

## 2023 MYRCA – Sundog



### **Birdspell** by Valerie Sherrard

*Dancing Cat Books, 2021. 978-1770866133*

Corbin Hayes has felt alone for as long as he can remember. His mom's illness means lost jobs, constant moves, new schools and friendships that never get to grow. There's a gap in his life that's been waiting to be filled. So, when a classmate offers Corbin the talking bird she can no longer keep, he's stoked. But when things begin to spiral out of control, Corbin can no longer get his mom – or himself – through the dark period. At his lowest moment, he's forced to do the one thing he fears the most.

### **Death and Sparkles** by Rob Justus

*Chronicle Books/Raincoast, 2021. 978-1797206356*

Being Death is a lonely job, especially when everything you touch instantly dies (not to mention the paperwork), but being Sparkles the Last Unicorn is not much fun either, since everyone just wants to take selfies with you or use you to sell stuff. But when Death and Sparkles meet between life and, well, death, it's the beginning of a friendship that just might change the world.

### **Elvis and Me and the Lemonade Stand** by Leslie Gentile

*Dancing Cat Books, 2021. 978-1770866157*

It's the summer of 1978 and most people think Elvis Presley has been dead for a year. But not eleven-year-old Truly Bateman – because she knows Elvis is alive and well and living in the Eagle Shores Trailer Park. Maybe no one ever thought to look for him on the Eagle Shores First Nation on Vancouver Island. It's a busy summer for Truly, she is determined to raise as much money for herself as she can through her lemonade stand...and to prove that her cool new neighbour is the one and only King of Rock 'n' Roll.

### **Lost on the Prairie** by MaryLou Driedger

*Wandering Fox, 2021. 978-1772033687*

Following the sudden death of his eldest brother, twelve-year-old Peter is chosen by his father to travel by train from Kansas to Saskatchewan to help set up the new family homestead. But when Peter's boxcar becomes uncoupled from the rest of the train somewhere in South Dakota, he finds himself lost and alone on the vast prairie. Along the way, he faces real dangers and grows more resourceful, courageous, and self-reliant as he makes his way across the Midwest to the Canadian border.

### **Peter Lee's Notes from the Field** by Angela Ahn

*Tundra Books, 2021. 978-0735268241*

Eleven year-old Peter Lee has one goal in life: to become a paleontologist. Okay, maybe two: to get his genius kid-sister, L.B., to leave him alone. But his summer falls apart when his real-life dinosaur expedition turns out to be a bust, and he watches his dreams go up in a cloud of asthma-inducing dust. Even worse, his grandmother, Hammy, is sick. Armed with notebooks and pens, Peter puts his observation and experimental skills to the test to see what he can do for Hammy.

### **Taking the Ice** by Lorna Schultz Nicholson

*Scholastic, 2021. 978-1443182393*

Meet Aiden Mallory. He's trying to find his bearings while coping with the loss of his father – an NHL player who died in a car accident – and moving back to his dad's hometown of Prairie Field, where he is STILL a big deal. Aiden loves hockey, but his feelings about moving and his dad's death cause him to struggle at tryouts. Then the minor hockey association announces a brand-new U13 tournament: the Luke Mallory Memorial. As Aiden tries to find his place on his new team, and among his new teammates, he will do anything he can to live up to his dad's legacy.

### **The Dollhouse** by Charis Cotter

*Tundra Books, 2021. 978-0735269064*

Alice's world is falling apart. Her parents are getting a divorce, and they've cancelled their yearly cottage trip – the one thing that gets Alice through the school year. Instead, Alice and her mom are heading to some small town where Alice's mom will be a live-in nurse to a rich elderly lady. The house is huge, imposing and spooky, and everything inside is meticulously kept and perfect – not a fun place to spend the summer. Things start to get weird when Alice finds a dollhouse in the attic that's an exact replica of the house she's living in. Then she wakes up to find a girl asleep next to her in her bed – a girl who looks a lot like one of the dolls from the dollhouse...

### **The Great Bear** by David A. Robertson

*Puffin Canada, 2021. 978-0735266131*

Back at home after their first adventure in the Barren Grounds, Eli and Morgan each struggle with personal issues: Eli is being bullied at school, and tries to hide it from Morgan, while Morgan has to make an important decision about her birth mother. They turn to the place where they know they can learn the most, and make the journey to Misewa to visit their animal friends. This time they travel back in time and meet a young fisher that might just be their lost friend. But they discover that the village is once again in peril, and they must dig deep within themselves to find the strength to protect their beloved friends. Can they carry this strength back home to face their own challenges?

### **The School between Winter and Fairyland** by Heather Fawcett

*Balzer + Bray, 2021. 978-0063043312*

Twelve-year-old Autumn Malog is a servant at the enchanting Inglenook School, where young magicians study to become the king's future monster-hunters. Along with her Gran and three too many older brothers, she works as a beastkeeper, tending to Inglenook's menagerie of terrifying monsters. But when she isn't mucking out the wyvern stalls or coaxing the resident boggart to behave, Autumn searches for clues about her twin brother's mysterious disappearance. Everyone else thinks he was devoured by the feared Hollow Dragon, but Autumn is convinced she's heard – and glimpsed – him calling to her from within the castle walls. But who will believe a lowly servant?

### **The Undercover Book List** by Colleen Nelson

*Pajama Press, 2021. 978-1772781878*

Between her father's posting overseas and her best friend Sienna's move to the other side of the country, seventh grade is looking lonely for Jane MacDonald. But Sienna has left her with one last trick: a hidden message in a library book – the perfect plot to start a secret club and find Jane a new book-loving friend. Tyson Flamand has problems of his own. Since the fourth grade he's had a reputation as a bad kid, and there's no point fighting it when teachers always think the worst. So when he finds an anonymous note in the library looking for a nerdy new friend, he knows he's the last person in the world it could be meant for. But something makes him answer it anyway.

The books are nominated based on their quality and reader appeal. Not all titles may be appropriate for all students in the age range of the MYRCA readership.



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# MYRCA 2023



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Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Awards Inc. aims to promote reading and Canadian literature by giving young Manitobans in Grades 4 - 6 the opportunity to vote for their favourite Canadian book from an annual preselected list.

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## VOTING 2023

All young Manitobans who have read or been read at least 3 titles may vote.

**3 books = 1 vote  
6 books = 2 votes**



Voting for the 2022 MYRCA winner will be open from **April 20 2023 to midnight Saturday, April 29, 2023.**

## 2023 MYRCA – Northern Lights

**Borders** by Thomas King and Natasha Donovan  
HarperCollins, 2021. 978-1443460675



On a trip to visit his older sister, who has moved away from the family home on the reserve to Salt Lake City, a young boy and his mother are posed a simple question with a not-so-simple answer. Are you Canadian, the border guards ask, or American? "Blackfoot." And when border guards will not accept their citizenship, mother and son wind up trapped in an all-too-real limbo between nations that do not recognize who they are.

**Both Sides Now** by Peyton Thomas  
Penguin Teen, 2021. 978-0735269750

There's only one thing standing between Finch Kelly and a full-blown case of high school senioritis: the National Speech & Debate Tournament. Taking home the gold would not only be the pinnacle of Finch's debating career, but the perfect way to launch himself into his next chapter: college in Washington, DC, and a history-making career as the first trans congressman. What could possibly go wrong?

**Dear Peter, Dear Ulla** by Barbara Nickel  
ThistleDown Press, 2021. 978-1771872171

Letters fly back and forth between Peter and Ulla, and although Ulla lives in Danzig, Germany, and Peter on a Mennonite farm in Saskatchewan, their lives become inextricably entwined through an intense, empathetic connection that plays out in the first months of World War Two. Peter is a talented pianist and Ulla a skillful storyteller with a talent for drawing – will these skills help or hinder them through the challenges brought about by war? They can't think of one another as enemies, even though that's what the world is telling them that they are.

**Firefly** by Philippa Dowding  
Dancing Cat Books, 2021. 978-1770865983

Firefly lived in the park across from her mother's home. It was safer there. But after the bad night happens, social services sends Firefly to live with her Aunt Gayle. She hardly knows Gayle, but discovers that she owns a costume shop. Yes, Firefly might be suffering from PTSD, but she can get used to taking baths, sleeping on a bed again, and wearing as many costumes as she can to school.

**Guardians of Porthaven** by Shane Arbuthnott  
Orca Book Publishers, 2021. 978-1459827042

On his fifteenth birthday, Malcolm Gravenhurst is preparing to take on the mantle of Guardian, like many Gravenhursts before him. The Guardians are tasked with defending the city of Porthaven, and his family is the only one to possess the superpowers necessary to battle the alien invasions. But power has brought the Gravenhursts more than just responsibility – it has also brought them fame and wealth. When Malcolm meets some teens living and working in secret, he learns that underneath their heroic facade, the Gravenhurst family is hiding some very dark secrets. With the threat of annihilation on the horizon, soon Malcolm must choose between family loyalty and doing the right thing.

**Lessons in Fusion** by Primrose Madayag Knazan  
Yellow Dog, 2021. 978-1773370682

Sixteen-year-old Sarah has a successful blog creating fusion recipes. When Sarah is invited to compete on Cyber Chef, a virtual cooking competition that soars in popularity at the height of the pandemic, her twists on her Baba's recipes are not enough to pique the palate of the show's producers. She is

pushed to present dishes that represent her Filipino culture, but these flavours are foreign to her since her parents raised her emphatically Jewish. To survive Cyber Chef and find her cultural identity, Sarah must discover why her mother turned her back on all things Filipino, and learn the true meaning of fusion.

**Living with Viola** by Rosena Fung  
Annick Press, 2021. 978-1773215495

Livy is already having trouble fitting in as the new girl at school – and then there's Viola. Viola is Livy's anxiety brought to life, a shadowy twin that only Livy can see or hear. Livy tries to push back against Viola's relentless judgement, but nothing seems to work until she strikes up new friendships at school. Livy hopes that Viola's days are numbered. But when tensions arise both at home and at school, Viola rears her head stronger than ever. Only when Livy learns how to ask for help and face her anxiety does she finally figure out living with Viola.

**Second Chances** by Harriet Zaidman  
Red Deer Pres, 2021. 978-0889956391

Thirteen-year-old Dale Melnyk finds himself stuck in an iron lung, desperately fighting for breath – and wishing he could die. It is the worst outbreak of polio in the history of Winnipeg, and Dale is one of the many young victims being treated in the early 1950s. Second Chances follows Dale's slow and often agonizing struggle to regain his life, first of all to breathe on his own and then to regain the use of his limbs. Will he ever be able to play hockey again, he wonders?

**The Deadman's Castle** by Iain Lawrence  
Margaret Ferguson Books, 2021. 978-0823446551

When Igor was five, his father witnessed a terrible crime--and ever since, his whole family has been hunted by a foreboding figure bent on revenge, known only as the Lizard Man. They've lived in so many places, with so many identities, that Igor can't even remember his real name. But now he's twelve years old, and he longs for a normal life. He's even starting to wonder--what if the Lizard Man only exists in his father's frightened mind? Slowly, Igor starts bending the rules he's lived by all his life--making friends for the first time, testing the boundaries of where he's allowed to go in town. But soon, he begins noticing strange things around them--is it in his imagination? Or could the Lizard Man be real after all?

**Tremendous Things** by Susin Nielsen  
Penguin Teen, 2021. 978-0735271203

We all have moments that define us. For Wilbur, his moment happened on the first day of middle school, when someone shared his private letter with the entire student body. It revealed some of Wilbur's innermost embarrassing thoughts that no one else should ever know. Now it's the start of ninth grade and Wilbur hasn't been able to escape that major humiliation. His good friend Alex stuck by him, but Alex doesn't have as much time since he started dating Fabrizio. Luckily, Wil's in the school band, where he plays the triangle. They're doing an exchange program with students from Paris, and Wilbur's billet, Charlie, a tall, chic young woman who plays the ukulele and burps with abandon, captures his heart.

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