



TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10

Ghost Boys

By Jewell Parker Rhodes

"*Ghost Boys* is a devastating novel. But it is also hopeful, full of compassion, and a compelling case for the fact that 'we can all do better, be better, live better.' Jerome's story is heartbreaking, and the telling of it is necessary, just as the telling of Emmett Till's story is necessary, though it so often goes untold. Rhodes has crafted a beautiful novel that will facilitate many conversations with young people; *Ghost Boys* is essential for the middle school classroom as well as for family discussion. This is a novel to be shared with children; read it with them, discuss it with them, and together we can gain the tools we need in order to live better."

—Michelle Cavalier, Cavalier House Books, Denham Springs, LA

Find out more about this book and others at WWW.INDIEBOUND.ORG



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Dread Nation

By Justina Ireland

"*Dread Nation* is not just a zombie story; you could have weeks of book group meetings and still be talking about it. Ireland is an author to keep your eyes on. She writes with meaning, intention, and spark. Her characters leap off the page and demand attention. In Ireland's tale, the world is crumbling, racism is making a fierce comeback (if it every really left), and you won't be able to help drawing connections to recent current events."

—Clarissa Murphy, Papercuts J.P., Boston, MA

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Children of Blood and Bone: The Orisha Legacy

By Tomi Adeyemi

"When Zélie was a child, she saw her mother and all magic wiped from existence with a tyrant's single, sweeping order. Now she finds herself tasked with restoring that magic to the land of Orisha, with the aid of her brother and that same tyrant's daughter. As Zélie races against time, she reckons with her newfound abilities and the moral complexities they awaken her to. Adeyemi's debut features truly epic world-building without sacrificing the intimate character development that propels the narrative. Every action combines taut pacing with lucid internal monologue, lending each work of magic or physical blow a palpable emotional weight. Stunning, cinematic, and resonant."

—Bill Grace, Buttonwood Books & Toys, Cohasset, MA

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The Night Diary

By Veera Hiranandani

"*The Night Diary* is a beautifully written and intimate story about the Partition of India. Nisha's letters carefully explore the changes in herself and her family through one of history's biggest forced displacements. Veera Hiranandani's writing and characterization make this intense (and often overlooked) historical atrocity accessible to young readers. Nisha's longing for her mother and search for personal identity in the midst of political struggle are also universal and timely subjects for our contemporary world. A gorgeous book that readers will fall into from the first page."

—Johanna Albrecht, McIntyre's Books, Pittsboro, NC

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The Astonishing Color of After

By Emily X.R. Pan

"From the first pages of *The Astonishing Color of After*, you know that you're reading something special. It's a strange and beautiful story of a Chinese-American girl whose mother's ghost appears to her in the form of a fantastical red bird. Chasing family secrets, she travels to Taipei to meet the grandparents she's never seen, while trying to forget about the boy she left at home. It's lovely, real, and unforgettable."

—Christie Olson Day, Gallery Bookshop and Bookwinkle's Children's Books, Mendocino, CA

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Hurricane Child

By Kheryn Callender

"Being a hurricane child myself, I instantly connected with Caroline and her bad luck. Caroline is used to being the outsider who can see ghosts, but she can't accept that her mom left her one day and never came back. When a new, charismatic girl who may see ghosts, too, starts at her school, Caroline desperately wants to befriend her. Soon the two are inseparable, and together they search for Caroline's mother. This wonderful, mystical tale takes the reader on a journey filled with grief and loss but also love, friendship, and hope."

—Holly Alexander, Magic Tree Bookstore, Oak Park, IL

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Like Vanessa

By Tami Charles

"All I can say is thank goodness the '80s are back in fashion, because this gem of a book is best read sitting in front of a TV tray in a recliner. Inspired by Vanessa Williams' 1983 Miss America win, a headstrong and pushy teacher, and a supportive and scheming grandfather, Vanessa Martin braves the small-town pageant circuit, the potential disappointment of her father, and the challenge of being dark skinned. Vanessa touches the dreamer spirit in all of us, and I cheered her on right through to the end."

—Kim Bissell, Broadway Books, Portland, OR

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Hello Hello

By Brendan Wenzel

"*Hello Hello* is filled with colors, patterns, shapes, and comparisons so beautiful and original you get that elusive feeling of surprise and delight on each page. Brendan Wenzel has created another gorgeous book perfect for anyone who has the innate longing to find a connection in the natural world. Best of all, his illustrations are mostly of endangered or threatened animals, and the book includes a lovely note on how readers can help!"

—Caitlin Jordan, Kepler's Books, Menlo Park, CA

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Islandborn

By Junot Díaz, Leo Espinosa (Illus.)

"*Islandborn* is a delightful picture book about celebrating your heritage. Lola's teacher has asked the class to draw a picture of their first home. While the whole room grows loud with excitement over what they will draw, Lola sits quietly at her desk. Lola doesn't remember her first home, the Island. How will she draw a picture if she can't remember anything about the Island? With help from her family and neighbors, Lola learns that the Island will always be with her. A great picture book for the whole family, with vibrant illustrations that jump off the page."

—Jen Steele, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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Alma and How She Got Her Name

By Juana Martinez-Neal

"Names can be a powerful reminder of our family history, as debut author/illustrator Juana Martinez-Neal shows in this beautiful story about a little girl with a very long name. Alma complains about her name (didn't we all as kids?) but slowly changes her mind as her father explains which relative each of her names honors. Dreamy illustrations with a limited color palette show Alma and her ancestors with quirky, engaging details. Whether you have a long, short, common, or unique name, this book will make you think a little bit about your name and smile. A treasure."

—Cecilia Cackley, East City Bookshop, Washington, D.C.



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