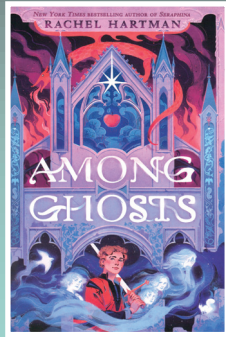




WILLOW AWARDS

2026
SASKATCHEWAN
YOUNG READERS'
CHOICE

Snow Willow Finalists



Among Ghosts
by Rachel Hartman



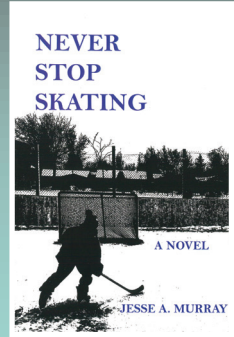
The End of Always
by Rebecca Philips



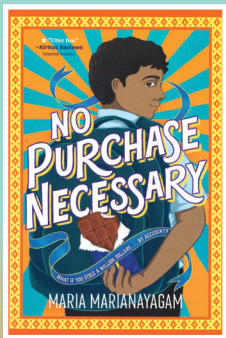
A Fondness For the Reckless
by Jennifer Jacoby-Smith



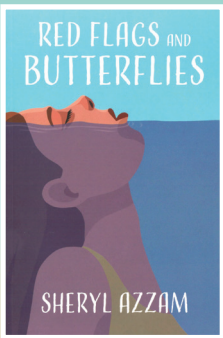
The Mystery of the Haunted Dance Hall
by Charis Cotter



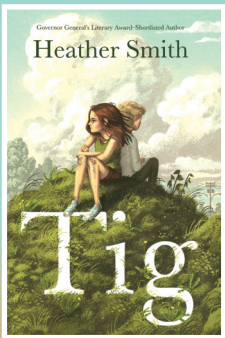
Never Stop Skating
by Jesse A. Murray



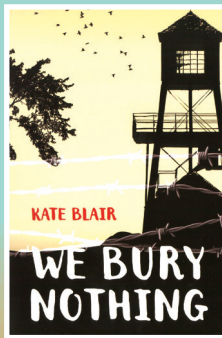
No Purchase Necessary
by Maria Marianayagam



Red Flags and Butterflies
by Sheryl Azzam



Tig
by Heather Smith

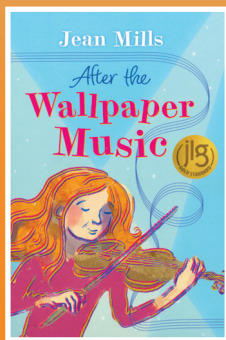


We Bury Nothing
by Kate Blair

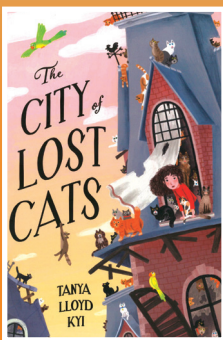


You Started It
by Jackie Khalilieh

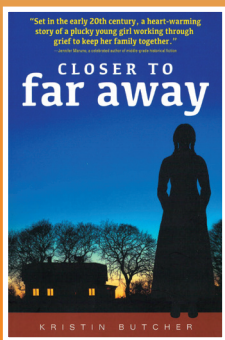
Diamond Willow Finalists



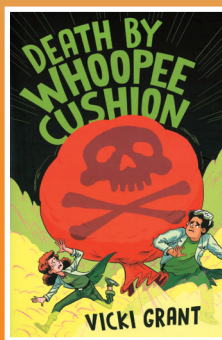
After the Wallpaper Music
by Jean Mills



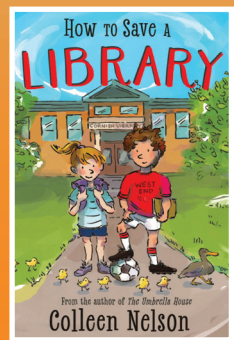
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Closer to Far Away
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Death by Whoopee Cushion
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How to Save a Library
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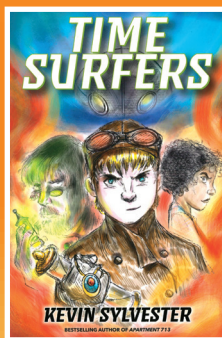
The Longest Shot: How Larry Kwong Changed the Face of Hockey
by Chad Soon and George Chiang
illustrated by Amy Qi



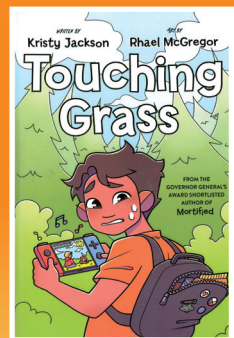
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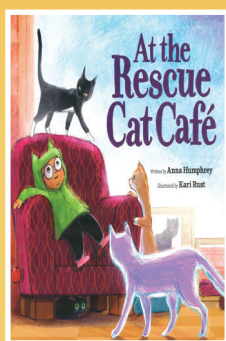


Time Surfers
by Kevin Sylvester

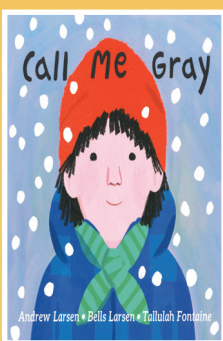


Touching Grass
by Kristy Jackson
illustrated by Rhael McGregor

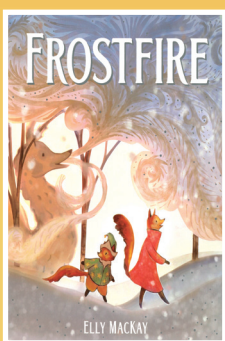
Shining Willow Finalists



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illustrated by Kari Rust



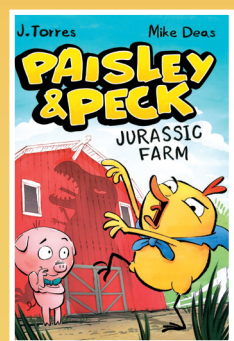
Call Me Gray
by Andrew Larsen and Bells Larsen
illustrated by Tallulah Fontaine



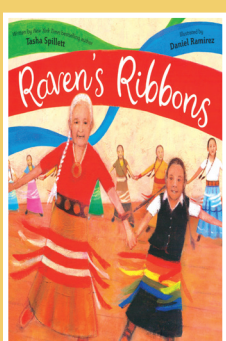
Frostfire
by Elly Mackay



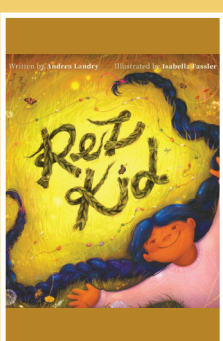
Oma's Bag
by Michelle Wang
illustrated by Sam Nunez



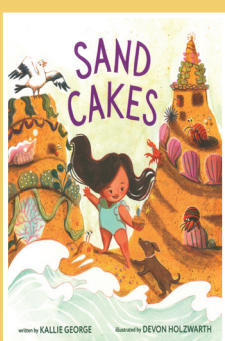
Paisley & Peck: Jurassic Farm
by J. Torres
illustrated by Mike Deas



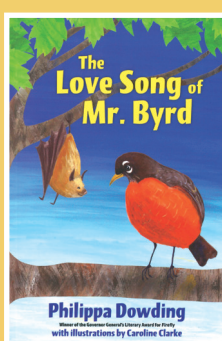
Raven's Ribbons
by Tasha Spillett
illustrated by Daniel Ramirez



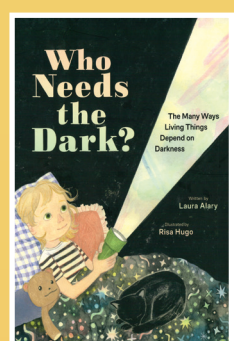
Rez Kid
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Sand Cakes
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The Love Song of Mr. Byrd
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illustrated by Caroline Clarke



Who Needs the Dark? The Many Ways Living Things Depend on Darkness
by Laura Alary
illustrated by Risa Hugo

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2026

Who Can Vote

Saskatchewan children are encouraged to have read (or had read to them) the minimum number of books in each category in order to place one vote for their favourite title.

Snow Willow Award: Encouraged to read 2 of the 10 titles.

Diamond Willow Award: Encouraged to read 2 of the 10 titles.

Shining Willow Award: At least 5 of the 10 titles.

Voting Deadline: March 31, 2027

To Vote Go To: www.willowawards.ca

Find at: www.willowawards.ca

- Online voting ballots
- Vote summary forms
- Book sticker order form
 - Posters
- Learning activities
- Author biographies
 - Book reviews
 - Bookmarks

Snow Willow Finalists (Gr. 7 & Up)

Among Ghosts by Rachel Hartman Penguin Random House, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77488-613-7 (hc)</i> All Charl wants is to become a heroic swordsman to keep those he cares about safe. When a plan to thwart his bully accidentally ends in death, his dream may be too dangerous. Dealing with dragons, ghosts, and a regretful nun leaves him wondering how true memories and stories really are!	The End of Always by Rebecca Philips Second Story Press, ©2024 <i>ISBN 978-1-77260-371-2 (pbk)</i> Follow Isobel as she struggles against her father’s escalating doomsday paranoia and fights to protect herself and her younger sister, April, from a forced life in a survivalist compound. Even after befriending Dane there, Isobel is determined to choose her own future—and save her sister from it.	A Fondness For the Reckless by Jennifer Jacoby-Smith YNWP, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-177869-0488 (pbk)</i> Follow Canadian boy band Ten Past Midnight on the day everything could change. When Indigo Lee vanishes before an interview, the group is forced to confront fame, friendship, first love, and the pressure to grow up fast. Told through multiple perspectives, this novel explores identity, ambition, and what it means to stay true to yourself.	The Mystery of the Haunted Dance Hall by Charis Cotter Penguin Random House, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77455-555-0 (hc)</i> Summer camp is supposed to be fun, but when the older girls start sneaking off at night toward faint fairy music in the woods, flashlight batteries die with alarming speed, and a mysterious ghost boy begins appearing, Bee gears up to solve the mystery of the haunted dance hall.	Never Stop Skating by Jesse A. Murray Off the Field Publishing, ©2024 <i>ISBN 978-1-77759-134-2 (pbk)</i> After moving to Saskatoon, Jay is faced with starting at a new school and experiencing bullying. He soon discovers a natural talent for skating and a passion for hockey, which opens his world to new friendships, challenges and the courage to face those who seem intent on making Jay’s life anything but easy.
No Purchase Necessary by Maria Marianayagam HarperCollins Publishing, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-4434-7261-6 (pbk)</i> All Ajay wants is to make his parents proud and to impress the cool kids at school. Too bad they want very different things from him. When Ajay wins a prize in a stolen candy bar, his life spirals out of control and he must decide: who do I want to be?	Red Flags and Butterflies by Sheryl Azzam DCB, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77086-806-9 (pbk)</i> Lexie Moore, a gifted student and artist, dreams of joining Sundridge High’s fine arts program, but her father insists she help launch his renovation business instead. Hoping cooperation will earn his support, she agrees—only to find his expectations tightening into control, leaving her increasingly trapped by his idea of “fair.”	Tig by Heather Smith Tundra Books, ©2024 <i>ISBN 978-0-7352-6749-7 (hc)</i> After months of living alone without electricity, Tig and her brother Peter are taken in by their Uncle Scott and his partner Manny. Struggling with the trauma of her past, Tig finds it difficult to adjust to her new life. The story follows her emotional journey as she slowly begins to heal and move forward.	We Bury Nothing by Kate Blair DCB, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77086-802-1 (pbk)</i> When Kiera takes an internship to investigate the murder of a young German soldier at Camp 43, a World War II POW camp, she has no idea it will pull her into mysteries that could change her life forever.	You Started It by Jackie Khalilieh Penguin Random House, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77488-4751 (hc)</i> It’s hard to check off a pre-grad relationship bucket list when your boyfriend of three years dumps you. But Jamie won’t let that stop her, even if it means enduring a complex fake dating scheme with TikTok dancer, Axel. Can Jamie get her heart figured out in time for winter formal?

Diamond Willow Finalists (Gr. 4-6)

After the Wallpaper Music by Jean Mills Pajama Press, ©2024 <i>ISBN 978-1-77278-322-3 (hc)</i> Flora loves her violin, her friends, and playing beautiful music together. But when a Battle of the Bands competition pops up, things get noisy! With classical tunes on one side and rock music on the other, Flora has to figure out how to follow her heart and find her very own sound.	The City of Lost Cats by Tanya Lloyd Kyi Tundra Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77488-212-2 (pbk)</i> Fiona discovers an old harbour mansion full of stray cats, parakeets and big trouble—it’s about to be demolished! With help from unexpected friends (and some very opinionated animals), Fiona races to save “The City” and turn it into a home where everyone belongs.	Closer to Far Away by Kristin Butcher Red Deer Press, ©2024 <i>ISBN 978-0889957497 (pbk)</i> In the winter of 1921 in Saskatchewan, 13-year-old Lucy May Barber is sure it’s her job to keep her family together after her mother dies. But with a bossy housekeeper, a little brother already beginning to forget their mother, a troubled older brother, and a distant father, everything falls apart—until another tragedy forces Lucy to face her grief in a different way.	Death by Whoopee Cushion by Vicki Grant Tundra Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77488-468-3 (hc)</i> Manya loves science, not pranks, but when her joke-shop parents get arrested for a deadly trick, she must mix brains and bravery to clear their name. With her friend Isaac, she uncovers the secret chemistry behind her parents’ jokes...and a clue to solving a murder.	How to Save a Library by Colleen Nelson Pajama Press, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77278-352-0 (hc)</i> Casey is tired of being the new kid—again! But in The Gates, life finally feels right...until the library his dad works at is in danger of closing. With soccer skills, smarts and a little help from former “not-so-friend” Addison, Casey joins a fundraising challenge to try to save the library and the life he’s built.
The Longest Shot: How Larry Kwong Changed the Face of Hockey by Chad Soon and George Chiang Illustrated by Amy Qi. Orca Book Publishers, ©2024 <i>ISBN 9781459835030 (hc)</i> Larry Kwong made history as the first NHL player of Asian descent, skating one shift for the New York Rangers in 1948. From Vernon’s Chinatown to Madison Square Garden, he faced racism with courage, broke hockey’s colour barrier and paved the way for future generations’ ice dreams.	Robot Island by Cary Fagan Tundra Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-77488-728-8 (hc)</i> Willis never expected that stealing books from a mysterious widow would lead him to a secret island full of quirky robots! Between dusty old books, daring adventures and surprising friendships, he must uncover the island’s secrets and figure out who he can really trust before trouble catches up to him.	Swan: The Girl Who Grew by Sidura Ludwig Nimbus Publishing Ltd., ©2024 <i>ISBN 978-1-7747-1-321-1 (pbk)</i> Twelve-year-old Anna Swan is really tall—seven feet tall! Being so tall brings its challenges, with bullies, loss, and big fears that she’ll never stop growing. Given the chance to exhibit herself as a curiosity in Halifax to help with family money problems, Anna must balance helping her family with her desire to be normal. Inspired by the real Anna Swan.	Time Surfers by Kevin Sylvester HarperCollins Publishers, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-4434-7506-8 (hc)</i> Caleb Fisher teams up with his scientist dad on thrilling time-surfing missions—but there’s a catch: never change history! When Caleb sneaks onto a forbidden trip to ancient Alexandria, father and son must face the wild consequences that will change their lives forever. Adventure, danger and secrets await!	Touching Grass by Kristy Jackson Illustrated by Rhael McGregor HarperCollins Publishers, ©2025 <i>ISBN 978-1-4434-7223-4 (hc)</i> Tristen would rather hide online than confront the real world. Facing expulsion, his mom sends him to a Dene culture camp, where he’s forced offline—no Wi-Fi, no gadgets, no way out! At first it’s a disaster... but with new friends, clever tech and a little courage, Tristen might just discover that nature can be hacked too.

Shining Willow Finalists (Young - Gr. 3)

At the Rescue Cat Café by Anna Humphrey, illustrated by Kari Rust. Owlkids Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781771475402 (hc)</i> A clowder of cats resides at the Rescue Cat Café. Each cat is unique and in need of a forever home. Each day throughout the week, visitors come and adopt a cat that’s just right. By Sunday, even Mouse, a shy cat hiding in the background, finds a home perfect for them.	Call Me Gray by Andrew Larsen and Bells Larsen, illustrated by Tallulah Fontaine Kids Can Press, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781525311352 (hc)</i> While creating their annual ice rink together, a child tries to tell their dad something important. After some misunderstandings, the child explains they look like a boy, but sometimes feel more like a girl and want to change their name to Gray. When Gray’s dad uses their chosen name, it feels warm and right, like hot chocolate after the season’s first skate.	Frostfire by Elly MacKay Tundra Books, ©2024 <i>ISBN 9780735266988 (hc)</i> Also available in French, <i>ISBN 9781039709911</i> On a walk through a snow-covered garden, big sister Miriam claims to hear the sound of a snow dragon. Little sister Celeste has lots of questions and Miriam seems to have an answer for everything about snow dragons. But when Celeste wanders off, she has a magical encounter that changes everything she thought she knew.	Oma’s Bag by Michelle Wang, illustrated by Sam Nunez. Arsenal Pulp Press, ©2024 <i>ISBN 9781551529479 (hc)</i> The five Lim children are thrilled when Oma and Opa visit, but Oma seems different, often repeating questions and things around the house go missing. When the items reappear in Oma’s large shopping bag, they spark stories from the past and new shared moments. Though the family realizes Oma is experiencing early dementia, they are reminded that Oma is still Oma.	Paisley & Peck: Jurassic Farm by J. Torres, illustrated by Mike Deas Owlkids Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781771476409 (hc)</i> Paisley is a tidy pig with foodie dreams and Peck is a chick who refuses to be the farm’s rooster alarm clock. When Peck learns chickens evolved from dinosaurs, he embraces life as a Ty-rooster-saurus rex instead. But when Peck’s Jurassic act goes too far, Paisley and the other farm animals realize they might have created a monster.
Raven’s Ribbons by Tasha Spillett, illustrated by Daniel Ramirez. Owlkids Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781771475662 (hc)</i> Raven loves round dances, especially dancing with his grandma and watching ribbon skirts swirl. When Raven asks if a boy could wear a ribbon skirt, his Grandma admits she has never seen it, but nevertheless decides to make Raven a skirt of his own. At the next dance, Raven wears it proudly and his grandma celebrates seeing something beautiful and new.	Rez Kid by Andrea Landry, illustrated by Isabella Fassler. Kids Can Press, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781525311253 (hc)</i> When the kids on the school bus call her “Rez kid!”, the girl just wants to get home. Safe and happy on the reservation, she beads with her mother, harvests medicines with her nóhkom, gardens with her aunty, and rides horseback with her moshum. Each elder offers advice, but the girl insists on coming up with her own way to connect with the other kids.	Sand Cakes by Kallie George, illustrated by Devon Holzwarth. Tundra Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781774882474 (hc)</i> A beach day inspires an imaginative child to “bake” sandy cakes, pies, and pastries full of creativity and love. But everyone and everything politely refuses to try the sandy sweets; even the seagulls. No one, that is, until the Sea, creeping ever closer, decides to rush in for a big bite!	The Love Song of Mr. Byrd by Philippa Dowding, illustrated by Caroline Clarke DCB Young Readers, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781770868083 (pbk)</i> Bat and Mr. Byrd meet by chance on a red maple branch and agree to visit each other every summer twilight. Though different, they discover friendship in shared moments of danger, beauty, love, loss, fun, joy, family, and more. With autumn comes change for these unlikely summer friends, and for Mr. Byrd, it brings the sweetest song of all.	Who Needs the Dark? The Many Ways Living Things Depend on Darkness by Laura Alary, illustrated by Risa Hugo Owlkids Books, ©2025 <i>ISBN 9781771475570 (hc)</i> How do you feel about the dark? Is it creepy or cozy? Spooky or spectacular? The dark is for sleeping, growing, healing, sharing secrets, and changing into something new. Humans depend on it for their health and well-being, as do many other living things. Some wonderful things can only be seen in the dark. Celebrate and cherish the dark, instead of being afraid of it.

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