

## Multicultural Fiction

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### African American

[I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou \(B Angelou, Maya\)](#)

Sent by their mother to their devout, self-sufficient grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash." When she journeys at eight to her mother's side in St. Louis, she is attacked by a man many times her age. Years later, in San Francisco, she learns about love for herself-and has to live with the consequences for a lifetime.

[Black Boy, Robert Wright \(B Wright, Robert\)](#)

Wright's autobiography describes his childhood and teenage years in the brutally racist South, where, though he was forced to mask his pride in himself, "It had never occurred to me that I was in any way an inferior being."

### Native American

[Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, by Sherman Alexie](#)

Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

### Russian Occupation of Lithuania

[Between Shades of Gray, by Ruta Sepetys](#)

In 1941, fifteen-year-old Lina, her mother, and brother are pulled from their Lithuanian home by Soviet guards and sent to Siberia, where her father is sentenced to death in a prison camp while she fights for her life, vowing to honor her family and the thousands like hers by burying her story in a jar on Lithuanian soil. Based on the author's family, includes a historical note.

### Nigeria

[Things Fall Apart, by Chinua Achebe \(Adult Fiction\)](#)

Things Fall Apart tells two intertwining stories, both centering on Okonkwo, a "strong man" of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first, a powerful fable of the immemorial conflict between the individual and society, traces Okonkwo's fall from grace with the tribal world. The second, as modern as the first is ancient, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world with the arrival of aggressive European missionaries. These perfectly harmonized twin dramas are informed by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul.

### China

[Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution by Ji-Li Jiang \(951.056 JIA\)](#)

An outstanding student and much admired leader of her class, Ji-Li Jiang was poised for a shining future in the Communist party until the Cultural Revolution of 1966. Told with simplicity, innocence and grace, this unforgettable memoir gives a child's eye view of a terrifying time in 20th-century history--and of one family's indomitable courage under fire.

### Japan

[The Heavenward Path, by Kara Dalkey](#)

Haunted by a broken promise to a powerful god, fifteen-year-old Mitsuko again enlists the aid of a mischievous shape-shifter who helps her learn to think for herself.

[Shizuko's Daughter, by Kyoko Mori](#)

After her mother's suicide when she is twelve years old, Yuki spends years living with her distant father and his resentful new wife, cut off from her mother's family, and relying on her own inner strength to cope with the tragedy.

**Japanese American**

[Kira-Kira, by Cynthia Kadohata](#) (J Kadohata, C.)

Chronicles the close friendship between two Japanese-American sisters growing up in rural Georgia during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the despair when one sister becomes terminally ill.

**Korean American**

[Wait For Me, by An Na](#)

As her senior year in high school approaches, Mina yearns to find her own path in life but working at the family business, taking care of her little sister, and dealing with her mother's impossible expectations are as stifling as the southern California heat, until she falls in love with a man who offers a way out.

[Step from Heaven, by An Na](#) (J Na, A.)

A young girl describes her family's bittersweet experience in the United States after their emigration from Korea. Four years old on the flight to California, Young Ju concludes that America is heaven. But when they arrive, they are weighed down by the difficulty of learning English, their insular family life, and the traditions of the country they left behind.

**Pakistan**

[Haveli, by Suzanne Staples](#)

Having relented to the ways of her people in Pakistan and married the rich older man to whom she was pledged against her will, Shabanu is now the victim of his family's blood feud and the malice of his other wives. (Sequel to Shananu)

[Shabanu, by Suzanne Staples](#)

When eleven-year old Shabanu, the daughter of a nomad in the Cholistan Desert of present-day Pakistan, is pledged in marriage to an older man whose money will bring prestige to the family, she must either accept the decision, as is the custom, or risk the consequences of defying her father's wishes.

**Nepal, India**

[Sold, Patricia McCormick](#)

Thirteen-year-old Lakshmi leaves her poor mountain home in Nepal thinking that she is to work in the city as a maid only to find that she has been sold into the sex slave trade in India and that there is no hope of escape.

**Indian Americans**

[The Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri](#) (Adult Fiction)

Gogol Ganguli is born to Indian immigrants newly arrived in Cambridge, MA, after their arranged marriage. Gogol becomes the namesake as a newborn, when his grandmother's letter decreeing his official name fails to arrive from Calcutta. As a first-generation American, Gogol grows up resenting both his strange name and the yoke of Indian culture imposed by his parents and their extended family of Indian expatriates.

### **Bangladeshi Americans**

[Ask Me No Questions, by Marina Budhos](#) (Juvenile Fiction)

Fourteen-year-old Nadira, her sister, and their parents leave Bangladesh for New York City, but the expiration of their visas and the events of September 11, 2001, bring frustration, sorrow, and terror for the whole family.

### **World War II**

[The Auslander, by Paul Dowswell](#)

German soldiers take Peter from a Warsaw orphanage, and soon he is adopted by Professor Kaltenbach, a prominent Nazi, but Peter forms his own ideas about what he sees and hears and decides to take a risk that is most dangerous in 1942 Berlin.

[The Berlin Boxing Club, by Robert Sharenow](#)

In 1936 Berlin, fourteen-year-old Karl Stern, considered Jewish despite a non-religious upbringing, learns to box from the legendary Max Schmeling while struggling with the realities of the Holocaust.

[Annexed, by Sharon Dugar](#)

Everyone knows about Anne Frank and her life hidden in the secret annex -- but what about the boy who was also trapped there with her?

[Devil's Arithmetic, by Jane Yolen](#) (Juvenile Fiction)

Hannah dreads going to her family's Passover Seder-she's tired of hearing her relatives talk about the past. But when she opens the front door to symbolically welcome the prophet Elijah, she's transported to a Polish village in the year 1942, where she becomes caught up in the tragedy of the time.

[The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, by John Boyne](#)

Bored and lonely after his family moves from Berlin to a place called "Out-With" in 1942, Bruno, the son of a Nazi officer, befriends a boy in striped pajamas who lives behind a wire fence.

### **WWII, Colonial Africa**

[Power of One, by Bryce Courtenay](#)

In 1939, as Hitler casts his enormous, cruel shadow across the world, the seeds of apartheid take root in South Africa. There, a boy called Peekay is born. His childhood is marked by humiliation and abandonment, yet he vows to survive and conceives heroic dreams-which are nothing compared to what life actually has in store for him. He embarks on an epic journey through a land of tribal superstition and modern prejudice where he will learn the power of words, the power to transform lives, and the power of one.

### **WWII, Korea**

[When My Name Was Keoko](#)

With national pride and occasional fear, a brother and sister face the increasingly oppressive occupation of Korea by Japan during World War II, which threatens to suppress Korean culture entirely.