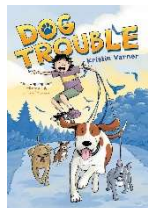


Sunshine State Young Readers Award Books 2026 - 2027 List for Grades 6 - 8



***Bye Forever, I Guess* by Jodi Meadows**

Ingrid's been living a double life. At school, she's her popular friend Rachel's charity case. Online, things are different: she crushes it in her favorite MMORPG and runs a popular social media account. But when Ingrid finally stands up to Rachel, it suddenly feels like she has no life at *all*. Until she gets a wrong-number text from a mystery boy at her school, and everything starts to go right. Playing online with him makes her feel like she's really *connecting* with someone. But when she begins to suspect that the mystery boy may be a popular classmate who is WAY above her in the cool-kid food chain—and whose original text was actually intended for *Rachel*—she faces a difficult choice. Can they be friends IRL?



***Dog Trouble* by Kristin Varner**

Ash is a good kid at heart. But his grades are slipping, and when he gets caught vandalizing an old building, it's the last straw. It's decided: Ash will spend some time away from the city, at his dad's place on Ferncliff Island. That's bad enough, but his parents are also making him do community service at the local animal shelter! Ash isn't a dog person, but as he bonds with the pups at the shelter, especially Cooper, a clever, fun-loving pointer that gives sloppy kisses—he starts to see that maybe his time on Ferncliff Island isn't a total loss.



***I.R.L.* by Jenny Goebel**

Not every kid would be thrilled to move to rural Alaska, but sixth grader Lucy is eager to leave her bullies behind and start over. However, it turns out that Lucy's new school does remote learning from October to April, when the roads become too icy to navigate safely. Being the new kid is hard enough -- how is she going to make friends when she can't meet anyone in person? Luckily, the sixth grade class is tiny (just thirteen students) and they're all super nice and really welcoming. As the ice starts to thaw, Lucy grows excited about finally meeting her new friends in person. But when she arrives at her new school, Lucy doesn't know what to believe. Are her new "friends" pulling an elaborate prank? Or is truth far, far more horrifying?



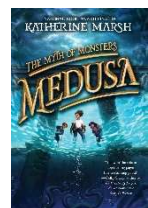
***The Last Dragon on Mars* by Scott Reintgen**

Keep your eyes down and your feet moving, or this planet will rust you. That's what Lunar Jones tells the other kids at the relocation clinic. All of them were born on Mars, a planet that never wanted people in the first place. With resources scarce and hope even scarcer, it's easy to get distracted looking up. After all, their ancestors descended from the stars. Lunar knows all the old stories about dragons and space, but no one up there's planning to help him or his crew. Instead, he focuses on scrapping valuable gear that the storms uncover in the war zone. Until one day, a salvaging run goes wrong. Desperate to find shelter, Lunar goes underground in a restricted zone. What he finds there, buried in the Martian dust, might just be the only hope left for a dying planet.



***The Legend of the Last Library* by Frank L. Cole**

After a devastating Blight killed off all the trees, paper is worth more than just about anything. Juni's parents died when she was young, so now it's just her and Grandpa Edgar. When she's not in school, Juni and her friends Doler and Quaze turn to plifting—scavenging for any paper they can find. If Juni can find enough paper, she can pay for the health care Grandpa needs. So when Juni discovers a book—the first one she's ever seen—hidden in a box in her grandpa's closet, she's both surprised and elated thinking of the money she could get for it. That all changes when she decides to read the book. Beyond opening her imagination, the book contains clues that point to what could be the last library on Earth. If reading one book could change Juni's life, what would access to thousands—or millions—of books do?



***The Myth of Monsters: Medusa* by Katherine Marsh**

Ava Baldwin has always tried to keep her anger in check, just like her mom taught her. But when know-it-all classmate Owen King tries to speak over her yet again, Ava explodes . . . and Owen freezes, becoming totally unresponsive. Although Owen recovers, Ava's parents whisk her off to her mother's alma mater, the Accademia del Forte, a mysterious magical boarding school in Venice, Italy. But not everything at the Accademia is as it seems. After her friend Fia is almost expelled for challenging a teacher, Ava realizes the school is hiding a dangerous secret. To uncover the truth, Ava and her new friends embark on an adventure that could change the way they view history, ancient mythology—and themselves—forever...or end their lives.



***The No Brainer's Guide to Decomposition* by Adrianna Cuevas**

Bodies buried in her backyard doesn't exactly make Frani Gonzalez the most popular kid in school, and the imaginary spider that lives in a web in her brain isn't helping either. Arañita's always to blame for the distracted thoughts weaving through Frani's mind. But when a hand reaches out of the ground and grabs her ankle, Frani realizes that she's got bigger problems. Not everything is as it seems at the body farm, and now Frani must help the zombie that crawled out of the dirt...before he gets too hungry. But as more and more zombies begin to appear—and they seem to get less and less friendly—can Frani embrace the true nature of her brain and count on new friendships to solve the body farm's mystery before it's overrun with the undead?

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***On Thin Ice* by Jessica Kim**

Twelve-year-old fraternal twins Phoebe and Dexter Bae are polar opposites in every way except for their love of the ice. Phoebe is hyper focused on pairs figure skating, and Dex loves his hockey team. But when Phoebe's partner injures his knee just two months before competitions and Dex gets cut from his team in favor of a new hotshot goalie from Canada, they're both left spinning. With their skating dreams dashed, their mother suggests that Dex fill in as Phoebe's doubles partner. It's a hard sell—the twins haven't been close since their father passed away two years ago. Can these siblings skate past their differences toward victory?



***Plain Jane and the Mermaid* by Vera Brosgol**

Jane is incredibly plain. Everyone says so: her parents, the villagers, and her horrible cousin who kicks her out of her own house. Determined to get some semblance of independence, Jane prepares to propose to the princely Peter. It's a good plan! Or it would've been, if he wasn't kidnapped by a mermaid. Jane must venture underwater to rescue her maybe-fiancé. But the depths of the ocean hold beautiful mysteries and dangerous creatures. What good can a plain Jane do?



***Secrets of the Broken House* by Taryn Souders**

In the small, southern town of Everson, goats can run for mayor, the mail is always late, and nothing all that bad ever happens. That is, until thirteen-year-old Tucker finds Miss Geraldine dead at the bottom of her stairs. At first glance, it looks like an accident. But Tucker has always had a knack for noticing details that others overlook, and the details surrounding Miss Geraldine's death just aren't adding up. Miss Geraldine was miserable and mean. Miss Geraldine was *murdered*. The whole town seems to have reason to want her dead, which makes Tucker's search for the truth nearly impossible. Anyone could be the killer, and in a small town that loves to gossip, if Tucker isn't careful, he could be the next one to have an "accident".



***The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman* by Gennifer Choldenko**

When eleven-year-old Hank's mom doesn't come home, he takes care of his toddler sister, Boo, like he always does. But it's been a week now. They are out of food and mom has never stayed away this long... Hank knows he needs help, so he and Boo seek out the stranger listed as their emergency contact. But asking for help has consequences. It means social workers, and a new school, and having to answer questions about his mom that he's been trying to keep secret. And if they can't find his mom soon, Hank and Boo may end up in different foster homes—he could lose everything.



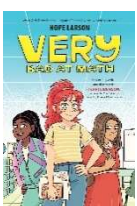
***The Trouble with Heroes* by Kate Messner**

Finn Connelly is nothing like his dad, a star athlete and firefighter hero who always ran toward danger until he died two years ago. Finn is about to fail seventh grade and has never made headlines . . . until now. Caught on camera vandalizing a cemetery, he's in big trouble for knocking down some dead old lady's headstone. Turns out that grave belongs to a legendary local mountain climber, and her daughter makes Finn an unusual offer: she'll drop all the charges if he agrees to climb all forty-six Adirondack High Peaks in a single summer. And there's just one more thing—he has to bring along the dead woman's dog.



***Valor Wings* by Sam Subity**

May 10, 1940: Everyone in Iris's small English village avoids the dragon in the woods. Everyone, that is, except for Iris. When Galahad the dragon is accused of stealing military rations, Iris strikes a bargain that will spare Galahad's life... but send him off to the war brewing in Europe. Soon after, she receives news that her brother is among the troops trapped in France by the advancing German troops. Refusing to give up hope, Iris devises a desperate plan that will either save both her brother and her best friend—or end in disaster. Meanwhile in Belgium, Max's school day is abruptly interrupted by some terrifying news: The Germans have invaded his country. Across hundreds of miles, the stories of Iris and Max steadily converge toward an explosive conclusion that will change them both forever.



***Very Bad at Math* by Hope Larson**

Verity "Very" Nelson can do it all. She's student body president, debate club whiz, and first chair clarinetist. You could say she's pretty much the best at everything... Well, almost everything. Everything except math. And it's not like she doesn't try. Math just doesn't make sense in her brain. But it better start soon, or else she can kiss her presidency—and her campaign promises—goodbye. Soon Verity finds herself enrolled in a remedial math class where, despite her best efforts, failure persists. All seems lost until a teacher helps her discover the truth: Verity has dyscalculia, a learning disability that causes her to mix up numbers. Armed with a new diagnosis and improved grades, Verity is confident her math struggles will remain secret. But when a gossip podcaster dismantles her perfect image, Verity must choose: remain part of a broken system or fight to fix it.



***Will's Race for Home* by Jewell Parker Rhodes**

It's 1889, barely twenty-five years after the Emancipation Proclamation, and a young Black family is tired of working on land they don't get to own. So when Will and his father hear about an upcoming land rush, they set out on a journey from Texas to Oklahoma, racing thousands of others to the place where land is free—if they can get to it fast enough. But the journey isn't easy—the terrain is rough, the bandits are brutal, and every interaction carries a heavy undercurrent of danger. And then there's the stranger they encounter and befriend: a mysterious soldier named Caesar, whose Union emblem brings more attention—and more trouble—than any of them need. All three are propelled by the promise of something long denied to them: freedom, land ownership, and a place to call home—but is a strong will enough to get them there?