

**2026 Lone Star Texas  
Annotated Bibliography**



Ahmed, Samira. **The Singular Life of Aria Patel.** Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2025. ISBN: 9780316548687

A science-minded teen who craves order, Aria Patel, is thrown into chaos when she begins slipping uncontrollably through parallel universes. Each reality offers a different version of her family, her life, and Rohan—the boy who seems to find her no matter where she lands. When Aria arrives in a world nearly identical to her own, she’s tempted by the stability and love it offers. But staying would mean taking another Aria’s place, forcing her to choose between borrowed happiness and the uncertainty of returning home. Her journey becomes not just about getting back, but about discovering who she wants to be across every possible version of her life.

**You might also like:**

*A Forgery of Fate* by Elizabeth Lim

*You’ve Reached Sam* by Dustin Thao

*The Space Between Here and Now* by Sara Suk

Baron, Chris. **Spark.** Feiwel & Friends, 2025. ISBN: 9781250864741

Finn’s community near the Redwood forest seems idyllic, though tension is building. A large development project promises jobs for the town, yet it will require cutting down part of the forest. Finn knows his dad needs a job, but he also knows the damage the developers are doing to the forest. Meanwhile, environmentally minded Finn and his friend, Rabbit, are working together on a class project to share footage of the animals in the forest from their trail camera. This plan ends when a terrible wildfire breaks out. The wildfire doesn’t just destroy some of the forest and homes in the town; it also destroys Rabbit and Finn’s hope. When Rabbit discovers that footage from their trail cam has evidence of how the fire started, it may change everything in the town.

**You might also like:**

*Ode to a Nobody* by Caroline Brooks Dubois

*When Giants Burn* by Beth Varbal

*The Burning Season* by Caroline Starr Rose

Bowling, Dusti. **The Beat I Drum.** Union Square Kids, 2025. ISBN: 9781454957058

Connor Bradley is dreading his first day of high school—not just because he’s the new kid or because he misses his old friends, but because he’s certain no one will understand his barking and tics. Living with Tourette’s Syndrome means every day comes with challenges: the stares, the questions, the mocking, and the uncomfortable attention he never asked for.

To Connor’s surprise, he quickly befriends a girl who also has Tourette’s and finds comfort within her

accepting group of friends. A supportive music teacher encourages him to try drumming as a way to channel his stress—and maybe even give him a break from his tics.

Just as Connor starts to find his footing, everything shifts. His long-absent father returns, a school bully ramps up his cruelty, and the pressures in Connor's life begin stacking higher and higher. As tensions peak, Connor is pushed to his breaking point. Can an unexpected discovery help him regain balance and find his rhythm again?

**You might also like:**

*Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus* by Dusti Bowling

*Please Pay Attention* by Jamie Sumner

*Forget Me Not* by Ellie Terry

Brashares, Ann and Ben. **Westfallen.** Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2024. ISBN: 9781665950817

This alternative history novel asks a frightening question: What would have happened if Germany had won World War II? While burying a pet gerbil, Henry, Frances, and Lukas discover an old radio buried in Henry's yard. They are excited to discover that it still works, and even more excited when they are able to communicate with 3 other kids in their same town. However, these other kids - Alice, Lawrence, and Artie - are living in the year 1944. Unwittingly, the kids in the present day share too much information with the kids in 1944, and it alters the course of history. The kids in the present day wake up in a country called Westfallen, because small changes led to Germany winning World War II. Both sets of teens in their respective timelines work against time to try and reverse the small changes they made that had disastrous outcomes.

**You might also like:**

*Glitch* by Laura Martin

*Wolf by Wolf* by Ryan Graudin

*Live in Infamy* by Caroline Tung Richmond

Bury, Katryn. **We are Not Alone.** Harper Collins, 2024. ISBN: 9780063337411

After losing his best friend, Oscar, to brain cancer and being a recent cancer survivor himself, it's safe to say Sam has been through more than the average middle schooler. As he returns to school full-time, he is forced to navigate the grief process, deal with middle school rumors, and a science project where he is paired up with the popular girl, Cat. Sam has vowed to solve a UFO-based mystery that Oscar left behind, and discovers Cat is a secret nerd, loving all things science fiction just as much as he does. Together, they team up not only on their science project, but on the personal mission to find answers to Oscar's questions he left behind.

**You might also like:**

*Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie* by Jordan Sonnenblick

*Rabbit, Rabbit* by Dori Hillestad Butler and Sunshine Bacon

*Aftermath* by Emily Barth Isler

Callans, Jess. **Ollie in Between.** Feiwel & Friends, 2025. ISBN: 9781250331342

Ollie feels adrift and confused as seventh grade brings massive changes, including looming puberty. Suddenly, Ollie is too girly to play on the street hockey team, but too boyish for their suddenly make-up-obsessed best friend. When their health class is assigned an essay on what it means to be a woman, Ollie decides to get perspectives from the women in their lives. Through interviews with teachers, friends' moms, and their sister, Ollie starts to understand that there is no one way to grow into womanhood. In the midst of this search for clarity, Ollie befriends a group of queer kids at her school who show them the joy that can be found in

self-discovery and living a life unbound by others' expectations.

Ollie's humorous and searching voice makes this an essential coming-of-age story for any young person struggling to live authentically in a world that seeks to put people into boxes.

**You might also like:**

*Anna on the Edge* by A. J. Sass

*Glitch Girl!* by Rainei Oet

*Murray Out of Water* by Taylor Tracy

Cartaya, Pablo. **A Hero's Guide to Summer Vacation.** Kokila, 2025. ISBN: 9780451479754

Gonzalo isn't excited about spending the summer on a book tour with his grandfather, the famous but standoffish author of the *Chronicles of Gonzalo Sanz*. Still grieving his father and frustrated with his distant mom, Gonzalo finds the trip awkward at first—especially since he barely knows the man who named a whole book series after him. But as they drive from California to Miami, Gonzalo begins to uncover the real story behind his grandfather's past in Cuba, the books he refuses to talk about, and the family tensions no one has dealt with. Along the way, Gonzalo uses his artwork to make sense of his grief, his mom eventually joins the journey, and the three of them start to rebuild what they've lost.

**You might also like:**

*Busted* by Dan Gutman

*Not Nothing* by Gale Foreman

*El Niño* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Cole, Frank L. **The Legend of the Last Library.** Shadow Mountain, 2024. ISBN: 9781639932382

A Blight, caused by insects, destroyed the world's trees, and with it, governments destroyed books and paper to stop the Blight in its tracks. Now, Juniper 'Juni' Nox (13) is a grifter, seeking ruins for every scrap of paper she can find to auction off for money, money she needs to buy medicine for her ailing grandfather. In her search, she learns her parents, before their deaths, were involved in a mission to stop Novexus, the corporation that runs everything - including the true history of what happened. This discovery leads Juni to seek the Last Library, a hidden oasis of books and knowledge, with a grifter friend and Kobyn Garcia with Novexus on their heels, with their robot dogs everyone fears.

Will Juni escape Novexus and their dogs to discover the truth of the Last Library?

**You might also like:**

*The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau

*The Last Cuentista* by Donna Barba Higuera

*The Book of Stolen Dreams* by David Farr

Colman, Alyssa. **Where Only Storms Grow.** Farrar, Straus, and Giroux 2025. ISBN: 9780374392789

Four years without rain have left the Oklahoma Panhandle—and the bond between the Stanton twins—cracked and strained. Howe Stanton longs to escape, while Joanna Stanton, despite constant pain from scoliosis, refuses to give up on their home. When their father leaves for work in California, saving the farm falls to them. Joanna finds purpose working at the local hospital, while Howe takes comfort in caring for his father's horse and reading a borrowed book. But after a tragedy reveals the dust's true danger, a massive storm forces the twins to set aside their differences—or risk losing everything.

**You might also like:**

*Scattergood* by H. M. Bouwman  
*Bea and the New Deal Horse* by L. M. Elliott  
*Will's Race For Home* by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Currie, Lindsay. **It's Watching**. Delacorte Press, 2025. ISBN: 978059381163

Josie and her friends, budding journalists, go to Chicago's historic Bachelor's Grove (the most haunted graveyard in Illinois) with the hope of finding proof of the Lady in White and the phantom farmhouse. On this Halloween Night, things turn truly creepy for the trio when they are texted a bloody message, "I'm Watching. You have 2 days." Thinking it's a prank, they go back to Josie's house, and small things start to happen - the house turns freezing, electricity flickers or dies, dirt on the floor, creepy messages on a glitching computer. The kids dive into research with adults only playing roles in helping them delve through the archives to try to discover what is happening, and who the 2 ghosts that followed Josie home are, and what they want. Can their friendship survive as they try to discover what the ghosts want before the time runs out?

**You might also like:**

*Dead Voices* by Katherine Ardyn  
*1-2-3-4, I Declare a Thumb War* by Lisi Harrison  
*The Clackity* by Lora Senf

Deuker, Carl. **Shadowed**. Clarion Books, 2024. ISBN: 9780063376342

Nate is stuck living in his sister's shadow, playing soccer just to live up to his family's expectations. But everything changes once Lucas moves in across the street. Lucas is different from Nate's normal circle and often gets made fun of for hanging out with and caring for his disabled sister. Despite their differences, Nate and Lucas find commonality on the basketball court and become close friends who push each other to be better players.

Nate and Lucas make the cut for the competitive team and are determined to outshine the star player, who bullies them. Things turn south when a prank gets out of control, destroying everything Nate and Lucas have built. Nate now has to figure out how to move forward while discovering what matters most in life.

**You might also like:**

*Gym Candy* by Carl Deuker  
*Rez Ball* by Byron Graves  
*Wrong Side of the Court* by H. N. Khan

Egan, Catherine. **The Factory**. Scholastic, Inc., 2025. ISBN: 9781339034218

Asher and his family live in precarity in a near future dominated by extreme inequality. When his mother borrows money from the wrong people, Asher is sent to a mysterious research facility to wipe out the debt. The top-secret program was supposedly designed to develop clean energy solutions by harnessing the electromagnetic energy of its teenage subjects. Billed as a fun camp-like environment for kids from 11 to 15, the program is quickly revealed to be more of a prison than anything else. The energy extraction procedure is excruciatingly painful, and the adult staff avoids answering questions about how the technology really works. When kids start disappearing from the program, Asher joins forces with his new friends, Faith, Vi, and Troy, to get to the bottom of what is really happening during the procedures. What is being taken from them each time they are forced to undergo this experimental procedure? What truths are hiding behind the facade of science and technology?

**You might also like:**

*The Loop* by Ben Oliver  
*Bite Risk* by S. J. Willis

*Moongarden: Plotting the Stars* by Michelle A. Barry

Faruqi, Saadia. **The Strongest Heart**. Quill Tree Books, 2025. ISBN: 9780063115859

Forced to move to Houston with his father when his mother is out of the country for work, 13-year-old Mo acts out and lets his anger rule his life. Mo's anger is driven by his frustration with his father's paranoia and rages, the effects of his schizophrenia. Mo's tough exterior hides his insecurity and his desire for safety and certainty. In Houston, Mo grows close to his 13-year-old cousin, Rayyan, and his loving aunt. He finds community and purpose at the local mosque. Woven through the narrative are Desi folktales that Mo looks to for inspiration and escape. As Mo opens himself up to his new life in Houston, he realizes that he cannot just see his father as a monster – he begins to understand that his father has little control over his mental illness.

**You might also like:**

*Quagmire Tiarello Couldn't Be Better* by Mylissa Larsen

*Ghost* by Jason Reynolds

*The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman* by Gennifer Choldenko

Florence, Debbi Michiko. **A Study in Secrets (Last Chance Academy)**. Aladdin Paperbacks, 2025. ISBN: 9781665950473

Meg's busy dad has shipped her off to a boarding school. Since her mom died, her grades have tanked, and she's been expelled from her regular school. She arrives at Leland Chase Academy, whose students call it Last Chance Academy, because they've all been sent there for similar reasons. As Meg settles into the very small school, she makes friends with her roommate, Tana, and even sneaks a kitten into their room. Things get exciting when a mysterious letter shows up under their door, inviting them to participate in a secret scavenger hunt, promising the winner a trip to California during the holiday break. Meg is good at solving puzzles, something that she learned from her mother. Whoever the "mastermind" is who has orchestrated the game knows a little too much about each of the students. Leland Chase Academy apparently has some secrets of its own.

**You might also like:**

*The Liar's Society* by Alyson Gerber

*Benny on the Case* by Wesley King

*The Misfits: A Royal Conundrum* by Lisa Yee

Graudin, Ryan. **The Girl Who Kept the Castle**. Quill Tree Books, 2024. ISBN: 9780063229419

When 12-year-old maid Faye Gardener informs Wizard West that he died in his sleep, he curses her into a half-cat form. A male successor must be named to keep balance in the realm and keep Celurdur, the only home Faye has ever known, standing. Though Faye and many of the other women perform small magics in secret to make up for Wizard West's lack of performing his duties, they must keep it hidden when potential male wizards, including the king's son, arrive for the tournament games to earn their place as the new Wizard. Things are afoot as West hides that he's a ghost, and a shadow of evil begins to weave its way into the competition and into the very foundation of Celurdur.

Can Faye save the castle, its creatures, and even the young wizards vying to rule her home before the evil shadow takes over Celurdur and the secret of Wizard West's death from coming to light?

**You might also like:**

*Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones

*Dealing with Dragons* by Patricia C. Wrede

*Where There Be Monsters* by Alby C. Williams

Gupta, Ruchira. **The Freedom Seeker**. Scholastic Press, 2025. ISBN: 9781339012421

Twelve-year-old Simi Singh lives a normal life in Northern India. She's a good student and a great field hockey player. But things turn south when her family begins to face violence and hostility due to her parents' interfaith marriage. Her Sikh father and Muslim mother decide that he will seek asylum in the US, and Simi and her mom will follow. Their plans are overturned when their visas are denied, leaving them no choice but to make the dangerous journey across continents to reunite their family.

Simi and her mother travel from India to Spain and into Mexico with the plan to use a coyote for the final leg of their journey to America. During the crossing, they are separated and end up believing the other has died. But Simi refuses to give up and uses the values she learned as a field hockey captain, along with the kindness of strangers, to persevere and unite her family.

**You might also like:**

*Finally Seen* by Kelly Yang

*Zarina Divided* by Reem Faruqi

*Borders* by Thomas Kin

Jackson, Tiffany D. **Blood in the Water**. Scholastic Inc, 2025. ISBN: 9781338849912

Kaylani McKinnon, a 12-year-old girl from Brooklyn, is sent to spend the summer on Martha's Vineyard with the Watsons, a wealthy and "snooty" family of old friends. Kaylani is already under immense stress: her father is currently incarcerated for a crime she is certain he didn't commit, and she'd rather be studying law to help him than vacationing with the elite. Things take a dark turn when a popular local teenager is found dead. While the community—and the authorities—are quick to dismiss the death as a tragic drowning or a shark attack, Kaylani's instincts tell her otherwise. Drawing on her sharp observational skills and her desire for justice, she begins an amateur investigation that uncovers deep-seated secrets within the island's high-society circles.

**You might also like:**

*Body in the Woods* by April Henry

*The Silent Sister* by Megan Davidhizar

*The Last Resort* by Erin Entrada Kelly

Kelly, Erin Entrada and Mbalia, Kwame. **On Again, Awkward Again**. Harry N. Abrams, 2025. ISBN: 9781419775635

Pacita "Pacy" Mercado and Cecil Holloway have enough to worry about starting high school, add clumsiness and IBS to the equation, and suddenly it feels much worse. Pacy feels like everyone around her is a high school stereotype, while Cecil just wants to focus on his drum playing and controlling his IBS. When the two lock eyes in the clinic, it is love at first sight, no matter how much Pacy wants to deny it. It seems fate wants them together when Pacy and Cecil also end up on the freshman formal committee together, but allergies, miscommunication, and bad advice from others make them both question whether a relationship with each other is truly meant to be. Will they be able to get past their own doubts and insecurities in order to find love?

**You might also like:**

*Flipped* by Wendelin Van Draanen

*Not if You Break Up with Me First* by G. F. Miller

*When Dimple Met Rishi* by Sandhya Rishi

Mackay, Jack. **Gloam**. Viking Books for Young Readers, 2025. ISBN: 9780593693834

Gwen refuses to admit how much her life has changed since her mother died. With a younger brother and

twin sisters depending on her, she doesn't have time for grief—especially now that they've moved into their late grandmother's creaky old house on a damp, isolated island where something feels deeply wrong. Enter Esme Laverne: the stunning babysitter with the sugary-sweet voice, sharp smile, and eyes that never seem quite human. Everyone else is enchanted by her, but Gwen can see the danger lurking beneath the surface. If she wants to keep her family safe, she realizes she may be the only one who can stand against Esme. Soon, Gwen is battling nightmarish creatures, haunting visions, and the unsettling rot spreading through the house itself. As Esme's influence grows stronger, Gwen must confront the fears she's tried so hard to bury—and discover her own strength—before the monster in their home destroys everything she loves.

**You might also like:**

*Identikill* by K. R. Alexander

*Another* by Paul Trembley

*The Secret Dead Club* by Karen Strong

Mandanna, Sangu. **Vanya and the Wild Hunt.** Roaring Book Press, 2025. ISBN: 9781250899835

Eleven-year-old Vanya Vallen has never quite felt like she fits in. Her ADHD makes everything feel a bit louder and brighter, and she can talk to books. When a monster straight out of folklore attacks her family, Vanya learns her parents have been hiding far more than she imagined. She's whisked away to Auramere, a magical library-school where students train to face the creatures that haunt their world. Auramere is thrilling, strange, and everything Vanya has ever wanted. But danger follows her even here. To save her new home, Vanya must rely on her imagination, bravery, and the magic she's only beginning to understand—before the Wild Hunt tears apart the first place she's ever truly belonged.

**You might also like:**

*Skandar and the Unicorn Thief* by A.F. Steadman

*Once There Was* by Kiyash Monsef

*Greenwild: The World Behind the Door* by Pari Thompson

Marianayagam, Maria. **No Purchase Necessary.** Harper Collins, 2025. ISBN: 9780063360921

Ajay Anthonipillai is a seventh-grader from a strict Tamil immigrant family who lives by his parents' rigid rules: "Straight A's only," "never watch scary movies," and "there is no such thing as a no-homework day." When he switches schools, he's desperate to fit in, especially with popular classmate Jacob. Jacob dares Ajay to steal a candy bar from a local convenience store. Ajay takes the dare, hoping it will earn him a spot with Jacob, but Jacob rejects the stolen candy. Ajay then unwraps the candy to find that he has won a contest for \$1 million. Ajay now struggles with the moral dilemma of claiming the money to help his struggling parents or fessing up to stealing the candy bar and facing the consequences, while also losing out on the \$1 million prize.

Throughout this story, Ajay navigates themes of ethics, belonging, family expectations, and identity.

**You might also like:**

*The Jake Show* by Joshua S. Levy

*Kareem Between* by Shifa Saltagi Safadi

*A Field Guide to Broken Promises* by Lea Stecher

Meadows, Jodi. **Bye Forever, I Guess.** Holiday House, 2024. ISBN: 9780823456383

Thirteen-year-old Ingrid leads a double life, feeling like "The Girl With Dead Parents" at school while shining as an expert gamer and passionate fandom member online with her long-distance best friend. After finding the

courage to finally stand up to her popular friend Rachel, Ingrid experiences major social drama and feels completely alone at school. Everything begins to change for the better when Ingrid receives a mysterious wrong-number text from another gamer, introducing a new connection just when she needed it most.

**You might also like:**

*Mallory in Fully Color* by Elisa Stone Leahy

*Roll for Initiative* by Jaime Formato

*Dungeons and Drama* by Kristy Boyce

Messner, Kate. **The Trouble with Heroes.** Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2025. ISBN: 9781547616398

This novel in verse tracks the growth of 13-year-old Finn, forced to hike all 46 peaks in the Adirondacks after he commits an act of vandalism in the local cemetery. Overwhelmed by grief for his father, Finn has been acting out and wallowing in anger. In addition to the vandalism charges, Finn is also facing summer make-up work if he wants to start eighth grade in the fall. He needs to complete a poetry project about the nature of heroes. Accompanied by a rotating crew of trail nannies and a slobbery dog, Finn sets out on his mandated hikes. Finn approaches both hiking and poetry grudgingly, but as he tackles each peak, he finally confronts his complicated feelings towards his father. Finn ruminates on masculinity and what it truly means to be a hero, and he discovers the healing beauty of the natural world.

**You might also like:**

*Joey the Good* by Erin Fry

*Poetry of Car Mechanics* by Heid E. Y. Semple

*Just Keep Walking* by Erin Soderberg Downing

Morrison, Laurie. **Keeping Pace.** Harry N. Abrams, 2024. ISBN: 9781419768750

Grace has spent years structuring her life around one goal: beating her former friend Jonah for the top scholar title. When Jonah wins instead, Grace is left drifting, unsure of who she is without a checklist to chase or a finish line to cross—and frustrated by her dad’s lack of recognition. Searching for purpose, she signs up for the half-marathon she and Jonah once dreamed of running together, hoping a new goal will steady her. But as she trains, rebuilds her connection with Jonah, and slowly lets herself enjoy the summer, Grace begins to question why winning matters so much and whether she’s been measuring success the wrong way. Her journey becomes one of redefining ambition, friendship, and the kind of person she wants to be.

**You might also like:**

*Fast Pitch* by Nic Stone

*Listen to This* by Jennifer Blecher

*Hidden Truths* by Elly Swartz

O’Shaughnessy, Kate. **The Wrong Way Home.** Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2024. ISBN: 9780593650738

Fern and her mother have been living on The Ranch under the thumb of a charismatic leader named Dr. Ben. One night, Fern’s mom sneaks herself and Fern across the country from New York to California, where they live in a motel in her mother’s teenage neighborhood. Although it quickly becomes obvious to the reader that Fern and her mom have escaped a cult, Fern is confused. She misses the stability of living a regimented life. Fern starts plotting, unbeknownst to her mother, to return to The Ranch. She even goes so far as to hire a private investigator to help her on her search. Will she adjust to life on the outside or will Dr. Ben and The Ranch find Fern and her mother?

**You might also like:**

*Science of Friendship* by Tanita S. Davis

*Shark Teeth* by Sherri Winston

*Outside* by Jennifer L. Holm

Paulino, Jasminne. **The Extraordinary Orbit of Alex Ramirez.** G. P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2025. ISBN: 9780593859315

Seventh grader, Alex Ramirez, spends his school days with the same kids, worksheets, and boring books his sister read in third grade. After an altercation with another student in elementary school, it was determined that Alex would do better in a smaller setting, apart from the mainstream classes, so he is in a self-contained class. But Alex loves watching videos about rocket launches, reading about astronauts and planets, and is determined to work at NASA someday. His teachers do not encourage his love of science, though, so Alex wants to move into the mainstream science class. This is the first big step he needs to take in order to reach his goals. Alex has to learn how to advocate for himself and work with other students in order to prove to his mother and to the school that he has the potential to succeed beyond their plans for him.

**You might also like:**

*Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick

*Weird, Sad, and Silent* by Alison McGhee

*Not an Easy Win* by Crystal Giles

Stead, Rebecca. **The Experiment.** Feiwel & Friends, 2025. ISBN: 9781250374769

Sixth grader Nathan has spent his whole life hiding the fact that he's an alien. He starts to worry when the quiet experiment he and other Kast families are part of suddenly begins to unravel. Fellow alien kids—including the girl he likes—start disappearing, and strange changes in Nathan's body suggest something is very wrong. When his family is summoned back to the mothership, Nathan begins questioning everything he's been told about his purpose on Earth. Fast-paced and warm, the story follows his journey to understand identity, choice, and who he wants to become—and whether he has the power to change his own future.

**You might also like:**

*Bloom* by Kenneth Oppel

*What Fell from the Sky* by Adrianna Cuevas

*Defanged* by H. E. Edgmon

Van Wagenen, Maya. **Chronically Dolores.** Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2024. ISBN: 9780525426820

Fourteen-year-old Dolores is already struggling with a lifelong bladder condition, interstitial cystitis, when a humiliating accident on the last day of school makes her the center of unwanted attention. With her best friend ghosting her, tension at home, and a summer workshop for “sad kids” she never asked for, Dolores feels more isolated than ever. Everything shifts when she meets Terpsichore, an autistic teen whose overprotective mother keeps her homeschooled and cut off from typical teenage life. Despite their differences, the girls form an unexpected friendship and make a pact to help each other fight for the futures they want. This is an honest and compassionate look at chronic illness, identity, and the power of finding someone who truly understands.

**You might also like:**

*Popcorn* by Rob Harrell

*Louder than Hunger* by John Schu

*Gut Reaction* by Kirby Larsen

Wolf, Allan. **Junius Leak and the Spiraling Vortex of Doom.** Candlewick Press. ISBN: 9781536217452

Lake Pegineur knows the history of its life, telling tales spanning from 1820 to 1980 when oil drilling and an underlying salt mine turned the lake into a destructive whirlpool that swallowed everything in its path, only to refill itself after the devastation. Junius Leak is sent to stay with Uncle Spot, whom he's never heard of, and Aunt Bordeaux, a sassy cat who is a spunky terror. He finds out that he is not the first Junius Leak. The first was born in 1820, and many in his family have carried the name, male or female, throughout the years. Though he begins to make friends and add more information to his book about 'water bodies', Junius is slow to get into the water out of fear and anxiety.

Will the secrets of hidden pirate treasure and Junius's family's link be revealed? Will his family, friends, and even his haters survive the whirlpool when it wreaks havoc and destruction to everything the lake touches?

**You might also like:**

*Holes* by Louis Sachar

*The Secret Library* by Kekla Magoon

*Vanishing of Lake Peigneur: A Graphic Novel Based on a True Story* by Allan Wolf

Zarr, Sara. **Kyra, Just for Today.** Clarion Books, 2024. ISBN: 9780063045132

Kyra is a sensitive girl living with her single mother, who is a recovering alcoholic. In 7th grade, Kyra's best friend, Lu, starts to distance herself, and Kyra also gets made fun of sometimes because she is bigger and taller than the other girls in her grade. When Kyra's mother starts acting strange, she suspects that her mother has fallen off the wagon and started drinking again. Her mom can't keep up with her house cleaning business, and has stopped talking to her Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor. Kyra starts picking up the slack and also manages their money - things a 7th grader shouldn't have to do. Things boil over when Kyra's mom leaves her by herself, and Kyra gets injured in a kitchen accident. Throughout these struggles, Kyra finds support at her group meetings for kids of alcoholic parents.

**You might also like:**

*Maid for It* by Jamie Sumner

*Coyote Queen* by Jessica Vitalis

*The Benefits of Being an Octopus* by Ann Braden