Young Adult Novel List: Part II

Popular Novels

This list brings together some of the most popular current young adult novels, many of which are also serialized. They are paired with multiple scholarly works, some of which focus solely on one text and others that look at the YA genre and its development as a whole. Some of the novels are better written than others, most are controversial, and all are beloved by a large young adult population, the best judges of their worth.


A long series that incorporates mythology from all over the world in an educational way. It avoids the trap that hurts a lot of other stories that use mythology by making an effort to differentiate the origins of myths. Greek myths stay Greek; Egyptian, Egyptian. Still, many mythologies are sampled giving the reader a fun intro to the gods, fae, and other magical creatures or deities of religions past who act as actual characters in the plotline.


The first in the bestselling series, this funny book revolves around Mia, a high school freshman who finds out that she is the princess of a small European nation that she must one day rule. With an interesting concept and well developed characters, the novel works well. It is told through diary entries and Mia's diary also functions as her high school notebook—which explains why she flunks so many tests. It is a meat and potatoes YA story—it revolves around Mia's relationships with friends and family—but the added twist of royalty adds complications to every aspect of her relationships and when paired with the narrative style and form the novel makes for a refreshing take on teenage angst.


Beloved author of *The Princess Diaries* wrote one of her first YA series, five books 1-800-where-are-you, under the pseudonym Jenny Carroll. In it a teenage girl is struck by lightning and develops psychic powers which she uses to find missing children, all while still juggling high school and her family life. One of the less explored Meg Cabot series, the characters, which have always been Cabot's strong suit, are a little more offbeat than usual, though because of the missing persons aspect, the stories are all very plot driven. When paired with a later Cabot novel, can show a progression of talent and focus of a popular novelist.


More challenging than *The Hunger Games*, this dystopic science fiction novel dramatically reveals a complex plot with even more developed characters. Chocked full of interesting and class ready themes worthy of exploration.


Religion is everywhere...but not necessarily as much as this book implies. One of the largest criticisms of the *Twilight* saga is the clear religious subtexts and Mormon ideals of male/female relationships. This book explores those claims and makes many parallels between the plot and its characters and religious texts. SPOILER: Edward Cullen is apparently Jesus. Some claims are far
reaching but still worth exploring because, in the end, religion plays a role in every text and in *Twilight* even more so than usual.


David Levithan's debut novel (Co-other of *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*) has become one of the most well known novels of the YA LGBTQ cannon, a relatively small and new sub genre of fiction. In it, the gay main character exists in an imagined community where sexuality is not a source of conflict and his biggest problem becomes being a teenager in love. Levithan's prose is filled with humor and relate-able characters.


This volume contains book one and two of the ten book Pendragon series. In it young Bobby Pendragon must protect not just the whole world but Halla -- every time and place that has ever existed. This series, unlike many YA adventure driven series, does not fear death. Many characters die in the making of it and young Pendragon, unlike many YA heroes, ages realistically with his readers. Both of these facts can make it easy for readers aging out of YA fiction to relate to the series, where the death of characters can seem more "adult like" and the physical as well as noticeable mental maturation of the main character reflects their own life struggles.


The hilarious romp of an overweight teen girl. This one takes place in Manhattan and gives a realistic look at life in a city for a young adult. The only dud in a family of perfects, Virginia Shreves thinks if she were erased, her family would be picture-perfect- until her rugby god brother proves himself not-so-perfect. A YA book to the core whose focus is self acceptance, it is filled with enough laugh out loud moments to entertain readers of every age.


Hilarious is the first and best word to describe this novel, the first in a series. When the self absorbed daughter of a historical scholar Emily is forced to move to England for her father's job, she does not take well to the change of pace. Told in a series of emails to her best friend back in Seattle, this fast paced book is rife with side-splitting moments that are sure to delight all readers, while the form keeps things new and different and the characters never let up.


Whether read as a joke or in earnest, *Twilight* is undeniably a page turner and has become an international phenomenon. It has been a major player in the current vampire wave in fiction, it was written by a Mormon and thereby thoroughly analyzed for religious subtexts, and has captivated the hearts of teenage girls and their mothers the world over. Its flaws and its success say more about society as a whole than they do about the world of young adult fiction, but the YA lens is a good place to start.


Relying on the classic fantasy story of a boy and his dragon, Eragon touched the hearts of children when its equally young author crafted this tale. A good contemporary introduction to classic fantasy narrative.

The First in the His Dark Materials trilogy, The Golden Compass has proven itself to be a wonderful fantasy world for all ages. The wonderful writing simultaneously envelops and alienates the reader in a world that is fundamentally different from our own but faced with problems that, in their terror, mirror our own. Other books in the series: The Subtle Knife, and The Amber Spyglass.


This time a British overweight girl laments her otherwise perfect life. A story full of yummy food and well drawn characters, it too is the YA version of meat and potatoes- a teen girl, body issues, revolves around relationships between family and friends.


A novel about a high school age Transgendered F2M person and how her relationships change as she realizes her male identity. Criticized by some young readers for giving an unrealistic portrayal of a high school reaction to a transgendered person (no one was mean enough), it is optimistic and focuses more on successful relationships of love and support.


Tobias Wolff's first novel explores the world of an elite boy’s prep school in the 1960s. While the characters are young, the tone and pacing of the novel are so mature and unflinching that the book defies any genre based on age.