

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Reading Recommendations for Teens

This list is not exhaustive nor completely representative of all of the amazing fiction and nonfiction available for our youth featuring Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) authors or characters, or touching upon relevant topics of interest. It is, however, what we hope will be a jumping off point for our middle and high school students, and even adults, to seek out other titles by and about people of other backgrounds.

Please note: if a title you are interested in has a wait list, please don't hesitate to place a hold on it; holds lists are reviewed to ensure that items will most likely be available to borrow sooner than the wait time estimate given.

### [This Time Will Be Different by Misa Sugiura](#)



Katsuyamas never quit--but seventeen-year-old CJ doesn't even know where to start. She's never lived up to her mom's type A ambition, and she's perfectly happy just helping her aunt, Hannah, at their family's flower shop. She doesn't buy into Hannah's romantic ideas about flowers and their hidden meanings, but when it comes to arranging the perfect bouquet, CJ discovers a knack she never knew she had. A skill she might even be proud of.

Then her mom decides to sell the shop--to the family who swindled CJ's grandparents when thousands of Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps during WWII. Soon a rift threatens to splinter CJ's family, friends, and their entire Northern California community; and for the first time, CJ has found something she wants to fight for.

### [Parachutes by Kelly Yang](#)

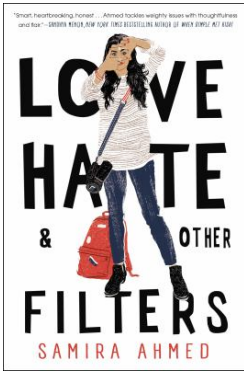


They're called parachutes: teenagers dropped off to live in private homes and study in the United States while their wealthy parents remain in Asia. Claire Wang never thought she'd be one of them, until her parents pluck her from her privileged life in Shanghai and enroll her at a high school in California.

Suddenly she finds herself living in a stranger's house, with no one to tell her what to do for the first time in her life. She soon embraces her newfound freedom, especially when the hottest and most eligible parachute, Jay, asks her out.

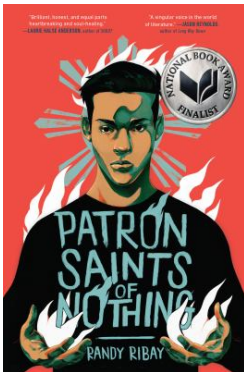
Dani De La Cruz, Claire's new host sister, couldn't be less thrilled that her mom rented out a room to Claire. An academic and debate team star, Dani is determined to earn her way into Yale, even if it means competing with privileged kids who are buying their way to the top. But Dani's game plan veers unexpectedly off course when her debate coach starts working with her privately.

As they steer their own distinct paths, Dani and Claire keep crashing into one another, setting a course that will change their lives forever.



### [Love, Hate and Other Filters by Samira Ahmed](#)

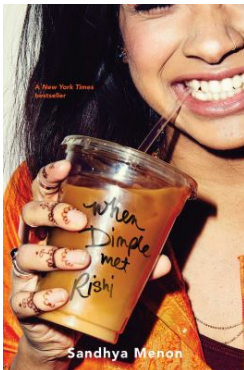
17-year-old Maya Aziz is torn between worlds. There's the proper one her parents expect for their good Indian daughter: a good school, an arranged marriage. And then there is the world of her dreams: going to film school, living in New York City, pursuing the boy she's liked for ages. But unbeknownst to Maya, there is a danger looming beyond her control. When a terrorist attack occurs in another Midwestern city, the prime suspect happens to share her last name. In an instant, Maya's community, consumed by fear and hatred, becomes unrecognisable, and her life changes forever.



### [Patron Saints of Nothing by Randy Ribay](#)

Jay Reguero plans to spend the last semester of his senior year playing video games before heading to the University of Michigan in the fall. But when he discovers that his Filipino cousin Jun was murdered as part of President Duterte's war on drugs, and no one in the family wants to talk about what happened, Jay travels to the Philippines to find out the real story.

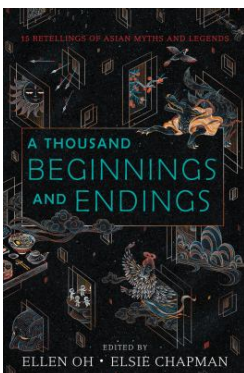
Hoping to uncover more about Jun and the events that led to his death, Jay is forced to reckon with the many sides of his cousin before he can face the whole horrible truth -- and the part he played in it.



### [When Dimple Met Rishi by Sandhya Menon](#)

With graduation behind her, Dimple Shah's more than ready for a break from her family's inexplicable obsession with her finding the "Ideal Indian Husband." Dimple knows they must respect her principles on some level, though. If they truly believed she needed a husband right now, they wouldn't have paid for her to attend a summer program for aspiring web developers, right?

Rishi Patel is a hopeless romantic. So when his parents tell him that his future wife will be attending the same summer program as him - wherein he'll have to woo her - he's totally on board. Because as silly as it sounds to most people in his life, Rishi wants to be arranged, believes in the power of tradition and stability. The Shahs and Patels didn't mean to start turning the wheels on this "suggested arrangement" so early, but when they noticed them both gravitate towards the same summer program, they figured, why not?

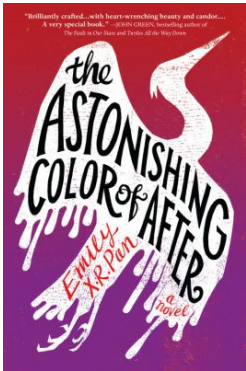


### [A Thousand Beginnings and Endings: Fifteen Retellings of Asian Myths and Legends, edited by Ellen Oh & Elsie Chapman](#)

Sixteen bestselling and acclaimed authors reimagine the folklore and mythology of East and South Asia in short stories that are by turns enchanting, heartbreaking, romantic, and passionate.

A mountain loses her heart. Two sisters transform into birds to escape captivity. A young man learns the true meaning of sacrifice. A young woman takes up her mother's mantle and leads the dead to their final resting place.

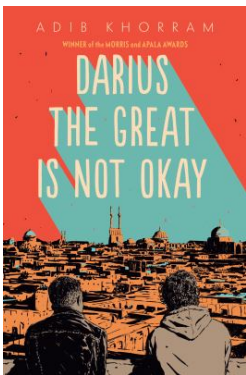
From fantasy to science fiction to contemporary, from romance to tales of revenge, these stories will beguile readers from start to finish.



### [The Astonishing Color of After by Emily X.R. Pan](#)

Leigh Chen Sanders is absolutely certain about one thing: When her mother died by suicide, she turned into a bird.

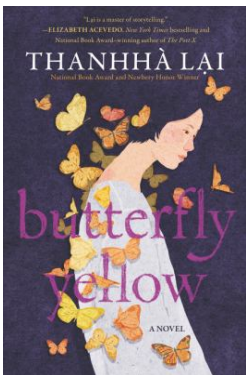
Leigh, who is half Asian and half white, travels to Taiwan to meet her maternal grandparents for the first time. There, she is determined to find her mother, the bird. In her search, she winds up chasing after ghosts, uncovering family secrets, and forging a new relationship with her grandparents. And as she grieves, she must try to reconcile the fact that on the same day she kissed her best friend and longtime secret crush, Axel, her mother was taking her own life.



### [Darius the Great is Not Okay by Adib Khorram](#)

Darius Kellner speaks better Klingon than Farsi, and he knows more about Hobbit social cues than Persian ones. He's about to take his first-ever trip to Iran, and it's pretty overwhelming-especially when he's also dealing with clinical depression, a disapproving dad, and a chronically anemic social life. In Iran, he gets to know his ailing but still formidable grandfather, his loving grandmother, and the rest of his mom's family for the first time. And he meets Sohrab, the boy next door who changes everything.

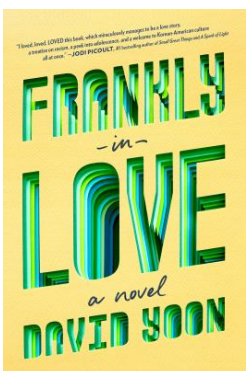
Darius has never had a true friend before, but now he's spending his days with Sohrab playing soccer, eating rosewater ice cream, and sitting together for hours in their special place, a rooftop overlooking the Yazdi skyline. Sohrab calls him Darioush-the original Persian version of his name-and Darius has never felt more like himself than he does now that he's Darioush to Sohrab. When it's time to go home to America, he'll have to find a way to be Darioush on his own.



### [Butterfly Yellow by Thanhha Lai](#)

In the final days of the Việt Nam War, Hằng takes her little brother, Linh, to the airport, determined to find a way to safety in America. In a split second, Linh is ripped from her arms--and Hằng is left behind in the war-torn country.

Six years later, Hằng has made the brutal journey from Việt Nam and is now in Texas as a refugee. She doesn't know how she will find the little brother who was taken from her until she meets LeeRoy, a city boy with big rodeo dreams, who decides to help her.



### [Frankly in Love by David Yoon](#)

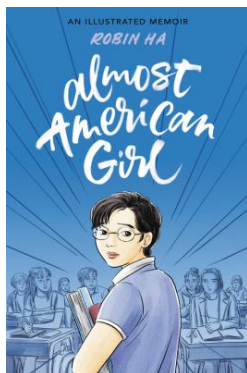
Frank Li has two names. There's Frank Li, his American name. Then there's Sung-Min Li, his Korean name. No one uses his Korean name, not even his parents. Frank barely speaks any Korean. He was born and raised in Southern California.

Even so, his parents still expect him to end up with a nice Korean girl--which is a problem, since Frank is finally dating the girl of his dreams: Brit Means. Brit, who is funny and nerdy just like him. Brit, who makes him laugh like no one else. Brit . . . who is white.

As Frank falls in love for the very first time, he's forced to confront the fact that while his parents sacrificed everything to raise him in the land of opportunity, their traditional



expectations don't leave a lot of room for him to be a regular American teen. Desperate, Frank turns to family friend Joy Song, who is in a similar bind. Together, they come up with a plan to help each other and keep their parents off their backs. Frank thinks he's found the solution to all his problems, but when life throws him a curveball, he's left wondering whether he ever really knew anything about love--or himself--at all.

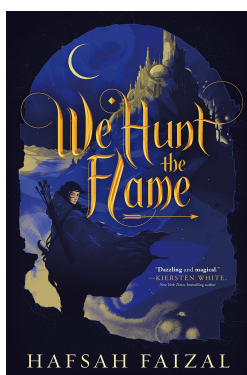


### [Almost American Girl by Robin Ha](#)

For as long as she can remember, it's been Robin and her mom against the world. Growing up as the only child of a single mother in Seoul, Korea, wasn't always easy, but it has bonded them fiercely together.

So when a vacation to visit friends in Huntsville, Alabama, unexpectedly becomes a permanent relocation--following her mother's announcement that she's getting married--Robin is devastated. Overnight, her life changes. At home, she doesn't fit in with her new stepfamily, and worst of all, she is furious with the one person she is closest to--her mother.

Then one day Robin's mother enrolls her in a local comic drawing class, which opens the window to a future Robin could never have imagined.



### [We Hunt the Flame by Hafsah Faizal](#)

People lived because she killed. People died because he lived.

Zafira is the Hunter, disguising herself as a man when she braves the cursed forest of the Arz to feed her people. Nasir is the Prince of Death, assassinating those foolish enough to defy his autocratic father, the sultan. If Zafira was exposed as a girl, all of her achievements would be rejected; if Nasir displayed his compassion, his father would punish him in the most brutal of ways. Both Zafira and Nasir are legends in the kingdom of Arawiya--but neither wants to be.

War is brewing, and the Arz sweeps closer with each passing day, engulfing the land in shadow. When Zafira embarks on a quest to uncover a lost artifact that can restore magic to her suffering world and stop the Arz, Nasir is sent by the sultan on a similar mission:

retrieve the artifact and kill the Hunter. But an ancient evil stirs as their journey unfolds--and the prize they seek may pose a threat greater than either can imagine.

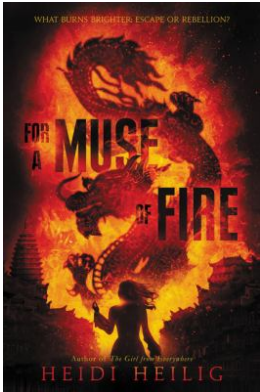


### [Dragon Pearl by Yoon Ha Lee](#)

Thirteen-year-old Min comes from a long line of fox spirits, but you'd never know it by looking at her. To keep the family safe, Min's mother insists that none of them use any fox-magic, such as Charm or shape-shifting. They must appear human at all times. Min feels hemmed in by the household rules and resents the endless chores and she would like nothing more than to escape Jinju, her neglected, dust-ridden, and impoverished planet. She's counting the days until she can follow her older brother, Jun, into the Space Forces and see more of the Thousand Worlds.

When word arrives that Jun is suspected of leaving his post to go in search of the Dragon Pearl, Min knows that something is wrong. Jun would never desert his battle cruiser, even for a mystical object rumored to have tremendous power. She decides to run away to find him and clear his name.





### [For a Muse of Fire by Heidi Heilig](#)

Jetta's family is famed as the most talented troupe of shadow players in the land. With Jetta behind the scrim, their puppets seem to move without string or stick--a trade secret, they say. In truth, Jetta can see the souls of the recently departed and bind them to the puppets with her blood. But ever since the colonizing army conquered their country, the old ways are forbidden. Jetta must never show, never tell. Her skill and fame are her family's way to earn a spot aboard the royal ship to Aquitan, where shadow plays are the latest rage, and where rumor has it the Mad King has a spring that cures his ills. Because seeing spirits is not the only thing that plagues Jetta. But as rebellion seethes and as Jetta meets a young smuggler, she will face truths and decisions that she never imagined--and safety will never seem so far away.



### [The Shadow Hero by Gene Luen Yang](#)

In the comics boom of the 1940s, a legend was born: the Green Turtle. He solved crimes and fought injustice just like the other comics characters. But this mysterious masked crusader was hiding something more than your run-of-the-mill secret identity... The Green Turtle was the first Asian American super hero.

The comic had a short run before lapsing into obscurity, but Gene Luen Yang, the acclaimed author of *American Born Chinese*, and Sonny Liew, the author of the New York Times-bestseller *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*, have finally revived this character in *Shadow Hero*, a new graphic novel that creates an origin story for the Green Turtle.



### [All That I Can Fix by Crystal Chan](#)

In Makersville, Indiana, people know all about Ronney--he's from that mixed-race family with the dad who tried to kill himself, the pill-popping mom, and the genius kid sister. If having a family like that wasn't bad enough, the local eccentric at the edge of town decided one night to open up all the cages of his exotic zoo--lions, cheetahs, tigers--and then shoot himself dead. Go figure. Even more proof that you can't trust adults to do the right thing.

Overnight, news crews, gun control supporters, and gun rights advocates descend on Makersville, bringing around-the-clock news coverage, rallies, and anti-rallies with them. With his parents checked out, Ronney is left tending to his sister's mounting fears of roaming lions, stopping his best friend from going on a suburban safari, and shaking

loose a lonely boy who follows Ronney wherever he goes. Can Ronney figure out a way to hold it together as all his worlds fall apart?

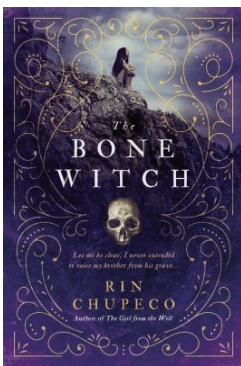


### [The Best We Could Do by Thi Bui](#)

Exploring the anguish of immigration and the lasting effects that displacement has on a child and her family, Bui documents the story of her family's daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s, and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves.

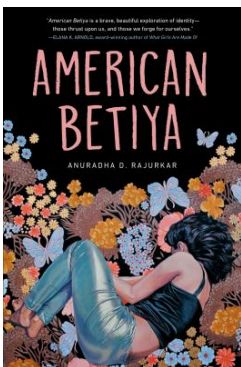
At the heart of Bui's story is a universal struggle: While adjusting to life as a first-time mother, she ultimately discovers what it means to be a parent--the endless sacrifices, the unnoticed gestures, and the depths of unspoken love. Despite how impossible it seems to take on the simultaneous roles of both parent and child, Bui pushes through. With haunting, poetic writing and breathtaking art, she examines the strength of family, the

importance of identity, and the meaning of home.



### [The Bone Witch by Rin Chupeco](#)

When Tea accidentally resurrects her brother from the dead, she learns she is different from the other witches in her family. Her gift for necromancy means that she's a bone witch, a title that makes her feared and ostracized by her community. But Tea finds solace and guidance with an older, wiser bone witch, who takes Tea and her brother to another land for training. In her new home, Tea puts all her energy into becoming anasha -- one who can wield elemental magic. But dark forces are approaching quickly, and in the face of danger, Tea will have to overcome her obstacles... and make a powerful choice. Something of a high-fantasy Memoirs of a Geisha, Chupeco's series excels in originality.



### [American Betiya by Anuradha D. Rajurkar](#)

Rani Kelkar has never lied to her parents, until she meets Oliver. The same qualities that draw her in--his tattoos, his charisma, his passion for art--make him her mother's worst nightmare.

They begin dating in secret, but when Oliver's troubled home life unravels, he starts to ask more of Rani than she knows how to give, desperately trying to fit into her world, no matter how high the cost. When a twist of fate leads Rani from Evanston, Illinois to Pune, India for a summer, she has a reckoning with herself--and what's really brewing beneath the surface of her first love.