

## Take a Look at Teen Fiction

There are so many things people are passionate about: family, cars, work, and music. Books definitely make the top of my list but lately I have been obsessed with a specific type – young adult fiction. Since I started working at the library I have found incredible books in the teen section. As with adult novels, teen or young adult novels tell complex and touching stories of hopes, dreams, love, and fears. You can pick from genres such as fantasy, sci-fi, mystery, and romance. There are authors who write both teen and adult novels such as Meg Cabot, Neil Gaiman, and James Patterson. Sherman Alexie wrote his first teen book last year (a brilliant book titled “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian”) which received the 2007 National Book Award for the best in young adult literature.

Here are just a few of the fantastic teen books we have at the library:

“The White Darkness” by Geraldine McCaughrean – Fourteen-year-old Symone is fascinated by the Antarctic, especially the explorer Captain Laurence Titus Oates. So when she has the opportunity to visit the South Pole with a family friend she is excited to go. But the seemingly normal trip turns into a secret expedition filled with terror. Will Symone survive the hostile elements and the threats to her life? Winner of the 2008 Michael L. Printz Award for excellence in young adult literature. Grade 7 and up.

“City of Bones” by Cassandra Clare – The 1<sup>st</sup> book in the Mortal Instruments Trilogy, this suspense-filled book plunges into the world of urban fantasy. One night, fifteen-year-old Clary learns she has the power to see demons. When she returns home, she finds her mother has disappeared and a demon is waiting to kill her. Fortunately the Shadowhunters, a group of demon hunters, rescue her and she finds her life -past, present, and future - tied to the Shadowhunters. Full of excitement, secrets, and romantic tension, the series continues with City of Ashes and City of Glass. Grade 9 and up.

“Breathe My Name” by R.A. Nelson – Seventeen-year-old Frances lives quietly with her adopted family after her mother smothered her sisters and attempted to kill Frances. As Frances starts falling for the new boy in school she receives a note from her mother: she has been released and wants to see Frances. Is it to finish what she started years ago? Can Frances face her past and her mother? Grade 9 and up.

“Just Listen” by Sarah Dessen –To many, Annabel’s life seemed perfect: cool friends, a nice family, and a job as a part-time model. But in one summer everything changes. Alienated from her friends and family, Annabel finds an ally in Owen, a boy with anger issues and a belief in total honesty. He encourages Annabel to face her troubles but will Owen still be there when he learns the truth? Grade 10 and up.

“Looking for Alaska” by John Green – Wanting to shake up his life, Miles decides to leave home his junior year to attend a boarding school. During the school year Miles makes friends and participates in pranks that defy school rules. But it’s Alaska, a beautiful and troubled girl, who changes his life. Winner of the 2006 Michael L. Printz Award. Grade 10 and up.

"Leaving Paradise" by Simone Elkeles – Told in alternating chapters, this fantastic novel tells the story of Caleb and Maggie as they both readjust to school and home life after a terrible accident. Once friends, Maggie must deal with a leg injury from a drunk driving accident that sent Caleb to prison. Grade 10 and up.

Now, I hope one or more of these titles sound like good reads, but even if they don't I hope you look at young adult fiction in a new light. While the characters may be teenagers, their struggles and dreams can resonate with anyone regardless of age. Many of my favorite books are considered young adult and I bet if you give them a chance, you will be pleasantly surprised to find some favorites of your own.

*Jennifer Tchida is Children's Librarian at Bartholomew County Public Library*