

# Contemporary Multicultural Fiction Books for Young Adults



## AFRICAN

**Broken Memory by Elisabeth Combres 139p.** Emma is only five years old when she witnesses her mother's murder during the Rwandan genocide. She faces haunting memories while struggling to obey her mother's last wish: 'Tell yourself that everything will soon be over. You must not die, Emma.'

**Where I Belong by Gillian Cross 245p.** Thirteen-year-old Khadija, a Somali refugee, becomes a model for a famous fashion designer to help her family back home, while the designer's daughter Freya and fourteen-year-old Abdi, whose family Khadija lives with in London, try to protect her.

**The Good Braider by Terry Farish 221p. Novel in Verse.** Viola survives brutality in war-torn Sudan, after a perilous journey she lives as a refugee in Egypt, and finally reaches Portland, Maine, where her freedom is hampered by memories of past horrors and the traditions Sudanese adults hold dear.

**Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You by Hanna Jansen 342p.** Jeanne lived a typical life until one horrifying night when everything changed. Political troubles in Rwanda unleashed genocide and upheaval for her family as well as all Tutsis.

**Now is the Time for Running by Michael Williams 233p.** When soldiers attack a small village in Zimbabwe, Deo goes on the run with Innocent, his older, mentally disabled brother, carrying little but a leather soccer ball filled with money, and after facing prejudice, poverty, and tragedy, it is in soccer that Deo finds renewed hope.

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## AMISH

**A World Away by Nancy Grossman 394p.** Sixteen-year-old Eliza, an Amish girl, goes to work for an "English" family as a nanny to two young children, and must then choose between two entirely different ways of life.

**The Hallowed Ones by Laura Bickle 311p.** Amish teen Katie smuggles a gravely injured young man, an outsider, into her family's barn despite the elders' ruling that no one can come in or out of the community while some mysterious and massive unrest is wreaking havoc in the "English" world.

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## CULTURE CLASH

**Ten Things I Hate About Me by Randa Abdel-Fattah 297p.** Lebanese-Australian Jamilah, known in school as Jamie, hides her heritage from her classmates and tries to pass by dyeing her hair blonde and wearing blue-tinted contact lenses, until her conflicted feelings become too much for her to bear. Also try **Does My Head Look Big in This?** and **Where the Streets had a Name.**

**One Man Guy by Michael Barakiva 255p.** When Alek's high-achieving, Armenian-American parents send him to summer school, he thinks his summer is ruined. But then he meets Ethan, who opens his world in a series of truly unexpected ways.

**Anya's Ghost by Vera Brosgol 221p. Graphic Novel.** Anya, embarrassed by her Russian immigrant family and self-conscious about her body, has given up on fitting in at school but falling down a well and making friends with the ghost there just may be worse. Graphic Novel.

**Tell us We're Home by Marina Budhos 297p.** Three immigrant girls from different parts of the world meet and become close friends in a small New Jersey town where their mothers have found domestic work, but their relationships are tested when one girl's mother is accused of stealing a precious heirloom.

**Overboard by Elizabeth Fama 158p.** Escaping from a sinking ferry in the waters off Sumatra, fourteen-year-old Emily fights for survival for herself and an Indonesian boy, who draws courage from his quiet but firm Islamic faith.

**Tell me Again how a Crush Should Feel by Sara Farizan. 296p.** Leila's Persian heritage already makes her different and if word got out that she liked girls life would be twice as hard, but when a new girl, Saskia, shows up, Leila starts to take risks she never thought she would, especially when it looks as if the attraction mutual.

**Life is Funny by E.R. Frank 263 p.** The lives of a number of young people of different races, economic backgrounds, and family situations living in Brooklyn, New York, become intertwined over a seven-year period.

**Born Confused by Tanuja Desai Hidier 413p.** Seventeen-year-old Dimple, whose family is from India, discovers that she is not Indian enough for the Indians and not American enough for the Americans.

**Someone like Summer by M.E. Kerr 263p.** An upper-middle-class white girl from Long Island and an immigrant worker from Colombia fall in love despite objections from both their families and their community.

**Black, White, Other by Joan Steinau Lester 222p.** Twenty miles from Oakland, California, where fires have led to racial tension, multi-racial fifteen-year-old Nina faces the bigotry of long-time friends, her parents' divorce, and her brother's misbehavior, while learning of her great-great grandmother Sarah's escape from slavery.

**Habibi by Naomi Shihab Nye 271p.** When fourteen-year-old Liyane and her family move from St. Louis to a new home between Jerusalem and the Palestinian village where her father was born, they face many changes and must deal with the religious tensions.

**Out of Nowhere by Maria Padian 337p.** Performing community service for pulling a stupid prank against a rival high school, soccer star Tom tutors a Somali refugee with soccer dreams of his own.

**Mexican Whiteboy by Matt de la Peña 249p.** Sixteen-year-old Danny searches for his identity amidst the confusion of being half-Mexican and half-white while spending a summer with his cousin and new friends on the baseball fields and back alleys of San Diego County, California

**Losers by Mattheu Roth 186p.** Born in Russia and seeing things in a different way than his American-born peers, Jupiter struggles to figure out where he belongs in the social structure at school while dealing with the torment of a bully in an unusual way.

**The Boy on the Bridge by Natalie Standiford 248p.** It is 1982 and nineteen-year-old Laura Reid is spending a semester in Leningrad studying Russian, but when she meets Alyosha she discovers the dissident Russia--a world of wild parties, underground books and music, love, and constant danger.

**Borderline by Allan Stratton 289p.** Despite the strained relationship between them, teenaged Sami Sabiri risks his life to uncover the truth when his father is implicated in a terrorist plot.

**Orchards by Holly Thompson 327p.** Sent to Japan for the summer after an eighth-grade classmate's suicide, half-Japanese, half-Jewish Kana Goldberg tries to fit in with relatives she barely knows and reflects on the guilt she feels over the tragedy back home.

**Cobwebs by Karen Romano Young 338p.** Sixteen-year-old Nancy enjoys the colorful ethnic mix of her heritage in several different Brooklyn households, not suspecting how very strange that heritage is.

## LATIN AND SOUTH AMERICAN

**Go and Come Back by Joan Ablove 176p.** Alicia, a young tribeswoman living in the Amazonian jungle, tells about the two American women anthropologists who arrive to study the way of life of her people.

**Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico by Malín Alegría 291p.** When Southern California senior Sofi Mendoza lies to her parents and crosses the border for a weekend party, she has no idea that she will get stuck in a Mexican village with family she has never met before, unable to return to the U.S. and the easy life she knew.

**Tree Girl by Ben Mikaelson 225p.** While high up in a tree, a sixteen-year-old Guatemalan girl gets a clear view of the ravages of war as guerilla warfare takes place just beneath her, forever changing how she sees the world.

**Illegal by Bettina Restrepo 251p.** Nora, a fifteen-year-old Mexican girl, faces the challenges of being an illegal immigrant in Texas when she and her mother cross the border in search of Nora's father.

**Crazy Loco: Stories by David Rice 135p.** This collection features nine stories about Mexican-American kids growing up in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas.

**Useful Fools by C.A. Schmidt 262p.** A fifteen-year-old Peruvian boy, whose mother runs a clinic for poor village children, becomes caught up in the war after Senderistas bomb the clinic, killing his mother and throwing his family into turmoil.

**The last summer of the death warriors by Francisco X. Stork 344p.** Seventeen-year-old Pancho is bent on avenging the senseless death of his sister, but after he meets D.Q, who is dying of cancer, and Marisol, one of D.Q.'s caregivers, both boys find their lives changed by their interactions.

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## MIDDLE EASTERN & EURASIA

**No Safe Place by Deborah Ellis 205p.** Fifteen-year-old Abdul, having lost everyone he loves, journeys from Baghdad to a migrant community in Calais where he sneaks aboard a boat bound for England, not knowing it carries a cargo of heroin.

**Angel de la Luna and the 5th Glorious Mystery by Evelina Galang 347p.** As a baby in her mother's womb; as a schoolgirl in Manila; and as a reluctant immigrant to Chicago at age sixteen; Angel burns with a desire to be an activist, but learning truths about her mother and grandmother help her find peace.

**Why we Took the Car by Wolfgang Herrndorf 245p.** Mike Klingenberg is a troubled fourteen-year-old from a dysfunctional family in Berlin who thinks of himself as boring, so when a Russian juvenile delinquent called Tschick begins to pay attention to him and include Mike in his criminal activities, he is excited--until those activities lead to disaster on the autobahn.

**In the Name of God by Paula Jolin 208p.** Determined to follow the laws set down in the Qur'an, seventeen-year-old Nadia becomes involved in a violent revolutionary movement aimed at supporting Muslim rule in Syria and opposing the Western politics and materialism that increasingly affect her family.

**Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy by Elizabeth Kiem 264p.** After a harrowing defection to the United States in 1982, Russian teenager Marya and her father settle in Brooklyn, where Marya is drawn into a web of intrigue involving her gift of foresight, her mother's disappearance, and a boy she cannot bring herself to trust.

**Sold by Patricia McCormick 263p.** When she is tricked by her stepfather and sold into prostitution, 13-year-old Lakshmi becomes submerged in a nightmare where her only comfort is the friendship she forms with the other girls.

**Boys without Names by Kashmira Sheth 316p.** Eleven-year-old Gopal and his family leave their rural Indian village for life with his uncle in Mumbai, but when they arrive his father goes missing and Gopal ends up locked in a sweatshop from which there is no escape. Also by this author: **Koyal Dark, Mango Sweet**.

**Haveli by Suzanne Fisher Staples 320p.** Having relented to the ways of her people in Pakistan and married the rich older man to whom she was pledged against her will, Shabanu is now the victim of his family's blood feud and the malice of his other wives. Sequel to **Shabanu: daughter of the wind**.

**Island's End by Padma Venkatraman 228p.** A young girl trains to be the new spiritual leader of her remote Andaman Island tribe, while facing increasing threats from the modern world.

**Homeless Bird by Gloria Whelan 186p.** Bound by her cultural and religious obligations, thirteen-year-old Koly is first married to a sickly husband and then subjected to the brutal life of a Hindu widow.

**American born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang 233p. Graphic Novel.** Alternates three interrelated stories about the problems of young Chinese Americans trying to participate in the popular culture.

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#### NATIVE AMERICAN

**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie 229p.** Junior wants more from life than what the reservation has to offer him so he transfers to an all-white high school in town where he is stunned and amazed by this strange and affluent new world.

**Who will tell my Brother by Marlene Carvell 150p.** During his lonely crusade to remove offensive mascots from his high school, a Native American teenager learns more about his heritage, his ancestors, and his place in the world.

**More than Good Enough by Crissa-Jean Chappell 203p.** When seventeen-year-old Trent Osceola moves to the Rez to live with his father, a member of Florida's Miccosukee Tribe, he faces new questions about his identity and reconnects with his childhood friend Pippa.

**Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson 241p.** After his anger erupts into violence, Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing based on the Native American Circle Justice, and he is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where an encounter with a huge Spirit Bear changes his life.