

2021-2022 Willow Finalist List With Annotations

Shining Willow

Fast Friends by Heather M. O'Connor. Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2020. ISBN 9781443170406 (pbk.)

Tyson lacks friends, due to his fast pace and disruptiveness in class. When Suze, a new girl with special needs arrives, the other classmates don't understand her and see her differently. But Tyson understands and their developing friendship celebrates looking at our commonalities and not our differences. Available in French.

When We Are Kind by Monique Gray Smith. Orca Book Publishers, ©2020. ISBN 9781459825222 (hc.)

This book teaches the importance of cooperation and community by celebrating simple acts of everyday kindness and encouraging children to explore how they feel when they initiate and receive acts of kindness in their lives. Available in French.

AAALLIGATOR! By Judith Henderson. Kids Can Press, ©2020. ISBN9781525301513 (hc.)

A boy, walking in the forest, is startled by an alligator. He realizes that the alligator is lonely rather than mean. When the mayor writes a law saying, "No alligators!", the townspeople work together to hide the alligator. This hilarious story reminds us that true friendship has no boundaries.

Bobby Orr and the Hand Me Down Skates by Bobby Orr and Kara Kootstra. Penguin Random House Tundra Books, ©2020. ISBN 9780735265325 (hc.)

Bobby eats, sleeps and breathes hockey. For his birthday, he only wants one thing: new skates. He's seen the exact pair he wants in the shop window, but when Bobby opens his birthday gift, he's dismayed to find hand-me-down skates. After breaking them in, he can't imagine his life without them.

The One with the Scraggly Beard by Elizabeth Withey. Orca Book Publishers, ©2020. ISBN 9781459818552 (hc.)

A young boy who leads a comfortable life learns of a man with a scraggly beard living under a bridge. In a conversation with his mother, the boy compares and contrasts the way the man lives to the boy's own life and wonders where his own possible future will lead.

Princesses Versus Dinosaurs by Linda Bailey. Penguin Random House Tundra Books, ©2020. ISBN 9780735264298 (hc.)

This funny story is a princess book and a dinosaur book all mixed into one. Can a royal battle between princesses and dinosaurs determine which one will reign supreme? This book is not big enough for both princesses and dinosaurs, or is it? Who will come out on top?

The Girl with the Cat Beverley Brenna. Red Deer Press, ©2020. ISBN 9780889955318 (pbk.)

Caroline enters an art gallery in Saskatoon and falls in love with a bronze sculpture of a girl and a cat. When the sculpture is due to leave the gallery, Caroline gathers her spare change and begs for it to stay, spurring a donation campaign that succeeds. Inspired by a true story.

Violet Shrink by Christine Baldacchino. Groundwood Books, House of Anansi Press, ©2020. ISBN 9781773062051 (hc.)

Like most people, Violet has likes and dislikes. She prefers solitude and quiet activities rather than the gatherings and parties that her family loves. They make her tummy ache and hands sweat. With a family reunion approaching, Violet gathers her courage and talks to her dad. Together they come up with a compromise.

The Mosquito by Elise Gravel. Penguin Random House, Tundra Books, ©2020. ISBN 9780735266452 (hc.), ISBN 9780735266476 (pbk.)

Everything you might want to know about mosquitoes is told in this hilarious book that will both amuse and teach. Conversational text and silly illustrations will have you up all night reading about the most annoying bug on Earth! Available in French.

The Barnabus Project by The Fan Brothers. Penguin Random House, Tundra Books, ©2020.
ISBN 9780735263260 (hc.)

In a world that values genetically engineered pets, Barnabus, half mouse and half elephant, is a “Failed Project”, kept hidden and captive. When the “Failed Projects” discover they will be “recycled”, they know they must escape. Using courage and cooperation, they set out to find a place of freedom and acceptance.

Diamond Willow

What If Soldiers Fought with Pillows? True Stories of Imagination and Courage by Heather Camlot. Owlkids Books, ©2020. ISBN 978-1-77147-362-0 (hc.)

From a soldier who refused to carry a weapon to a young Congolese refugee who received the International Children's Peace Prize, read about real-life courageous individuals and organizations that dared to imagine a better world and then helped to make it a reality. Available in French, Spanish, German, and Korean.

No Vacancy by Tziporah Cohen. Groundwood Books, ©2020. ISBN 978-1-77306-410-9.

Moving to a small town to own and run the Jewel Motor Inn is not Miriam's dream. When it becomes clear that only a miracle is going to save the Jewel from bankruptcy and its failure will affect other businesses in town, Miriam and her friend Kate decide to create their own miracle.

The Stray and the Strangers by Steven Heighton. Groundwood Books, ©2020. ISBN 978-1-77306-381-2 (hc.)

Kanella, a scrawny, nervous stray watches a dinghy filled with weary, desperate strangers come to shore. She knows what it is like to be homeless and hungry and follows them as they are led to a temporary refugee camp. There she gains comfort, companionship and a new purpose. Inspired by a true story.

The Brushmaker's Daughter by Kathy Kacer. Second Story Press, ©2020. ISBN 978-1-77260-138-1 (pbk).

Lillian and her Papa are on the run from Nazi soldiers. Lillian's father is blind and no one is willing to help them except Otto Weidt. Mr. Weidt runs a brush-making factory for the Nazi army and employs blind Jewish workers. He is determined to protect his employees at all costs. Inspired by a true story.

Notorious by Gordon Korman. Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2020. ISBN 978-1443187732 (pbk).

Centerlight Island, split between the United States and Canada, is Keenan's new home. ZeeBee, his neighbour, is obsessed with the island's gangster history and the supposed murder of her dog Barney. The more Keenan learns about the Island and its inhabitants the less crazy ZeeBee's murder suspicions seem, leading them on a dangerous investigation with shocking secrets.

Fish Out of Water by Joanne Levy. Orca Book Publishers, ©2020. ISBN 978-1-4598-2659-5 (pbk).

Fishel "Fish" Rosner doesn't like regular "boy" activities. So when he decides to do a special knitting project for his bar mitzvah, some of his family and friends don't support his "girly" pursuits. Why does everyone else get to decide what Fish should or shouldn't be?

Mya's Strategy to Save the World by Tanya Lloyd Kyi. Puffin, ©2019. ISBN 978-0-7352-6526-4 (pbk).

Mya is organized, reliable and destined to make a difference. Unfortunately, with Mya's added responsibilities due to her mom being away, it is hard to make an impact, especially without an essential cell phone. Despite mounting personal and social disasters, Mya sets out on a take charge campaign to save the world and gain that cellphone.

The Jigsaw Puzzle King by Gina McMurchy-Barber. Dundurn, ©2020. ISBN 978-1-4597-4606-0 (pbk).

Fitting in at a new school is hard for Warren whose twin brother, Benny, has Down Syndrome and attracts too much attention for Warren's liking. He thinks life would be easier if he had no brother. Warren hatches a plan to prevent Benny from embarrassing him; that ends with stinky mayhem and an important lesson learned.

The Ghost Collector by Allison Mills. Annick Press, ©2019. ISBN 978-1-77321-295-1 (pbk).

As an apprentice to her ghost-hunting grandma, Shelly helps animal ghosts move on to the afterlife and watches her Cree grandma do the same with people. Then a terrible accident changes how Shelly sees death. Breaking the rules, Shelly hordes ghosts in a desperate attempt to fill a void left by the one spirit she can't find.

The Barren Grounds by David A. Robertson. Puffin, ©2020. ISBN 978-0-7352-6610-0 (hc.) ISBN 978-0-7352-6612-4 (pbk.)

Morgan and Eli are struggling to fit in at school and their foster home. They feel disconnected from their Indigenous culture until they discover a portal to another reality. There they learn traditional ways and find themselves in a race to save the creatures of Aski before winter's grip freezes everything - including them.

Snow Willow

Bloom by Kenneth Oppel. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., ©2020. ISBN 9781443450317 (hc.), ISBN: 9781443450324 (pbk.)

Strange plants invade the world after a heavy rainfall. They release toxins into the air and form pods to swallow animals and people. Three 15-year-olds appear to be immune to the toxic effects, in fact they seem to thrive in their presence. Together, they must find a cure or some way to destroy the plants.

Feral by Nicole Luiken. Yellow Dog, ©2019. ISBN 9781773370316 (pbk.)

17-year-old Chloe fears she is a Dud, a child of two werewolves who cannot transform into her wolf form. If she's still a Dud upon adulthood, she faces certain exile from her pack. Maybe solving the case of a stray feral werewolf will help her change?

He Must Like You by Danielle Young-Ullman. Penguin Random House, ©2020. ISBN 9780735265691 (hc.), ISBN 9780735265714 (pbk.)

Libby is waitressing to pay for college and her future. When one of the regular customers goes too far with his harassment, Libby dumps a pitcher over him and must deal with the fallout. This book raises excellent questions about the issues of sexual harassment, consent and revenge in a surprisingly fun and humorous way.

Heart Sister by Michael F. Stewart. Orca Book Publishers, ©2020. ISBN 9781459824874 (pbk.)

Emmitt's world falls apart after his twin sister, Minnie, dies in an accident. Minnie was an organ donor who saved several lives. Grasping at anything that will keep his memory of Minnie alive, Emmitt decides to capture his sister's spirit by tracking down each organ recipient and videoing them.

Hunted By The Sky by Tanaz Bhathena. Penguin Random House, ©2020. ISBN 9780735267022 (hc.), ISBN 9780735267046 (pbk.)

Dangerous circumstances bring Gul and Cavas together at the king's domain in Ambar Fort, a world with secrets deadlier than their own. A gripping fantasy adventure that explores identity, class struggles, and romance, *Hunted by the Sky* is set in a magical world inspired by medieval India.

If I Go Missing by Brianna Jonnie with Nahanni Shingoose. James Lorimer & Co., ©2019 ISBN 9781459414518 (hc.)

Focusing on the social justice issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada, this powerful graphic novel provides a compassionate perspective on dangers confronting Indigenous teens. The Ojibway author makes a heartfelt plea to police to look beyond race when carrying out job-related duties.

The King Of Jam Sandwiches by Eric Walters. Orca Book Publishers, ©2020. ISBN 9781459825567 (pbk.)

Thirteen-year-old Robbie has a secret. Robbie lives with his dad and his dad is struggling. Once his dad was gone for a week and food got scarce. Robbie is terrified of telling anyone lest he be put into foster care. Can Robbie trust his new friend to keep his secret?

Qaqavii by Miriam Körner. Red Deer Press, ©2019. ISBN 9780889955707 (pbk.)

15 year-old Emmylou has moved to Churchill, Manitoba and feels all alone until she meets Barnabas, a young Inuk boy, who teaches her all about sled dogs. Together they train for the Arctic Quest, one of the most difficult dog-sled races ever!

Spin by Colleen Nelson. Dundurn Press, ©2019. ISBN 9781459744967 (pbk.)

Delilah “Dizzy” Doucette is learning how to become a famous DJ. When her DJing threatens to expose her family’s secret that her estranged mother is a famous singer, her life spins out of control. Dizzy will have to decide what is most important to her - the family she has or the family she wants.

The Unteachables by Gordon Korman. Scholastic Canada Ltd., ©2019 ISBN 9781443170161 (hc.), ISBN 9781443182010 (pbk.)

The Unteachables never thought they’d find a teacher who had a worse attitude than they did, and Mr. Kermit never thought he would actually care about teaching again. Over the course of a school year, though, room 117 will experience mayhem, destruction—and maybe even a shot at redemption.