

GRA Shortlist 2017

JUNIOR CATEGORY

The Hypnotist /by Laurence Anholt -- Penguin : 2016 9780552573450

Pip is plucked from an orphanage and hired as a farm hand. He is black and the farmer and wife are white. This is 1960s America where race defines you. Add to the mix Jack Morrow, who left his native Ireland dreaming of a new life in the American South. He is teaching hypnotism in the university and his skills have far reaching and unexpected outcomes. Very topical content.

See You in the Cosmos /by Jack Cheng -- Penguin : 2017 9780141365602

Alex is recording current events onto his iPod to send to Aliens so they will learn about life on earth. His mother is unwell and he copes alone until he gets to launch the device at a rocket convention and things get a bit unravelled. If you liked Wonder, you will love this.

The Girl in Between /by Sarah Carroll -- Penguin : 2017 9781471160622

A girl and "her ma" take shelter from the streets in an old abandoned mill. The girl calls it "the Castle" and she is happy there even though her mother does not allow her to leave or go out into the streets. She watches the world go by from the high floors of the mill and makes up stories for the people she sees below as a means to escape the dark shadows that haunt her mother. But then, developers move on to the site of the old mill a novel that treats the topical theme of homelessness (Irish author)

Wing Jones /by Katherine Webber -- Walker : 2017 9781406369090

Wing has an unusual set up at home with one grandmother from China and the other from Ghana. Her love for her brother is torn by the fact that the coma he is in was caused by a drunk driving accident in which he killed the other driver. She discovers her talent at running while he is in hospital. Topical and engaging.

The Ministry of Strange, Unusual

and Impossible Things /by Paul Gamble -- Little Island : 2016 9781910411544

Strange things are happening in school but Jack Pearse, a curious boy skilled at logical thinking, gets trained by the Ministry of Suits in a most unusual way and tries to save the day. Humorous suspense. Lemony Snicket meets Flann O'Brien. (Irish author)

SENIOR CATEGORY

The Hate U Give /by Angie Thomas -- Harper : 2017 9781406372151

A powerful and brave YA novel about what prejudice looks like in the 21st century. Sixteen-year-old Starr lives in two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she was born and raised and her posh high school in the suburbs. The uneasy balance between them is shattered when Starr is the only witness to the fatal shooting of her unarmed best friend, Khalil, by a police officer. Now what Starr says could destroy her community. It could also get her killed. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping YA novel about one girl's struggle for justice.

Bullet Catcher /by Joaquin Lowe -- Hot Key : 2016 978147140506

A dystopian take on a cowboy/girl genre, this is a most unusual story. Imma leaves her dull life of washing dishes to get trained as a Bullet Catcher. She is devoted to her mentor until she is reunited with her brother and the Gunslinger world is revealed to her. Interesting moral dilemmas ensue.

The Space Between /by Meg Grehan -- Little Island : 2017 9781910411599

Trapped in her apartment and unable to face the outside world, Beth's neighbour befriends her and unravels her anxiety. Told in verse. (Irish author)

Birdy Flynn /by Helen Donohoe -- Oneworld : 2017 9781780749396

Birdy is miserable when his so-called friends are unbearably cruel to his grandmother's cat. Actually, Birdy is miserable about his life in general. Living in England with an Irish mother during the Birmingham bombings does not help matters. Solace comes from an unusual source of friendship.

One of Us is Lying /by Karen M. McManus -- Penguin : 2017 9780141375632

Five of the most popular kids in school get detention. One person among them dies. Any one of them could have done it. This is an American High School story that will keep you turning the pages until you find out what really happened. Great suspense.

The Great Reads Award 2017

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