

HISTORICAL FICTION FOR TEENS

From Ancient Egypt to the 1980's, in Alabama to South Africa, this list comprises a wide variety of historical fiction titles for any interest.

Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson. At the start of the Revolutionary War, Isabel is sold to a cruel loyalist family even though she was promised freedom. After meeting Curzon, she spies on her owners then flees. Series.

The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing: Traitor to the Nation: Vol. I: The Pox Party by M.T. Anderson. Various diaries, letters, and other manuscripts chronicle the experiences of Octavian, a young African American, from birth to age 16, as he is brought up as part of a science experiment in the years leading up to and during the Revolutionary War. Series.

Wonder Show by Hannah Barnaby. Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, step inside Mosco's Traveling Wonder Show, a menagerie of human curiosities and misfits guaranteed to astound and amaze! Set in the Great Depression.

What I Saw and How I Lied by Judy Blundell. In 1947 with her jovial stepfather Joe back from WWII and family life returning to normal, teenage Evie, smitten by the handsome young ex-GI who seems to have a secret hold on Joe, finds herself caught in a complicated web of lies.

The Incredible True Story of the Making of the Eve of Destruction by Amy Brashear. In 1984, after her parents' divorce and her mother's remarriage to an African-American man, Laura wins a walk-on role in the nuclear holocaust movie being filmed in her town, but when the scripted nuclear explosion occurs, nobody seems to know if a real nuclear bomb has detonated or not. Inspired by a real event.

The Power of One by Bryce Courtenay. Peekay, a white British boy in South Africa during WWII, survives an abusive boarding school and goes on to succeed in life and the boxing ring with the help from a chicken, a boxer, a pianist, black African prisoners, and others he encounters in his life.

Alex & Eliza: A love story by Melissa de la Cruz. Before the world knew them as Alexander Hamilton and Elizabeth Schuyler, young Alex and Eliza fell in love amidst the turmoil of the American Revolution. Series.

A Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly. In 1906, 16-year-old Mattie, determined to attend college and be a writer against the wishes of her father and fiancé, takes a job at a summer inn where she discovers the truth about the death of a guest.

Academie by Suzanne Dunlap. Eliza is sent to from Virginia a boarding school near Paris, where she quickly meets Josephine and Caroline Bonaparte (as in Napoleon!) and quickly discovers that the sisters hate each other. Soon, Eliza finds herself in the thick of their plans.

Hamilton and Peggy!: A revolutionary friendship by Laura Elliott. When a flirtatious aide-de-camp, Alexander Hamilton, writes to Peggy asking for her help in wooing the earnest Eliza, Peggy finds herself unable to him help. A fast friendship forms, but Alexander is caught in the same war as her father, and the danger to all their lives is real.

Jazz Owls: A novel of the Zoot Suit Riots by Margarita Engle. In early 1940s Los Angeles, Mexican Americans Marisela and Lorena work in canneries all day then jitterbug with sailors all night with their zoot suit wearing younger brother, Ray, as escort until the night racial violence leads to murder.

The Red Necklace: A story of the French Revolution by Sally Gardner. In the late 18th-century, Sido, the 12-year-old daughter of a self-indulgent marquis, and Yann, a 14-year-old Gypsy orphan raised to perform in a magic show, face a common enemy at the start of the French Revolution.

Uprising by Margaret Peterson Haddix. In 1927, Mrs. Livingston reluctantly recalls her experiences at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, including the miserable working conditions that led to a strike and the fire that took the lives of her two best friends.

My Lady Jane by Cynthia Hand. A comedic romance adventure set in 16th Century England inspired by the true story. Follows the experiences of a 16-year-old noblewoman who, on the eve of her marriage to a stranger, is swept up in a conspiracy to usurp the throne from her cousin. Series.

Wicked Girls by Stephanie Hemphill. A fictionalized account of the Salem witch trials, told from the perspective of three of the real young women living in Salem in 1692--Mercy Lewis, Margaret Walcott, and Ann Putnam, Jr. Novel in Verse.

The War Outside by Monica Hesse. Teens Haruko, a Japanese American, and Margot, a German American, form a life-changing friendship as everything around them starts falling apart in the Crystal City family internment camp during World War II.

News from the Dead by Mary Hooper. Anne, falsely accused of infanticide in 1650 England and sent to the scaffold, lies immobile in the darkness, unsure if she's dead, terrified she's buried alive, haunted by her final memory. A young medical student attends his first dissection, and notice.

Four-Four-Two by Dean Hughes. Forced into an internment camp at the start of WWII, two young Japanese Americans enlist in the U.S. Army to fight for the Allies as members of the "Four-Four-Two," a segregated Japanese American regiment.

Soldier Boy by Keely Hutton. Follows Ricky from 1987-1991, and Samuel in 2006, as they are abducted to serve as child-soldiers in Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda.

Going Over by Beth Kephart. In the early 1980s Ada and Stefan are young, would-be lovers living on opposite sides of the Berlin Wall--Ada lives with her mother and grandmother and paints graffiti on the Wall, and Stefan lives with his grandmother in the East and dreams of escaping to the West.

A Spy in the House by Y.S. Lee. Steeped in Victorian atmosphere and intrigue, this mystery trails a feisty heroine as she takes on a precarious secret assignment. Assuming the guise of a lady's companion, she must infiltrate a rich merchant's home in hopes of tracing his missing cargo ships.

A Death-Struck Year by Makiia Lucier. When the Spanish influenza epidemic reaches Portland, Oregon, in 1918, 17-year-old Cleo leaves behind the comfort of her boarding school to work for the Red Cross.

Escaping from Houdini by Kerri Maniscalco. In 1889, the ship Etruria departs Liverpool, England, for New York carrying Audrey Rose Wadsworth and her crime-solving partner, Thomas, a famous escape artist, and a cold-blooded killer.

Jepp, Who Defied the Stars by Katherine Marsh. Jepp is spirited across Europe by a kidnapper, in order to become the master of his own destiny, he must prove himself to a brilliant and eccentric new master, earn the love of a girl, and unearth the long-buried secrets of his parentage. 16th century.

Blood Water Paint by Joy McCullough. In Renaissance Italy, Artemisia Gentileschi endures the subjugation of women that allows her father to take credit for her extraordinary paintings, rape and the ensuing trial, and torture, buoyed by her deceased mother's stories of strong women of the Bible.

The Devil's Paintbox by Victoria McKernan. When orphans Aiden and Maddy Lynch first meet trail-rider Jefferson J. Jackson in the spring of 1865, they're struggling to survive on their family's drought-ravaged Kansas farm. When Jackson offers an escape - a 2000-mile journey across the roughest country in the world - Aiden knows it's their only choice.

Hush: An Irish Princess' Tale by Donna Jo Napoli. 15-year-old Melkorka, an Irish princess, is kidnapped by Russian slave traders and not only learns how to survive but to challenge some of the brutality of her captors, who are fascinated by her apparent muteness and the possibility that she is enchanted. 10th Century Ireland.

The Wednesday Wars by Gary D. Schmidt. Holling Hoodhood finds his 7th-grade year filled with many challenges as he spends afternoons with Mrs. Baker discussing the plays of Shakespeare, defends his tasty cream puffs from a determined bully, and prepares for his big debut in the school play--all while the issue of Vietnam looms on a daily basis.

The Hired Girl by Laura Amy Schlitz. In 1911, 14-year-old Joan yearns for a real life of true love, adventure, beauty and art, like the heroines in her beloved novels, but what hope is there when she lives on a hardscrabble farm in Pennsylvania where the work never ends?

Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys. After Lina, 15, and her family are pulled from their Lithuanian home by Soviet guards in 1941 and sent to Siberia, where her father is sentenced to death in a prison camp, she comforts herself in her art, carefully documenting events by drawing.

The Berlin Boxing Club by Robert Sharenow. In 1936 Berlin, 14-year-old Karl Stern, considered Jewish despite a non-religious upbringing, learns to box from the legendary Max Schmeling while struggling with the realities of the Holocaust.

Cleopatra's Moon by Vicky Shecter. Princess Selene, the daughter of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra VII, lives a life of luxury and ease in Alexandria. But trouble looms when Octavianus, the Roman Emperor, wants Egypt for himself and she is forced to build a new life in Rome.

Lies we Tell Ourselves by Robin Talley. In 1959 Virginia, Sarah, a black student who is one of the first to attend a newly integrated school, forces Linda, a white integration opponent's daughter, to confront harsh truths when they work together on a school project.

The Logan Family series by Mildred Taylor. Set in Mississippi at the height of the Depression, it is the story of one family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride, and independence in the face of racism and social injustice.

The Pearl Thief by Elizabeth Wein. After Julia wakes up in a hospital not knowing how she was injured, she befriends a Scottish Traveller boy who found her, later, when a body is discovered, she experiences the same prejudices his family has endured and tries to keep them from being framed for the crime. Prequel to Code Name Verity.

The Steep & Thorny Way by Cat Winters. A suspenseful reimagining of Hamlet is set in 1920s Oregon, where the outcast daughter of a white mother and a black father finds her survival further complicated by the fearmongering of the KKK and the discovery that her stepfather might have murdered her father.

The Watch that Ends the Night by Allan Wolf. The fates of a millionaire, a refugee, and hundreds of others lie with the as-of-yet unseen iceberg. Undertakers' reports, telegraphs, and more join the stories of those on board the Titanic. Novel in verse.

My Name is Victoria by Lucy Worsley. A reimagining of Queen Victoria's childhood told from the perspective of her companion, Miss V., as she is torn between loyalty to her father and her friendship with the princess.

Blood and Sand by C.V. Wyk. Recasting the legendary character of Spartacus as a fierce female warrior, a high-action story about a 17-year-old princess and a handsome gladiator who dared to challenge the Roman Republic.

Mapping the Bones by Jane Yolen. In 1940's Poland the lives of twins Chaim and Gittel feel like a fairy tale torn apart as they must rely on each other to endure life in a ghetto and the horrors of a concentration camp where they lose everything but each other.

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak. Death itself narrates this deeply affecting tale of young book lover Liesel, her loving foster parents, and the Jew hiding in their basement.

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