UNDERSTANDING OUR WORLD

A SPOTLIGHT ON TITLES THAT EXPLORE EMPATHY, U.S. HISTORY, CULTURAL AWARENESS, IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE STORIES

A RESOURCE FOR ALL AGES
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DEAR EDUCATOR,

Ours is an increasingly global world, thanks to the Internet, international trade, and ease of travel. This will be all the more true in the future for today’s students. It’s vital for them to understand their own country and its history, but also to learn about other countries and their people. Immigrants and refugees from all over the world have come to our shores since colonial times and continue to do so, contributing to our strength as a nation. To welcome and understand others, whether newcomers or long-time neighbors, requires empathy, kindness, and compassion. While it may seem those qualities are on the decline, educators can encourage them in students through reading and discussing thought-provoking books.

The brochure opens with diverse books across all age groups that explore empathy, kindness, and compassion, so essential if we are to live together in peace. Next is a section on books that provide a grounding in U.S. history with an emphasis on human and civil rights. Turning to international themes, the third section features novels about children and teens in other countries from Bolivia to Tanzania to India. The protagonists overcome problems that may be new to the reader but their emotions are universal. In the final two sections, a mix of fiction and nonfiction focuses on immigrants and refugees, historically and today.

These excellent books, many of them award winners, can serve as the central text for a class, such as The Great Big Book of Families for a unit on families or What Was Ellis Island? for a study on immigration. The picture books, perfect for reading aloud, will prompt discussion of topics, themes, and emotions across the curriculum. For older readers, the outstanding novels repay close study as ELA texts, or choices for literature circles or book clubs. The novels also tie in to social studies and history classes on civics, geography, labor history, civil rights, child labor, war, and more. At all levels, the nonfiction entries serve as models for high quality research and writing, and as springboards for student projects. And no matter their interests, students will find appealing independent reading: contemporary, historical, sports, romance, memoirs, fascinating nonfiction, and wonderful picture books. As they enjoy the stories and information, students will also be expanding their connection to the wide world that opens before them.

SINCERELY,
THE PENGUIN YOUNG READERS SCHOOL & LIBRARY MARKETING TEAM
EMPATHY, KINDNESS & COMPASSION

PEACE IS AN OFFERING
by ANNETTE LEROX, illustrated by STEPHANIE GREGGIN
hc 9780803740914 | Grades UP TO KINDERGARTEN
At a level young children can understand, this gentle story explores ways to be peaceful and kind in daily life. Warm watercolors show a variety of children making their world a better place with small gestures: offering a cookie, reading to a younger child, sharing a laugh. Each kind act is within the scope of a child, even in sad times when a friend can be comforted by another's presence.

LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET
by MATT DE LA PENA, illustrated by CHRISTIAN ROBINSON
hc 9780399257742 | Grades PRE-SCHOOL-3
As CJ and his nana board a city bus, he sees a friend in a car and wishes they had one. On the bus, he sees boys with an MP3 player and wishes he had that. But his nana sees the world in brighter terms, appreciating the friendly bus driver and the guitar playing on the bus. Soon CJ responds to the magic of music and, when they arrive to volunteer at a soup kitchen, feels glad they came. Nana's gentle modeling of kindness and generosity shows the power of teaching by example in this glorious Caldecott Honor book and Newbery Medal winner.

LOVE
by MATT DE LA PENA, illustrated by LOREN LONG
hc 9781524740917 | Grades K-3
In this heartfelt celebration of love, Newberry Medal-winning author Matt de la Peña and bestselling illustrator Loren Long depict the many ways we experience this universal bond, which carries us from the day we are born throughout the years of our childhood and beyond. With a lyrical text that's soothing and inspiring, this tender tale is a needed comfort and a new classic that will resonate with readers of every age.

COME WITH ME
by HOLLY M. MCGHEE, illustrated by PASCAL LEMATRE
hc 9781524739058 | Grades K-3
When the news reports are flooded with tales of hatred and fear, a girl asks her papa what she can do to make the world a better place. Along with her parents and a friend, the girl goes around her day doing small acts of kindness. She begins to see that as small and insignificant as her heart may seem, it matters to the world. This gentle and timely story will inspire students to turn to kindness, bravery, and friendship in the face of uncertainty.

THE GREAT BIG BOOK OF FAMILIES
by MARY HOFFMAN, illustrated by ROS ASQUITH
hc 9781419719518 | Grades K-3
This joyful picture book, which celebrates families of all kinds, opens with different family configurations: children who live with a mother and father, just a mother, just a father, two mothers, two fathers, grandparents as parents, and foster parents. Double-page spreads illustrate how families differ in terms of homes, schooling, jobs, and much more, reflecting diversity of all sorts including financial. An independent reading.

UGLY
by ROBERT HOGE
hc 9780399257974 | Grades 3-7
Everyone feels different in some way but few people look as different—or ugly—as he puts it—as Australian Robert Hoge. He was born with a tumor on his face and two incomplete legs, leading to 24 operations when young. His wise, moving memoir recounts his childhood and adolescence when he figured out his strengths and found what he loved to do. Authentic anecdotes show how he dealt with bullying and teasing. His appealing account will inspire serious discussions among students about how to treat others and what to value in themselves.

COUNTING BY 7s
by HOLLY GOLDBERG SLOAN
hc 9780803735853 | Grades 5+
“I do not like to exclude people (I’m the one who is always excluded, so I know how that feels),” explains Willow, an eccentric girl charished by her parents. When they die, Willow’s unlikely friends, a family struggling to succeed with a nail salon, try to care for her but fear she’ll be put in a group home. Willow, twelve, wins over readers with her sincerity, courage, and strong sense of self. Themes about kindness, compassion, friendship, and different meanings of family make this a rich novel for study and independent reading.

FISH IN A TREE
by LYNDA MULLALY HUNT
hc 9780399142408 | Grades 5+
For years, sixth-grader Ally has hidden the fact that she can’t read even though she excels at math and art. She’s become adept at making trouble to divert attention from her problem. At school, bullying girls call her “dumb.” At home, she misses her grandfather, who died, and her deployed military father. When her kind new teacher realizes Ally has dyslexia, Ally resists his help but then starts to believe she can learn to read. This genuine story will resonant with the many kids who struggle academically and inspire tolerance in those around them.

PIECES OF WHY
by SARAH CARROLL
hc 9780352560611 | Grades 7+
Tia lives with her mom in a high-risk neighborhood in New Orleans and loves singing gospel in the Rainbow Choir. Tia’s dream is to change the world with her voice, but when a shooting happens in her neighborhood and she learns the truth about the crime that sent her father to prison years ago, Tia finds she can’t sing anymore. The loss prompts her to start asking the people in her community hard questions—questions that just might mend fences and bring people together.

THE GIRL IN BETWEEN
by K. L. GOING
hc 9781423141772 | Grades 7+
Told in the naïve voice of a homeless girl sheltered by her mother from the world, this haunting debut takes place in an old, abandoned mill. The girl calls it the Castle because it’s the biggest place they’ve ever stayed, a home of her own like no other. The windows are boarded up and the floorboards are falling in, but for her neither of those things matter. Then developers show up, and it’s clear that their lives are about to change forever. Desperate to save their refuge from the Authorities and her mother from her own personal demons, the girl seeks out the ghosts of the mill.

HOPE NATION: YA AUTHORS SHARE PERSONAL MOMENTS OF INSPIRATION
edited by DR. ROSE BROCK
hc 9781959514167 | Grades 7+
We all experience moments when we struggle to understand the state of the world, when we feel powerless and—in some cases—even hopeless. The teens of today are the caretakers of tomorrow, and yet it’s difficult for many to find joy or comfort in such a turbulent society. But in trying times, words are power. Some of today’s most influential young adult authors come together in this highly personal collection of essays and original stories that offer moments of light in the darkness, and show that hope is a decision we all can make.

THIRTEEN REASONS WHY
by JAY ASHER
hc 9781959514181 | Grades 7+
Clay Jensen returns home from school to find a strange package with his name on it lying on his porch. Inside he discovers several cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker—his classmate and crush—who committed suicide two weeks earlier. Hannah’s voice tells him that there are thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life. Clay is one of them. If he listens, he’ll find out why. Clay spends the night crisscrossing his town with Hannah as his guide. He becomes a firsthand witness to Hannah’s pain, and as he follows Hannah’s recorded words throughout his town, what he discovers changes his life forever.
SPOTLIGHT ON JACQUELINE WOODSON

Jacqueline Woodson's books are revered and widely acclaimed—four Newbery Honor awards, two Coretta Scott King Awards, an NAACP award for Outstanding Literary Work, and the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Lifetime Achievement. Awards and accolades aside, her stories are relevant, personal, and thought-provoking. Regardless of whether Woodson is writing picture books, middle grade, or YA, her books push boundaries.

CANDY STANTON: A VOTE FOR ALL
by CANDY STANTON
9780698117648 | grades 5+

With intriguing anecdotes and well-chosen details, this short biography explores how Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a major advocate for women's suffrage, became a writer and orator for the cause. Even while raising seven children, she helped lead the movement that eventually won women the vote. Students may be surprised to learn that no married woman could own property, that men could legally beat their wives, that only men could initiate a divorce, and more. This excellent short history, which puts today's still ongoing movement for women's equality in context, may inspire future activists.

MARCHING FOR FREEDOM: WALK TOGETHER CHILDREN AND DON’T YOU GROW WEARY
by ELIZABETH PARTRIDGE
9780670011896 | grades 5+

This story of one of the most important figures in Native American history is brought to life for middle grade readers. Thirteen-year-old Uwohali has not seen his father, Sequoyah, for many years. So when Sequoyah returns to the village, Uwohali is eager to reconnect. But Sequoyah's new obsession with Sequoyah's strange markings is actually an alphabet representing the sounds of the Cherokee language. It's a genius and his strange markings are actually an alphabet representing the sounds of the Cherokee language. It's sad, but they don't know, and what Uwohali discovers, is that Sequoyah is a genius and his strange markings are actually an alphabet representing the sounds of the Cherokee language. It's sad, but they don't know, and what Uwohali discovers, is that Sequoyah is a genius and his strange markings are actually an alphabet representing the sounds of the Cherokee language. It's sad, but they don't know, and what Uwohali discovers, is that Sequoyah is a genius and his strange markings are actually an alphabet representing the sounds of the Cherokee language. It's sad, but they don't know, and what Uwohali discovers, is that Sequoyah is a genius and his strange markings are actually an alphabet representing the sounds of the Cherokee language.
AUDACITY
BY MELANIE CROWDER
ISBN 9780399168974 | 7+ grades

In this fictionalized story of labor leader Clara Lemlich, short verses span the years from 1903 to 1909, first in anti-Semitic Russia and then in New York City sweatshops. Although Lemlich would rather have been studying, she devoted her time to improving working conditions. Treated as inferior by the men in her family and in the unions, Lemlich still persisted. Issues about the labor movement and women’s rights blend with historic detail about anti-Semitism and immigrant life to create a rich novel with ties to many areas across the curriculum.

BOOTs ON THE GROUND: America’s War in Vietnam
BY ELIZABETH PARTRIDGE
ISBN 9780670016792 | 7+ grades

There are now 58,000 American soldiers and beleaguered four U.S. presidents. More than forty years after America left Vietnam in defeat in 1975, the war remains controversial and divisive both in the United States and abroad. The history of this era is complex; the social impact extraordinary. But it’s the personal stories of eight people—six American soldiers, one American military nurse, and one Vietnamese refugee—that create the heartbeat of Boots on the Ground. With more than one hundred photographs, award-winning author Elizabeth Partridge’s unflinching book captures the intensity, frustration, and lasting impacts of one of the most tumultuous periods of American history.

THE DUEL: the Parallel Lives of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr
BY JUDITH ST. GEORGE
ISBN 9780425288214 | 7+ grades

With the music of Broadway’s Hamilton sweeping the country, this succinct biography of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr is easy to link to today’s world. Students learn about these two key historical figures set in the context of the Revolution and early years of our nation, in a format that models comparing and contrasting. That Burr killed Hamilton in a duel makes the story all the more powerful. Introduce the book to students by playing the musical’s rap song, “Ten Duel Commandments,” about an earlier duel in their lives.

STONewALL: Breaking Out in the Fight for Gay Rights
BY ADEN BAUSUM
ISBN 9781416929351 | 7+ grades

New York City in 1969 offered few places for gay men to gather safely. One was a bar called Stonewall where they could usually socialize without harassment. But on a hot June evening, police raided Stonewall and arrested a handful of the men. Instead of leaving, the others protested angrily outside the bar that night and then the next. The protests escalated activism for gay rights and inspired gay parades. This richly detailed account quotes effectively from participants as it sets the story in historic context in the continuing effort to secure equal rights.

TURNING 15 ON THE Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March
BY LYNDIA BLACKMON LOWERY, RETOLD BY ELSIEPTH LEACOCK & SUSAN BUCKLEY, ILLUSTRATED BY PJ LOUGHRAN
ISBN 9780803741232 | 7+ grades

In this extraordinary memoir, Lowery recounts her experiences in the civil rights movement, including the 1965 voting rights march to Montgomery, during which she turned fifteen. Lowery describes being put in jail nine times as a protester, and being beaten so badly by a state trooper that she needed thirty-five stitches. Yet she found the courage to keep protesting. Short chapters, lots of illustrations and photographs, and Lowery’s conversational voice make this a great choice for all readers, including reluctant ones, as a primary document about the civil rights era.

WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT... Series
BY RUBY SHAMIR, ILLUSTRATED BY MATT FAULKNER

Full of entertaining facts, the What’s the Big Deal About series delves into questions kids have about the United States of America. From the Constitution to our first ladies, this series presents history and trivia in a fun, kid-friendly way.
**EXPLORING OTHER COUNTRIES & CULTURES**

**Amal Unbound**
*by Asha Saeed*  
[9780399173073 | Grades 7+]

Life is quiet and orderly in Amal’s Pakistani village, but she has no complaints, and besides, she’s busy pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher one day. Then the unimaginable happens—an accidental run-in with the son of her village’s corrupt landlord. Amal must work as his family’s servant to pay off her family’s debt. Life at the opulent Khan estate is full of heartbreak, struggle, and cruel expectations for Amal. As she begins to learn more about the Khans’ corrupt dealings, she knows that she has to work with the others in her position to change their lives and achieve their dreams. This story of modern-day indentured servitude is both important and inspiring.

**Golden Boy**
*by Tara Sullivan*  
[9780399161224 | Grades 5+]

Habo, an albino, grows up in a Tanzanian village feeling like “less than a person,” rejected because of his appearance. When the family moves to a city, he learns that albinos are sometimes murdered due to superstition. Habo flees to a larger city where he’s stunned to find that some prominent people have his condition—and that it’s genetic, not his fault. Still in danger, Habo makes friends and expands his world. This gripping novel will open students’ eyes to life in contemporary East Africa and the appalling injustice toward abirons that still exists there.

**The Green Bicycle**
*by Haifaa Al Mansour*  
[9780142428610 | Grades 5+]

Spunky eleven-year-old Wadjda lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with her parents. She desperately wants a bicycle so that she can race her friend Abdullah, even though it is considered improper for girls to ride bikes. Wadjda comes up with a scheme to make money to buy a bike, but is soon caught and forced to turn over a new leaf, or risk expulsion from school. Set against the shifting social attitudes of the Middle East, this story explores gender roles, conformity, and the importance of family, all with wit and irresistible heart.

**The Inquisitor’s Tale**
*by Adam Gidwitz, Illustrated by Hatem Aly*  
[9780142427378 | Grades 5+]

In this splendid Newbery Honor book, three children in medieval times become friends and learn to appreciate their religious and cultural differences. As they flee across France, chased by an inquisitor, their experiences range from hilarious as they see a town from a flatulent dragon to frightening as they risk their lives to save precious books from a bonfire. From villages to Paris to the seacoast of Normandy, the unforgettable journey takes these three heroic children and their holy dog across France, chased by the French king.

**A Time to Dance**
*by Padma Venkatraman*  
[9780142427710 | Grades 7+]

In urban India, Veda excels at traditional Indian dance to which she passionately dedicates herself—despite her mother’s insistence she pursue engineering. When Veda learns her father is in�tomoping under her knee, it turns her world upside down. Her tenacity in the face of the loss wins her mother’s respect, while continuing to study dance restores Veda’s spirit. Written in image-filled verse, this is a stunning novel about spiritual awakening, the power of art, and above all, the courage and resilience of the human spirit.

**Between Shades of Gray**
*by Ruta Sepetys*  
[9780399254123 | Grades 7+]

Fifteen-year-old Lina is a Lithuanian girl living an ordinary life—until Soviet officers invade her home and tear her family apart. Separated from her father and forced onto a crowded train, Lina, her mother, and her younger brother are relocated to a Siberian work camp, where they are forced to fight for their lives. A harrowing view of WWII, this story delves into the hidden history of Russian labor camps and the cruelty of Stalin’s regime.

**The Bitter Side of Sweet**
*by Tara Sullivan*  
[9780147515504 | Grades 7+]

How can Amaloud, fifteen, keep up hope in light of the backbreaking work he and his younger brother do every day? Two years earlier, they traveled from Mal to the Ivory Coast, looking for work, and ended up as forced labor—essentially slaves—picking cacao tree pods, barely eating, and often beaten. A rebellious newcomer unwittingly prompts tragedy but also inspires an attempt to escape as Amaloud realizes only death awaits them if they stay. The gripping story takes readers into the world of contemporary children and teens enslaved to produce chocolate.

**Climbing the Stairs**
*by Padma Venkatraman*  
[9780142424503 | Grades 7+]

Vidya, who’s from a prosperous family in 1941 India, longs to go to college rather than get married like her peers. But just when it seems possible, a tragedy sidelines the fifteen-year-old, relegating her to the traditional subservient role for females. Her new life has unexpected results involving romance. In the background, India’s nonviolent campaign to end British rule provides parallels to Vidya’s own campaign to gain more rights and control over her future. With its unusual setting, this fine novel ties in with studies of history, geography, and women’s rights.

**Mapping the Bones**
*by Javeen Yolken*  
[9780399257380 | Grades 7+]

It’s 1942 in Poland, and the world is in pieces. The story follows twins Chaim and Gittel as they travel from the Lodz ghetto, to the Polish forest with partisans, to a horrific concentration camp where they lose everything but each other. Influenced by Dr. Mengele’s sadistic experiments, this is a novel filled with brutality and despair, as well as poetry and strength. Yolken’s return to WWII after The Devil’s Arithmetic will captivate readers with the authenticity and power of her words.

**An Uninterrupted View of the Sky**
*by Melanie Crowder*  
[9780142424063 | Grades 7+]

In 1999 Bolivia, Francisco angrily resents the prejudice directed at his dark skin. But that burden is nothing compared to his indigenous father’s arrest on false drug charges, which means that Francisco, seventeen, and his sister are forced to live in a filthy, dangerous prison with him. The situation focuses Francisco’s energy on studying, to escape to a better life. Should he abandon his ambitions and take his sister to live with their rural grandparents? Readers will be shocked, as Francisco is, by the prison conditions, which are more horrifying because U.S. drug policies helped create them.

**The Secret Sky**
*by Fatima and Sami*  
[9780142424083 | Grades 9+]

Fatima and Sami grew up as friends in their small village in Afghanistan, even though they are from different ethnic groups. It’s forbidden for Fatima to be alone with Sami and impossible that she would marry him. But, they meet secretly and fall in love. They only realize the dire consequences of their relationship when Sami’s cousin Rashid finds out. Distinct first-person voices of Fatima, Sami, and Rashid alternate in telling this tragic but ultimately hopeful love story. Their narratives vividly convey war-torn contemporary Afghanistan with its complicated history, changing traditions, and heartbreaking violence.

**Written in the Stars**
*by Aisha Saeed*  
[9780399173103 | Grades 9+]

What teen hasn’t defied her parents? But when Naila, seventeen, goes to prom with her secret boyfriend, disobeying her strict Pakistani-American parents, the consequences are shocking. They take her on her first trip to Pakistan but instead of returning for college as planned, Naila is forced into an arranged marriage. Readers see Pakistan and its restrictions on women through Naila’s eyes and feel her pain when betrayed by her parents. The author’s note, which calls forced marriage in the U.S. “a silent epidemic,” attests to its grim reality for young women around the world.
A gentle picture book takes readers across the Atlantic with a young girl and her brother. Because their parents are already in America, the children travel alone on a large ship. They experience sadness on the way but their arrival in the U.S., past the Statue of Liberty, through Ellis Island, and into the arms of their parents is joyful. Soft-edged pictures show their journey in a time of different clothes and settings but with emotions today’s children will understand.

When Lola’s teacher asks the students to draw a picture of where their families emigrated from, all the kids are excited, except for Lola. She can’t remember The Island—she left when she was just a baby. But with the help of her family and their friends, and Lola’s imagination, she takes an extraordinary journey back to The Island. As she draws closer to the heart of her family’s story, Lola comes to understand the truth of her abuela’s words: “Just because you don’t remember a place doesn’t mean it’s not in you.”

An extraordinary woman in an era when women were expected to be quiet, Emma Lazarus is best known for her sonnet engraved on the Statue of Liberty with its famous lines, “Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” written in 1883. In this picture book biography, she grows from a well-educated girl in a wealthy family to a respected writer and advocate for Russian Jewish refugees. This inspiring story speaks to women’s history, Jewish history, the Statue of Liberty, and nineteenth-century immigration.

Looking for the best pitch that will get his team to the World Series, Julio defected from Cuba. Books for sports fans, this also delves into emotions that affect many immigrants who leave so much behind.

Although her room initially feels like an island, soon her life expands through visitors, many of them prejudiced even on the baseball field. Ruthie’s unique voice will appeal to kids of all backgrounds.

Scott’s life is a mess. With his family’s expectations, Scott’s story will appeal to kids with families’ expectations, Scott’s story will appeal to kids with families’ expectations. With college applications looming, Scott’s Jewish parents pressure him to get serious and settle on a career path that meets their expectations. Desperate for help, Scott runs away to Washington, D.C., to get help from a famous professor who specializes in grit. Trying to figure out his own identity while managing his family’s expectations, Scott’s story will appeal to kids of all backgrounds.

When two young Chinese brothers vow to make money to save their family, they start with a grueling two-month voyage to America and then work long hours building the transcontinental railroad. The accomplishments of these two and other Chinese workers, who labored long hours and did dangerous jobs, is celebrated in glowing illustrations. Despite prejudice and even hatred, the Chinese brothers and their companions, called coolies, endured. Readers learn just one of the crucial ways that immigrants contributed to building America. In this story about brotherly loyalty and love, it’s excellent sports action will also end up absorbing the story of struggling immigrant boys who face daily prejudice even on the baseball field.

This short nonfiction chapter book introduces Ellis Island and the European immigrants who passed through it. Black-and-white drawings and photographs help tell the story of immigrants being processed and sometimes detained on the island, and show the hard lives they led in their new country. Facing prejudice and poverty, they filled cities and worked hard jobs. Sidebars about successful immigrants highlight their contributions to the U.S. Use this succinct overview to supply background to shorter, illustrated books such as Liberty’s Voice and Naming Liberty.
Imani discovers an old diary among her books chronicling Anna's escape from Holocaust-era Europe. Black and almost everyone she knows is white. When her mom's grandmother Anna passes away, her community in Baltimore, but she has always wondered where she came from, especially since she's never known where she belongs, or what her country is anymore. When Papa decides it's too dangerous to stay in what is now Pakistan, Nisha and her family become refugees and embark by train and by foot to reach their new home. Told through Nisha's letters to her deceased mother, it's 1947, and India, newly independent of British rule, has been separated into two countries: Pakistan and India. The divide has created much tension between Hindus and Muslims, and hundreds of thousands are killed crossing borders. Half-Muslim, half-Hindu twelve-year-old Nisha doesn't know where she belongs, or what her country is anymore. When Papa decides it's too dangerous to stay in what is now Pakistan, Nisha and her family become refugees and embark by train and by foot to reach their new home. Told through Nisha's letters to her deceased mother, The Night Diary is a heartfelt story of one girl's search for home.

Two fully-realized girls become friends in this short novel told in alternating first-person chapters. Drita has just arrived in New York City from Kosovo where war destroyed her family's good life. How will she learn English and make friends? Maxie has many friends but badly misses her mother who died a few years earlier. The two grow close, even after Maxie hurts Drita's feelings, in a story that shows the difficulties refugees face in adjusting to a new country, especially knowing loved ones left behind are still in danger.

TEACUP
by REBECCA YOUNG, ILLUSTRATED BY MATT OTTLEY
hc 9780375327774 (grades K–3)
Dreamlike paintings dominate this poetic story about a boy who leaves home alone in a small boat with just a book, a bottle, a blanket, and a teacup that holds earth from his home. After many days, smooth and stormy, something begins to grow in his teacup. At long last he reaches his destination. Introduce students to the idea of an allegory and guide them in a discussion about the many meanings of this lovely book: the journey of life, the plight of a lonely child, a refugee seeking a new home.

JOURNEY OF THE SPARROWS
by FRAN LEEPER BUSS
ps 9780142423622 (grades 3–7)
“ My sister, brother, and I were pressed together in the dark crate,” opens this wrenching story of a family fleeing from El Salvador to seek safety and a better life in the U.S. They will be deported if caught and face death if returned to their village. Crossing the Mexican border is only one of the nearly impossible obstacles facing Maria, fifteen, as she tries to keep her family together, fed, and sheltered. Some people Maria encounters help them while others exploit them, in this refugee story that reflects the experiences of many undocumented immigrants.

THE NIGHT DIARY
by VEZRA HIRANANDANI
hc 9780375528511 (grades 3–7)
It's 1947, and India, newly independent of British rule, has been separated into two countries: Pakistan and India. The divide has created much tension between Hindus and Muslims, and hundreds of thousands are killed crossing borders. Half-Muslim, half-Hindu twelve-year-old Nisha doesn't know where she belongs, or what her country is anymore. When Papa decides it's too dangerous to stay in what is now Pakistan, Nisha and her family become refugees and embark by train and by foot to reach their new home. Told through Nisha's letters to her deceased mother, The Night Diary is a heartfelt story of one girl's search for home.

THE LENGTH OF A STRING
by ELISSA BRENT WEISSMAN
hc 97803753294711 (grades 5–9)
What Imani wants most in the world is to meet her birthparents. She loves her family and her Jewish community in Baltimore, but she has always wondered where she came from, especially since she's black and almost everyone she knows is white. When her mom's grandmother Anna passes away, Imani discovers an old diary among her books chronicling Anna's escape from Holocaust-era Europe to seek refuge in Brooklyn. Anna's diary and Imani's birthparent search intertwine to tell the story of two girls, each searching for family and identity in her own time and in her own way.

CITY OF SAINTS & THIEVES
by NATHALIE C. ANDERSON
hc 9780399547884 (grades 7+)
In this intense thriller, Tina, sixteen, tracks down her mother's murderer by traveling from Kenya to their old home in the Congo. Despite the danger and deprivation in her life, friendships and family keep Tina strong. The author, who worked with refugees throughout Africa, immerses readers in Tina's world of refugees, poverty, gangs, and militia, a world where females are rarely safe. A gripping introduction to the Congo refugee crisis, this is hard to put down.

A LAND OF PERMANENT GOODBYES
by ATTIA ABAWII
hc 9780143136317 (grades 7+)
In a country ripped apart by war, Tareq lives with his big and loving family... until the bombs strike. His city is in ruins and his life is destroyed. In the wake of destruction, Tareq and his family are threatened by Daesh fighters and decide that, in order to stay alive, they must leave. What follows is a tale narrated by Destiny following the refugees as they travel from Syria to Turkey to Greece, facing danger at every turn. While this is one family's story, it is also the timeless tale of all wars, of all tragedy, and of all strife. When you are a refugee, success is outliving your loss.

SALT TO THE SEA
by RUTA SEFYTS
hc 97801424423622 (grades 7+)
In January 1945, as Germany is losing the war, refugees flee to the East Prussian coast, hoping to board ships that will save them from the advancing Russians. A young Lithuanian nurse, a pregnant Polish teen, and a Prussian teenage boy with a dangerous secret end up traveling together. Despite years of deprivation and fear, the travelers help each other on their grim journey, little knowing the disaster that lies in wait. Narrated in distinctive alternating voices, this outstanding novel introduces a little-known disaster of World War II that killed thousands of refugees—more devastating than the Titanic.

WE ARE ALL THAT’S LEFT
by CARRIE ARCOS
hc 9780399175541 (grades 7+)
Two lives. Two worlds apart. One deeply compelling story set in both Bosnia and the United States, spanning decades and generations, about the brutality of war and the trauma of everyday life in its aftermath, about hope and the ties that bind us together. Told in chapters that alternate between Zara’s present-day Providence, RI, and Nadija’s own childhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Bosnian War of the 1990s, We Are All That’s Left shows us that no matter the time and place, struggle and tragedy can give way to connection, healing and love.

THE ALEX CROW
by ANDREW SMITH
hc 9780147511768 (grades 9+)
Ariel, fifteen, recounts how he survived atrocities that killed his fellow villagers during an unspecified country’s civil war and depicts his new life in America, adopted by the Burgesses. This summer he and his adoptive brother are attending a broadcast-style camp where the female camp therapist has written a book about the extinction of males. Alternating with Ariel’s narrative are one about an Arctic expedition and another about a schizophrenic man on a road trip. This edgy novel brings together themes of survival, psychological control, and the horrors of war.

THE ORANGE HOUSES
by PAUL GRIFFIN
hc 97801424419623 (grades 9+)
Viewpoints alternate in this gritty novel among three teenagers in the Bronx who face a harsh world. Fatima, a sixteen-year-old illegal refugee from an unspecified African country, lives in fear of deportation. Barely getting by, she still volunteers in a veterans’ hospital. She becomes friends with Demmie, a kind, eighteen-year-old veteran emotionally damaged from serving in Iraq, and Tamika, fifteen, who feels isolated by her partial deafness. The hardships these teens face with courage will get students talking about poverty, war, and the fate of refugees their own age.
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