

## **All the Bright Places**

Jennifer Niven

Alfred A. Knopf, 2015

388 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Theodore and Violet have nothing in common, until they have everything in common. When they meet atop the school bell tower, both preparing to plunge to their death, they promise to keep each other's secrets safe. Then, deciding to pair up on a project to discover the "Natural Wonders" of their state, they end up discovering more about themselves. When he's with Violet, Finch can be his crazy, loud self. When she's with Finch, Violet can see the color and light in the world. When Violet's world starts to grow, Finch's world begins to close in.

### **IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK TRY ...**

*Eleanor and Park*, Rainbow Rowell

*The Fault in our Stars*, John Green

### **WEBSITES:**

All the Bright Places, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=R0WXpFt8GVg>, a book trailer from Penguin Group NZ for the book All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven.

Jennifer Niven, <http://www.jenniferniven.com/>, the author's official website.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Jennifer Niven tackles a difficult subject, in a wonderful way. When you meet the two characters, Finch and Violet – you immediately fall in love. You begin to cheer for their story, their personalities and most importantly, their lives. Jennifer Niven keeps you hanging on throughout the novel, through every "natural wonder" of their state, every failed relationship that they struggle with and every emotion they process. The ending may leave you tears in your eyes, but your heart will swell with emotion for these likeable and relatable characters.

### **Prepared By:**

Emma Ball, Liberty Hill Academy, [emmaball828@gmail.com](mailto:emmaball828@gmail.com)

## **Beware the Wild**

Natalie Parker  
HarperTeen, 2014  
330 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

The end of her sophomore year is one week away, and Sterling should be studying for exams and hanging out with her friends Candy and Abigail at the racetrack or doing manicures. However, her older brother has disappeared into the swamp, and no one except the melancholy Heath—not even her parents—recalls his existence. Sterling realizes that if she is ever going to see her beloved brother again, she must summon the courage to reclaim him from the sinister, supernatural creatures dwelling in the swamp.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*The Devouring*, Simon Holt

*The Forest of Hands and Teeth*, Carrie Ryan

*Beautiful Creatures*, Kami Garcia

*Fiendish*, Brenna Yovanoff

### **WEBSITES:**

Kuriositas, <http://www.kuriositas.com/2010/09/atchafalaya-biggest-swamp-in-states.html>, This site contains photos of Atchafalaya, a swamp in Louisiana which is known as the largest swamp in the United States. Captions provide factual geographical and cultural information

NatalieParker.com, <http://nataliecparker.com/index.html>, The author's website provides a biography and contact information, as well as news pertaining to her writing, personal appearances, and special services.

Shmoop, <http://www.shmoop.com/southern-gothic/>, If you want to know about Southern Gothic literature, this is the site for you. It includes a Top 10 list, characteristics, top authors, best websites, and a time line of important events and publications.

### **BOOKTALK:**

There's a swamp here in Sticks, Louisiana—a sinister, mysterious, hot, sticky swamp. We locals don't talk about it much. You might say we act like it's not even here. Way back, folks built a fence around the swamp. The fence is not to keep us out; no one has to tell you to stay away from there. No, the barrier is to keep the greedy swamp from snatching one of us for its own. Most people claimed by the Swamp never return, but those who do are either mentally or psychologically affected.

Now my brother Phin is one of those unfortunate souls. It's my fault. I was mad with him so I picked a fight. He stormed off, straight over the split rail fence, and straight into the swamp. Even the sheriff refused to look for him in there. It won't do me any good to plead. No one remembers Phin. It's like he was never even born. And what's up with that girl, that swamp

creature who walked right out of the swamp and under the fence claiming to be my sister Lenora May? She claimed his room. Now she's driving his cherry red Chevelle. When I tried to explain to my parents that we needed to find Phin and that Lenora May was not my sister, they thought I was crazy. They even sent for the doctor, who of course was on their side. If I'm going to help Phin, I've got to go along with them on this. But maybe I am nuts. I know things about her. Her favorite color is purple. I'm starting to remember things about growing up with her. I will be strong. I will not let the swamp take away my memories of Phin.

I'm running out of options. Old Lady Clary, whose family has known about the swamp's secrets for years, refuses to help me. The only ally I have is Heath. He lost his best friend to the swamp when the car they were in slid off the road and his friend ended up in the edge of the swamp. Maybe together we can save Phin and Nathan. But one thing is certain. I will go into that vile, evil swamp to reclaim my brother, and I refuse to come back without him.

As I've said before, the swamp has a way claiming anything or anyone who enters its territory, so I may not make it out. Whatever happens, remember those who have lost their lives or their minds to the swamp. To find out how my story ends, read *Beware the Wild* by Natalie C. Parker.

**Prepared by:**

Melissa Mixon, McBee High School, [MMixon@chesterfieldschools.org](mailto:MMixon@chesterfieldschools.org)

# **The Boy in the Black Suit**

Jason Reynolds

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2015

272 pages

## **SUMMARY:**

Matt has to find a way to come to terms with the death of his mother to cancer. Everybody seems to treat him like he has the plague when he goes back to school and it gets even weirder when he starts wearing the black suit.

The black suit is because he has landed a job with Mr. Ray the funeral director. Matt finds solace in attending the services of others that have passed away. During one such event he sees the girl that took his breath away at the Cluck Bucket, Lovely Brown. Lovely see Matt for who he is and Matt finds himself opening up to a new world of hope.

In this fast moving story, Matt has to find ways to deal with his loss, help his father find a way to heal without the bottle, and not mess up this new relationship with the girl of his dreams.

## **IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK TRY ...**

*How It Went Down*, Kekla Magoon

*All American Boys*, Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely

*Crossover*, Kwame Alexander

## **WEBSITES:**

PBS NewsHour: "*The hidden racism of young white Americans*",

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/americas-racism-problem-far-complicated-think/>,

An article exploring racial beliefs still permeating in institutions that are supposed to be more tolerant today.

The Washington Post: "*Americans say racism is a bigger problem today than at any point in the past 20 years*",

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/08/05/americans-say-racism-is-a-bigger-problem-today-than-at-any-point-in-the-past-20-years/>, An article about racism and attitudes in

the wake of Ferguson.

Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination_in_the_United_States), Encyclopedia article about discrimination in the United States.

## **BOOKTALK:**

Have you ever lost someone one to cancer? Even worse that person is your parent. Matt has lost his mom to cancer and it seems like the world and all his friends are looking at him like he is sick himself. It is hard enough being in high school without the added weight of death hanging over your shoulder. It seems like the only one that understands is his best friend Chris and Ray at the funeral home. Matt gets a job with Ray and he helps with the funerals setting up the food, tables and chairs. Listening in on other people's funerals seems to be a healing balm for Matt.

Of course there has to be a girl involved, so here enters Lovely at one of the wakes as she gets up to speak, and Matt remembers her as the girl from the Cluck Bucket. They find a way to help each other deal with the loss of their loved ones.

**Prepared by:**

Wendy S. Tyree, Green Sea Floyds High School, [wtyree@horrycountyschools.net](mailto:wtyree@horrycountyschools.net)

## **Can't Look Away**

Donna Cooner  
Scholastic Point, 2014  
265 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Torrey is a teen sensation. She posts every day to her fashion and beauty vlog and has thousands of followers. Torrey's young sister only wants some attention from her big sister and when she is killed in a freak accident Torrey is racked with guilt. She and her family have just moved to Texas when her sister dies. Torrey is accustomed to being in the "IT" crowd with others mimicking her every move. When she arrives in Texas, she is befriended by two girls and a guy from the not so popular crowd. Luis appears to be hated by everyone, but Torrey is drawn to him. Through her move from Colorado to Texas and the new friends she makes, Torrey learns there is more to being a teenager than being popular. Real people and real feeling and most of all real friends are the healing that Torrey needs.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*The Fault in our Stars*, John Green  
*Thirteen Reasons Why*, Jay Asher  
*Forget Me*, K.A. Harrington  
*The Unfinished Life of Addison Stone*, Lonore Appelhans  
*Life After Theft*, Aprilynne Pike

### **WEBSITES:**

Day of the Dead & the Sugar Skull Tradition,  
<http://www.mexicansugarskull.com/support/dodhistory.html>, A description of the Latin American and Catholic Church's celebration of the Dead. A time for families to welcome back the spirits of their family members for the night. A very good explanation of the symbols used in this celebration.

Dia de los Muertos [Day of the Dead], <http://www.dayofthedeadsf.org/history.html>, Another site with a more detailed history of The Day of the Dead

Cyberbullying, <http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/>, A one stop shop for defining cyberbullying, how to report it, how to stop it and additional resources.

Siblings & Grief: 10 Things Everyone Should Know,  
<http://www.drchristinahibbert.com/dealing-with-grief/siblings-grief-10-things-everyone-should-know/>, A website for families dealing with the grief of a sibling. Good information on the stages of grief.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Torrey is on top of the world. She has a successful fashion Vlog she posts everyday with fashion and beauty tips for her thousands of followers. She is at the top of the food chain in high school

with she and her girlfriends rule the social scene. Then Torrey's world is turned upside down when her younger sister is killed by a drunk driver. Torrey and her parents move to Texas and Torrey is forced to start over with new friends, and new priorities. Is being at the top of the social ladder and having lots of friends but are they true friends? Torrey meets a boy, but everyone at school seems to hate him. What could he have done to create so much animosity? Torrey and Luis will make discoveries that will change both of their lives.

**Prepared by:**

Candi Vaughn, James F. Byrnes Freshman Academy, [candi.vaughn@spart5.net](mailto:candi.vaughn@spart5.net)

## **Chernobyl's Wild Kingdom: Life in the Dead Zone**

Rebecca L. Johnson

21st Century, 2014

88 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

The Dead Zone, the area affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear explosion, was expected to be a barren area where life would not exist. Scientists were shocked to find wildlife actually thriving in the area, even though they are radioactive. Readers, while enjoying the beautiful photographs, will learn about these animals and what this means for animals in the future.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines*, Paul Fleischman

*Last Chain on Billie: How One Extraordinary Elephant Escaped the Big Top*, Carol Bradley

*Forensic Identification: Putting a Name and Face on Death*, Elizabeth A. Murray, PhD.

### **WEBSITES:**

Chernobyl's Wild Kingdom, <http://www.rebeccajohnsonbooks.com/books/chernobyls-wild-kingdom/>, Author's website about the title.

A World Nuclear Association Chernobyl Accident 1986, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Safety-and-Security/Safety-of-Plants/Chernobyl-Accident/>, Additional information, charts, and maps of the accident are provided on this page.

Chernobyl Then and Now: 28 Haunting Images from Nuclear Disaster, <https://www.rt.com/news/155072-chernobyl-images-now-then/>, Photographs from Chernobyl at the time of the accident and today are shared.

### **BOOKTALK:**

How can something so horrible lead to something so beautiful? Chernobyl's Wild Kingdom investigates the area expected to be lifeless and devastated, and shows us the beauty that has grown in the last twenty-eight years. Johnson has consulted scientists about the event and the aftermath. Throughout the text, sidebars add information about protection for the ecologists, effects on humans, as well as other topics. Even readers who think they do not like science or nonfiction will be fascinated by this book.

### **Prepared by:**

Kim Hayes, Lamar High School, kimberly.hayes@darlington.k12.sc.us



**Death Coming Up the Hill**  
Chris Crowe  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014  
204 pages

**SUMMARY:**

Ashe, a high-school student, in the troubling times in 1968, has to deal with the uncertainties of the battles raging in Vietnam, a very unstable relationship between his parents, and a new girlfriend. Written in haiku form, Chris Crowe carries us on a magical journey with Ashe as he navigates the stressful relationship with his parents. His father is a very dogmatic personality and his mother the extreme activist.

Married in college because of her pregnancy with Ashe, his mother causes his father to lose his promising football career with the Arizona Wildcats. Their relationship is doomed from the start, but Ashe has been the thread keeping them together.

Then comes Angela, the new girl from LA and Ashe is turned upside-down and inside-out. She is the most beautiful thing in the world and he is smitten as soon as he sees her walk into his history class. An activist like his mom, trouble will surely brew when his dad sees his new hippie girl-friend. For Ashe, it just seems like one conflict after another and the bombshell hits, his mom is pregnant and it is not his dad's child.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK TRY ...**

*Revolution*, Deborah Wiles

*Fallen Angels*, Walter Dean Myers

*Vietnam, Book One, I Pledge Allegiance*, Chris Lynch

**WEBSITES:**

Martin Luther King Jr. Assassination, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr-assassination>, an informational article detailing the events of his death.

Bobby Kennedy is assassinated, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/bobby-kennedy-is-assassinated>, an informational article detailing the events of his assassination.

Chris Crowe's Official Website, <http://chriscrowe.com/>, the author's official website with publishing and contact information.

**BOOKTALK:**

“Mr. Ruby’s eyes turned red and watery when he told us about the Tet Offensive. “They caught us by surprise, and we’ve lost too many”- his voice trembled, and we all listened, dead silent,  
.....

This is just one of many days in Mr. Ruby’s class as they discuss the war efforts in Vietnam. Days filled with tears, anger, and tension. Ashe has to learn to deal with the atrocity of war and the headlines of numbers of soldiers killed each week on top of an ongoing war at home. Dad is as dogmatic as Mom is an activist and peace-lover. How will they ever reach a reconciliation?

Then the new girl; a tall, beautiful blond goddess shows up in Mr. Ruby's class and Ashe is completely smitten. Now how does he hide the fact that his girlfriend is a hippie, anti-war activist just like mom from his dad?

Things go from bad to worse quickly when Mom announced she is pregnant. The problem is that it is definitely not Dad's baby.

**Prepared by:**

Wendy S. Tyree, Green Sea Floyds High School, [wtyree@horrycountyschools.net](mailto:wtyree@horrycountyschools.net)

## **Double Exposure**

Bridget Birdsall

Sky Pony Press, 2014

304 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Fifteen-year-old Alyx Atlas just wants a do over - a new start in a new town at a new school with her new identity as a girl, but a jealous teammate threatens to reveal Alyx is intersex – a fact that could keep the team from playing in the state championship game and disqualify Alyx from participating in the sport she loves.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Alex as Well*, Alyssa Brugman

*Crossing Lines*, Paul Volponi

*Eight Seconds*, Jean Ferris

*George*, Alex Gino

*I'll Give You the Sun*, Jandy Nelson

*King of the Screwups*, K. L. Going

*Luna*, Julie Anne Peters

*None of the Above*, I. W. Gregorio

### **WEBSITES:**

Bridget Birdsall, <http://bridgetbirdsall.com/> Authors official website

Double Exposure, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDA9QlqLGbc>, Bridget Birdsall explains her book, Double Exposure!

Inter/Act Youth – <http://interactyouth.org/>, A site designed to assist you for more information about understanding what it means to be intersex.

Stop Bullying - <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>, US Government site about what is bullying and what you can do to help stop bullying.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Fifteen-year-old Alex needs the freedom to be the girl she knows she is – and after the terrible beating she receives from bullies, she and her momma pack up and move from California to Momma's hometown on the South Side of Milwaukee. You see, in California, Alex was Alex Atlas, beloved son of Dr. Avery Atlas, deceased famous biologist. But in Milwaukee Alex will be Alex Kowalsy, just another sophomore girl hoping to fit in – and hide the fact that she's intersex – at least until she can have the operation that will make her truly the girl she's always supposed to have been. But a new start is threatened by a jealous new teammate on the girls' basketball team. And she'd been doing so well, playing basketball, making friends, even the start of a budding romance. Now, her secret, once revealed could keep the team from playing in the state championship game and disqualify Alyx from participating in the sport she loves! So much for trying to live a quiet, if double life --- Double Exposure by Bridget Birdsall.

**Prepared by:** Heather Loy, Wagener-Salley High School, hloy@acpsd.net

## **Firebug**

Lish McBride

Henry Holt and Company, 2014

335 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Ava wants to be a regular teenager, especially the having a boyfriend part. Unfortunately, Ava is a firebug, someone who is able to start fires using her mind. Ava signed a contract with the Coterie, mostly to keep her loved one safe. Now, she must do their bidding, until the Coterie commands her to kill a family friend. Hoping to stay ahead of the Coterie and keep their friend alive, Ava and her close friends escape and are on the run. Can they save him, each other, and future generations?

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Croak*, Gina Damico

*Sweet Unrest*, Lisa Maxwell

*Evil Librarian*, Michelle Knudsen

*Shiver*, Maggie Stiefvater

*Twilight*, Stephenie Meyer

### **WEBSITES:**

Lish McBride, <http://www.lishmcbride.com>, Authors official website

Macmillan Publishers Firebug, <http://us.macmillan.com/books/9780805098624>, Publishers website including excerpt and reviews.

September Haul, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g\\_uoxGUt3C0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_uoxGUt3C0), Book talk beginning at 8:59 and lasting until 12:09.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Ava lives with her guardian, works at a bookstore, and enjoys spending time with her boyfriend. Her life seems ideal, except she has the ability to make fire with her mind. She has worked hard to be able to control it, and only uses this ability when her contract with the Coterie requires her skills. The Coterie asks her to do the unspeakable, kill a close family friend. Ava and her friends cause an explosion and escape the Coterie headquarters. They are hunted by the Coterie's henchmen. All she wants to do is prevent what happened to her mother from happening to another. Fans of the Twilight series will find this novel exciting.

### **Prepared by:**

Kim Hayes, Lamar High School, kimberly.hayes@darlington.k12.sc.us

## **Hunt For the Bamboo Rat**

Graham Salisbury

Random House Publishing, 2014

316 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Zenji Watanabe was born in Hawaii to Japanese parents but is an American Citizen. He is bilingual and at the beginning of WWII the American Army recruits him to be a civilian translator. He is a very smart young man and thinks that helping the army with translating duties will provide income for his struggling family. He is under age but his mother agrees to let him join the army. His is now part of the G2 intelligence for the Army. His job is to stay at a hotel with Japanese businessmen, blend in and gather intelligence for the Army. World War II breaks out and Zenji is captured, tortured and draws on strength he never knew he had to stick with his story that he is an American civilian. He endures the war and with his abilities to play both sides is able to send valuable intelligence to the Americans.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Navajo Code Talkers*, Joseph Bruchac

*A Boy No More*, Harry Mazer

*The Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II*, John Davenport

*The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins*, Walter Dean Myers

*Dear Miss Breed*, Joanne Oppenheim

*Soldier Boys*, Dean Hughes

### **WEBSITES:**

Congressional Record: Tribute to the Late LT. COL. Richard Sakakida,

[http://fas.org/irp/congress/1996\\_cr/s960130a.htm](http://fas.org/irp/congress/1996_cr/s960130a.htm), A documentary of the life and service of Richard Sakakidas, a Japanese American who served in the War as an intelligence officer. The Hunt for The Bamboo Rat is based on his story.

Richard Sakakida tells of his capture and assignment as interpreter,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6bhfwqH0zQ>, A Youtube Video of Sakakidas reenactment of his capture.

10 Biggest Misconceptions About World War II In The Philippines,

<http://www.filipiknow.net/common-misconceptions-about-wwii-in-the-philippines/>, A description of how the Philippines played an important role in World War II

War in the Philippines, <http://www.gov.ph/featured/world-war-ii-in-the-philippines/> The

interactive web project World War II in the Philippines seeks to provide the structure by which we unify the people's stories, in search of a history we can truly call our own.

### **BOOKTALK:**

How much of your life would you give for your country? Would you enlist with the Army to be a spy even though you are only 15 and have no training at all? Would you put yourself in harm's way for the good of your country? That is what Zenji Watanabe did at the beginning of World

War II. Zenji was a smart student and fluent in Japanese and English so the Army needed him to become an invisible spy and transfer information to the Government and translate documents. This exciting book is based on the true story of Richard Sakakidas who did just that in 1941. This book gives a vivid picture of the beginnings of the war through the eyes of a scared 15 year old who called on courage he did not know he possessed to survive an unspeakable situation. He endured torture and loneliness for 5 years before going home to resume his life as a “normal” teen. If you like war stories, this book is especially good because it is based on a true story and its vivid descriptions and details will make the war come to life.

**Prepared by:**

Candi Vaughn, James F. Byrnes Freshman Academy, [candi.vaughn@spart5.net](mailto:candi.vaughn@spart5.net)

# **The Last Time We Say Goodbye**

Cynthia Hand  
HarperTeen, 2015  
386 pages

## **SUMMARY:**

High School senior Lex has not been able to get beyond the grief caused by the unexpected suicide of her brother. She has a support system; however, she refuses to take advantage of it.

## **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...**

*My Heart and Other Black Holes*, Jessica Warga

*13 Reasons Why*, Jay Asher

*Fat Kid Rules the World*, K. L Going

## **WEBSITES:**

KidsHealth, [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org). This website contains much useful information on the causes, symptoms, and prevention of teenage and childhood suicide and includes an audio read along.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org). This site emphasizes understanding and preventing suicide through research, education, and advocacy.

## **BOOKTALK:**

Alexis (Lex) cannot seem to get beyond the grief of losing her brother, Tyler to suicide. For the most part, Tyler seemed well adjusted and happy, despite a previous suicide attempt, therefore, his death is all the more baffling to her and others. Her mother, enmeshed in her own grief, offers no relief, as she senses, feels, even smells Tyler's presence in the house. Lex's father, who years ago left the family after becoming involved with his secretary and later marrying her, is somewhat distant and offers little support. Her boyfriend Steve tries to give her support, however, she continually rejects him, as well as Dave, her therapist. She refuses the help and sympathy of her girlfriends. Why won't she accept the helping hands that are reaching out to her? Will she destroy all of the relationships that can help her heal? Will she continue to torture herself with the reminders and remembrances of Tyler to the point that she actually believes that he is visiting her? This beautifully written novel explores Lex's torment as she recalls, acknowledges, and eventually comes to grips with her sense of guilt surrounding the circumstances of her brother's suicide, and at last has the strength to experience "the last time to say goodbye."

## **Prepared by:**

Minerva T. King, MLS, NBCT, St. John's High School, [Minerva\\_king@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:Minerva_king@charleston.k12.sc.us)

# **My Heart and Other Black Holes**

Jasmine Warga  
Balzer + Bray, 2015  
302 pages

## **SUMMARY:**

Aysel loves physics because of its simplicity and logic, in direct contrast with her life. But is Aysel's future a black hole? She cannot run away from her past and her locked-up father who committed a violent crime that shook (and still shakes) her small town. Always judged by her classmates, boss, and, she fears, her own mother. Worried that she's destined for the same fate, Aysel looks to the website Smooth Passages for a suicide partner. But she doesn't quite expect to find Roman with his own tragic past. Can they save each other, or is the gravity of reality too heavy to escape?

## **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...**

*All the Bright Places*, Jennifer Niven  
*The Last Time We Say Goodbye*, Cynthia Hand  
*And We Stay*, Jenny Hubbard  
*This Song Will Save Your Life: a novel*, Leila Sales  
*I Swear*, Lane Davis  
*By the time you read this, I'll be dead*, Julie Anne Peters

## **WEBSITES:**

Youth Suicide Prevention Program, [www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org), this website provides all sorts of information like statistics, FAQs, warning signs, and much more to help you prevent or cope with a youth suicide.

National Alliance on Mental Illness, [www.NAMI.org](http://www.NAMI.org), this website provides information about different types of mental illness from youth to LGBTQ to veterans.

The American Academy for Suicide Prevention: [www.AFSP.org](http://www.AFSP.org), this website provides resources for learning to cope with loss and how to prevent tragedy. You can also find your local chapter and learn ways to become more involved in the organization.

Author's website, <http://jasminewarga.com/>, Visit author Jasmine Warga's website to read critical praise about *My Heart and Other Black Holes* as well as her blog!

## **BOOKTALK:**

Kinetic energy, always in motion. Variables, equations, then answers: making the complicated uncomplicated. This is why I love physics. But if energy cannot be created nor destroyed, what about the physics of death? It makes my stomach churn, but I can't lose my nerve. How much longer can I stand to be my father's daughter, my father who murdered the town hero? I can't take the chance that I'm in for the same fate. I see it in the way everyone looks at me, whispers, ignores. Even my mom and her new family. It'll be better for everyone when I'm not here, especially for me.



The website Smooth Passages is helping me. I think I found my suicide partner, Roman. I didn't think anyone else had the gravity of problems like me, but I found out his might be worse. So we're the perfect pair. But now I can't stop thinking about how he actually cares about me and has never once mentioned my father to me. Sometimes I think I start to see some light through this black hole, but it's only because of Roman. And suicide pacts are pretty final. So much for making the complicated uncomplicated.

**Prepared by:**

Jamie Gregory, James F. Byrnes High School, [Jamie.gregory@spart5.net](mailto:Jamie.gregory@spart5.net)

**Red Queen**  
Victoria Aveyard  
HarperTeen, 2015  
400 pages

**SUMMARY (Amazon):**

In *Red Queen*, by Victoria Aveyard, the world is divided into those whose blood runs red in their veins, and those whose blood runs silver. The main character, Mare Barrow's blood runs red ... or does it? She has lived her life serving the silver-blooded elite, those with super-human powers. All of her days, she has scraped by as a thief, but in a simple twist of fate, she appears before the Silver Court. In front of everyone, she discovers she has her own power.

The King isn't too happy and forces her to play the role of a lost Princess to explain her powers. As she falls deeper and deeper into the Silver world, she discovers the Red Rebellion and devotes all of her energy into helping the Scarlet Guard. Not sure who to trust, and always on her toes, Mare Barrow plays a dangerous game.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Throne of Glass*, Sarah J. Mass  
*Blackwidow: Forever Red*, Margaret Stohl  
*A Court of Thorns and Roses*, Sarah J. Mass  
*The Selection*, Kiera Cass  
*Shatter Me*, Tahereh Mafi

**WEBSITES:**Book Trailer of Red Queen,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKjg5Jz9Reo&app=desktop>, this book trailer provides a short overview of the book.

A Guide to Red Queen's Kingdom of Norta, <http://www.epicreads.com/blog/a-guide-to-red-queens-kingdom-of-norta/>, maps indicating key locations and geography from the book. Also contains a video from Victoria Aveyard explaining the Kingdom of Norta.

**BOOKTALK:**

*Red Queen* is known to be one of the best books to come out in 2015. Sci-Fi and Fantasy have been popular in the YA genre since *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*. *Red Queen* offers more into the aspect of Politics into a fantasy world. The world is well developed with how the world works and the social classes. The characters are also well rounded and have their strengths and their flaws. I also like how there's romance but it's only a small part of what's going on and that people who don't like romance to be the main issue can still enjoy this book. This book pulls a lot of twists and turns and always have you second guessing. Overall I believe anyone who has enjoyed the new YA Dystopian genre and fantasy will be completely happy with *Red Queen*.

**Prepared By:**

Ashlynn Peat, White Knoll High School, peatashlynnm@gmail.com

**Some Boys**  
Blount, Patty  
Sourcebooks Fire, 2014  
339 pages

**SUMMARY:**

Some Boys is a book about a teenage victim of sexual assault. Grace accused Zac, the school's popular athlete of rape. Grace experiences what it's like to have your community and family turn against you. She came forward and shared her pain. As a victim she was blamed. Ian is Zac's best friend who later became friends with Grace in spite of all the rumors.

**IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*All the Rage*, Courtney Summers

*Speak*, Laurie Halse Anderson

*Just Listen*, Sarah Dessen

**WEBSITES:**

Patty Blout, <http://www.pattyblout.com>, this is the author's website. This is a must see for those who have read and enjoyed Some Boys. Blount provides information on her life, her books and blog.

Stop Bullying, <http://www.stopbullying.com> - This is a good website for individuals interested in learning more about bullying and were to go for help. It provides information from various government agencies on bullying, who is at risk, and how you can prevent and respond to bullying.

RAINN, <http://www.rainn.org> - RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. It provides resources and helpful support to the community.

**BOOKTALK:**

Some Boys, by Patty Blount, is an important book about the effects of rape and recovery. It shows how Grace, a young high school girl survives being raped by Zac, one of the most popular boys on the school's lacrosse team. She must go to school and see Zac who is defended by the people in the school. All around people are asking questions and calling Grace names. She is bullied. Her friends turn away from her because they believe she is crying wolf. She suffers fear, pain and humiliation, first at the hands of Zac the accused rapist then at the hands of those close to her. Grace however, learns to move on and develops a new friendship with Ian who is Zac's best friend. Ian remains her friend through it all. In the novel, the author educates the readers to change the way they think and talk about rape.

**Prepared By:**

Adrine Weaks, South Pointe High, [aweaks@rhmail.org](mailto:aweaks@rhmail.org)

**Soulprint**  
Megan Miranda  
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2015  
368 pages

**SUMMARY:**

Alina Chase has spent her entire life imprisoned on a secluded island for a crime committed by June, a hardened criminal, in her previous life. Her soul was imprinted in her at birth and they transported her to the prison away from her parents as an infant. Alina has spent her life paying for someone else's crimes. When she is miraculously rescued, she finds that there is an even bigger mystery to solve. She soon finds that June has left behind clues to what actually did happen in the past.

Alina, Cameron, Dominic and Casey find themselves on a quest to find answers to the clues. Alina soon begins to wonder if they have ulterior motives for helping her.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK TRY ...**

*When*, Victoria Laurie

*Vanishing Girls*, Lauren Oliver

*Spirit and Dust*, Rosemary Clement-Moore

**WEBSITES:**

Discovery News | Psychology | "Real-life 'Paranormal Activity': Are Ghosts Real?"  
<http://news.discovery.com/human/psychology/real-paranormal-activity-111021.htm>, Discovery News looks into the world of ghost hunters to examine the truth or lack thereof of measures used to prove the existence of the paranormal. This article and video seem to give very little credibility to the likelihood of proof of ghosts and other paranormal activity.

Psychic Library | Beyond Books: "Psychic Abilities Test",  
<http://psychiclibrary.com/beyondBooks/psychic-abilities-test/>, Would you like to take a psychic abilities test? Well, this website's tune your psychic will supposedly help you find out what type of psychic ability you have. Several articles are referenced that will help you with your psychic development. If you ever thought you had special powers, this could be the website for you.

Wikipedia – List of psychic abilities, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_psychic\\_abilities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_psychic_abilities), Apportation, Out-of-Body experience, Clairvoyance, and Divination are a few of the psychic abilities that are defined in this quick read Wikipedia article. It gives a lot of references for further reading.

**BOOKTALK:**

Alina is in prison for a crime she did not commit. In a time when souls are imprinted in others at their birth, Alina has been given the soul of a hardened criminal. Alina would love to be a normal girl without the stigmas attached to her life from another person. As Alina begins to unravel the clues left behind in a former life she wonders if she was really guilty and if the people behind her rescue have an ulterior motive in helping her escape the prison she was in since an infant.

**Prepared by:**

Wendy S. Tyree, Green Sea Floyds High School, [wtyree@horrycountyschools.net](mailto:wtyree@horrycountyschools.net)

## Sweet Unrest

Lisa Maxwell

Flux, 2014

336 Pages

### SUMMARY:

Lucy, dragged to Louisiana during her senior year, is just a little bit out of sorts. But she realizes that this is a chance of a lifetime for her history buff parents. A plantation filled with history and tales of ghosts and voodoo legends seems to be her fate. Lucy is still determined to finish her senior project in photography, her love and lifelong ambition. She captures images that seem to speak for themselves. However, when touring the plantation near the beautiful pond, she meets Alex (Alexandre) and snaps a shot as he is departing. She feels like she already knows him. When she is developing the film, he is not in the shot.

Filled with ghosts, voodoo dolls and charms; this is a delightful story of true love that can span generations. Who is Alex? Who is Armantine? Are Alex and Lucy just a reincarnation of the true love from the past? Delightful and fast moving, students and adults will both love the mysterious southern Cajun legends and characters like Mama Legba, who helps Lucy traverse the spirit world.

### IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK TRY ...

*The House on Stone Throw Island*, Dan Poblocki

*The Haunting of Sunshine Girl*, Paige McKenzie

*Servants of the Storm*, Delilah S. Dawson

### WEBSITES:

Lisa Maxwell's Official Website - <http://www.lisa-maxwell.com/>, contains her contact information, publishing details and helpful tips for writers.

Folklife in Louisiana,

[http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Maidas\\_Essay/main\\_introduction\\_onepage.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Maidas_Essay/main_introduction_onepage.html), an essay about folklore centered in this southern state.

Creole,

<https://books.google.com/books?id=TlouQDCb8cEC&lpg=PP1&dq=creole&pg=PP132#v=onepage&q&f=false>, a novel about the Creole culture.

### BOOKTALK:

Have you ever dreamed and woken in screams? Do the dreams seem so real they take your breath away? Lucy has had the dreams for as long as she can remember. The new move to Louisiana seems to ignite the dreams and sleep seems to elude her many nights. When she meets Alex on a tour of the plantation grounds where she and her family have moved she seems to already know him. He is so familiar and her heart stirs.

Put your seatbelt on and take a journey into the secret voodoo culture and spiritual world of Louisiana. Meet Mama Legba, the modern day witch as she tries to help Lucy navigate the world of the living and the world of the dead.

**Prepared by:**

Wendy S. Tyree, Green Sea Floyds High School, [wtyree@horrycountyschools.net](mailto:wtyree@horrycountyschools.net)

## **Taking Flight: From War Orphan to Star Ballerina**

Michaela DePrince, Elaine DePrince

Alfred A. Knopf, 2014

249 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

This is the story of Mabinty Bangura, an orphan of Sierra Leone's terrible civil war, and how she was adopted by an American family, becoming Michaela DePrince and later a star ballerina. Through the love and commitment of her adoptive family, Michaela not only overcame the traumas that she experienced as a child caught up in the midst of a war but went on to become an internationally successful ballerina and has been featured in documentaries and on Dancing With The Stars.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Agnes de Mille*, Judy L. Hasday

*Every Step You Take: A Memoir*, Jock Soto

*Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina*, Misty Copeland

*Mao's Last Dancer*, Li Cunxin

*Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina*, Maria Tallchief

*Someday dancer*, Sarah Rubin

### **WEBSITES:**

Michaela DePrince's Official Website, <http://www.michaeladeprince.com/>, This website has information about Michaela's early life, books, career, film appearances, and

Taking Flight Book Trailer,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfh2AtBhZDM&feature=youtu.be>, This links to a 3 minute video trailer for Michaela's books with interviews of her and her mother.

Michaela DePrince's TED Talk, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fh5kiTn0P4Y>, This links to a 12 minutes TEDxAmerstam talk in which Michaela talks about her early life and becoming a ballerina.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Imagine that you're a four year old child named Mabinty, with a father and mother who love you more than anything, despite your discolored skin which makes others call you "devil's child." Now imagine that war has come to your peaceful village and your mother and father are suddenly taken from you. Your uncle doesn't want you because he already has 13 daughters to find husbands for and your spotted skin makes you of little value to him so he takes you an orphanage where then even your name is taken from you and you become Number 27. All you want to do is to be loved and happy again and to dance. Read this book to find out how Number 27, the "devil's child," got her wish and become an internationally successful ballerina named Michaela.

### **Prepared by:**

Marti Brown, Westwood High School, [martbrown@richland2.org](mailto:martbrown@richland2.org)



## **Tunnel Vision: a novel**

Susan Adrian

Thomas Dunne Books 2015

312 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Jake Lukin is a high school senior waiting to hear about his acceptance to Stanford. He is a great tennis player, and likes to hang out with the theater crowd. One day after school he realizes he is being followed by some government men. He immediately becomes scared because he believes his secret ability “to tunnel” has been discovered. When he holds an object of another person, he is able to sense where the owner is and how that person is feeling, thinking, and seeing. It’s an ability the government would love to have access to in order to catch people kidnapped, spies, terrorists and for control. He finds himself having to lie to family and friends in order to keep his secret safe while working as an agent for the government. Then he discovers the government agency, “the good guys” aren’t so good after all.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY ...**

*Becoming Jinn*, Lori Goldstein

*Duplicity*, N.K. Traver

*The Edge of Forever*, Melissa E. Hurst

### **WEBSITE:**

Urban Dictionary, <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=tunnel+vision>

This website just gives the definition commonly used for tunnel vision. I think this is appropriate because I am not sure if teens would know what “tunnel vision” is and after they read the book they could compare Jake’s ability with this definition.

FBI Extra Sensory Perception, <https://vault.fbi.gov/Extra-Sensory%20Perception>, ESP is considered a perception of information about events beyond what may be discerned through the five physical senses or deduced from past experience or knowledge. This website consists of cross references to ESP found in FBI files from 1957 to 1960. The FBI found no scientific support for this or other claims and did not pursue the matters raised in these references.

### **BOOKTALK:**

I am Myka Lukin and I am really worried about my brother Jake. One day he picked me up after school and told me he was being followed. He drove us crazily home and we almost crashed. Things are getting really weird at home. I hear Jake talking to people on the phone in his room and he always texts. My grandfather, a Russian immigrant, has called for Jake to come visit. My father used to work for the government was in a plane crash two years ago and my mom is alone. All of a sudden we have a housekeeper who is cooking and cleaning for us. I hated this, because I don’t need a babysitter, but Jake agrees and he thinks this Mrs. Delgado housekeeper will be great. Something is up. . . She and Jake talk a lot and I can’t be around. Jake has a new friend Eric who has appeared out of nowhere something is up

### **Prepared by:**

Susan Mitchell, Beaufort High School, [susan.mitchell@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:susan.mitchell@beaufort.k12.sc.us)

## **Walled City**

Ryan Graudin

Little, Brown and Company, 2014

432 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Disguised as a boy to survive the violence in Hak Nam Walled City, Jin searches for her sister who was sold away to the Brotherhood of the Red Dragon. She meets Dai, and, together, they attempt a daring rescue, racing against the clock before the Walled City is demolished.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Of Dreams and Rust*, Sarah Fine

*The Saints*, Lex Thomas

*Bloodtide*, Melvin Burgess

*The Fifth Wave*, Rick Yancey

*The Kill Order*, James Dashner

### **WEBSITES:**

Ryan Graudin, <http://www.ryangraudin.com/>, Find out more about this young adult author, and what led her to write this book and others.

“Kowloon Walled City”, Wikipedia article (rated Good),

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kowloon\\_Walled\\_City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kowloon_Walled_City), Learn about the history of this unique area that once stood inside Hong Kong.

City of Imagination: Kowloon Walled City 20 Years Later (Video, 17 minutes),

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj\\_8ucS3lMY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj_8ucS3lMY), a look back at the anomaly of Kowloon Walled City, and what it looks like today.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Jin is desperate to find her sister within the environs of Hak Nam Walled City, a lawless “city within a city” inside Hong Kong. Her father has sold his eldest daughter to the “Brotherhood of the Red Dragon,” the most ruthless of the Triads in power. To survive long enough to find her sister, Mei Yee, Jin disguises herself as a boy. She ventures out into the overcrowded city each day, searching for clues as to her sister’s whereabouts, while trying to avoid violent criminals who roam the mean streets. Jin finds an accomplice and protector in Dai, a boy who seems to have his own secret agenda. Together, they devise a plan to wrest Mei Yee from the clutches of the Brotherhood, putting their own lives at risk. But they can’t afford to delay their rescue effort, since they must race against the clock to carry out their plan before the Walled City is completely demolished.

### **Prepared by:**

Leah Roche, Bluffton High School, [leah.roche@beaufort.k12.sc.us](mailto:leah.roche@beaufort.k12.sc.us)

# **We Should Hang Out Sometime, Embarrassingly, A True Story**

Josh Sundquist

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2014

336 pages

## **SUMMARY:**

Using self-deprecating humor, Paralympic ski racer, Josh Sundquist, authors this poignant coming-of-age story about being a cancer survivor, amputee, Paralympic ski racer, and motivational speaker. The accounts of many of his blundering dating experiences will keep readers both laughing and cringing throughout the book.

## **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Just Don't Fall: A Hilariously True Story of Childhood, Cancer, Amputation, Romantic Yearning, Truth, and Olympic Greatness*, Sundquist, Josh

*Laughing at my nightmare*, Burcaw, Shane

*Soul Surfer*, Hamilton, Bethany

*This Star won't go out*, Earl, Esther

## **WEBSITES:**

U. S. Paralympics Alpine Skiing, <http://www.teamusa.org/US-Paralympics/Sports/Alpine-Skiing>  
Paralympic alpine skiing competition is open to both male and female skiers with different disabilities.

Josh Sundquist; Author, Speaker, Paralympian, <http://blog.joshsundquist.com/>

This author's blog includes a short bio, photos, speaking strategies, products, video links and contact information.

We Should Hang Out Sometime, <http://www.weshouldhangoutsometime.com/>

The official site for the book. This site offers a free sample and a link to the Josh Sundquist YouTube channel.

## **BOOKTALK:**

Well, I just got to tell you I am just as proud as a peacock of my Grandson Josh. Not only is he a Paralympic skier, he is a published author. How about that? My grandson is a published author. This is his book. (Show book: read title) Now let me tell y'all my Josh is a good boy but, I got plum embarrassed myself just reading about some of his most embarrassing memories. You know I don't think he thought I'd read about that, do you? He talks all about his experiences with girls but his mama and daddy raised him right so don't be expecting any hot and steamy scenes in his book just some real, straight talk about relationships. Now I always say when it comes to relationships, all women are crazy and all men are stupid. Josh talks all about how he just can't figure girls out which kind'a proves my point, doesn't it? But I really think this book might help boys understand girls a little better or at least let them know they aren't the only ones who are totally dumbfounded when it comes to the female gender and teenage girls might get a better understanding about teenage boys. Oh, this is Josh right now. You know he bought this fancy phone just so he could text me. Anyway, let me see if I can read this tiny writing. "Grammie I heard you were going all over the place telling people that you're my Grammie and talking all

about my book. Now I know you love me and you're proud of me but please stop, you're embarrassing me. See you Easter (or upcoming holiday). Love you lots, Josh!" Well, shut my mouth. Try to help out and this is the thanks you get. I just don't get any respect. You'd think he'd appreciate my help, wouldn't ya. (Mumble away) or Y'all enjoy your meeting now. Note: Use Grammie, Auntie, Sis, buddy as appropriate to the book talker.

**Prepared by:**

Carol Ross, Mayo High School for Math, Science & Technology, arol.ross@darlington.k12.sc.us

**Wildflower**  
Alecia Whitaker  
Poppy, 2014  
336 pages

**SUMMARY:**

Singing with her family's bluegrass band, Bird Barrett has lived her whole life on the road. She's spent most of the time in the background, but one night, she takes over as lead singer while her Dad recovers from a cold. To her (and her family's) surprise, there was a Nashville scout sitting in the audience who offers her a chance at a record deal – the only catch is that it's a solo deal, leaving her family behind.

Soon she is swept up into recording sessions, photo shoots and planning for a tour. While her head is into her music, her heart struggles to decide between the fame and fortune, and her family – and her longtime crush, Adam. Her publicist stages romantic rendezvous between Bird and another young male star, and the repercussions have ripple effect. Suddenly, Bird's fans and ravenous paparazzi are fighting for her attention – Bird has to decide if she can stay true to herself while becoming a rising star.

**IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...**

*The Secret of a Hum Daisy*, Tracy Holczer

*Nantucket Red*, Leila Howland

*The Boys Next Door*, Jennifer Echols

**WEBSITES:**

Alecia Whitaker's Website, <http://www.aleciawhitaker.com>, the author's own website containing her booking information, publishing details and contact information.

Alecia Whitaker's Blog, <http://aleciawhitaker.tumblr.com/>, the author's personal blog that details her life's events – books and babies included.

**BOOKTALK:**

Whether or not you are a fan of country music, you will be a fan of Alecia Whitaker's writing. Whitaker creates characters that are easy to love, to get to know and to cheer for. From the beginning, you anticipate Bird's success in her music, crossing your fingers that she gets discovered, that she catches the guy and that she stays true to herself throughout the process. Her personality shines through Whitaker's words, and the writing helps create a picture in your mind of a good-natured family traveling through the heart of the country in their RV. When the book ends, you are left wanting more ... which is perfect, because this is the first part of a series.

**Prepared by:**

Emma Ball, Liberty Hill Academy, emma\_ball@charleston.k12.sc.us