



Forest Of Reading[®]

2025 Kid Committee List

Red Maple Readers

Ages 12-14, Grades 7-8

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best books for schools and libraries

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Suggested Reading List

Red Maple Readers (Ages 12-14, Grades 7-8)



***Crash Landing* by Li Charmaine Anne (Annick Press)**

Jay Wong is spending the last languid days of summer 2010 trying to land a kickflip and begging for something (anything!) to make her senior year different—to finally give her some stories worth telling. When she meets Ash Chan, it seems like she's getting what she asked for. Ash is confident, intensely independent, and hell on a skateboard—nothing like anyone Jay knows and exactly how she wishes she could be.

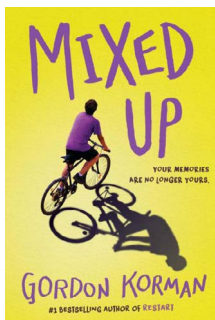
Offering to film Ash's submission to an upcoming skate contest introduces Jay to a side of Vancouver she's never seen and gives her the chance to push back against the expectations placed on her. But Ash has a secret, and Jay is increasingly desperate to figure it out. As things between them ride the fine line between friendship and something more, Jay has to decide just how much Ash will impact all the choices she still has to make about where she's going and who she wants to become.



***Ghosts of Gastown* by Jessica Renwick (Yellow Dog (Great Plains Press))**

Twelve-year-old Hope Graves can see the dead. But nobody believes her. Not even her best friend. When Hope and her mom move to the Gastown area of Vancouver, their new home isn't exactly as she imagined. The ancient apartment sits over a weird crystal shop, she misses her dad, and ghosts lurk around every corner. The worst part? The strange boy whose parents own the shop can see spirits too, and he won't stop bugging her about it.

Hope tries to avoid Oliver, but when a ghost appears in her bedroom with a haunting plea, he's the only person she can turn to for help. Trying to banish the spirit only leads them down a twisted path far more dangerous than any ghost. Something is hunting the souls of Gastown, and it's closing in on its next victim.



***Mixed Up* by Gordon Korman (Scholastic Press)**

Reef and Theo don't know what's happening to them. They'll be going about their days and then suddenly they'll have these strange flashes of memory – but the memories don't belong to them. And at the same time, their own memories are starting to . . . vanish.

For Reef, this is a big problem, because memories are all he has left of his mom.

For Theo, it's strange because the new memories give him a freedom he doesn't have with his domineering dad.

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***More Frightening True Tales (Haunted Canada 12)* by Joel A. Sutherland (Scholastic Canada)**

The twelfth book in the bestselling series of hauntingly true Canadian stories — more chilling than ever!

In this terrifying collection of haunted stories, author Joel A. Sutherland has put together even more frightening true ghost stories from all across our spooky land, including:

A black cat haunts a log cabin in Breckenridge, Quebec.

Disembodied sobs torment workers at a mill in Glovertown, Newfoundland and Labrador.

A mischievous spirit plays nighttime pranks at an inn in Dawson City, Yukon.

Moody black-and-white illustrations and photographs enhance the hauntingly eerie read.



***The New Girl: A Graphic Novel (The New Girl #1)* written and illustrated by Cassandra Calin (Graphix (Scholastic Press))**

Goodbye, old life...

Lia and her family are waiting to board a flight across the Atlantic, leaving behind family, friends, and Romania -- the only home Lia has ever known. But Lia's heartache is overshadowed by the discomfort of her first period. As if things weren't difficult enough! Now Lia is thrust into a world where everything is different: her home, her language, and even her body. With so many changes happening at once, Lia struggles with schoolwork, has trouble communicating with classmates, and has no idea how to manage her unpleasant periods. Will she ever feel like herself again?

Inspired by the author's own immigration experience, *The New Girl* is a comically charming story about change and acceptance.



***Night of the Living Zed* by Basil Sylvester and Kevin Sylvester (HarperCollins Canada)**

Zed and Gabe are back to their treasure-hunting, literary-sleuthing ways in this spooky new adventure! After some lacklustre cases involving lost books and a missing pet, the two friends have finally come across a mystery worth their attention: the secrets of Glyndebourne Manor, haunted home of a late, great opera designer. Every twenty-five years, the Manor hosts a challenge. You have three days and two nights to solve the puzzles in each room before the stroke of midnight. If you leave, you forfeit the game. If you solve the puzzles in time, you win a huge pile of money.

Simple enough, thinks Zed. They and Gabe are interested in all things ghoulish. And if they win, they will be able to give their friends Sam and Jo the large wedding they deserve. There's only one problem: no one has been able to stay in the house for more than a single night.

Cue a whirlwind of scary ghosts, moving walls and cryptic letters. The two friends are going to need some help. Which means figuring out who the mysterious figure holding a crowbar is. And how to get out of a room with no doors! But thanks to Zed's fearless enthusiasm and Gabe's encyclopedic knowledge of theatre, they might be able to survive and maybe even right some past wrongs.

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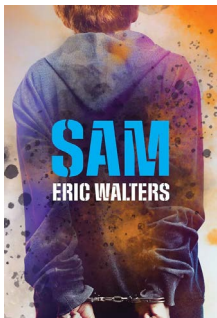
Recommended Reading by Paul Coccia (Zando Young Readers)

In this opposites-attract YA rom-com inspired by *Emma*, a failed romantic gesture puts a damper on a queer teen bookseller's summer of book matching and matchmaking until a handsome lifeguard and romance skeptic waltzes into his bookstore. Sometimes you get a second chance at happily ever after when you least expect it...

Curvaceous, clever, and an avid reader, seventeen-year-old Bobby Ashton never misses a main character moment. So when it comes to asking out his crush, he plans a romantic gesture grand enough to go down in local history. Unfortunately, though, his extensive knowledge of every rom-com trope ever doesn't prepare him for how tragically he misreads the situation. Suddenly Bobby's very public romantic gesture turns into an ordeal so embarrassing it could be a villain origin story.

Having masterfully shattered every plan for his perfect summer before college, Bobby's last resort is working at his uncle's sleepy bookstore. Soon, Bobby is expertly recommending books for customers to perfectly cure what ails them. Attempting to rebound after a breakup? There's a book for that. Trying to tame your crochety coworker? There's a book for that too. Then a plot twist Bobby never saw coming walks through the door in the form of Luke, an unfairly attractive and staunchly anti-romantic lifeguard.

Bobby's blossoming connection with Luke reminds him of some of his favorite tropes: grumpy-sunshine, quippy banter, and even forced proximity. But after his last romantic disaster, should Bobby use all the tricks in his arsenal to turn Luke's head? Or is he misreading all the signs again? Do grand gestures really need to be so... grand?



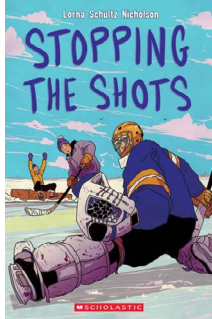
Sam by Eric Walters (DCB Young Readers (Cormorant Books))

Redheaded orphan Sam can't seem to stay out of trouble. His latest incident — defending himself by hitting the high school quarterback in the face with a can of soda — lands him in the Johnson "Blue Gables" Juvenile Center while he awaits trial. Sam needs to keep his nose clean, but can he control his temper when he's targeted by a long-term Gables resident?

When Sam is given a reading assignment, he thinks he'll have no interest in a classic book about another redheaded orphan. But he soon realizes that he's found a kindred spirit in the book, and maybe even an unexpected source of hope.

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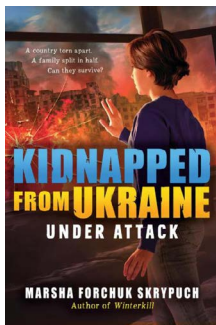


***Stopping the Shots* by Lorna Schultz Nicholson (Scholastic Canada)**

In this companion book to *Taking the Ice*, goalie Mike Krieger (aka Tree) takes centre stage. Although Mike is known to be calm and collected, his home life is more difficult than it seems.

His younger brother, Eric, is a hockey hotshot, already playing on the top U13 team. And their parents are so focused on Eric's game that Mike's success in net is barely noticed — except by his older brother, Liam, who was born with Down syndrome and is Mike's biggest fan. Mike's parents dismiss a suggestion that he could be good enough to attend a top goalie camp, and while Mike is used to living in Eric's shadow, the tension between the two brothers increases when Mike is asked to play goal for Eric's team.

When an accident threatens Eric's hockey career, and money troubles threaten his parents' farm, Mike worries he might also have to give up the sport he loves. He decides to risk his reputation — and more — for the new goalie pads he desperately needs. But when the truth comes out, can Mike find a way to make things right?



***Under Attack (Kidnapped from Ukraine, 1)* by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch (Scholastic Press)**

12-year-old twin sisters Rada and Dariia Popkova couldn't be more different. Dariia is outgoing and chatty while Rada is a quieter and artsy. But what they have in common is their love for each other and their home. The family lives in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol, which is attacked by the Russians on Feb 24th, 2022.

The attack separates the family -- Dariia is with her mom and Rada with her dad. Dariia and her mother are then separated by Russian officials and Dariia is sent to live with a Russian family. As the war rages around them, the sisters and their family must overcome unimaginable hardships. But they will learn how powerful hope is in the face of disaster.

The 2025 Committee

Met Virtually in May 2025



Red Maple



Gabrielle — Halton Catholic District School Board, **Beatrice** — Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, **Nyla** — Surrey Schools, **Mikaela** — Halton District School Board, **Mona** — Toronto District School Board

Helen Kubiw, Red Maple facilitator of the Kid Committee
Retired Teacher-Librarian, former Forest of Reading Chair

Meredith Tutching, Director, Forest of Reading®