

VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

# GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD



## YOUTH SELECTIONS

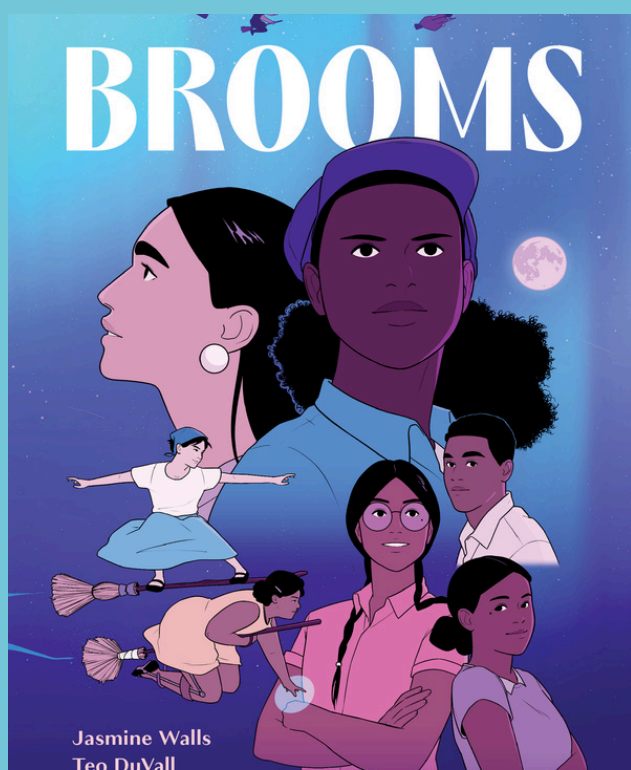
2023 WINNER, HONORS,  
AND OVERFLOW



# VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD 2023 YOUTH WINNER

The Virginia Library Association Graphic Novel Diversity Award (GNDA) celebrates diversity captured within the pages of graphic novels.

In 2023, our eighth year offering the award, 47 publishers submitted 162 titles in two categories- Adult and Youth. The Committee is proud to announce the winners and honor books selected for the 2023 Award.



## YOUTH WINNER

**BROOMS**  
**BY JASMINE WALLS**  
**ART BY TEO DUVALL**

**Levine Querido**

**ISBN: 978-1646142682**

**Themes:** Color/Race/Ethnicity/  
Nationality, Feminism, LGBTQ+, Disability

Set in an alternative version of 1930s Mississippi where magic exists, *Brooms* is about six witches who use their magical powers to compete in illegal broom races. Their families are in desperate need of the prize money, but society and the law in segregationist Mississippi are determined against them ever winning. The risks of failure are steep- if discovered, a witch's magic can be sealed away by the authorities. With an ensemble cast of characters drawing on many different types of diversity, including non-white, Indigenous, disabled, and transgender representation, *Brooms* manages to carry many intersectional stories by delving into the identities of its main characters. Action-packed and briskly paced with many a chase sequence, *Brooms* is a testament to the tenacity of the "people on the margins" succeeding against all odds.



# VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD ABOUT THE CREATORS



## Jasmine Walls Author

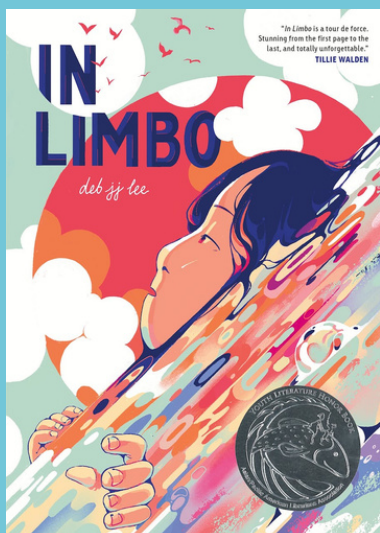
Jasmine Walls is a writer, artist, and editor with former lives in professional baking and teaching martial arts. She still bakes (though she's pretty rusty at martial arts) and has a deep love for storytelling, creating worlds, and building tales about the characters who inhabit them. Along with Levine Querido, she has works published with Boom! Studios, Capstone, Oni Press, The Atlantic, and The Nib. She lives in California with two dogs and a large stash of quality hot chocolate.



## Teo DuVall Artist

Teo DuVall is a queer Chicanx comic artist and illustrator based in Seattle, WA. They graduated in 2015 with a BFA in Cartooning from the School of Visual Arts and have had the immense pleasure of working with Levine Querido, HarperCollins, Dark Horse, Chronicle Books, Scholastic and more. He has a passion for fantasy, aesthetic ghost stories, and witches of color, and loves being able to create stories for a living. Teo lives with his partner, their two pets — a giant, cuddly pit-bull, and a tiny, ferocious cat — and a small horde of houseplants

# VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD YOUTH HONORS



## **IN LIMBO** by Deb JJ Lee

Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, ISBN: 978-1250252661  
Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+

In Limbo is an unflinchingly real coming-of-age story that revisits the author's high school years and explores the rawness of coming to terms with identity. It captures Lee's struggles with their new Korean American identity after emigrating from Korea and dealing with the realization of being queer in a household dominated by their mother's high expectations. Lee recreates the raw discomfort of existing between multiple worlds, cultures, and mindsets, and ultimately not entirely belonging to any of them, accentuated through the palette and panels of the dreamy art.



## **CLOCK STRIKER VOLUME 1** by Frederick L. Jones and Issaka Galadima

Rockport Publishers, ISBN: 978-0760381571  
Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, Disability

Clock Striker revels in shounen manga tropes we all know and love – fantasy worlds, interesting magic systems, an underdog protagonist, power scaling, mentorship, battling – and creates its own vision of them. It's a unique action title featuring shounen manga-style artwork and lettering, subversive casting choices, and afrofuturistic elements. It tells the story of a young inventor named Cast, a black disabled girl from a poor town who dreams of becoming a Smith, a legendary Warrior-Engineer. Drawing inspiration from creations such as Naruto, Bioshock, Trigun, Fullmetal Alchemist, and even Batman and Robin, the artwork alone makes this comic stand out.



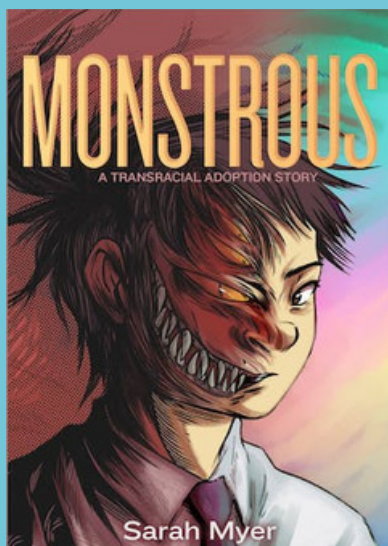
## **FIREBIRD** by Sunmi

HarperCollins, ISBN: 978-0062981516  
Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+

When high school sophomore Caroline Kim begins tutoring universally popular senior Kimberly Park-Ocampo, the two girls quickly grow closer despite their vastly different personalities and home lives. Firebird blends a realistic tale of queer friendship and romance with explorations of complicated family dynamics and struggles with self-esteem and body image, all brought to life by an evocative art style. The authentic intersectional representation and relatable storyline are sure to resonate with many young readers.



# VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD YOUTH HONORS



## **MONSTROUS: A TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION STORY**

**by Sarah Myer**

Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, ISBN: 978-1250268808

Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+

Monstrous is a tour de force coming-of-age graphic memoir by author Sarah Myer. As a young child, Sarah was adopted from South Korea and raised on a farm in rural Maryland. Gifted with a strikingly visual imagination, Sarah uses drawing, cosplay, and anime to escape from the racism and microaggressions of their school. When Sarah's feelings of alienation are turned inward by their overactive imagination, they see themselves as a monster- a monster born of immense anger and pain that threatens to break free. Monstrous is a deeply poignant, technical masterpiece featuring hair-raising art and evocative compositions that will keep readers spellbound from the first page to the last.



## **SHAKTI**

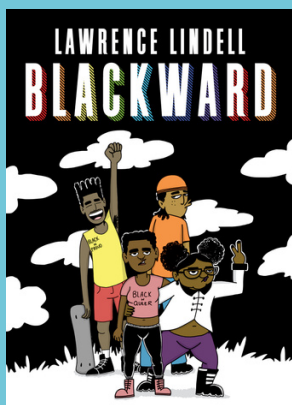
**by SJ Sindu, art by Nabi H. Ali**

HarperCollins, ISBN: 978-0063090118

Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+

SJ Sindu's Shakti focuses on a twelve-year-old Indian American, Shakti, who moves to a new town and inherits magical powers. Shakti hopes to have a permanent home with her moms and soon-to-be-born new brother, but the mean girls at school cause her to accidentally call on the powers of Kali Ma, the destroyer, and curse the town. This fun fantasy graphic novel draws on Indian mythology as Shakti tries to undo the curse. In the process, she learns that good and evil don't exist but there is in fact beauty and power in all things. While the story uses the familiar quest arc, Shakti's Indian heritage subverts expectations and creates a delightful and heart-warming narrative.

# VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD YOUTH OVERFLOW

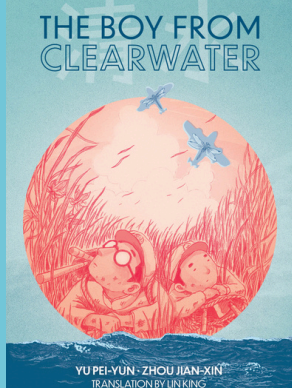


## **BLACKWARD** by Lawrence Lindell

Drawn & Quarterly, ISBN: 978-1770466784

**Themes: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+, Disability (Invisible)**

Four teens start a club in the hopes of creating a space where they can be their awkward, bookish, black, and queer selves openly and unapologetically, facing trolls, microaggressions, and protests along the way. This funny and heartwarming graphic novel brings a fresh and much needed perspective to young adult graphic literature, and is sure to provide a mirror for kids who rarely see themselves represented so authentically in graphic novels.



## **THE BOY FROM CLEARWATER** by Yu Pei-Yun, translated by Lin King Art by Zhou Jian-Xin

Levine Querido, ISBN: 978-1646142804

**Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality**

The Boy from Clearwater is told from the perspective of Tsai Kun-lin as he grows up in Taiwan, first under Japanese occupation and then under the rule of the Chinese National Party. This non-fiction graphic novel examines a period that hasn't been featured in many narratives, capturing life in Taiwan during the 1930s through the 1950s. Author Yu Pei-Yun works seamlessly with illustrator Zhou Jian-Xin and translator Lin King to create an excellent introduction to the experiences and perspectives of people in Taiwan who found themselves stuck between allegiance to their homeland, Japan, and China. This compelling story makes the most of the visual medium to show the intricacies of cultural assimilation and all its ramifications.



## **THE DOG KNIGHT** by Jeremy Whitley, art by Bre Indigo

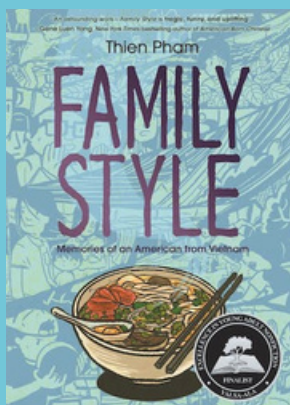
Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, ISBN: 978-1250756725

**Themes: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+**

Frankie, a biracial genderqueer teen, has been chosen as a warrior who represents the six principles of dogdom: Loyalty, Kindness, Stubbornness, Justice, Honesty, and Smell. But first, Frankie has to prove they are worthy of the title, facing different trials given by the Pawtheon- and finding themselves along the way. A wholesome narrative of personal growth featuring a fantastically fun supporting cast of dog friends and colorful, friendly artwork, this title radiates positivity with its queer explorations and supportive nature. Recommended for readers who enjoy heartwarming, magical, humorous tales - and love puppies, of course.



# VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD YOUTH OVERFLOW



## **FAMILY STYLE: MEMORIES OF AN AMERICAN FROM VIETNAM** by Thien Pham

**Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, ISBN: 978-1250809728**

**Themes: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality**

Family Style is a captivating memoir that explores the profound link between food and culture through the lens of Pham's refugee experience. The narrative chronicles Pham and his family's journey to the United States, highlighting how food serves as a powerful medium to convey shifts in identity and cultural relationships. Amidst their harrowing journey and subsequent adaptation to a new life, Pham uses humor and insight to navigate and understand his cultural heritage.



## **PARACHUTE KIDS** by Betty C. Tang

**Scholastic Inc., ISBN: 978-1338832686**

**Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+**

Siblings Feng-Li, Ke-Gang, and Jia-Xi think they are just visiting America for a short trip to Disneyland, when their parents drop the news that they are staying in the USA permanently. To make matters worse, their parents have to go back to Taiwan without them and will only be able to visit occasionally. Inspired by true events from creator Betty C. Tang's life, Parachute Kids follows the three siblings as they are suddenly forced to live in a new culture, learn a new language, and face a variety of unique challenges. This graphic novel does an incredible job of setting high personal stakes while keeping the subject matter accessible to younger readers.



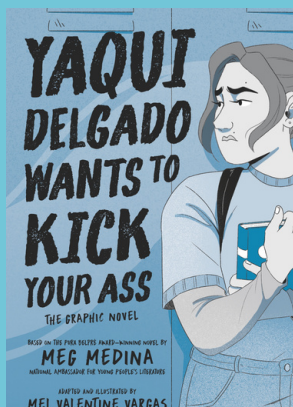
## **A SKY OF PAPER STARS** by Susie Yi

**Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, ISBN: 978-1250843890**

**Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality**

A Sky of Paper Stars unfolds a sensitive tale of a young girl grappling with loss. Yuna, a student navigating the labyrinth of middle school, yearns to find her place among peers. Intertwined with this desire is a haunting worry that her aspiration to belong has wrought a disastrous outcome upon her grandmother. This narrative weaves a tapestry that resonates with the essence of middle school life, offering a glimpse into cultural intricacies and painting a vivid portrait of a Korean family.

# VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION GRAPHIC NOVEL DIVERSITY AWARD YOUTH OVERFLOW



## **YAQUI DELGADO WANTS TO KICK YOUR ASS: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL** by Meg Medina, art by Mel Valentine Vargas

Candlewick Press, ISBN: 978-1536234732

**Themes: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality**

New school, new bully. When Piedad “Piddy” Sanchez transfers schools in the middle of the year, she suddenly begins receiving threats from an unknown student for reasons she can’t understand. Piddy falls into a downward spiral and it takes the love and intervention of friends and family for her to break through. When she does emerge, the other side is bright and shining. Adapted from a YA novel of the same name, it is a complex, well-written take on bullying seen from an intracultural Latina perspective.



## **PAPER PLANES** by Jennie Wood, art by Dozerdraws

Mad Cave Studios, ISBN: 978-1952303548

**Theme: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality, LGBTQ+**

Paper Planes is a story about self-discovery and re-examining past and present relationships. Leighton and Dylan have always been the best of friends. When a traumatic event forces them to attend a summer camp for troubled youth, they find both their friendship and their futures are at stake. Through the camp’s activities, Leighton and Dylan are forced to reckon not only with their past history, but with the gulf between who they are and who they want to be.

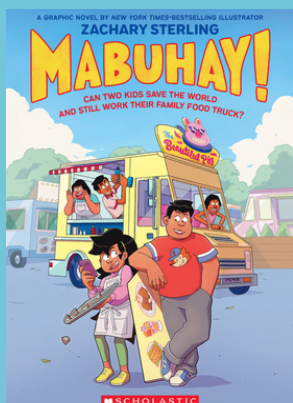


## **SAVING SUNSHINE** by Saadia Faruqi, art by Shazleen Khan

Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, ISBN: 978-1250793805

**Themes: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality**

A pair of Pakistani American twins whose relationship has deteriorated into non-stop bickering are forced to spend time together on a family trip to Florida. Detailed watercolor illustrations pull the reader into the Key West setting as the two tweens relearn how to see past their differences and support each other, coming together to save a sick loggerhead turtle. Microaggressions in the present lead into flashbacks exploring the racism and Islamophobia faced by the twins, as well as their parents, making this a validating and educational read.



## **MABUHAY!** by Zachary Sterling

Scholastic Inc., ISBN: 978-1338738605

**Themes: Color/Race/Ethnicity/Nationality**

Mabuhay! is an energetic book blending folklore with a delightful mix of middle school life and fantastical adventures. The dynamic movement and vivid expressions are truly engaging, and the humor makes it a fun read. Overall, Zachary Sterling has crafted a visually beguiling book that highlights the value of diversity and family bonds. This title is bound to captivate children seeking fantasy, fun, and plenty of humor!