



READ FOR A LIFETIME 2025-2026 BOOKLIST

“#MurderTrending”

Gretchen McNeil

352 pages

“Squid Games” meets “Black Mirror” in this addictive thriller about an innocent girl’s struggle to clear her name before she falls victim to her fellow prisoners and the twisted government holding her hostage.

In a dystopian near future, society engages in the public execution of convicted criminals via the streaming app, The Postman, from Alcatraz 2.0. Seventeen-year-old Dee Guerrero awakens in a warehouse, realizing she is the next target despite being innocent of any crimes. Determined to evade a wrongful execution, she allies with a group she names the Death Row Breakfast Club. Together, they must race against time to prove her innocence and survive against the app's lethal executioners.

“83 Days in Mariupol: A War Diary”

Don Brown

128 Pages

Young adult graphic novel that captures the complexities of the war in Ukraine, focusing on the siege of Mariupol (February 2022-May 2022) and the brave people who stayed to defend their city against Russian forces.

Journalist Don Brown presents a poignant account of the devastating impact of Russia’s invasion on the Ukrainian city of Mariupol. Once a peaceful residential area, it has transformed into a battleground where civilians are forced to seek refuge in cellars amid scarcity of food, water, and medical supplies. The narrative highlights the relentless siege endured by the city, drawing parallels to historical instances of fierce resistance such as the Alamo and Dunkirk. Through Brown's compassionate lens, the book not only captures the suffering of Mariupol’s inhabitants but also reflects the broader human cost of conflict that echoes across Ukraine, challenging notions of patriotism and survival in the face of overwhelming odds.

“Aisle Nine”

Ian X. Cho

272 Pages

William C. Morris Award Finalist. It’s Black Friday—and the apocalypse is on sale! An unforgettably freaky and hilarious young adult debut, perfect for fans of “Grasshopper Jungle” or “The Last of Us”.

Jasper, a teenage nobody with no friends or family, spends his days working as a checkout clerk at the Here for You discount mart, where a hell portal in aisle nine means danger every shift. But at least here he can be near the girl he’s crushing on—Kyle Kuan, a junior member of the monster-fighting Vanguard—who seems to hate Jasper for reasons he can’t remember or understand. But when Jasper and Kyle learn they both share a frightening vision of the impending apocalypse, they’re forced to team up and uncover the uncomfortable truth about the demons that haunt the world. Because the true monsters are not always what they seem, the past is not always what we wish, and, like it or not, on Black Friday, all hell will break loose, starting in aisle nine.

“All Better Now”

Neal Shusterman

528 Pages

An instant New York Times Best Seller. A young adult thriller about a world where happiness is contagious, but the risks of catching it may be just as dangerous as the cure.

A novel virus is spreading, resulting in profound and unprecedented effects on those who survive complete and lasting contentment, which eradicates negative emotions such as stress and depression. While many embrace this newfound state, those in positions of power, who rely on discontent to drive consumerism, perceive this happiness as a threat to productivity and societal stability. In response, they initiate campaigns declaring eternal happiness to be perilous and begin searching for a vaccine. Concurrently, a movement emerges among the "Recoverees," individuals who wish to disseminate the virus to promote global well-being. Amidst this chaos, three teenagers from diverse backgrounds, each affected by the virus in distinct ways, find themselves at the epicenter of a struggle that has the potential to reshape humanity.

“After Life”**Gayle Forman****272 Pages**

GMA YA Book Club pick. This masterpiece explores the porous veil between life and death, examines the impact that one person can have on the world, and celebrates life in all its beautiful complexity.

On a seemingly ordinary spring afternoon, Amber returns home on her bike, an unsettling event as she was presumed dead seven years ago after a tragic accident. Her unexpected reappearance profoundly affects her family, particularly her sister Melissa and estranged parents who are in conflict over Amber's return. The repercussions extend to her friends and acquaintances, all grappling with the legacy of her past. Throughout this turmoil, Amber reflects on her identity and the purpose of her second chance at life. This remarkable narrative by author Gayle Forman artfully examines the fragile boundary between life and death, the significance of individual impact, and the intricate beauty of existence.

“Better Than the Movies”**Lynn Painter****356 Pages**

USA Today and New York Times Best Seller. A sweet teen romcom follows a hopelessly romantic teenage girl and her cute yet obnoxious neighbor as they scheme to get her noticed by her untouchable crush.

Liz Buxbaum, an eternal daydreamer, has long harbored feelings for her elusive crush, Michael, who never truly acknowledged her before moving away. With his return to town, Liz is determined to capture his attention and possibly secure him as her prom date. To achieve this, she enlists the help of her annoyingly attractive neighbor, Wes Bennet, who has been a source of irritation since childhood due to their pranks against one another. As Liz and Wes collaborate to bring her closer to Michael, Liz unexpectedly finds herself enjoying Wes's company. This evolving relationship compels her to reassess her understanding of love and reconsider what a "Happily Ever After" truly entails.

“Bless the Blood: A Cancer Memoir”**Walela Nehanda****400 Pages**

A searing debut young adult poetry and essay collection about a Black cancer patient who faces medical racism after being diagnosed with leukemia in their early 20s, for fans of Laurie Halse Anderson's “Shout”.

Walela recounts their experience following a diagnosis of advanced-stage blood cancer at the age of 23. Faced with a medical system that often disregards their identity, including issues related to their pronouns, Walela navigates the challenges posed by both health and societal expectations. The journey not only highlights the intersectionality of their identities—disabled, fat, Black, queer, and nonbinary—but also fosters a deeper connection with their ancestors. This pivotal moment catalyzes a profound self-realization and ultimately reveals their resilience in confronting mortality within a flawed healthcare framework.

“Brownstone”**Samuel Teer & Mar Julia****320 Pages**

Printz Award Winner. An exciting teen coming-of-age graphic novel that tells a vivid, sweeping, ultimately hopeful story about navigating your heritage even when you feel like you don't quite fit in.

Almudena, who has long contemplated the father she never knew, faces a transformative summer alone with her Guatemalan father, Xavier, after her white mother embarks on a once-in-a-lifetime trip. Xavier is eager to bond but expects Almudena to assist in renovating his dilapidated brownstone, all while she grapples with his rapid Spanish, which she struggles to understand. As she acclimates to her new surroundings, Almudena meets the diverse residents of Xavier's Latin American neighborhood, each with their own experiences and cultural expectations of her identity. Some question her connection to her roots, while others believe she does not fully belong. As the summer progresses, Almudena and Xavier must bridge their emotional distance and integrate their disparate backgrounds, ultimately seeking to transform their relationship into a familial bond amidst the complexities of their individual lives.

“Call Me Iggy”**Jorge Aguire & Rafael Rosado****256 Pages**

Kirkus Best Book of the Year. School Library Journal Best Book of the Year. Booklist Best Book of the Year. A multigenerational story perfect for fans of the graphic novels “Displacement” and “The Magic Fish”.

Ignacio "Iggy" Garcia, a Colombian American teenager from Ohio, faces the complexities of adolescence after a chance encounter with Marisol, a girl preoccupied with her own challenges. While Iggy seeks to win her affection, he receives misguided romantic advice from the ghost of his deceased grandfather, leading to a series of personal revelations. "Call Me Iggy" narrates Iggy's quest for identity within his family and community against the backdrop of the shifting political landscape during the 2016 election. This story explores familial relationships and emerging love, while questioning perceptions of Latino-American identity and highlighting the potential of youth.

"Dungeons and Drama"

Kristy Boyce

304 Pages

National Best Seller and a Cosmopolitan Best Young Adult Book of the Year. When it comes to romance, sometimes it doesn't hurt to play games. A fun young adult romcom full of fake dating hijinks!

Riley Morris, an avid musical enthusiast with aspirations of becoming a Broadway director, faces a setback when her spring show is canceled. To revive her theatrical ambitions, she must navigate her responsibilities at her father's game store, which he prioritizes over family. Seeking a way to elevate her status, she recruits her co-worker, Nathan Wheeler, to help her create a facade of a romantic relationship. In return, she intends to assist him in making his crush jealous. As they pretend to be a couple, Riley surprisingly discovers enjoyment in Nathan's role-playing game and finds that her feelings for him may not be mere pretense after all.

"Everything We Never Had"

Randy Ribay

288 Pages

APALA Medal Winner. Longlisted for the National Book Award. A moving novel about four generations of Filipino American boys grappling with identity, masculinity, and their fraught father-son relationships.

In "Everything We Never Had," the narrative spans four generations of the Maghabol family, each grappling with their identity and societal expectations. In 1930, Francisco Maghabol struggles in California's fields, contemplating his decision to leave the Philippines amidst growing violence. By 1965, his son Emil faces prejudice in school while working at his aunt's restaurant, determined to forge his own path, distinct from his father's legacy as a labor organizer. In 1983, Chris rebels against his father's control and discovers a newfound interest in Filipino history after a school assignment disrupts his life. Finally, in 2020, Enzo deals with personal anxieties and family tensions during a pandemic, seeking to mend the rift between his father and grandfather through their shared history. The story is intricately woven through multiple perspectives, illustrating how the Maghabol men navigate their challenges while passing down their values and flaws, culminating in Enzo's quest to unify their experiences.

"Heartless Hunter: The Crimson Moth: Book 1"

Kristen Ciccarelli

406 Pages

Enemies-to-lovers doesn't get more high stakes than a witch and a witch hunter falling in love. This is bestselling author Kristen Ciccarelli's latest romantic fantasy.

In the wake of a catastrophic revolution, witches are hunted and diminished, and Rune must conceal her true identity. While leading a double life as a glamorous socialite by day and the vigilante Crimson Moth by night—rescuing endangered witches—her plans are complicated when a rescue attempt fails. To divert attention, she courts the alluring but brutal witch hunter Gideon Sharpe, who has his own motives for infiltrating her life. As he navigates her world of superficiality, he discovers her intelligence and kindness, conflicting with his role as her pursuer. Kristen Ciccarelli's "Heartless Hunter" launches The Crimson Moth duology, weaving a tale of romance and danger in a society where love poses as great a threat as witchcraft itself.

"Heir"

Sabaa Tahir

484 Pages

GMA YA Book Club pick. A ruthless and romantic new fantasy that introduces a new generation of characters set in the same world as the unforgettable "An Ember in the Ashes" series.

In a poignant narrative, acclaimed author Sabaa Tahir intricately weaves the lives of three distinct characters within the Martial Empire, each facing personal trials that intertwine with themes of power, treachery, and love. Aiz, an orphan and fierce avenger, endures the hardships of the Kegari slums and seeks retribution for her past. Meanwhile, Sirsha, a banished

tracker reliant on magic, reluctantly accepts a perilous mission to apprehend a child-killer, only to find herself entangled in a complex emotional conflict. Lastly, Quil, the crown prince, grapples with the heavy legacy of his father while confronting a formidable new threat to the Empire. Together, their journeys highlight the harsh consequences of ambition and greed, ultimately leading them to confront the potential loss of their lives and hearts.

“James”

Percival Everett

303 Pages

#1 New York Times Best Seller. National Book Award Winner. A brilliant reimagining of “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” told from the enslaved Jim's point of view. *In development as a feature film to be produced by Steven Spielberg.

Jim, an enslaved man, learns of his impending sale to a buyer in New Orleans, prompting him to conceal himself on Jackson Island while he devises a plan for escape. Concurrently, Huck Finn fakes his own death to evade his abusive father. This sets in motion their perilous journey down the Mississippi River, seeking freedom in the uncertain promise of the Free States. While retaining familiar elements of “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,” including natural disasters and encounters with con artists, the portrayal of Jim is reimagined, highlighting his agency, intellect, and compassion. The work, infused with humor and keen insights, cements James Everett’s status as a pivotal figure in contemporary American literature.

“Looking for Smoke”

K. A. Cobell

416 Pages

A Reese’s Book Club pick. A thriller that weaves loss, betrayal, and complex characters into a page-turner that will illuminate, surprise, and engage readers until the final word.

When local girl Loren includes Mara in a traditional Blackfeet Giveaway to honor Loren’s missing sister, Mara thinks she’ll finally make some friends on the Blackfeet reservation. Instead, a girl from the Giveaway, Samantha White Tail, is found murdered. Because the four members of the Giveaway group were the last to see Samantha alive, each becomes a person of interest in the investigation. And all of them—Mara, Loren, Brody, and Eli—have a complicated history with Samantha. Despite deep mistrust, the four must now take matters into their own hands and clear their names. Even though one of them may be the murderer.

“Powerless”

Lauren Roberts

495 Pages

New York Times Best Seller. This young adult fantasy follows the forbidden romance between a powerful prince and an ordinary girl as they try to survive their kingdom’s grueling laws, pitting them against each other.

In the kingdom of Ilya, only the extraordinary are deemed worthy, as the Elites possess powers bestowed by a devastating Plague. Those labeled as Ordinary, such as Paedyn Gray, face banishment, leading her to navigate life as a fugitive. Having learned to adapt, Paedyn masquerades as a Psychic to survive in the harsh slums. However, her fate alters when she inadvertently saves a prince, drawing her into the perilous Purging Trials, which highlight the very abilities she does not possess. As she grapples with the life-threatening competition, she also confronts her growing feelings for the prince, a situation fraught with danger should her true identity be revealed.

“Project Hail Mary”

Andy Weir

476 Pages

#1 New York Times Best Seller. An irresistible interstellar adventure of discovery, speculation, and survival to rival Weir’s infamous, “The Martian”. *Soon to be a major motion picture starring Ryan Gosling.

Ryland Grace finds himself as the lone survivor of a critical space mission, unaware of his identity or the specific nature of his assignment. Awakening in deep space, accompanied only by two deceased crewmates, he gradually retrieves fragmented memories. Faced with the daunting challenge of solving a scientific enigma to prevent an extinction-level disaster, he must rely solely on his capabilities, with the nearest human being lightyears away. Time is running out, and the burden of humanity’s survival rests on his shoulders.

“Shut Up, This is Serious”

Carolina Ixta

368 Pages

Pura Belpré Ya Author Award. An unforgettable young adult debut about two Latina teens growing up in East Oakland as they discover that the world is brimming with messy complexities.

Belén Dolores Itzel del Toro grapples with the complexities of adolescence in East Oakland, where her desires for love and normalcy are overshadowed by personal challenges. With her father's departure, looming graduation issues, and her best friend Leti's unexpected pregnancy—complicated by Leti's secretive relationship with a Black boyfriend against her family's racist views—Belén feels increasingly overwhelmed. By providing support to Leti and engaging with an older peer, she attempts to navigate her own struggles, only to face the harsh realities of her situation. As her friends prepare for their futures, she questions her own path, reflecting on the cycles of her environment and the journey toward self-discovery. This debut novel by Carolina Ixta offers a poignant exploration of friendship, family bonds, and the transformative quest for identity.

“Snowglobe” **Soyoung Park** **384 Pages**
New York Times Best Seller. Changbi X Kakaopage Young Authors Novel Award. The “Hunger Games” meets “Squid Game.” A groundbreaking exploration of personal identity, and the future of the world as we know it.

In a perpetual winter, the citizens of Snowglobe, the last warm haven on Earth, enjoy a seemingly perfect life within a dome, shielded from the harsh, icy wasteland outside. Their daily routine involves commuting to a power plant essential for sustaining their climate-controlled home, while their lives are broadcast for the less fortunate outside, who yearn for a similar existence. Among them is Chobahm, an avid viewer of the popular show "Goh Around," featuring the beloved star Goh Haeri. However, when Haeri's death leads to Chobahm being selected to assume her role, she discovers that life in Snowglobe is a far cry from the glamorous facade presented on screen, revealing deeper, unsettling truths behind its idyllic surface.

“The Boys of Riverside: A Deaf Football Team and a Quest for Glory” **Thomas Fuller** **256 Pages**
Named a Best Book by Book Riot, and many more. The incredible story of an all-deaf high school football team’s triumphant climb from underdog to undefeated, their inspirational brotherhood.

In November 2021, an email from the California Department of Education caught the attention of New York Times reporter Thomas Fuller, who learned about the California School for the Deaf football team in Riverside, which was enjoying an undefeated season. Drawn to this uplifting story amidst the challenges of the pandemic, Fuller traveled seven hours to explore the dynamic between the team of underestimated boys and their deaf coach, Keith Adams. "The Boys of Riverside" chronicles the 2021 and 2022 seasons, highlighting personal narratives such as a player who spent nights in a car and another who played through a broken leg. Through these stories, Fuller depicts the essence of high school athletics, the spirit of camaraderie, and the experience of deafness in America.

“The Collectors: Stories” **J.A.S. King (Editor), and an All-Star Cast of Contributors** **272 Pages**
2024 Michael L. Printz Award. National Best Seller. From an all-star team of contributors, an anthology of stories about remarkable people and their strange and surprising collections.

The anthology presents a diverse range of narratives exploring the theme of collections, each crafted by nine prominent young adult authors responding to a prompt from A.S. King. The storytellers, including M. T. Anderson, e. E. Charlton-Trujillo, A.S. King, David Levithan, Cory McCarthy, Anna-Marie McLemore, G. Neri, Jason Reynolds, Randy Ribay, and Jenny Torres Sanchez weave tales that reflect unique perspectives—ranging from a non-binary individual's quest for identity to 1970s skaters navigating challenges. This collection not only showcases the innovative storytelling of award-winning authors but also highlights the multifaceted nature of storytelling through the act of gathering, ultimately illustrating how any collection can illuminate deeper narratives.

“The Glass Girl” **Kathleen Glasglow** **464 Pages**
New York Times Best Seller. A raw, heart-wrenching novel about a teenager facing down her struggles with alcohol—and the journey she must take to heal.

Fifteen-year-old Bella grapples with the pressures imposed by her family and the void left by her deceased grandmother. Seeking refuge from her difficulties, Bella turns to alcohol as a coping mechanism, believing she can control her drinking.

However, following a harrowing experience of waking in the hospital after a Thanksgiving party, she is compelled to confront her reality and enter rehab. This novel offers a poignant and empathetic examination of the societal influences that can lead young women toward addiction, highlighting the path to recovery.

“The Reappearance of Rachel Price”

Holly Jackson

448 Pages

#1 New York Times Best Seller. A gripping mystery of one teen’s search for the truth about her mother’s shocking disappearance, and even more shocking reappearance, during the filming of a true crime documentary.

Eighteen-year-old Bel grapples with the enduring mystery of her mother Rachel's disappearance, which occurred sixteen years ago. Despite being the only witness, Bel has no recollection of the event and yearns for closure. The family’s decision to participate in a true crime documentary brings the past crashing back, leading to Rachel's unexpected return. Rachel shares a story that challenges Bel's perception of reality and raises questions about her mother's true nature and the circumstances of her absence. Amidst ongoing filming, Bel is compelled to uncover the truth about her mother and confront the implications of this revelation on her life and understanding of family.

“Twenty-Four Seconds from Now”

Jason Reynolds

256 Pages

Coretta Scott King Author Award Winner. New York Times Best Seller. Seven starred reviews! A stream of consciousness story from the guy’s perspective of a teen boy about to experience a huge first.

Twenty-four months ago, Neon experienced an embarrassing moment when he was chased by a dog in a church parking lot, an event that became significant due to his connection with the dog's owner, Aria, who captivated him with her casual appearance. Over the past two years, Neon’s relationship with Aria has deepened, coinciding with discussions about intimacy prompted by his father. Recently, a discovery made by Neon’s mother about intimate apparel in his room indicated preparation for a significant milestone in their relationship. Following a work shift, Neon brought Aria her favorite chicken tenders, a modest but meaningful gesture. Currently, he finds himself in a state of anxiety, trapped in her bathroom as he grapples with his feelings and fears regarding their impending intimate moment.

“When the World Tips Over”

Amber McBride

528 Pages

An Instant New York Times Best Seller. The explosive new novel that brims with love, secrets, and enchantment by Jandy Nelson, Printz Award–winning and New York Times bestselling author.

The Fall siblings reside in the scorching Northern California wine country, where their lives were disrupted years ago by the mysterious disappearance of their father. Now, 12-year-old Dizzy bakes cakes and yearns for a romantic adventure, while her brother Miles, seventeen, balances his roles as a scholar and athlete, hoping to discover his ideal partner. Nineteen-year-old Wynton, a gifted violinist, grapples with his ambitions in the pursuit of fame and the risk of self-destruction. Their lives take a turn with the arrival of a mysterious girl with rainbow hair, who appears to play a significant role in each sibling's life. However, a catastrophic event exacerbates their struggles, leaving them more fragmented and longing for unity. This narrative intricately weaves together themes of love, rivalry, family curses, and the legacies of joy and sorrow, illustrating the complex dynamics of the family's past and present, and their desire to reshape their futures.