

Dystopias

by



Dystopias – imperfect societies, and totalitarian governments running amok – have been around for a long time. George Orwell wrote *1984* way back in 1949, and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley was written in 1931 . . . long before *Divergent* or *The Hunger Games*. There is no denying that dystopias have been particularly popular in the last decade, though, and creative authors are combining dystopian themes with post-apocalyptic, paranormal and science fiction genres – to name just a few. At its best, the dystopia story is provocative and thought-provoking. The most frightening dystopias target some aspect of our recognisable world, whether political, environmental or scientific, and then imagine plausible outcomes. Cautionary tales or just entertainment?

You, the reader, decide.



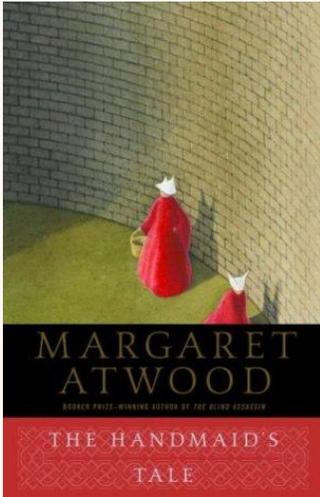
Legend

by Marie Wu

Day and June are both citizens of the Republic of America, but they are not equal. Although they both possess superior intelligence and physical agility, one of them has had an elite education while the other is a common thief. When Day is framed for murder, June is given the task of hunting him down; are they destined to be adversaries or allies? This exciting novel is the first in the *Legend* trilogy.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; science fiction; action; adventure; romance



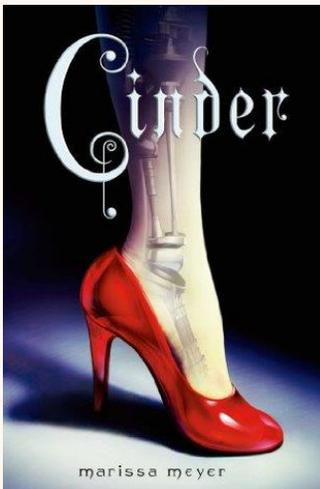
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

In the Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States of America, women can no longer work, read or control their own money and property. Required to wear robes and a headdress which conceals both face and body, Offred has no identity other than handmaiden to her Commander. Her body belongs to the Republic, and its only purpose now is to bear children. This classic dystopia, published 30 years ago, anticipated a resurgence of religious extremism that would seek to limit women's autonomy.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; science fiction; feminism; classic

This book contains some emotionally disturbing content, strong language and sexual scenes.



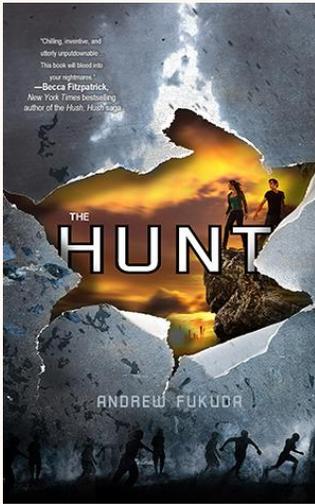
Cinder by Marissa Meyer

Cinder might be the best mechanic in New Beijing, but her wicked step-mother treats her like a worthless grease-monkey. When an unexpected meeting with Prince Kai becomes an even more unlikely friendship, Cinder is desperate to keep her secret – that she is 36.28% Cyborg. Cinder is more than she seems, and more than she even knows, and she may be the only person capable of keeping Queen Levana from taking over Earth. This inventive dystopia, which splices together science fiction and fairy tales, is

the first in a quartet.

Reading and interest level: 12+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; science fiction; fairy tale retellings; romance



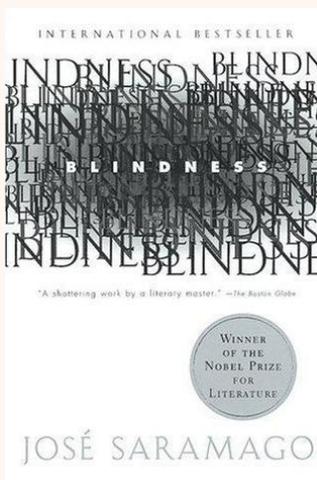
The Hunt by Andrew Fukuda

In this futuristic thriller, vampires rule the world and humans have become rare to the point of extinction. The last remaining humans have been housed in a protective Dome for years, but now they will be released into the wild for one last Hunt. 17 year-old Gene wins a coveted place in the Hunt, but he's not exactly ecstatic about it. For years he has been protecting a dangerous secret, and now he risks more than just exposure.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; paranormal; vampires; horror; thriller; romance

This book contains some frightening, gory imagery.



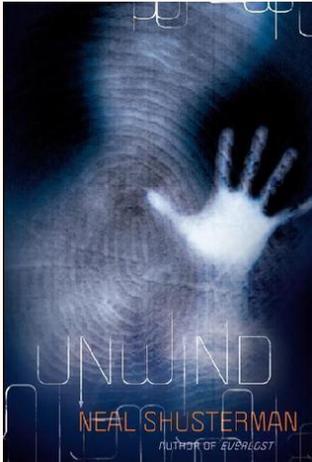
Blindness by José Saramago

This classic novel, written by the Portuguese Nobel laureate, can be read as an allegory – or a harrowing dystopia. The story begins with a nameless man who suddenly becomes blind as he waits for the traffic lights to change. The mysterious blindness spreads, like a plague, and efforts to contain it are unsuccessful. The novel is a powerfully real study of how quickly civilization breaks down and the strength of the survival instinct.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; post-apocalyptic; science fiction; horror; classic

This novel contains some emotionally disturbing content and descriptions of sexual violence.



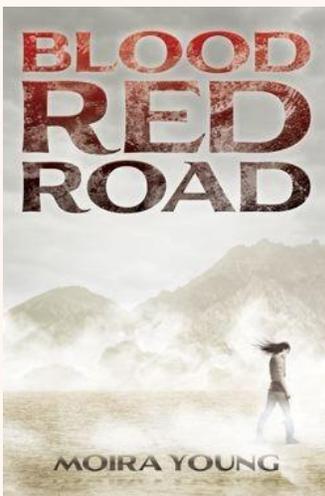
Unwind by Neal Shusterman

In the aftermath of the Heartland War, a compromise between the pro-life and pro-choice factions results in the practice of “unwinding”. During the adolescent years, a teenager’s body may be “unwound” as long as all of its parts are kept alive . . . in other living bodies. In this thought-provoking and suspenseful series, three teenagers go on the run in order to save their own lives.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; science fiction; suspense; thriller; friendship; adventure

This book contains some strong language and emotionally disturbing content.



Blood Red Road by Moira Young

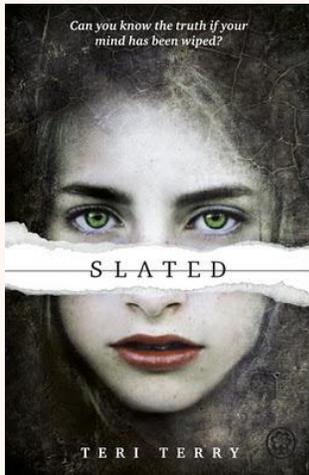
When Saba’s twin brother is kidnapped by four cloaked horsemen, she leaves her family’s burnt-out farm and ventures far into unknown territory to rescue him. On her journey, Saba will make new friends, fall in love and discover a ferocious fighting ability in herself. This unique story combines the post-apocalyptic with the western, and is written in a spare, poetic style reminiscent of Cormac McCarthy. The final book in the trilogy, *Raging Star*, has

recently been published.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; post-apocalyptic; adventure; family; friendship; romance

This book contains scenes of violence and sexuality.



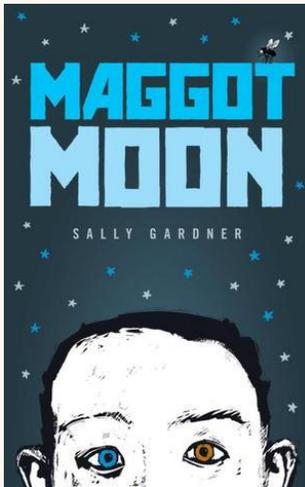
Slated

by Teri Terry

Kyla has been given a fresh start and told that she should feel grateful . . . and obedient. Her memories have been wiped from her mind and now she belongs to a new family. But unlike most “slated” teenagers, Kyla keeps experiencing disturbing flashbacks. She is not supposed to feel negative emotions, but she does. She is not supposed to ask questions, either, but Kyla is determined to unravel the mystery of her own past.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; science fiction; thriller; mystery; family; romance



Maggot Moon

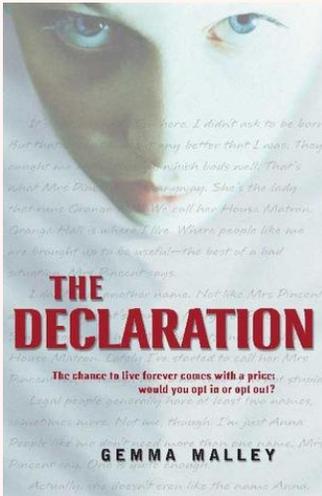
by Sally Gardner

Standish Treadwell has all sorts of “impurities” that the Motherland can’t tolerate: dyslexia, mismatched eyes and a uniquely rebellious way of seeing the world. When his best friend Hector disappears, Standish is determined to find him. And while he’s at it, Standish might as well risk his life to expose one of the Motherland’s most outrageous lies.

Reading and interest level: 12+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; science fiction; alternate history; mystery; friendship; dyslexia

This book contains some strong language.



The Declaration

by Gemma Malley

All of her short life, 14 year-old Anna has been told that she doesn't deserve to live. Now that longevity drugs enable rich adults to extend their lives indefinitely, children are considered "surplus" – and an unwanted drain on the earth's limited resources. Like other illegal children, Anna has been sent to Grange Hall and trained for life as a servant. She has never questioned the restrictions on her life until Peter arrives – with his shocking knowledge of the outside world. This dystopic novel cleverly draws on England's past to build a disturbingly plausible version of the future.

Reading and interest level: 12+

Genre: fantasy; dystopia; science fiction; romance

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