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### 5. Eragon by [Christopher Paolini](#)

Eragon, a young farm boy, finds a marvelous blue stone in a mystical mountain place. Before he can trade it for food to get his family through the hard winter, it hatches a beautiful sapphire-blue dragon, a race thought to be extinct. Eragon bonds with the dragon, and when his family is killed by the marauding Ra'zac, he discovers that he is the last of the Dragon Riders, fated to play a decisive part in the coming war between the human but hidden Varden, dwarves, elves, the diabolical Shades and their neanderthal Urgalls, all pitted against and allied with each other and the evil King Galbatorix. Eragon and his dragon Saphira set out to find their role, growing in magic power and understanding of the complex political situation as they endure perilous travels and sudden battles, dire wounds, capture and escape.

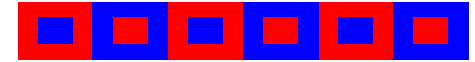
In spite of the engrossing action, this is not a book for the casual fantasy reader. There are 65 names of people, horses, and dragons to be remembered and lots of pseudo-Celtic places, magic words, and phrases in the Ancient Language as well as the speech of the dwarfs and the Urgalls. But the maps and glossaries help, and by the end, readers will be utterly dedicated and eager for the next book, *Eldest*

### 6. *On the Fringe: Stories*

Donald Gallo, editor

**Recommended for 8<sup>th</sup> grade "choice" only.**

Gr 7 Up-Kids who are geeks, unathletic, poor, emotionally fragile, loners, or unattractive by current standards form the heart of this collection of exceptional stories by well-known YA authors such as Joan Bauer, Chris Crutcher, and M. E. Kerr. Inspired by the events at Columbine High School, the authors pondered what sorts of heartbreak could cause teens to react so powerfully and violently, and how being isolated and shut out of high school groups could tear down the fragile walls of self-esteem, making vulnerable individuals snap and cause massive destruction. The result is a compilation of short stories from the point of view of those tormented, and those who view others being bullied and how their perceptions change as they examine the situations.



# Summer Reading Choices

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**E. L. Wright  
Middle School**

**Rising 8th  
Graders**

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# Allow your mind to get lost in a book.....



## 1. Last Shot: a Final Four Mystery, John Feinstein (knopf 2005)

A trip to the Final Four Tournament in New Orleans—complete with press credentials and reporting assignments. It's a dream come true for Stevie and Susan Carol, who won the U.S. Basketball Writers Association's writing contest. But there is more going on at the Superdome than just basketball. With all the bright lights and famous athletes, Stevie feels like he's in a movie, and when he and Susan Carol overhear a blackmail attempt, the two of them become part of the movie.

Stevie and Susan Carol quickly become embroiled in a plot to throw the championship game. They team up with star player for Minnesota State, Chip Waber by offering to help him escape the blackmail attempt.

## 2. Runner, Carol Deuker (Houghton Mifflin 2005)

Chance is a "ghost walker" at school—barely talking, barely passing. Just keeping it together until graduation. He has other things to worry about. His alcoholic father can barely hold a job. They live on a boat so small you can hardly turn around without bumping in to something or someone. Every day after school, Chance runs to escape his problems. These long, solitary runs along the Seattle waterfront are his only pleasure.

When his father loses yet another job, Chance is worried that they won't be pay to the moorage fees to keep the boat docked. So when a dock worker offers him \$200 a week to pick up packages on his regular running route, Chance can't turn it down even though he's pretty sure it's illegal. At first, Chance doesn't ask any questions, but it soon becomes even clearer that he is involved in something illegal—and dangerous.

## 3. Uglies, Scott Westerfeld (Simon Pulse 2005)

Tally Youngblood is about to turn 16, and she can't wait to turn pretty. Everyone gets an operation when they turn 16 that makes them pretty, and then you get to live in New Pretty Town where there are parties every day and no responsibilities. Until then, Tally is stuck in Uglyville planning tricks to keep busy, including sneaking into a party in New Pretty Town.

But when she meets Shay, another ugly, something changes. Shay isn't sure she wants to be pretty, and she is willing to risk everything to stay the way she is, even live outside the city with a group of rebels. Just before her birthday, Shay runs away in search of the Smoke where she can stay ugly and live with others like her.

## 4. Shakespeare's Secret, Elise Broach (Henry Holt 2005)

Hero is the new girl in town, and she's already resigned to her classmates' teasing about her name. She can't help it if she was named for a character in a Shakespearean play, and her classmates think its more like a dog's name than a girl's name.

Hero, however, has other things to think about. Her eccentric neighbor Mrs. Roth tells Hero about an enormous diamond supposedly hidden somewhere in Hero's family's new house. Hero wants to believe the story about the diamond, and together, Hero and Mrs. Roth set out to find the mysterious diamond. Soon they find a strange connection between the diamond, Anne Boleyn, and Shakespeare himself. *You won't be able to put this book down until the mystery is solved!*

