



# Sunshine State Young Readers Award Books 2023-2024 List for Grades 6-8

## **96 Miles by J. L. Esplin**

Twenty-one days without power. Two brothers on a desperate trek. Seventy-Two hours before time runs out. The Lockwood brothers are supposed to be able to survive anything. Their dad, a hardcore believer in self-reliance has stockpiled enough food and water at their isolated Nevada home to last for months. But when they are robbed of their supplies during a massive blackout while their dad was out of town, John and Stew must walk 96 miles in the stark desert sun to get help. Along the way, they're forced to question their dad's insistence on self-reliance and ask just what it is that we owe to our neighbors, to our kin, and to ourselves.

## **Born Behind Bars by Padma Venkatraman**

Kabir has been in jail since the day he was born!. His mom is serving time for a crime she didn't commit. He's never met his dad so the only family he has are their cellmates. The only place he feels the least bit free is in the classroom where his kind teacher regales him with stories of the wonders of the outside world. He escapes from an uncle that plans to sell him and runs away as fast as his legs will carry him. This is not the world Kabir dreamed of but he's discovered that he's not the type to give up. Kabir is ready to show the world that he and his mother deserve a place in it.

## **A Duet for Home by Karina Yan Glaser**

It's June's first day at Huey House, and as if losing her home weren't enough, she also can't bring her cherished viola inside. Before the accident last year, her dad saved tip money for a year to buy her viola, and she's not about to give it up now. Tyrell has been at Huey House for three years and gives June a good glimpse of the good things about living there; friendship, hot meals, and a classical musician next door. Can he and June work together to oppose the government, or will families be forced out of Huey House before they are ready?

## **Escape by K. R. Alexander**

Westworld meets Charlie and the Chocolate Factory meets Jurassic Park as kids win a chance to enter the place of their dreams and finds that it quickly turns into a nightmare. It's all anyone talks about and it's all Cody dreams about. It's the biggest adventure park in the world, and it's more than mere rides and roller coasters. At ESCAPE, you can do anything you want, be anyone you want, and there are no adults to tell you no. Simulations turn deadly. His fantasy world glitches, and the games become races for survival!

## **Hush-A-Bye by Jody Lee Mott**

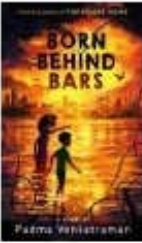
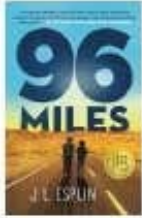
Like most kids with younger siblings, Lucy loves her sister Antonia, but is all too frequently annoyed with her as well. The two spend most of their time together since their mother works so hard. Without friends, Lucy can't help but feel lonely. She's always tried to ignore the bullying and teasing at school about her family being poor. When the girls find the old muddy doll head in the river, Antonio claims it as her newest treasure. At night Lucy hears her talking to Hush-a-Bye and does she hear the doll talking back?

## **Invisible by Christina Diaz Gonzalez**

Can five overlooked kids make one big difference? There's George: the brain, Sara: the loner, Dayara: the tough kid, Nico: the rich kid and Miguel: the athlete. They're stuck together when they're forced to complete their school's community service hours. Although they're sure they have nothing in common with one another, some people see them as all the same, just five Spanish-speaking kids. Then they meet someone who truly needs their help, and they must decide whether they are each willing to expose their own secrets to help or if remaining invisible is the only way to survive middle school.

## **Linked by Gordon Korman**

Linked is set in Chokecherry, Colorado, a small town where everyone knows everyone and all the students have been together since Kindergarten. There are a few new kids, one of whom is Jewish, whose parents work as paleontologists digging for dinosaur fossils in town. The small town is thrown into an uproar when a swastika is painted in the school building. Dana, Michael and Caroline are dealing with the impact of the swastikas and working to create six million paper links to represent the Jews killed in the Holocaust.



## Sunshine State Young Readers Award Books: 2023-2024 List for Grades 6-8, Page 2



### **Long Lost by Jacqueline West**

A mysterious book leads a girl into a century-old supernatural mystery. When Fiona's family moves across Massachusetts to Lost Lake, a small town that's far closer to her older sisters Arden's figure skating club, Fiona resents both being uprooted and the constant focus on her accomplished sibling. Find out what happens when another set of sisters from long ago are introduced to the equation.



### **The Monster Missions by Laura Martin**

Berkeley and her best friend, Garth, live on an old cruise ship, scavenging for supplies from drowned cities left behind on the ocean floor after the sea swallowed up all the land. They think they've seen every kind of aquatic creature, but they never expected to find sea monsters. After awakening a Hydra, Berkeley and Garth are sent to live on a submarine, where they study and hunt sea monsters. But the Hydra wants revenge on their home ship, and if it succeeds, their families will go down with it. They must find a way to save the ship! Will they succeed?



### **Scout is Not a Band Kid by Jade Armstrong**

When Scout learns that her favorite author is doing an exclusive autograph session at the end of the year, she's determined to be there! She officially needs a plan, and when she finds out that her school's band is heading to the same location for their annual trip, an idea takes shape. Being a band kid can't be that hard, right? As it turns out, learning how to play an instrument when you can't even read music is much, much, MUCH tougher than expected. Will she be able to master the trombone, and get to her favorite author's book signing?



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

Mainlanders believed unicorns were only a myth. But when the islanders revealed their secret, unicorns are real, mainlanders learned "unicorns don't belong in fairy tales; they belong in nightmares." Unicorns are dangerous, bloodthirsty and immortal. They become slightly less vicious when bonded with a rider so destined children are found and trained to channel the magical creature's magic. At 13, children take the Hatchery exam and those who pass may attempt "to open the Hatchery door on the Island" and find a unicorn egg. Skandar has watched years of rider/unicorn pairs competing in the Chaos Cup and dreams of joining their ranks.



### **Treasure Tracks by S. A. Rodriguez**

Fernando "Fin" joins his grandfather on a secret quest to find a long-lost treasure swept to sea. But when their first mission takes a near-deadly turn, leaving his abuelo weak and unable to speak, Fin's left to navigate the hunt alone. With danger lurking at every turn, Fin dives into the mission in order to save abuelo's life. If he can't succeed, will he lose abuelo for good?



### **Valentina Salazar is NOT a Monster Hunter by Zoraida Cordova**

It takes a special person to end up in detention on the last day of school. It takes a really special person to accidentally burn down the school yard while chasing a fire-breathing chipmunk. But nothing about Valentina has ever been normal. The Salazars are protectors, tasked with rescuing the magical creatures who sometimes wander into our world, from grumpy unicorns to chupacabras to the occasional fire-breathing chipmunk.



### **Wayward Creatures by Dayna Lorentz**

Twelve-year-old Gabe doesn't know where he belongs anymore. His family is caught up in their own lives and his friends barely have time for him now that they're stars on the soccer team. In a desperate plea for attention to impress his friends after school, Gabe sets off fireworks in the wood near his house and causes a small forest fire that destroys several acres of land. In the chaos of the destruction, a coyote named Rill, tired of her family and longing for adventure, finds herself far from home. Find out how Gabe and Rill cross paths to become friends and discover where you belong in the world.



### **Winnie Zeng Unleashes a Legend by Katie Zhao**

Winnie Zeng has two goals: survive her first year of middle school and outdo her stuck-up archnemesis, David Zuo. It won't be easy, since, according to her older sister, middle school is the pits. Luckily Winnie studied middle school survival tactics in comic books and anime. Nothing will stop her from being the very best student. But none of Winnie's research has prepared her to face the mother of all hurdles: evil spirits. When she makes mooncakes for a class bake sale, she awakens the stuff of legends from her grandmother's old cookbook, spilling otherworldly chaos into her sleepy town.