

OUTSIDERS /// NONCONFORMISTS /// REBELS

Alexie, Sherman

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

Anderson, Laurie Halse

Speak

A traumatic event in the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year of high school.

Andreu, Maria E.

The Secret Side of Empty

As her friends make plans for life after high school, M.T. struggles to envision her future as an undocumented immigrant and becomes determined to make a life for herself in the only place she has ever known as home.

Blount, Patty

Send

Incarcerated five years ago for sending a photo of a classmate in character underwear to all of his friends--resulting in the boy's suicide--18-year-old Kenny has since been on the move with his family, seeking anonymity. Starting his senior year at a new school with an assumed name, Dan, he immediately gets himself in trouble when he stops a bully from beating up perennial victim Brandon.

Budhos, Marina

We Are All We Have

After her mom is taken by ICE, seventeen-year-old Rania's hopes and dreams for the future are immediately put on hold as she figures out how to take care of her younger brother and survive in a country that seems to be closing around them.

Carpenter, Nora Shalaway

Fault Lines

Since her aunt's death, Vivian (Viv) Spry is aching to figure out where she belongs. Her father has become emotionally distant, and her best friend has found a new sense of identity in her theater group. No one in her rural West Virginia town has time for an assertive, angry girl, especially a girl dubbed "Ice Queen" for refusing to sleep with her popular boyfriend. The only place Viv feels like it is safe to be her true self is the tree stand where her aunt taught her to hunt. When fracking destroys the stand and almost kills her, Viv vows to find a way to take the gas company down. Dex Mathews is a new kid in town; his mom has a job laying pipeline. Viv's plan to sabotage the pipeline company could result in Dex's mom losing her job. As their worlds collide, Viv and Dex have to decide what is worth fighting for: their families, their principles, or each other.

Colasanti, Susane

Keep Holding On

Bullied at school and neglected by her self-absorbed, single mother at home, high school junior Noelle finally realizes she must do something to change her life after a classmate commits suicide.

Connis, Dave

Suggested Reading

Clara Evans is a voracious reader and a volunteer at her high school's library. One day she discovers that her school has a "prohibited media" list and is banning books from the library collection, including some of Clara's personal favorites. In retaliation, Clara creates a secret library in her locker to ensure that students still have access to these books. In addition, she encourages her classmates to write notes on the book covers explaining what the books meant to them, to demonstrate how impactful they are and convey why they shouldn't be banned. Clara feels confident in her actions until an unexpected tragedy makes her question her motivations and wonder if books really can be dangerous.

Cooner, Donna

Fake

Maisie Fernandez has just about convinced herself that she does not care about her weight or her looks, or about only having one friend in Fort Collins High School (nerdy Owen Carpenter)—but "Sienna", the internet profile she creates, is beautiful, skinny, and confident. The profile is part of her plan to humiliate the popular kids who bully and make fun of her, but suddenly the deception gets complicated because the actual Sienna, the girl whose photos Maisie has been using, shows up in real life.

Cormier, Robert

The Chocolate War

A high school freshman discovers the devastating consequences of refusing to join in the school's annual fund raising drive and arousing the wrath of the school bullies.

Crutcher, Chris

Whale Talk

Intellectually and athletically gifted, TJ, a multiracial, adopted teenager, shuns organized sports and the gung-ho athletes at his high school until he agrees to form a swimming team and recruits some of the school's less popular students.

Dessen, Sarah

Just Listen

Isolated from friends who believe the worst because she has not been truthful with them, sixteen-year-old Annabel finds an ally in classmate Owen whose honesty and passion for music helps her to face and share what really happened at the end-of-the-year party that changed her life.

Friesen, Jonathan

Jerk, California

Plagued by Tourette's syndrome and a stepfather who despises him, Sam meets an old man in his small Midwest town who sends him on a road trip designed to help him discover the truth about his life.

Friesen, Jonathan

Rush

A pariah in his town and home because of his risk-taking behavior, eighteen-year-old Jake seeks adrenaline rushes to clear his dark thoughts. When Salome, the girl he loves, gets caught up in taking chances, too, the consequences are devastating.

Haddon, Mark

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

Hartinger, Brent

Geography Club

A group of gay and lesbian teenagers finds mutual support when they form the "Geography Club" at their high school.

Hinton, S. E.

The Outsiders

Three brothers struggle to stay together after their parents' death, as they search for an identity among the conflicting values of their adolescent society in which they find themselves "outsiders."

Jean, Emiko

Tokyo Ever After (and sequel)

After learning that her father is the Crown Prince of Japan, Izumi travels to Tokyo, where she discovers that Japanese imperial life--complete with designer clothes, court intrigue, paparazzi scandals, and a forbidden romance with her handsome but stoic bodyguard--is a tough fit for the outspoken and irreverent eighteen-year-old from northern California.

Klass, David

You Don't Know Me

Fourteen-year-old John creates alternative realities in his mind as he tries to deal with his mother's abusive boyfriend, his crush on a beautiful, but shallow classmate, and other problems at school.

Picoult, Jodi

Nineteen Minutes

In Sterling, New Hampshire, 17-year-old high school student Peter Houghton has endured years of verbal and physical abuse at the hands of classmates. His best friend, Josie Cormier, succumbed to peer pressure and now hangs out with the popular crowd that often instigates the harassment. One final incident of bullying sends Peter over the edge and leads him to commit an act of violence that forever changes the lives of Sterling's residents.

Shusterman, Neal

Bruiser

Inexplicable events start to occur when sixteen-year-old twins Tennyson and Bronte befriend a troubled and misunderstood outcast, aptly nicknamed Bruiser, and his little brother, Cody.

Spinelli, Jerry

Stargirl

In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever.

Strasser, Todd

Boot Camp

Abducted by transporters in the middle of the night, 15-year-old Garrett finds himself handcuffed in the back of a car trying to make sense of why he is being sent to a facility for troubled teens. Convinced that he does not belong in Lake Harmony, he has difficulty conforming to the camp's standards. As a result, he is subjected to continuous physical and mental abuse.

Strasser, Todd

Give a Boy a Gun

Events leading up to a night of terror at a high school dance are told from the point of view of various people involved.

Swarthout, Glendon

Bless the Beasts & Children

Six teenagers, from affluent but unloving homes, share a cabin at an Arizona riding camp. Their sadistic counselor takes them to a bison reserve where hunters slaughter the animals mercilessly. Led by Teft and Cotton, the boys undertake to save the remaining buffalo in a defiant act of mercy.

Vaught, Susan

Going Underground

Interest in a new girl and pressure from his parole officer cause seventeen-year-old Del, a gravedigger, to recall and face the sexting incident three years earlier that transformed him from a straight-A student-athlete into a social outcast and felon.