

2021 – 2022 Kentucky Bluegrass Award 9-12 Master List

Golden Arm / Carl Deuker / HMH Books for Young Readers, 2020.

Lazarus “Laz” Weathers has always been shy, and his issue with stuttering when he speaks hasn’t helped. Stuck in a Seattle trailer park, Laz finds baseball helps him escape from the world of poverty and drugs. When he gets an opportunity to pitch for the rich kids across town, he has a chance to get drafted by the major leagues. But playing for the other team means leaving behind his family, including Antonio, Laz’s younger brother, who more and more, seems to be drawn to the dark world of the Jet City’s drug ring. Now Laz will have to choose between being the star pitcher he always dreamed of becoming and the team player his family needs.

Good Girl’s Guide to Murder / Holly Jackson / Delacorte Press, 2020.

Everyone in Fairview knows the story, it was all anyone could talk about when high school senior Andie Bell was murdered by her boyfriend, Sal Singh, who then killed himself. Five years later, Pip sees how the tragedy still haunts her town and she can't shake the feeling that there was more to what happened that day. She knew Sal when she was a child, how could he possibly have been a killer? Now a senior herself, Pip decides to reexamine this closed case for her final project. At first she just wanted to cast doubt on the original investigation, but soon she discovers a trail of dark secrets that might actually prove Sal innocent . . . and the line between past and present begins to blur. Someone in Fairview doesn't want Pip digging around for answers, and now her own life might be in danger.

Grown / Tiffany D. Jackson / Katherine Tegen Books, 2020.

When legendary R&B artist Korey Fields spots her at an audition, Enchanted Jones’ dreams of being a famous singer take flight with her dreams becoming a nightmare as Korey’s charm and star power emerge as dark and controlling. Enchanted wakes up with blood on her hands and zero memory of the previous night. Who killed Korey Fields? The police are at the door, and all signs point to Enchanted.

Hard Wired / Len Vlahos / Bloomsbury YA, 2020.

Quinn thinks he's a normal fifteen year-old. He plays video games, spends time with his friends, and crushes on a girl named Shea. But a shocking secret brings his entire world crashing down: he's not a boy. He's artificial intelligence. After Quinn "wakes up," he sees his world was nothing more than a virtual construct. He's the QUantum

INtelligence Project, the first fully-aware A.I. in the world--part of a grand multi-billion-dollar experiment led by the very man he believed to be his dead father. Quinn finds himself completely alone--until he bonds with Shea, the real girl behind the virtual one. As Quinn explores what it means to truly live, he questions who he can trust. What will it take to win his freedom . . . and where does he belong?

How to Build a Heart / Maria Padian / Algonquin Young Readers, 2020.

All sixteen-year-old Izzy Crawford wants is to feel like she really belongs somewhere. But since her Marine father died in Iraq six years ago Izzy's moved to a new town nearly every year, far away from her extended family in North Carolina and Puerto Rico. In a small Virginia town, Izzy begins to feel comfortable and settled despite having to keep her scholarship-student status hidden from her well-to-do classmates and her popular, athletic boyfriend. Added to the complexity of her situation, Izzy's family has been selected by Habitat for Humanity to build and move into a brand-new house and all the secret pieces of her life begin to collide.

Legendborn / Tracy Deonn / Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2020.

After her mother dies in an accident, sixteen-year-old Bree Matthews wants nothing to do with her family memories or childhood home. A residential program for bright high schoolers at UNC-Chapel Hill seems like the perfect escape—until Bree witnesses a magical attack her very first night on campus. A flying demon feeding on human energies. A secret society of so called “Legendborn” students that hunt the creatures down. And a mysterious teenage mage who calls himself a “Merlin” and who attempts—and fails—to wipe Bree’s memory of everything she saw. The mage’s failure unlocks Bree’s own unique magic and a buried memory with a hidden connection: the night her mother died, another Merlin was at the hospital. Now that Bree knows there’s more to her mother’s death than what’s on the police report, she’ll do whatever it takes to find out the truth, even if that means infiltrating the Legendborn as one of their initiates. But when the Legendborn reveal themselves as the descendants of King Arthur’s knights and explain that a magical war is coming, Bree has to decide how far she’ll go for the truth and whether she should use her magic to take the society down—or join the fight.

Meet Me at Midnight / Jessica Pennington / Tor Teen, 2020.

Sidney and Asher should have clicked. Two star swimmers forced to spend their summers on a lake together sounds like the perfect match. But it's the same every year--in between cookouts and boat rides and family-imposed bonfires, Sidney and

Asher spend the dog days of summer finding the ultimate ways to prank each other. And now, after their senior year, they're determined to make it the most epic summer yet. But their plans are thrown in sudden jeopardy when their feud causes their families to be kicked out of their beloved lake houses. Once in their new accommodations, Sidney expects the prank war to continue as usual. But then she gets a note--Meet me at midnight. And Asher has a proposition for her: join forces for one last summer of epic pranks, against a shared enemy--the woman who kicked them out. Their truce should make things simpler, but six years of tormenting one another isn't so easy to ignore.

Punching the Air / Ibi Zoboi & Yusef Salaam / Balzer & Bray, 2020.

*The story that I thought
was my life
didn't start on the day
I was born*

Amal Shahid has always been an artist and a poet. But even in a diverse art school, because of a biased system he's seen as disruptive and unmotivated. Then, one fateful night, an altercation in a gentrifying neighborhood escalates into tragedy. "Boys just being boys" turns out to be true only when those boys are white.

*The story that I think
will be my life
starts today*

Suddenly, at just sixteen years old, Amal is convicted of a crime he didn't commit and sent to prison. Despair and rage almost sink him until he turns to the refuge of his words, his art. This never should have been his story. But can he change it?

Raybearer / Jordan Ifueko / Harry N. Abrams, 2020.

Nothing is more important than loyalty. But what if you've sworn to protect the one you were born to destroy? Tarisai has always longed for the warmth of a family. She was raised in isolation by a mysterious, often absent mother known only as The Lady. The Lady sends her to the capital of the global empire of Aritsar to compete with other children to be chosen as one of the Crown Prince's Council of 11. If she's picked, she'll be joined with the other Council members through the Ray, a bond deeper than blood. That closeness is irresistible to Tarisai, who has always wanted to belong somewhere. But The Lady has other ideas, including a magical wish that Tarisai is compelled to

obey: Kill the Crown Prince once she gains his trust. Tarisai won't stand by and become someone's pawn—but is she strong enough to choose a different path for herself?

What I Carry / Jennifer Longo / Random House Books for Young Readers, 2020.

Growing up in foster care, Muir has lived in many houses. And if she's learned one thing, it is to Pack. Light. Carry only what fits in a suitcase. Toothbrush? Yes. Socks? Yes. Emotional attachment to friends? foster families? a boyfriend? Nope! There's no room for any additional baggage. Muir has just one year left before she ages out of the system. One year before she's free. One year to avoid anything--or anyone--that could get in her way. Then she meets Francine. And Kira. And Sean. And everything changes.