Twerp
by Mark Goldblatt
“In 1960s New York, sixth-grader Julian ‘Twerp’ Twerski has just returned to school after a weeklong suspension, when his English teacher offers him a deal. If he writes a journal about the incident that got him suspended, Julian can get out of writing a report on Shakespeare. At the beginning of the book it’s unclear why Julian and his friends were suspended, but more details come to light as the journal entries progress. The book’s greatest strength is that it calls attention to the important issues of friendship, peer pressure, and bullying without preaching or talking down to the reader. Julian is a flawed character, but he’s someone you can’t help but root for.”
—Caitlin Ayer, Books Inc., San Francisco, CA

The Watermelon Seed
by Greg Pizzoli
“Great for fans of Mo Willems, this funky, funny tale fills you with giggles and leaves you craving watermelon. Pizzoli confronts the rather harrowing childhood worry of what happens when you swallow a watermelon seed. This crocodile deals with the question in a comical, panicked way. Children will love this story with its simple illustrations and perfect comic ending.”
—Hannah Moushabeck, Odyssey Bookshop, South Hadley, MA

The Testing
by Joelle Charbonneau
“In post-apocalyptic America, the key to survival is leadership and the training of great leaders takes place at the University. To make it to the University, a select number of students from colonies across the surviving landscape must first make it through The Testing. Charbonneau’s first foray into writing for young adults yields cliffhanger after cliffhanger, making it impossible to find a point for the reader to pause. Every scene, every word becomes important to the end of this story, so pay close attention: You do not want to fail The Testing!”
—Nicole Porter, Mysterious Galaxy, San Diego, CA

The 5th Wave
by Rick Yancey
“Starting with an adrenalin rush and somehow keeping up a breathless pace, Yancey tells a desperate and stunning story of love and loyalty in the middle of a thriller. The 5th Wave follows four kids in the months following an alien arrival, when the battle for life pushes everyone to their physical and psychological limits. While each character must choose between a violent will to survive and an exhausted surrender, holding onto humanity may be the most heartbreaking challenge of all.”
—Mara Lynn Luther, Chapter One Book Store, Hamilton, MT
Far Far Away
by Tom McNeal

“Ever since Jeremy Johnson Johnson admitted that he could hear voices, the townspeople have treated him as an outsider. Life has been hard, but Jeremy does have a companion—the voice of Jacob Grimm, one half of the Brothers Grimm. Jacob watches over Jeremy and protects him from the evil in the world. When Ginger Boultinghouse becomes interested in Jeremy, things start to happen that Jacob may or may not be able to stop. Narrated by Jacob, this book is lovely and thrilling at the same time.”

—Cathy Berner, Blue Willow Bookshop, Houston, TX

Find out more about this book and others at www.indiebound.org

The Rithmatist
by Brandon Sanderson

“Joel desperately wants to be a Rithmatist—part of a select order that can bring chalk drawings to life to battle wild chalkings and keep the human race safe. But since he’s not, Joel spends his time learning everything he can about Rithmatics and befriends an outcast professor and another student, who end up helping him in his own battle. This well-plotted story is perfect for all sorts of readers—the math geek, the fantasy lover, and the sucker for happy endings. I can’t wait for a sequel!”

—Melissa Oates, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC

Find out more about this book and others at www.indiebound.org

Oliver and His Alligator
by Paul Schmid

“Oliver is a little insecure about his first day of school, so he brings an alligator for reinforcement. While the alligator takes care of one scary thing after another, Oliver starts to realize school might not be so bad—but he has to decide quickly before everything is devoured! Readers will identify with Oliver’s fears and eat up Schmid’s adorable pastel illustrations.”

—Erin Barker, Hooray for Books!, Alexandria, VA

Find out more about this book and others at www.indiebound.org

Wild Awake
by Hilary T. Smith

“With her parents away for the summer, Kiri looks forward to time alone with hours to practice her piano, win the Battle of the Bands, and convince Lukas that they should be together forever. However, a phone call from a mysterious stranger changes everything. Heart-wrenching, powerful, and much more than a coming-of-age story, Wild Awake perfectly portrays a forced maturity, one in which a strong human spirit refuses to be undone, whatever the cost. Highly recommended!”

—Sue Campbell, Book Passage, Core Madera, CA

Find out more about this book and others at www.indiebound.org
Maya Was Grumpy
by Courtney Pippin-Mathur

“Maya was in a crispy, cranky, grumpy, grouchy mood and did not want to do anything until her Gramma started to mention all the crazy, fun little things that she could not do if she were grumpy. As the story continues, Maya gradually comes out of her crispy, cranky, grumpy, grouchy mood and can’t help but giggle at Gramma’s ideas. This story is hysterical in so many ways. I can’t wait to share this book with our customers!”

—Kayleigh Bass, Cornerstone Cottage Kids, Hampton, IA

The School for Good and Evil
by Soman Chainani, Iacopo Bruno (Illus.)

“Agatha and Sophie are as different as two friends can be. Beautiful and talented, Sophie has spent her whole life preparing to be chosen by the mysterious School Master to attend the School for Good. Plain, grumpy, and witchy Agatha, on the other hand, just hopes to avoid being chosen for the School for Evil. When Sophie ends up in the School for Evil and Agatha in the School for Good, everything that they know about themselves and each other will be called into question. This exciting and thought-provoking fantasy is the first in a planned trilogy and I can’t wait for the next installment!”

—Emily Ring, Inklings Bookshop, Yakima, WA