

## Diverse Books - 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

The books on this list highlight the lives of those who are often marginalized. These include books about people who identify as LGBTQ+, Hispanic & Latinx culture and lives, African American/Black Lives, and those experiencing poverty and homelessness.

### LGBTQ

#### **Hurricane Child by Kacen Callender**

*Being born during a hurricane is unlucky, and 12-year-old Caroline has had her share of bad luck lately. She's hated and bullied by everyone in her small school on St. Thomas of the US Virgin Islands, a spirit only she can see won't stop following her, and -- worst of all -- Caroline's mother left home one day and never came back. But when a new student named Kalinda arrives, Caroline's luck begins to turn around. Kalinda, a solemn girl from Barbados with a special smile for everyone, becomes Caroline's first and only friend -- and the person for whom Caroline has begun to develop a crush. Now, Caroline must find the strength to confront her feelings for Kalinda, brave the spirit stalking her through the islands, and face the reason her mother abandoned her. Together, Caroline and Kalinda must set out in a hurricane to find Caroline's missing mother -- before Caroline loses her forever.*

#### **My Life as a Diamond by Jenny Manzer**

*Ten-year-old Caspar "Caz" Cadman loves baseball and has a great arm. He loves the sounds, the smells, the stats. When his family moves from Toronto to a suburb of Seattle, the first thing he does is try out for the local summer team, the Redburn*

*Ravens. Even though Caz is thrilled when he makes the team, he worries because he has a big secret. No one knows that back in Toronto, Caz used to live life as a girl named Cassandra. And it's nobody's business. Caz will tell his new friends when he's ready. But when a player on a rival team starts snooping around, Caz's past is revealed, and Caz worries it will be Toronto all over again.*

*Will Caz's teammates rally behind their star pitcher? Or will Caz be betrayed once more? A heartwarming, funny, fast-paced story about the bravery it takes to live as your true self, no matter the cost.*

### Hispanic & Latinx

#### **The First Rule of Punk by Celia C. Perez**

*There are no shortcuts to surviving your first day at a new school— you can't fix it with duct tape like you would your Chuck Taylors. On Day One, twelve-year-old Malú (María Luisa, if you want to annoy her) inadvertently upsets Posada Middle School's queen bee, violates the school's dress code with her punk rock look, and disappoints her college-professor mom in the process. Her dad, who now lives a thousand miles away, says things will get better as long as she remembers the first rule of punk: be yourself. The real Malú loves rock music, skateboarding, zines, and Soyrizo (hold the*

*cilantro, please). And when she assembles a group of like-minded misfits at school and starts a band, Malú finally begins to feel at home. She'll do anything to preserve this, which includes standing up to an anti-punk school administration to fight for her right to express herself!*

#### **Sal & Gabi Break the Universe by Carlos Hernandez**

*What would you do if you had the power to reach through time and space and retrieve anything you want, including your mother, who is no longer living (in this universe, anyway)? When Sal Vidon meets Gabi Real for the first time, it isn't under the best of circumstances. Sal is in the principal's office for the third time in three days, and it's still the first week of school. Gabi, student council president and editor of the school paper, is there to support her friend Yasmany, who just picked a fight with Sal. She is determined to prove that somehow, Sal planted a raw chicken in Yasmany's locker, even though nobody saw him do it and the bloody poultry has since mysteriously disappeared. Sal prides himself on being an excellent magician, but for this sleight of hand, he relied on a talent no one would guess . . . except maybe Gabi, whose sharp eyes never miss a trick. When Gabi learns that he's capable of conjuring things much bigger than a chicken--including his dead mother--and she takes it all in stride, Sal knows that she is someone he can work with. There's only one slight problem:*

*their manipulation of time and space could put the entire universe at risk. A sassy entropy sweeper, a documentary about wedgies, a principal who wears a Venetian bauta mask, and heaping platefuls of Cuban food are just some of the delights that await in his mind-blowing novel gift-wrapped in love and laughter.*

## **African American/Black Lives**

### **A Good Kind of Trouble by Lisa Moore Ramee**

*Twelve-year-old Shayla is allergic to trouble. All she wants to do is to follow the rules. (Oh, and she'd also like to make it through seventh grade with her best friendships intact, learn to run track, and have a cute boy see past her giant forehead.) But in junior high, it's like all the rules have changed. Now she's suddenly questioning who her best friends are and some people at school are saying she's not black enough. Wait, what? Shay's sister, Hana, is involved in Black Lives Matter, but Shay doesn't think that's for her. After experiencing a powerful protest, though, Shay decides some rules are worth breaking. She starts wearing an armband to school in support of the Black Lives movement. Soon everyone is taking sides. And she is given an ultimatum. Shay is scared to do the wrong thing (and even more scared to do the right thing), but if she doesn't face her fear, she'll be forever tripping over the next hurdle. Now that's trouble, for real.*

### **New Kid by Jerry Craft**

*Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him*

*in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?*

## **Poverty & Homelessness**

### **How to Steal a Dog by Barbara O'Connor**

*Half of me was thinking, Georgina, don't do this. Stealing a dog is just plain wrong. The other half of me was thinking, Georgina, you're in a bad fix and you got to do whatever it takes to get yourself out of it. Georgina Hayes is desperate. Ever since her father left and they were evicted from their apartment, her family has been living in their car. With her mama juggling two jobs and trying to make enough money to find a place to live, Georgina is stuck looking after her younger brother, Toby. And she has her heart set on improving their situation. When Georgina spots a missing-dog poster with a reward of five hundred dollars, the solution to all her problems suddenly seems within reach. All she has to do is "borrow" the right dog and its owners are sure to offer a reward. What happens next is the last thing she expected.*

### **Free Lunch by Rex Ogle**

*Free Lunch is the story of Rex Ogle's first semester in sixth grade. Rex and his baby brother often went hungry, wore*

*secondhand clothes, and were short of school supplies, and Rex was on his school's free lunch program. Grounded in the immediacy of physical hunger and the humiliation of having to announce it every day in the school lunch line, Rex's is a compelling story of a more profound hunger—that of a child for his parents' love and care. Compulsively readable, beautifully crafted, and authentically told with the voice and point of view of a 6th-grade kid, Free Lunch is a remarkable debut by a gifted storyteller.*

### **Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate**

*Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent. And not much for food, either. His parents, his little sister, and their dog may have to live in their minivan. Again. Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, he's outspoken, and he's imaginary. He has come back into Jackson's life to help him. But is an imaginary friend enough to save this family from losing everything?*

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