

The Hired Girl

Laura Amy Schlitz
 Historical Fiction, 400 pp
 Over the summer of 1911, fourteen-year-old Joan pours her heart out into her diary as she seeks a new, better life for herself—because maybe, just maybe, a hired girl cleaning and cooking for six dollars a week can become what a farm girl could only dream of—a woman with a future.



The Rules of Survival

Nancy Werlin
 Fiction, 304 pp
 For Matt and his sisters, life with their cruel mother is a day-to-day struggle for survival. But then Matt witnesses Murdoch coming to a child's rescue in a convenience store, and for the first time, he feels a glimmer of hope. When, amazingly, Murdoch begins dating Matt's mother, life is suddenly almost good....



Everything, Everything

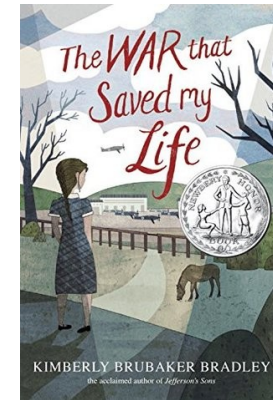
Nicola Yoon
 Romance, 320 pp
 Madeline was diagnosed with Severe Combined Immunodeficiency that limits her to a world of two people: her mother, who is a doctor, and her nurse. Everything changes when Olly and his family move into the house next door. Olly is the kind of inventive guy who figures out a way to communicate with Madeline, and over the course of the next few months Madeline contemplates risking everything to venture outside...



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ycouser@merrimacklibrary.org

Speak

Laurie Halse Anderson
Fiction, 197 pp

It's freshman year and Melinda is a friendless outcast because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party.



The Thing About Jellyfish

Ali Benjamin
Fiction, 352 pp

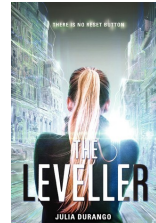
After her former best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy must have been a rare jellyfish sting because things don't just happen for no reason. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory--even if it means traveling halfway across the world to meet a jellyfish expert.



The Leveller

Julia Durango
Science Fiction, 256 pp

Nixy's parents are developers for a highly advanced virtual reality called the MEEP, and Nixy, an unofficial beta tester, uses her inside knowledge to work as a virtual bounty hunter—making money from clients who hire her to drag their wayward kids back from the MEEP. When she is contacted by the creator of the virtual reality, she is thrilled at the lucrative opportunity. But the job is especially hard, and when she finally reaches her employer's son Wyn, she discovers that he is trapped and that her job is actually a rescue mission.



The Walk On

John Feinstein
Fiction, Sports, 384 pp

New student Alex Myers is a quarterback, but from the first day of football practice, it's clear that that position is very much filled by the coach's son, Matt. Alex finally gets a chance to show what he can do when Matt is injured, and he helps win a key game to keep the Lions' bid for the state championship alive. But just when his star is rising, Alex gets blindsided--the state has started drug testing, and Alex's test comes back positive for steroids. Alex knows that's not right. But he doesn't know if it's a mistake--or if someone wants to make sure he can't play.



Roller Girl

Victoria Jamieson
Graphic Novel

For most of her twelve years, Astrid has done everything with her best friend Nicole. But after Astrid falls in love with roller derby and signs up for derby camp, Nicole decides to go to dance camp instead. And so begins the most difficult summer of Astrid's life as she struggles to keep up with the older girls at camp, hang on to the friend she feels slipping away, and cautiously embark on a new friendship. As the end of summer nears and her first roller derby bout (and junior high!) draws closer, Astrid realizes that maybe she is strong enough to handle the bout, a lost friendship, and middle school... in short, strong enough to be a roller girl.



The Skeleton Tree

Ian Lawrence
Survival, 288 pp

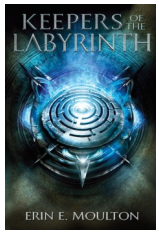
Less than forty-eight hours after twelve-year-old Chris sets off on a sailing trip down the Alaskan coast with his uncle, their boat sinks. The only survivors are Chris and a boy named Frank, who hates Chris immediately. Chris and Frank have no radio, no flares, and no food. Suddenly, they've got to forage, fish, and scavenge the shore for supplies.



Keepers of the Labyrinth

Erin Moulton
Fiction, 304 pp; NH Author

Lilith hopes that if she follows exactly in the steps of her strong air force pilot mother, she'll somehow figure out the mystery of her mother's death—and the reason why her necklace of Greek symbols has been missing ever since. So when Lil is invited to Crete to attend the same conference her mom attended years ago, she jumps at the chance to find some answers. Soon, Lil finds herself ensnared in an adventure of mythological proportions that leads her and her friends through the very labyrinth in which the real Minotaur was imprisoned.



A Night Divided

Jennifer Nielsen
Historical, 336 pp

With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. One day, Gerta spots her father motioning to her on a viewing platform on the western side, and concludes that he wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin.



The Seventh Most Important Thing

Shelley Pearsall
Fiction, 288 pp

After Arthur's father died, Arthur struggles to cope with the loss of a man he loved and feared. One day he can't control his anger and he throws a brick at the local garbage picker - the Junk Man - and is ordered by the court to serve community service with the Junk Man. The Junk Man gives him a list of seven important items to collect with no substitutions allowed. Eventually Arthur enters the old garage and realizes there's more to the Junk Man than meets the eye, and the "trash" he's collecting is being transformed into something more precious than anyone could imagine. . . .



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