



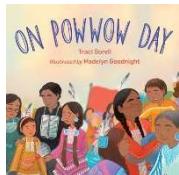
Inclusive Literature Lists

The Billings Public Library supports and values and celebrates diversity and inclusion. We strive to curate a collection of resources that represents all demographics in our community's tapestry. We believe an inclusive and welcoming community is a stronger community.

This list of inclusive and diverse literature that the youth of our community can see themselves in as well as use as a conduit to build compassion for others is brought to you on behalf of collaboration between the Human Relations Commission of the City of Billings, the Billings Public Library, and a children's literature assistant professor from Montana State University Billings.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. We welcome your feedback, suggestions, and any recommendations for this list. We will take these into consideration as we continue to develop these lists.

January 2025 Inclusive Literature



On Powwow Day

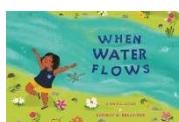
By [Sorell, Traci](#)

Illustrator [Goodnight, Madelyn](#)

2024-09 - Charlesbridge Publishing

9781623545765 [Check Our Catalog](#)

[...More](#)



When Water Flows

By [Salazar, Aida](#)

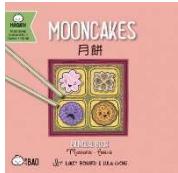
Illustrator [Benavides, Caribay M.](#)

2024-10 - Rise X Penguin Workshop

9780593659205 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Derived from Mexican Indigenous wisdom, this is the second title in a series of poetic board books centering around establishing an authentic, heartfelt connection with nature.

Using Mexican concepts, this poignantly lyrical series invites young children to pay witness to nature, to value it, and to become a steward of the planet. Water is essential to all life on earth--it helps us [...More](#)



Bitty Bao: Mooncakes: A Bilingual Book in English and Mandarin with Traditional Characters, Zhuyin, and Pinyin

By [Benard, Lacey](#)

Author [Cheng, Lulu](#)

Illustrator [Benard, Lacey](#)

2024-07 - Bitty Bao

9781958833575 [Check Our Catalog](#) CMN

Learn about the most delicious Mid-Autumn Moon Festival treat - mooncakes!

Mooncakes is a bilingual English and Mandarin Chinese book that teaches you everything there is to know about this scrumptious treat. Inspire the culinary adventurer inside each and every one of you and not only learn about the various types of mooncakes, including the different fillings, skins, and [...More](#)



The Night Market

By [Wedlick, Seina](#)

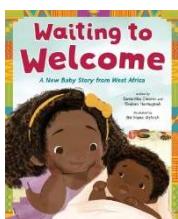
Illustrator [Mukodiri Uchendu, Briana](#)

2024-09 - Random House Studio

9780593563687 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Journey with a young girl as she explores the mesmerizing wonders of a Nigerian night market, where each stall is an adventure waiting to be discovered! Filled with vibrant illustrations, this captivating picture book invites young readers into a world of magic, mystery, and the joy of finding treasures in unexpected places.

The Night Market is here again, and all one girl needs is a [...More](#)



Waiting to Welcome: A New Baby Story from West Africa

By [Cleaver, Samantha](#)

Author [Nantogmah, Reuben](#)

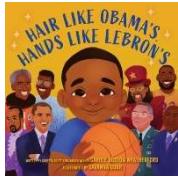
Illustrator [McNish, Bri Marie](#)

2024-07 - Feiwel & Friends

9781250883599 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Readers are invited to a joyous cultural celebration full of delicious food, laughter, and love in Samantha Cleaver and Reuben Nantogmah's charming picture book, adorably brought to life by debut illustrator Bri Marie McNish.

In Ghana and some other west African countries, when a baby is born, the extended family prepares for a whole week to welcome the little one [...More](#)



Hair Like Obama's, Hands Like LeBron's: A Picture Book

By [Weatherford, Carole Boston](#)

Illustrator [Durr, Savanna](#)

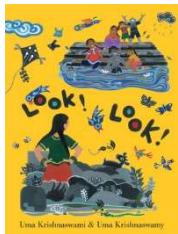
2024-10 - Abrams Appleseed

9781419771484 [Check Our Catalog](#)

From Colin Kaepernick to Martin Luther King, Jr. to Benjamin Crump, *Hair Like Obama's, Hands Like LeBron's* is a picture book celebration of Black history and excellence from *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning author Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Savanna Durr.

I have hair like Obama's and hands like LeBron's.

My mind is [...More](#)



Look! Look!

By [Krishnaswami, Uma](#)

Illustrator [Krishnaswamy, Uma](#)

2024-04 - Groundwood Books

9781773069326 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A girl in India discovers an ancient step well in this companion book to the creators' much-loved *Out of the Way! Out of the Way!*

When a girl discovers a slab of stone on a weedy patch of land, she calls to her friends, "Look! Look!" The children clear away the weeds and garbage and find more stones. They call their families to come and see and begin to dig [...More](#)



My Best Friend's Bangles

By [Ponweera, Thushanthi](#)

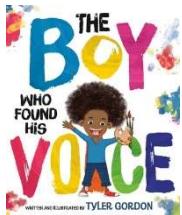
Illustrator [Joshi, Maithili](#)

2024-06 - Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

9781665921718 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A stunning, lyrical picture book exploration of the nuances of friendship as two best friends experience jealousy for the first time when one of them receives a beautiful gift of rainbow bangles from her mom.

Selvi's best friend in the whole world is Divya. She and Divya are alike in so many ways: they love biking to school; they love to play dress up; and they both miss their ammas, [...More](#)



The Boy Who Found His Voice

By [Gordon, Tyler](#)

Illustrator [Gordon, Tyler](#)

2024-06 - Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Byr)

9780374389673 [Check Our Catalog](#)

From teen activist and artistic prodigy Tyler Gordon comes a heartwarming picture book inspired by his own life about a boy with a speech difference who learns the power of self-expression through art.

There once was a young boy who had trouble with words. He paused and stuttered and stammered, which made school really tough. But with encouragement from his mom and a paintbrush in [...More](#)



Monster Hands

By [Kane, Karen](#)

Author [McMillan, Jonaz](#)

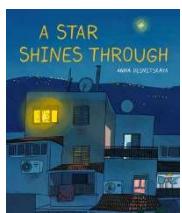
Illustrator [Mbd, Dion](#)

2024-05 - Nancy Paulsen Books

9780593532294 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Two best friends use rhyming ASL to help vanquish their fear of the monster under the bed in this fun, interactive bedtime readaloud.

When nighttime comes, Milo has a problem--he's convinced there's a monster under his bed! Luckily, his best friend Mel knows just what to do--scare the monster more than the monster scares you! So using shadow puppets on the wall, Mel and Milo make [...More](#)



A Star Shines Through

By [Desnitskaya, Anna](#)

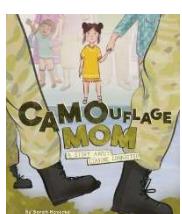
2024-08 - Eerdmans Books for Young Readers

9780802856319 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Kirkus Reviews Best Picture Books About Families List (2024)

"Straightforward, heartfelt words and thin-lined, fully imagined drawings from Desnitskaya (*On the Edge of the World*) give tender voice to one child's refugee experience." -- *Publishers Weekly* (STARRED REVIEW)

"Encouraging empathy and understanding, this illuminating picture book offers a [...More](#)



Camouflage Mom: A Military Story about Staying Connected

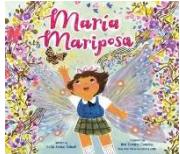
By [Parks, Elif Balta](#)

Illustrator [Parks, Elif Balta](#)

2024-07 - Cardinal Rule Press

9781945369452 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Sarah is happy to finally see her mom after two months of boot camp but she feels a distance between them that's more than the physical space that separates them. Is that her mom who stares straight ahead in a line of soldiers when Sarah calls out for her? Is that her mom who stomp stomp stomps in big, heavy boots and hides in camouflage clothing? Using the analogy of links in a chain, [...More](#)



María Mariposa

By [Valenti, Karla Arenas](#)

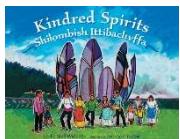
Illustrator [Ramírez González, Ana](#)

2024-07 - Chronicle Books

9781797207933 [Check Our Catalog](#)

From acclaimed author Karla Arenas Valenti and *New York Times*-bestselling illustrator Ana Ramírez González comes a lyrical children's book about finding confidence, embracing identity, and recognizing that your unique self is more than enough.

A gift from Mexico alights on María Mariposa's windowsill on her first day of school in a brand-new country: "Una mariposa!" / "A [...More](#)



Kindred Spirits: Shilombish Ittibachvffa

By [Widener, Leslie Stall](#)

Illustrator [Yazzie, Johnson](#)

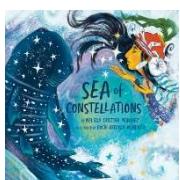
2024-07 - Charlesbridge Publishing

9781623543969 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A nonfiction picture book about the inspiring true pay-it-forward story that bridges two continents, 175 years, and two events in history--connecting Ireland, Choctaw Nation, Navajo Nation, and the Hopi Tribe.

Choctaw author Leslie Stall and Navajo illustrator Johnson Yazzie come together to share the importance of empathy and kindness.

1845. The Potato Famine devastated Ireland. An [...More](#)



Sea of Constellations

By [Márquez, Melissa Cristina](#)

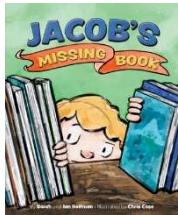
Illustrator [Mendoza, Rocío Arreola](#)

2024-05 - Penguin Workshop

9780593523605 [Check Our Catalog](#)

"Touching upon the importance of sharing and kindness, this lovely picture book also introduces a beautiful ocean world and Aztec mythology to young readers." -- *School Library Journal*, starred review

"This gentle aquatic fable reminds us that friendship and selflessness can be powerful beacons against fear and hopelessness, even in times of darkness. A visually appealing tale with a [...More](#)



Jacob's Missing Book

By [Hoffman, Sarah](#)

Author [Hoffman, Ian](#)

Illustrator [Case, Chris](#)

2024-09 - Magination Press

9781433844584 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Jacob--the star of one of the most banned books of the decade--is back in *Jacob's Missing Book*, a kid-friendly story about book banning, censorship, and LGBTQ+ rights.

Noah is confused about Emily's family, so he asks her—who's Pop and who's Dad? Jacob knows just how to explain, but how can he? The penguin book isn't in the library anymore! As the day goes on, everyone is [...More](#)

JUST WHAT TO DO



Just What to Do

By [Lukoff, Kyle](#)

Illustrator [Tahboub, Hala](#)

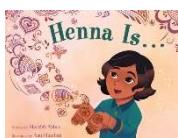
2024-07 - Dial Books

9780593462942 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A tender picture book about grief and the many ways to offer comfort in sad times, from Newbery Honor-winner Kyle Lukoff.

When you see someone sad, it's only natural to want to cheer them up. But how? Some people like hugs but others don't. Sometimes a joke is more comforting than a card. How can you do the just-right-thing if you don't know what it is?

With its spare, poignant text [...More](#)



Henna Is . . .

By [Abbas, Marzieh](#)

Illustrator [Chouhan, Anu](#)

2024-07 - Feiwel & Friends

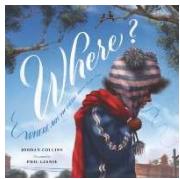
9781250862662 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A picture book that serves young readers as a lyrical love letter to henna, written by Muslim Book Reviewer Award winner Marzieh Abbas and brilliantly illustrated by Anu Chouhan.

Henna is so much more than a form of temporary body art.

Henna is nature--seeds sprouted into shrubs, leaves kissed by tropical rain.

Henna is color--the orange of [...More](#)



Where?

By [Collins, Jordan](#)

Illustrator [Lesnie, Phil](#)

2024-08 - Candlewick Press (MA)

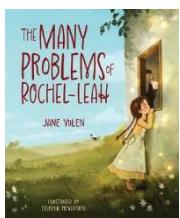
9781536232738 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A child claims their space in the world with a hopeful response to a complicated question in this lyrical picture book.

I am from children of millions of years, a time line of humanity.

I am from this planet and all others.

When a child is once again on the receiving end of the dreaded question "Where are you from?" their answer takes readers on an [...More](#)



The Many Problems of Rochel-Leah

By [Yolen, Jane](#)

Illustrator [Henditirto, Felisha](#)

2024-09 - Apples & Honey Press

9781681156392 [Check Our Catalog](#)

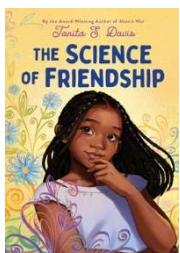
A "rousing historical tale"--*Publisher's Weekly*

"This picture book is a delight!"--*Historical Novel Society*

"Jane Yolen tri-umphs once again."--*Jewish Book Council*

Once upon a time, girls were not allowed to learn to read. This is the story of a girl who decided to change that.

Award-wining [...More](#)



The Science of Friendship

By [Davis, Tanita S.](#)

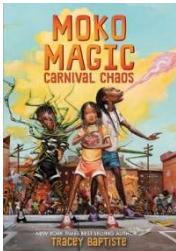
2024-08 - HarperCollins

9780063284746 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A friendship hypothesis--and one failed experiment--leads one girl to investigate the science of middle school friendship makeups and breakups in this hopeful and heartwarming story from Tanita S. Davis, author of *Partly Cloudy* and *Serena Says*.

Rylee Swanson is beginning eighth grade with zero friends.

A humiliating moment at the [...More](#)



Moko Magic: Carnival Chaos

By [Baptiste, Tracey](#)

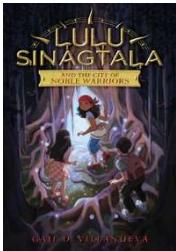
2024-08 - Freedom Fire

9781368074377 [Check Our Catalog](#)

From the best-selling author of the Jumbies series comes an Afro-Caribbean-inspired story about three cousins who discover they are mokos--protector spirits--during carnival season in Brooklyn

Weirdness and wonders abound in this colorful celebration of Afro-Caribbean culture by the author of the beloved Jumbies series.

Twelve-year-old Misty and her mother have just moved from [...More](#)



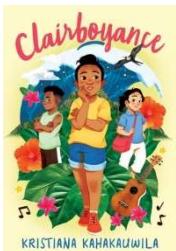
Lulu Sinagtala and the City of Noble Warriors

By [Villanueva, Gail D.](#)

2024-01 - HarperCollins

9780063255364 [Check Our Catalog](#)

In this fast-paced, thrilling middle grade fantasy rooted in Tagalog mythology, a young Filipino girl discovers realms beyond our own full of monsters and gods, a terrible evil who wants her magic, and even a talking duck! The first book in a duology from Gail D. Villanueva (*My Fate According to the Butterfly*) that's perfect for fans of Tristan [...More](#)



Clairboyance

By [Kahakauwila, Kristiana](#)

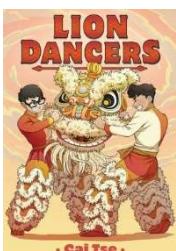
2024-05 - HarperCollins

9780063045354 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

Perfect for fans of Debbi Michiko Florence and Lisa Greenwald, *Clairboyance*'s heartfelt and sweet coming of age story with a touch of magic follows Clara as her life is turned upside down when she discovers that she has boy-specific ESP abilities.

After accidentally wishing on a family heirloom [...More](#)



Lion Dancers

By [Tse, Cai](#)

Illustrator [Tse, Cai](#)

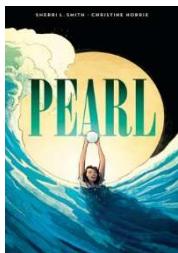
2024-08 - Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

9781665927246 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A Junior Library Guild Selection

Former best friends become bitter rivals when one returns to lion dancing after a long absence in this vibrant and heartfelt middle grade graphic novel perfect for fans of Haikyu!! and Fence.

Young Wei dreamed of being a legendary lion dancer just like his dad. With his best friend Hung performing as the tail and Wei controlling the head, he [...More](#)



Pearl: A Graphic Novel

By [Smith, Sherri L.](#)

Illustrator [Norrie, Christine](#)

2024-08 - Graphix

9781338029437 [Check Our Catalog](#)

In a beautifully crafted and captivating graphic novel from award-winning writer Sherri L. Smith and Eisner-nominated artist Christine Norrie, a Japanese-American girl must survive years of uncertainty and questions of loyalty in Hiroshima during World War II.

Amy is a thirteen-year-old Japanese-American girl who lives in Hawaii. When her great-grandmother falls ill, Amy travels to [...More](#)



Samira's Worst Best Summer

By [Hamza, Nina](#)

2024-05 - Quill Tree Books

9780063024946 [Check Our Catalog](#)

From the author of Ahmed Aziz's Epic Year comes another wryly humorous tween novel about finding belonging in an unexpected place. A must-read for fans of Hena Khan, Kelly Yang, and Karina Yan Glaser.

Samira knows this is going to be the worst summer ever. Her best friend, Kiera, ditched her for the cool girls. Her parents and older sister are taking a trip to [...More](#)



Three Summers

By [Sabic-El-Rayess, Amra](#)

Author [Sullivan, Laura L.](#)

2024-04 - Farrar, Straus and Giroux (Byr)

9780374390815 [Check Our Catalog](#)

An epic middle-grade memoir about sisterhood and coming-of-age in the three years leading up to the Bosnian Genocide.

Three Summers is the story of five young cousins who grow closer than sisters as ethnic tensions escalate over three summers in 1980s Bosnia. They navigate the joys and pitfalls of adolescence on their family's little island in the middle of the Una River. [...More](#)



Splinter & Ash

By [Nijkamp, Marieke](#)

2024-09 - Greenwillow Books

9780063326262 [Check Our Catalog](#)

"A winning addition to boundary-defying heroines like Alanna of Trebond and Sir Callie." --*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"An essential middle grade fantasy where all readers will find heroes to love and to cheer!" --Alex London, author of *Battle Dragons* and *The Princess Protection* [...More](#)



Deer Run Home

By [Lezotte, Ann Clare](#)

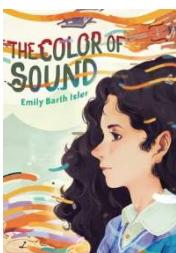
2024-10 - Scholastic Press

9781339021904 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Effie is Deaf, and no one in her family speaks sign language, her language. This moving story of survival and found family, inspired by a true court case, is perfect for fans of *Wonder* and *Out of My Mind*.

* **"Quietly extraordinary."** --*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

* **"Elegantly weaves a heartbreakingly hopeful story with hope."** --*School Library Journal* [...More](#)



The Color of Sound

By [Isler, Emily Barth](#)

2024-03 - Carolrhoda Books (R)

9781728487779 [Check Our Catalog](#)

"[A] salient celebration of family, music, and neurodiversity." --starred, *Publishers Weekly*

"A top pick for any middle school collection; a perfect book club pick and a reminder to all that patience and understanding can change lives." --starred, *School Library Journal*

Twelve-year-old Rosie is a musical prodigy whose synesthesia allows her to [...More](#)



Night Stories: Folktales from Latin America: A Toon Graphic

By [Liniers](#)

Introduction by [Bowles, David](#)

2024-06 - Toon Books

9781662665295 [Check Our Catalog](#)

The New York Public Library Best Book for Kids 2024

"Liniers' comics are funny and fanciful and whimsical and philosophical in the best sense." -- Matt Groening, *The Simpsons*

Classic Latin American folktales get an update in this new collection by celebrated author Liniers!

New York Times bestselling author and Eisner Award winner Liniers brings his [...More](#)



Lola

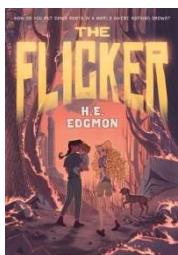
By [Valenti, Karla Arenas](#)

2024-09 - Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers

9780593177006 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A simmering tale of magic, adventure, and the extraordinary bond between a brother and sister who'd journey to the ends of the Earth to save each other. From the acclaimed author of *Lotería* comes a heartfelt story rooted in Mexican magical realism.

Ten-year-old Lola has always been touched by magic. In her Mexico City home, built around a towering tree, she is accustomed to [...More](#)



The Flicker

By [Edgmon, H. E.](#)

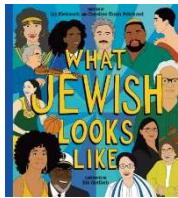
2024-09 - Feiwel & Friends

9781250873972 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Perfect for fans of *The Marrow Thieves*, *Hatchet* and *The City of Ember*, H.E. Edgmon's middle grade debut offers a bittersweet tale of hope and survival, a modern classic for the climate change generation.

One year ago, a solar flare scorched the Earth and destroyed life as we know it.

With their parents gone and supplies running dangerously [...More](#)



What Jewish Looks Like

By [Kleinrock, Liz](#)

Illustrator [Gottlieb, Iris](#)

Author [Pritchard, Caroline Kusin](#)

2024-09 - HarperCollins

9780063285712 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Compiled by educator and author Liz Kleinrock and author Caroline Kusin Pritchard, this powerful intersectional anthology celebrates thirty-six Jewish heroes--from Tracee Ellis Ross and Victor "Young" Perez to Doña Gracia Nasi. A first-ever collection that disrupts the narrative of how a

Jewish person is perceived, *What Jewish Looks Like* includes accessible
[...More](#)



Puzzleheart

By [Reese, Jenn](#)

2024-05 - Henry Holt & Company
9781250783462 [Check Our Catalog](#)

Get ready to solve the mystery at the heart of this captivating new middle grade adventure about family--and a house with a mind of its own--from the award-winning author of *Game of Fox & Squirrels* and *Every Bird a Prince*, Jenn Reese.

Twelve-year-old Perigee has never met a problem they couldn't solve. So when their Dad's spirits need raising, Perigee [...More](#)



Anatomy of Lost Things

By [Stout, Shawn K.](#)

2024-06 - Peachtree Publishers
9781682635872 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A laugh-through-your-tears middle grade novel about what it's like to lose something precious. For fans of the Three Rancheros series by Kate DiCamillo.

A necklace. A bugle. A lion statue. What do they have to do with each other? Absolutely nothing unless you're Tildy, Leon, or Nell. These items matter an awful lot to them. Not because of what they are, but what--and who--they [...More](#)



Kareem Between

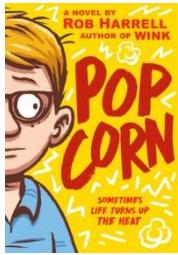
By [Safadi, Shifa Saltagi](#)

2024-09 - G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers
9780593699263 [Check Our Catalog](#)

****WINNER of the NATIONAL BOOK AWARD for Young People's Literature****

This heartfelt coming-of-age novel in verse tells the powerful story of a seventh-grade Syrian American boy and his struggles, big and small, as he navigates middle school.

"The exact type of book I would've loved, and *needed*, as a kid." -- Jasmine Warga, *New York Times* bestselling author of and Newbery [...More](#)



Popcorn

By [Harrell, Rob](#)

2024-09 - Dial Books

9780593697924 [Check Our Catalog](#)

The beloved author of *Wink* is back with a hilarious and moving story about coping with anxiety on a day when everything is going wrong

Andrew's just trying to make it through Picture Day, which is easier said than done when it seems like the whole world is out to get him--from a bully to a science experiment gone wrong to a someone else's juice snot (don't ask).

But as Andrew [...More](#)



Sunny Parker Is Here to Stay

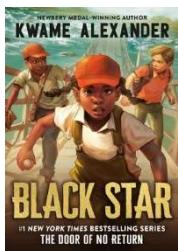
By [Finnegan, Margaret](#)

2024-04 - Atheneum Books for Young Readers

9781665930086 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A determined girl spends the summer before middle school learning to stand up for her low-income community in this funny, fast-paced read just right for fans of Kelly Yang's *Front Desk*.

Sunny Parker loves the Del Mar Garden Apartments, the affordable housing complex where she lives. And she especially loves her neighbors. From her best friend, Haley Michaels, to Mrs. [...More](#)



Black Star

By [Alexander, Kwame](#)

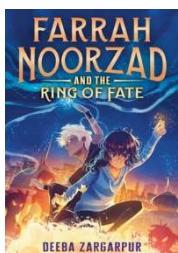
2024-09 - Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

9780316442596 [Check Our Catalog](#)

The thrilling second book in the #1 *New York Times* bestselling Door of No Return trilogy stars Kofi's granddaughter, Charley, who's set on becoming the first female pitcher to play professional ball but who soon has to contend with the tensions about to boil over in her segregated town.

You can't protect her from knowing. The truth is all we have.

12-year old [...More](#)



Farrah Noorزاد and the Ring of Fate

By [Zargarpur, Deeba](#)

2024-07 - Labyrinth Road

9780593564417 [Check Our Catalog](#)

A 12-year-old girl discovers her true jinn heritage when a birthday wish gone wrong traps her father in a magical ring, sending her on an epic

quest to free him. This richly imagined fantasy series inspired by Persian mythology and Islamic lore is filled with action, magic, and self-discovery.

"A jewel of a fantasy novel that shines with adventure and sparkles with humor."

--A.F. [...More](#)