

KEYSTONE TO READING SECONDARY BOOK AWARDS 2023-2024
ANNOTATED HIGH SCHOOL BOOK LIST

A Forgery of Roses by Jessica S. Olson

Myra has a gift many would kidnap, blackmail, and worse to control: she's a portrait artist whose paintings alter people's bodies. Guarding that secret is the only way to keep her younger sister safe now that their parents are gone. But one frigid night, the governor's wife discovers the truth and threatens to expose Myra if she does not complete a special portrait that would resurrect the governor's dead son.

Once she arrives at the legendary stone mansion, however, it becomes clear the boy's death was no accident. A killer stalks these halls--one disturbingly obsessed with portrait magic. Desperate to get out of the manor as quickly as possible, Myra turns to the governor's older son for help completing the painting before the secret she spent her life concealing makes her the killer's next victim. (Fantasy, grades 9-12)

A Magic Steeped in Poison by Judy Lin

For Ning, the only thing worse than losing her mother is knowing that it's her own fault. She was the one who unknowingly brewed the poison tea that killed her—the poison tea that now threatens to also take her sister, Shu.

When Ning hears of a competition to find the kingdom's greatest shennong-shi—masters of the ancient and magical art of tea-making—she travels to the imperial city to compete. The winner will receive a favor from the princess, which may be Ning's only chance to save her sister's life.

But between the backstabbing competitors, bloody court politics, and a mysterious (and handsome) boy with a shocking secret, Ning might actually be the one in more danger.
(Fantasy, grades 9-12)

All My Rage by Sabaa Tahir

Lahore, Pakistan. Then.

Misbah is a dreamer and storyteller, newly married to Toufiq in an arranged match. After their young life is shaken by tragedy, they come to the United States and open the Clouds' Rest Inn Motel, hoping for a new start.

Juniper, California. Now.

Salahudin and Noor are more than best friends; they are family. Growing up as outcasts in the small desert town of Juniper, California, they understand each other the way no one else does. Until *The Fight*, which destroys their bond with the swift fury of a star exploding.

Now, Sal scrambles to run the family motel as his mother Misbah's health fails and his grieving father loses himself to alcoholism. Noor, meanwhile, walks a harrowing tightrope: working at her wrathful uncle's liquor store while hiding the fact that she's applying to college so she can escape him—and Juniper—forever.

When Sal's attempts to save the motel spiral out of control, he and Noor must ask themselves what friendship is worth—and what it takes to defeat the monsters in their pasts and the ones in their midst.

From one of today's most cherished and bestselling young adult authors comes a breathtaking novel of young love, old regrets, and forgiveness—one that's both tragic and poignant in its tender ferocity.

When Lou hijacks Oscar's carefully crafted schedule of independent studies and blocks of time in the Culinary Lab, Oscar is roped into helping Lou complete her over-ambitious, resume-building service project—reducing food waste in Central Adams High School. While Lou stands to gain her Girl Scout Gold Award, Oscar will be faced with a mountain of uneaten school apples and countless hours with a girl he can't stand.

With the finish line in sight, a relationship he never expected, and festival season about to begin (for good), the unthinkable happens, and Oscar's future is anything but certain.

(Realistic Fiction, grades 9-12)

Finding Jupiter by Kelis Rowe

Ray: Just once I'd like my birthday to be about me, and not the day my father died. I want to be Ray Jr., the tall girl from Memphis with the poetry beats and the braids that stay poppin'. And when I meet Orion at the skating rink, that's exactly who I am. He pulls my hand, and instead of being defined by my past, he races me toward my future.

Orion: When I dive into the pool, it's just me and my heartbeat. There's no dad, no dead sister, and no distracting noises. But I can't hold my breath forever. And since I met Ray, I don't want to. The closer we get, though, the more I see I'm not the only one caught in her wake.

(Realistic Fiction, grades 9-12)

Five Survive by Holly Jackson

Red Kenny is on a road trip for spring break with five friends: Her best friend - the older brother - his perfect girlfriend - a secret crush - a classmate - and a killer.

When their RV breaks down in the middle of nowhere with no cell service, they soon realize this is no accident. They have been trapped by someone out there in the dark, someone who clearly wants one of them dead.

With eight hours until dawn, the six friends must escape, or figure out which of them is the target. But is there a liar among them? Buried secrets will be forced to light and tensions inside the RV will reach deadly levels. Not all of them will survive the night. . . . (Mystery/Thriller, grades 9-12)

Hollow Fires by Samira Ahmed

Safiya Mirza dreams of becoming a journalist. And one thing she's learned as editor of her school newspaper is that a journalist's job is to find the facts and not let personal biases affect the story. But all that changes the day she finds the body of a murdered boy.

Jawad Ali was fourteen years old when he built a cosplay jetpack that a teacher mistook for a bomb. A jetpack that got him arrested, labeled a terrorist—and eventually killed. But he's more than a dead body, and more than "Bomb Boy." He was a person with a life worth remembering.

Driven by Jawad's haunting voice guiding her throughout her investigation, Safiya seeks to tell the whole truth about the murdered boy and those who killed him because of their hate-based beliefs.(Realistic Fiction, grades 9-12)

Love Radio by Ebony LaDelle

Prince Jones is the guy with all the answers—or so it seems. After all, at 17, he has his own segment on Detroit’s popular hip-hop show, *Love Radio*, where he dishes out advice to the brokenhearted.

Prince has always dreamed of becoming a DJ and falling in love. But being the main caretaker for his mother, who has multiple sclerosis, and his little brother means his dreams will stay just that and the only romances in his life are the ones he hears about from his listeners.

Until he meets Dani Ford.

Dani isn’t checking for anybody. She’s focused on her plan: Ace senior year, score a scholarship, and move to New York City to become a famous author. But her college essay keeps tripping her up and acknowledging what’s blocking her means dealing with what happened at that party a few months ago.

And that’s one thing Dani can’t do.

When the romantic DJ meets the ambitious writer, sparks fly. Prince is smitten, but Dani’s not looking to get derailed. She gives Prince just three dates to convince her that he’s worth falling for.

Three dates for the love expert to take his own advice, and just maybe change two lives forever
(Realistic Fiction, grades 9-12)

Man Made Monsters by Andrea L. Rogers

When Jeska’s grandmother accidentally calls her by a stranger’s name, she seizes her first clue to uncovering her family’s past, and hopefully to all that’s gone unsaid. With the help of an old family photo album, her father’s encyclopedia collection, and the unquestioning friendship of a stray cat, the silence begins to melt into frightening clarity: Jeska’s family survived a terror that they’ve worked hard to keep secret all her life. And somehow, it has both nothing and everything to do with her, all at once. A true story of navigating generational trauma as a child, *I’ll Keep You Close* is about what comes after disaster: how survivors move forward, what they bring with them when they do, and the promise of beginning again while always keeping the past close.

(Horror/Collection grades 9-12)

Murder Among Friends by Candace Fleming

In 1924, 18-year-old college students Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb made a decision: they would commit the perfect crime by kidnapping and murdering a child they both knew. But they made one crucial error: As they were disposing of the body of young Bobby Franks, whom they had bludgeoned to death, Nathan’s eyeglasses fell from his jacket pocket.

(Nonfiction, grades 9-12)

***We Deserve Monuments* by Jas Hammonds**

Seventeen-year-old Avery Anderson is convinced her senior year is ruined when she's uprooted from her life in DC and forced into the hostile home of her terminally ill grandmother, Mama Letty. The tension between Avery's mom and Mama Letty makes for a frosty arrival and unearths past drama they refuse to talk about. Every time Avery tries to look deeper, she's turned away, leaving her desperate to learn the secrets that split her family in two.

While tempers flare in her avoidant family, Avery finds friendship in unexpected places: in Simone Cole, her captivating next-door neighbor, and Jade Oliver, daughter of the town's most prominent family—whose mother's murder remains unsolved.

As the three girls grow closer—Avery and Simone's friendship blossoming into romance—the sharp-edged opinions of their small southern town begin to hint at something insidious underneath. The racist history of Bardell, Georgia is rooted in Avery's family in ways she can't even imagine. With Mama Letty's health dwindling every day, Avery must decide if digging for the truth is worth toppling the delicate relationships she's built in Bardell—or if some things are better left buried.

(Realistic fiction/Historical Fiction, grades 9-12)

The Keystone to Reading Secondary Book Awards lists are created to give students a voice in the selection of the children's choice book awards presented each year at the annual KSLA Conference. The information presented in these books represents the thoughts and opinions of the authors and does not necessarily represent the viewpoints of the Keystone State Literacy Association. (The book descriptions have been taken from outside sources.)