

# Iowa Teen Award

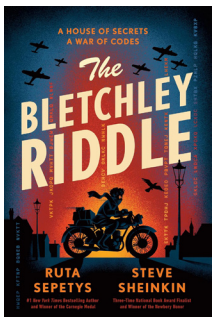
## 2026-2027



### **AND THEN, BOOM!** FIPPS, LISA

*A comic-loving boy battles homelessness, loss, and the real villain—poverty.*

Eleven-year-old comic-book-loving Joseph Oak and his Grandmum live barely above the poverty line and suffer from the poor decisions of his unreliable mother. When they become homeless and must live out of a car, Joseph tries to keep his hopes up by reminding himself of the challenges his comic book heroes face. Fortunately, in real life, he has friends who help him and his Grandmum find an affordable trailer home to live in. But when his grandmother becomes sick and dies, Joseph is left on his own, and as things become more precarious and food scarce, he will have to muster up all the courage he can to face the villain known as poverty.



### **BLETCHLEY RIDDLE** SEPETYS, RUTA

*Siblings decode wartime clues that may reveal their mother's fate.*

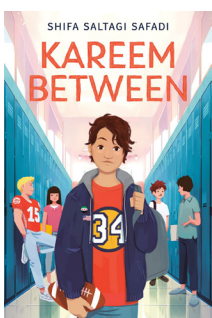
Presents a middle grade historical novel that follows nineteen-year-old Jakob Novis and his fourteen-year-old sister Lizzie, Polish siblings who live at Bletchley Park, the home of WWII codebreakers. Jakob joins Bletchley staff to crack the Nazi's Enigma cipher, while Lizzie attempts to learn what happened to their mother who worked at the American Embassy in London and disappeared in Poland during the 1939 German attack. When mysterious messages and codes are left for them on their doorstep, the siblings wonder if it's a trap or if it's connected to their mother's disappearance. Jakob and Lizzie race to decipher the clues which lead to shocking secrets.



### **DREAMSLINGER** KIM, GRACI

*A girl with dream magic enters forbidden trials and uncovers dangerous truths.*

Fourteen-year-old Aria is a dreamslinger, someone who has a genetic mutation that allows access to powerful magic from their dreams. Dreamslingers are suppressed, however, due to the Great Outburst ten years ago that killed Aria's mother. Aria's father teaches her and other dreamslingers to suppress their emotions and therefore control their magic. Everyone is surprised when the secretive Kingdom of Royal Hanguk, the only kingdom who doesn't suppress their dreamslingers, opens up their annual Royal Slinger Trials to other nations. Aria is selected to go in order to spy on the kingdom for her father, but when she arrives, she finds that nothing is what she expected and she begins to question what she's been told about her mother and dreamslingers' danger to the outside world.



### **KAREEM BETWEEN** SAFADI, SHIFA SALTAGI

*Stuck between losses and pressures, Kareem searches for hope again.*

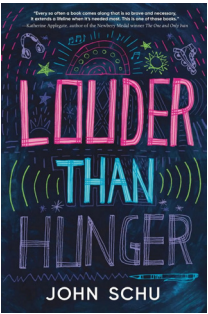
At the start of seventh grade, Syrian American Kareem is feeling down about his best friend moving away, messing up his football tryouts, and having to show a new Syrian kid around school. Making matters worse, the star quarterback offers to arrange another chance for him to try out for the team, but first he must write a school essay for him. In addition, his mom returned to Syria to help her parents during the political strife there and now is unable to return home. Feeling caught in between everything, Kareem must learn to maintain hope and have the confidence to see the good things in his life.



## LAST DRAGON ON MARS REINTGEN, SCOTT

*A Martian orphan discovers a secret that could save his dying planet.*

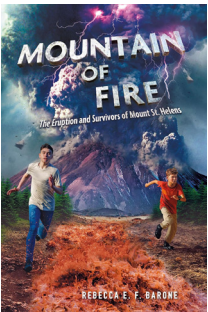
Thirteen-year-old Lunar Jones is one of the many orphans living at the understaffed, underfunded Relocation Clinic in the dying Mars settlement, and he is the defacto leader for the other kids, who were all born on Mars, a planet that never wanted people in the first place. Lunar knows that Martian history always starts with Earth as the first astronauts discovered that space was already occupied by dragons long ago. When humanity learned that Earth's dragon had sacrificed herself to make their home planet habitable, they set their sights on Mars and figured they could do the same thing to Mars' dragon, but as the dragon died, he whispered a curse over Mars. During a salvage run gone wrong, Lunar goes underground in a restricted zone, and he uncovers what might be the only hope left for the dying planet.



## LOUDER THAN HUNGER SCHU, JOHN

*A bullied teen confronts anorexia and learns to trust the healing process.*

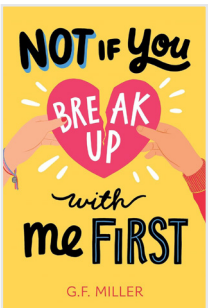
In 1996, thirteen-year-old Jake, who loves skating, volunteering at a nursing home, and listening to Broadway tunes, is relentlessly bullied in school, which triggers an eating disorder. Withholding food from his body feels like the one thing he has control over. When his anorexia turns dangerous, he reluctantly enters a treatment program and his initial resistance slowly transforms into an exploration of his relationship with food and trusting others.



## MOUNTAIN OF FIRE : THE ERUPTION AND SURVIVORS OF MOUNT ST. HELENS BARONE, REBECCA E. F.

*True survivor stories reveal Mount St. Helens' explosive, unforgettable impact.*

Relates true, eyewitness stories of survivors of the Mount St. Helens volcano eruption—from Harry Truman, owner of nearby Spirit Lake Lodge, and pararescue jumper Michael Cooney to photographer Roger Werth and Washington State Governor Dixy Lee Ray. Discusses the actions these people took before, during, and after the catastrophe, as well as the lasting legacy of Mount St. Helens' eruption.



## NOT IF YOU BREAK UP WITH ME FIRST MILLER, G. F.

*Two best friends fake date, then scheme to get the other to break up first.*

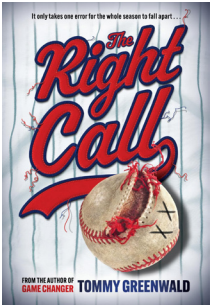
Childhood friends Eve and Andrew begin middle school and suddenly find that everyone expects them to date. So, when it's time for the first eighth-grade dance, Eve caves to pressure and asks Andrew to the dance. Now the best friends find themselves in an accidental relationship that neither wants and are miserable. To save their friendship, they both try to get the other to break up first.



## PIZZA FACE OGLE, REX

*A middle schooler navigates change, bullies, and body confidence.*

Presents a graphic memoir following late bloomer Rex as he tries to navigate his low-income family, bullies, sports, and middle school, all while learning to have confidence with a body that refuses to stop changing.



## **RIGHT CALL** GREENWALD, TOMMY

*A star pitcher faces fallout after his dad attacks an umpire.*

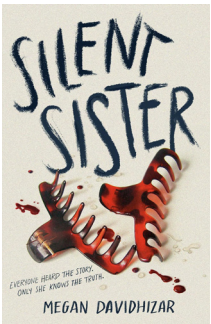
Told through a combination of transcripts, articles, texts, and emails, star pitcher Cal must face the fallout after his father attacks an umpire during a game.



## **SHADOWED** DEUKER, CARL

*A rising basketball star confronts tragedy, guilt, and friendship's weight.*

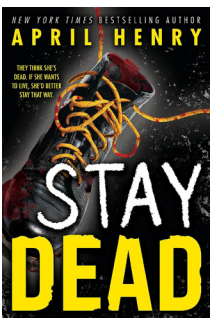
Nate quits soccer to begin playing basketball with his neighbor Lucas, who is teased by the other kids because he is poor and cares for his sister who has special needs. Soon Nate and Lucas have honed their skills to become star players on their school's basketball team. But when a tragic accident happens, Nate struggles to come to terms with what happened and how he will go forward.



## **SILENT SISTER** DAVIDHIZAR, MEGAN

*One sister disappears, one returns injured—both hide dangerous secrets.*

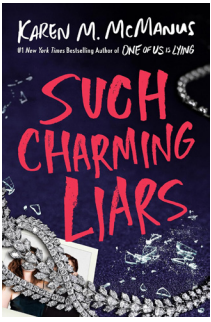
When popular, outgoing athlete Grace and her wallflower sister, Maddy, disappear during a class trip, everyone races to find the girls. Eventually, Grace is found injured near the road, but Maddy is still nowhere to be found. Grace insists she has no memory of what happened, but everybody thinks she's lying. Desperate to find her sister and prove her innocence, Grace begins to piece together what happened that fateful night, and she soon discovers secrets Maddy was hiding as well as some of her own.



## **STAY DEAD** HENRY, APRIL

*A teen fakes her death to survive assassins and a mountain crash.*

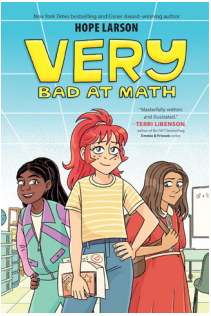
In the aftermath of a car accident that killed her senator father, sixteen-year-old Milan is struggling, and she's still reeling from the incident. But when her mother, who assumed her father's senate seat, picks her up in her private plane after getting kicked out of her third boarding school, a bomb explodes causing the plane to crash in the mountains. In her final moments, her mother entrusts Milan with a key that unlocks the evidence that many have already died for, including her father, and tells her she must let everyone believe she died with the other passengers. Milan must find a way to survive in the harsh wilderness alone all while trying to outwit a relentless assassin.



## **SUCH CHARMING LIARS** MCMANUS, KAREN M.

*A teen thief and a con artist's son flee from a killer.*

Sixteen-year-old Kat Quinn joins her mother, a jewelry thief, on one last heist before she leaves the industry for good. Their target is Annalise Sutherland, the daughter of a billionaire, who will be wearing a priceless ruby necklace. When her mother gets sick and Kat is left to complete the job on her own, she runs into the last two people she wants to see: her mother's ex-husband, a con man who preys on wealthy women, and his seventeen-year-old son Liam. When a member of the Sutherland family is killed in front of Kat and Liam, Kat realizes that they might now be the killer's targets and she and Liam must work together to sort out who wants them dead and why.



## **VERY: BAD AT MATH** LARSON, HOPE

*A popular and successful student discovers she has a learning disability.*

Verity "Very" Nelson is student body president, debate club whiz, and first chair clarinetist, and she's pretty much the best at everything except math. Despite her best efforts, math just doesn't make sense to Very, and soon she finds herself enrolled in a remedial math class. She worries that if she doesn't raise her math score, she's going to lose her presidency, but everything changes when Very discovers she has dyscalculia, a learning disability that causes her to mix up numbers. After learning there's nothing wrong with her, Very finds a way to be confident and realizes she doesn't have to be perfect at everything.