



2023 Teens' Top Ten Top 25 List

***All My Rage* by Sabaa Tahir (Razorbill).** 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 Cloud's Rest Inn Motel, hoping for a new start. 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.

***Alone Out Here* by Riley Redgate (Disney Hyperion).** What do you stand for, when you're one of the last left standing? The year is 2072. Soon a volcanic eruption will trigger catastrophic devastation, and the only way out is up. While the world's leaders, scientists, and engineers oversee the frantic production of a space fleet meant to save humankind, their children are brought in for a weekend of touring the *Lazarus*, a high-tech prototype spaceship. But when the apocalypse arrives months ahead of schedule, First Daughter Leigh Chen and a handful of teens from the tour are the only ones to escape the planet. This is the new world: a starship loaded with a catalog of human artifacts, a frozen menagerie of animal DNA, and fifty-three terrified survivors. From the panic arises a coalition of leaders, spearheaded by the pilot's enigmatic daughter, Eli, who takes the wheel in their hunt for a habitable planet. But as isolation presses in, their uneasy peace begins to fracture. The struggle for control will mean the difference between survival and oblivion, and Leigh must decide whether to stand on the side of the mission or of her own humanity.

***Blackwater* by Jeanette Arroyo and Ren Graham (Henry Holt and Co.).** Tony Price is a popular high school track star and occasional delinquent aching for his dad's attention and approval. Eli Hirsch is a quiet boy with a chronic autoimmune disorder that has ravaged his health and social life. What happens when these two become unlikely friends (and a whole lot more . . .) in the spooky town of Blackwater, Maine? Werewolf curses, unsavory interactions with the quarterback of the football team, a ghostly fisherman haunting the harbor, and tons of high school drama.

***Crumbs* by Danie Stirling (Clarion Books).** Ray, a young seer struggling with her powers, discovers first love and friendship in her town's magic bakery. In a very special town, there's an even more unusual bakery with a selection of baked treats hand-crafted to help your dreams come true. For Ray, a quiet young woman with

special powers of her own, the order is always the same: a hot tea with a delicious side of romance. When Ray meets Laurie, the kind barista who aspires to be a professional musician, she gets a real taste of love for the first time. But even with a spark of magic, romance isn't so simple. Both Ray and Laurie are chasing their own dreams and even when Ray starts to see the future, she can't predict her fate with Laurie.

***Dig Two Graves* by Gretchen McNeil (Disney Hyperion).** *I did my part, BFF. Now it's your turn.* Seventeen-year-old film noir fan Neve Lanier is a girl who just wants to be seen, but doesn't really fit in anywhere. When Neve is betrayed by her best friend, Yasmin, at the end of the school year, she heads off to a girl's empowerment camp feeling like no one will ever love her again. So when she grabs the attention of the beautiful, charismatic Diane, she falls right under her spell, and may accidentally promise to murder Diane's predatory step-brother, Javier, in exchange for Diane murdering Yasmin. But that was just a joke...right? Wrong. When Yasmin turns up dead, Diane comes calling, attempting to blackmail Neve into murdering Javier. Stalling for time, Neve pretends to go along with Diane's plan until she can find a way out that doesn't involve homicide. But as she gets to know Javier – and falls for him – she realizes that everything Diane told her is a lie. Even worse, she discovers that Yasmin probably wasn't Diane's first victim. And unless Neve can stop her, she won't be the last.

***Don't Look Back: A Memoir of War, Survival, and My Journey from Sudan to America* by Achut Deng and Keely Hutton (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).** I want life. After a deadly attack in South Sudan left six-year-old Achut Deng without a family, she lived in refugee camps for ten years, until a refugee relocation program gave her the opportunity to move to the United States. When asked why she should be given a chance to leave the camp, Achut simply told the I want life. But the chance at starting a new life in a new country came with a different set of challenges. Some of them equally deadly. Taught by the strong women in her life not to look back, Achut kept moving forward, overcoming one obstacle after another, facing each day with hope and faith in her future. Yet, just as Achut began to think of the US as her home, a tie to her old life resurfaced, and for the first time, she had no choice but to remember her past.

***Five Survive* by Holly Jackson (Electric Monkey).** Eight hours. Six friends. One sniper . . . Eighteen-year-old Red and her friends are on a road trip in an RV, heading to the beach for Spring Break. It's a long drive but spirits are high. Until the RV breaks down in the middle of nowhere. There's no mobile phone reception and nobody around to help. And as the wheels are shot out, one by one, the friends realise that this is no accident. There's a sniper out there in the dark watching them and he knows exactly who they are. One of the group has a secret that the sniper is willing to kill for. A game of cat-and-mouse plays out as the group desperately tries to get help and to work out which member of the group is the target. Buried secrets are forced to light in the cramped, claustrophobic setting of the RV, and tensions within the group will reach deadly levels. Not everyone will survive the night.

***Gallant* by V.E. Schwab (Greenwillow Books).** Olivia Prior has grown up in Merilance School for girls, and all she has of her past is her mother's journal—which seems to unravel into madness. Then, a letter invites Olivia to come home—to Gallant. Yet when Olivia arrives, no one is expecting her. But Olivia is not about to leave the first place that feels like home, it doesn't matter if her cousin Matthew is hostile or if she sees half-formed ghouls haunting the hallways. Olivia knows that Gallant is hiding secrets, and she is determined to uncover

them. When she crosses a ruined wall at just the right moment, Olivia finds herself in a place that is Gallant—but not. The manor is crumbling, the ghouls are solid, and a mysterious figure rules over all. Now Olivia sees what has unraveled generations of her family, and where her father may have come from. Olivia has always wanted to belong somewhere, but will she take her place as a Prior, protecting our world against the Master of the House? Or will she take her place beside him?

***Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* by Axie Oh (Feiwel & Friends).** Deadly storms have ravaged Mina’s homeland for generations. Floods sweep away entire villages, while bloody wars are waged over the few remaining resources. Her people believe the Sea God, once their protector, now curses them with death and despair. In an attempt to appease him, each year a beautiful maiden is thrown into the sea to serve as the Sea God’s bride, in the hopes that one day the “true bride” will be chosen and end the suffering. Many believe that Shim Cheong, the most beautiful girl in the village—and the beloved of Mina’s older brother Joon—may be the legendary true bride. But on the night Cheong is to be sacrificed, Joon follows Cheong out to sea, even knowing that to interfere is a death sentence. To save her brother, Mina throws herself into the water in Cheong’s stead. Swept away to the Spirit Realm, a magical city of lesser gods and mythical beasts, Mina seeks out the Sea God, only to find him caught in an enchanted sleep. With the help of a mysterious young man named Shin—as well as a motley crew of demons, gods and spirits—Mina sets out to wake the Sea God and bring an end to the killer storms once and for all.

***Gleanings: Stories from Arc of a Scythe* by Neal Shusterman (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers).** There are still countless tales of the Scythedom to tell. Centuries passed between the Thunderhead cradling humanity and Scythe Goddard trying to turn it upside down. For years, humans lived in a world without hunger, disease, or death with Scythes as the living instruments of population control. Neal Shusterman—along with collaborators David Yoon, Jarrod Shusterman, Sofía Lapuente, Michael H. Payne, Michelle Knowlden, and Joelle Shusterman—returns to the world throughout the timeline of the Arc of a Scythe series. Discover secrets and histories of characters you’ve followed for three volumes and meet new heroes, new foes, and some figures in between. *Gleanings* shows just how expansive, terrifying, and thrilling the world that began with the Printz Honor-winning Scythe truly is.

***Gold Mountain* by Betty Yee (Carolrhoda).** Working on the Transcontinental Railroad promises a fortune—for those who survive. Growing up in 1860s China, Tam Ling Fan has lived a life of comfort. Her father is wealthy enough to provide for his family but unconventional enough to spare Ling Fan from the debilitating foot-binding required of most well-off girls. But Ling Fan’s life is upended when her brother dies of influenza and their father is imprisoned under false accusations. Hoping to earn the money that will secure her father’s release, Ling Fan disguises herself as a boy and takes her brother’s contract to work for the Central Pacific Railroad Company in America. Life on “the Gold Mountain” is grueling and dangerous. To build the railroad that will connect the west coast to the east, Ling Fan and other Chinese laborers lay track and blast tunnels through the treacherous peaks of the Sierra Nevada, facing cave-ins, avalanches, and blizzards—along with hostility from white Americans. When someone threatens to expose Ling Fan’s secret, she must take an even greater risk to save what’s left of her family . . . and to escape the Gold Mountain alive.

***I Must Betray You* by Ruta Sepetys (Penguin).** Romania, 1989. Communist regimes are crumbling across Europe. Seventeen-year-old Cristian Florescu dreams of becoming a writer, but Romanians aren't free to dream; they are bound by rules and force. Amidst the tyrannical dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu in a country governed by isolation and fear, Cristian is blackmailed by the secret police to become an informer. He's left with only two choices: betray everyone and everything he loves—or use his position to creatively undermine the most notoriously evil dictator in Eastern Europe. Cristian risks everything to unmask the truth behind the regime, give voice to fellow Romanians, and expose to the world what is happening in his country. He eagerly joins the revolution to fight for change when the time arrives. But what is the cost of freedom?

***Icebreaker* by Hannah Grace (Pig & Bear Publishing).** Anastasia Allen has worked her entire life for a shot at Team USA. A competitive figure skater since she was five years old, a full college scholarship thanks to her place on the Maple Hills skating team, and a schedule that would make even the most driven person weep, Stassie comes to win. No exceptions. Nathan Hawkins has never had a problem he couldn't solve. As captain of the Maple Hills Titans, he knows the responsibility of keeping the hockey team on the ice rests on his shoulders. When a misunderstanding results in the two teams sharing a rink, and Anastasia's partner gets hurt in the aftermath, Nate finds himself swapping his stick for tights, and one scary coach for an even scarier one. The pair find themselves stuck together in more ways than one, but it's fine, because Anastasia doesn't even like hockey players....right?

***The Ivory Key* by Akshaya Raman (Clarion Books).** Vira is desperate to get out of her mother's shadow and establish her legacy as a revered queen of Ashoka. But with the country's only quarry running out of magic—a precious resource that has kept Ashoka safe from conflict—she can barely protect her citizens from the looming threat of war. And if her enemies discover this, they'll stop at nothing to seize the last of the magic. Vira's only hope is to find a mysterious object of legend: the Ivory Key, rumored to unlock a new source of magic. But in order to infiltrate enemy territory and retrieve it, she must reunite with her siblings, torn apart by the different paths their lives have taken. Each of them has something to gain from finding the Ivory Key—and even more to lose if they fail. Ronak plans to sell it to the highest bidder in exchange for escape from his impending political marriage. Kaleb, falsely accused of assassinating the former maharani needs it to clear his name. And Riya, a runaway who cut all family ties, wants the Key to prove her loyalty to the rebels who want to strip the nobility of its power. They must work together to survive the treacherous journey. But with each sibling harboring secrets and their own agendas, the very thing that brought them together could tear apart their family—and their world—for good.

***Lakelore* by Anna-Maria McLemore (Feiwel & Friends).** Everyone who lives near the lake knows the stories about the world underneath it, an ethereal landscape rumored to be half-air, half-water. But Bastián Silvano and Lore Garcia are the only ones who've been there. Bastián grew up both above the lake and in the otherworldly space beneath it. Lore's only seen the world under the lake once, but that one encounter changed their life and their fate. Then the lines between air and water begin to blur. The world under the lake drifts above the surface. If Bastián and Lore don't want it bringing their secrets to the surface with it, they have to stop it, and to do that, they have to work together. There's just one problem: Bastián and Lore haven't

spoken in seven years, and working together means trusting each other with the very things they're trying to hide.

***Lesbiana's Guide to Catholic School* by Sonora Reyes (Balzer + Bray).** Sixteen-year-old Yamilet Flores prefers to be known for her killer eyeliner, not for being one of the only Mexican kids at her new, mostly white, very rich Catholic school. But at least here no one knows she's gay, and Yami intends to keep it that way. After being outed by her crush and ex-best friend before transferring to Slayton Catholic, Yami has new priorities: keep her brother out of trouble, make her mom proud, and, most importantly, don't fall in love. Granted, she's never been great at any of those things, but that's a problem for Future Yami. The thing is, it's hard to fake being straight when Bo, the only openly queer girl at school, is so annoyingly perfect. And smart. And talented. And cute. *So cute.* Either way, Yami isn't going to make the same mistake again. If word got back to her mom, she could face a lot worse than rejection. So she'll have to start asking, WWSGD: What would a straight girl do?

***Lia and Beckett's Abracadabra* by Amy Noelle Parks (Harry N. Abrams).** Seventeen-year-old Lia Sawyer is thrilled to get a mysterious invitation from her grandmother to compete in a stage magic contest—even though her parents object. But she's going to be judged by a bunch of old-school magicians who think that because she's a girl, her only magical talents lie in wearing sparkly dresses, providing distractions, and getting sawed, crushed, or stretched. And Lia can't ask her grandmother for help because she's disappeared, leaving behind only her best magic tricks, a few obscure clues, and an order to stay away from Blackwell boys, the latest generation of a rival magic family. Lia totally plans to follow her grandmother's rule—until the cute boy she meets on the beach turns out to be Beckett Blackwell, son of the biggest old guard magical family there is. Witty and romantic, *Lia and Beckett's Abracadabra* is a YA rom-com with a magical twist!

***Lightlark* by Alex Aster (Harry N. Abrams).** *Welcome to the Centennial.* Every 100 years, the island of Lightlark appears to host the Centennial, a deadly game that only the rulers of six realms are invited to play. The invitation is a summons—a call to embrace victory and ruin, baubles and blood. The Centennial offers the six rulers one final chance to break the curses that have plagued their realms for centuries. Each ruler has something to hide. Each realm's curse is uniquely wicked. To destroy the curses, one ruler must die. Isla Crown is the young ruler of Wildling—a realm of temptresses cursed to kill anyone they fall in love with. They are feared and despised, and are counting on Isla to end their suffering by succeeding at the Centennial. To survive, Isla must lie, cheat, and betray...even as love complicates everything.

***Messy Roots: A Graphic Memoir of an Wuhanese American* by Laura Gao (Balzer + Bray).** After spending her early years in Wuhan, China, riding water buffalos and devouring stinky tofu, Laura immigrates to Texas, where her hometown is as foreign as Mars—at least until 2020, when COVID-19 makes Wuhan a household name. In *Messy Roots*, Laura illustrates her coming-of-age as the girl who simply wants to make the basketball team, escape Chinese school, and figure out why girls make her heart flutter. Insightful, original, and hilarious, toggling seamlessly between past and present, China and America, Gao's debut is a tour de force of graphic storytelling.

***A Million Quiet Revolutions* by Robin Gow (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).** For as long as they can remember, Aaron and Oliver have only ever had each other. In a small town with few queer teenagers, let alone young trans men, they've shared milestones like coming out as trans, buying the right binders--and falling for each other. But just as their relationship has started to blossom, Aaron moves away. Feeling adrift, separated from the one person who understands them, they seek solace in digging deep into the annals of America's past. When they discover the story of two Revolutionary War soldiers who they believe to have been trans man in love, they're inspired to pay tribute to these soldiers by adopting their names--Aaron and Oliver. As they learn, they delve further into unwritten queer stories, and they discover the transformative power of reclaiming one's place in history.

***My Sister's Big Fat Indian Wedding* by Sajni Patel (Harry N. Abrams).** Zurika Damani is a naturally gifted violinist with a particular love for hip hop beats. But when you're part of a big Indian family, everyone has expectations, and those certainly don't include hip hop violin. After being rejected by Juilliard, Zuri's last hope is a contest judged by a panel of top tier college scouts. The only problem? This coveted competition happens to take place during Zuri's sister's extravagant wedding week. And Zuri has already been warned, repeatedly, that she is not to miss a single moment. In the midst of the chaos, Zuri's mom is in matchmaking mode with the groom's South African cousin Naveen—who just happens to be a cocky vocalist set on stealing Zuri's spotlight at the scouting competition. Luckily Zuri has a crew of loud and loyal female cousins cheering her on. Now, all she has to do is to wow the judges for a top spot, evade getting caught by her parents, resist Naveen's charms, and, oh yeah . . . not mess up her sister's big fat Indian wedding. What could possibly go wrong?

***Nothing Burns as Bright as You* by Ashley Woodfolk (Versify).** Nothing Burns as Bright as You is an impassioned stand-alone tale of queer love, grief, and the complexity of female friendship. Two girls. One wild and reckless day. Years of tumultuous history unspooling like a thin, fraying string in the hours after they set a fire. They were best friends. Until they became more. Their affections grew. Until the blurry lines became dangerous. Over the course of a single day, the depth of their past, the confusion of their present, and the unpredictability of their future is revealed. And the girls will learn that hearts, like flames, aren't so easily tamed. It starts with a fire. How will it end?

***Nothing More to Tell* by Karen McManus (Delacorte Press).** Four years ago, Brynn left Saint Ambrose School following the shocking murder of her favorite teacher—a story that made headlines after the teacher's body was found by three Saint Ambrose students in the woods behind their school. The case was never solved. Now that Brynn is moving home and starting her dream internship at a true-crime show, she's determined to find out what really happened. The kids who found Mr. Larkin are her way in, and her ex-best friend, Tripp Talbot, was one of them. Without his account of events, the other two kids might have gone down for Mr. Larkin's murder—but instead, thanks to Tripp, they're now at the top of the Saint Ambrose social pyramid. Tripp's friends have never forgotten what Tripp did for them that day, and neither has he. Just like he hasn't forgotten that everything he told the police was a lie. Digging into the past is bound to shake up the present, and when Brynn begins to investigate what happened in the woods that day, she uncovers secrets that might change everything—about Saint Ambrose, about Mr. Larkin, and about her ex-best friend, Tripp Talbot.

***The Rumor Game* by Dhonielle Clayton and Sona Charaipotra (Disney).** All it takes is one spark to start a blaze. At Foxham Prep, a posh private school for the children of DC's elite, a single rumor has the power to ruin a life. Nobody knows that better than Bryn. She used to have it all—the perfect boyfriend, a bright future in politics, and even popularity, thanks to her best friend, cheer captain Cora. Then one mistake sparked a scandal that burned it all to the ground. Now it's the start of a new school year and the spotlight has shifted: It's geeky Georgie, newly hot after a summer makeover, whose name is on everyone's lips. When a rumor ignites, Georgie rockets up the school's social hierarchy, pitting her and Cora against each other. It grants her Foxham stardom . . . but it also makes her a target. As the rumors grow and morph, blazing like wildfire through the school's social media, all three girls' lives begin to unravel. But one person close to the drama has the power to stop the gossip in its tracks. The question is—do they even want to?

***Some Mistakes Were Made* by Kristin Dwyer (HarperTeen).** You can't always go home again. Ellis and Easton have been inseparable since childhood. But when a rash decision throws Ellis's life—and her relationship with Easton— into chaos she's forced to move halfway across the country, far from everything she's ever known. Now Ellis hasn't spoken to Easton in a year, and maybe it's better that way; maybe eventually the Easton shaped hole in her heart will heal. But when Easton's mother invites her home for a celebration, Ellis finds herself tangled up in the web of heartache, betrayal, and anger she left behind... and with the boy she never stopped loving.