



VOYA'S



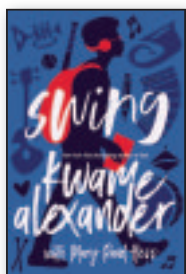
PERFECT TENS 2018

Of all of the reviews in VOYA in print in 2018, our reviewers awarded only nineteen (about two percent) the Perfect Ten—a 5Q for quality (hard to imagine it better written) and a 5P for popularity (every young adult who reads was dying to read it yesterday).

After careful consideration, VOYA's reviewers considered these titles to be the best of the best in 2018. These reviewers bring extensive knowledge of young adult titles and professional expertise (as librarians and educators who work directly with young adult readers) to their ratings.

Excerpts from their reviews tell us why these titles are extraordinary. Give these titles a special place in your readers' advisories and collections.

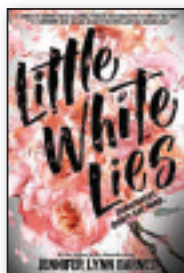
Alexander, Kwame, and Mary Rand Hess. **Swing**. Blink, October 2018. 448p. \$18.99. 978-0-310-76191-4. VOYA October 2018. 5Q 5P M J S



"Alexander teams up once again with Hess to deliver a heartfelt, moving story about the power of music, friendship, and identity. What begins as a straightforward story about love and friendship comes to a head in a dramatic final act involving a shooting and dead teen. The arguable strength of the story is in its characters; Alexander and Hess

manage to fully flesh out even minor characters in as few words as necessary, using the brevity of the verse format to their advantage. This book will certainly spark discussion among teens about numerous social topics, from what the 'friend zone' means to the current racial divide in America. This is a must-have purchase for all libraries serving teens and young adults."

Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. **Little White Lies**. Freeform, November 2018. 400p. \$17.99. 978-1-368-01413-7. VOYA December 2018. 5Q 5P J S



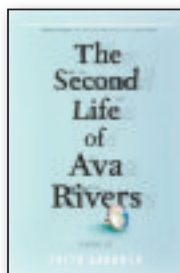
"Sawyer suddenly finds herself embroiled in a mystery involving missing family pearls and aiding and abetting her prim and proper cousin Lily in kidnapping the town's resident mean girl. There is much to love in **Little White Lies**. Sawyer is endearing and sarcastic at the same time, and the supporting characters are complex and entertaining. This funny, lighthearted book will fly off shelves and have readers clamoring for the sequel."

Berla, Kathryn. **Going Places**. Amberjack, March 2018. 276p. \$10.99 Trade pb. 978-1-944995-53-9. VOYA April 2018. 5Q 5P J S NA A/YA

"Told by a highly likable, good-humored narrator coming to terms with his share of sadness, **Going Places** unfolds like a time-lapse video of a blooming flower, revealing both the selfishness and the generosity of the human spirit. Readers

of realistic fiction will appreciate the rich, engaging characters and be drawn into this story of overcoming sadness to open one's heart to another."

Gardner, Faith. **The Second Life of Ava Rivers**. Razorbill/Penguin Random House, August 2018. 384p. \$17.99. 978-0-451-47830-6. VOYA June 2018. 5Q 5P J S NA



"This remarkable novel reproduces the personal and family trauma associated with the loss and recovery of a missing child. Vera, interrupted on her journey of self-discovery, narrates events in an authentic voice that realistically brings readers to a surprising conclusion. The San Francisco setting and the element of mystery surrounding Ava's past make the story even more captivating. **The Second Life of Ava**

Rivers is an enthralling tale of grief and trauma suitable for all teen (and adult) readers."

Gilbert, Kelly Loy. **Picture Us in the Light**. Disney Hyperion, April 2018. 368p. \$17.99. 978-1-4847-2602-0. VOYA June 2018. 5Q 5P S



"Danny has always had strong feelings about Harry that he has kept hidden. As a kid, Danny disliked Harry, but "it was because something in me recognized how much he would matter to me, all along." Now, tight-knit school friendships are tested by the inevitable changes that come with growing up. Gilbert, author of **Conviction** (Disney Hyperion, 2015, VOYA June 2015), writes well about characters of faith, and in this novel, her characters are beautifully flawed, loving people trying to do the best they can for each other. Further, Gilbert brilliantly shows the diversity within Asian American communities in this heartbreaking page-turner. With a unique voice and impeccable writing, **Picture Us in the Light** is a must-read destined to become a classic."

Giles, Amy. **That Night**. HarperTeen, October 2018. 320p. \$17.99. 978-0-06-249577-8. VOYA October 2018. 5Q 5P S R



"This is a timely book that unflinchingly addresses what happens to the survivors of the gun violence, a horror that has become all-too-common in our society. The reader sees Jess self-medicate to numb her pain and watches Lucas learn to box as a way to regain a sense of control over his life. The stumbling blocks in their relationship are depicted realistically, convincingly, and believably, as are both imperfect lead characters. The novel

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shows that surviving such an unspeakable event does not have to be the end of happiness, but it also makes clear that the path to it is not going to be easy. This is a triumphant love story and a testimony to the power of human resilience that will win over teen (and adult) readers. Add this to your mandatory reading list and every library serving young adults.”

Klobuchar, Amy. **Nevertheless, We Persisted: 48 Voices of Defiance, Strength, and Courage.** Knopf/Penguin Random House, September 2018. 320p. \$18.99. 978-1-5247-7196-6. Table of Contents. Biographies. Discussion Questions. Copyright Information. Index. **VOYA** August 2018. **5Q 5P JS**



“The narratives take a variety of formats, from a comic strip to an interview and essays. Most are quite short, three to five pages, none more than ten, and yet a tremendous

amount of emotion and insight emanate from these brief tales of struggle. This is an invaluable collection of snapshots of American society, revealing instances of overcoming racism, bullying, and other troubling issues that need to be recognized, acknowledged, and addressed. Every library serving young adults should have this title.”

Konigsberg, Bill. **The Music of What Happens.** Arthur A. Levine, February 2019. 338p. \$17.99. 978-1-338-21550-2. **VOYA** December 2018. **5Q 5P S**



“As Max and Jordan navigate Coq Au Vinny through the sweltering Arizona heat, they form a fast friendship, beginning to trust each other with their greatest fears and secrets. Somewhere along the line, their mutual attraction and friendship lead to something more. Konigsberg weaves an engaging story that is equal parts laugh-out-loud funny and tender and thoughtful. He addresses issues of date rape and parental neglect with sensitivity. The multifaceted characters will make readers laugh, cry, and ultimately cheer.”

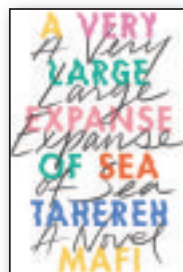
Kristoff, Jay. **Lifelink3.** Knopf/Random House, 2018. 416p. \$18.99. 978-1-5247-1392-8. **VOYA** August 2018. **5Q 5P JS**



“In a fast-paced, action-filled plot, Kristoff depicts a dangerous, dystopian, post-nuclear United States with landscapes of trash and rusting machines. An important theme of the story is the consequence of creating androids programmed to think and feel who struggle with the knowledge that they can never be

truly human. Evoking Isaac Asimov’s three rules for robots, Kristoff imagines the consequences of androids being broken. Love, loyalty, betrayal, and friendship are explored through the tender romance between Eve/Ana and Ezekiel and the friendship between Eve and Lemon. Issues of identity are central as, in a final twist to the plot, Eve/Ana is forced to reconsider who she might be. Even with a preponderance of movielike action scenes, this novel is a thoughtful and thought-provoking work of science fiction.”

Mafi, Tahereh. **A Very Large Expanse of Sea.** HarperCollins, October 2018. 320p. \$18.99. 978-0-0628-6656-1. **VOYA** December 2018. **5Q 5P JS**



“Muslim American teenager Shirin is at her third high school in two years and coupled

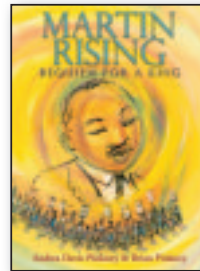
with the post-9/11 aggression directed at her as a Muslim, she has built up heavy emotional walls. She chooses to wear a headscarf, which leads to regularly being singled out at this new high school. Then Shirin strikes up a relationship with one of the most popular athletes at her school, a white boy named Ocean. . . . When their relationship becomes public, the reaction from the community devastates Shirin. . . . The power of Mafi’s work is weaving an expansive, culturally rich character study inside a candid yet tender story of first love. Shirin and Ocean are fully developed characters who thoughtfully interact with the world around them. The two have real, nuanced conversations about race and gender that sound like actual teenage conversations. This moving work is a must-have for all libraries serving teens.”

Pan, Emily X.R. **The Astonishing Color of After.** Little, Brown, March 2018. 480p. \$18.99. 978-0-3164-6399-7. **VOYA** February 2018. **5Q 5P JS**



“Transitioning between real and magic, past and present, love and loss, **The Astonishing Color of After** is a novel about finding oneself through family history, art, grief, friendship, and love. . . . This novel is as elegant as it is mesmerizing. The narrative—especially Leigh’s grief and guilt—is heartbreakingly real. Readers will relate to her vulnerability and overwhelming desire to find answers. This is a truly stellar debut, illuminating not only a family’s ongoing struggle with depression but also the impact upon those left behind when faced with a friend or family member’s suicide. The author’s use of magical realism adds a poignant layer to the writing, providing readers with a haunting yet hopeful reading experience.”

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. **Martin Rising: Requiem for a King.** Illus. by Brian Pinkney. Scholastic, 2018. 128p. \$19.99. 978-0-545-70253-9. Photos. Illus. Timeline. Biblio. Source Notes. Authors’ Notes. **VOYA** April 2018. **5Q 5P M J R**



“This genre-bending work uses poetry (docu-poems) to document the last months of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life, January through April 1968. This well-researched, thorough tribute captures the details that make each section vividly memorable. . . . Expertly crafted, every

word, every illustration creates nuance and meaning. The often alliterative and sometimes rhyming poetry, full of simile and metaphor, begs for re-reading and performing. Brian Pinkney’s use of watercolor, gouache, and India ink creates luminescent illustrations that epitomize the essence of King’s life as a beacon of light and create hope, even during troubling times. . . . **Martin Rising** is an inspiring joy to read and a genuinely unique accolade; it also has many curriculum connections: MLK day (January), Black History Month (February), Poetry Month (April), and can be used as a resource for units on biography or the Civil Right Movement, to name a few.”

Roehrig, Caleb. **White Rabbit.** Feiwel & Friends/Macmillan, April 2018. 336p. \$17.99. 978-1-250-08565-8. **VOYA** April 2018. **5Q 5P S R**



“In a classic, gritty noir murder mystery, Rufus and Sebastian attempt to seek the truth about a murder without getting killed or arrested before the night ends. Roehrig masterfully employs aspects of the mystery and thriller genres to create



a gripping drama that also encompasses the realities of being a teen, including strained family dynamics and the courage required to come out. Readers will find this novel difficult, if not impossible, to put down, and while they may not guess the culprit before the end, they are likely to figure out why Sebastian has sought out Rufus this night long before Rufus does.”

Sanchez, Jenny Torres. **The Fall of Innocence.** Philomel/Penguin Random House, June 2018. 448p. \$18.99. 978-1-5247-3775-7. **VOYA** June 2018. **5Q 5P JS**



“In superb crafting of characters, the author follows the main characters’ thoughts through their days. As Emilia’s mother goes about her work, a quiet moment finds her reliving a painful scene in a grocery store when Emilia had a break and caused others to stare. Tomas, her brother, realizes too late that Emilia understood his struggle with gender identity. Ian worries about driving her away by loving her too much. Emilia’s emotional fragility is stretched dangerously thin when she learns that her attacker was not the boy she accused. It is hard to imagine a more beautifully told, more moving, or more authentic story of one family’s journey through unbearable pain.”

Shaw, K.B. **Newworld Papers.** iPulpfiction.com, February 2018. 538p. \$19.99. 978-0-692-96162-9. **VOYA** June 2018. **5Q 5P S**



“This novel starts as dystopian and moves quickly to science fiction. The settlers are faced with the moral dilemma of whether or not to tell the rest of the planet the truth and change their way of life forever or use the truth to save their culture. It is a well-written, fast-paced story perfect for reluctant and avid readers alike. Due to some graphic sexual content, it may not be appropriate for some readers. Shaw describes a world that is outwardly free of many of the vices those on Earth indulge. The ultimate question of this tale is whether humans are born inherently good or inherently evil. Shaw weaves a tale that will make readers believe in the human race again.”

Shusterman, Neal, and Jarrod Shusterman. **Dry.** Simon & Schuster, October 2018. 400p. \$18.99. 978-1-4814-8196-0. **VOYA** December 2018. **5Q 5P JS**



“People become increasingly desperate for water. The fast breakdown of civil society, outbreaks of violence, and the deleterious effects of dehydration are described in a dark, quick-moving, jam-packed plot through the first-person narratives of a group of young people. . . . The values of each character are revealed in life or death decisions. . . . Multiple

perspectives are also provided in “Snapshots” in which adults recall their experiences dealing with the crisis. This topical theme will resonate with teens concerned with conservation and environmental issues.”

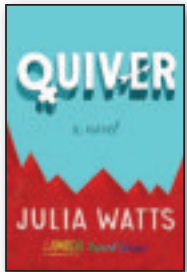
Turnage, Sheila. **The Law of Finders Keepers: Mo and Dale Mysteries, Book 4.** Kathy Dawson/Penguin Random House, September 2018. \$16.99. 978-0-8037-3962-8. **VOYA** August 2018. **5Q 5P M J**



“In the fourth book of the *Mo and Dale Mysteries* series, Detective Mo LoBeau is at it again, juggling her lifelong search for her Upstream Mother with the newest mysteries that have come to the small town of Tupelo Landing,

North Carolina. . . . Every volume a standout, the *Mo and Dale Mysteries* series ends on as high a note—just as it began. Turnage delivers, once again, a fast-paced adventure with a cast of characters who are as real as they are quirky and laugh-out-loud dialog. Fans of the series will fall in love with Lavender all over again, finally forgive Anna Celeste, and cry with Mo as she takes on the case of her Upstream Mother. . . . Readers of character-driven novels filled with humor will be thrilled by this smart and sweet series, start to finish.”

Watts, Julia. **Quiver.** Three Rooms Press, October 2018. 300p. \$15.95 Trade pb. 978-1-941110-66-9. **VOYA** October 2018. **5Q 5P S**



Her conservative Christian family homeschools Libby Hazlett. Zo, who began having panic attacks while attending public high school, is gender fluid. “Zo and Libby form an improbable but quick friendship. While each of them learns that the other is different from their understanding of ‘normal,’ they attempt to remain friends, even after

their fathers disagree on roles within families. Zo and Libby decide to meet each other secretly, only to be found by Libby’s younger sister who forces Libby to confess her “sin” to their father. This is a wonderful story of friendship between two young people who are seeking their place within a world that is constantly changing, sometimes not for the better. For anyone who has felt “different,” Watts’s novel will be ultimately relatable. Sensitive readers may want to know that there is corporal punishment within the Hazlett family, whose stereotyped personalities may offend some practicing evangelical Christian readers.”

Yolen, Jane. **Mapping the Bones.** Philomel/Penguin Random House, March 2018. 432p. \$17.99. 978-0-399-25778-0. **VOYA** February 2018. **5Q 5P M JS**



“Chaim and Gittel are Jewish twins thrust into the ghetto of Lodz with their family in this gruesome tale bearing a resemblance to the Hansel and Gretel fairytale, but with brutality so intense, it is painful at times to read. . . . Acclaimed author Yolen is no stranger to writing award-winning books and this one, her first Holocaust novel in almost thirty years, is sure to be a frontrunner. Chapters are bookended by Chaim’s poetry and Gittel’s reflections, and the overall effect is a breath-taking and heartbreaking look at the horrors of war and the lengths people go to overcome.” ■

