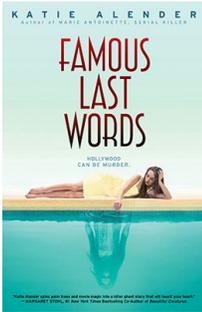




## 2016-2017 Truman Nominees

Check out our Truman Website! <https://sites.google.com/site/trumanreadersaward/home>



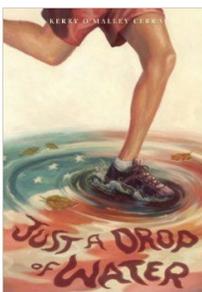
### ***Famous Last Words by Katie Alender***

Moving from the suburbs of Connecticut to live in a Hollywood mansion may seem like every teenager's dream, but Willa isn't sure how she feels about her new home since she's pretty sure it's haunted. It begins with the sound of dripping water, but it isn't long before weird and unexplained sights appear that oddly enough only Willa seems to be able to see. Being new to Hollywood, Willa would like to confide in a friend, but whom should she trust? Marnie, the only girlfriend she's made who doesn't seem completely trustworthy? Reed, the incredibly good looking guy Willa has a secret crush on? Or Wyatt, the super smart/nice guy who has an unhealthy obsession with Hollywood's latest problem...a murderer who has been aptly named the Hollywood killer. All Willa knows is that if she doesn't tell someone about the visions and the dripping water, she's likely to lose her mind. She's even starting to wonder if this ghost isn't trying to warn her that she might be in danger of losing her life. For a spine chilling tale of murder, mystery and mayhem read "Famous Last Words" by Katie Alender.



### ***Midnight Thief by Livia Blackburne***

Kyra was raised on the streets. She can scale walls and sneak past guards better than anyone. Her abilities are strange and amazing. Kyra is invited to join the Assassin's Guild and make a lot of money, but she has to follow orders even if she doesn't agree with them. Some of the tasks she must complete and some of the actions of other Assassins are so terrible that Kyra begins having nightmares. Tristam is a knight. He is haunted by the death of his best friend and has been investigating his murder. Tristam's friend, a fellow knight, was killed by the Demon Riders, fierce warriors riding gigantic wildcats. Tristam is frustrated because Kyra keeps interfering with his investigation by completing tasks for the Assassin's Guild. After a brutal attack by the Demon Riders, Tristam and Kyra are forced to work together in order to survive. What they discover is so shocking, even they cannot believe it at first. Will they be able to survive when enemies are everywhere and even friends can't be trusted? Find out in "Midnight Thief" by Livia Blackburne.



### ***Just A Drop of Water by Kerry O'Malley Cerra***

Jake Green has always wanted to be a soldier and a hero, just like his Grandpa, who died serving his country. But right now Jake is looking forward to winning the cross country meet and beating the rival team. When the tragedy of September 11 occurs, everything changes. First the discovery is made that one of the hijackers lived nearby, and the FBI comes to town to investigate. Then Jake's best friend, Sam, becomes the target of bullies because he is Muslim. When Sam's father is detained by the FBI, Jake must decide if he will stand by his friend, despite pressure from others to stay away. With lies exposed and relationships tested, Jake struggles to decide how to respond to the events in his life. As if that wasn't enough...there are now even questions about Jake's grandfather's real past. During this turbulent time, Jake must learn what is important and how to stand up for what is right. For a gripping drama that brings historical fact and realistic fiction together, read "Just A Drop Of Water" by Kerry O'Malley Cerra.



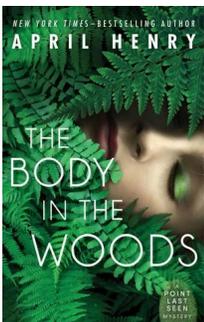
### ***Buzz Kill by Beth Fantaskey***

Millie Ostermeyer is a writer for her school newspaper. She spends her time hanging out with friends and wondering about the cute new guy at school. But when the head football coach is found murdered, Millie, is on the case...just like her favorite book character “Nancy Drew”. Millie’s dad is the assistant football coach and often openly questions head coach Killdare’s decisions on and off the football field. This makes for drama and conflict for Millie and her arch nemesis, Vivienne, the school’s editor and rival reporter. After the murder investigation of Coach Killdare begins to unfold Millie uncovers trash on everyone, even her own dad. Though Millie becomes closer to hunky quarterback Chase, he too is on her list of suspects. Just what is Chase’s connection to Coach Killdare? At the top of Millie’s suspect list is Mike, former Honeywell High quarterback, until he too falls victim and is found dead in the locker room. The drama and the bodies pile up around Millie as she chases clues. Read “Buzz Kill” by Beth Fantaskey and join Millie in her quest to uncover the truth, clear her father’s name and take down a murderer.



### ***Falls The Shadow by Stefanie Gaither***

On the surface, Cate Benson has an ordinary family with a mom, a dad, and a sister. But is her family really that ordinary? When Cate was young, her sister, Violet, died. Just hours after her sister’s funeral, her family picked up Violet’s replacement . . . a clone of her sister. New Violet has the same smile, same, face, same body, even the same memories. As if grieving her real sister’s death and getting used to her new clone sister isn’t hard enough, Cate has to deal with the anti-cloning protesters who think that clones are monsters that need to be eliminated. She gets used to hearing all the anti-clone talk and isn’t afraid to defend her sister. However, things get more serious when the most popular girl in school ends up murdered and fingers point to New Violet. When Violet suddenly goes missing, Cate finds herself on a dangerous mission to find her sister. She uncovers secrets that make her question everything she once thought to be true. Find out what happens to Cate in this futuristic thriller where the lines between right and wrong and good vs. evil are easily blurred. How far will Cate go to keep her family together? Find out in “Falls the Shadow” by Stefanie Gaither.



### ***The Body In The Woods by April Henry***

Alexis has shut herself off from others as she deals with hardships at home. Nick is plagued by low self-esteem and is out to prove to himself and the father he hardly knew that he is brave. Ruby has some eccentric interests and is just looking for a place to belong. These three come from completely different backgrounds, but find themselves teamed together as new volunteers for the Portland County Search Rescue Team. Their first mission is to help search for a missing man. As they comb through the woods, instead of finding the person they are looking for, they stumble upon the dead body of a young girl. The three new friends start investigating the death but fear a serial killer is on the loose as more and more bodies start piling up. Their friendship grows as they work together through crime scene investigations, terrifying rescues, and harrowing escapes. Now they are the thick of it, and they need to find the killer and stop them before one of the three friends becomes the next victim. Read “The Body in the Woods” by April Henry to find out if they can stop this serial killer before it’s too late.



***Pieces of Me* by Amber Kizer**

Jessica is an introverted and socially awkward teenager who is excited about an invitation she received to a Halloween party. In a tragic turn of events, Jessica gets lost on her way to the party and is killed in a car accident. Her devastated parents decide it would be best to donate her organs so that others in need, can survive and benefit from Jessica’s life. Jessica’s spirit, not yet ready to move on, is able to observe the lives of four teenagers who are the recipients of her organs. Samuel receives her kidneys. Vivian receives her heart and lungs. Leif receives her tissues and bone, and Misty gets her liver. Jessica is able to not only follow the lives of these four teens, but she has the ability to know their thoughts and feelings. She sees the teens’ medical and emotional struggles and has an up-close look at the adversities each of them faces in their daily lives. Jessica’s journey into the spiritual realm teaches her that maybe she has more in common with these teens than just her organs. Can Jessica find meaning in her untimely death? Find out in “Pieces of Me” by Amber Kizer.



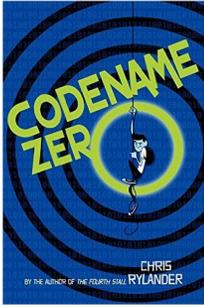
***Grandmaster* by David Klass**

Daniel Pratzer is your average teenage boy. He attends school at Loon Lake Academy and recently joined the chess team. Typically, chess teams are considered “nerdy”, but Loon Lake Academy has a history of being one of the oldest and strongest chess teams in New Jersey. Daniel does not have any real experience at playing chess, but is learning the strategies of playing the game. Daniel is shocked when the chess team’s top two players, Eric and Brad, ask him and his father to join their team in a father-son tournament. When Daniel begins to question their invite, he learns a secret that his father has been keeping from him. Daniel’s father is a chess Grandmaster. Why would Daniel’s father keep this a secret? Why would he stop playing? As the tournament begins to take a toll on his father’s health and sanity, Daniel begins to think that some skeletons are better left in the closet. Apparently, there is more to chess than moving the pieces around the board. For a story filled with moves and counter-moves read “Grandmaster” by David Klass.



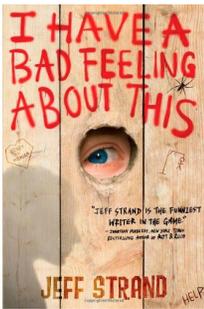
***The Blood Guard* by Carter Roy**

Thirteen-year-old Ronan Truelove has spent his whole life attending after school activities, like gymnastics, judo, and survival training. Having always lived an ordinary life, he doesn’t realize that he might need these skills. Then, one day, his seemingly ordinary mom pulls him out of school, takes him on a high speed car chase, and sends him off across the country, while she sets off to save his father, who has been kidnapped. It turns out, Ronan’s mom isn’t ordinary at all, she’s a member of an ancient order of knights called the Blood Guard. The Blood Guard protect the Pure....thirty six noble souls whose safety is crucial to the survival of the world as we know it. Along the way, Ronan meets new friends, confronts his enemies, and learns more about his mom and the secret society she works for. Threats are everywhere as Ronan is thrust into a world of danger and intrigue. Will Ronan be able to find his parents? Will he be able to save the world? “The Blood Guard” by Carter Roy is an action-packed story that will hook readers from the first page.



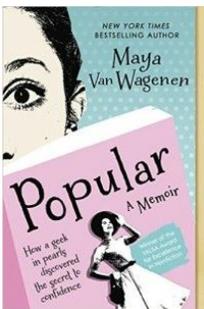
### **Codename Zero by Chris Rylander**

Could life in the quiet town of Minot, North Dakota be more boring? Carson Fender, a seventh grader at Eric Hill Middle School, believes nothing exciting ever happens in his sleepy little North Dakota town. To spice things up and make life a little more exciting, Carson and his friends create elaborate pranks which often land them in the principal's office. After an over the top prank of releasing fainting goats at school, life for Carson becomes filled with intrigue and mystery. It begins when a man hands Carson a mysterious package claiming the fate of the world depends on Carson delivering the package to a Mr. Jensen. The package leads Carson to enter a world of secret missions, spy gadgets and underground government agencies. When a secret government agency recruits Carson aka Codename Zero to join their ranks, can he save the day? Will Codename Zero accept a secret mission to foil enemy plans? Suddenly, life for Carson becomes anything but boring! For a mixture of humor, action and adventure read "Codename Zero" by Chris Rylander.



### **I Have a Bad Feeling About This by Jeff Strand**

When Henry Lambert's dad suggests he attend a two-week session at Strongwoods Survival Camp, he figures his summer is ruined. The web videos claim the place can turn scrawny, nerdy boys into fearless he-men by learning various manly skills like archery, hand-to-hand combat, water transport, and hunting. Henry just wants to stay home all summer playing video games. He reluctantly agrees to go when his best friend Randy decides to go with him, and the two join three other equally nerdy, clueless boys at the camp run by Max, a macho ex-military outdoorsman charged with whipping them into shape. It seems hopeless as the boys bungle their way through every activity and challenge Max puts them through, from target practice to fire building. After two weeks of mostly inept participation, the boys spend their final day competing in the Survival Games Challenge to test their training. Then three armed men arrive at the camp to kill Max for money they say he owes, and suddenly the pretend games have become very, very real as Henry and his fellow campers use their new skills to survive. For a dark comedy with plenty of action read "I Have a Bad Feeling About This" by Jeff Strand.



### **Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek by Maya Van Wagenen**

Every middle school girl would love to know the secret to being popular. It's during Maya's 8th grade year that she begins a social experiment to see if she can figure out the key. In a school where warnings against gangs and lockdown drills are weekly occurrences, Maya has no easy task. Maya owns a copy of a self help guide from the 1950s titled "Betty Cornell's Teenage Popularity Guide" from a visit to a local thrift store. Maya decides to give the tips in this guide a try. She figures if they worked in the '50s, surely there is some advice that still would be applicable in today's world too. Tips like smiling at people and sitting at different tables during lunch seem like obvious ways to gain popularity. However, Betty Cornell also suggests caring about one's posture and appearance which leads Maya to wear a girdle and pearls and start having only wheat toast and grapefruit juice for breakfast. "Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek" by Maya Van Wagenen is the true story of an 8th grade girl named Maya who tries nearly every tip in Betty Cornell's popularity guide and is shocked by what she learns.

Interested in getting involved?

- Sign up on the MASL website to be a Truman Reader Selector. As a reader selector, you will read from a list of 20–25 books from August through December. You will then get to vote for your favorite 12 titles. These votes will be tallied and the Truman list for the next school year is formed!
- Want more of a challenge? Consider becoming a one-year Truman committee member. We will be looking for new one-year members in the spring for the 2016–2017 school year. This is a big commitment! Committee members read all year long to find the best books for the given copyright year. Next school year we will be reading and considering 2016 copyrights. This list of books evolves all year until May when it is weeded down to a summer reading list of 50–75 books. Complete the Google form on the MASL website if you are interested!



[http://www.maslonline.org/?page=truman\\_award](http://www.maslonline.org/?page=truman_award)