

Best Bets

Recommended Canadian Reads for Teens from 2016

Young Adult Fiction • Young Adult Nonfiction



The Best Bets Committee, under the wing of the OPLA division of the Ontario Library Association, picks this annual list.

Books are selected on the basis of their literary/artistic merit as well as their appeal for children or young adults.

Text and illustrations are of equal importance in picture books and information books.

OLA BEST BETS COMMITTEE

We are a long-standing committee with a strong voice in promoting Canadian literature for children and young adults. Our goal is to highlight excellence in literature for children and young adults for the OLA membership and other interested parties.

The OLA's annual Best Bets lists evolved from a list put out by the Canadian Materials Committee of the Children's Services Guild. This committee, now known as the OLA Best Bets Committee, is under the wing of the OPLA division of the Ontario Library Association.

The Best Bets Committee selects books on the basis of their literary/artistic merit as well as their appeal for children and young adults. Text and illustrations are of equal importance in picture books and information books. We publish two lists each year, one listing top material for children and the other listing top material for young adults (teens).

Meetings are held a minimum of six times a year. Members discuss and evaluate publications by Canadian authors and illustrators from the current calendar year. The books evaluated are suitable for children and young adults from birth to nineteen years old. From these discussions, the Committee produces "Best Bets" lists, annual annotated lists of recommended titles. These lists are released each year at the OLA Super Conference and can also be found on the OPLA website.

2016 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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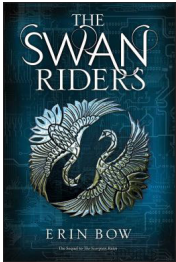
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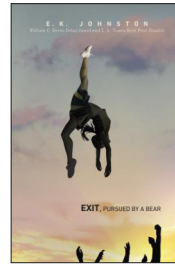
YOUNG ADULT FICTION



Bow, Erin. *The Swan Riders*. Simon & Schuster.

Once the Crown Princess and Prisoner of Peace for her country, Greta has left both the Precepture and her humanity behind as she joins Earth's ruler and overlord, Talis, as a new AI. With her full integration into becoming AI still in a delicate transition, she and Talis must travel across the land under the safety and care of his loyal

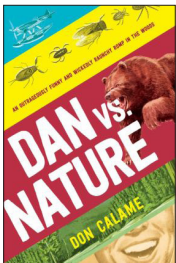
Swan Riders. And while Greta's fate was her own decision, her fate has brought about rebellion from her nation, threatening the peace that Talis' rule decrees, and unveiling conspiracy amongst those most trusted.



Johnston, E.K. *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*. Dutton Books.

What was supposed to be the best and final cheer camp for Hermione and Polly, BFFs, has turned into a nightmare after Hermione is found assaulted and half-submerged in the lake following the annual summer dance. Whispers follow Hermi-

one everywhere as she works through the trauma and fallout of the assault in her rural Ontario town, trying to figure out how to cope with an event she doesn't remember.



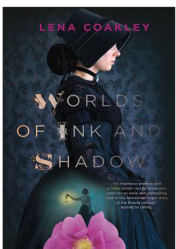
Calame, Don. *Dan Vs. Nature*. Candlewick.

Nothing can go wrong when teen Dan Weekes tries to sabotage his mother's future, by arranging for some hilarious and harebrained adventures while on a camping trip with his father-to-be, right? Cue one hungry, stalking bear and some increasingly humiliating stunts that pit Dan vs. nature, and himself.



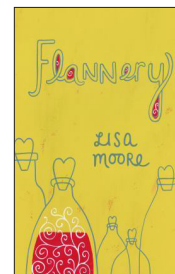
Lawrence, Lisa J. *Rodent*. Orca Book Publishers.

Unstable is the best way to describe Isabelle's life. Bouncing from apartment to apartment and school to school as a result of her alcoholic mother's inability to remain employed, Isabelle is tasked with looking after her two younger siblings by working at a local mini-mart. She reluctantly falls for Will and anticipates disaster at every turn, all while keeping her home life a secret.



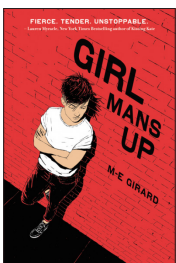
Coakley, Lena. *Worlds of Ink and Shadow*. HarperCollins.

The Brontës are reimagined in this page-turning fantasy. While isolated on a remote moor, the Brontës write stories in which they write themselves as characters. This book will leave you wondering what is real and imagined in this character-filled story.



Moore, Lisa. *Flannery*. Groundwood Books.

Sixteen year old Flannery Malone has a few problems. Her mom can't pay the bills, her best friend loses herself in a new boyfriend, and she's desperately infatuated with Tyrone, a once geeky kid now turned graffiti artist. Left alone to complete an entrepreneurship project, Flannery soon learns the difference between the power of perceptions and the realities of love.



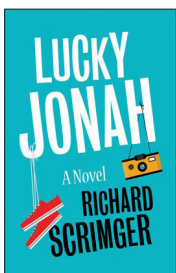
Girard, M-E. *Girl Mans Up*. HarperCollins.

Everyone in Pen Oliveira's life has an idea how she should act. The problem is, how they want her to act is just that—acting. Conflicts in her home, social circle, and romantic life bring Pen to realize that to be true to herself, there's only one course of action: Man Up.



Oppel, Kenneth. *Every Hidden Thing*. HarperCollins.

Samuel Bolt and Rachel Cartland have a few things in common, feuding paleontologist fathers included. As both families head into the Badlands in search of a life-changing find, Samuel and Rachel realize that they are better together than apart. Breaking away from their fathers, Sam and Rachel endeavour to find the Rex for themselves to prove they are just as capable as their predecessors.



Scrimger, Richard. *Lucky Jonah*. HarperCollins.

Given a special disposable camera, Jonah learns that with it he is able to transport himself into other people's bodies, and lives. What would you do with such a gift? Can Jonah forget being bullied and living in the shadow of his more popular best friend, or will this special gift show him that everything and everyone isn't what it seems?



Toten, Teresa. *Beware That Girl*. Doubleday Canada.

Scholarship student Kate O'Brien is an adept and admitted liar who befriends broken Olivia Sumner for her connections at the top of the social and academic ladders. New to their school's administration, Mark Redkin slowly and secretly starts threatening to unearth the less than polished pasts of Kate and Olivia. Who will come out on top? You might be surprised.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Tamaki, Mariko. *Saving Montgomery Sole*. Tundra Books.

Tromly, Stephanie. *Trouble Makes a Comeback*. Kathy Dawson Books.

Bass, Karen. *The Hill*. Pajama Press.

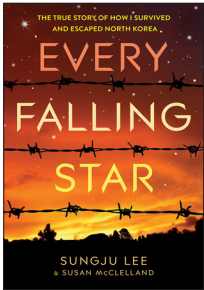
Watt, Erin. *Paper Princess*. EverAfter Romance. *Mature**

Green, Dawn. *In the Swish*. Red Deer Press.

Bouchard, Luc & David Wright. *Away Running*. Orca Book Publishers.

*The Best Bets lists are put together considering many factors of a book, including the appeal to its designated audience. *Paper Princess*, while not in our top ten, was noteworthy most particularly for its appeal to young adults. However, as this list is often used as a collection development or readers' advisory tool, we feel it prudent to add a disclaimer. Rated M for Mature.

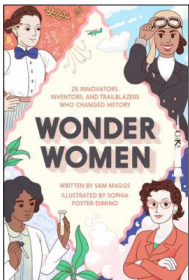
YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION



Lee, Sungju and Susan McClelland. *Every Falling Star: The True Story of How I Survived and Escaped North Korea*. Abrams.

Growing up in a world of privilege in North Korea's Capital, Sungju believes everything that the world has told him — that America is evil and trying to destroy North Korea, that their ruler

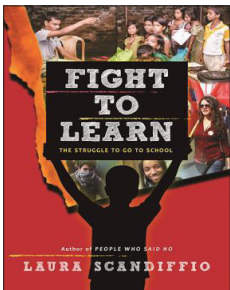
is benevolent and wants what's best for the people, and that the greatest thing he can do is become a general in their army to continue keeping North Korea safe. When his father makes a political mistake, Sungju and his parents are exiled from the capital and sent to the territories where the people are policed by corrupt officials and rations are scarce. As reality takes its toll and Sungju's parents are lost to him, he quickly learns that the only way to survive is to join a gang and fight each day to live.



Maggs, Sam. *Wonder Women: 25 Innovators, Inventors, and Trailblazers Who Changed History*. Illustrated by Sophia Foster-Dimino. Quirk Books.

Women have always been able to change the world, even though they don't always get the credit. This fun and accessible book highlights the accomplishments of

diverse, under-recognized female innovators throughout history—scientists, engineers, adventurers, inventors, mathematicians. Short interviews with contemporary women in STEM careers provide modern-day inspiration.



Scandiffio, Laura. *Fight to Learn: The Struggle to go to School*. Annick Press.

A hard look at a right many take for granted. Readers will learn about how poverty, discrimination, and violence can prevent young people around the world from getting an education and meet some amazing individuals trying to change that.

The author also examines two protest movements, one in Canada and one in Chile, trying to change education in their respective countries.