

VA Reads YA Book List 2025-26

This Book Won't Burn by Samira Ahmed ISBN: 978-0316547840 Noor Khan knows that after starting at a new high school, across the country from all of her friends, in the last quarter of her senior year, the best thing she can do is keep her head down and just make it to graduation. However, when she discovers that a new school board policy is removing hundreds of books from the school library because they have been labeled “obscene”- and many of them are by queer and BIPOC authors- Noor decides that she cannot stay silent, even if puts her in the crosshairs of the opponents of the books. (Recommended for 12-18)

Icarus by K Ancrum ISBN: 978-0063285781 Icarus Gallagher is an art thief, trained by his father to target the collection of Mr. Black as part of a long-standing feud over the death of Icarus's mother years before. Just as Icarus is planning his final heist before ending his time as his father's accomplice, he is caught by Mr. Black's son, Helios, who is just as trapped in his complicated family web as Icarus is. (Recommended for 14+)

Looking for Smoke by KC Cobell ISBN: 978-0063318670 When Mara is invited to a traditional Blackfeet Giveaway ceremony on the reservation to honor the missing sister of a friend, she thinks that she might finally be accepted on the reservation. Instead, a girl from the Giveaway ceremony is found dead, and the other four members of the ceremony must work together to clear their own names in spite of their complicated histories with Samantha, the murdered girl. (Recommended for 15+)

Ariel Crashes a Train by Olivia A Cole ISBN: 978-0593644669 Ariel feels out of control in many aspects of her life- she struggles to meet the high expectations of her parents, and her obsessive, violent fantasies have begun to take over her mind. When she begins a new job at a carnival, she is determined to keep her distance from the other employees, using her careful rituals to keep her compulsions at bay. However, once she begins to make friends, she finds that there can be help, support, and hope for the future. (Recommended for 14+)

Dead Below Deck by Jan Gangsei ISBN: 978-0063310445 Four teen girls, Maggie, Viv, Emi, and wealthy heiress Giselle, set out on a five day yacht trip, but on the final night, Giselle is pushed overboard and the remaining friends become suspects in the murder investigation. Told in reverse chronological order, this mystery unfolds with plenty of twists and turns. Audiobook strongly recommended! (Recommended for 13+)

Kill Her Twice by Stacey Lee ISBN: 978-0593532041 Three sisters set out to solve the murder of Chinese-American film star Lulu Wong in 1932 Los Angeles when the newspapers and police seem to dismiss the case. (Recommended for 13+)

A Banh Mi For Two by Trinity Nguyen ISBN: 978-1250910837 When Vietnamese-American Vivi travels to Vietnam for the first time as a college freshman, she is determined to piece together her family's complicated history and try all of the food recommendations from her favorite foodie blog, A Banh Mi for Two. She doesn't expect to ever meet Lan, the blogger behind the site, especially since Lan hasn't published anything new since the death of her father. When the two young women strike a deal to explore Saigon, falling in love isn't part of it, but they find themselves drawn closer together throughout their travels. (Recommended for 14-18)

A Drop of Venom by Sajni Patel ISBN: 978-1368092685 Against all odds, Pratyush and Manisha fall in love. When Manisha is assaulted and pushed into a pit of vipers, everyone assumes that she has perished. Pratyush is sent to slay a monster that lives in the very same pit, and is forced to confront the question of what it truly means to be monstrous. (Recommended for 14+, contains mention of sexual assault)

Tell Me What Really Happened by Chelsea Sedoti ISBN: 978-1492673057 Five friends go camping for a weekend at Salvation Creek, despite the creepy stories of people going missing. Just before midnight, one of them disappears. Told entirely through first person police interviews, the truth unfolds as each of the remaining friends share their very different stories of exactly what happened that night. (Recommended for 14+)

Saints of the Household by Ari Tison ISBN: 978-0374389499 When they intervene in a bullying incident to defend a classmate and leave their school's star soccer player seriously injured, two Bribri (indigenous Costa Rican) brothers grapple with their family history to reconcile their own actions with the lives they want to live. (Recommended for 14+)

Lunar New Year Love Story by Gene Luen Yang and Leuyen Pham ISBN: 978-1250908261 Vietnamese-American teen Val is convinced that she is cursed in love, until she decides to learn how to lion dance for the Lunar New Year Festival and meets a pair of very cute dancers. Can she break her family's curse, or is she destined to break her own heart over and over again? (Recommended for 14+)