



# Gateway Readers Award

## 2026 Nominees

### **This Book Won't Burn** by *Samira Ahmed* YA AHM

While coping with her parents' sudden divorce, Noor must start at a new school midway through her senior year. She plans to lie low, until Noor learns about the book bans at her school. With a sense of justice and a few new friends, Noor takes a stand.

### **Dungeons and Drama** by *Kristy Boyce* YA BOY

Riley and her coworker Nathan fake a relationship to get what they want. For Riley, that means bringing back the spring musical. For Nathan, making his gamer-girl crush jealous. But selling the ruse means joining Nathan's role-playing game. To Riley's surprise, flirting with Nathan doesn't require as much acting as she thought it would.

### **Looking for Smoke** by *K.A. Cobell* YA COB

When Samantha White Tail is murdered, Mara and three other teens come under police scrutiny. All of them have a complicated history with Samantha. Despite deep mistrust, the four work to clear their names . . . even though one of them may be the murderer.

### **Another First Chance** by *Robbie Couch* YA COU

Eighteen-year-old River Lang struggles with the death of his best friend Dylan and reluctantly joins a research study for struggling teens. There, he confronts his complex relationship with Dylan's ex, develops feelings for a charismatic jock and uncovers unsettling truths about the study.

### **The Glass Girl** by *Kathleen Glasgow* YA GLA

Everyone in fifteen-year-old Bella's life needs something from her, except her grandmother — and now she's dead. The only thing that dulls the pressure: alcohol. But after she gets blackout drunk at a party and wakes up in the hospital, it's time to face reality. And for Bella, reality means rehab.

### **Diet Soda Club** by *Chaz Hayden* YA HAY

After his father's death, Reed's mother has struggled to parent and leaves Reed to care for his disabled sister, Beatrice. Mom leaves for a "weekend getaway" that stretches on indefinitely. With growing hospital bills and no word from his mom, Reed begins selling fake IDs for cash.

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### **Stay Dead** by *April Henry* YA HEN

Entrusted with a key that holds top-secret evidence by her dying mother, sixteen-year-old Milan pretends to perish along with her mother in a plane crash. To find the truth, she must untangle a web of deceit and survive the beasts and assassins hunting her.

### **Death at Morning House** by *Maureen Johnson* YA JOH

When Marlowe becomes an accidental arsonist on a first date, she watches any hope of love and house-sitting jobs go up in literal flames. In need of new employment, Marlowe snags a job on Ralston Island as a tour guide at the Morning House, where two children mysteriously died almost a century prior. Then the disappearance of their boss thrusts Marlowe and her coworkers into solving buried secrets.

### **Under This Red Rock** by *Mindy McGinnis* YA MCG

With a family history of mental illness and her brother's suicide heavy on her mind, Neely takes a job guiding tours where her monsters can't follow — the caverns. There she meets the beautiful Mila and an innocent crush grows as the two bond. When Mila is found brutally murdered, Neely can't remember the drug-fueled staff party the night prior. Her grip on reality slipping, Neely must find who killed Mila.

### **Youth Group** by *Jordan Morris* TEEN GN YOU

When Kay joins a youth group, she finds out both group leaders are demon hunters in a war. Kay is thrust into the war when she finds out she's a "Blight," a human who demons can't possess. Will Kay find her place in this new world? Or will demons use Blights to start trouble?

### **Darkly** by *Marisha Pessl* YA PES

Dia is one of six teens selected for a highly-coveted internship at Darkly. This game-making empire, known for its terrifying toys and games, lies dormant after the founder's mysterious death. Dia and the interns soon become pawns in a Darkly game with stakes too big to lose.

### **The Merciless King of Moore High** by *Lily Sparks* YA SPA

Nine months after the adults in her town turned into giant beasts and the students barricaded themselves in the schools, Kay is thrown Outside and left for dead. She is saved by the rival Moore High and has to earn her place. But when she discovers a deadly secret reaching back to her own high school, Kay's inability to hide the truth might spark a revolution.





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