

2006 Great Books for Teens

AA - African American Interest
AS - Asian Interest
DO - Diversity (Other issues besides ethnicity)
HISP - Hispanic Interest
MC - Multicultural-several or many ethnic groups

The annotations below are collected from the following professional journals: Booklist, Horn Book, Kirkus, Publisher's Weekly, and School Library Journal.

Barkley, Brad **Scrambled Eggs at Midnight**
and Hepler, Heather

Eliot, the son of a Born-Again Christian father and a mother resigned to her fate, and Cal, daughter of a nomadic mother, find each other in this witty novel. Helping Cal and Eliot escape their situations (and find romance) are a number of offbeat, unforgettable characters, including Eliot's mother, who is not nearly as complacent with her own situation as Eliot initially believes. This story, told in alternating chapters by the two teens, is both contemporary and wise. Ages 12 and up

Behrens, Andy **All The Way**

Ian has been working all summer at the local Dunkin Doughnuts shop. In an attempt to salvage his summer before starting his senior year of high school, Ian embarks on a road trip to South Carolina so he can have sex with the internet girl he's been chatting with. Some complications - his friends are tagging along and he only has 36 hours to complete the 1,870 mile round trip. Ages 14 and up

Brooks, Kevin **The Road of the Dead.**

Fourteen-year-old Ruben is a psychic who has always had a clear connection with his tough seventeen-year-old brother Cole's feelings and impulses. He could never read his sister Rachel's feelings until the moment of her murder in a faraway isolated village. The two brothers then travel to desolate Dartmoor to find their sisters brutal killer. Ages 14 and up

Carter, Ally **I'd Tell You I Love You, But Then I'd Have
to Kill You**

As a sophomore at a secret spy school and the daughter of a former CIA operative, Cammie is sheltered from normal teenage life until she meets a local boy while on a class surveillance mission. Ages 12 and up

Cave, Patrick **Sharp North**

In a futuristic Britain, 15-year old Mira witnesses a murder which leads to a surprising discovery. When she arrives in the city, she discovers her connection to the powerful Saint family. This book touches on such societal issues such as cloning and environmental changes, but all in the form of a story that is fast-paced despite its length. Ages 14 and up

Cohn, Rachel

Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist

When confronted with his ex-girlfriend at the club where his band is playing, Nick does the first thing he can think of - he asks the first girl he sees if she will be his "girlfriend" for 5 minutes. Thus begins this foul-mouthed, fun-filled, intense journey into all corners of New York nightlife from the alternating viewpoints of Nick and Norah. Ages 14 and up

Cole, Stephen

Thieves Like Us

Jonah is sent to a Juvenile Detention Center for hacking into a few too many computers. He isn't there for long before he is coaxed into joining a group of other teenagers who each have special talents and go on missions all over the globe. This first mission is to steal the elixir of life from an ancient tomb. This adventure-filled novel is a delightful mix of Indiana Jones, Charlie's Angels, and Tomb Raider. Ages 12 and up

Cooney, Caroline B.

Hit the Road

When Brit's parents go on vacation, they leave her with her 85 year old grandmother. But Nannie has vacation plans of her own - her 65th college reunion. As Brit and Nannie head up I-95, this fun, fast-paced story takes on kidnapping, learning to drive, and the perceptions of the very elderly. Each of the "girls" is very unique, and the reader will often not be sure who is right and wrong on this road trip. Ages 12 and up

de la Cruz, Melissa

Blue Bloods

Forget everything you ever thought you knew about vampires. The information was just myths created by vampires to keep humans from finding out the truth about them. The blue bloods are a group of vampires that came to America with the original settlers of Plymouth. They are alive and cycle. When their "life" is done, they come back again in another human shell, for all of time. That is, unless the Silver Bloods succeed in eliminating them. Ages 14 and up

Dessen, Sarah

Just Listen

Annabel just can't tell. She can't tell her Mom she wants to quit modeling, can't tell why her best friend now hates her, can't tell about her sister's anorexia, and certainly can't tell about why she's now a high school loner. Then she gets to know Owen, a boy who can't help but tell, and who helps Annabel open up and talk. Ages 12 and up

Draper, Sharon M.

Copper Sun

Amari is a fifteen year old African girl who, after watching her family and fellow villagers slaughtered, is sold into slavery. Percival Derby purchases Amari as a birthday gift for his son. Amari spends her days in the kitchen with Teenie the cook, Tidbit, her son, and Polly, a white indentured servant. The four of them form a "family" which helps them survive their abusive situation and to eventually escape. Ages 14 and up AA

Gantos, Jack

The Love Curse of the Rumbauchs

A young woman named Ivy, who made a shocking discovery in her small western Pennsylvania town when she was seven years old and learned a surprising secret nine years later, questions whether she has inherited the Rumbaugh curse of having excessive love for one's mother. Ages 12 and up

Going, K. L.

Saint Iggy

Iggy is the son of drug addicted parents. After being kicked out of high school he searches for hope, but is connected with people who draw him into a new set of problems. The story is full of insights that reveal how people care for, as well as, mistreat each other. Ages 14 and up

Green, John

An Abundance of Katherines

After being dumped by 19 Katherines, Colin (a child prodigy) embarks on a road trip with his friend, Hassan, that leads them to Tennessee. There Colin experiences a "eureka moment" where he believes that he can truly predict how his relationships will turn out based on a mathematical theorem he's created. One factor he hasn't counted on though - a Lindsey. Ages 14 and up

Inside Delta Force: The Story of America's

Haney, Eric L.

Elite Counterterrorist Unit

This is an inside look at the formation of America's Counterterrorist Unit, told from the perspective of Command Sergeant Major Eric L. Haney who was present from the beginning. This riveting account details the training process, from getting invited to be a part of the team until the unit is officially formed. Ages 12 and up

Hartinger, Brent

Grand & Humble

Harlan, son of a rich senator, is a 17-year-old popular jock. Manny, a 17-year-old not popular theater geek, is the only son of a single father. Their parents are keeping secrets from them and they have secrets of their own. As both boys struggle to regain control of their lives they realize how much of their existence is about fate and the choices and mistakes their parents made in the past. Ages 14 and up

Hautman, Pete

Rash

In the future 24% of the population is incarcerated for issues, such as raising your voice and obesity. Although Bo struggles to maintain his control, when he suggests that he started a rash that spread through the school, he too is sent to a penal colony. It is there that Bo begins to question a country that can take away a person's right to freedom in the name of safety. Ages 12 and up

Nothing But the Truth (and a Few White Lies)

Headley, Justina Chen

Patty Ho is trapped in the middle of two cultures. She is half white, half Taiwanese, and being raised by her Taiwanese mother who is very prejudiced against the white world. After completing her sophomore year in high school, Patty is sent to Stanford for Math Camp. While she is there she discovers the history of her parents, first love and heartbreak, and gradually comes to accept who she is. Ages 12 and up AS

Hyde, Catherine Ryan**Becoming Chloe**

A homeless teenager rescues a teenage girl when she is raped in an alley outside his cellar room. Searching for beautiful things in the world, they venture off on a cross country trip. This is an eloquent story about how two troubled teens find redemption through each other. Ages 14 and up

Jaffe, Michele**Bad Kitty**

Seventeen-year-old Jasmine has wanted to be a detective since first grade. Unfortunately, she's a trouble magnet! When her family goes to Las Vegas for the family's summer vacation, trouble follows in the form a three legged cat, a movie star and a hottie with a British accent. With the help of her three friends, Jas is on a mission to solve the case. Ages 12 and up

Jaramillo, Ann**La Linea**

When fifteen-year-old Miguel's time finally comes to leave his poor Mexican village, cross the border illegally, and join his parents in California, his younger sister's determination to join him soon imperils them both.

Ages 12 and up HISP

Klause, Annette Curtis**Freaks: Alive, on the Inside**

Abel lives with his parents in a circus comprised of "Freaks." Since Abel was born without an apparent abnormality he feels abnormal among this group. Abel leaves his circus home and eventually finds employment as a knife-thrower in a larger circus. Along the way, Abel discovers he is being led towards his destiny by a dead mummy. Follow Abel's often hilarious and sometimes harrowing adventures, as he finds his place in the world.

Ages 14 and up

Korman, Gordon**Born to Rock**

Leo, the president of his high school's Young Republican Club, learns that his biological father is the lead singer of a punk rock band. After having his scholarship from Harvard taken away for an ethic violation, Leo approaches his biological father in hopes of having him pay his tuition. Instead Leo ends up working as a roadie on a punk rock tour and learning much about himself in the process. Ages 12 and up

Lipsyte, Robert**Raiders Night**

Matt Rydek is the co-captain of his high school football team, a star athlete with aspirations of playing Division One college football. After witnessing the brutal hazing attack on a young teammate, and dealing with his own use of performance enhancing drugs, can Matt do the right thing and tell the truth, or will he play by the Raiders rules and take part in the cover up? Ages 14 and up

Fly on the Wall: How One Girl Saw**Lockhart, E.****Everything**

Sixteen-year-old Gretchen Yee, a student at the Manhattan School for Music and Art,

wishes she could understand boys. She wishes she could be a fly on the wall in the boys' locker room. When her wish comes true, Gretchen spends a week in the locker room learning all she wanted to know and more. Ages 12 and up

Lupica, Mike

Heat

Michael Arroyo, originally from Cuba and now a star pitcher in New York City Little League, lives alone with his 17-year-old brother and dreams of playing for the Yankees. When Michael's talent embarrasses a rival player, the player's father questions Michael's age and demands a birth certificate for proof. When adults cannot get the necessary proof from Havana, Michael is benched and his dreams are in danger of being dashed.

Ages 10 and up HISP

The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy &

Lyga, Barry

Goth Girl

Fifteen-year-old Fanboy is having a rough sophomore year dealing with bullies, his pregnant mom, and his best friend's move to the dark side (sports and popularity). Life begins to get better when he meets Kyra, Goth Girl, who shares his love of comics and his disdain for the popular kids in school. Will Kyra help Fanboy live his dream to see his own graphic novel published or will she lead him down a dangerous path? Ages 14 and up

MacLean, Christine Kole

How It's Done

Grace has lived her life by her fundamentalist, God-fearing father's book. But then she meets Michael, a gorgeous college professor who is interested in her. Michael's attention makes Grace question her father's rules, her own beliefs, and even who she is. Ages 14 and up

McCormick, Patricia

Sold

Sold into prostitution, Nepali teenager Lakshmi lives a nightmare in a Kolkata brothel. She gradually forms hesitant friendships with other girls, and learns English from the young son of one of her colleagues. Despite this difficult life, Lakshmi matures, learning about unfamiliar technologies such as television and automobiles. An outside aid organization learns of the plight of Lakshmi and the others, and a daring escape ensues. Told in free verse with an explanatory afterward, this work is both powerful and unsettling.

Ages 12 and up MC

McNeal, Laura and McNeal, Tom

Crushed

Trouble begins when a high school girl, Audrey, dates a sophisticated classmate. Audrey also has a secret admirer who spreads slander about her boyfriend and a teacher to gain Audrey's attention. As the truth about the slander unfolds secrets are revealed and hearts are broken. Ages 12 and up

Medley, Linda

Castle Waiting

When Sleeping Beauty leaves the castle with her prince, the castle and its inhabitants await her return. In the meantime the castle becomes home to an unusual assortment of monsters, sprites, and humans. This episodic fairytale will leave you wondering what magic and mystery now surround the storybook castle. Ages 14 and up

Mochizuki, Minetaro Dragon Head, Volume 1

In this graphic novel, three people appear to be the sole survivors in a mass train wreck – everyone else is dead and the crash site is within a tunnel which seems to have no way out. Will they go crazy before they are rescued? Will they be rescued? Will they survive? Ages 16 and up

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert Dairy Queen

Sixteen-year-old D.J. works the family farm, likes football, and Brian, the quarterback for the rival football team. At the suggestion of Brian's coach, she trains Brian all summer. During the course of the story, D.J. matures, learns about how difficult playing football really is, tries out for her school's football team and ends up dating Brian. This first novel is a joy to read and the depiction of D.J.'s dysfunctional family is well done. Ages 12 and up

Nelson, Blake Paranoid Park

His decision to go to the park that evening would change his life forever. The skateboarder never thought that he would become entangled in a web of lies to hide terror, murder, and deceit. Ages 12 and up

Noyes, Deborah One Kingdom: Our Lives with Animals

This non-fiction book explores the ways that our beliefs, culture, myths and science have been influenced by animals. Noyes also addresses issues of conservation and a debate on the use of zoos. Interesting facts and photographs accompany the narrative. Ages 12 and up

Peters, Julie Anne Between Mom and Jo

Fourteen-year-old Nick has a three-legged dog named Lucky 2, some pet fish, and two mothers, whose relationship complicates his entire life as they face prejudice, work problems, alcoholism, cancer and finally, separation. Ages 12 and up

Pinder, Margaret But I Don't Want to Be a Movie Star

While spending the summer in California with her movie-star grandmother, fifteen-year-old Kat reluctantly agrees to impersonate the aging actress in the hopes of helping her land an important movie role. Ages 12 and up

Price, Charlie Dead Connection

Murray Kiefer is a loner who finds companionship among the dead people buried in the local cemetery. As his high school year begins, a popular girl named Nikki Parker

disappears. While others search for clues to her probable murder, Murray is drawn into the case from another direction – from Nikki herself. He hears her whispers that she wants to be found. This mystery is suspenseful and the ending will surprise most readers. Ages 12 and up

Reinhardt, Dana **A Brief Chapter in My Impossible Life**

Simone has always known she was adopted, but she doesn't ask questions about her birth mother and has a wonderful relationship with her adoptive family. However, after much prodding from her parents, Simone finally agrees to call and ultimately meet her birth mother, Rivka. First love, the definition of family, and religion are all explored in Simone's journey to discover who she truly is. Ages 12 and up

When the Wall Came Down: the Berlin Wall

Schmemann, Serge **and the Fall of Soviet Communism**

Relive the first hand accounts of the events before, during, and following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as written by witness, New York Times writer, and Pulitzer Prize winner Serge Schmemann. Ages 12 and up

Sfar, Joann **Vampire Loves**

This graphic novel for older readers portrays single vampire Ferdinand as a slacker who carries his music around in a bag and chases women. The four separate but interrelated, humorous and at times, unpredictable, stories feature nice colorful illustrations of Ferdinand and his varied friends. Ages 14 and up

Sheth, Kashmira **Koyal Dark, Mango Sweet**

16-year-old Jeeta lives in a traditional Indian family in Mumbai, India. After witnessing the arranged marriages of her older sister, as well as spending time with her more liberal friend Sarina, Jeeta begins to question the status quo. This is a real immersion into contemporary Indian culture. Ages 12 and up MC

Stassen, Jean-Philippe **Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda**

Deogratias is just a boy. Benina is just a girl. Only he is a Hutu, and she is a Tutsi — so say their ID cards. The tale of Deogratias takes place in Rwanda in the days leading to a swift and gruesome genocide and is presented in graphic novel form for older readers. Ages 16 and up MC

Stone, Tanya Lee **A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl**

Three girls who attend the same school, who are linked to and subsequently hurt by the same boy, share their experiences with one another as well as all girls at their school by detailing their sagas in the school library's copy of *Forever* by Judy Blume. Every girl in school wants to borrow that copy, simply to read the handwritten notes in the margins about the school's bad boys and to add their own notes. Ages 14 and up

**Berenice Abbott, Photographer: An
Independent Vision**

Sullivan, George

This well-illustrated biography details the interesting life of famous photographer, Berenice Abbott. Berenice left college to learn photography in the art communities of New York and Paris where she invented some of her own equipment. Tackling portraits and cityscapes of New York in the 1920's and 1930's that are still famous today, Berenice also used photography to demonstrate scientific theories. Ages 12 and up

Tharp, Tim **Knights of the Hill Country**

Hampton Green is the star linebacker of the Kennisaw Knights, a longtime football powerhouse in rural Oklahoma. Off the field, he is forced to deal with a number of issues, such as his single-parent mother's string of boyfriends; his first romance - with a girl most jocks aren't expected to notice; and the unraveling of his relationship with his best friend. The author's spot-on descriptions of football-crazed characters in a small town merge well with the excitement of the games themselves. Ages 14 and up

Thayer, Ernest **Casey at the Bat**

The classic baseball poem is updated with modern, edgy illustrations by Joe Morse. While the poem may be familiar to adults, it could be new to teens and the illustrations really add to that sense of newness. Ages 10 and up AA

**You, Maybe: the Profound Asymmetry of
Love in High School**

Vail, Rachel

Sophomore Josie is just a regular high school girl, not that popular but not an outcast either. Suddenly mega-hot senior Carson Gold seems to be falling in love with her. Will Josie lose herself to Carson's charms? Ages 12 and up

van Diepen, Allison **Street Pharm**

At only seventeen, Brooklyn resident Ty Johnson can already claim four years of experience in managing his incarcerated father's drug business. However the powerful forces of rival dealers, a new school, a new relationship and family ties combine to present Ty with a glimpse of a different future and a life-altering decision. Ages 14 and up AA

Vizzini, Ned **It's Kind of a Funny Story**

At a prestigious Manhattan high school, Craig realizes he isn't as brilliant as he thought he was. Paralyzed with obsessive thoughts about all that he needs to do to compete with other students, Craig spends more time with his friends drinking and doing drugs. As his world continues to crumble, Craig checks himself into a psychiatric hospital where he not only helps the other quirky patients, but learns what he needs to help himself. Ages 13 and up

Volponi, Paul **Rooftop**

Still reeling from seeing police shoot his unarmed drug dealing cousin to death on the roof of a New York City housing project, seventeen-year-old Clay, a drug addict, is dragged into the whirlwind of political manipulation that follows. With drugs, race,

poverty, violence and even doing the right thing featured in this book, there is much to discuss. Ages 12 and up AA

Vrettos, Adrienne Maria **Skin**

Donnie, a middle school outcast, must cope with his parent's separation while at the same time watching with horror as his older sister starves herself in a losing battle with anorexia. Ages 12 and up

Waite, Judy **Forbidden**

For most of her life, all Elinor has ever known is the True Cause. She lives only to work, worship, and spread the word until Endtime and the New Beginning. When she is chosen by the cult leader as one of his Brides, everyone says she should be happy but lately, she has been plagued by Bad Thoughts. A chance encounter stirs vague memories of her life before and she realizes there is a world outside the commune's wall. Ages 12 and up

Watase, Yuu **Absolute Boyfriend, Volume 1**

When Riiko tires of her real love life, she finds a "lover figure" online and orders him to suit. When he arrives, he's a dream come true, but Riiko neglected to notice his price tag, \$1,000,000.00! She can't return him, and doesn't really want to, but how will she raise this amount of money? This manga is sweet, romantic, and a little sexy. Ages 16 and up

Werlin, Nancy **The Rules of Survival**

Matt, the 17-year-old protagonist of this gripping novel, is constantly on alert for his mother Nikki to have a meltdown and turn her violent rage against him, his sister Callie, and their young stepsister Emmy. Finally, a new boyfriend of Nikki's takes note of her psychosis and gets involved before it's too late. This is a thought-provoking exploration of a teenager's self-reliance which will captivate readers to the final page. Ages 12 and up

Yang, Gene Luen **American Born Chinese**

This graphic novel which features crisp colorful illustrations, is composed of three interrelated stories about the problems of young Chinese -Americans trying to participate in the popular culture. However, it is more than just the story of a Chinese-American childhood; it's a fable for every kid born into a body and a life they wished they could escape. Ages 12 and up AS

Zusak, Markus **Book Thief**

Death takes an interest in Liesel as she steals a book lying next to her younger brother's grave. Liesel witnesses the cruelty towards those who dissent against the Nazi regime as she grows up with a poor family in a small German town. Her only means of defiance in the face of these enormous events is to continue to steal books. Ages 12 and up MC