

Complex Issues

Books to help you think, understand and empathise



Amnesia/Memory/Self and Identity

The Memory Book by Lara Avery
The One Memory of Flora Banks by Emily Barr
Every Day by David Levithan
The Adoration of Jenna Fox by Mary Pearson
Slated by Teri Terry
Before I Go to Sleep by SJ Watson
Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac by G Zevin

Anxiety

A Quiet Kind of Thunder by Sarah Barnard
Under Rose-Tainted Skies by Louise Gornall
Worries Go Away by Kes Gray (picture book)
I Was Born For This by Alice Oseman

Body image/Anorexia/Eating Disorders

Blubber by Judy Blume
Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes by Chris Crutcher
Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson
Fat Boy Swim by Catherine Forde
Second Start to the Right by Deborah Hautzig
Nothing Tastes as Good by Claire Hennessey
Dumplin' by Julie Murphy

Bullying

Seven Days by Eve Ainsworth
Blubber by Judy Blume
Inside My Head by Jim Carrington
The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier
Being Miss Nobody by Tamsin Winter

Captivity

Bunker Diary by Kevin Brooks
Stolen by Lucy Christopher
Guantanamo Boy by Anna Perrera
The Cellar by Natasha Preston

Coming of Age – various issues

Flying Lessons and Other Stories - various authors

Booked by Kwame Alexander
Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret -J Blume

Open: A Toolkit for How Magic and Messed Up Life Can Be by Gemma Cairney (NF help book)

Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

Ten Things We Shouldn't Have Done—S Mlynowski
Solitaire, Radio Silence or *I Was Born for This* by Alice Oseman

Coping with family depression/mental health

See You In The Cosmos by Jack Cheng
15 Days Without a Head by Dave Cousins
The Boy in the Tower by Polly Ho-Yen
Saving Francesca by M. Marchetta
Crazy by Han Nolan

Coping with family illness

Nest by Esther Ehrlich
A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness
My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult
Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie by Jordan Sonnenblick

Depression or Suicide

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher
Kite Spirit by Sita Brahmachari
We Are Young by Cat Clarke
I Was Here by Gayle Forman
Night Shift by Debi Gliori (picture book)
Reasons to Stay Alive by Matt Haig
Some Kind of Happiness by Claire Legrand
All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven
When Reason Breaks by Cindy Rodriguez
The Red Tree by Shaun Tan (picture book)
It's Kind of a Funny Story by Ned Vizzini
My Heart and Other Black Holes by J. Warga

Disability or Difference

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon
Whisper by Crissie Keighery
Accidents of Nature by Harriet McBryde Johnson

Red Sky in the Morning by Elizabeth Laird
A Mango-Shaped Space by Wendy Mass
Miss Spitfire by Sarah Miller
Wonder by RJ Palacio
House Rules by Jodi Piccolt
She Is Not Invisible by Marcus Sedgwick

Drugs and Alcohol

Go Ask Alice by Anonymous
Candy by Kevin Brooks
Junk or *The Hit* by Melvin Burgess
Other Broken Things by C Dessir
Nina is Not OK by Shappi Khorsandi

Dying and Living

Love Letters to the Dead by Ava Dellaira
Before I Die by Jenny Downham
If I Stay and *Where I Went* by Gayle Foreman
Fault in Our Stars or *Looking for Alaska*- J Green
Hannah's Choice by Hannah and Kirsty Jones
Ways to Live Forever by Sally Nichols
Before I Fall by Lauren Olivier
Extraordinary Means by Robyn Schneider
The Great Blue Yonder by Alex Shearer
Elsewhere by Gabrielle Zevin
Falling into Place by Amy Zhang

Ethnicity and Identity

Does My Head Look Big in This? - R Abdel-Fattah
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
by Sherman Alexie (n.b. controversial)
Starfish by Akemi Dawn Bowman
The Girl Who Fell From the Sky by Heidi Durrow
If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth
See No Color by Shannon Gibney
Dreams From My Father by Barack Obama
Cuba 15 by Nancy Osa
Mexican Whiteboy by Matt de la Pena
Anita and Me by Myra Syal
Gabi, A Girl in Pieces by Isabel Quintero

Euthanasia

The Universe vs Alex Woods by Gavin Extence
Me Before You by Jojo Moyes
Mercy by Jodi Piccolt

Families – complex or difficult

Running on Empty by SE Durrant
Heroic or *Being Billy* by Phil Earle
We Are All Made of Molecules, Word Nerd or *My Messed-Up Life* by Susin Nielsen
Chinese Cinderella by Adeline Yen Mah
My Name is Leon by Kit de Waal
A Boy Called Hope by Lara Williamson

Fitting in – problems with

Why We Took the Car by Wolfgang Herrndorf
Holding up the Universe by Jennifer Niven
Eleanor and Park or *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell
Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger
Stargirl by Jerry Spinnelli

Gang Culture/Violence/Identity

I Predict a Riot by Catherine Bruton
When I Was Joe by Keren David
The Outsiders by SE Hinton
Pigeon English by Stephen Kelman
Orangeboy by Patrice Lawrence
The Knife that Killed Me by Anthony McGowan
Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds
Liclle Bit or *Crongton Knights* by Alex Wheatle
Gangsta Rap by Benjamin Zephaniah

Gender Identity and Homosexuality

Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda -B Albertalli
One Man Guy by Micahel Barakiva
Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World - Ashley Blake
Great by Sarah Benicasa (retelling of *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald)
If You Could be Mine by Sarah Farizan
None of the Above by IW Gregorio
Boy Meets Boy by David Levithan
If I Was Your Girl by Meredith Russo
Funny Boy: A Novel in Six Stories by S Selvadurai
God Loves Hair by Vivek Shraya
The Art of Being Normal by Lisa Williamson

Grief

Rebound by Kwame Alexander
The Thing About Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin
Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume

Mockingbird by Kathryn Erskine (+ autism)
Two Weeks With the Queen by Morris Gleitzman
Ostrich Boys by Keith Gray (+coming of age)
The Heart and the Bottle by Jeffers (picture book)
The Square Root of Summer by Harriet R Hapgood
We Are Okay by Nina LaCour
The Sky is Everywhere by Jandi Nelson
Optimists Die First by Susin Nielson
My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece or Ketchup
Clouds by Annabel Pitcher

Imprisonment

Blame by Simon Mayo
Lockdown by Walter Dean Myers
Guantanamo Boy by Anna Perara
Holes by Louis Sachar

Mental Health issues/illness

Beautiful Broken Things by Sara Barnard
Game Changer by Tim Bowler (phobias)
Am I Normal Yet? or All We All Lemmings and Snowflakes by Holly Bourne
Mind Your Head by Juno Dawson (NF help book)
Shock of the Fall by Nathan Filer
Truth Pixie by Matt Haig (picture book)
When We Collided by Emery Lord
Panther by David Owen
On a Scale of 1 to 10 by Ceylan Scott (BPD)
Wild Awake by Hilary Smith

Misogyny or

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
The Gender Game by Bella Forrest
A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khalid Hosseini
Only Ever Yours by Louise O'Neill
Maresi by Maria Turtschaninoff
I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

All The Things That Could Go Wrong by S. Foster
Turtles All The Way Down by John Green
The Goldfish Boy by Lisa Thompson

Poverty and Homelessness

Lottery Boy by Michael Byrne

Sleeping in My Jeans by Connie K Leonard
No Fixed Address by Susin Nielson
Where I Live by Brenda Rufener
Stone Cold by Robert Swindells
Homecoming by Cynthia Voight

Racism

The Hypnotist by Laurence Anholt
Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman
Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice -Hoose
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
The Rock and the River by Kekla Magoon
Coming of Age in Mississippi by Anne Moody
The Bluest Eye or Beloved by Toni Morrison
Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult
All American Boys by J. Reynolds and B. Kelly
Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes
Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli
Lies We Tell Ourselves by Robin Talley
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by M Twain
Crow by Barbara Wright
Black Boy by Richard Wright

Redemption, Injustice or Regret

Heart-shaped Bruise by Tanya Byrne
Looking for JJ by Anne Cassidy
Whirligig by Paul Fleischman
We Were Liars by Emily Lockhart
Monster by Walter Dean Myers
The Storyteller by Jodi Picoult

Refugee experience

Give Me Shelter: An Asylum Seeker Anthology
Abela: The Girl Who Saw Lions by Bernie Doherty
The Bone Sparrow by Zana Fraillion
In the Sea there are Crocodiles by Fabio Geda
Boy Overboard by Morris Gleitzman
Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai
Shadow by Michael Morpurgo
Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah

Relationships

Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist-Cohn & Levithan

An Abundance of Katherines by John Green
To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han
Why We Broke Up by Daniel Handler
Hold Back the Stars by Katie Khan
I'll Give You the Sun by Jandi Nelson
One Day by David Nicholls
Big Mouth and Ugly Girl by Joyce Carol Oates
How I Live Now by Meg Rosoff
Our Chemical Hearts by Krystal Sutherland
If You Come Softly by Jacqueline Woodson
Everything, Everything or *The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon

Self-Harming

Damage by Eve Ainsworth
Saving Daisy by Phil Earle
Girl in Pieces by Kathleen Glasgow
Red Tears by Joanna Kenrick
Scars by Cheryl Rainfield

Sexuality

Forever by Judy Blume
Lobsters by Tom Ellen and Lucy iVison
Release by Patrick Ness

Sexual Assault and Abuse

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson
No Shame or *No Virgin* by Anne Cassidy
You Against Me by Jenny Downham
Learning to Scream by Beate Teresa Hanike
The Kite Runner by Khalid Hosseini
Girl in the Broken Mirror by Savita Kahlan
Lucky by Alice Sebold

Slavery

Copper Sun by Sharon Draper
Elijah of Buxton by Christopher Paul Curtis
Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi
Day of Tears by Julius Lester
Sold by Patricia McCormick
Never Forgotten by Patricia McKissack
The Glory Field by Walter Dean Myers
Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen

Social Justice

Change is Gonna Come – various BAME authors
Here I Stand: Stories that Speak for Freedom
Protest: Stories of Resistance -various authors
Terror Kid by Benjamin Zephaniah

Social Media/Surveillance–hooked on/dangers

Feed by MT Anderson
Need by Joelle Charbonneau
Little Brother by Cory Doctorow
Notes on a Nervous Planet by Matt Haig
Queen of Likes by Hillary Homzie
Unfriended by Rachel Vail

Teen Pregnancy

Boys Don't Cry by Malorie Blackman
Someone Like You by Sarah Dessen
Dear Nobody by Berlie Doherty
A Pure Swift Cry by Siobhan Dowd
Megan by Mary Hooper
Trouble by Non Pratt
How to Save a Life by Sara Zarr

Transplants

Pig Heart Boy by Malorie Blackman
Eva by Peter Dickinson
Out of Heart by Irfan Master
Cold Hands, Warm Heart by Jill Wolfson

Young Carers

Tender by Eve Ainsworth
The Weight of a Thousand Feathers by Brian Conaghan
The Outsiders by SE Hinton
This Raging Light by Estelle Laure
Broken Soup by Jenny Valentine