

# 2023 Rainbow List for Middle Grade Readers

The 2023 Rainbow List is selected by the committee of the Rainbow Project, a joint task force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table and the Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Queer Round Table of the American Library Association. This booklist includes selected titles for middle grade readers available in HSPLS. Books with an \*asterisk are “Top Ten Titles.” For the complete 2023 Rainbow List, visit [2023 Rainbow Book List](#). Some titles may be available in e-formats. Check the catalog or ask a librarian for assistance.

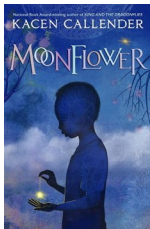
## Fiction



Bury, Katryn  
**Drew Leclair Gets a Clue**

J Bury, Gr. 5 and up

Drew Leclair wants to be just as great a detective as her hero, Lita Miyamoto. But when the latest mystery involves cyberbullying posts about her mother running away with her guidance counselor, Drew wants to get to the bottom of it quickly, before all of her secrets are exposed. But the lines between being a good detective and being a good friend start getting really blurry when Drew has to investigate her own friends. *Fiction-Mystery*



Callender, Kacen

**\*Moonflower**

J Callender, Gr. 4 and up

Moon escapes their crushing depression each night by journeying into the spirit world, where they explore new dimensions with their friend Wolf. In our world, Moon struggles with their mom’s frustration with their nonverbal sadness, therapy that feels useless, and their new class, where they are haunted by memories of past bullying. In this stunning work of magical realism, Moon discovers that love and kindness can exist in any world. *Fiction-Realistic*

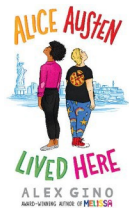


Clark, Zack Lorán

**The Lock-Eater**

J Clark, Gr. 5 and up

Melanie Gate has a talent for being able to open anything, regardless of what locks or magic stand in her way. When a mysterious gearling named Traveler appears at her orphanage seeking to adopt a child to be a witch’s apprentice, Melanie is selected due to her penchant for magic. Faced with the adventure of a life-time, Melanie travels the kingdom and discovers secrets about herself—like the fact that she likes girls—and where she came from. *Fiction-Fantasy*

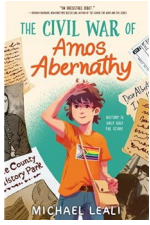


Gino, Alex

**Alice Austen Lived Here**

J Gino, Gr. 4 and up

When Sam and TJ, two non-binary best friends, are assigned a project on local history, they insist on finding a queer historical figure from Staten Island. In the process, they learn about queer identity in the past and present and the importance of queer representation for everyone. *Fiction-Realistic*

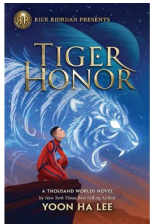


Leali, Michael

**\*The Civil War of Amos Abernathy**

J Leali, Gr. 4 and up

History buff and reenactor Amos has a chance to create a new exhibit for the living history park where he volunteers. When he discovers the story of Albert Cashier, a transgender civil war soldier, he makes it his mission to bring attention to little known historic LGBTQIA+ people. Along the way he learns about all kinds of people left out of the history books and what it means to be an ally to people who are different from him. *Fiction-Realistic*

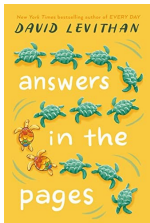


Lee, Yoon

**\*Tiger Honor**

J Lee, Gr. 4 and up

After Sebin gets accepted into the Space Forces in hopes of becoming a battle-cruiser captain like their uncle, their ship is taken hostage. They must rise to the occasion to restore their family's honor, in this action-packed sci-fi adventure inspired by Korean mythology. *Fiction-Science Fiction*



Levithan, David

**Answers in the Pages**

J Levithan, Gr. 4 and up

When Donovan's mother challenges a book his class is reading, he is caught in the middle of a censorship war. Is he brave enough to stand up to his mother's harmful actions even if he knows she's doing what she thinks is best? *Fiction-Realistic*



Lockington, Mariama J.

**In the Key of Us**

J Lockington, Gr. 5 and up

Andi's feeling lost after the death of her mother, and even more so at Harmony Music Camp where she's one of a few black kids. When she begins to connect with Zora, one of the most popular girls at camp, the two realize they have a lot to discover about themselves from each other. *Fiction-Realistic*



Lukoff, Kyle

**\*Different Kinds of Fruit**

J Lukoff, Gr. 5 and up

Annabelle is excited to have a new kid, Bailey, join her sixth-grade class. The two quickly become friends, but whenever Annabelle brings up the non-binary Bailey to her parents, they start acting weird. When Bailey meets Annabelle's parents, Annabelle is shocked at how rude her parents are to Bailey. Annabelle fears her parents are homophobic and transphobic and is scared about what that might mean for their relationship as Annabelle questions her own identity. But in truth, her father may have more in common with Bailey than Annabelle thinks. *Fiction-Realistic*

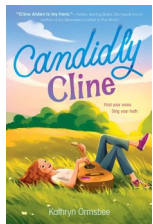


Machias, Jules

**Fight + Flight**

J Machias, Gr. 5 and up

Avery loves speed, thrills, and riding her dirt bike, but ever since her diagnosis of hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, she's afraid of no longer being able to do the activities she loves and being a burden to her moms. Avery's crush, Sarah, is also dealing with fear. In the months since her aunt passed away, Sarah's been having debilitating panic attacks. When a traumatic active shooter drill occurs at school, the girls grow closer and work through their fears together. *Fiction-Realistic*

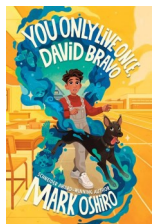


Ormsbee, Kathryn

**Candidly Cline**

J Ormsbee, Gr. 4 and up

Cline has always dreamed of being a singer/songwriter. When she has the opportunity to attend a workshop at a local community college, she meets Sylvie. Cline begins to fall for Sylvie and struggles to find a way to express her own identity. *Fiction-Realistic*



Oshiro, Mark

**\*You Only Live Once, David Bravo**

J Oshiro, Gr. 4 and up

David is cursed. As he struggles his way through middle school and searches for how to describe his transracial adoption to his peers, David finally wishes for a do-over. Yet, he really didn't think it would come true, especially in the form of a timeline traveling, talking dog named Fea. As they hunt down when and what went wrong in the past, David and Fea make discoveries neither was looking for. *Fiction-Fantasy*

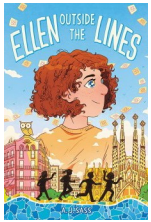


Reese, Jenn

**Every Bird a Prince**

J Reese, Gr. 4 and up

Seventh grader Eren's world changes when she saves a magical talking bird. She soon learns of a battle raging in their forest kingdom against the evil wolfish frostfangs, whose whispers of fear and despair are creeping into her world. Now, in addition to figuring out why she doesn't share her friend's romantic feelings and dealing with her mom's slimy new boyfriend, Eren must become a champion and save her world. *Fiction-Fantasy*



Sass, A.J.

**\*Ellen Outside the Lines**

J Sass, Gr. 5 and up

Ellen functions best when things are planned out and there are no surprises, so when the itinerary for a school trip to Barcelona changes and she finds herself separated from her best friend, Ellen struggles to cope. Yet, meeting new friends, especially her new non-binary classmate, provides Ellen with opportunities to expand her world and learn more about herself. *Fiction-Realistic*



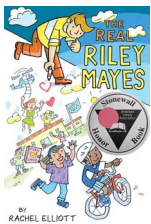
Stamper, Phil

**Small Town Pride**

YA Stamper, Gr. 5 and up

When Jake's dad hangs a large pride flag on their front yard in small town Barton Springs, OH, the mayor begins to receive complaints. Jake wants to know why can't they hold a pride festival in Barton Springs? Jake knows he'll have to get approval from the town council, and the mayor won't be on his side. Now the mayor's son, Brett, wants to spend time with Jake. Can Jake trust that Brett, as cute as he is, isn't in league with his mom, the Mayor? *Fiction-Realistic*

**Graphic Novels**



Elliott, Rachel

**The Real Riley Mayes**

J Elliott (GN), Gr. 4 and up

There is only one thing Riley Mayes loves more than drawing: comedian Joy Powers! When the class is assigned a letter-writing project, Riley is excited to write to her hero. With the help of Cate and new kid Aaron, Riley learns more than just how to write a good letter. *Graphic Novel, Fiction-Realistic*

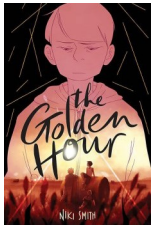


Lapensée, Elizabeth, KC Oster (illustrator), and Aarin Dokum (translator)

### **Rabbit Chase**

J Lapensée (GN), Gr. 4 and up

Aimée joins their class on a trip to honor the Anishinaabe water spirits. When Aimée wanders off, they're transported to an alternate dimension where they must help the Trickster fend off the dark spirits, all while battling the Land Queen and her robotic minions. *Graphic Novel, Fiction-Fantasy*

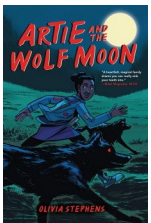


Smith, Niki

### **The Golden Hour**

J Smith (GN), Gr. 4 and up

Manuel has always loved photography, but after witnessing a violent attack at school, Manuel suffers from PTSD and uses his phone's camera as an anchor when he dissociates. A school photography assignment has Manuel paired up with new friends Caysha and Sebastian, who both show animals for Ag-Club. As Manuel helps Sebastian raise his calf, the two grow closer. *Graphic Novel, Fiction-Realistic*



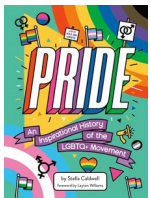
Stephens, Olivia

### **\*Artie and the Wolf Moon**

YA GN Artie, Gr. 6 and up

Artie is excited to discover she comes from a family of werewolves. Her mom relies on their community to help Artie learn about being a werewolf and her father. *Graphic Novel, Fiction-Fantasy*

## **Non Fiction**

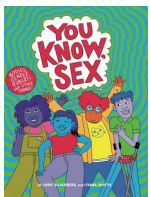


Caldwell, Stella

### **Pride: An Inspirational History of the LGBTQ+ Movement**

YA 306.7609 Ca, Gr. 5 and up

Interspersed with interview profiles of queer teens and new adults, this LGBTQ+ history book starts by looking into queer content in ancient myths and follows LGBTQ milestones into the modern era. Profiles on notable figures like Anne Lister, Oscar Wilde, Audre Lorde, Martha P. Johnson and Harvey Milk are included. *Nonfiction-Informational*



Silverberg, Cory and Fiona Smyth

### **You Know, Sex: Bodies, Gender, Puberty, and Other Things**

YA 306.7609 Ca, Gr. 5 and up

A comprehensive graphic guide for teens on nearly everything they need to know about sex. Includes discussions on relationships, consent, and body differences with a diverse cast of characters, and questions to spark conversations with peers and caregivers. *Graphic Novel, Nonfiction-Informational*

The complete 2023 Rainbow List, lists from previous years, and information about the Rainbow Project may be found at: <http://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks>  
Accessed May 26, 2023



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