

# 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

## BIRTH TO AGE FIVE

### **AGGIE AND THE GHOST**

Matthew Forsythe

Simon and Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books

9781534478206

Aggie is excited to start her new life after moving into her home, only to discover she has an unexpected, messy ghost as a housemate.

### **BEARSUIT TURTLE MAKES A FRIEND**

Bob Shea

ABRAMS / Abrams Books for Young Readers

9781419771552

Shea's characteristically vibrant illustrations capture the whimsical spirit of this unlikely friendship tale, chock-full of dramatic irony that's sure to make young readers giggle.

### **BEHOLD THE CHAMELEON!**

Suzanne Slade

Thomas Gonzalez (illustrator)

Peachtree

9781682637340

Fascinating facts about various species of chameleon and gorgeous pastel and colored-pencil illustrations will appeal to a wide range of readers.

### **BLUE SKY MORNING**

Jihyun Kim

Polly Lawson (Translator)

Ingram Publisher Services / Floris Books

9781782509080

An immersive trip through the daily routine of a little girl in South Korea invites readers to settle into their senses and appreciate the moment.

### **BROKEN**

X. Fang

Penguin Random House / Tundra Books

9781774882009

Expressive, hilarious illustrations depict young Mei Mei's emotional ups and downs when she accidentally breaks a teacup and, to her relief, Ama blames the cat.

EST. 1996  
**CAPITOL CHOICES**

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **CAT NAP**

Brian Lies

HarperCollins/Greenwillow Books

9780062671288

Impressive hand crafted art tells the story of a cat who chases a mouse through works of art and transforms to match the medium of each piece. Notes discuss both the artist's process and the featured artworks.

### **DON'T TRUST FISH**

Neil Sharpson

Dan Santat (illustrator)

Penguin Random House / Dial Books

9780593616673

Purporting to be an animal guide with facts and realistic depictions of mammals, reptiles, etc., the book quickly reverts to explaining—with increasingly exaggerated caricatures—why fish can't be trusted. Laugh-out-loud funny, especially when the crabby narrator is ultimately revealed.

### **DOWNPOUR: SPLISH! SPLASH! KER-SPLASH!**

Yuko Ohnari

Koshiro Hata (illustrator); Emily Balistrieri (translator)

ABRAMS / Red Comet Press

9781636551142

Onomatopoeia and evocative illustrations convey the experience of a joyful child with a yellow umbrella in a sudden rainstorm.

### **ELVIS & ROMEO**

David Soman

Jacky Davis (co-author)

Simon & Schuster / Aladdin

9781665948067

An improbable friendship blossoms between Elvis the quiet bulldog and Romeo a super hyper doodle as they navigate how to get along and play together.

EST. 1996

### **EVERY MONDAY MABEL**

Jashar Awan

Simon & Schuster / Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

9781665938150

Mabel's enthusiasm is compelling in this neon colored look at her favorite moment of the week. Perfect for garbage truck enthusiasts.

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## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **FAITH TAKES THE TRAIN**

Kesi Augustine

Mokshini (illustrator)

HarperCollins

9780063251342

Faith, a little girl with a big heart, performs an act of kindness on her train ride in New York City in this boldly vibrant, colorful tale of bravery and generosity.

### **FIREWORKS**

Matthew Burgess

Cátia Chien (illustrator)

HarperCollins/Clarion Books

9780063216723

Sensory, sonorous language accompanies two young siblings experiencing summer in the city—a saxophone in the park, juicy watermelon wedges, salsa beats. The best part is the fireworks seen from the roof, illustrated with a dazzling, vertical, fold-out opening. Magical!

### **THE LITTLEST DROP**

Sascha Alper

Jerry Pinkney and Brian Pinkney (illustrators)

Penguin Random House/Anne Schwarz Books

9780593309124

When a woodland fire threatens her nest, a hummingbird retrieves river water in her beak. The other animals scorn her actions, but quickly realize that pitching in is the better approach. Colorful, dynamic illustrations capture the drama and the satisfying conclusion.

### **NIGHT LIGHT**

Michael Emberley

Holiday House

9780823458165

An engaging early reader comic follows a parent and child on an adventure to find light during a blackout. Dynamic frames and vibrant illustrations mirror the movements and emotions of the story.

### **A POCKET FULL OF ROCKS**

Kristin Mahoney

E.B. Goodale (illustrator)

Penguin Random House / Knopf Books for Young Readers

9780593428542

Seasonal items in a boy's pocket bring him comfort and creativity, while the relationship with those items differ for everyone. Textured multi-media illustrations invite everyone to join this sensory journey.

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **POP! GOES THE NURSERY RHYME**

Betsy Bird

Andrea Tsurumi (illustrator)

Hachette Book Group / Union Square Kids

9781454960461

To the chagrin of our secretary bird host, and to the delight of readers who will enjoy the delightful silliness, a weasel keeps popping up in nursery rhymes where he doesn't belong.

### **SEVEN LITTLE DUCKLINGS**

Annette LeBlanc Cate

Candlewick Press

9781536235746

Mother duck looks for her seven ducklings who hatched while she slept, but ends up with a brood bigger than the one she started with. Young readers will delight in finding the "ducklings" who are different.

### **SMILING EYES**

Linda Sue Park

Lenny Wen (illustrator)

HarperCollins / Allida

9780358663928

Simple, well-placed verses and sweet illustrations showcase a variety of characteristics and abilities in this ode to eyes, how they look and what they can do.

### **SO TORTOISE DUG**

Emmy Kastner

Simon & Schuster / Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

9781665931359

Warm, textured illustrations and repeating text tell the charming and amusing story of a generous tortoise who digs a burrow for all his friends to share.

### **TIOS AND PRIMOS**

Jacqueline Alcántara

Penguin Random House / Nancy Paulsen Books

9780593620137

A young girl is excited to get to meet the large family waiting for her and her father on their visit to Honduras. But how will she connect when she doesn't speak Spanish? Vibrant illustrations demonstrate how love can transcend words.

EST. 1996

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### **THE TOUR AT SCHOOL**

Katie Clapham  
Nadia Shireen (illustrator)  
Candlewick Press  
9781536242980

A talkative and outgoing student gives a quiet shy kid an overwhelming tour of their new school. Colorful pictures and funny asides make readers a part of the experience.

### **TWO WORLDS=DOS MUNDOS: A FIRST PICTURE BOOK OF ENGLISH AND SPANISH WORDS**

Edel Rodriguez  
ABRAMS / Abrams Appleseed  
9781419764950

This bilingual book introduces children to vocabulary in Spanish and English through bright, eye-catching print-style illustrations, contrasting island life with an urban U.S. context, and shedding light on the experiences of immigrant children.

### **WAITING FOR HANAMI**

J. P. Takahashi  
HifuMiyo (illustrator)  
HarperCollins  
9780063224971

A celebration of cherry blossom time features a family united through the power of stories and the magic of art.

### **WE'RE MOVING HOUSE**

Mick Jackson  
Rashin Kheiriyeh (illustrator)  
Candlewick  
9781536238921

It turns out that the house itself won't really move, the narrator comes to realize. An amusing look at the excitement and anxiety of a common childhood experience.

EST. 1996

### **ZIP ZAP WICKETY WACK: A STORY ABOUT SHARING**

Matthew Diffie  
Holiday House/Neal Porter Books  
9780823458714

Who gets to claim “baa”—the sheep or the goat? And what about “zip zap wickety wack?” A droll take on barnyard sounds and the possibility of sharing.

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## AGES SIX TO NINE

### **BAD BADGER: A LOVE STORY**

Maryrose Wood

Giulia Ghigini (illustrator)

Hachette Book Group / Union Square Kids

9781454953456

Septimus lives in a cottage by the sea and loves opera. A good life, but is it right for a badger? A short illustrated chapter book about being a friend and dealing with social expectations.

### **BIRDLORE: THE IRIDESCENT LIFE OF FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY**

Jess Keating

Devon Holzwarth (illustrator)

Penguin Random House / Knopf Books for Young Readers

9780593488584

In this beautifully illustrated book, Florence's passion for birds change the way we look at them!

### **A BOOK OF MAPS FOR YOU**

Lourdes Heuer

Maxwell Eaton, III (illustrator)

Holiday House/Neal Porter Books

9780823455706

A young cartographer creates a set of vivid maps that introduces a new resident to the most important people and places of the neighborhood. When the final page is turned, his altruistic purpose becomes clear.

### **CABIN HEAD AND TREE HEAD (CABIN HEAD AND TREE HEAD, BOOK #1)**

Scott Campbell

Penguin Random House Canada / Tundra Books

9781774885055

This wonderfully silly graphic novel for younger readers features two main characters, one with a tree on his head and one with a cabin on his head. Through four short stories, readers get to know them and their delightfully nonsensical world.

### **CREAKY ACRES**

Calista Brill

Nilah Magruder (co-author and illustrator)

Penguin Random House / Kokila

9780735230620

Finding a suitable stable for her horse is paramount when Nora's family moves to the country, but the farm, its residents, and fellow boarders provide unexpected and hilarious surprises in this sweet graphic novel.

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **FIREFLY SONG: LYNN FRIERSON FAUST AND THE GREAT SMOKEY MOUNTAIN DISCOVERY**

Colleen Paeff

Ji-Hyuk Kim (illustrator)

Simon & Schuster / Margaret K. McElderry Books

9781665931847

Lynn Frierson Faust's love and attention to fireflies led to an important scientific discovery in the Great Smoky Mountains. Illustrations show the illumination of the nocturnal insects.

### **FISH FRY FRIDAY: A PICTURE BOOK**

Winsome Bingham

C.G. Esperanza (illustrator)

ABRAMS / Abrams Books for Young Readers

9781419766930

Colorfully delicious illustrations and rhythmic dialogue depict everything it takes to make a fish fry. A hush puppy recipe is included for those who wish to try their own fish fry.

### **FRANK'S RED HAT**

Sean E. Avery

Lerner Publishing group / Walker Books Australia

9781761600661

Frank the Penguin tries to introduce a splash of color to his frozen, colorless world but must overcome the natural skepticism of his black-and-white neighbors and random attacks from heartless nature. A funny storybook for crafters and non-crafters alike.

### **GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SPECTACULAR SPECTACLES : THE GLASSES THAT SAVED AMERICA**

Selene Castrovilla

Jenn Harney (Illustrator)

Astra Publishing House, Ltd./Calkins Creek

9781662680434

As our country approaches its 250th birthday, this book shows how it might not have made it through its first decade, with playful and appealing pictures that accompany serious words.

EST. 1996

### **A GIFT OF DUST**

Martha Brockenbrough

Juana Martinez-Neal (illustrator)

Penguin Random House / Knopf Books for Young Readers

9780593428429

Buoyant text and ingenious illustrations show how dust travels from the Sahara and wraps its way around the world, shaping much of the world's ecosystem.

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### **GROWING HOME**

Beth Ferry

Terry Fan & Eric Fan (illustrators)

Simon & Schuster / Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

9781665942485

As cranky goldfish Toasty, plant Ivy, spider Arthur and newcomer violet plant Ollie get to know each other, they discover magic in more ways than one. The humorous illustrations make this a perfect chapter book for younger readers.

### **HARRIET TUBMAN: FORCE OF NATURE: A BIOGRAPHY IN POEMS**

Caroline Brewer

What on Earth!

9781804661444

A picture book biography of the famed abolitionist focuses on her relationship with her environment. Textured paint and collage art present a new light on an American icon.

### **THE HISTORY OF WE**

Nikkolas Smith

Penguin Random House/Kokila

9780593619681

How did we become what we now know as human? How did we first sing, laugh and tell stories? This is the story of human evolution, told through rich paintings and stirring poetry.

### **HURRICANE**

Jason Chin

Holiday House/Neal Porter Books

9780823458493

As an enormous storm approaches the Outer Banks, the magnitude of its power and the effects on the people in its path are keenly described. Fine illustrations depict daily meteorological and human activity before, during, and after the rain and winds subside.

EST. 1996

### **IF YOU WANT TO WRITE A STORY**

Jeff Mack

Holiday House/Neal Porter Books

9780823458189

A mouse imagines crossing the universe in a rocket in this easy-to-understand, vibrantly illustrated writing guide disguised as a picture book. As readers follow the adventure they will be motivated to create their own.

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### **IN THE WORLD OF WHALES**

Michelle Cusolito  
Jessica Lanan (illustrator)  
Holiday House/Neal Porter Books  
9780823453429

A free diver studying sperm whales finds himself in an extraordinary situation in this true-life story about the birth of a whale. Fascinating back matter and appropriately watery illustrations complete the retelling of a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

### **JIM! SIX TRUE STORIES ABOUT ONE GREAT ARTIST: JAMES MARSHALL**

Jerrold Connors  
Penguin Random House/Dial Books  
9780593859346

A sublime ode to the beloved children's author. The punchy, amusing text doesn't shy away from the realities of Marshall's life, while the art serves as both a clever nod and a love letter to the literary giant.

### **LONE WOLF GOES TO THE LIBRARY**

Kiah Thomas  
K-Fai Steele (illustrator)  
Holiday House/Neal Porter Books  
9780823457809

This early chapter book makes the cranky introvert Lone Wolf and his mission to return his library book seem so very relatable.

### **THE LOST SUNDAY**

Ileana Surducan  
Simon & Schuster / Oni Press  
9781637157756

Young readers will understand the importance of both work and play through the simple but satisfying story of a young girl who seeks that delicate balance in this beautifully illustrated graphic novel.

### **MAKE A PRETTY SOUND: A STORY OF ELLA JENKINS- THE FIRST LADY OF CHILDREN'S MUSIC**

Traci N. Todd  
Eleanor Davis (illustrator)  
Chronicle Books  
9781452170640

A lively, bright, and musical picture book biography of the "First Lady of Children's Music." Don't forget your instruments before jumping in!

EST. 1996  
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### **MY HEART SPEAKS KRIOLU**

Stefanie Foster Brown  
Keisha Morris (illustrator)  
Simon & Schuster / Denene Millner Books  
9781665927833

During their Saturday walks, a young girl's grandfather encourages her to use the Kriolu language of their native Cabo Verde. She understands the essence of the language, not in the words, which she sometimes finds difficult, but in the faces and stories of the community.

### **MY PRESENTATION TODAY IS ABOUT THE ANACONDA**

Bibi Dumon Tak  
Annemarie Van Haeringen (illustrator); Nancy Forest-Flier (translator)  
Levine Querido  
9781646145102

Imagine a classroom in which the students are animals, and each is required to give a presentation about.....an animal! That's the concept of this uniquely hilarious compendium of animal facts.

### **SO MANY YEARS: A JUNETEENTH STORY**

Anne Wynter  
Jerome Pumphrey (illustrator)  
HarperCollins/Clarion Books  
9780063081147

A beautifully illustrated addition to the Juneteenth canon, this picture book invites readers to consider how they would celebrate the holiday and how it has evolved over the years.

### **WHEN ALEXANDER GRACED THE TABLE**

Alexander Smalls  
Denene Millner (co-author); Frank Morrison (illustrator)  
Simon & Schuster / Denene Millner Books  
9781534488724

When Alexander gets a chance to make a pie all on his own, his pride and joy at the dessert's success are contagious. Brightly evocative illustrations make for a work good enough to eat—and a recipe for the pie is included so you can do just that.

### **WORM MAKES A SANDWICH**

Brianne Farley  
Penguin Random House / G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers  
9780593697801

A friendly, food-loving earthworm and other creatures show readers how their eating habits contribute to the health of gardens humans need for food. Kids will love the humor and beautiful illustrations as they learn the process of how worms compost and build soil. A fantastic extension activity for earth day.

# 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

## AGES TEN TO FOURTEEN

### **BAND NERD**

Sarah Clawson Willis  
Emma Cormarie (illustrator)  
HarperCollins/HarperAlley  
9780358447856

Middle schooler Lucy desperately wants to play the flute in this realistic graphic novel that will resonate with readers who have a less-than-perfect life at home but who strive for perfection in themselves.

### **THE BEST WORST SUMMER OF ESME SUN**

Wendy Wan-Long Shang  
Scholastic  
9781546115380

Esme Sun learns the value of friendship, sportsmanship, and family through her summer swim league. Terrific for sports-loving tweens looking for a quick summer read.

### **BLACK GIRL POWER: 15 STORIES CELEBRATING BLACK GIRLHOOD**

Leah Johnson  
Penguin Random House/Disney Publishing Group  
9781368098960

All Black girls are magic, but that magic manifests itself in different ways in each girl. In this collection of short stories, we see how awesome and diverse black girlhood can be.

### **BLOOD IN THE WATER**

Tiffany D. Jackson  
Scholastic  
9781338849912

A masterfully written murder mystery filled with plenty of heart-stopping action, perfect for readers looking for a scare.

EST. 1996

### **BOY 2.0**

Tracey Baptiste  
Hachette/Algonquin Young Readers  
9781643753812

This superhero story will draw in Marvel and DC fans and leave them with a deeper understanding of PTSD, Black excellence, experimentation on human subjects, and the dynamics of being adopted in a world where community is essential for survival.

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### THE BURNING SEASON

Caroline Starr Rose

Penguin Random House/Nancy Paulsen Books

9780593617939

Opal's Mom is making the trek down the mountain for supplies, and Gram is missing when Opal spots a spiral of smoke. This fast-paced survival/adventure novel in verse highlights the realities of wildfires.

### BYE FOREVER, I GUESS

Jodi Meadows

Candlewick Press

9780823456383

When an online friendship turns to flirtation Ingrid's intentionally separate worlds collide and self-doubt ensues. An authentically awkward 21st century middle school experience perfect for young romantics living in the internet age.

### DANILO WAS HERE

Tamika Burgess

HarperCollins

9780063159662

This coming-of-age story centered around a young Panamanian boy during the 1990 U.S. Operation "Just Cause" has something for every reader: baseball, complex relationships with parents, autistic representation, and a protagonist whose struggles are not minimized, but supported.

### FRESH START

Gale Galligan

Scholastic/Graphix

9781338045840

Ollie's diplomat parents finally announce they're staying put. An ideal read for Raina Telgemeier fans, this hilarious graphic novel will appeal to anyone who's ever been the new kid.

### HAPPY TOWN

Greg Van Eekhout

HarperCollins

9780063253360

When the corporation their parents work for and their remote company town turn out to be too good to be true, kids save the day in this fast-paced, action packed tale of dystopia.

### HUNGRY BONES

Louise Hung

Scholastic Press

9781338832587

Molly uses her clairvoyance to help a decades-old ghost find peace in a spine-tingler that features elements of Chinese American history in an eerie exploration of loss, connection, and heritage.

EST. 1996

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **IT'S ALL OR NOTHING, VALE**

Andrea Beatriz Arango

Penguin Random House / Penguin Random House Books for Young Readers

9780593810927

This unconventional sports novel-in-verse highlights a protagonist with an acquired disability and, with its exploration of first love, will appeal to fans of romance.

### **THE MIDWATCH INSTITUTE FOR WAYWARD GIRLS**

Judith Rossell

Penguin Random House/Dial Books

9798217002405

An orphan sent away to a dreadful new institution quickly discovers she's actually joined a secret training facility of mystery-solving and crime-fighting girls in this rollicking romp of an illustrated adventure.

### **MONSTER LOCKER, VOL. 1**

Jorge Aguirre

Andrés Vera Martínez (Illustrated by)

Macmillan / First Second

9781250749734

In this exciting graphic novel that showcases Meso-American folklore, Pablo must channel his inner hero in order to defeat an Aztec god. Perfect for fans of the Percy Jackson series!

### **OCTOPUS MOON**

Bobbie Pyron

Penguin Random House / Nancy Paulsen Books

9780593616291

Fifth grade is overwhelming for Opal until Dr. Jill, her new therapist, challenges her to do one impossible thing every day. This graceful and compassionate novel-in-verse handles early-onset depression in an easily accessible way for young readers, regardless of their lived experiences.

### **ON GUARD!**

Cassidy Wasserman

Penguin Random House / Random House Graphic

9780593649985

With no one to eat lunch with and nothing to lose, unathletic Grace joins the fencing team and finds both friendship and a shaky new confidence to stand up for herself at home. An empowering graphic novel depiction of finding your people and finding your voice.

### **PLEASE PAY ATTENTION**

Jamie Sumner

Simon & Schuster / Atheneum Books for Young People

9781665956079

This episatory novel in verse tells a timely story about a wheelchair user who survives a school shooting and uses her voice to demand change.

EST. 1996

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **RADIANT**

Vaunda Michaeux Nelson

Penguin Random House / Dutton Books for Young Readers

9780593855782

Fifth-grader Cooper's introspective voice is a refreshing glimpse into one of the most important periods of American history. This novel in verse set in 1963 Pittsburgh is rife with issues both mundane and life-changing, from Beatlemania to a racist classmate and the civil rights movement.

### **SCATTERGOOD**

H. M. Bouwman

Holiday House/Neal Porter Books

9780823457755

12-year-old Peggy's insightful coming-of-age story brings together a war, a sick cousin, refugees, and small-town life in 1941 Iowa.

### **THE SECRET ASTRONOMERS**

Jessica Walker

Penguin Random House / Viking Books for Young Readers

9780593692677

Two teens connect through anonymous correspondence of notes and drawings in an old physics textbook in their West Virginia high school library. Gorgeous bookmaking and an intriguing mystery will appeal to a range of readers.

### **SPLIT THE SKY**

Marie Arnold

Hachette Book Group / Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

9780316582872

An intriguing and heartbreaking look at social justice, systemic racism, and the exhaustion that comes from being a Black person in modern-day America.

### **THE TONTINE CAPER**

Dianne K. Salerni

Matt Schu (illustrator)

Holiday House

9780823458103

A middle grade mystery with a cast of quirky characters will have readers turning pages as much for the dry humour as for the suspenseful reveal. Illustrations, a map, and a character quiz are the cherry on top.

### **THE UNDEAD FOX OF DEADWOOD FOREST**

Aubrey Hartman

Hachette Book Group / Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

9780316575720

With beautiful, lyrical prose, this atmospheric story will have readers rooting for the main character as he moves through his undead world.

EST. 1996

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **WILL'S RACE FOR HOME**

Jewell Parker Rhodes

Hachette Book Group / Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

9780316299336

Will and his father set out to claim their own land in the Oklahoma Land Rush in this western packed with action from start to finish. Perfect for lovers of historical fiction.

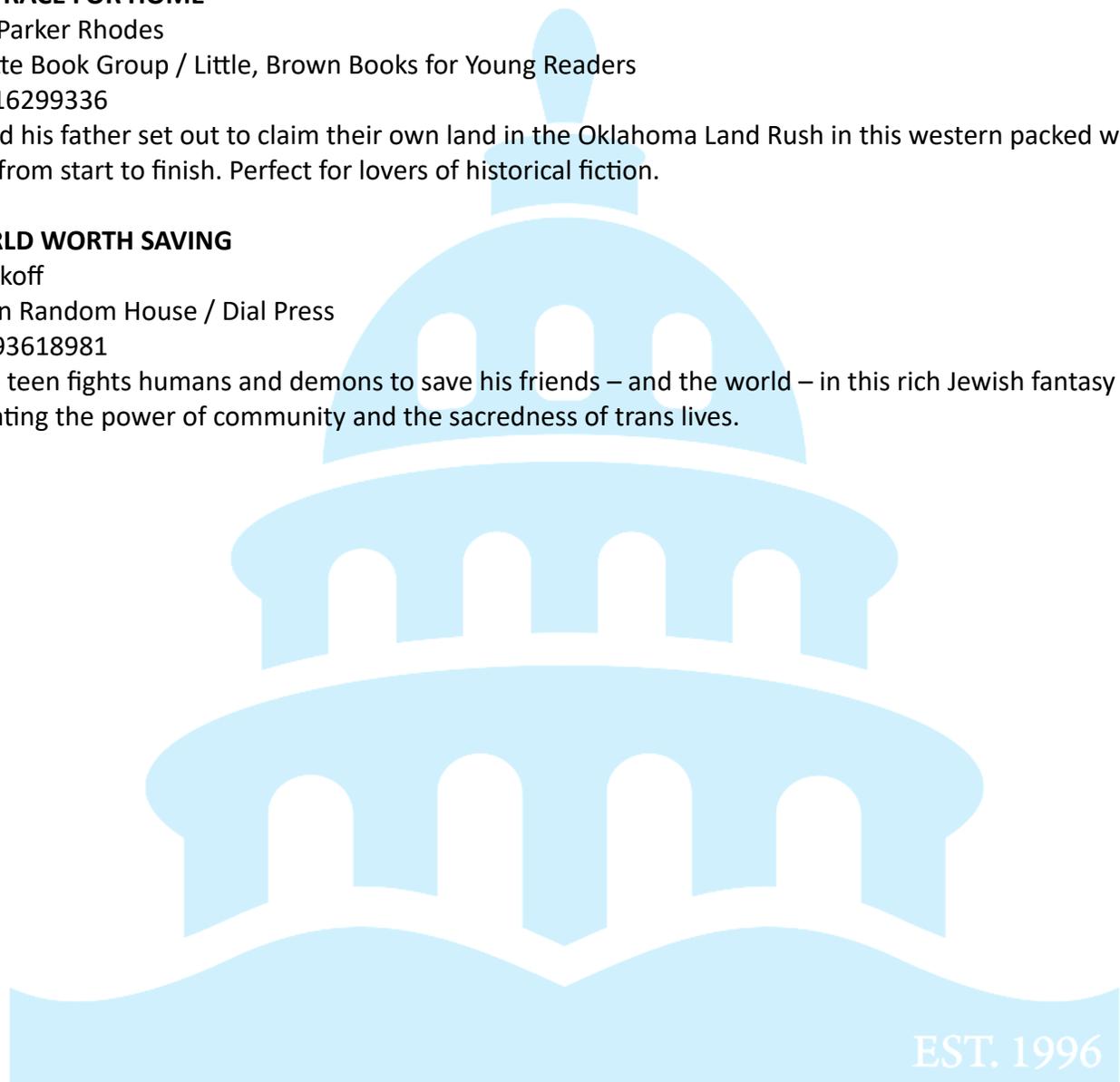
### **A WORLD WORTH SAVING**

Kyle Lukoff

Penguin Random House / Dial Press

9780593618981

A trans teen fights humans and demons to save his friends – and the world – in this rich Jewish fantasy celebrating the power of community and the sacredness of trans lives.



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## AGES FIFTEEN AND UP

### **ALL THE NOISE AT ONCE**

DeAndra Davis

Atheneum Books for Young Readers/ Simon and Schuster

9781665952651

Austin, a Black, autistic teen, hopes to play football alongside his brother Brandon. When emotions run high after a game, Brandon is arrested for assaulting a cop. Austin struggles with this emotional strain. Sports fans will cheer for in-game action; all readers will love the strong connection between the brothers. 🧠

### **BEST OF ALL WORLDS**

Kenneth Oppel

Scholastic Press

9781546158202

Planning to spend the weekend at their cabin, Xavier and his family wake to discover that the cabin now sits on an unfamiliar farm. They are completely alone and trapped in a seemingly impenetrable dome. When a second family shows up, ideological differences lead to material conflict as tensions rise.

### **A CATALOG OF BURNT OBJECTS**

Shana Youngdahl

Dial Books/ Penguin Random House

9780593405512

As Caprice struggles with the changes in her life—the return of her brother from rehab, decisions about college and her future—her world is irrevocably changed by a wildfire that may destroy her home but teaches her what family means.

### **THE CORRUPTION OF HOLLIS BROWN**

K. Ancrum

HarperCollins

9780063285835

Hollis Brown's life is upended when he offers a strange boy shelter, unknowingly trading his own body in the process. A chilling yet tender thriller, this title explores Hollis and Walt's connection, and features strong secondary characters and impactful social commentary.

### **DAN IN GREEN GABLES: A MODERN REIMAGINING OF ANNE OF GREEN GABLES**

Rey Terciero

Claudia Aguirre (illustrator)

Penguin Workshop/ Penguin Random House

9780593385586

When Dan's mother drops him in rural Tennessee with his grandparents, he must learn how to navigate new relationships while owning his queer identity in a conservative community. This graphic novel adaptation has all the old charm of *Anne of Green Gables* with a modern twist.

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **DEATH IN THE JUNGLE: MURDER, BETRAYAL, AND THE LOST DREAM OF JONESTOWN**

Candace Fleming  
Anne Schwartz Books/ Penguin Random House  
9780593480069

This nonfiction narrative about Jim Jones' infamous cult of the 1970s focuses on how he was successful at his grift, and how those skills were developed at a young age. Fleming provides robust backmatter including interviews with survivors. 🎧

### **DOGSRED, VOLUME 1**

Satoru Noda  
VIZ MEDIA  
9781974748921

After getting banned from figure skating, Rou moves to a new town with nowhere to direct his grief and rage. He finds an outlet in a winless ice hockey team with lots to prove. The black and white illustrations brilliantly capture the heartache and drama that make sports great.

### **THE EDUCATION OF KIA GREER**

Alanna Bennett  
Knopf Books for Young Readers/ Penguin Random House  
9780593806104

Kia has grown up in front of the world on her family's reality television program. As she nears turning 18, she wonders what it would be like to step into her own light and out of her family's spotlight. 🎧

### **HEKATE: THE WITCH**

Nikita Gill  
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers/ Hachette Book Group  
9780316596763

A mythical story of Hekate, the Greek Goddess of Witchcraft. This novel is written in verse which accentuates the lyrical language and mythical atmosphere of the story. Great young adult contribution to the mythological genre. 🎧

EST. 1996

### **HUNGER'S BITE**

Taylor Robin  
Union Square & Company  
9781454950257

Something sinister is brewing onboard the SS Lark. Aided by an intriguing newcomer, Neeta sets out to save the luxury ship's crew and passengers in this creepy and compelling graphic novel.

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## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **I AM THE SWARM**

Hayley Chewins

Viking Books for Young Readers/ Penguin Random House

97805903623862

Nell Strand has trouble understanding her own emotions and dealing with her family. Magic runs in her blood and manifests itself in insects. A story written in verse about understanding one's own emotions and dealing with difficult feelings. 🧠

### **I KILLED THE KING**

Rebecca Mix and Andrea Hannah

Storytide/ HarperCollins

9780063379619

On the night a peace treaty is finally to be signed, the lights go out and the king is stabbed. There are six suspects, all summoned by the king, who must work together to solve the mystery of why they are there, who killed the king, and whether the treaty can be saved.

### **THE LAST BOOKSTORE ON EARTH**

Lily Braun-Arnold

Delacorte Press/ Penguin Random House

9780593899489

After the world ended in acid rain and chaos, all Liz has is her bookstore and an intruder shows up looking for a place to stay. Liz and Maeve must each face their ghosts and fears if they are going to survive the coming storm in this post-apocalyptic adventure with a touch of queer romance.

### **THE LEAVING ROOM**

Amber McBride

Feiwel and Friends/ Macmillan

9781250908087

Gospel is the Keeper of the Leaving Room – a place where young people must wait when they die. When teen Melodee shows up unexpectedly, the balance of the Leaving Room is upset and the walls threaten to rip apart. Teens will appreciate this beautiful novel-in-verse that expertly layers grief and hope with suspense. 🧠

### **LEGENDARY FRYBREAD DRIVE-IN**

Cynthia Leitich Smith (editor)

Heartdrum/ HarperCollins

9780063314269

There's a place, and a story, for everyone at this special drive-in that sits in its own time and place, always appearing for the Native in need. Indigenous writers honor individuality, interconnectedness, and the importance of community, served perfectly with an NDN taco and huckleberry shake. 🧠

## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### **THIS MOTH SAW BRIGHTNESS**

A.A. Vacharat

Dutton Books for Young Readers/ Penguin Random House

9780593698600

'Wayne joins a teen health study that quickly puts him and his friends into the center of a possible government conspiracy. This genre-bending novel will leave readers wondering what's real and what's just in 'Wayne's head.

### **REASONS WE BREAK**

Jesmee Kaur Deo

Disney Hyperion/ Disney Publishing Group

9781368113748

In a coming of age romance with immigrant family representation, Rajan navigates the difficulty of trying to leave a gang after serving time in a juvenile detention center. Intense situations will captivate readers.

### **THE SINGULAR LIFE OF ARIA PATEL**

Samira Ahmed

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers/ Hachette Book Group

9780316548687

One poem changes Aria Patel's life when she begins slipping into alternate realities. She must figure out why this is happening before the world she knows becomes nothing more than a memory. Teens will be hooked by the fast pace and sci-fi elements woven throughout.

### **(S)KIN**

Ibi Zoboi

Versify/ HarperCollins

9780062888877

Secrets and yearning to belong intertwine in this captivating novel in verse that follows Marisol and Genevieve as they struggle to cope with the magic burning beneath their skins.

### **SONG OF A BLACKBIRD**

Maria van Lieshout

First Second/ Macmillan

9781250869814

A mysterious blackbird travels through time and space in this graphic novel, weaving the story of two young women connected through art and hope: one in 2011 Amsterdam and the other in its 1943 Nazi-controlled past.

EST. 1996

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## 2026 Capitol Choices Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

### THE SUMMER I ATE THE RICH

Maika Moulite and Maritza Moulite  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux/ Macmillan  
9780374390532

Brielle is an aspiring chef who steps up when her mother loses her job, getting revenge on the wealthy families who wronged them. Steeped in Haitian culture, this novel explores race, class, and identity, with a chilling twist as Brielle serves her clientele human flesh.

### TRUTH IS

Hannah V. Sawyerr  
Amulet Books/ Abrams  
9781419776830

Told through drafts of poems, journal entries, text messages, and free verse, the story centers on Truth, a seventeen-year-old who is juggling an emotionally abusive mother and an unexpected pregnancy. Authentic and powerful, readers will applaud Truth's choices and progress.

### UNDER THE NEON LIGHTS

Arriel Vinson  
G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers/ Penguin Random House  
9780593858592

Teen Jaelyn loves her community roller-skating rink, but when gentrification threatens its closure, she inspires others by taking action. Vibrant imagery and rich sensory details shape this romantic, fun, and uplifting novel-in-verse. 🎧

### UNDER THE SAME STARS

Libba Bray  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux/ Macmillan  
9780374388942

Teens in Germany and New Jersey wrangle with the Holocaust, generational trauma, and new love across three connected timelines—1940s, 1980s, and 2020—, discovering themselves amidst all of it. 🎧

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### UP IN SMOKE

Nick Brooks  
Henry Holt and Co./ Macmillan  
9781250359933

This thriller weaves social justice and romance as Cooper and Monique seek to find answers when Monique's brother is arrested for allegedly murdering a DC police officer. 🎧

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