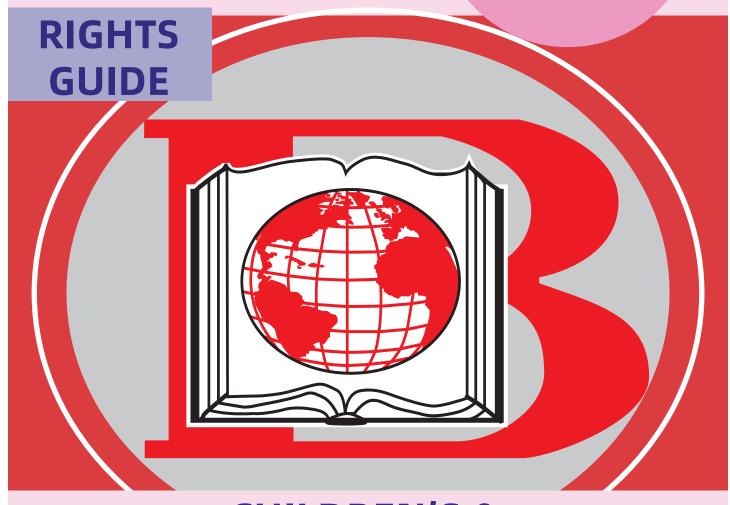
#### BAROR INTERNATIONAL

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FALL 2024



CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT

# BAROR INTERNATIONAL



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#### AMELIA, IF ONLY BECKY ALBERTALLI

COVER

COMING

SOON

"Abertalli is one of the best in the queer-romance biz, whose presence on best-seller lists and Netflix attest to her status as a fan favorite."
-Booklist Starred Review, Imogen, If Only

Balzer + Bray / HarperCollins, June 2025

From the #1 New York

Times bestselling author

of Simon vs. the Homo

Sapiens Agenda

Amelia Applebaum isn't in love with Walter Holland. He just happens to be her favorite moderately famous, chaotically bisexual YouTuber. Who she just happened to invite to prom. (But it's fine. No, for real. If you delete the post, it didn't happen.)

Okay, maybe her friends are right: she's slightly parasocially infatuated. But Amelia just knows sparks would fly-- if only she could meet Walter for real.

If only he would host a meet-and-greet.

If only it were just a short road trip away.

And if only she could talk her best friends into making it the perfect last hurrah before graduation--even Amelia's newly-single, always-cynical, guitar-toting best friend Natalie.

One thing's for sure: all roads lead to butterflies.

But what if Amelia's butterflies aren't for Walter at all?

#### THEA AND THE MISCHIEF MAKERS TRACY BADUA



athlete
Thea must face her
worst fears when two
mischievous duwendes,
Filipino goblins, threaten
to wreak havoc on her
life—and destroy her
town.

Clarion Books, October 2024

A magical middle grade adventure that's perfect for fans of Lisa Yee and Erin Entrada Kelly

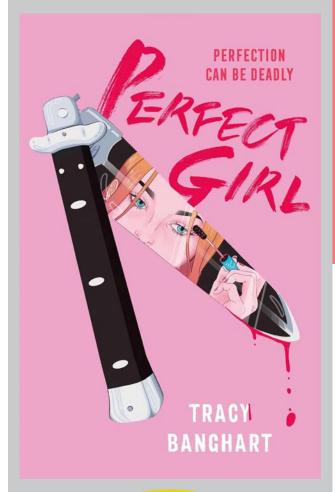
Thea gets a chance to begin anew at Coastview Academy. There, she's a star athlete, someone with friends and popularity.

But disaster strikes at Junior Stunt Warrior summer camp with her new friends: Her extremely uncool former best friend, Evan, shows up too, and she discovers that stunt class is the one activity she's not good at. Actually, it's something she's terrified of. It all reminds Thea of the shy, invisible version of herself she's determined to leave behind.

Then, in the midst of building a practice obstacle course, Thea wrecks a tree that a pair of grumpy duwendes—Filipino goblins—call home. She's shocked that not only are duwendes real, but the two in her backyard want revenge.

Now Thea must team up with friends new and old to fend off the duwendes before they destroy her entire neighborhood. But can she pull it off while saving her cool-girl image, too?

#### PERFECT GIRL TRACY BANGHART



A fabulous new young adult suspense novel!

Feiwel & Friends, November 2024

Who knew perfection could be so dangerous?

Jessa has been raised to be the "perfect girl." She is unfailingly polite, never rocks the boat, and always follows the rules - no matter what. Her friends love to give her a hard time for being such a goody two-shoes, but Jessa likes it this way. She knows what's expected of her, and she's happy to be the person her parents (and society) want.

When a freak storm takes out the power during a sleepover at Jessa's creepy, old house, things go south before the pizza gets cold. Her friends are at each other's throats, unexpected guests keep showing up (some more welcome than others), and it's not just her brother serving up jump scares. A killer looking for the perfect girl has targeted Jessa, and she'll have to reject everything she's been taught if she wants to keep herself - and her friends - alive until sunrise.

#### GHOST SCOUTS HONOR CAREY BLANKENSHIP-KRAMER



Scholastic, January 2025

A thrilling, ghostly adventure...and a testament to the power that kids have to change the world.

The Ghost Scouts were created to keep the ghosts of Savannah in line. It's an honor to serve.

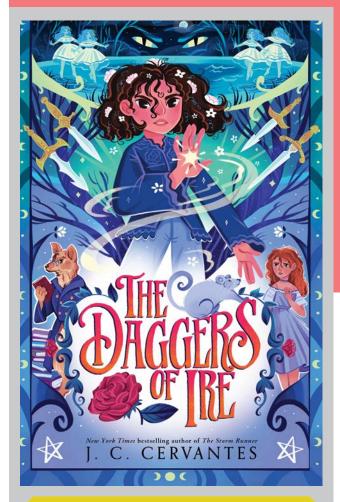
Evey's never wanted anything to do with ghosts, but after best friend, Laura, dumps her for no reason, Evey wants revenge. To take the student of the year award from her ex-bestie, she'll have to join the Ghost Scouts. She'll be the best Ghost Scout Savannah has ever seen.

Only this year the ghosts seem different. They are angrier than usual, and they seem to be growing in power. No problem, Evey can get to the bottom of why and send all the ghosts back to their cages.

But what she uncovers makes her angry too. What if the ghosts don't deserve to be caged? What if they have every right to be furious?

DEFIANCE
HOLDS
POWER

#### THE DAGGERS OF IRE J.C. CERVANTES



A rich and exciting new Latine middle grade fantasy about sisterhood, magic, and the power of kids to face what grown-ups refuse to see.

Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins, September 2024

"J.C. Cervantes is a powerful bruja.

That's the only explanation for how she can pro- duce so many wonderful books. The Daggers of Ire is a perfect blend of magic, humor, adventure, and heart!"

—Rick Riordan

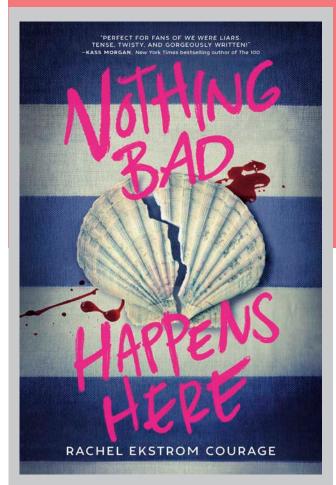
New York Times #1 Best-selling
Author of Percy Jackson and the
Olympians

Esmerelda Santos is a rare bruja, one born with Chaos magic in her veins. She and her family are direct descendants of one of the original four witches--a mysterious legend about the night magic was born in San Bosco. But Esme has no time for such tales. Since the death of her mother, she's been determined along with her sister Lenny, to heal their father's spiraling grief.

When Esme finds a heart spell in a forbidden grimorio, she thinks it could be the answer to making her dad whole again. But before she can try, she and her best friend, Tiago discover that their families and all the town's witches have mysteriously vanished. The only way to save them is to find an original witch, impossible since no one has actually ever seen one.

With a witch hunter on their tail, Esme and Tiago journey to a banished realm, where forbidden magic runs wild. Here the two must embrace their powers and confront the legend's terrible truths...or risk losing their families and their magic forever.

## NOTHING BAD HAPPENS HERE RACHEL EKSTROM COURAGE



"The perfect summer read!
Rich teens beach-partying
in glamorous Nantucket . . .
and then a murder. Enough
mystery, twists, secrets and
surprises to keep you reading
to the startling finish. Loved
it!" —R.L. Stine, author of the
Goosebumps series and Fear
Street

Delacorte/PRH, April 2025

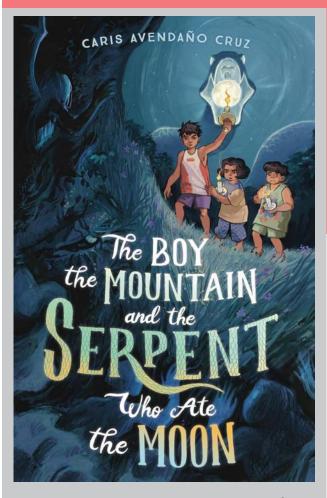
THEY WISH THEY WERE US meets THE WICKED DEEP with a mythical twist.

#### **Beautiful Lives, Beautiful Lies**

A carefree New England vacation is just what sixteenyear-old Lucia needs to chase her sadness away. At least, according to her mom, who whisks them away for the summer with her ridiculously wealthy new boyfriend. Nothing bad happens in Nantucket, a charming island with cobblestone streets and milliondollar cottages.

But when Lucia stumbles upon the body of a teenage girl on a beach, the discovery reopens old wounds from her past. With the dead girl's identity a mystery, Lucia takes it upon herself to investigate and crosses paths with Selah and her pack of devil-may-care besties. The three girls are beautiful, chaotic, and a little wild—and they help Lucia forget her crushing sense of grief and loneliness. But as Lucia becomes a part of their shimmering world, she begins to suspect that there are dark secrets hidden in this quiet enclave, and that uncovering them may be the key to solving the dead girl's murder. Not everything on this island is what it seems...

## THE BOY, THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SERPENT WHO ATE THE MOON CARIS AVENDANO CRUZ



Caris Avendaño Cruz is the author of *The Boy, the Mountain, and the Serpent Who Ate the Moon and Marikit* and *the Ocean of Stars.* She is a copywriter for internet brands and cool businesses, but her favorite things to write are magical stories led by kids of color. She lives in Bulacan, Philippines and posts on Instagram. Visit her website to learn more.

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, July 2025

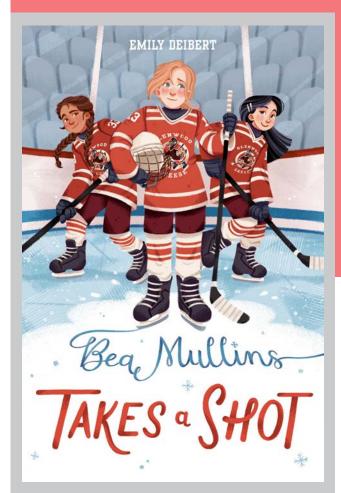
A magical middle grade adventure about three Filipino children who must find their way through a mystical land filled with monsters and gods from Filipino lore.

The town of Santo Cristo is known for two things—their colorful town fiesta capped off with a solemn evening procession, and the dozens of people that have disappeared over the years.

When three kids – the headstrong Bayani, stubborn Isay, and anxious Aaron – find their way over the other side of a mysterious bridge and to a long-forgotten island of myth, they're faced with monsters, cryptids, and sinister characters.

In this land of Night, they must find their way back to their world and keep their light burning bright lest they lose themselves too.

### BEA MULLINS TAKES A SHOT EMILY DEIBERT



A hilarious and heartfelt middle-grade contemporary about first crushes and fierce friendships

Random House Children's Books, February 2025

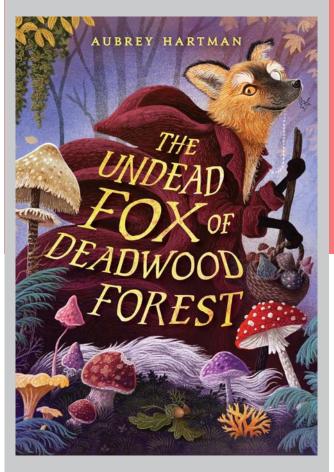
A contemporary middle grade with all the warmth and big-heartedness of Sidetracked and Almost Flying

Some goals are worth falling for.

After a lifetime of humiliating sports experiences, Bea Mullins knows the best way to survive middle school is to stick to the sidelines. When PE is suddenly canceled, though, Bea is forced to join an after-school activity...which is how she ends up as a member of the Glenwood Geese, her middle school's first all-girls hockey team.

Bea would be happy sitting on the bench, but she doesn't want to let down her best friend, Celia. Plus, the more time Bea spends on the rinks, the more she comes to enjoy her teammates, especially the incredibly talented--and incredibly cool--co-captain Gabi. But when low funding puts the Geese in danger of never playing again, Bea realizes she may lose everything she didn't know she wanted.

#### THE UNDEAD FOX OF DEADWOOD FOREST AUBREY HARTMAN



Little Brown Children's BFYR, February 2025

A delightfully grim tale about an undead fox whose lonely existence is turned upside down when he learns his job as usher of souls is in jeopardy

Clare is the undead fox of Deadwood Forest. Here, leaves grow in a perpetual state of fall: not quite dead, but not quite alive...just like Clare. Long ago, he was struck by a car, and, hovering between life and death, he was given the choice to either cross into the Afterlife or become an Usher of wandering souls. Clare chose the latter: stepping into a solitary life of helping souls meet their destiny.

Perfect for fans of Kate
DiCamillo and
Tim Burton

Clare's quiet and predictable days are met with upheaval when a badger soul named Gingersnipes knocks on his door. Despite Clare's efforts to usher her into the Afterlife, the badger is unable to find her way out of Deadwood. This is unprecedented. Baffling. A disturbing mystery which threatens the delicate balance of the living and the dead. Clare seeks the help of Hesterfowl—the visionary grouse who recently foretold of turmoil in Deadwood. But Hesterfowl divulges a shocking revelation about the badger that leaves Clare devastated, outraged, and determined to do anything to change their fate.

#### THE LIES WE CONJURE SARAH HENNING



Rights Sold: Ravensburger German

"[A] propulsive drama, giving tantalizing insight into contrasting pieces of the puzzle and the complicated web of relationships between the devious and compellingly wrought cast."-Publishers Weekly, starred review

Tor Teen, September 2024

Thirteen witches, a lockedroom murder, and two nonmagical sisters trapped in a deadly game of Clue.

Ruby and her sister, Wren, are normal, middle-class Colorado high school students working a summer job at the local Renaissance Fest to supplement their meager college savings.

So when an eccentric old lady asks them to impersonate her long-absent grandchildren at a fancy dinner party at the jaw-dropping rate of two grand - each - for a single night... Wren insists it's a no-brainer. Make some cash, have some fun, do a good deed.

But less than an hour into the evening at the mysterious Hegemony Manor, Ruby is sure she must have lost her mind to have agreed to this.

The hostess is dead, the gates are locked, and a magical curse ensures no one can leave until they solve both her murder and the riddles she left behind - in just three days. Because everyone else at this party is a powerful witch. And if the witches realize Ruby and Wren are imposters? The sisters won't make it out of Hegemony Manor alive.

#### HOW IT ALL ENDS EMMA HUNSINGER

Imagine the possibilities

Greenwillow/HarperCollins, August 2024

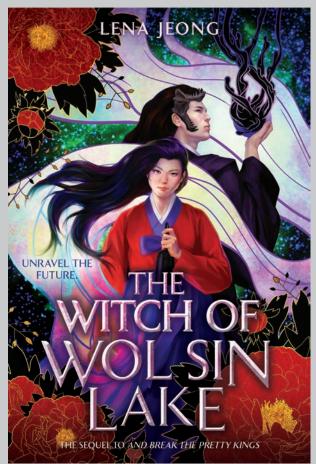
- An Indie Next Pick
- A New England Book Award
   Finalist
- 5 Starred Reviews

"How It All Ends is hilarious, inventive, smart and silly, and perfectly captures the overwhelming confusion, anxiety, and joy of a young gay crush."

—ALICE OSEMAN, bestselling author of Heartstopper



#### THE WITCH OF WOL SIN LAKE LENA JEONG



AND
BREAK THE
PRETTY
I (INGS

HarperCollins, October 2024

Dark and thrilling, this action- packed sequel to And Break the Pretty Kings pulls readers deeper into its captivating world of lavish, fantastical magic and dangerous secrets, as Mirae faces overwhelming odds to save her queendom— and an impossible choice.

The Netherking is finally back in his dark cage.

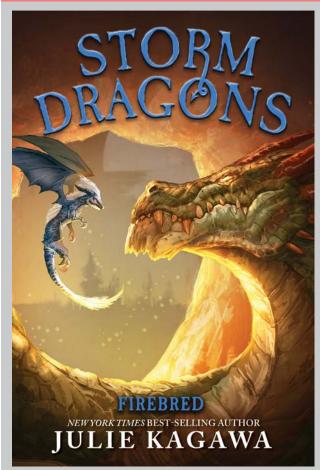
But his imprisonment brings Mirae no peace because he managed to possess her beloved older brother, Minho, and it is Minho's body that languishes in the Deep, tormented by his possessor.

Mirae is determined to free her brother and destroy the Netherking once and for all. But when the Netherking steals the all-powerful pearl of Seolla, Mirae's careful plans are destroyed. She must set out once more to stop him, slipping in and out of the future with her divine powers as she races a path to the heavens.

When she discovers the truth about the Netherking's intentions and learns that the only way to destroy him is with a sacrifice larger than she can bear, Mirae begins to doubt her free will and even the fate of the entire peninsula and the gods beyond.

Dark and thrilling, this action-packed sequel to And Break the Pretty Kings pulls readers deeper into its captivating world of lavish, fantastical magic and dangerous secrets, as Mirae faces overwhelming odds to save her queendom and an impossible choice.

#### STORM DRAGONS: FIREBRED JULIE KAGAWA





Disney Hyperion, April 2025

A new series from the New York
Times, USA Today, internationally
bestselling author of many series
including The Iron Fey, The Talon
Saga, Shadow of the Fox and more
with over a million copies sold
across the globe.

REMY has come a long way from his life as a scrappy orphan on Cutthroat Wedge. Still on the run from the evil pirate Jhaeros, Remy and his dragon, Storm, set out to find a True Dragon, the only creature old enough to understand why the magic that powers their floating islands is dying. After a confession from a long-forgotten sky knight about the remote location of a True Dragon, Remy is more determined than ever to help save the day. But this is easier said than done when an ancient force has done everything in its power to keep that True Dragon hidden.

GEM is ready to harness magic to protect her friends, but training is impossible now that she's far away from the College of Magic. That is, until she teams up with the surly wizard Lysander aboard the Queen's Blade, forming a begrudging partnership and beginning a journey to master magic. As Gem grows stronger, so does her desire to live up to her title as the princess by halting the kingdom's impending doom. But what good is revealing the truth about the dire state of the world if nobody will listen?

To save their realm, Remy, Gem, and Storm must evade the king's guards, discover the hidden truths about the past, and face down a vengeful villain none of them saw coming. Together they will discover who they are, what it means to be a good friend, and what it takes to be a hero.

Rights Sold: CBJ, German Gallimard Jeunesse, French

#### ONE WORD, SIX LETTERS ADIB KHORRAM

COVER

**COMING** 

SOON

A conversationgenerating book in the vein of Wonder by R.J. Palacio, Walter Dean Myers' Monster, Jandy Nelson's I'll Give You the Sun, Neal Schusterman's and Jason Reynolds' A Long Way Down Holt/Macmillan, Winter 2026

From the author of the

critical and commercial

success: Darius the

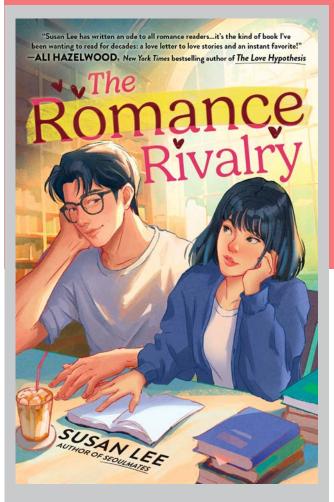
Great is Not Okay.

This is a story in two voices, about bad choices and the rippling after-effects of those mistakes, the strangely propulsive nature of toxic friendships, and sometimes slow nature of forgiveness, and our collective and individual needs for accountability, apology, self-acceptance, and healing.

Inspired by a true story and told with Adib's characteristic humor and authentic teenage ear this is a story about justice in which readers are complicit in the decisions the characters make, and where we have full narrative power at the story's end.

When one boy allows another to influence him, it is ultimately the entire community who suffers.

#### THE ROMANCE RIVALRY SUSAN LEE



Previous Work Sold in 8 Languages

HarperCollins Children's, May 2025

"Susan Lee always writes the exact book I want to read!"
—Ali Hazelwood, New York
Times bestselling author of
The Love Hypothesis

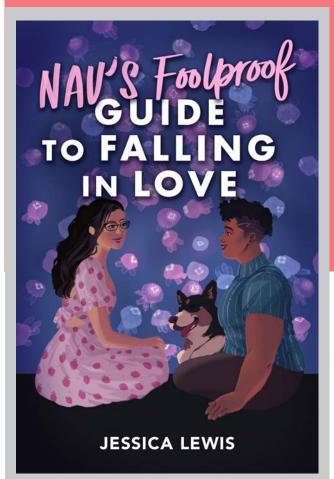
At 18, Irene Park is one of the internet's most followed romance book reviewers. And though she's had plenty of "book boyfriends", she's never been in an actual relationship in real life. As she sets off to start anew in college, she decides this will be the year to fall in love. So she turns to what she knows best. Following the tropes of her favorite romance novels, Irene will choose boys to date and find her happily ever after.

Only one trope is off limits: enemies-to-lovers. It's a trope she's never enjoyed reading. Plus, she doesn't have any enemies... that is, except for Aiden Jeon, rival romance book reviewer and overall distasteful human being. Aiden and Irene never like the same books and he's made it very clear, publicly in the comments, that he thinks she has bad reading taste. The nerve.

So what if they're going to the same college. So what if they're both in the school's Contemporary Literature program. So what if he catches wind about her trope-to-find-a-mate plan and suddenly keeps showing up everywhere she is. Aiden's efforts to make her life miserable won't work and he can't stop Irene from her goal of falling in love.

But when bickering becomes banter and fighting an addictive form of flirting, Irene's confusing feelings start to make her wonder. And when Aiden dares Irene to give his favorite trope... you guessed it, enemies-to-lovers...a chance, she finds that she might have been missing out on some of the swooniest books... and boyfriends...out there. And that maybe, just maybe, she's found a new favorite trope on the way to finding true love.

#### NAV'S FOOLPROOF GUIDE TO FALLING IN LOVE JESSICA LEWIS



Rights Sold: OFF/II Castoro, Italian HarperCollins, April 2025

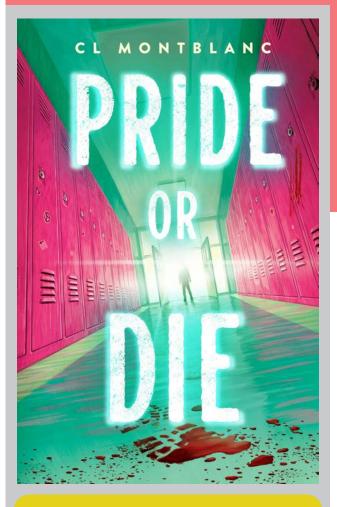
"Lewis crafted a foolproof book that I immediately fell in love with. Funny, tender, charming, and extremely relatable, Nav's Foolproof Guide to Falling in Love is a swoony sapphic masterpiece."
-Justine Pucella Winans, award winning author of Bianca Torre is Afraid of Everything

Nav knows how to flirt, but she also knows love is a messy losing proposition. As proof, her best friend, Hallie, is constantly getting her heart broken. And when Hallie goes to her boring academic camp this summer, Nav won't be there to protect her for the first time in their lives.

So when shy new girl Gia asks Nav for help getting Hallie's attention, Nav finds a way to make it work for her. In exchange for lessons in romance, Gia, whose mom runs the camp, will help get Nav a spot there. And if her coaching works, maybe Hallie can date someone who will treat her right for a change.

Except...Gia's not just bad at flirting, she's terrible. She's too anxious to even speak to Hallie, never mind date her. Training Gia quickly becomes a disaster. Worse, Gia's every awkward joke and catastrophic fake date makes Nav like Gia a little bit more...and not in a friend way. Which puts a really, really big wrench in Nav's plans. As Nav's feelings change, she'll have to decide what's more important: sticking to her plan for the perfect summer or taking a chance on learning more about love than she ever expected.

#### PRIDE OR DIE C.L. MONTBLANC



In this delightful dark comedy debut, when the members of an LGBTQ+ club find themselves accidentally framed for attempted murder, it's up to them to clear their names before it's too late.

Wednesday Books/Macmillan, April 2025

#### ONE OF US IS LYING

meets

I KISSED SHARA WHEELER

It's kind of hard to graduate high school when you're the prime suspect in an attempted murder.

Seventeen-year-old Eleanora Finkel just wants to finish her senior year and get the hell out of Texas. But when her LGBTQ+ meeting inconveniently coincides with an attack on the school's head cheerleader, she and her friends find themselves in the hot seat.

In order to clear their names and ensure the survival of their club for future queer teens, they'll have to track down the real culprit themselves. But Eleanora is far from a professional detective; she's riddled with anxiety, annoyingly attracted to the case's cute victim, and all the crocheting in the world couldn't prepare her to square up against a criminal. Can this ragtag group of unlikely sleuths find their way out of an entire freaking murder mystery by graduation?

#### A TREACHERY OF SWANS A.B. PORANEK

COVER

COMING

SOON

Rights Sold: Celeste, French Arctis, German Puck, Spanish

Previous Title sold in 14 Languages

Margaret K. MacElderry/Simon & Schuster, July 2025

An atmospheric fantasy based on Swan Lake, following Odile as her plan to restore magic to her kingdom gets disrupted by a murder—forcing her to beg for help from the young woman whose identity she stole.

Can two girls—one enchanted, one the enchantress—save their kingdom…and each other?

The kingdom of Réveillon is under a terrible curse—flowers won't bloom and snow falls black from the sky. Magic could change things, but all of it is said to be trapped within a golden crown ruthlessly guarded by the king. Seventeen-year-old Odile, raised by vengeful sorcerer Rothbarte, has been trained to infiltrate the palace to steal the crown back and release the power within. When it comes time to set the plot in motion, Odile uses an enchanted necklace to transform Marie, a friend of the young dauphin, into a swan—leaving Odile free to assume her identity and gain access to the royal court.

But when the king is brutally murdered, chaos ensues. Odile's own brother gets accused of being behind the assassination, leaving Odile desperate to free him...even if it means putting her mission on hold to find the real killer. She's forced to team up with none other than Marie, the girl who rightfully distrusts her—and who Odile might have feelings for.

As they investigate, they hear whispers that the king's murder was not at the hands of man, but beast. Torn between loyalty to Rothbarte and her growing feelings for Marie, Odile becomes tangled in a web of treachery and deceit. To save her kingdom, she must find the true path to magic...and find the real killer before they—or it—strikes again.

#### AND THEY WERE ROOMMATES PAGE POWARS



Roaring Brook Press/Macmillan, January 2025 Hodder, UK/Commonwealth

Two roommates. One secret.

A lot of love letters. To All

The Boys I've Loved Before
meets Young Royals in this
heartwarming and hilarious
queer boarding school rom-com.

Romance is the last thing on Charlie's mind.

On his first day at Valentine Academy for Boys, Charlie's carefully crafted plan to hide his identity as the school's only trans student is set in motion. Only to be immediately destroyed. Charlie has been assigned the worst roommate in the world (possibly the universe): Jasper Grimes, the boy who broke Charlie's heart the year before he transitioned.

Except, Jasper doesn't recognize Charlie.

Who knows how long until Jasper realizes the truth? Charlie has one shot at freedom and a dorm room all to himself, but only if he helps Jasper write love letters on behalf of their fellow students first. No problem. Charlie can help Jasper with some silly letters.

Long nights spent discussing deep romantic feelings with Jasper? Surely, no unintended consequences will arise...

**Previous Work:** 

1,500 Goodreads Ratings

9,000 Wants-to-Read

#### HER SOUL FOR A CROWN ALYSHA RAMEERA

COVER

COMING

SOON

A romantasy novel
based on Sri Lankan
history and mythology,
blends the history of
the Poisoner Queen
Anula with a lush
setting and steamy,
slow-burn romance

Sourcebooks, August 2025

For fans of Vaishnavi

Patel's Kaikeyi and

Scarlett St. Clair's A

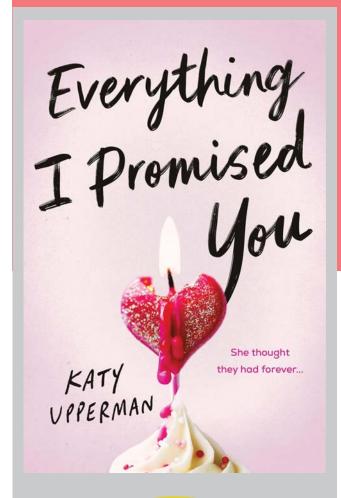
Touch of Darkness

In an endless age of usurpers, Anula of Anuradhapura is sick of witnessing death and devastation at the hands of ruthless men waging war. The solution? Take the throne for herself by poisoning her husband after their wedding...but that is until an unexpected coup thwarts her careful plans. Left with one remaining option, Anula offers her soul to the cursed gods she's never believed in—the yakkas—in exchange for the throne and the title of first Rajini.

Soul aside, Anula has made a grave mistake. In the Second Heavens dwells the most powerful and dangerous yakka, Reeri; and for eons, he's waited for the chance to return his fellow yakkas to their former glory on earth. But as Reeri accepts Anula's bargain, they become spiritually tethered until their goals are achieved, or until they die.

As the war presses on, Anula must move quickly or lose her last chance to take the throne. But while she is skilled at many things, especially in stopping hearts, the closer she grows to Reeri, the more she finds her own heart at risk. Forced to fight for their kingdoms and their people in more ways than one, Anula and Reeri will have to confront what it means to be a most-favored leader. Is it the power forged by fear, the strength formed by trust, or the love found in community?

### EVERYTHING I PROMISED YOU KATY UPPERMAN



Rights Sold:

CBJ, German

Mondadori, Italian

Hachette, French

Seguinte, Brazilian Portuguese

Porto, Portuguese

Rahva Raamat, Estonian

Family Leisure Club, Ukrainian

Alpina, Russian

Sourcebooks, February 2025

An emotionally raw and romantic portrait of grief, growth, and acceptance, perfect for fans of Laura Nowlin's If He Had Been with Me.

What comes after heartbreak?

Lia and Beck. Beck and Lia. Despite army-brat life orbiting them in and out of each other's worlds, Lia knows they are destined to be together. It's more than their friendship and chemistry. When Lia's mom was a teen, a fortune teller said her daughter would fall in love with her best friend's son. Lia and Beck were always meant to be. Or so they thought.

When tragedy steals Beck away, Lia is devastated. She lived her life by her mom's old fortune. If she was fated to be with Beck and he is gone, who is she supposed to be? And is there room in her broken heart for life, let alone new love?

#### THEIR WILL UNDONE RJ VALLDEPERAS

COVER

COMING

SOON

The perfect read for fans of Marie Rutkoski's The Winner's Curse, Mary E. Pearson's Dance of Thieves, and Tahereh Mafi's This Woven Kingdom.

Quill Tree/HarperCollins, Winter 2026

A crossover Incainspired Latinx comingof-RAGE fantasy romance.

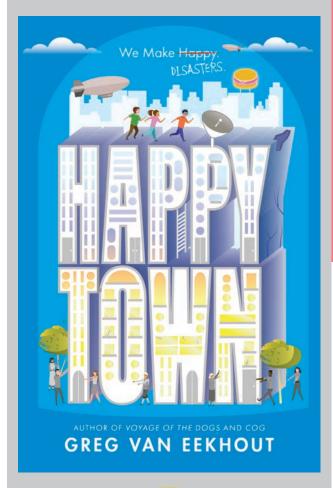
In the Amaru empire, it is an honor to be chosen for the annual harvest—boys conscripted into the army, and girls relegated to a cloistered upbringing behind the stone walls of the Aclla, destined to become priestesses, servants, or wives to the powerful and favored nobles in the emperor's ever-expanding territory. Four years ago, seventeen-year-old Nina volunteered to take her sister's place inside that gilded cage, and now she bides her time, waiting for her chance to escape.

The last thing Nina expects is for salvation to arrive in the form of a soldier named Kasik, bringing news from the emperor announcing their betrothal. Guided by her new escort, Nina reluctantly sets off toward the palace where her future husband rules with an iron fist from a palace made of gold.

But Kasik is not just any soldier: he's the emperor's best friend, dutybound to become commander of the army, and the son of the very man who imprisoned Nina within the walls of the Aclla all those years ago. There is no reason to trust him, and yet, Nina feels drawn to him. Their chemistry is palpable, but her attraction to Kasik isn't the only thing getting harder to ignore. There's also the tugging sensation in her chest, an awakening of a hidden magic she hasn't encountered since she was nothing more than a farmer's daughter running wild.

As this spark of power inside Nina grows, making her more dangerous and desirable to her enemies, so do the questions that have been eating at her throughout the journey—questions about why the emperor has chosen her, a nobody. Is she truly a bride, or is she a weapon? And when the time comes for Kasik to confront where his true loyalty lies, will he choose his emperor or his heart?

#### HAPPY TOWN GREG VAN EEKHOUT



"In this latest caper from the ingenious Van Eekhout, readers will enjoy the banter as much as the topsyturvy action."

— Booklist

HarperCollins, October 2024

This adventure-packed middle grade story, set in a world not too far from our own, follows a family that moves to a remote company town that seems perfect on the surface....

Stay calm and remain HAPPY. Help is on the way.

Keegan knows there's something off about Happy Town.

The isolated, high-tech company town is too perfect—with a dome keeping out bad weather and self-driving vehicles rumbling throughout the town delivering residents to work and school. Still, Keegan is excited to grow his art skills at Happy Town's ultra-modern middle school, even if he has less time to see his mom and stepdad because of their new jobs.

But when the two become obsessed with working and eating Happy Corp Meat Cramwich (the Microwaveable Sandwich Crammed with Meat) and Keegan gets sentenced to Mandatory Work Opportunities for refusing to follow Happy Town's shady rules, he discovers a dangerous glitch in the system that's turning the town's happy residents into zombies. Carnivorous, meat-craving, literal zombies. With his new friends Gloriana and Tank by his side, he'll need to find a way to destroy Happy Town's happy system—before there's nothing left.

