

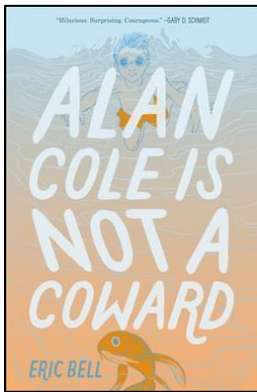
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CHILDREN'S BOOKSLIST

Rainbow Reads

Books for Grades 3 – 6

These titles feature a rainbow of culturally diverse LGBTQIA+ characters! Reading and sharing these books can help kids understand their feelings and express themselves, and reminds them that, however they choose to identify, they deserve respect.



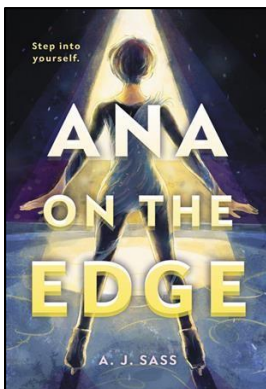
Alan Cole is Not a Coward

by Eric Bell

Middle Grade Novel (2017)
J Bell

Hoping to keep his older brother Nathan silent about his secret crush on another boy at their school, twelve-year-old Alan agrees to a ruthless sibling competition Nathan calls Cole vs. Cole. Each brother must complete seven nearly impossible tasks; whoever finishes the most wins the game. If Alan doesn't want to be outed to all of Evergreen Middle School, he's got to become the most well-known kid in school, get his first kiss, and stand up to Dad. Alan's determined to prove his mettle – to Nathan, to the world, and to himself. May the best Cole win.

Suggested for ages 9-13



Ana on the Edge

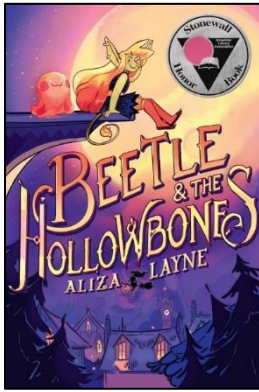
by A. J. Sass

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Sass

12-year-old Ana-Marie Jin, the reigning U.S. Juvenile figure skating champion, is *not* a frilly dress kind of kid. And when her new choreographer presents her with a princess-themed routine, Ana struggles with discomfort. But her mom has made many sacrifices in order for Ana to keep skating, so she doubles down on her training. Then Ana meets Hayden, a transgender boy learning to skate, and her whole world changes. As a major competition approaches, Ana grapples with questions about her gender identity. Can she meet the expectations of her family and friends and still be true to herself?

Suggested for ages 8-12





Beetle & the Hollowbones

by Aliza Layne; coloring by Natalie Riess & Kristen Acampora

Middle Grade Graphic Novel (2020)
Graphic J Layne

In the eerie town of 'Allows, *some* people get to be magical sorceresses, while others like Blob Ghost have their spirits trapped in the mall for all ghastly eternity. 12-year-old goblin-witch Beetle is caught in between and just wants to hang out with Blob Ghost. But when Beetle's old best friend, Kat, returns to town, they discover that Kat's sorceress aunt plans to demolish the mall. Now Beetle has less than a week to enlist Kat's help, rescue Blob Ghost, stand up to Aunt Hollowbone, and confront the magic she's been avoiding for far too long.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook.

Suggested for ages 9-14



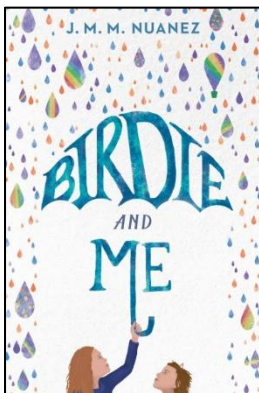
The Best at It

by Maulik Pancholy

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J Pancholy

Rahul Kapoor feels anxious about starting seventh grade, so his grandfather gives him some advice: *Find the one thing you're really good at and become the BEST at it.* Well, Rahul is not quite sure what that special thing is, he is convinced that once he finds it, bullies like Brent Mason will stop torturing him at school. And he won't be worried about staring too long at his classmate Justin. With his best friend, Chelsea, by his side, Rahul is ready to crush this challenge... But what if he discovers he isn't *the best* at anything?

Suggested for ages 9-13



Birdie and Me

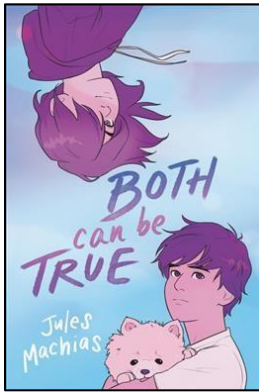
by J. M. M. Nuanez

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Nuanez

Ever since their free-spirited mama died ten months ago, twelve-year-old Jack and her gender-creative nine-year-old brother, Birdie, have been living with their fun-loving Uncle Carl, but now their conservative Uncle Patrick insists on being their guardian. Now all four family members must confront grief, prejudice, and loss, all while exploring what 'home' really means.

Suggested for ages 9-13





Both Can Be True

by Jules Machias

Middle Grade Novel (2021)
J-MS Machias

Daniel and Ash cross paths when a Pomeranian is about to be euthanized; the sensitive Dan rescues the dog and Ash offers to help on a day when they are female-presenting. As the friendship grows, Ash feels less and less able to be their full self – sometimes male and sometimes female – in front of Dan without knowing that both people find themselves constantly at war with their non-conforming identities.

Suggested for ages 10-14



The Cardboard Kingdom

by Chad Sell

Middle Grade Graphic Novel (2018)
Graphic J Sell

Welcome to a neighborhood of kids who transform ordinary boxes into colorful costumes, and their ordinary block into a cardboard kingdom. This is the summer when sixteen kids encounter knights and rogues, robots and monsters – and their own inner demons – on one last quest before school starts again.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook.

Suggested for ages 9-13



Cattywampus

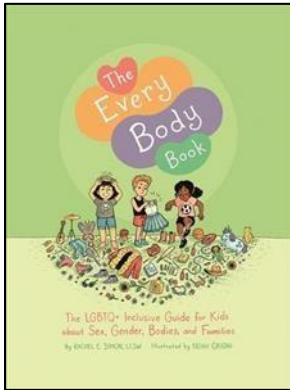
by Ash Van Otterloo

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Van Otterloe

Magic is strictly forbidden in the McGill house, but Delpha McGill has found the family book of spells, and plans to use it to make things a little easier for herself and her mother. Katybird Hearn comes from a rival family of witches, but her magic has been slow to emerge, and she thinks a spell book is just what she needs to help things along – and when a quarrel between the two unleashes a graveyard full of angry zombies the two girls must work together to save Howler's Hollow, and themselves.

Suggested for ages 8-12





The Every Body Book: The LGBTQ+ Inclusive Guide for Kids about Sex, Gender, Bodies, and Families

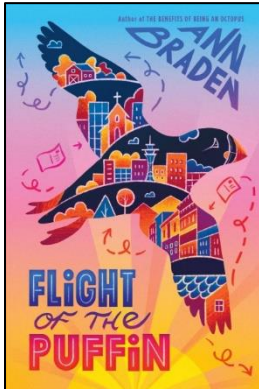
by Rachel E. Simon; illustrated by Noah Grigni

Nonfiction Book (2020)

Parent J612.6 Simon

The Every Body Book uses inclusive language, illustrations, and facts to teach children sex, gender and relationships education. Covering puberty, hormones, pregnancy, consent, sex, babies, relationships and families, it uses gender-neutral language throughout and celebrates diversity in all its forms, including race, ethnicity, faith, bodies, gender and sexuality. With informative illustrations, further resources and a guide for adults, this text will help answer questions and spark open discussion between children and parents, caregivers and teachers.

Suggested for ages 8-12



Flight of the Puffin

by Ann Braden

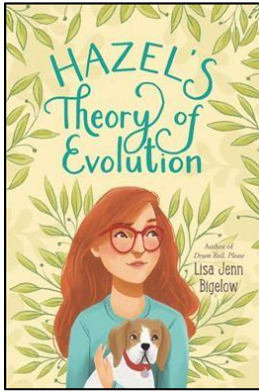
Middle Grade Novel (2021)

J-MS Braden

Libby comes from a long line of bullies. She wants to be different, but sometimes that doesn't work out. To bolster herself, she makes a card with the message *You are amazing*. That card sets off a chain of events that brings hope and encouragement to four different individuals across the country who are dealing with bullies, acceptance, homelessness, and grief.

Suggested for ages 10-14





Hazel's Theory of Evolution

by Lisa Jenn Bigelow

Middle Grade Novel (2019)

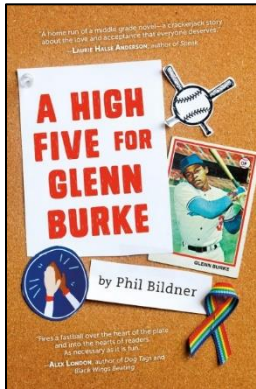
J Bigelow

Hazel is worried about the start of eighth grade. What if no one at her new school gets her, and she doesn't make any friends? What's going to happen to one of her moms, who's pregnant again after having two miscarriages? Why does everything have to change

when life was already perfectly fine? As Hazel navigates her tumultuous school year, she learns important truths about her peers, her family, and herself.

Also available as a Freeding Ebook.

Suggested for ages 10-14



A High Five for Glenn Burke

by Phil Bildner

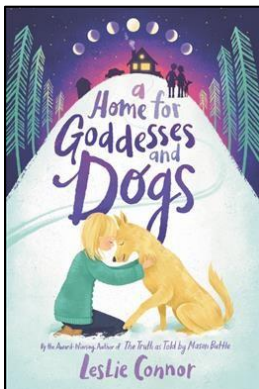
Middle Grade Novel (2020)

J Bildner

When sixth grader Silas Wade does a school presentation on former Major Leaguer Glenn Burke, it's more than just a report about the irrepressible inventor of the high five. Burke was a gay baseball player in the 1970s--and for Silas, the presentation is his own first

baby step toward revealing a truth about himself he's tired of hiding. Soon he tells his best friend, Zoey, but the longer he keeps his secret from his baseball teammates, the more he suspects they know something's up--especially when he stages one big cover-up with terrible consequences.

Suggested for ages 10-14



A Home for Goddesses and Dogs

by Leslie Connor

Middle Grade Novel (2020)

J Connor

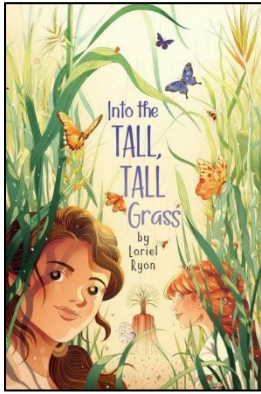
Following the death of her mother, thirteen-year-old Lydia moves to a Connecticut farm to live with her mother's sister. Aunt Brat, her jovial wife, Eileen, and their ancient live-in landlord, Elloroy, are welcoming – and a more than a little quirky. But Lydia remains

weighed down with grief and struggles for a sense of belonging. Can a troublesome rescue dog with a mysterious past help Lydia find her way forward?

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 10-14





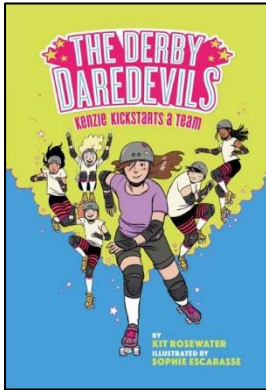
Into the Tall, Tall Grass

by Lorie Ryon

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J-MS Ryon

Yolanda Rodríguez-O'Connell has a secret. All the members of her family have a magical gift – but while her twin Sonja's gift has surfaced, Yolanda's has not. When her grandmother, Wela, falls into an unexplained sleep, Yolanda is scared. Her father is off fighting in a faraway war, her mother died long ago, and a social worker is threatening to put the girls into foster care. When a strange grass emerges in the desert behind their house, Wela miraculously wakes, begging Yolanda to take her to the lone pecan tree left on their land. Determined not to lose her, Yolanda sets out on a journey with family and friends. But what is the mysterious box that her grandmother needs to find? And how will going to the pecan tree make everything all right?

Suggested for ages 10-14



Kenzie Kickstarts a Team

by Kit Rosewater; illustrated by Sophie Escabasse

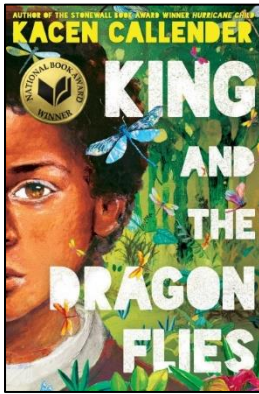
Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Rosewater

Ever since they can remember, fifth-graders Kenzie (aka Kenzilla) and Shelly (aka Bomb Shell) have dreamed of becoming roller derby superstars. When Austin's city league introduces a brand-new junior league, the dynamic duo celebrates! But they'll need to try out as a five-person team. Now Kenzie and Shelly have just one week to convince three other girls that roller derby is the coolest thing on wheels.

Also available as a Freading Ebook.

Suggested for ages 8-12





King and the Dragonflies

by Kacen Callender

Middle Grade Novel (2020)

J Callender

Twelve-year-old Kingston James is weighed down by grief and secrets. It's been three months since his beloved older brother, Khalid, died unexpectedly. King wishes he could talk things over with his best friend, Sandy Sanders. But just days before he died, Khalid told King to end their friendship after overhearing a secret about Sandy – that he thinks he might be gay. “You don’t want anyone to think you’re gay too, do you?” But when Sandy goes missing, sparking a town-wide search, King is forced to confront questions about himself and the reality of his brother’s death.

Also available as an OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 8-14



The List of Things That Will Not Change

by Rebecca Stead

Middle Grade Novel (2020)

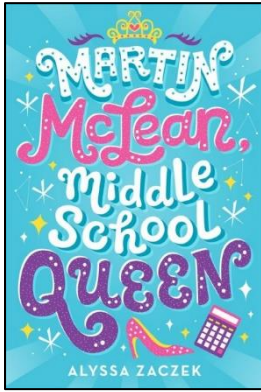
J Stead

After her parents' divorce, Bea's life became different in many ways. But she can always look back at the list she keeps in her green notebook to remember the things that will stay the same. The first and most important: Mom and Dad will always love Bea, and each other. When Dad tells Bea that he and his boyfriend, Jesse, are getting married, Bea is thrilled. But her anxieties over the dynamics of her new blended family continue to mount, as does her guilt over a long-kept secret. As the wedding day approaches, Bea will learn that making a new family brings questions, surprises, and joy.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 9-13





Martin McLean, Middle School Queen

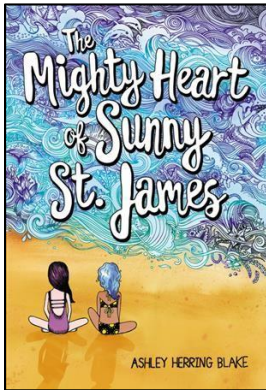
by Alyssa Zaczek

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Zaczek

Seventh-grader Martin McLean has always been surrounded by people who can express themselves. His mother is an artist, his colorful Tío Billy works in theater, and his best friends Carmen and Pickle are outgoing and don't care what other people think. But

Martin can only find the right words when he's answering a problem at a Mathletes competition—until his tío introduces him to the world of drag.

Suggested for ages 10-14



The Mighty Heart of Sunny St. James

by Ashley Herring Blake

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J Blake

When Sunny St. James receives a new heart, she decides to set off on a "New Life Plan": 1) do awesome amazing things she could never do before, 2) find a new best friend, and 3) kiss a boy for the first time. Her "New Life Plan" seems to be racing forward, but

when she meets her new best friend Quinn, Sunny questions whether she really wants to kiss a boy at all. With the reemergence of her estranged mother, Sunny begins a journey to becoming the new Sunny St. James.

Suggested for ages 9-13



Pepper's Rules for Secret Sleuthing

by Briana McDonald

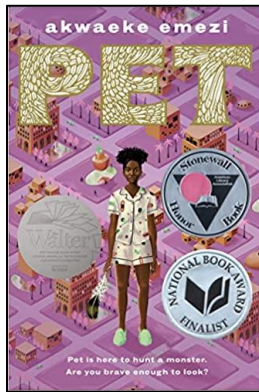
Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J McDonald

Rule One: Your loyalty is to the case. Amateur detective Pepper Blouse has always held true to this rule, even if it meant pushing people away. But when her Great Aunt Florence passes away under mysterious circumstances, Pepper can't just ignore rule

fourteen: *Trust your gut.* But there's nothing in the rulebook that could've prepared her for the family secrets her investigation uncovers. Maybe it's time to stop playing by the rules.

Suggested for ages 9-12





Pet

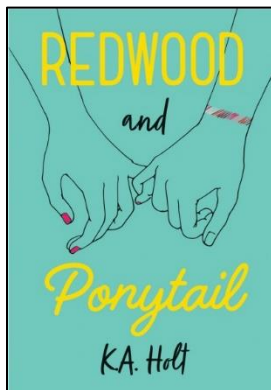
by Akwaeke Emezi

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J-MS Emezi

There are no monsters anymore, or so the children in the city of Lucille are taught. Jam and her best friend, Redemption, have grown up with this lesson all their life. But when Jam meets Pet, a creature made of horns and colors and claws, who emerges from one of her mother's paintings and a drop of Jam's blood, she must reconsider what she's been told. Pet has come to hunt a monster, and the shadow of something grim lurks in Redemption's house. Jam must fight not only to protect her best friend, but also to uncover the truth, and the answer to the question – How do you save the world from monsters if no one will admit they exist?

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook & OverDrive Audiobook.

Suggested for ages 11-18



Redwood and Ponytail

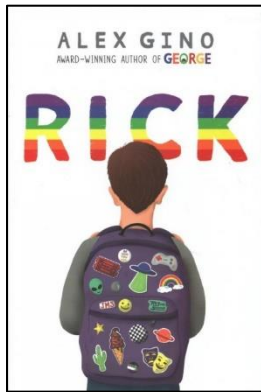
by K.A. Holt

Middle Grade Novel (2019)
J-MS Holt

Kate and Tam meet, and both of their worlds tip sideways. At first, Tam figures Kate is your stereotypical cheerleader; Kate sees Tam as another tall jock. But the more they keep running into each other, the more they surprise each other. Beneath Kate's sleek ponytail and perfect façade, Tam sees a goofy, sensitive, lonely girl. And Tam's so much more than a volleyball player, Kate realizes: She's everything Kate wishes she could be. It's complicated. Except it's not. When Kate and Tam meet, they fall in like. It's as simple as that. But not everybody sees it that way.

Suggested for ages 10-14





Rick

by Alex Gino

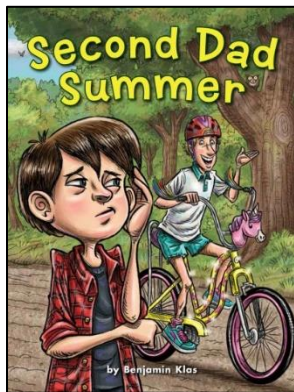
Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Gino

Rick's never questioned much. He's gone along with his best friend Jeff even when Jeff's acted like a bully and a jerk. He's let his father joke with him about which hot girls he might want to date even though that kind of talk always makes him uncomfortable. But

when he starts middle school, Rick discovers the school's Rainbow Spectrum club, where kids of many genders and identities can express themselves. Maybe among them he can find new friends and discover his own identity.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook, OverDrive Audiobook & Hoopla E-Audiobook

Suggested for ages 8-12



Second Dad Summer

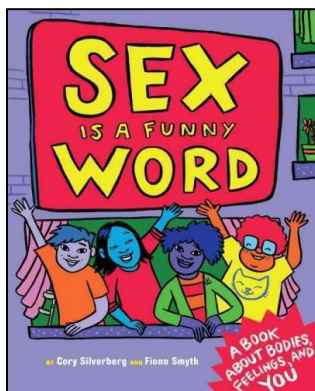
by Benjamin Klas; illustrated by Fian Arroyo

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J Klas

Jeremiah just wants a normal summer with his dad, but it's clear that isn't happening. His dad has just moved to an apartment near downtown Minneapolis to live with his new boyfriend, Michael. Michael wears shorts too short, serves weird organic

foods, and is constantly nagging Jeremiah to watch out for potholes and to stay hydrated. Worst of all Michael rides a bicycle decorated to look like a unicorn. This is not the summer Jeremiah wanted. But Jeremiah soon learns that being a family comes in many surprising forms.

Suggested for ages 9-13



Sex Is a Funny Word

by Cory Silverberg & Fiona Smyth

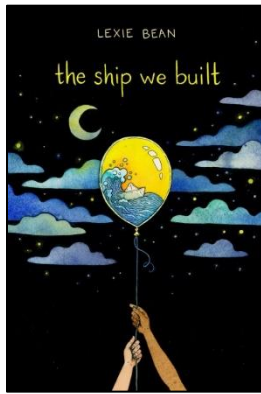
Nonfiction Book (2015)
J613.9 Silverberg

A comic book for kids that includes children and families of all makeups, orientations, and gender identities, *Sex Is a Funny Word* is an essential resource about bodies, gender, and sexuality for children as well as their parents and caregivers.

Using direct, conversational, and entirely gender-neutral language, this book guides the conversation between children and trusted adults in an accessible graphic format.

Suggested for ages 7-11





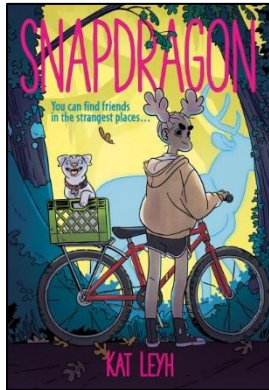
The Ship We Built

by Lexie Bean; illustrated by Noah Grigni

Middle Grade Novel (2020)
J-MS Bean

Rowan has too many secrets to write down in the pages of a diary. And if he did, he wouldn't want anyone he knows to read them. He understands who he is and what he likes, but it's not safe for others to find out. Now the kids at school say Rowan's too different to spend time with. He's not the "right kind" of girl, and he's not the "right kind" of boy. His mom ignores him. And at night, his dad hurts him in ways he's not ready to talk about yet. But Rowan discovers another way to share his secrets: letters. Letters he attaches to balloons and releases into the universe, hoping someone new will read them and understand. But when he befriends a classmate who knows what it's like to be lonely and scared, even at home, Rowan realizes that there might already be a person he can trust right by his side.

Suggested for ages 10-14



Snapdragon

by Kat Leyh

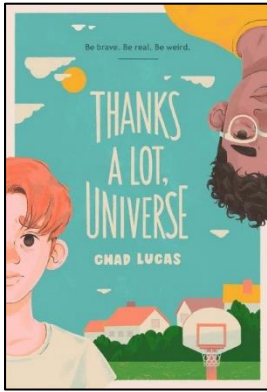
Middle Grade Graphic Novel (2020)
Graphic J Leyh

Snap's town had a witch – at least, that's how the rumor goes. But in reality, Jacks is just a crocks-wearing, internet-savvy old lady who sells roadkill skeletons online – after doing a little ritual to put their spirits to rest. It's creepy, *sure*, but Snap thinks it's kind of cool, too. They make a deal: Jacks will teach Snap how to take care of the baby opossums that Snap rescued, and Snap will help Jacks with her work. But as Snap starts to get to know Jacks, she realizes that Jacks may in fact have *real* magic – and a connection with Snap's family's past.

Also available as an OverDrive Ebook.

Suggested for ages 10-14





Thanks a Lot, Universe

by Chad Lucas

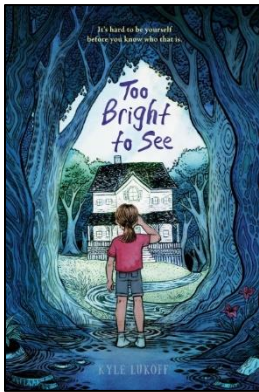
Middle Grade Novel (2021)

J Lucas

Brian has always been anxious, whether at home, or in class, or on the basketball court. And after he and his brother are placed in foster care, Brian starts having panic attacks. His teammate Ezra wants to help, but he worries if he's too nice to Brian, his friends will realize that he has a crush on him. But when Brian and his brother run away, Ezra has no choice but to take the leap and reach out. Both boys have to decide if they're willing to risk sharing parts of themselves they'd rather hide. But if they can be brave, they might just find the best in themselves and each other.

Also available as a Hoopla Ebook.

Suggested for ages 10-14



Too Bright to See

by Kyle Lukoff

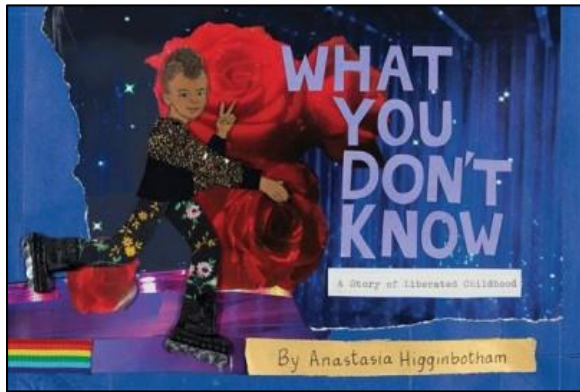
Middle Grade Novel (2021)

J-MS Lukoff

It's the summer before middle school and eleven-year-old Bug's best friend Moira has decided the two of them need to use the next few months to prepare. For Moira, this means figuring out the right clothes to wear, learning how to put on makeup, and deciding which boys are cuter in their yearbook photos than in real life. But none of this is all that appealing to Bug, who doesn't particularly want to spend *more* time trying to understand how to be a girl. Besides, there's something more important to worry about: A ghost is haunting Bug's eerie old house in rural Vermont...and maybe haunting Bug in particular. As Bug begins to untangle the mystery of who this ghost is and what they're trying to say, an altogether different truth comes to light--Bug is transgender.

Suggested for ages 9-13





What You Don't Know: A Story of Liberated Childhood

by Anastasia Higginbotham

Middle Grade Graphic Novel (2021)

Graphic J Higginbotham

Anastasia Higginbotham's *What You Don't Know: A Story of Liberated Childhood* delves into queerness, Blackness, and the love that dismantles whiteness. It's a book about knowing deeply that you matter--always did, always will. It's a book about what schools get wrong and churches don't say; but institutions are made by people and the people are evolving. It's a book about being known and cherished by family, living in communion with your own personal divinity and humility in the presence of all we don't know.

Suggested for ages 7-11



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(Updated July 2021)