

Mrs. Canter's Book Talk

Realistic Fiction:

Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds

Or, you can call it a gun. That's what fifteen-year-old Will has shoved in the back waistband of his jeans. See, his brother Shawn was just murdered. And Will knows the rules. No crying. No snitching. *Revenge*. That's where Will's now heading, with that gun shoved in the back waistband of his jeans, the gun that was his brother's gun. He gets on the elevator, seventh floor, stoked. He knows who he's after. Or does he?

As the elevator stops on the sixth floor, on comes Buck. Buck, Will finds out, is who gave Shawn the gun before Will took the gun. Buck tells Will to check that the gun is even loaded. And that's when Will sees that one bullet is missing. And the only one who could have fired Shawn's gun was Shawn. Huh. Will didn't know that Shawn had ever actually USED his gun. Bigger huh. BUCK IS DEAD. But Buck's in the elevator?

Just as Will's trying to think this through, the door to the next floor opens. A teenage girl gets on, waves away the smoke from Dead Buck's cigarette. Will doesn't know her, but she knew him. Knew. When they were eight. And stray bullets had cut through the playground, and Will had tried to cover her, but she was hit anyway, and so what she wants to know, on that fifth floor elevator stop, is, what if Will, Will with the gun shoved in the back waistband of his jeans, MISSES.

And so it goes, the whole long way down, as the elevator stops on each floor, and at each stop someone connected to his brother gets on to give Will a piece to a bigger story than the one he thinks he knows. A story that might never know an END...if Will gets *off* that elevator.

Rayne and Delilah's Midnite Matinee by Jeff Zentner

Every Friday night, best friends Delia and Josie become Rayne Ravenscroft and Delilah Darkwood, hosts of the campy creature feature show *Midnite Matinee* on the local cable station TV Six.

But with the end of senior year quickly approaching, the girls face tough decisions about their futures. Josie has been dreading graduation, as she tries to decide whether to leave for a big university and chase her dream career in mainstream TV. And Lawson, one of the show's guest performers, a talented MMA fighter with weaknesses for pancakes, fantasy novels, and Josie, is making her tough decision even harder.

Scary movies are the last connection Delia has to her dad, who abandoned the family years ago. If *Midnite Matinee* becomes a hit, maybe he'll see it and want to be a part of her life again. And maybe Josie will stay with the show instead of leaving her behind, too.

As the tug-of-war between growing up and growing apart tests the bonds of their friendship, Josie and Delia start to realize that an uncertain future can be both monstrous...and momentous.

Dystopia:

Dry by Neal Shusterman

The drought—or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it—has been going on for a while now. Everyone’s lives have become an endless list of don’ts: don’t water the lawn, don’t fill up your pool, don’t take long showers.

Until the taps run dry.

Suddenly, Alyssa’s quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don’t return and her life—and the life of her brother—is threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if she’s going to survive.

Divided We Fall by Trent Reedy

Danny Wright never thought he'd be the man to bring down the United States of America. In fact, he enlisted in the Idaho National Guard because he wanted to serve his country the way his father did. When the Guard is called up on the governor's orders to police a protest in Boise, it seems like a routine crowd-control mission ... but then Danny's gun misfires, spooking the other soldiers and the already fractious crowd, and by the time the smoke clears, twelve people are dead.

The president wants the soldiers arrested. The governor swears to protect them. And as tensions build on both sides, the conflict slowly escalates toward the unthinkable: a second American civil war.

Fantasy:

Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo

Ketterdam: a bustling hub of international trade where anything can be had for the right price—and no one knows that better than criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker. Kaz is offered a chance at a deadly heist that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams. But he can't pull it off alone. . . .

A convict with a thirst for revenge.

A sharpshooter who can't walk away from a wager.

A runaway with a privileged past.

A spy known as the Wraith.

A Heartrender using her magic to survive the slums.

A thief with a gift for unlikely escapes.

Six dangerous outcasts. One impossible heist. Kaz's crew is the only thing that might stand between the world and destruction—if they don't kill each other first.

Nonfiction:

The Borden Murders by Sarah Miller

Lizzie Borden took an axe, gave her mother forty whacks. When she saw what she had done, she gave her father forty-one.

In a compelling, linear narrative, Miller takes readers along as she investigates a brutal crime: the August 4, 1892, murders of wealthy and prominent Andrew and Abby Borden. The accused? Mild-mannered and highly respected Lizzie Borden, daughter of Andrew and stepdaughter of Abby. Most of what is known about Lizzie's arrest and subsequent trial (and acquittal) comes from sensationalized newspaper reports; as Miller sorts fact from fiction, and as a legal battle gets underway, a gripping portrait of a woman and a town emerges.

Science Fiction:

Nyxia by Scott Reintgen

Emmett Atwater isn't just leaving Detroit; he's leaving Earth. Why the Babel Corporation recruited him is a mystery, but the number of zeroes on their contract has him boarding their lightship and hoping to return to Earth with enough money to take care of his family.

Forever.

Before long, Emmett discovers that he is one of ten recruits, all of whom have troubled pasts and are a long way from home. Now each recruit must earn the right to travel down to the planet of Eden—a planet that Babel has kept hidden—where they will mine a substance called Nyxia that has quietly become the most valuable material in the universe.

But Babel's ship is full of secrets. And Emmett will face the ultimate choice: win the fortune at any cost, or find a way to fight that won't forever compromise what it means to be human.