

## **Book list, which includes fiction, nonfiction, and graphic novel titles (24 total):**

**Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *Does My Head Look Big In This?* 368 pages. (Young Adult fiction title. Not at Amery Library, but can be ordered from other libraries)**

Sixteen-year-old Amal makes the decision to start wearing the hijab full-time and everyone has a reaction. Her parents, her teachers, her friends, people on the street. But she stands by her decision to embrace her faith and all that it is, even if it does make her a little different from everyone else. Can she handle the taunts of "towel head," the prejudice of her classmates, and still attract the cutest boy in school? Brilliantly funny and poignant, Randa Abdel-Fattah's debut novel will strike a chord in all teenage readers, no matter what their beliefs.

**Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. 209 pages. Located in Adult fiction under ACH.**

*Things Fall Apart* tells two overlapping, intertwining stories, both of which center around Okonkwo, a "strong man" of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first of these stories traces Okonkwo's fall from grace with the tribal world in which he lives, and in its classical purity of line and economical beauty it provides us with a powerful fable about the immemorial conflict between the individual and society.

The second story concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world through the arrival of aggressive, proselytizing European missionaries. These two stories are modulated by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul.

**Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. 230 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA ALE.**

Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the "rez" to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

**Anderson, M. T. *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume I: The Pox Party*. 384 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA AND.**

Young Octavian is being raised by a group of rational philosophers known only by numbers -- but it is only after he opens a forbidden door that learns the hideous nature of their experiments, and his own chilling role in them. Set in Revolutionary Boston, M. T. Anderson's mesmerizing novel takes place at a time when Patriots battled to win liberty while African slaves were entreated to risk their lives for a freedom they would never claim. The first of two parts, this deeply provocative novel reimagines the past as an eerie place that has startling resonance for readers today.

**Bruchac, Joseph. *Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two*. 231 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA BRU.**

Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and with their code, they saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years. But now Joseph Bruchac brings their stories to life for young adults through the riveting

fictional tale of Ned Begay, a sixteen-year-old Navajo boy who becomes a code talker. His grueling journey is eye-opening and inspiring. This deeply affecting novel honors all of those young men, like Ned, who dared to serve, and it honors the culture and language of the Navajo Indians.

**Cameron, Ann. *Colibri*. 256 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA CAM.**

When Tzunún was little, her mother nicknamed her Colibrí, Spanish for “hummingbird.” At age four, Colibrí is kidnapped from her parents in Guatemala City and ever since she’s traveled with Uncle, the ex-soldier and wandering beggar, who renamed her Rosa. Uncle told Rosa that he looked for her parents, but never found them. When she was young, Uncle consulted fortune tellers who told him Rosa would bring him luck in finding treasure. When eight years pass with no treasure found, danger begins to threaten Rosa from all sides—but especially from Uncle himself.

**Carter, Anne Laurel. *The Shepherd’s Granddaughter*. 192 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA CAR.**

Amani longs to be a shepherd like her beloved grandfather Sido, who has tended his flock for generations, grazing sheep on their family's homestead near Hebron in Palestine. Amani loves Sido's many stories, especially one about a secret meadow called the Firdoos. But as outside forces begin to encroach upon this hotly contested land, Amani struggles to find suitable grazing for her family's now-starving herd. While her father and brother take a more militant stance against the intruding forces, Amani and her new American friend Jonathan accidentally stumble upon the Firdoos and begin to realize there is more to life than fighting over these disputed regions. Amani learns a difficult lesson about just what it will take to live in harmony with those who threaten her family's way of life.

**Ellis, Deborah. *I Am a Taxi*. 208 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA ELL.**

For twelve-year-old Diego and his family, home is the San Sebastian Women’s Prison in Cochabamba, Bolivia. His parents farmed coca, a traditional Bolivian medicinal plant, until they got caught in the middle of the government’s war on drugs. Diego’s adjusted to his new life. His parents are locked up, but he can come and go: to school, to the market to sell his mother’s hand-knitted goods, and to work as a “taxi,” running errands for other prisoners. But then his little sister runs away, earning his mother a heavy fine. The debt and dawning realization of his hopeless situation make him vulnerable to his friend Mando’s plan to make big money, fast. Soon, Diego is deep in the jungle, working as a virtual slave in an illegal cocaine operation. As his situation becomes more and more dangerous, he knows he must take a terrible risk if he ever wants to see his family again.

**Ellis, Deborah. *Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids*. 256 pages. (Young Adult Nonfiction title. Not at Amery Library, but can be ordered from other libraries)**

For two years Ellis traveled across the United States and Canada interviewing Native children. The result is a compelling collection of interviews with children aged nine to eighteen. They come from all over the continent, from Iqaluit to Texas, Haida Gwaai to North Carolina, and their stories run the gamut — some heartbreaking; many others full of pride and hope. You’ll meet Tingo, who has spent most of his young life living in foster homes and motels, and is now thriving after becoming involved with a Native Friendship Center; Myleka and Tulane,

young artists in Utah; Eagleson, who started drinking at age twelve but now continues his family tradition working as a carver in Seattle; Nena, whose Seminole ancestors remained behind in Florida during the Indian Removals, and who is heading to New Mexico as winner of her local science fair; Isabella, who defines herself more as Native than American; Destiny, with a family history of alcoholism and suicide, who is now a writer and pow wow dancer.

**Ellis, Deborah. *Sacred Leaf*. 208 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA ELL.**

This book is the sequel to *I Am a Taxi*. After finally managing to escape from being held as a virtual slave in an illegal cocaine operation, young Diego is taken in by the Ricardos, a poor, coca-farming family who provides a safe haven while he recovers from his ordeal. But even that brief respite comes to an end when the Bolivian army moves in and destroys the family's coca crop — and their livelihood. Diego eventually joins the cocaleros as they protest the destruction of their crops by barricading the roads and confronting the army head on. As tension builds to a dramatic standoff, he wonders whether he'll ever find a way to return to his family.

**Engle, Margarita. *The Firefly Letters: a suffragette's journey to Cuba*. 160 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA ENG.**

The freedom to roam is something that women and girls in Cuba do not have. Yet when Fredrika Bremer visits from Sweden in 1851 to learn about the people of this magical island, she is accompanied by Cecilia, a young slave who longs for her lost home in Africa. Soon Elena, the wealthy daughter of the house, sneaks out to join them. As the three women explore the lush countryside, they form a bond that breaks the barriers of language and culture.

**Farish, Terry. *The Good Braider*. 224 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA FAR.**

In spare free verse laced with unforgettable images, Viola's strikingly original voice sings out the story of her family's journey from war-torn Sudan, to Cairo, and finally to Portland, Maine. Here, in the sometimes too close embrace of the local Southern Sudanese Community, she dreams of South Sudan while she tries to navigate the strange world of America—a world where a girl can wear a short skirt, get a tattoo, or even date a boy; a world that puts her into sharp conflict with her traditional mother who, like Viola, is struggling to braid together the strands of a displaced life.

**Garcia, Christina. *Dreaming in Cuban*. 245 pages. Located in Adult under GAR.**

Here is the dreamy and bittersweet story of a family divided by politics and geography by the Cuban revolution. It is the family story of Celia del Pino, and her husband, daughter, and grandchildren, from the mid-1930s to 1980. Celia's story mirrors the magical realism of Cuba itself, a country of beauty and poverty, idealism and corruption. DREAMING IN CUBAN presents a unique vision and a haunting lamentation for a past that might have been.

**Kadonaga, Cynthia. *Weedflower*. 272 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA KAD.**

When Pearl Harbor is attacked, the lives of a Japanese-American girl and her family are thrown into chaos. Sumiko, 12, and her younger brother, Tak-Tak, live with their aunt and uncle, grandfather Jiichan, and adult cousins on a flower farm in Southern California. Though often busy with chores, Sumiko enjoys working with the blossoms, particularly stock, or weedflowers (fragrant plants grown in a field). In the difficult days that follow the bombing, the family members fear for their safety and destroy many of their belongings. Then Uncle and Jiichan are

taken to a prison camp, and the others are eventually sent to an assembly center at a racetrack, where they live in a horse stable. When they're moved to the Arizona desert, Sumiko misses the routine of her old life and struggles with despair. New friends help; she grows a garden with her neighbor and develops a tender relationship with a Mohave boy. She learns from him that the camp is on land taken from the Mohave reservation and finds that the tribe's plight parallels that of the incarcerated Japanese Americans.

**Laird, Elizabeth. *A Little Piece of Ground*. 240 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA LAI.**

Twelve-year-old Karim Aboudi and his family are trapped in their Ramallah home by a strict curfew. In response to a Palestinian suicide bombing, the Israeli military subjects the West Bank town to a virtual siege. Meanwhile, Karim, trapped at home with his teenage brother and fearful parents, longs to play football with his friends. When the curfew ends, he and his friend discover an unused patch of ground that's the perfect site for a football pitch. Nearby, an old car hidden intact under bulldozed building makes a brilliant den. But in this city there's constant danger, even for schoolboys. And when Israeli soldiers find Karim outside during the next curfew, it seems impossible that he will survive.

**McCormick, Patricia. *Sold*. 263 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA MCC.**

Lakshmi is a thirteen-year-old girl who lives with her family in a small hut on a mountain in Nepal. Though she is desperately poor, her life is full of simple pleasures, like playing hopscotch with her best friend from school. But when the harsh Himalayan monsoons wash away all that remains of the family's crops, Lakshmi's stepfather says she must leave home and take a job to support her family. He introduces her to a glamorous stranger who tells her she will find her a job as a maid in the city. Glad to be able to help, Lakshmi journeys to India and arrives at "Happiness House" full of hope. But she soon learns the unthinkable truth: she has been sold into prostitution. Lakshmi is trapped there until she can pay off her family's debt. Lakshmi's life becomes a nightmare from which she cannot escape. Still, she lives by her mother's words-*Simply to endure is to triumph*-and gradually, she forms friendships with the other girls that enable her to survive in this terrifying new world. Then the day comes when she must make a decision-will she risk everything for a chance to reclaim her life?

**See, Lisa. *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*. 258 pages. Located in Adult fiction under SEE.**

In nineteenth-century China, in a remote Hunan county, a girl named Lily, at the tender age of seven, is paired with a laotong, "old same," in an emotional match that will last a lifetime. The laotong, Snow Flower, introduces herself by sending Lily a silk fan on which she's painted a poem in nu shu, a unique language that Chinese women created in order to communicate in secret, away from the influence of men. As the years pass, Lily and Snow Flower send messages on fans, compose stories on handkerchiefs, reaching out of isolation to share their hopes, dreams, and accomplishments. Together, they endure the agony of foot-binding, and reflect upon their arranged marriages, shared loneliness, and the joys and tragedies of motherhood. The two find solace, developing a bond that keeps their spirits alive. But when a misunderstanding arises, their deep friendship suddenly threatens to tear apart.

**Sommerdorf, Norma. *Red River Girl*. 226 pages. Located in Young Adult under SOM.**

It's August 1846 in the northern Midwest territory and Josette Dupre has just turned thirteen. The daughter of a French trader and an Ojibwe woman, she has bigger dreams than most girls of the day, dreams of traveling East for a higher education. But these dreams come to an abrupt halt when her mother dies. Soon after the funeral, her restless father decides to lead a wagon train traveling south to St. Paul. Now Josette must face the reality of abandoning her dreams and leaving behind everything connected with her mother's memory. In this engaging historical novel, a determined young girl struggles not only with the savage wilderness in which her family is forced to make a home, but with the knowledge that there is no going back.

**Spiegelman, Art. *Maus*. 160 pages. Located in Young Adult graphic novels under YA 741.5 SPI.**

Each scene of this graphic novel opens at the author's father's home in Rego Park, N.Y. Art, who was born after the war, is visiting his father, Vladek, to record his experiences in Nazi-occupied Poland. The Nazis, portrayed as cats, gradually introduce increasingly repressive measures, until the Jews, drawn as mice, are systematically hunted and herded toward the Final Solution. Vladek saves himself and his wife by a combination of luck and wits, all the time enduring the torment of hunted outcast. The other theme of this book is Art's troubled adjustment to life as he, too, bears the burden of his parents' experiences. This is a complex book. It relates events which young adults, as the future architects of society, must confront, and their interest is sure to be caught by the skillful graphics and suspenseful unfolding of the story.

**Stone, Tanya Lee. *Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles, America's First Black Paratroopers*. 160 pages. Located in Juvenile Nonfiction under J 940.54 STO.**

World War II is raging, and thousands of American soldiers are fighting overseas against the injustices brought on by Hitler. Back on the home front, the injustice of discrimination against African Americans plays out as much on Main Street as in the military. Enlisted black men are segregated from white soldiers and regularly relegated to service duties. At Fort Benning, Georgia, First Sergeant Walter Morris's men serve as guards at The Parachute School, while the white soldiers prepare to be paratroopers. Morris knows that for his men to be treated like soldiers, they have to train and act like them, but would the military elite and politicians recognize the potential of these men as well as their passion for serving their country? Tanya Lee Stone examines the role of African Americans in the military through the history of the Triple Nickles, America's first black paratroopers, who fought in a little-known attack on the American West by the Japanese. The 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, in the words of Morris, "proved that the color of a man had nothing to do with his ability."

**Wilson, Diane Lee. *I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade*. 272 pages. Located in Young Adult under YA WIL.**

When Oyuna was a baby, a horse accidentally crushed her foot, cursing her family with bad luck. Oyuna vows to restore good fortune to her family...but how? One fateful day, soldiers from the great Khan's army invade her village to steal horses and gather new soldiers. In hopes of bringing honor to her family, Oyuna courageously disguises herself as a boy and joins the soldiers on their quest. With only her horse and her cat to keep her company, Oyuna sets off on an amazing journey across deserts and mountains—a journey that will change her life forever.

**Yang, Gene Luen. *American Born Chinese*. 240 pages. Located in YA graphic novels under YA 741.5 YAN.**

Jin Wang starts at a new school where he's the only Chinese-American student. When a boy from Taiwan joins his class, Jin doesn't want to be associated with an FOB like him. Jin just wants to be an all-American boy, because he's in love with an all-American girl. Danny is an all-American boy: great at basketball, popular with the girls. But his obnoxious Chinese cousin Chin-Kee's annual visit is such a disaster that it ruins Danny's reputation at school, leaving him with no choice but to transfer somewhere he can start all over again. The Monkey King has lived for thousands of years and mastered the arts of kung fu and the heavenly disciplines. He's ready to join the ranks of the immortal gods in heaven. But there's no place in heaven for a monkey. Each of these characters cannot help himself alone, but how can they possibly help each other? They're going to have to find a way—if they want fix the disasters their lives have become.

**Yang, Gene Luen. *Boxers & Saints*. Two volumes in this graphic novel series. Both are located in YA graphic novels under YA 741.5 YAN.**

China, 1898. Bands of foreign missionaries and soldiers roam the countryside, bullying and robbing Chinese peasants. Little Bao has had enough. Harnessing the powers of ancient Chinese gods, he recruits an army of Boxers - commoners trained in kung fu who fight to free China from "foreign devils." Against all odds, this grass-roots rebellion is violently successful. But nothing is simple. Little Bao is fighting for the glory of China, but at what cost? So many are dying, including thousands of "secondary devils"—Chinese citizens who have converted to Christianity. *Boxers & Saints* is an innovative new graphic novel in two volumes - the parallel stories of two young people caught up on opposite sides of a violent rift known as the Boxer Rebellion.

**Yep, Laurence. *American Dragons: Twenty-Five Asian American Voices*. Located in Young Adult under YA YEP.**

The dragon, a symbol of Asian art and mythology, appears in many guises and is always adaptable. Asian Americans display this same strength as they move between their Asian culture and their American one. In *American Dragons*, Laurence Yep brings together 25 talented writers, each with a different story about the Asian American experience: a Chinese American girl struggles to find her place in a suburban high school without denying her true intelligence, a young woman is torn when her romantic feelings clash with the expectations of her Vietnamese parents, and a 21<sup>st</sup> century teenager and his aging grandfather learn that it is possible to live in the future without losing touch with the past.

## **Films (8 total):**

***African American War Heroes: True Stories of Patriotism and Valor.* Released 2005. No rating. Located in Amery nonfiction DVDs under 940.54 AFR.**

Through archival film footage, war veterans from all military branches recount their personal experiences to bring their true stories to life, honoring the remarkable contributions of all African Americans who served our country.

***Bend It Like Beckham.* Released 2003. Rated PG-13. Located in Amery fiction DVDs under BEN.**

Jess Bhamra, the daughter of a strict Indian couple in London, is not permitted to play organized soccer, even though she is 18. When Jess is playing for fun one day, her impressive skills are seen by Jules Paxton, who then convinces Jess to play for her semi-pro team. Jess uses elaborate excuses to hide her matches from her family.

***Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.* Released 2007. Not rated. Located in Amery fiction DVDs under BUR.**

Begins powerfully with the Sioux Indian triumph over General Custer at Little Big Horn and goes on to center around three powerful men. Charles Eastman is a young, Dartmouth-educated Sioux doctor. Sitting Bull is the proud Lakota chief who refuses to submit to U.S. government policies designed to strip his people of their identity, dignity, and sacred land. Senator Henry Dawes is one of the men responsible for the government policy on Indian affairs. While Eastman and schoolteacher Elaine Goodale work to improve life for the Sioux on the reservation, Senator Dawes lobbies President Grant for kinder Indian treatment.

***Hotel Rwanda.* Released 2004. Rated PG-13; for violence, disturbing images and brief strong language. Located in Amery fiction DVDs under HOT**

The deeply moving true story of a five-star-hotel manager who used his wits and words to save more than 1,200 lives during the 1994 Rwandan genocide conflict.

***Long Live Pakistan.* Released 2008. No rating. Located in Amery nonfiction DVDs under 954.91 LON.**

Produced for the 60th anniversary of the creation of Pakistan, this compelling documentary explores the country's brief but turbulent past in order to understand its volatile present.

***Men of Bronze.* Released 1995. No rating. Located in Amery nonfiction DVDs under 940.41 MEN.**

Photographs, interviews with veterans, and film from the French and American National Archives are used to recount the saga of the black American soldiers of the 369th combat regiment, known as the "Harlem Hellfighters," who served with the French Army in World War I.

***New Year Sacrifice.* Released 2004. No rating. Film in Mandarin with English subtitles. Located in Amery fiction DVDs under NEW.**

The story of a young woman, widowed twice, who is seen as a bearer of bad luck and becomes a social outcast. Based on the short story by the Chinese author Lu Xun and named one of the top 100 Chinese films of all time by Asia Weekly.

***Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles.* Released 2007. Rated PG. Located in Amery fiction DVDs under RID.**

Takada is an aging Japanese fisherman who has been estranged from his son for many years. When the son is diagnosed with terminal cancer his daughter-in-law, Rie, summons him to the hospital. When his son refuses to see him, Rie gives him a videotape about the work his son was doing on a documentary film in a remote region of China's Yunnan province. Still troubled by the relationship, Takada decides to go to China and complete his son's work in part to develop an understanding of his son, and in part to do something for him. Once in China a series of obstacles and relationships bring him unexpectedly closer to both an understanding of himself and of his son.