



# LG**T**Q**I**A+ Storylines

## Recommended Book List

### Upper Elementary–Middle School

***The Best at It-*** Maulik Pancholy

Rahul Kapoor is heading into seventh grade in a small town in Indiana. The start of middle school is making him feel increasingly anxious, so his favorite person in the whole world, his grandfather, Bhai, gives him some well-meaning advice: Find one thing you're really good at and become the BEST at it. Those four little words sear themselves into Rahul's brain. While he's not quite sure what that special thing is, he is convinced that once he finds it, bullies like Brent Mason will stop torturing him at school. And he won't be worried about staring too long at his classmate Justin Emery. With his best friend, Chelsea, by his side, Rahul is ready to crush this challenge.... But what if he discovers he isn't the best at anything? Funny, charming, and incredibly touching, this is a story about friendship, family, and the courage it takes to live your truth. (Ages 8-12)

***The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher-***Dana Alison Levy

The start of the school year is not going as the Fletcher brothers hoped. Each boy finds his plans for success veering off in unexpected and sometimes disastrous directions. And at home, their miserable new neighbor complains about everything. As the year continues, the boys learn the hard and often hilarious lesson that sometimes what you least expect is what you come to care about the most. (Ages 9-12)

***Zenobia July-*** Lisa Bunker

Zenobia July is starting a new life. She used to live in Arizona with her father; now she's in Maine with her aunts. She used to spend most of her time behind a computer screen, improving her impressive coding and hacking skills; now she's coming out of her shell and discovering a community of friends at Monarch Middle School. People used to tell her she was a boy; now she's able to live openly as the girl she always knew she was. (Ages 10-13)

***Middle School's a Drag, You Better Werk!-*** Greg Howard

Twelve-year-old Mikey Pruitt is a budding entrepreneur. Inspired by his grandfather Pap Pruitt, who successfully ran all sorts of businesses, Mikey is still looking for his million-dollar idea. Unfortunately, most of his ideas--from a roadside general store to croquet lessons--haven't taken off. It isn't until kid drag queen Coco Caliente, Mistress of Madness and Mayhem (aka eighth grader Julian Vasquez) walks into his office (aka his family's storage/laundry room) looking for a talent agent that Mikey thinks he's finally found a business that will put him on the map, and the Anything Talent and Pizzazz Agency is born! Soon, Mikey has a whole roster of kid clients looking to hit it big or at least win the middle school talent show's hundred-dollar prize. As newly out Mikey prepares Julian for the gig of a lifetime, he realizes there's no rulebook for being gay--and if Julian can be openly gay at school, maybe Mikey can, too, and tell his crush, the dreamy Colton Sanford, how he feels. (Ages 10+)

***To Night Owl from Dogfish-*** Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer

Avery Bloom, who's bookish, intense, and afraid of many things, particularly deep water, lives in New York City. Bett Devlin, who's fearless, outgoing, and loves all animals as well as the ocean, lives in California. What they have in common is that they are both twelve years old, and are both being raised by single, gay dads. When their dads fall in love, Bett and Avery are sent, against their will, to the same sleepaway camp. Their dads hope that they will find common ground and become friends--and possibly, one day, even sisters. (Ages 10-12)

***A High Five for Glenn Burke-*** Phil Bildner

A heartfelt and relatable novel from Phil Bildner, weaving the real history of Los Angeles Dodger and Oakland Athletic Glenn Burke--the first professional baseball player to come out as gay--into the story of a middle-school kid learning to be himself. When sixth grader Silas Walker does a school presentation on former Major League Baseball player Glenn Burke, it's more than just a report on the inventor of the high five. Burke was a black gay baseball player in the 1970s—and for Silas, the presentation is his own first baby step toward coming out as gay. Soon he tells his best friend Zoey, but the longer he keeps his secret from his baseball teammates, the more he suspects they know something's up. Kids get pulled from the team, fingers point at Silas, and he stages one big cover-up with terrible consequences. Was it a mistake to share his truth?

***Beyond the Gender Binary-*** Alok Vaid-Menon

Pocket Change Collective is a series of small books with big ideas from today's leading activists and artists. In this installment, Beyond the Gender Binary, Alok Vaid-Menon challenges the world to see gender not in black and white, but in full color. Taking from their own experiences as a gender-nonconforming artist, they show us that gender is a malleable and creative form of expression. The only limit is your imagination. (Ages 12+)





## Highschool

### ***I'll Give You the Sun-*** Jandy Nelson

At first, Jude and her twin brother Noah are inseparable. Noah draws constantly and is falling in love with the charismatic boy next door, while daredevil Jude wears red-red lipstick, cliff-dives, and does all the talking for both of them. Years later, they are barely speaking. Something has happened to change the twins in different yet equally devastating ways . . . but then Jude meets an intriguing, irresistible boy and a mysterious new mentor. The early years are Noah's to tell; the later years are Jude's. But they each have only half the story, and if they can only find their way back to one another, they'll have a chance to remake their world. (Grades 9-12)

### ***All Boys Aren't Blue-*** George M. Johnson

In a series of personal essays, prominent journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years in New Jersey and Virginia. From the memories of getting his teeth kicked out by bullies at age five, to flea marketing with his loving grandmother, to his first sexual relationships, this young-adult memoir weaves together the trials and triumphs faced by Black queer boys. (Grades 10-12)

### ***Bingo Love-*** Tee Franklin and Shawn Pryor

When Hazel Johnson and Mari McCray met at church bingo in 1963, it was love at first sight. Forced apart by their families and society, Hazel and Mari both married young men and had families. Decades later, now in their mid-'60s, Hazel and Mari reunite again at a church bingo hall. Realizing their love for each other is still alive, what these grandmothers do next takes absolute strength and courage. (Grades 9-12)

### ***The Black Flamingo-*** Dean Atta

Michael is a mixed-race gay teen growing up in London. All his life, he's navigated what it means to be Greek-Cypriot and Jamaican—but never quite feeling Greek or Black enough. As he gets older, Michael's coming out is only the start of learning who he is and where he fits in. When he discovers the Drag Society, he finally finds where he belongs—and the Black Flamingo is born. Told with raw honesty, insight, and lyricism, this debut explores the layers of identity that make us who we are—and allow us to shine. (Grades 9-12)

### ***Felix Ever After-*** Kacen Callender

Felix Love has never been *in* love—and, yes, he's painfully aware of the irony. He desperately wants to know what it's like and why it seems so easy for everyone but him to find someone. What's worse is that, even though he is proud of his identity, Felix also secretly fears that he's one marginalization too many—Black, queer, and transgender—to ever get his own happily-ever-after. When an anonymous student begins sending him transphobic messages—after publicly posting Felix's deadname alongside images of him before he transitioned—Felix comes up with a plan for revenge. What he didn't count on: his catfish scenario landing him in a quasi-love triangle....But as he navigates his complicated feelings, Felix begins a journey of questioning and self-discovery that helps redefine his most important relationship: how he feels about himself. *Felix Ever After* is an honest and layered story about identity, falling in love, and recognizing the love you deserve. (Grades 9-12)

## Parents and Caregivers

### ***How We Fight for Our Lives: A Memoir-*** Saeed Jones

Haunted and haunting, *How We Fight for Our Lives* is a stunning coming-of-age memoir about a young, black, gay man from the South as he fights to carve out a place for himself, within his family, within his country, within his own hopes, desires, and fears. Through a series of vignettes that chart a course across the American landscape, Jones draws readers into his boyhood and adolescence—into tumultuous relationships with his family, into passing flings with lovers, friends, and strangers. Each piece builds into a larger examination of race and queerness, power and vulnerability, love and grief: a portrait of what we all do for one another—and to one another—as we fight to become ourselves.

### ***Under the Rainbow-*** Celia Laskey

Big Burr, Kansas is the kind of place where everyone seems to know everyone—or so they think. But when a national nonprofit labels Big Burr “the most homophobic town in the U.S.” and sends in a queer task force to live and work there for two years, no one is prepared for what will ensue. Still grieving the death of her son, Linda welcomes the newcomers, who know mercifully little about her past. Teenage Avery, furious at being uprooted from her life in L.A. and desperate to fit in at her new high school, fears it's only a matter of time before her classmates discover her mom is the head of the task force. And Gabe, an avid hunter who has lived in Big Burr his whole life, suddenly feels as if he's in the crosshairs. As tensions roil the town, cratering relationships and bringing difficult truths to light, both long time residents and new arrivals must reconsider what it means to belong. Told with warmth and wit, *Under the Rainbow* is a poignant, hopeful articulation of our complicated humanity and the ways we can learn to live with each other and ourselves.

### ***This is How it Always Is-*** Laurie Frankel

This is Claude. He's five years old, the youngest of five brothers, and loves peanut butter sandwiches. He also loves wearing a dress, and dreams of being a princess. When he grows up, Claude says, he wants to be a girl. Rosie and Penn want Claude to be whoever Claude wants to be. They're just not sure they're ready to share that with the world. Soon the entire family is keeping Claude's secret. Until one day it explodes. Laurie Frankel's *This Is How It Always Is* is a novel about revelations, transformations, fairy tales, and family. And it's about the ways this is how it always is: Change is always hard and miraculous and hard again, parenting is always a leap into the unknown with crossed fingers and full hearts, children grow but not always according to plan. And families with secrets don't get to keep them forever