

Gere/Bethany BooksTalk

Fall 2018 – School Shootings

Tracy T. – Bennett Martin Public Library (* = I read this one)

Columbine – Dave Cullen (371.782 Cul) *

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, print

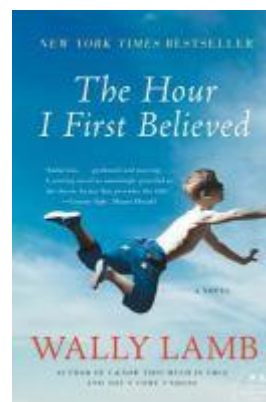
This non-fiction account of the events leading up to and taking place on April 20, 1999, outside of Littleton, Colorado reads like a novel. It's very well-written, with a sort of before-and-after layout. One chapter will speak to Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold's plans and preparations, over a year in advance of the actual event. The next chapter examines the actual breakdown of what happened that day, various people's perspectives as things were happening, and then, later, the aftermath and healing process. There are some psychological theories explained throughout, as well as a bit of forensic detailing given; yet the book is easy to follow and understand. One thing I've noticed and appreciated, as I've read this book, was that it answered many questions for me—but it also brought several more questions to the surface. This was the first book on school shootings that I had checked out since the Parkland, FL, shootings on Feb. 14, 2018. It was about a week after I began reading it that I decided to booktalk this subject. Something that sticks out to me in this book as well as in a few others (I'll try not to mention this more than once, since I'm putting it down right off the bat): although the investigators and FBI agents claim that school shooters do NOT have anything in common other than being human and male, I'm noticing that they seem to share a disdain for conformity. It's not to say that they're all outcasts or victims of bullying; it's more that they all have unique tendencies and want to embrace those, while it seems the majority of their peers all want to be like everyone else, shunning individuality. It seems that a common thread among school shooters is that they are completely disgusted by that robotic follow-the-leader mentality. (Of course, this is not to say that anyone who is a nonconformist is going to be a school shooter—I just find it interesting that I'm picking up on that after reading a few books on the subject, but all these highly qualified investigators don't pick up on that!)



The Hour I First Believed – Wally Lamb (Lamb) *

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, audiobook on CD, print

When forty-seven-year-old high school teacher Caelum Quirk and his younger wife, Maureen, a school nurse, move to Littleton, Colorado, they both get jobs at Columbine High School. In April 1999, Caelum returns home to Three Rivers, Connecticut, to be with his aunt who has just had a stroke. But Maureen finds herself in the school library at Columbine, cowering in a cabinet and expecting to be killed, as two vengeful students go on a carefully premeditated, murderous rampage. Miraculously she survives, but at a cost: she is unable to recover from the trauma. Caelum



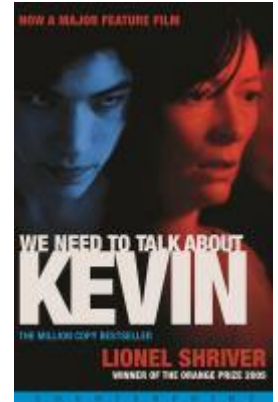
and Maureen flee Colorado and return to an illusion of safety at the Quirk family farm in Three Rivers. But the effects of chaos are not so easily put right, and further tragedy ensues.

[We Need to Talk About Kevin](#) – Lionel Shriver

(Shriver) *

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, audiobook on CD, print (also made into a movie, which we do have on DVD)

Eva never really wanted to be a mother - and certainly not the mother of the unlovable boy who murdered seven of his fellow high school students, a cafeteria worker, and a much-adored teacher who tried to befriend him, all two days before his sixteenth birthday. Now, two years later, it is time for her to come to terms with marriage, career, family, parenthood, and Kevin's horrific rampage in a series of startlingly direct correspondences with her estranged husband, Franklin. Uneasy with the sacrifices and social demotion of motherhood from the start, Eva fears that her alarming dislike for her own son may be responsible for driving him so nihilistically off the rails.

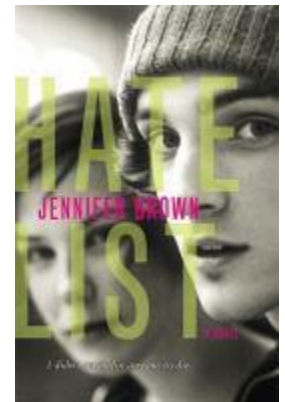


[Hate List](#) – Jennifer Brown (YA Brown) *

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, print

Five months ago, Valerie Leftman's boyfriend, Nick, opened fire on their school cafeteria. Shot trying to stop him, Valerie inadvertently saved the life of a classmate, but was implicated in the shootings because of the list she helped create. A list of people and things she and Nick hated. The list he used to pick his targets.

Now, after a summer of seclusion, Val is forced to confront her guilt as she returns to school to complete her senior year. Haunted by the memory of the boyfriend she still loves and navigating rocky relationships with her family, former friends and the girl whose life she saved, Val must come to grips with the tragedy that took place and her role in it, in order to make amends and move on with her life.



[Nineteen Minutes](#) – Jodi Picoult (Picoult)

Available in e-book, audiobook on CD, print

In nineteen minutes, you can mow the front lawn, color your hair, watch a third of a hockey game. In nineteen minutes, you can bake scones or get a tooth filled by a dentist; you can fold laundry for a family of five. In nineteen minutes, you can stop the world, or you can just jump off it. In nineteen minutes, you can get revenge.

Sterling is a small, ordinary New Hampshire town where nothing ever happens -- until the day its complacency is shattered by a shocking act of violence. In the aftermath, the town's residents must not only seek justice in order to begin healing but also come to terms with the role they played in the tragedy. For them, the lines between truth and fiction, right and wrong, insider and outsider have been obscured forever. Josie Cormier, the teenage daughter of the judge sitting on the case, could be the state's best witness, but she can't remember what happened in front of her own eyes. And as the trial

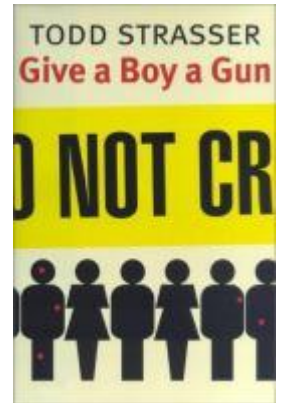


progresses, fault lines between the high school and the adult community begin to show, destroying the closest of friendships and families.

Give a Boy a Gun – Todd Strasser (j Strasser) *

Available in print

For as long as they can remember, Brendan and Gary have been mercilessly teased and harassed by the jocks who rule Middletown High. But not anymore. Stealing a small arsenal of guns from a neighbor, they take their classmates hostage at a school dance. In the panic of this desperate situation, it soon becomes clear that only one thing matters to Brendan and Gary: revenge.



This Is Where It Ends – Marieke Nijkamp (YA Nijkamp) *

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, print

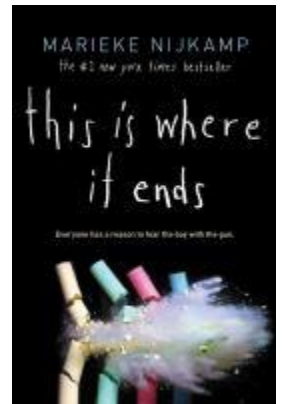
10:00 a.m. The principal of Opportunity High School finishes her speech, welcoming the entire student body to a new semester and encouraging them to excel and achieve.

10:02 a.m. The students get up to leave the auditorium for their next class.

10:03 a.m. The auditorium doors won't open.

10:05 a.m. Someone starts shooting.

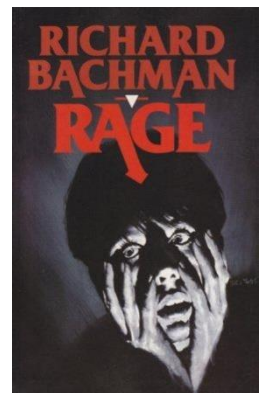
Told from four different perspectives over the span of fifty-four harrowing minutes, terror reigns as one student's calculated revenge turns into the ultimate game of survival.



Rage – Richard Bachman (Bachman [King]) *

No longer available through library--read my personal copy

A disturbed high-school student with authority problems kills one of his teachers and takes the rest of his class hostage. Over the course of one long, tense and unbearable hot afternoon, Charlie Decker explains what led him to this drastic sequence of events, while at the same time deconstructing the personalities of his classmates, forcing each one to justify his or her existence.

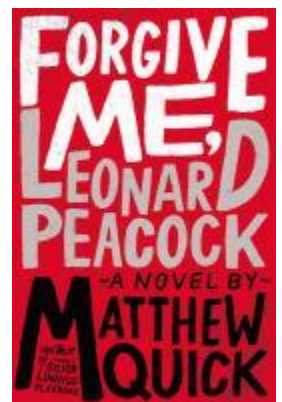


Forgive me, Leonard Peacock - Matthew Quick (YA Quick)

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, print

Today is Leonard Peacock's birthday. It is also the day he hides a gun in his backpack. Because today is the day he will kill his former best friend, and then himself, with his grandfather's P-38 pistol.

But first he must say good-bye to the four people who matter most to him: his Humphrey Bogart-obsessed next-door neighbor, Walt; his classmate, Baback, a violin virtuoso; Lauren, the Christian homeschooler he has a crush on; and Herr Silverman, who teaches the high school's class on the



Holocaust. Speaking to each in turn, Leonard slowly reveals his secrets as the hours tick by and the moment of truth approaches.

Violent Ends – by Shaun David Hutchinson (YA Hutchinson) * (tried, quit)

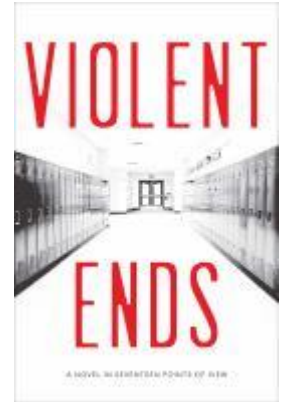
Available in print

It took only twenty-two minutes for Kirby Matheson to exit his car, march onto the school grounds, enter the gymnasium, and open fire, killing six and injuring five others.

But this isn't a story about the shooting itself. This isn't about recounting that one unforgettable day.

This is about one boy—who had friends, enjoyed reading, playing saxophone in the band, and had never been in trouble before—became a monster capable of entering his school with a loaded gun and firing bullets at his classmates.

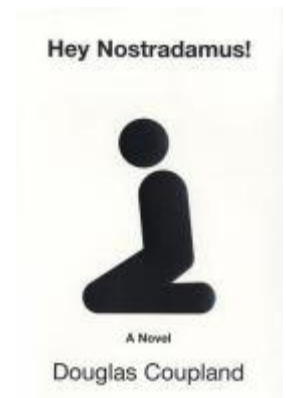
Each chapter is told from a different victim's viewpoint, giving insight into who Kirby was and who he'd become. Some are sweet, some are dark; some are seemingly unrelated, about fights or first kisses or late-night parties. This is a book told from multiple perspectives — with one character and one event drawing them all together...



Hey Nostradamus! – Douglas Coupland (Coupland) *

Available in downloadable audiobook, print

Pregnant and secretly married, Cheryl Anway scribbles what becomes her last will and testament on a school binder shortly before a rampaging trio of misfit classmates gun her down in a high school cafeteria. Overrun with paranoia, teenage angst, and religious zeal in the massacre's wake, this sleepy suburban neighborhood declares its saints, brands its demons, and moves on. But for a handful of people still reeling from that horrific day, life remains permanently derailed. Four dramatically different characters tell their stories: Cheryl, who calmly narrates her own death; Jason, the boy no one knew was her husband, still marooned ten years later by his loss; Heather, the woman trying to love the shattered Jason; and Jason's father, Reg, whose rigid religiosity has separated him from nearly everyone he loves. Hey Nostradamus! is an unforgettable portrait of people wrestling with spirituality and with sorrow and its acceptance.



Finding Jake – Bryan Reardon (Reardon)

Available in downloadable audiobook, print

While his successful wife goes off to her law office each day, Simon Connolly takes care of their kids, Jake and Laney. Now that they are in high school, the angst-ridden father should feel more relaxed, but he doesn't. He's seen the statistics, read the headlines. And now, his darkest fear is coming true. There has been a shooting at school.

Simon races to the rendezvous point, where he's forced to wait. Do they know who did it? How many victims were there? Why did this happen?



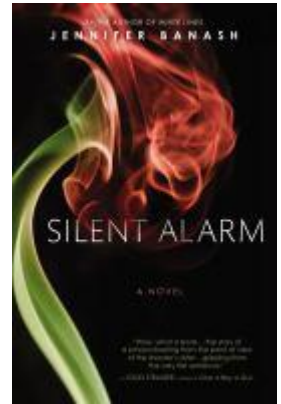
One by one, parents are led out of the room to reunite with their children. Their numbers dwindle, until Simon is alone.

As his worst nightmare unfolds, and Jake is the only child missing, Simon begins to obsess over the past, searching for answers, for hope, for the memory of the boy he raised, for mistakes he must have made, for the reason everything came to this. Where is Jake? What happened in those final moments? Is it possible he doesn't really know his son? Or he knows him better than he thought?

Silent Alarm – Jennifer Banash (YA Banash) *

Available in print

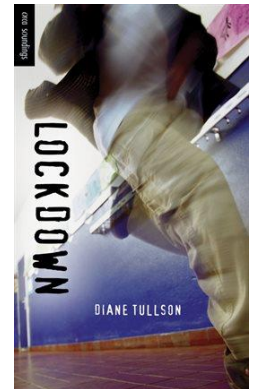
Alys's whole world was comprised of the history project that was due, her upcoming violin audition, being held tightly in the arms of her boyfriend, Ben, and laughing with her best friend, Delilah. At least it was—until she found herself on the wrong end of a shotgun in the school library. Her suburban high school had become one of those places you hear about on the news—a place where some disaffected youth decided to end it all and take as many of his teachers and classmates with him as he could. Except, in this story, that youth was Alys's own brother, Luke. He killed fifteen others and himself, but spared her—though she'll never know why.



Lockdown – Diane Tullson (YA Tullson)

Available in e-book and downloadable audiobook

Some days it's just easier not to go to school at all. Adam has been slacking off lately, but today he stuck around to see his girlfriend. When Josh, who has been bullied mercilessly, brings a gun to school, the building is locked down and Adam is forced to risk everything to save himself and to find Zoe before Josh does. Calling on reserves he didn't know he had, Adam could end up a hero--or a victim.



One of Us Is Lying – Karen McManus (YA McManus)

* (tried, quit)

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, print

On Monday afternoon, five students at Bayview High walk into detention.

Bronwyn, **the brain**, is Yale-bound and never breaks a rule.

Addy, **the beauty**, is the picture-perfect homecoming princess.

Nate, **the criminal**, is already on probation for dealing.

Cooper, **the athlete**, is the all-star baseball pitcher.

And Simon, **the outcast**, is the creator of Bayview High's notorious gossip app.

Only, Simon never makes it out of that classroom. Before the end of detention Simon's dead.

And according to investigators, his death wasn't an accident. On Monday, he died. But on Tuesday, he'd planned to post juicy reveals about all four of his high-profile classmates, which makes all four of them suspects in his murder. Or are they the perfect patsies for a killer who's still on the loose?

Everyone has secrets, right? What really matters is how far you would go to protect them.



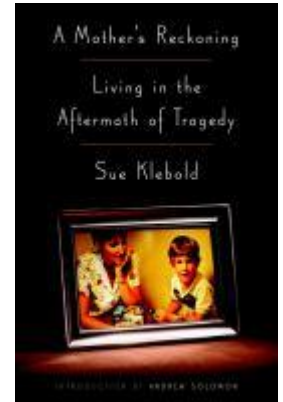
[A Mother's Reckoning: Living in the Aftermath of Tragedy](#) – Sue Klebold (Biography Klebold)

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, audiobook on CD, print

On April 20, 1999, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold walked into Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Over the course of minutes, they would kill twelve students and a teacher and wound twenty-four others before taking their own lives.

For the last sixteen years, Sue Klebold, Dylan's mother, has lived with the indescribable grief and shame of that day. How could her child, the promising young man she had loved and raised, be responsible for such horror? And how, as his mother, had she not known something was wrong? Were there subtle signs she had missed? What, if anything, could she have done differently?

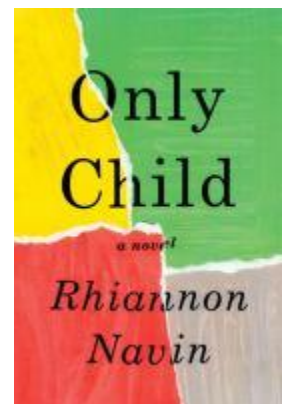
These are questions that Klebold has grappled with every day since the Columbine tragedy. In *A Mother's Reckoning*, she chronicles with unflinching honesty her journey as a mother trying to come to terms with the incomprehensible. In the hope that the insights and understanding she has gained may help other families recognize when a child is in distress, she tells her story in full, drawing upon her personal journals, the videos and writings that Dylan left behind, and on countless interviews with mental health experts.



[Only Child](#) – Rhiannon Navin (Navin) *

Available in e-book, downloadable audiobook, print

Squeezed into a coat closet with his classmates and teacher, first grader Zach Taylor can hear gunshots ringing through the halls of his school. A gunman has entered the building, taking nineteen lives and irrevocably changing the very fabric of this close-knit community. While Zach's mother pursues a quest for justice against the shooter's parents, holding them responsible for their son's actions, Zach retreats into his super-secret hideout and loses himself in a world of books and art. Armed with his newfound understanding, and with the optimism and stubbornness only a child could have, Zach sets out on a captivating journey towards healing and forgiveness, determined to help the adults in his life rediscover the universal truths of love and compassion needed to pull them through their darkest hours



[Mockingbird](#) - Kathryn Erskine (jPB Erskine) *

Available in audiobook on CD, print

Caitlin has Asperger's. The world according to her is black and white; anything in between is confusing. Before, when things got confusing, Caitlin went to her older brother, Devon, for help. But Devon was killed in a school shooting, and Caitlin's dad is so distraught that he is just not helpful. Caitlin wants everything to go back to the way things were, but she doesn't know how to do that. Then she comes across the word closure--and she realizes this is what she needs. And in her search for it, Caitlin discovers that the world may not be so black and white after all.

