspiracy, only to discover an even more sinister plot. A 2008 Printz Honor book.

Koertge, Ron. "Strays." Illustration by the author.

Koertge, Ron. **Strays.** Trapped in the unwelcoming world of foster care, Ted relies upon his strong connection with animals as he struggles to determine his life’s direction.

Lanagan, Margo. "Red Spikes." Illustration by the author.

Lanagan, Margo. **Red Spikes.** In this collection of ten unsettling stories, a bogeyman, an angelic budgie, and souls in limbo are just some of the elements that will leave readers startled and intrigued.

Landy, Derek. "Skulduggery Pleasant." Illustration by the author.

Landy, Derek. **Skulduggery Pleasant.** When Stephanie inherits her uncle’s’ estate, she also inherits his best friend: a walking, talking, crime-fighting skeleton.

Lat. "Town Boy." Illustration by the author.

Lat. **Town Boy.** The move from a small village to a growing Malaysian town offers Mat a chance to experience a wider world filled with exaggerated yet totally believable characters. A followup to graphic novel Kampung Boy.

Lockhart, E. "Dramarama." Illustration by the author.

Lockhart, E. **Dramarama.** When friends Demi and Sarah both attend theater camp, their bond is tested when Demi meets his dream man and Sarah discovers that she may have misjudged her talents.

Lyga, Barry. "The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy and Goth Girl." Illustration by the author.

Lyga, Barry. **The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy and Goth Girl.** Fanboy, a comic-book nerd and perennial target of the Jock Jerks, finally takes charge of his destiny (with a little help from Goth Girl).

Lyga, Barry. "Boy Toy." Illustration by the author.

Lyga, Barry. **Boy Toy.** Josh’s middle school teacher taught him more than history. Five years later, her release from jail forces him to confront the past in this frank depiction of sexual abuse.

MacCready, Robin Merrow. **Buried.** As her obsessive-compulsive disorder spirals out of control, Claudine finds herself buried under home and school duties after her alcoholic mother appears to have abandoned her.

Marillier, Juliet. **Wildwood Dancing.** Jena combats dark forces to protect all she holds dear, including her beloved Other Kingdom, in this magical steeped in fairy-tale lore.

Marrin, Albert. **The Great Adventure: Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of Modern America.** Roosevelt rides to life in this intimate yet historically revealing book about the man who redefined the United States presidency.

McCaughrean, Geraldine. **The White Darkness.** Battling an inscrutable villain in the frozen South Pole, Symone learns survival skills from her imaginary companion, the long-dead explorer Titus Oates. The 2008 Printz Award winner.

Mieville, China. **Un Lun Dun.** When it turns out her friend isn't the Chosen One after all, 12-year-old Deeba steps in to save Un Lun Dun—a bizarre and fantastical alternate London.

Miller, Sarah. **Miss Spitfire: Reaching Helen Keller.** New teacher Annie Sullivan struggles to unlock the mind of Helen Keller, a deaf and blind 6-year-old whose family is desperate to control her violent tantrums.

Moore, Perry. **Hero.** Thom is keeping two very big secrets from his father—that he is a superhero in training, and that he is gay.

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. **The Off Season.** In this standalone sequel to Dairy Queen, female linebacker DJ struggles to balance school, romance, and family responsibilities as she starts her junior year.

Myers, Walter Dean. **What They Found: Love on 145th Street.** From beauty shops and meat pies to war, drugs, and love between dying dogs, these fifteen interconnected stories explore life in Harlem with humor and sensitivity.

Olmstead, Robert. **Coal Black Horse.** Carried by a mysterious horse, 14-year-old Robey Childs journeys to find his father in the grisly aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg.

Peet, Mal. **Tamar: A Novel of Espionage,** Passion, and Betrayal. This sweeping thriller moves between World War II and the present day as 15-year-old Tamar uncovers her grandfather's hidden past as a spy in the Netherlands.

Polly, Matthew. American **Shaolin: Flying Kicks, Buddhist Monks, and the Legend of Iron Crotch: An Odyssey in the New China.** On a quest to transform himself from a scrawny weakling into a kung-fu master, Polly drops out of Princeton and journeys to the legendary Shaolin Temple.

Raddatz, Martha. **The Long Road Home A Story of War and Family.** An investigative journalist contrasts the physical brutality of the Iraq War with homefront loved ones' stress when an American platoon is trapped in a firefight.

Reef, Catherine. **e.e. cummings: a poet's life.** This well-rounded portrait skillfully examines the culture in which poet e. e. cummings lived as he developed his craft.

Resau, Laura. **Red Glass.** Fear has ruled the life of 16-year-old Sophie until dehydrated, speechless Pablo, a 6-year-old survivor of an illegal border crossing, is brought to her home.

Resau, Laura. **What the Moon Saw.** Fourteen-year-old Clara spends the summer in a tiny Mexican village with grandparents she has never met, discovering a sense of belonging previously unknown to her.

**The Restless Dead: Ten Original Stories of the Supernatural.** Edited by Deborah Noyes. These original short stories feature a celebrated cast of young adult authors and invite readers to question whether the dead really do rest in peace.

Rowling, J.K. **Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.** Harry fights to the death with Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters in the conclusion to this hugely popular series.

Schmidt, Gary D. **The Wednesday Wars.** Overseen by his seventh-grade English teacher, Holling Hoodhood spends Wednesday afternoons reading Shakespeare, hunting rats, and learning the consequences of the Vietnam War.

Sedgwick, Marcus. **My Swordhand is Singing.** When the dead of Chust begin to rise from their graves, Peter and his father, Tomas, must face a soulless enemy and a terrifying destiny.

Selznick, Brian. **The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel.** Illus. by Brain Selznick. Combining words and black-and-white pictures inspired by silent films, Selznick reveals the connections between a Parisian orphan and an elderly toymaker. The 2008 Caldecott Medal winner.

Shakespeare, William. **Romeo and Juliet.** Adapted by Richard Appignanesi. Illus. by Sonia Leong. Manga meets the bard! The classic, doomed love story gets a fresh look in this contemporary retelling set in Japan.

Sharenow, Robert. **My Mother the Cheerleader.** Thirteen-year-old Louise is thrust into an ugly confrontation due to her mother's activism against the 1960s integration of New Orleans schools.

Shusterman, Neal. **Unwind.** This is a future world where teens are "unwound"—their body parts are harvested for use by others. Conor, Risa, and Lev will go to extreme lengths to avoid this fate.

Sis, Peter. **The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain.** Through spare text and bold, powerful illustrations, Sis tells of his life in communist Czechoslovakia, especially his yearning for freedom, his attraction to Western pop culture, and his determination to embrace his creativity. The 2008 Sibert Award winner and a Caldecott Honor book.

Smith, Roland. **Peak.** His name is Peak and his destination is Everest. But is this avid climber ready to fulfill his father's dream?

Sonnenblick, Jordan. **Notes from the Midnight Driver.** Alex's drunken joyride in his mother's car lands him with 100 hours of community service mentoring a cantakerous elderly man.

St. James, James. **Freak Show.** Cultures collide when teen drag queen Billy moves from the northeast to a staid Florida community, where he is determined to disrupt the status quo.

Tammet, Daniel. **Born on a Blue Day: A Memoir: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant.** Recounting his long struggle to emotionally connect with others, Tammet vividly describes his childhood and adolescence as an autistic savant.

Tan, Shaun. **The Arrival.** Illus. by Shaun Tan. Without a single word, Tan's extraordinary images express the loneliness, sadness, anxiety, and wonder of the immigration experience.

Thompson, Kate. **The New Policeman.** In search of the perfect gift for his mother, J. J., an Irish 15-year-old, must save the inhabitants of another world and solve an ancient mystery.

Wallace, Rich. **One Good Punch.** Seemingly straightlaced Mike has never been in trouble—until police find four joints in his locker, forcing him to choose whether or not to betray a childhood friend.

Weinheimer, Beckie. **Converting Kate.** Kate has only known a world where her church is the ultimate authority, but after her father's death she begins to question her allegiance.

Wiess, Laura. **Such a Pretty Girl.** Having lost all faith in the justice system, Meredith tries to save herself and others from her father, a child molester recently released from prison.

Wizner, Jake. **Spanking Shakespeare.** With humor and pathos, Shakespeare Shapiro chronicles the absurd events his senior year and his obsession with sex.

Zarr, Sara. **Story of a Girl.** When Deanna's dad catches her having sex with an older guy, the consequences are greater than she ever could have imagined.

Zevin, Gabrielle. **Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac.** After falling down some steps, Naomi can't remember the past four years of her life. Now she must discover who she really is.

# Best Books For Young Adults 2008