

October 2023 MSLA Forum
Comics and Neurodiversity
Book List

Middle Grade



Button Pusher. Tyler Page (author and illustrator).

ISBN: 9781250758347

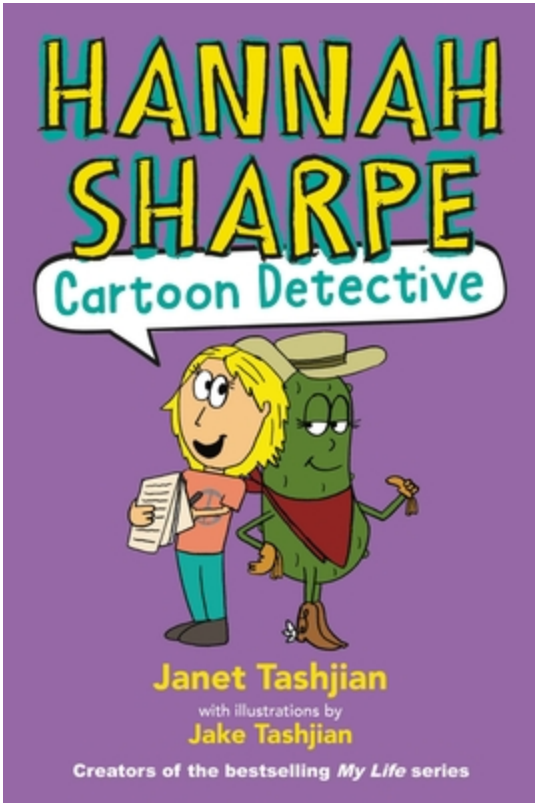
Publication Date: 2022

A memoir-driven realistic graphic novel about Tyler, a child who is diagnosed with ADHD and has to discover for himself how to best manage it.

Tyler's brain is different. Unlike his friends, he has a hard time paying attention in class. He acts out in goofy, over-the-top ways. Sometimes, he even does dangerous things—like cut up a bus seat with a pocket knife or hang out of an attic window.

To the adults in his life, Tyler seems like a troublemaker. But he knows that he's not. Tyler is curious and creative. He's the best artist in his grade, and when he can focus, he gets great grades. He doesn't want to cause trouble, but sometimes he just feels like he can't control himself.

In *Button Pusher*, cartoonist Tyler Page uses his own childhood experiences to explore what it means to grow up with ADHD. From diagnosis to treatment and beyond, Tyler's story is raw and

	<p>enlightening, inviting you to see the world from a new perspective.</p>
	<p>Hannah Sharpe Cartoon Detective. Janet Tashjian (author) Jake Tashjian (illustrator). ISBN: 9780316319805 Publication Date: 2023</p> <p>Young cartoonist Hannah Sharpe has many strengths: she’s curious, creative, has an amazing memory, and most important—she notices things. When Doug Williams moves into her family’s Airbnb, Hannah can’t shake the feeling that he’s got something to hide. But his girlfriend, Remy Furtado, couldn’t be nicer or more helpful. As Hannah investigates, often with her sketchbook in hand, she makes a series of unsettling discoveries involving stolen packages, changed keypad codes, and hidden stacks of cash. Can Hannah crack the case and unfold the mystery on her own?</p> <p>Including full-color illustrations with panel art featuring Hannah and her cartoon alter ego, Dusty Pickle, here is a thoughtful and propulsive new book starring a neurodiverse protagonist.</p>



Last Pick (trilogy) Jason Walz (author and illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1-62672-891-2

Publication Date: 2018 – 2020

Three years ago, aliens invaded Earth and abducted everyone they deemed useful. The only ones spared were those too young, too old, or too “disabled” to be of value. Living on Earth under the aliens’ harsh authoritarian rule, humanity’s rejects do their best to survive. Their captors never considered them a threat—until now.

Twins Sam and Wyatt are ready to chuck their labels and start a revolution. It’s time for the kids last picked to step into the game.

In this first volume of Jason Walz’s dystopian graphic novel trilogy, the kids last picked are humanity’s last hope.



Just Roll With It Veronica Agarwal & Lee Durfey-Lavone

ISBN: 978-0-593-12541-0

Publication Date: 2021

Starting middle school is hard enough when you don't know anyone; it's even harder when you're shy. A contemporary middle-grade graphic novel about how dealing with anxiety and OCD and can affect every day life.

As long as Maggie rolls the right number, nothing can go wrong . . . right?

Maggie just wants to get through her first year of middle school. But between finding the best after-school clubs, trying to make friends, and avoiding the rumored monster on school grounds, she's having a tough time. . . so she might need a little help from her twenty-sided dice.

But what happens if Maggie rolls the wrong number?



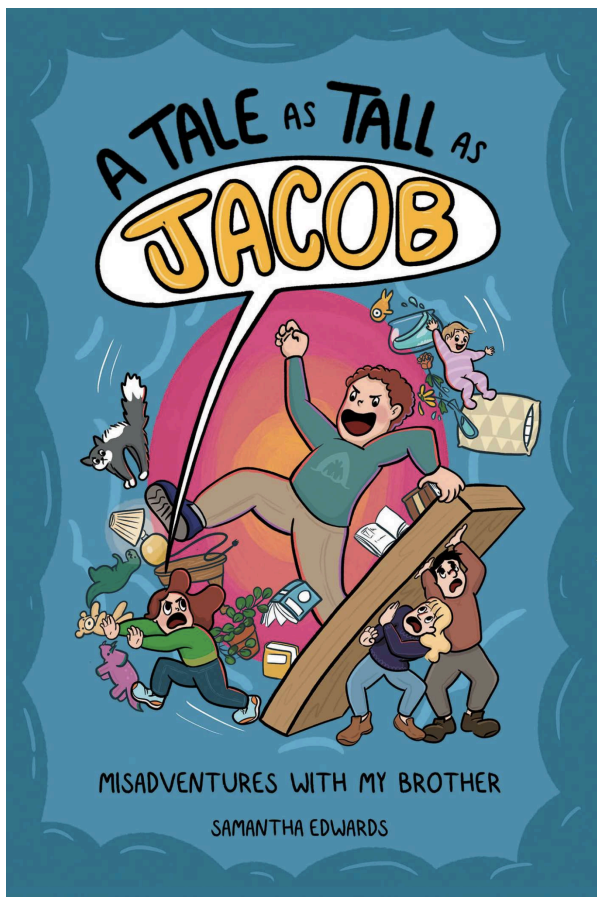
ISBN: 9781401293260

Publication Date: 9781401293260

Dustin Hansen (author and illustrator)

My Video Game At My Homework

Meet Dewey Jenkins, a 13-year old school kid who's about to fail science class. Follow Dewey on an amazing adventure that leads him and his friends to a virtual world where they will have to overcome all sorts of digital creatures and solve a number of puzzles in order to get home.



Public

A Tale as Tall as Jacob Samantha Edwards (author and illustrator)

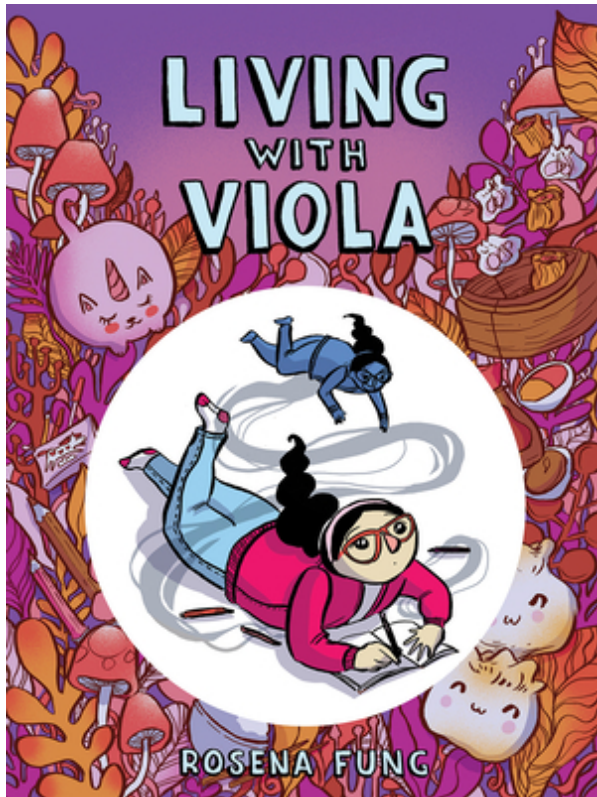
ISBN: 9781524865047

Publication Date: 2021

In this charming and poignant debut graphic novel, a young girl struggles to understand, accept, and support her remarkable little brother as he adapts to life with ADHD. Based on the author's own childhood and told through funny, beautifully illustrated vignettes, this story of two siblings celebrates empathy and embraces how difference makes every family unique.

When Jacob is born, Samantha is excited to have a normal little brother to play with. But those expectations are quickly upended as he grows into a loud, chaotic, and seemingly unstoppable force. And even though he can be a handful, Jacob's extraordinary strength and curiosity have a way of landing him in some unexpected, hilarious, and even heartwarming situations.

As Samantha struggles to get along with her little brother and survive his daily shenanigans, sweet moments of lighthearted fun surface to remind her—and the reader—that loving your family for who they are isn't so complicated after all.



Living with Viola. Roseana Fang (author and illustrator)

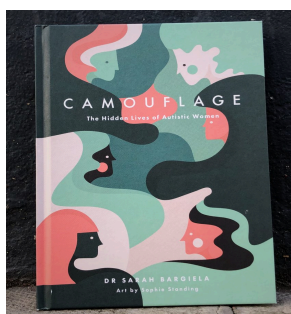
ISBN: 9781773215488

Publication Date: 2021

Livy is already having trouble fitting in as the new girl at school--and then there's Viola. Viola is Livy's anxiety brought to life, a shadowy twin that only Livy can see or hear. Livy tries to push back against Viola's relentless judgment, but nothing seems to work until she strikes up new friendships at school. Livy hopes that Viola's days are numbered. But when tensions arise both at home and at school, Viola rears her head stronger than ever. Only when Livy learns how to ask for help and face her anxiety does she finally figure out living with Viola.

Rosena Fung draws on her own early experiences with anxiety and the pressures of growing up as the child of Chinese immigrant parents to craft a personal story.

High School

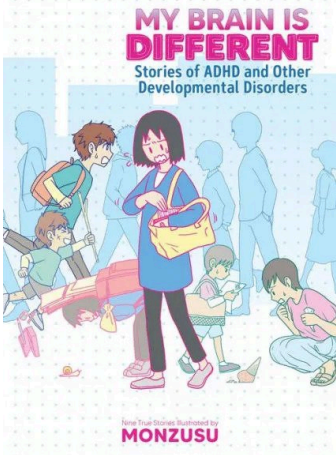


Camouflage: the hidden lives of autistic women. Sarah Bargiela (author) Sophie Standing (illustrator)

ISBN: 9781785925665

Publication Date: 2019

Autism in women and girls is still not widely understood, and is often misrepresented or even overlooked. This graphic novel offers an engaging and accessible insight into the lives and minds of autistic women, using real-life case studies. The charming illustrations lead readers on a

	<p>visual journey of how women on the spectrum experience everyday life, from metaphors and masking in social situations, to friendships and relationships and the role of special interests. Fun, sensitive and informative, this is a fantastic resource for anyone who wishes to understand how gender affects autism, and how to create safer, supportive and more accessible environments for women on the spectrum. (I am adding this in even though it is an adult book because I think it might be helpful for teachers to read)</p>
	<p>My Brain is Different: Stories of ADHD and Other Developmental Disorders. Monzusu (author and illustrator).</p> <p>ISBN: 9781638582359</p> <p>Publication Date: 2022</p> <p>This intimate manga anthology is about the struggles and successes of individuals learning to navigate daily life with a developmental disorder. The comics follow the stories of nine people, including: a junior high dropout finding an alternate path to education; a former "troublesome" child helping kids at a support school; a so-called problem child realizing the beauty of his own unique quirks; and a man falling in love with the world with the help of a new medication. This book illustrates the anxieties and triumphs of people living in a world not quite built with them in mind.</p>

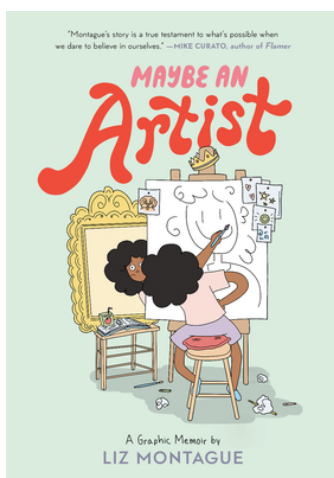


Sensory: Life on the Spectrum – An Autistic Comics Anthology. Bex Ollerton and Schnumm (editors).

ISBN: 9781524874766

Publication Date: 2021

From artist and curator Bex Ollerton comes an anthology featuring comics from thirty autistic creators about their experiences of living in a world that doesn't always understand or accept them. *Sensory: Life on the Spectrum* contains illustrated explorations of everything from life pre-diagnosis to tips on how to explain autism to someone who isn't autistic, to suggestions for how to soothe yourself when you're feeling overstimulated. With unique, vibrant comic-style illustrations and the emotional depth and vulnerability of memoir, this book depicts these varied experiences with the kind of insight that only those who have lived them can have.



Maybe an Artist. Liza Montague (author and illustrator)

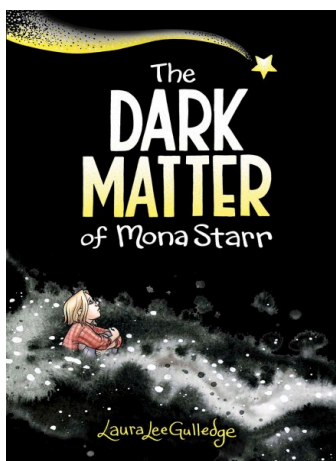
ISBN: 9780593307816

Publication Date: 2022

A heartfelt and funny graphic novel memoir from one of the first Black female cartoonists to be published in the *New Yorker*, when she was just 22 years old.

When Liz Montague was a senior in college, she wrote to the *New Yorker*, asking them why they didn't publish more inclusive comics. The *New Yorker* wrote back asking if she could recommend any. She yes, me.

Those initial cartoons in the *New Yorker* led to this memoir of Liz's youth, from the age of five through college--how she navigated life in her predominantly white New Jersey town, overcame severe dyslexia through art, and found the confidence to pursue her passion. Funny and poignant, Liz captures the age-old adolescent questions of "who am I?" and "what do I want to be?" with pitch-perfect clarity and insight.



The Dark Matter of Mona Starr. Laura Lee Gulledge (author and illustrator)

ISBN: 9781419734236

Publication Date: 2020

A bold and original YA graphic novel about battling your inner doubts and fears—and finding your genius. Sometimes, the world is too much for Mona Starr. She's sweet, geeky, and creative, but it's hard for her to make friends and connect with other people. She's like a lot of sensitive teenagers—but in the hands of graphic novelist Laura Lee Gulledge, Mona's struggle with depression takes on a vivid, concrete form. Mona calls it her Matter. The Matter gets everywhere, telling Mona she's not good enough, and that everyone around her wishes she would go away. But through therapy, art, writing, and the persistence of a few good friends, Mona starts to understand her Matter, and how she—and readers—can turn their fears into strengths. Heartfelt, emotionally vulnerable, and visually stunning, *The Dark Matter of Mona Starr* is a story that takes the inner life of a teenager seriously, while giving readers a new way to look at the universal quest for meaning and connection.



Fights. Joel Christian Gill (author and illustrator)

ISBN: 9781549303357

Publication Date: 2020

Fights is the visceral and deeply affecting memoir of artist/author Joel Christian Gill, chronicling his youth and coming of age as a Black child in a chaotic landscape of rough city streets and foreboding backwoods. Propelled into a world filled with uncertainty and desperation, young Joel is pushed toward using violence to solve his problems by everything and everyone around him. But fighting doesn't always yield the best results for a confused and sensitive kid who yearns for a better, more fulfilling life than the one he was born into, as Joel learns in a series of brutal conflicts that eventually lead him to question everything he has learned about what it truly means to

	fight for one's life.
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