**Contemporary Historical Fiction**

**21st Century titles:**

Nine, Ten: A September 11 Story by Nora Raleigh Baskin ~ From the critically acclaimed author of *Anything But Typical* comes a “tense…and thought-provoking” (*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review) look at the days leading up to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and how that day impacted the lives of four middle schoolers. Ask anyone: September 11, 2001, was serene and lovely, a perfect day—until a plane struck the World Trade Center…

A Very Large Expanse of Sea by Tahereh Mafi ~ Tahereh Mafi shares a very personal story inspired by her own teen years dealing with racism and her love of breakdancing in A VERY LARGE EXPANSE OF SEA. This novel is set in 2002, just a year after the events of 9/11, and follows Shirin, a young Muslim girl. Shirin and her brother start at a new high school, but while her brother fits in and makes friends immediately, Shirin stands out because of her hijab.

Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere by Julie T. Lamana ~ When Hurricane Katrina hits the Lower Nines of New Orleans and tears her world apart, Armani realizes that being ten means being brave, watching loved ones die, and mustering all her strength to help her family weather the storm. A gripping story of courage and survival, *Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere* celebrates the power of hope and love in the face of the unthinkable.

**20th Century titles:**

Secrets of the Terra-Cotta Soldier by Ying Chang Compestine ~ In this action-packed adventure and coming-of-age story that finely weaves fact and fiction, thirteen-year-old Ming lives in a small village in Maoist China in the 1970s. His father is convinced that Emperor Qin’s tomb―and the life-size terra-cotta army created to serve and protect the emperor in the afterlife―lies hidden in the hills around them.

Al Capone Shines My Shoes by Gennifer Cholodenko ~ Readers who enjoyed *Al Capone Does My Shirts* will find this lively novel a worthy sequel. Most of the large cast has returned and, as in the previous book, the 1935 Alcatraz Island setting is well realized through glimpses of its infamous prison, inmates, and island life. The narrator is Moose Flanagan, whose father works as a prison guard. The 12-year-old baseball-loving boy is both naive and wise beyond his years.

The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine ~ In Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1958, as politicians rage for and against the struggle to integrate schools, Marlee, 13, is a math whiz but she has a personal problem with mutism—she’s terrified to say things aloud in public. Then she makes friends—and more importantly, talks—with Lizzie, the new girl in her middle school. Then one day Lizzie is thrown out of school. It turns out that she is a light-skinned black passing for white, and the locals refuse to follow the federal integration order.

Echo by Pam Munoz Ryan ~ "Long before enchantment was eclipsed by doubt," a young boy named Otto lost in the woods is rescued by three sisters imprisoned there by a witch's curse. In return, he promises to help break the curse by carrying their spirits out of the forest in a mouth harp and passing the instrument along when the time is right. The narrative shifts to the 20th century, when the same mouth harp (aka harmonica) becomes the tangible thread that connects the stories of three children: Friedrich, a disfigured outcast; Mike, an impoverished orphan; and Ivy, an itinerant farmer's child. Their personal struggles are set against some of the darkest eras in human history: Friedrich, the rise of Nazi Germany; Mike, the Great Depression; Ivy, World War II.

The Mighty Miss Malone by Christopher Paul Curtis ~ If you enjoyed Christopher Paul Curtis’ classic *Bud, Not Buddy*, then you are sure to enjoy this follow-up story, featuring twelve-year-old Deza Malone. The book begins in 1936, during the height of the Great Depression, with the Malones living in Gary, Indiana. When Deza’s father can’t find work and her mother loses her job, the family decides to move to Flint, Michigan. Along the way, Deza endures discrimination, heartache, and shame, but learns to look past adversity with the help of her tenacious spirit and sharp mind.

Brooklyn Bridge by Karen Hesse ~ In 1903, school lets out for summer vacation, and Joseph Michtom dreams of visiting Coney Island. But the 14-year-old's plans have to be placed on hold while he helps out in his father's toy-making business. The family stumbles on an idea that leads to the creation of the first teddy bear and achieves financial success. Set in Brooklyn and narrated by Joseph, the novel portrays the joys and heartaches in the lives of Russian-Jewish immigrants at the turn of the 20th century.

Salt to the Sea by Ruta Sepetys ~ Winter 1945. WWII. Four refugees. Four stories. Each one born of a different homeland; each one hunted, and haunted, by tragedy, lies, war. As thousands desperately flock to the coast in the midst of a Soviet advance, four paths converge, vying for passage aboard the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, a ship that promises safety and freedom. But not all promises can be kept . . .

The Last Cherry Blossom by Kathleen Burkinshaw ~ Yuriko is happy growing up in Hiroshima when it's just her and Papa. While things are changing at home, the world beyond their doors is even more unpredictable. World War II is coming to an end, and Japan's fate is not entirely clear. Yuriko is used to the sirens and air raid drills, but things start to feel more real when the neighbors who have left to fight stop coming home. When the atomic bomb hits Hiroshima, it's through Yuriko's twelve-year-old eyes that we witness the devastation and horror.

Blue by Joyce Moyer Hostetter ~ Ann Fay Honeycutt accepts the role of "man of the house" when her father leaves to fight Hitler because she wants to do her part for the war. She's doing well with the extra responsibilities when a frightening polio epidemic strikes, crippling many local children. Her town of Hickory responds by creating an emergency hospital in three days.

Flygirl by Sheri Smith ~ All Ida Mae Jones wants to do is fly. Her daddy was a pilot, and years after his death she feels closest to him when she's in the air. But as a young black woman in 1940s Louisiana, she knows the sky is off limits to her, until America enters World War II, and the Army forms the WASP-Women Airforce Service Pilots. Ida has a chance to fulfill her dream if she's willing to use her light skin to pass as a white girl. She wants to fly more than anything, but Ida soon learns that denying one's self and family is a heavy burden, and ultimately it's not what you do but who you are that's most important.

**19th Century:**

The Twenty-One Balloons by William Pene DuBois ~ Professor William Waterman Sherman intends to fly across the Pacific Ocean. Through a twist of fate, he lands on Krakatoa before the historic 1883 explosion, and discovers a world of unimaginable wealth, eccentric inhabitants, and incredible balloon inventions. *(\*\*\*A Mrs. Graham personal favorite - highly recommend!\*\*\*)*

The Inventor’s Secret (3 book series) by Andrea Cremer ~ *The Inventor’s Secret* is the first book of a YA steampunk series set in an alternate nineteenth-century North America where the Revolutionary War never took place and the British Empire has expanded into a global juggernaut propelled by marvelous and horrible machinery.

The Luxe (4 book series) by Anna Godbersen ~ “Gossip Girl meets the Gilded Age” This is Manhattan, 1899. With the fate of the Hollands resting on her shoulders, Elizabeth must choose between family duty and true love. But when her carriage overturns near the East River, the girl whose glittering life lit up the city's gossip pages is swallowed by the rough current. As all of New York grieves, some begin to wonder whether life at the top proved too much for this ethereal beauty, or if, perhaps, someone wanted to see Manhattan's most celebrated daughter disappear…

Ripper by Stefan Petrucha ~ Panic grips the city! There is a killer loose in New York City, and Carver Young is the only one who sees the startling connection between the recent string of murders and the most famous serial killer in history: Jack the Ripper. Time is winding down until the killer claims another victim, but Carver soon sees that, to The Ripper, this is all a game that he may be destined to lose.