

# 2020 - 2021 Battle Books!



## ***Front Desk* by Kelly Yang (realistic)**

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

## ***The Serpent's Secret* by Sayantani DasGupta (fantasy)**

On the morning of her 12th birthday, Kiranmala is just a regular sixth grader living in Parsippany, New Jersey...until her parents mysteriously vanish and a drooling rakkhosh demon slams through her kitchen, determined to eat her alive. Turns out there might be some truth to her parents' fantastical stories -- like how Kiranmala is a real Indian princess and how she comes from a secret place not of this world.

## ***No Fixed Address* by Susan Nielsen (realistic)**

Twelve-and-three-quarter-year-old Felix Knutsson has a knack for trivia. His favorite game show is *Who What Where When*; he even named his gerbil after the host. Felix's mom, Astrid, is loving but can't seem to hold on to a job. So when they get evicted from their latest shabby apartment, they have to move into a van. Astrid swears him to secrecy; he can't tell anyone about their living arrangement, not even Dylan and Winnie, his best friends at his new school. If he does, she warns him, he'll be taken away from her and put in foster care.

## ***Dragon Hoops* Gene Luen Yang (graphic novel)**

Gene doesn't get sports. As a kid, his friends called him 'Stick' and every basketball game he played ended in pain. He lost interest in basketball long ago, but at the high school where he now teaches, it's all anyone can talk about. The men's varsity team, the Dragons, is having a phenomenal season that's been decades in the making. Each victory brings them closer to their ultimate goal: the California State Championship. Once Gene meets these young all-stars, he realizes that their story is just as thrilling as anything he's seen on a comic book page. He knows he has to follow this epic to its end. What he doesn't know yet is that this season is not only going to change the Dragons' lives, but his own life as well

## ***Skyward* by Brandon Sanderson (sci-fi)**

Spensa's world has been under attack for decades. Now pilots are the heroes of what's left of the human race, and becoming one has always been Spensa's dream. Since she was a little girl, she has imagined soaring skyward and proving her bravery. But her fate is intertwined with her father's--a pilot himself who was killed years ago when he abruptly deserted his team, leaving Spensa's chances of attending flight school at slim to none.

No one will let Spensa forget what her father did, yet fate works in mysterious ways. Flight school might be a long shot, but she is determined to fly. And an accidental discovery in a long-forgotten cavern might just provide her with a way to claim the stars.

## ***Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi (non-fiction)**

Through a gripping, fast-paced, and energizing narrative written by beloved award-winner Jason Reynolds, this book shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas--and on ways readers can identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their daily lives.

## ***The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle* by Leslie Connor (mystery)**

Mason Buttle is the biggest, sweatiest kid in his grade, and everyone knows he can barely read or write. Mason's learning disabilities are compounded by grief. Fifteen months ago, Mason's best friend, Benny Kilmartin, turned up dead in the Buttle family's orchard. An investigation drags on, and Mason, honest as the day is long, can't understand why Lieutenant Baird won't believe the story Mason has told about that day.

## ***Arlo Finch and the Valley of Fire* by John August (magical realism)**

Arlo Finch is a newcomer to Pine Mountain, Colorado, a tiny town of mystery and magic, but he's already attracted the attention of dark and ancient forces. At first he thinks these increasingly strange and frightening occurrences are just part of being in Rangers, the mountain scouting troop where he learns how to harness the wild magic seeping in from the mysterious Long Woods. But soon Arlo finds himself at the center of a dangerous adventure, where he faces obstacles that test the foundations of the Ranger's Vow: Loyalty, Bravery, Kindness, and Truth.

## ***Small Spaces* by Katherine Arden (horror)**

After suffering a tragic loss, eleven-year-old Ollie who only finds solace in books discovers a chilling ghost story about a girl named Beth, the two brothers who loved her, and a peculiar deal made with "the smiling man"--a sinister specter who grants your most tightly held wish, but only for the ultimate price. Captivated by the tale, Ollie begins to wonder if the smiling man might be real when she stumbles upon the graves of the very people she's been reading about on a school trip to a nearby farm. Then, later, when her school bus breaks down on the ride home, the strange bus driver tells Ollie and her classmates: "Best get moving. At nightfall they'll come for the rest of you." Nightfall is, indeed, fast descending when Ollie's previously broken digital wristwatch begins a startling countdown and delivers a terrifying message: RUN.

## ***The Length of a String* Elissa Brent Weissman (historical fiction)**

Imani knows exactly what she wants as her big bat mitzvah gift: to find her birth parents. 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. Then her mom's grandmother--Imani's great-grandma Anna--passes away, and Imani discovers an old journal among her books. It's Anna's diary from 1941, the year she was twelve and fled Nazi-occupied Luxembourg alone, sent by her parents to seek refuge in Brooklyn, New York. Anna's diary records her journey to America and her new life with an adoptive family of her own. And as Imani reads the diary, she begins to see her family, and her place in it, in a whole new way.

## ***Game Changer* by Tommy Greenwald (sports)**

Thirteen-year-old Teddy Youngblood is in a coma fighting for his life after an unspecified football injury at training camp. His family and friends flock to his bedside to support his recovery--and to discuss the events leading up to the tragic accident. Was this an inevitable result of playing a violent sport, or was something more sinister happening on the field that day? Told in an innovative, multimedia format combining dialogue, texts, newspaper articles, transcripts, an online forum, and Teddy's inner thoughts, *Game Changer* explores the joyous thrills and terrifying risks of America's most popular sport.

## ***They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei (graphic novel)**

A stunning graphic memoir recounting actor/author/activist George Takei's childhood imprisoned within American concentration camps during World War II. Experience the forces that shaped an American icon -- and America itself -- in this gripping tale of courage, country, loyalty, and love. George Takei has captured hearts and minds worldwide with his captivating stage presence and outspoken commitment to equal rights. But long before he braved new frontiers in *Star Trek*, he woke up as a four-year-old boy to find his own birth country at war with his father's -- and their entire family forced from their home into an uncertain future.