



## BOOK IN REVIEW: A TEACHING GUIDE

Barbara A. **Ward**



# Finding Hope and Resilience in Life's Bright Places:

Helping Adolescents Face Life's Challenges

*This article is also available in an online format that allows direct access to all links included. We encourage you to access it on the ALAN website at <http://www.alan-ya.org/publications/the-alan-review/the-alan-review-columns/>.*

**T**he theme for this issue of *The ALAN Review* revolves around what is often at the heart of many books written for young adults: the nature and challenges of adolescence/ts. It's intriguing to try to define these terms and to identify what it is that characterizes youth culture or makes adolescence what it is. Many readers of this journal are not that far removed from adolescence themselves, and the experience is still fresh in their minds. For those of us who are a little older, our age affords us the unique perspective of examining adolescence as it was depicted when we were young and now again in 2015. YAL as a genre was barely nascent when I was a teen reader, but I can certainly recall reading angst-filled classics such as *Wuthering Heights* (Brontë, 1847) and *Jane Eyre* (Brontë, 1847), the same weighty tomes that many adolescents read today, whether voluntarily or under pressure from their English teachers. But I can also recall gobbling up *The Pigman* (Zindel, 1968) and *Franny and Zooey* (Salinger, 1961), hungry to find books that would speak to me and describe my own life experiences as I continued my journey to adulthood.

Ah, adolescence, that most intriguing time in which many—but not all—childish things are put

away, and we look forward to the mingled pleasures that becoming an adult has to offer: independence, being on our own and making decisions for ourselves, starting and finishing high school and college, moving out, perhaps starting a family. Arguably, the adolescent years are concerned with a search for identity, finding ourselves, exploring possibilities outside our comfortable spaces, and coming of age in so many ways. It involves exploring our sexual and gender identities and sometimes taking risks.

Although my current acquaintances might disagree with the calendar, claiming that I act more like an adolescent than an adult in many ways, I still can remember those years of adolescence as clearly today as though they only occurred yesterday. I can remember well being caught up in the giddy excitement of my first crush only to have my heart broken when he didn't love me back. Rod Stewart's "The First Cut Is the Deepest" was the soundtrack for my heartbreak, and my poor parents had to listen to repeated plays of my 45 phonograph record, as well as my melancholic Joni Mitchell album "Blue," revolving endlessly on the turntable, with just the right ambience for depression provided by dim lighting, candles, and a firmly-shut bedroom door.

Each of us is a product of our experiences, whether first-hand or vicarious, and of our context. It's impossible to separate adolescents from the time period in which they grow up. It might be misty, unstudied, and unremarked history to many, but I grew up during the tumultuous Sixties. I became a teenager

during the Vietnam War and the protests against it, against the backdrop of several assassinations (JFK, RFK, MLK) and unprecedented violence in the streets; the times, they were a-changing. And I was changing with them. For a small-town Southern girl tiptoeing into adolescence, it was reading *The Bell Jar* (1971) by Sylvia Plath and the humorous yet meaningful novels of Kurt Vonnegut that influenced who I was. To know the books I chose to read was to become acquainted with a small part of me. After all, if adolescence mostly involves searching for one's identity and place in the sun, then books guided me along the way. It was through those books that I explored possible paths and identities and vicariously lived a completely different life than the one I led on my family's safe, sheltered farm.

As I was writing this column, I happened to go online to read comments made about some of the books I read during my adolescence, and one remark about *The Pigman* (1968) struck me as being most pertinent. The reviewer lauded the book's author for his ability to capture the way real teens speak and to focus his storyline not only on teens facing real problems, but also on their resourcefulness in coming up with solutions for those problems. Parents in those early books for teens tended to be absent, somewhat clueless, or ineffectual. As I reread the two books featured in this issue's column, I thought about the role of parents in them. To some extent, that absentee parent trend associated with early literature for teens seems to hold true even with books published five decades later. In *All the Bright Places* (Niven, 2015), home is not a bright place for the characters. Although Violet Markey has supportive parents, they treat her with kid gloves after the death of her sister, rarely even talking about Eleanor. Theodore Finch, Violet's romantic interest, spends tension-fraught weekends at the home of his father and stepmother, while at his own home, his mother is simply too busy, too preoccupied, and too unaware to see what's happening right in front of her. She barely knows Finch, just as many other parents of adolescents today may shake their heads in mystification as to whom or what their son or daughter has become. In *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things* (Aguirre, 2015), Sage's parents are dead, her mother after a horrible house fire. But still, Sage has her Aunt Gabby, her father's half-sister, in her corner. Shane, her love interest, fends for himself in a trailer outside of town, his father having absented

himself to drive trucks and avoid thinking of his wife, Shane's mother, who died of cancer.

Adolescents in the twenty-first century deal with many of the same issues as past generations, and yet, they also cope with pressures that were unimaginable back then. Once unheard of, school shootings have become increasingly commonplace, and teens must deal with the suicides of classmates, mental illness, absentee parents, and bullying. While those of my generation may have faced some of these issues, their intensity and/or frequency seems to have increased as the decades have rolled by. Or maybe that's just what I want to believe, from my sheltered, detached, somewhat safe perspective.

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## About the Authors

Jennifer Niven, who has been writing since she was a child, is a writer making the move from adult fiction to young adult fiction. She has written eight books, and *All the Bright Places* (2015) is her debut novel for teens. Her first nonfiction book, *The Ice Master* (2000), was followed by her first novel, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive* (2009), and then by *Ada Blackjack* (2003) and *The Aqua Net Diaries* (2010), all titles for adults. She lives in Los Angeles.

Ann Aguirre, author of *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things* (2015), is best known for her dystopian writing: her Razorland trilogy—*Enclave* (2011), *Outpost* (2012), *Horde* (2013)—and the paranormal Immortal Game trilogy—*Mortal Danger* (2014), *Public Enemies* (2015), and *Infinite Risk* (forthcoming in 2016). She grew up in a house near a cornfield, has a degree in English literature, and now lives in Mexico with her family. She worked as a clown, a clerk, and a voice actress before becoming a full-time writer, and she has written various types of genre fiction for adults and young adults.

Readers can learn more about these two authors at their websites: <http://www.annaguirre.com/> and <http://www.jenniferniven.com/>.

## About the Books

### *All the Bright Places*

Theodore Finch and Violet Markey are both marking time. He's counting the days when he actually feels alive and awake, while anticipating the darker ones that will end with him once again feeling comfortably numb. He wants to die and is preoccupied with death and possible ways to die, but at the same time, he is

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searching for a reason to live. Violet, on the other hand, has a calendar on which she marks off the number of days until graduation. Until then, she sleepwalks through her days, desperate to leave Indiana far behind. For Violet, leaving home is not so much a journey of self-discovery as a chance to move on with her life and escape from the guilt she feels after the death of her older sister. But while she

waits, she's missing out on a lot of living.

The two characters meet when Violet comes close to stepping off the school bell tower; their classmates assume that she saved Finch when, in fact, the opposite is true. At first, the two teens seem to have nothing in common other than being drawn to death. But as they head off on road trips to examine the state's wonders for a school project, they become friends and then fall in love. Violet starts living again and seeing the joy around her, while Finch shows her the many bright places that are within driving distance. Despite the love that they share, he falls into deeper and lengthier depressions until he simply disappears. By the time Violet finds him, it's too late. She begins to question everything they've shared, while also realizing that he left her with wonderful memories and a new outlook on life.

### *The Queen of Shiny Things*

Sage Czinski is like a lot of teen girls. While hiding her past and trying desperately to make herself indispensable to her aunt, she's also trying to avoid looking too closely at her own life and her own flaws. After all, if she's really busy and immersed in various causes, she

won't have time to reflect on her past or let people get too close to her. To her credit, she notices her classmates' pain and takes the time to place sticky notes on their lockers acknowledging their best attributes or something worth celebrating. When the book opens, she's also nurturing a secret crush on her best friend Ryan McKenna, but when she learns the truth about him and his involvement with an older woman, she pulls back. After all, he has used her to keep others from learning about his secret life, and that bothers her.

While she's trying to figure out how to fill the void left by Ryan's banishment, Shane Cavendish, a mysterious musician with a checkered past, transfers into her school. It turns out that he has plenty of secrets of his own, including a violent past and his current living situation. As Sage finds herself falling for him, she wonders if growing closer will necessitate sharing their secrets. Their relationship is complicated by Dylan, a bully who decides to make life difficult for Shane and for Lila, Dylan's ex-girlfriend. When Sage gets in the way, Dylan retaliates, but the author somehow still makes him a sympathetic character by revealing his relationship with his mother and what others say about her.

### About the Covers

Many teachers tell students not to judge a book by its cover, and while there is some wisdom in that old adage, I also find it insightful to examine book covers and allow readers to make guesses about the books' topics before opening them. With images of sticky notes included on their covers, these two books stand out. *All the Bright Places*, with its small versions of sticky notes, uses soft pastels—yellows, blues, lilacs—and one word on each sticky note to reveal the book's title, then additional sticky notes filled with words and symbols to perfectly depict the relationship covered in the book and encapsulate its plot artistically. The cover of *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things* features 10 snapshots of a couple tucked close together and riding a bicycle. The black-and-white images frame three bright pink, bright lilac, and bright blue sticky notes that are almost actual size. Both book titles appear on the sticky notes, one neatly organized in a series of rows or arrays and the other almost haphazardly placed on the page. It's hard to resist trying to lift them up in order to see if there are messages hidden underneath.

## Using the Books in the Classroom

### Pre-reading Activities

- Sticky notes play important roles in both books. Check out this website for interesting ways to use these little slips of paper: [http://www.Post-it.com/wps/portal/3M/en\\_US/PostItNA/Home/](http://www.Post-it.com/wps/portal/3M/en_US/PostItNA/Home/). The site includes curriculum and study tips as well as projects, including sticky note sculpture and origami. Read an article about how these ubiquitous but helpful papers came into existence in 1974 and their interesting inventors, Arthur Fry and Spencer Silver, at The Great Idea Finder: <http://www.ideafinder.com/history/inventions/postit.htm>. Also check out this CNN article on the “Hallelujah moment” behind the invention of the sticky note at <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/04/tech/Post-it-note-history/index.html>.
- As the characters in both novels realize, each day is filled with both joys and challenges. Perhaps survival is a matter of perspective on each of those. To remind yourself of what brings joy to your heart, make a daily gratitude list that includes a minimum of five individuals, places, or items for which you are grateful. Share your list with a friend or family member. Maybe even a pet!
- Words are important to the protagonists in both books. In *All the Bright Places*, Finch chooses to express his fondness for good words that make the world a brighter place by recording them on sticky notes, while in *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things*, Sage works hard to find something noteworthy about those around her in high school. Take five sticky notes and write a descriptive word that best describes you, such as “vivacious,” “friendly,” “passionate,” “patient.” Put the sticky notes in a prominent place, perhaps on your bathroom or bedroom mirror, as a reminder of your best qualities.
- You and your classmates can share and gather compliments through this creative and affirmative activity. First create a simple origami box by following the instructions at <http://www.origami-instructions.com/origami-box.html>. The box requires one square sheet of paper; if you also want to fashion a lid, you will need two sheets of paper. After creating your box (and possibly a

lid), tear several strips of paper so that you have enough strips to write down three compliments for each of your classmates. Record one compliment per strip. The compliments can be anonymous, or you can include your name on the strip. It’s up to you. Think hard about each of your classmates and give each of them three written compliments to be stored in the origami take-out compliment box. Your teacher should make sure that no one looks at the compliments until class is dismissed. If you don’t think you received the kinds of compliments that you would like to receive, then write your own compliments for yourself and stash them in your box. When you’re feeling discouraged, open up your treasure box and reread the compliments.

### Interdisciplinary Connections

- At the behest of a teacher who assigns a unique school project, Finch and Violet (from *All the Bright Places*) visit all sorts of bright places in Indiana where they live. Find a map online, download one on your Smartphone, or use a paper map of Indiana, and then identify and plot the places they visit. Are these made-up spots or actual destinations? Create a brochure enticing savvy teen tourists to visit Indiana and the places Finch and Violet ventured during the book.
- What are the bright places in your own life or your own community? After revisiting them in some way—through a road trip or a stroll down memory lane or rereading your own diary or journal—design a detailed map that pays tribute to those places. Be sure to use symbols, words, and dates that are meaningful for you.
- In *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things*, Sage becomes deeply involved in a community garden project with a small group of classmates. Before they can plant a garden, though, they must clean the area and remove all the debris and junk that has been left there. Being able to make such a tangible difference in their community is empowering for these teens. Your community or school may have such a garden. Do some investigating and take photos of the garden. If there is no school or community garden near you, scope out some areas that might be ripe for planting . . . and picking, once your fruits and veggies are growing.



### Group Discussion Questions

- The characters in both books hold on to secrets. Why is that the case? What makes us want to keep our secrets safe from others? How do we know when it's safe to share those secrets or reveal who we really are? What makes secrets so damaging?
- Consider the behavior of the parents in both of the books, and then imagine how very different each book might have been if the parents of Finch, for instance, had been switched with Sage's guardian and vice versa. Imagine that your parents are part of either one of the family dynamics depicted in these books. With which parenting style do you think they would be most comfortable? Why? How do you envision yourself in the future if you decide to be a parent? What mistakes and what good decisions did you identify on the part of the parents in both books? Assume you are a parent in either book and identify some of the words and actions you might handle differently and explain why.
- Both books contain different examples of bullying—some from classmates, some from teachers, and even sometimes, sadly, from parents. Although it's impossible to quantify, which type of bullying in either book did you regard as most damaging? Why? If you were one of these characters, what would you want to say in a letter, a tweet, a text message, or a dramatic monologue? Why? Would it do any good?
- Like many teen readers, I enjoy a good romance. However, I don't think that romance or a romantic relationship has to be the thing that saves us from the perils of the wide world or from our own demons. Yet both books feature characters that seem to save one another—at least for a short time. Is there any danger in encouraging teen readers to read books like this that seem to say, in part, that two is better than one or that we need someone else to help us find our way? Can we not be the heroes of our own stories?
- Both Finch in *All the Bright Places* and Sage in *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things* are drawn in many respects to what is the best and brightest in the world around them. Think for a little while about your own world, and then identify the things that you would share with someone who just moved into your community or state. What are the “bright places” or “bright and shiny things” in your surroundings? What makes them so appealing?
- Physical intimacy requires a certain amount of trust, and yet both couples, Sage and Shane in *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things* and Violet and Finch in *All the Bright Places*, maintain their secrets even after becoming physically intimate. Why do you think that is so? Are there parts of each of us or places hidden deep within our psyche that are far more precious to us than the pleasure we give and receive from a physical relationship? How can this be so?
- All of the main characters in both books have experienced some sort of loss. Discuss the ways each character copes with the losses in his/her life. Consider also how Sage stuffs away her feelings and her anger for fear that she will completely lose control or cause her aunt to send her away. Think about how Violet's parents never talk about Eleanor, making it almost seem as though she never existed. What problems do you see with these coping mechanisms? What advantages do you see with them? How do you cope with loss? How do those around you cope with loss? How do people in cultures other than your own cope with loss?
- In *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things*, Lila, who becomes a close friend to Sage, must deal with a great deal of gossip about her alleged sexual promiscuity. Sadly, the rumors can be traced back to her boyfriend, Dylan Smith. Dylan, in turn, has to deal with the rumors that fly through the school about his mother's attractiveness and her sexuality. Consider briefly the terms that are used when describing a male who is sexually active and a female who is sexually active. It often seems that there is a double standard at work here, since males are often described as studs, while females might be called sluts. Why do you suppose that is? What can we do about it? Does popular culture have any impact on how we regard the sexual behavior of males and females? How about in your high school? How much slut-shaming occurs within your high school's walls? What are you doing about it? Are you stopping it, passing it on, adding to it, or questioning it? From an even broader perspective, how is it possible to confront gossip?
- When we are young, adults often tell us that “Sticks and stones may break your bones, but

words can never hurt you.” While words can inflict no physical damage, they do cut deeply and hurt us. What do you think prompted Decca, Finch’s sister, to be so determined to remove all the unpleasant words from her books? Why is he so struck by that activity that he continues working on her project long after she’s finished with it? What words do you find the most hurtful in your daily life?

- Several characters in both books want to protect others from being hurt. Is it possible to ensure someone’s safety, surround him/her with good, and prevent those we love from the bad? Why do you think as you do?

### Wonderful Words Worth Noting

With the words they choose and the way they place those words, good writers help readers know their characters. Find a partner and discuss the quotations below. Be sure to explain what each passage reveals about the character and/or how the quote makes you feel. What makes the passage particularly memorable? Or, if you don’t like the lines, why don’t they appeal to you? Do they seem inauthentic?

#### FROM *ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES*

“I close my eyes, enjoying the way everything spins. Maybe this time I’ll do it—let the air carry me away. It will be like floating in a pool, drifting off until there’s nothing.” (p. 3)

“Like Ryan, my parents are perfect. They are strong and brave and caring, and even though I know they must cry and get angry and maybe even throw things when they’re alone, they rarely show it to me.” (p. 51)

“I love the world that is my room. It’s nicer in here than out there, because in here I’m whatever I want to be.” (p. 52)

“I don’t say anything because I used to love words. I loved them and was good at arranging them. Because of this, I felt protective of all the best ones. But now all of them, good and bad, frustrate me.” (p. 92)

“He smiles out at the ugly trees and the ugly farmland and the ugly kids as if he can see Oz. As if he really, truly sees the beauty that’s there.” (p. 97)

“There’s no rush of having survived, only emptiness, and lungs that need air, and wet hair sticking to my face.” (p. 107)

“I know life well enough to know you can’t count on things staying around or standing still, no matter how much you want them to. You can’t stop people from dying. You can’t stop them from going away. You can’t stop yourself from

going away either.” (pp. 139–140)

“Better to keep the unhappy, mad, bad, unpleasant words separate, where you can watch them and make sure they don’t surprise you when you’re not expecting them.” (p. 166)

“What if life could be this way? Only the happy parts, none of the terrible, not even the mildly unpleasant. What if we could just cut out the bad and keep the good? This is what I want to do with Violet—give her only the good, keep away the bad, so that good is all we ever have around us.” (p. 168)

“My light is off and my eyes are closed when I realize that for the first time I’ve forgotten to cross off the day on my calendar.” (p. 191)

“He opens the door to his closet, and it actually looks pretty cool. He’s made a cave for himself, complete with guitar and computer and notebooks of staff paper, along with pens and Post-its. My picture is tacked to the blue wall along with a license plate.” (p. 291)

“It’s not just that the room is bare—it’s that there’s a strange, dead stillness to the air, as if the room is an empty shell left behind by an animal.” (p. 311)

“The thing I realize is that it’s not what you take, it’s what you leave.” (p. 376)

#### FROM *THE QUEEN OF BRIGHT AND SHINY THINGS*

“I walk on, brightening my smile thorough sheer determination. I’ve heard if you pretend long enough—or maybe wish hard enough—faking normal becomes real. I’m counting on that.” (p. 2)

You can lie to yourself about all kinds of things. Until you can’t, anymore. Until reality pounds a hole through your fantasy castle and the reality check must be cashed.” (p. 9)

“This is a Tuesday. Nothing earth shattering ever happens on a Tuesday. It doesn’t even have a catchy nickname, unlike Wednesday, aka Hump Day.” (p. 60)

“But maybe it’s only horrible to be gay in this town if you’re a guy. Two girls together, on the other hand, might be considered hot. I hate that double standard so *much*.” (p. 66)

“Like me, he needs to get out of here; he’s running toward something bigger and brighter.” (p. 75)

“It’s kind of revelational to realize that graduation doesn’t also mean receiving all the answers. This is also depressing. I imagine being fifty-eight years old, still with no idea what the heck is going on.” (p. 116)

“I don’t know if I’m excited that he wants to know me or terrified about how he’ll feel once he does.” (p. 122)

“I’m so not enough. I can’t be. I smile, and I act happy, and I pretend. I’m the queen of bright and shiny things,

eternally looking for the positive and seeking a silver lining in the dark.” (p. 169)

“I wish I could say the time races like white-water rapids, but it’s more like honey in cold weather. But the clock hands can’t actually run backward, so eventually, it’s Wednesday afternoon.” (p. 222)

“Once people think you sleep around, it doesn’t much matter if you do or not.” (p. 245)

“When I get to my locker after school, I stop, staring at it in astonishment. The entire surface is covered in sticky notes. They’re lined up neatly in a rainbow of hues and ink colors, different handwritings that tell me this show of support comes from a vast array of people. I read them with dawning wonder, and the ice cracks a fraction in my heart.” (p. 280)

### Post-reading Activities

- Conduct a thorough Internet search to identify possible sources of help for the characters in both books. *All the Bright Places* includes several suggested websites for information about suicide, bullying, and abuse. Start with those websites, read them carefully, and then write a brief review of each one telling how useful you consider them to be. Then, expand your search and find even more online resources. Finally, explore your own community, and find out what help is available for teens in crisis. Create a brochure describing these resources so that your classmates and other teens have places to turn. If there are no resources in your school or community, band together with your friends and write a letter or petition requesting that resources be made available.
- Now that you have completed both books, consider the titles chosen for the books. Why do you think the titles work or don’t work? If you were the books’ publishers, what are some other possible titles you might suggest?
- Design another cover for each of the books, highlighting what you consider to be their most important themes. Alternatively, create a 30-second book trailer or teaser for each book urging your classmates to read it. Be sure not to give away how the story turns out, since your teacher may decide to share these with his/her class next year.
- Choose one of the books (or use both if you prefer), and then identify pivotal moments or points in the book. After carefully considering those important moments, choose five to depict by creating a collage from magazine photos, your original artwork, and text from the book or from letters cut from magazine ads. Be prepared to share your work with your classmates.
- Return to the books and note how each one is organized. *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things*, for instance, relies on a simple chapter organization, starting with chapter one and concluding with chapter thirty-three, with first-person narration. Except for brief passages in which the main character, Sage, ruminates on her past, everything occurs in present time. Readers never learn the perspectives of the other characters about how they regard the action or even the main character. *All the Bright Places* uses a different narrative technique, since the story alternates between Finch and Violet and includes a countdown. Rewrite one of the passages from either book from the point of view of another character and then share with a classmate or your teacher what you noticed as you reread and reworked these passages.
- In *All the Bright Places*, Violet and her sister maintained a blog before her sister died; Violet at first shuts it down, but she starts another one eventually. Imagine that you are Finch in the same book, and you are maintaining a blog. Create it and put it online. What does it reveal about you? Which version of Finch are you choosing to share with the world? Why? What if Sage and Lila decided to pour their energies into a blog? What might it include? Create a blog for these two characters from *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things* and post it.
- Found poems can provide a creative way to respond artistically to texts since they rely on rereading and then rearranging existing pieces of text. Because the choice of the words and phrases and their order are determined by the found poem’s creator, the resulting product is quite personal and somewhat revealing. After reading more about this poetic form at the Academy of American Poets website (<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/poetic-form-found-poem>), try your hand at creating a found poem from either one of the books. Using sticky notes is strongly suggested so that you can capture the flavor of the book in your poetic creation.
- One of my favorite scenes in *The Queen of Bright*

and *Shiny Things* occurs when Cassie, Ryan’s secret older girlfriend, visits Sage at the beauty parlor. That took a lot of courage. Imagine that you are Cassie trying to work up the nerve to confront Sage and get to know her. What would you write in your journal to give yourself courage to do so? What if Sage and Cassie hadn’t been open to getting to know one another? Rewrite the scene to make it turn out differently. You might even have Ryan arriving on the scene just as Cassie reveals who she is to Sage.

- One of my favorite scenes in *All the Bright Places* occurs when Finch finds his little sister Decca cutting out all of the mean and unpleasant words from her books. Create your own poster filled with images and words that bring you joy and one with words and images that hurt.
- Books often omit certain scenes, leaving the specific details of what might have happened to the imagination of readers. Write a dramatic monologue or dialogue depicting one omitted scene from either book. For instance, you might craft a monologue for Sage after she has set fire to the house where her mother was living. Or you might write a dialogue between Violet and Ryan in which she spells out all the reasons he has to live. The possibilities are almost limitless, and the length or intensity of the scene is up to you. After you’ve composed your scene, perform it before your classmates, or ask a classmate to perform it with you.

## These Remind Me of You

Both of the books featured in this column highlight characters dealing with very real problems—often ones beyond their ability to control, including mental illness, depression, abuse, trauma, bullying, slut-shaming, and fitting in. Each of the books below offers additional perspectives on these particular issues. Both Finch and Violet in *All the Bright Places* and Sage and Shane in *The Queen of Bright and Shiny Things* have secrets they keep from each other and their friends, even while growing closer together. The characters in the books suggested below deal with their challenging issues in many different ways; some of them are extremely self-destructive, but others choose healthier paths, channeling their pain into art, drama, and music:

- Camden, S. (2015). *It’s about love*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Children’s Books.
- Nijkamp, M. (2016). *This is where it ends*. Chicago, IL: Sourcebooks Fire.
- Oseman, A. (2015). *Solitaire*. New York, NY: HarperTeen.
- Portes, A. (2014). *Anatomy of a misfit*. New York, NY: Harper Children’s.
- Rodriguez, C. L. (2015). *When reason breaks*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Rowell, R. (2013). *Eleanor & Park*. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Griffin.

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