



Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award
2023-2024 Book Talk Scripts
Young Adult



*** *The Life and Crimes of Hoodie Rosen* by Isaac Blum**

Yehuda “Hoodie” Rosen is part of an Orthodox Jewish community that has just relocated from Colwyn to (fictional) Tregaron, Pennsylvania. Hoodie faithfully observes the Jewish laws that govern his community, but things get complicated when he meets Anna-Marie. Spending time with a gentile girl is strictly forbidden, but when they discover antisemitic graffiti in a local graveyard they spontaneously work together to clean up the headstones. His rabbi catches him in the act, and Hoodie becomes an exile within his school and even his family. Everything is complicated by the fact that Anna-Marie’s mother – who is the mayor of Tregaron – opposes the expansion of Hoodie’s Orthodox community. When a series of violent hate crimes ratchets up the stakes, Hoodie finds himself questioning the rules he has always lived by. This timely, heartfelt debut novel is a perfect choice for fans of Jared Reck’s *Donuts and Other Proclamations of Love*.

Author Website: <https://www.isaacblumauthor.com/>

Discussion Guide: http://images.randomhouse.com/teachers_guides/9780593525821.pdf

*** *Huda F Are You?* by Huda Fahmy**

Huda and her family just moved to Dearborn, Michigan, a small town with a big Muslim population. When Huda starts her freshman year at a new high school and realizes she’s not the only one with a hijab anymore, she tries to figure out where she fits in with her new classmates. Should she become a fashionista, play a sport, or become a gamer? This graphic novel is funny, the illustrations are great, and it will keep you turning the pages to find out what happens to Huda.

Author Website: <https://hudafahmy.com/>

Author Speaks on Being an Arab American: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSk0aCwok7U>

Discussion Guide: http://images.randomhouse.com/teachers_guides/9780593324318.pdf

***Murder Among Friends: How Leopold and Loeb Tried to Commit the Perfect Crime* by Candace Fleming**

For readers who like true crime or mystery novels, this nonfiction account of two teenagers who plot to abduct and murder a young boy will keep you turning pages. They did it just because they thought they were smart enough to get away with it. Richard Leob loved attention, and he was fascinated with crime magazines. Nathan Leopold was fascinated with Richard. Nathan also thought he was brilliant. If Richard wanted to kill someone, Nathan would help him plan it so they wouldn’t get caught. The two had a lot in common, growing up in the same millionaire’s

*Also recommended for grades 7 and 8

neighborhood in 1920s Chicago. However, their personalities and unusual hobbies were very different, and that was their undoing.

Author Website: <https://www.candacefleming.com/>

Author Reads Excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67J5-EbQfKs&t=4s>

***The Agathas* by Kathleen Glasgow and Liz Lawson**

Alice Ogilvie is back. Back from where? Never mind. Time to get back to regular life and catch up on missed schoolwork with her longtime classmate and new tutor, the quiet and mysterious Iris. But now Brooke, Alice's former best friend and current girlfriend of Alice's ex-boyfriend Steve, is missing after fleeing Castle Cove's annual Halloween party. Some people are saying that Brooke has "pulled an Ogilvie" - but others with darker suspicions are pointing a finger at Steve. Whatever Alice might think of Steve these days, the suspicions seem misdirected. Relying on the wisdom of mystery author Agatha Christie, Alice and Iris team up to deduce what happened to Brooke. Castle Cove is a town with many secrets (and more than two missing girls); danger may be closer than the teen sleuths realize!

Author Website: <https://www.kathleenglasgowbooks.com/>

Author Website: <https://www.lizlawsonauthor.com/>

Book Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tpsHcUddxE

Teaching Notes: https://resource.scholastic.com.au/resourceFiles/100100447_102866.pdf

***Murder for the Modern Girl* by Kendall Kulper**

Set in Chicago in 1928, Ruby has been using her mind-reading skills to murder men who prey on vulnerable women and slip through the justice system. Her weapon of choice: poison. When Ruby meets Guy after her father is attacked, she is immediately drawn to him. Turns out, Guy has some secrets of his own. His ability to shapeshift makes him alienate himself from most others. As an unlikely pairing, Ruby and Guy band together to figure out who attacked her father and stumble into a much bigger crime problem: the Chicago mob! With alternating chapters told by Ruby and Guy, you're taken on a wild-ride in this Gatsby-era thriller that will make you want to read all the way through in one sitting!

Author Website: <http://kendallkulper.com/>

The Guest Book Podcast: <https://holidayhouse.com/book/murder-for-the-modern-girl/>

***The Honeys* by Ryan La Sala**

When Mars's twin sister dies violently, he goes to Aspen summer camp in her place to find answers. Genderfluid, Mars suffered abuse there years ago and hasn't been back. His quest to learn more about Caroline from her housemates, the Honeys, won't happen overnight, especially since he has to bunk with the guys. Mars is not okay with the way they talk about the girls, and some of them are cruel to him; however, Mars has developed survival skills from childhood that help him at Aspen. What mysteries are going on at Cabin H and with the Honeys' beehives? Strange things happen that can't be explained by natural causes. Violent things. Campers

*Also recommended for grades 7 and 8

disappear. There are strange gaps in Mars' memory of events. His snooping around is putting him in danger and the mysterious Honeys are behind the supernatural events, he's sure of it.

Author Website: <https://www.ryanlasala.com/>

Author Discusses Book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHENwgBJICc>

Author Q & A: <https://diversebooks.org/qa-with-ryan-la-sala-the-honeys/>

***I Kissed Shara Wheeler* by Casey McQuiston**

Chloe Green wants nothing more than to win valedictorian in her senior year of High School. The only thing stopping her is Shara Wheeler. Since moving to the small-town Alabama school that is her mother's alma mater, Chloe has been in competition with Shara. That all changes one month before graduation, when Shara kisses Chloe, and then disappears. Chloe starts digging into her disappearance with the help of two other members of the student body, who have also kissed Chloe, and they follow a series of twists and turns to try to find Shara and set the world right again. A story that is less about finding a missing girl and more about finding who you really are, this book is a quirky romance with fun characters!

Author Website: <https://www.caseymcquiston.com/>

Author Q & A: <https://diversebooks.org/qa-with-casey-mcquiston-i-kissed-shara-wheeler/>

Discussion Guide: <https://assets-eu-01.kc-usercontent.com/d554c971-bcd0-014b-bb17-d2b96b437da4/ce8549fe-ec20-4695-a7d4-24bb82d4fa5f/1%20Kissed%20Shara%20Wheeler%20Discussion%20Guide.pdf>

***Little Thieves* by Margaret Owen**

Vanja (VON-ya), goddaughter of the gods Death and Fortune, has stolen plenty. Jewels from countless aristocrats, not to mention the face of her former mistress, Princess Gisele. Vanja owes a debt: Death and Fortune demand their due, and her freedom is on the line. But just when she has amassed nearly enough treasure to secure her freedom from their demands, she stumbles into the path of a third god who's not inclined to let her get away so easily. Now cursed, with her fate in question, Princess Gisele's fiancé stalking her moves, and the law on her heels, Vanja must rely on strangers and those she's wronged to wriggle out of the mess and pull off one final heist.

Author Website: <https://margaret-owen.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kR4wuiBa8H0>

***I Must Betray You* by Ruta Sepetys**

Bucharest, 1989. Cristian Florescu pretends to follow rules - and in Romania, there are plenty of them. In his secret notebook, Cristian asks questions the Communist regime ruling his country will not allow. The problem is, for every rule to break, there is an informer to report the rule-breaker. After Cristian unwittingly acquires contraband his whole family is threatened with punishment. The only way to avoid imprisonment and torture? Become an informer himself. To resist the regime almost certainly means severe punishment for Cristian, his friends, and his family, but would it be worth it to live freely? Another thrilling and devastatingly beautiful work

*Also recommended for grades 7 and 8

of historical fiction from Ruta Sepetys, *I Must Betray You* will take you to a place and time we don't learn much about in the U.S. today - a place and time that seems at once both long ago and far away and all too near.

Author Website: <https://rutasepetys.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vei9vBjrKUQ>

Author Reads an Excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FT-1Dx5SILc>

Discussion Guide: <https://storage.googleapis.com/classroom-portal-production/uploads/2022/02/a58f976a-i-must-betray-you-discussion-guide.pdf>

***Radha & Jai's Recipe for Romance* by Nisha Sharma**

Radha is a talented Kathak dancer, but her anxiety and family dynamics have led her to never want to perform again. After relocating from Chicago to New Jersey, Radha tries to make a fresh start by balancing a new school, a surprising passion for cooking with her grandfather's cookbook, and a closer relationship with her father. Jai is a star student and leads the Bollywood Beats dance team at Radha's new school. Jai knows he must pause his own dreams of college in order to keep his commitments to his family. When Radha and Jai meet, sparks fly on and off the dance floor. Can Radha find her "dance joy" again? Will Jai be able to follow his dream of attending medical school? With delicious recipes, a love of Indian food and culture, the pressure of family expectations, and spectacular dance moves, this upbeat story will have you rooting for Radha and Jai!

Author Website: <https://nisha-sharma.com/>

***Victory. Stand! Raising My Fist for Justice* by Tommie Smith, Derrick Barnes, and Dawud Anyabwile**

What does it take to go from a sharecropper's shack in Texas to an Olympic medal podium? For Tommie Smith, it took the traits he learned from his parents: faith, endurance, and hard work. In the 1950s, Tommie's parents relocated away from the rural South and its oppressive Jim Crow laws. In California, Tommie discovered his talent for running in a schoolyard race that changed everything. As he moved through high school and college, Tommie became a champion, multi-sport athlete and collected medals, trophies, and records. Focusing on track, he qualified for the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City. There, with a new world record and a gold medal around his neck, he raised his fist in protest of racial injustice in the United States. It was a moment that would change his life forever. With dynamic scenes from Tommie's life and gold-medal winning 100-meter race, this graphic memoir will be a new favorite for fans of sports history and *March* by John Lewis!

Author Website: <https://tommiesmith.com/>

Book Website: <https://www.victorystandbook.com/>

Author Book Discussion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9x1D3mPosNs>

Authors Book Discussion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMwVFkzkdf8>

*** *Crumbs* by Danie Stirling**

What would you order in a bakery that sells hand-crafted treats that will help your dreams come true? In the graphic novel *Crumbs*, Ray is a seer who wants to learn more about her power so she can someday join the Grand Council of Sorcerers. As a break from the pressures of life, Ray enjoys visiting a magical bakery and hopes for love. While enjoying her usual treat at the bakery, Ray meets a barista named Laurie who wants to be a musician. Join Ray and Laurie in their magical world as they face the ups and downs of following their dreams, friendship, and a sweet romance.

Author on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Whitherling>

Book Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_MGC40cjLw

Book Review: <https://www.bookpage.com/reviews/crumbs-danie-stirling-book-review/>

***All My Rage* by Sabaa Tahir**

Three points of view intertwine, one in the past and two in the present. Years ago, Misbah and her husband moved to California's Mojave Desert to begin a new life after suffering great loss. High school seniors (and used-to-be best friends) Salahudin and Noor both have difficult lives they are struggling to change. Salahudin's trying to save his family business and get Noor to talk to him again. Noor is secretly applying to colleges so she can escape from her uncle. Working hard doesn't seem to be enough for either of them to get out of the situations they are in. Salahudin's desperate choices have horrible consequences. Will Noor ever forgive him? This realistic story has earthquakes, college essays, drug deals, trips to the hospital, arrests, and romance. There's also rage, for good reason.

Author Website: <https://sabaataahir.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1XSbBBM7ks>

Author Reads an Excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMn11XCZ2uo>

Book Club Guide: https://storage.googleapis.com/classroom-portal-production/uploads/2022/03/0f6f59ab-allmyrage_dg_29294-1.pdf

Educator's Guide: https://storage.googleapis.com/classroom-portal-production/uploads/2022/09/b93a294e-allmyrage_educatorsguide.pdf

*** *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians but Were Afraid to Ask (Young Reader's Edition)* by Anton Treuer**

Do you have questions about American Indians that you aren't sure how to ask? Are you unsure if "American Indians" is even the right phrase to use? If so, this is the book for you! Author Anton Treuer (pronounced Troy-er) opens this fascinating and browse-able book with a section on terminology, covering whether Native, Indigenous, Indian, or other terms are appropriate for talking about North America's first people (hint: it's complicated). Using a Q&A format, Treuer also gets into History, Culture & Identity, Politics, Social Activism, and more. He answers almost two hundred questions along the way! You might even find that he answers questions you hadn't thought of yet. You are guaranteed to find this book, complete with photographs and

personal anecdotes from the author, fascinating and engaging. Read it cover-to-cover or browse the sections that you find most interesting!

Author Website: <https://antontreuer.com/>

*** *Instructions for Dancing* by Nicola Yoon**

Ever since her parents split up, Evie doesn't find romance novels quite as magical anymore. She sees through the happy endings to the true equation of every love story: "Heartbreak = love + time." But after she finds a book called *Instructions for Dancing* in a little free library, Evie has an unexpected vision of how her sister's relationship will end. Her premonition comes true, and it's the first of many. Realizing that her new ability is connected to the secondhand book in her backpack, Evie follows its instructions to return it to a local dancing school. There, she meets (charming, attractive, talented, and tall) Xavier, or X, whose grandparents own the studio. With a little nudge, the pair enters the L.A. Danceball competition. Genuine feelings develop as Evie and X master elements of ballroom including footwork, artistry, showmanship, and chemistry. But can Evie truly open her heart to love when she knows that it will inevitably end?

Author Website: <https://www.nicolayoon.com/>

Book Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPN_zSIwh-k

Book Club Guide: <https://www.getunderlined.com/article/instructions-for-dancing-book-club-guide/>

Author Q & A: <https://diversebooks.org/qa-with-nicola-yoon-instructions-for-dancing/>

Book Review: <https://www.bookpage.com/reviews/26325-nicola-yoon-instructions-dancing-ya/>