

KEYSTONE TO READING SECONDARY
ANNOTATED HIGH SCHOOL BOOK AWARD LIST
2018-2019

A Short History of the Girl Next Door by Jared Reck

Matt Wainwright is constantly sabotaged by the overdramatic movie director in his head. He can't tell his best friend, Tabby, how he really feels about her, he implodes on the JV basketball team, and the only place he feels normal is in Mr. Ellis's English class. If this were a movie, everything would work out perfectly. Tabby would discover that Matt's madly in love with her, be overcome with emotion, and would fall into his arms. Maybe in the rain.

But that's not how it works. Matt watches Tabby get swept away by senior basketball star and all-around great guy Liam Branson. Losing Tabby to Branson is bad enough, but screwing up and losing her as a friend is even worse.

After a tragic accident, Matt finds himself left on the sidelines, on the verge of spiraling out of control and losing everything that matters to him. (Realistic Fiction, 13-18)

Empress of a Thousand Skies by Rhoda Belleza

Empress

Rhee, also known as Crown Princess Rhiannon Ta'an, is the sole surviving heir to a powerful dynasty. She'll stop at nothing to avenge her family and claim her throne.

Fugitive

Aly has risen above his war refugee origins to find fame as the dashing star of a DroneVision show. But when he's falsely accused of killing Rhee, he's forced to prove his innocence to save his reputation – and his life.

Madman

With planets on the brink of war, Rhee and Aly must confront a ruthless evil that threatens the fate of the entire galaxy.

This is a powerful saga of vengeance, warfare, and the true meaning of legacy.

(Fantasy, 12-16)

Goodbye Days by Jeff Zentner

Where are you guys? Text me back. That's the last message Carver Briggs will ever send his three best friends, Mars, Eli, and Blake. He never thought that it would lead to their death.

Now Carver can't stop blaming himself for the accident and even worse, a powerful judge is pressuring the district attorney to open up a criminal investigation.

Luckily, Carver has some unexpected allies: Eli's girlfriend, the only person to stand by him at school; Dr. Mendez, his new therapist; and Blake's grandmother, who asks Carver to spend a "goodbye day" together to share their memories and say a proper farewell.

(Realistic Fiction, 12 & up)

***In a Perfect World* by Trish Doller**

Caroline Kelly is excited to be spending her summer vacation working at the local amusement park with her best friend, exploring weird Ohio with her boyfriend, and attending soccer camp with the hope she'll be her team's captain in the fall.

But when Caroline's mother is hired to open an eye clinic in Cairo, Egypt, Caroline's plans are upended. Caroline is now expected to spend her summer *and* her senior year in a foreign country, away from her friends, her home, and everything she's ever known.

With this move, Caroline predicts she'll spend her time navigating crowded streets, eating unfamiliar food, and having terrible bouts of homesickness. But what she finds instead is a culture that surprises her, a city that astounds her, and a charming, unpredictable boy who challenges everything she thought she knew about life, love, and privilege. (Realistic Fiction, 12-16)

***Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson**

Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And Jade has: every day she rides the bus away from her friends and to the private school where she feels like an outsider, but where she has plenty of opportunities. But some *opportunities* she doesn't really welcome, like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Just because her mentor is black and graduated from the same high school doesn't mean she understands where Jade is coming from. She's tired of being singled out as someone who needs help, someone people want to fix. Jade wants to speak, to create, to express her joys and sorrows, her pain and her hope. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference. (Realistic Fiction, 12-16)

***The Book Jumper* by Mechthild Glaser**

Amy Lennox doesn't know quite what to expect when she and her mother pick up and leave Germany for Scotland, heading to her mother's childhood home of Lennox House on the island of Stormsay. Amy's grandmother, Lady Mairead, insists that Amy must read while she resides at Lennox House—but not in the usual way. It turns out that Amy is a book jumper, able to leap into a story and interact with the world inside. As thrilling as Amy's new power is, it also brings danger: someone is stealing from the books she visits, and that person may be after her life. Teaming up with fellow book jumper Will, Amy vows to get to the bottom of the thefts—at whatever cost. (Fantasy, 14-18)

***The Valiant* by Lesley Livingston**

Fallon is the daughter of a proud Celtic king and the younger sister of the legendary fighter Sorcha. When Fallon was just a child, Sorcha was killed by the armies of Julius Caesar.

On the eve of her seventeenth birthday, Fallon is excited to follow in her sister's footsteps and earn her place in her father's war band. She never gets the chance.

Fallon is captured and sold to an elite training school for female gladiators—owned by none other than Julius Caesar himself. In a cruel twist of fate, the man who destroyed Fallon's family might be her only hope of survival.

Now, Fallon must overcome vicious rivalries, deadly fights in and out of the arena, and perhaps the most dangerous threat of all: her irresistible feelings for Cai, a young Roman soldier and her sworn enemy. (Historical Fiction, 12-18)

***Traveler* by L.E. DeLano**

Jessa has spent her life dreaming of other worlds and writing down stories more interesting than her own, until the day her favorite character, Finn, suddenly shows up and invites her out for coffee. After the requisite nervous breakdown, Jessa learns that she and Finn are Travelers, born with the ability to slide through reflections and dreams into alternate realities. But it's not all cupcakes, pirates, and fantasy lifestyles - Jessa is dying over and over again in every reality, and Finn is determined that this time, he's going to stop it... This Jessa is going to live. (Fantasy, 12-18)

Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team
by Steve Sheinkin

Jim Thorpe: Super athlete, Olympic gold medalist, Native American

Pop Warner: Indomitable coach, football mastermind, Ivy League grad

Before these men became legends, they met in 1907 at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, where they forged one of the winningest teams in American football history. Called "the team that invented football," they took on the best opponents of their day, defeating much more privileged schools such as Harvard and the Army in a series of breathtakingly close calls, genius plays, and bone-crushing hard work. (Nonfiction, 12 & up)

Vincent and Theo: The VanGogh Brothers by Deborah Heiligman

The deep and enduring friendship between Vincent and Theo Van Gogh shaped both brothers' lives. Confidant, champion, sympathizer, friend—Theo supported Vincent as he struggled to find his path in life. They shared everything, swapping stories of lovers and friends, successes and disappointments, dreams and ambitions. Meticulously researched, drawing on the 658 letters Vincent wrote to Theo during his lifetime, Deborah Heiligman weaves a tale of two lives intertwined and the extraordinary love of the Van Gogh brothers. (Nonfiction, 14 & up)

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 KSRA 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 Reading Association. As this is the high school list, these titles are mature in nature.