

28th Annual Garden State Teen Book Awards Grades 9-12 Fiction Nominee Annotations



*Annotations and images from title entries on LMxAC.



Dear Justyce

Author: Stone, Nic,

Summary: Incarcerated teen Quan Banks writes letters to Justyce McCallister, with whom he bonded years before over family issues, about his experiences in the American juvenile justice system.



Flamer

Author: Curato, Mike.

Publisher: Godwin Books, Henry Holt and Company,

Summary: In the summer between middle school and high school, Aiden Navarro navigates friendships, deals with bullies, and finds himself drawn to Elias, a boy he can't stop thinking about.



Grown

Author: Jackson, Tiffany D.,

Summary: "When legendary R&B artist Korey Fields spots Enchanted Jones at an audition, her dreams of being a famous singer take flight. Until Enchanted wakes up with blood on her hands and zero memory of the previous night. Who killed Korey Fields? Before there was a dead body, Enchanted's dreams had turned into a nightmare. Because behind Korey's charm and star power was a controlling dark side. Now he's dead, the police are at the door, and all signs point to Enchanted"--Provided by publisher.

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Punching The Air

Author: Zoboi, Ibi Aanu, & Salaam, Yusef, & Pasha, Omar T.,

Summary: From award-winning, bestselling author Ibi Zoboi and prison reform activist Yusef Salaam of the Exonerated Five comes a powerful YA novel in verse about a boy who is wrongfully incarcerated. "The story that I thought was my life didn't start on the day I was born." Amal Shahid has always been an artist and a poet. But even in a diverse art school, he's seen as disruptive

and unmotivated by a biased system. Then one fateful night, an altercation in a gentrifying neighborhood escalates into tragedy. "Boys just being boys" turns out to be true only when those boys are white. The story that I think will be my life starts today. Suddenly, at just sixteen years old, Amal's bright future is upended: he is convicted of a crime he didn't commit and sent to prison. Despair and rage almost sink him until he turns to the refuge of his words, his art. This never should have been his story. But can he change it. With spellbinding lyricism, award-winning author Ibi Zoboi and prison reform activist Yusef Salaam tell a moving and deeply profound story about how one boy is able to maintain his humanity and fight for the truth, in a system designed to strip him of both.



Sanctuary

Author: Mendoza, Paola, & Sher, Abby,

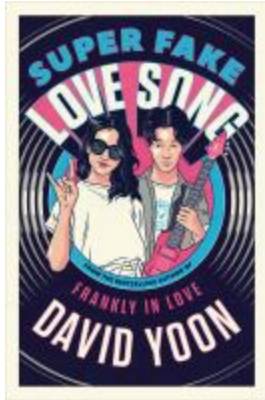
Summary: In 2032, when sixteen-year-old Vali's mother is detained by the Deportation Forces, Vali must flee Vermont with her little brother, Ernie, hoping to reach their Tía Luna in the sanctuary state of California.

In 2032 America, all citizens are chipped and everyone is tracked. It is almost impossible to survive as an undocumented immigrant, but that is exactly what Vali is doing. She and her family have carved out a stable, happy life in small-town Vermont. When Vali's mother's counterfeit chip starts malfunctioning and the Deportation Forces raid their town, they are forced to flee. On the run, Vali and her family are desperately trying to make it to her tía Luna's in California, a sanctuary

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state that is currently being walled off from the rest of the country. When Vali's mother is detained, Vali must carry on with her younger brother across the country to make it to safety before it is too late. -- adapted from jacket



Super Fake Love Song

Author: Yoon, David,

Summary: When new-girl Cirrus mistakes self-described nerd Sunny Dae as the lead in a rock band, Sunny rolls with it, forming a fake band with his friends, but as the lies continue he risks losing both Cirrus and his friends. When self-proclaimed nerd Sunny Dae meets Cirrus Soh, she mistakes Sunny's older brother Gray's bedroom, with its electric guitars and rock posters, for Sunny's own. He sort of, kind of, accidentally winds up telling her he's the frontman of a rock band. Now Sunny is knee-deep in the lie, and

begs his best friends into forming a fake band with him. When Cirrus asks to see them play, people start noticing him in the hallways. Now Sunny is going to football games and parties, feeling more confident, falling in love--and having fun. As his lies begin to catch up, was it all worth it? -- adapted from jacket



Tokyo Ever After

Author: Jean, Emiko,

Summary: After learning that her father is the Crown Prince of Japan, Izumi travels to Tokyo, where she discovers that Japanese imperial life--complete with designer clothes, court intrigue, paparazzi scandals, and a forbidden romance with her handsome but stoic bodyguard--is a tough fit for the outspoken and irreverent eighteen-year-old from northern California.

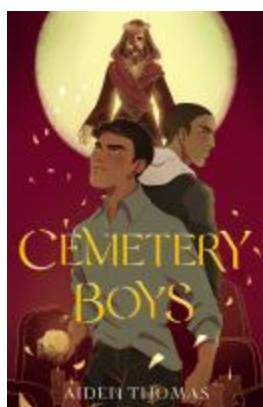
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We Are Not Free

Author: Chee, Traci,

Summary: For fourteen-year-old budding artist Minoru Ito, her two brothers, her friends, and the other members of the Japanese-American community in southern California, the three months since Pearl Harbor was attacked have become a waking nightmare: attacked, spat on, and abused with no way to retaliate--and now things are about to get worse, their lives forever changed by the mass incarcerations in the relocation camps.



Cemetery Boys

Author: Thomas, Aiden,

Summary: Yadriel, a trans boy, summons the angry spirit of his high school's bad boy, and agrees to help him learn how he died, thereby proving himself a brujo, not a bruja, to his conservative family.

When his traditional Latinx family has problems accepting his gender, Yadriel becomes determined to prove himself a real brujo. With the help of his cousin and best friend Maritza, he performs the ritual himself, and then sets out to find the ghost of his murdered cousin and set it free. But the ghost he summons is actually Julian Diaz, the school's resident bad boy, and Julian is determined to find out what happened-- and tie up some loose ends before he leaves. Left with no choice, Yadriel agrees to help Julian. But the longer Yadriel spends with Julian, the less he wants to let him leave. -- adapted from jacket

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Instructions For Dancing

Author: Yoon, Nicola,

Summary: "After picking up a book from the library, Evie--who has given up on love--gains the ability to see how other people's romantic relationships will end"-- Provided by publisher.



The Magic Fish

Author: Nguyen, Trung Le,

Summary: "Real life isn't a fairytale. But Tiaên still enjoys reading his favorite stories with his parents from the books he borrows from the local library. It's hard enough trying to communicate with your parents as a kid, but for Tiaên, he doesn't even have the right words because his parents are struggling with their English. Is there a Vietnamese word for what he's going through? Is there a way to tell them he's gay?"--Provided by publisher.



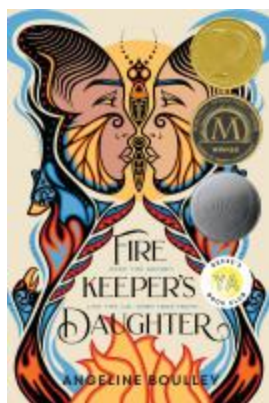
Elatsoe

Author: Little Badger, Darcie, & Cai, Rovina,

Summary: "Imagine an America very similar to our own. This America has been shaped dramatically by the magic, monsters, knowledge, and legends of its peoples. Elatsoe lives in this slightly stranger America. She can raise the ghosts of dead animals, a skill passed down through generations of her Lipan Apache family. Her beloved cousin has just been murdered, in a town that wants no prying eyes. But she is going to do more than pry"--Provided by

publisher.

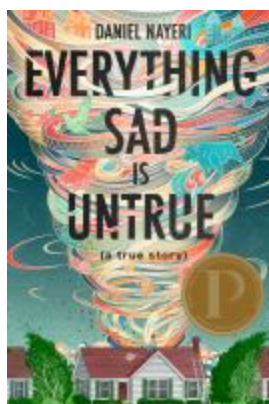
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Firekeeper's Daughter

Author: Boulley, Angeline,

Summary: Daunis, who is part Ojibwe, defers attending the University of Michigan to care for her mother and reluctantly becomes involved in the investigation of a series of drug-related deaths.



Everything Sad Is Untrue : (A True Story)

Author: Nayeri, Daniel,

Summary: "At the front of a middle school classroom in Oklahoma, a boy named Khosrou (whom everyone calls "Daniel") stands, trying to tell a story. His story. But no one believes a word he says. But Khosrou's stories are beautiful, and terrifying, from the moment his family fled Iran in the middle of the night with the secret police moments behind them, back to the refugee camps of Italy, and further back to Isfahan."--Provided by publisher.



Every Body Looking

Author: Iloh, Candice,

Summary: A mixed-heritage dancer's coming of age within the African diaspora is shaped by abuse at the hands of a cousin, her mother's descent into addiction, and her father's efforts to create a Nigerian-inspired home in America.

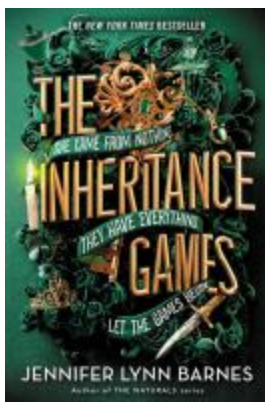
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All Our Hidden Gifts

Author: O'Donoghue, Caroline.

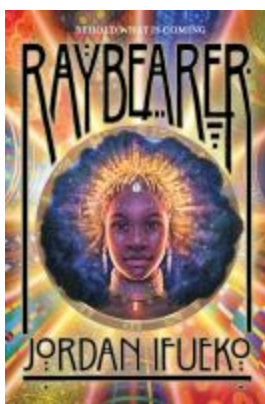
Summary: When her friend mysteriously vanishes after drawing an unsettling tarot card called The Housekeeper, Maeve uses her deep connection with the cards to search for clues the police cannot find.



The Inheritance Games

Author: Barnes, Jennifer (Jennifer Lynn),

Summary: When a Connecticut teenager inherits vast wealth and an eccentric estate from the richest man in Texas, she must also live with his surviving family and solve a series of puzzles to discover how she earned her inheritance.

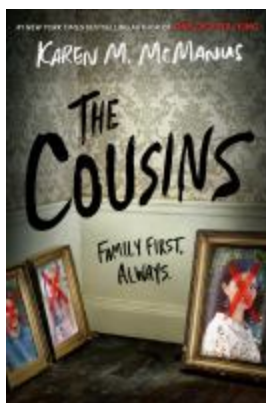


Raybearer

Author: Ifueko, Jordan,

Summary: Raised in isolation, Tarisai yearns for the closeness she could have as one of the Crown Prince's Council of 11, but her mother, The Lady, has magically compelled Tarisai to kill the Crown Prince.

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The Cousins

Author: McManus, Karen M.,

Summary: After receiving an invitation to spend the summer with their estranged grandmother, the Story cousins arrive at her house only to discover that she is not there, and the longer they stay on the island, the more they realize their mysterious family history has some deadly secrets.



Furia

Author: Méndez, Yamile Saied,

Summary: Seventeen-year-old Camila Hassan, a rising soccer star in Rosario, Argentina, dreams of playing professionally, in defiance of her fathers' wishes and at the risk of her budding romance with Diego. Rosario, Argentina. At home Camila Hassan lives within her mother's narrow expectations, her soccer-star brother's shadow, and under the abusive rule of her short-tempered father. On the field, she is La Furia, a powerhouse of skill and talent. When her team qualifies for the South American tournament,

Camila dreams of getting an athletic scholarship to a North American university. But her parents wouldn't allow a girl to play fútbol-- and she needs their permission to go any farther. Can she make her way in a world with no place for the dreams and ambition of a girl like her? -- adapted from jacket