

## Best Grief Books for Youth Ages 13-17

- **Author** - Custom Resource by the Eluna Team

Grief is the natural, normal and necessary response to loss. It is made up of many different emotions - ranging from sadness to anger to guilt and everything in between. Adjusting to loss is a long process and is unique to each and every person. Teens and adults face the same jumble of confusing emotions. Books can be an important tool for understanding emotions and sparking conversation. The following have been chosen as the top books for teens **aged 13-17**. Make sure to also check out our recommended books for grieving the loss of a [parent](#), [sibling](#), [friend](#), [grandparent](#), and [anticipatory grief](#).

### ***RIP Corey: My Friend Died and It Sucks*** **by Chris Buchanan**

RIP Corey: My Friend Died and It Sucks! is a graphic novel for readers of all abilities that does not overwhelm, so teens and young adults will feel compelled to open it, look at it, and find the support they need to process, talk about, and heal their grief. Ideal for children, tweens, teenagers, young adults who experience barriers to reading such as reluctant readers, struggling readers, English Language Learners (ELL), different abilities, special education, Autism spectrum, Asperger's (Aspies), dyslexia, learning disorders, developmental delay (developmental disability), non-speaking (nonverbal) language impairment. Inclusive of all beliefs and abilities, RIP Corey can open conversations about the difficult topic of the death of someone we love. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*



### ***Passed and Present: Keeping Memories of Loved Ones Alive*** by Allison Gilbert

Inspiring and imaginative, this bona fide "how-to" manual teaches us how to remember those we miss most, no matter how long they've been gone. Passed and Present is not about sadness and grieving. It is about happiness and remembering. It is possible to look forward, to live a rich and joyful life, while keeping the memory of loved ones alive. This much-needed, easy-to-use roadmap shares 85 imaginative ways to celebrate and honor family and friends we never want to forget. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Crying in H Mart*** by Michelle Zauner

From the indie rockstar of Japanese Breakfast fame, and author of the viral 2018 New Yorker essay that shares the title of this book, an unflinching, powerful memoir about growing up Korean American, losing her mother, and forging her own identity... As she grew up, moving to the East Coast for college, finding work in the

restaurant industry, and performing gigs with her fledgling band--and meeting the man who would become her husband--her Koreanness began to feel ever more distant, even as she found the life she wanted to live. It was her mother's diagnosis of terminal cancer, when Michelle was twenty-five, that forced a reckoning with her identity and brought her to reclaim the gifts of taste, language, and history her mother had given her. [Link to Purchase\\*\\*](#)

### ***The Book of Form and Emptiness* by Ruth Ozeki**

One year after the death of his beloved musician father, thirteen-year-old Benny Oh begins to hear voices. The voices belong to the things in his house--a sneaker, a broken Christmas ornament, a piece of wilted lettuce. Although Benny doesn't understand what these things are saying, he can sense their emotional tone; some are pleasant, a gentle hum or coo, but others are snide, angry and full of pain. When his mother, Annabelle, develops a hoarding problem, the voices grow more clamorous. At first, Benny tries to ignore them, but soon the voices follow him outside the house, onto the street and at school, driving him at last to seek refuge in the silence of a large public library, where objects are well-behaved and know to speak in whispers. There, Benny discovers a strange new world. He falls in love with a mesmerizing street artist with a smug pet ferret, who uses the library as her performance space. He meets a homeless philosopher-poet, who encourages him to ask important questions and find his own voice amongst the many. And he meets his very own Book--a talking thing--who narrates Benny's life and teaches him to listen to the things that truly matter. [Link to Purchase\\*\\*](#)

### ***My Parent Has Cancer and It Really Sucks* by Marc Silver and Maya Silver**

Let's face it, cancer sucks. This book provides real-life advice from real-life teens designed to help teens live with a parent who is fighting cancer. One million American teenagers live with a parent who is fighting cancer. It's a hard blow for those already navigating high school, preparing for college, and becoming increasingly independent. Author Maya Silver was 15 when her mom was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001. She and her dad, Marc, have combined their family's personal experience with advice from dozens of medical professionals and real stories from 100 teens--all going through the same thing Maya did. [Link to Purchase\\*\\*](#)

### ***Dancing at the Pity Party: A Dead Mom Graphic Memoir* by Tyler Feder**

Part poignant cancer memoir and part humorous reflection on a motherless life, this debut graphic novel is extraordinarily comforting and engaging. From before her mother's first oncology appointment through the stages of her cancer to the funeral, sitting shiva, and afterward, when she must try to make sense of her life as a motherless daughter, Tyler Feder tells her story in this graphic novel that is full of piercing--but also often funny--details. She shares the important post-death firsts, such as celebrating holidays without her mom, the utter despair of cleaning out her mom's closet, ending old traditions and starting new ones, and the sting of having the I've got to tell Mom about this instinct and not being able to act on it. This memoir, bracingly candid and sweetly humorous, is for anyone struggling with loss who just wants someone to get it. [Link to Purchase\\*\\*](#)

### ***Speak of Me As I Am* by Sonia Belasco**

A moving story of grief, honesty, and the healing power of art — the ties that bind us together, even when those we love are gone. Melanie and Damon are both living in the shadow of loss. For Melanie, it's the loss of her larger-than-life artist mother, taken by cancer well before her time. For Damon, it's the loss of his best friend, Carlos, who took his own life. As they struggle to fill the empty spaces their loved ones left behind, fate conspires to bring them together. Damon takes pictures with Carlos's camera to try to understand his choices, and Melanie begins painting as a way of feeling closer to her mother. But when the two join their school's production of Othello, the play they both hoped would be a distraction becomes a test of who they truly are,

both together and on their own. And more than anything else, they discover that it just might be possible to live their lives without completely letting go of their sadness. [Link to Purchase](#)

### ***Instructions for a Secondhand Heart* by Tamsyn Murray**

Johnny, the recipient of a donated heart, reaches out to the deceased donor's twin sister, Neve. As they both struggle with their personal grief and guilt, they forge a friendship and learn how to mend from their difficulties together. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***How to Save a Life* by Sara Zarr**

Two girls, Jill and Mandy, struggle with their changing families. After Jill's father passes away, her mom chooses to adopt a baby. Jill questions her mother, sinking into isolation. Mandy, the child of an unwanted pregnancy, gets a chance to raise a baby differently when she becomes unexpectedly pregnant. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***37 Things I love (in no particular order)* by Kekla Magoon**

Ellis has been waiting for a change as her father's coma has continued. When her mother suddenly announces the choice to end his life support, Ellis is devastated. While her closest friend doesn't pick up on her grief, she turns to another source to work through her feelings. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Lies My Girlfriend Told Me* by Julia Anne Peter**

After Alix's girlfriend, Swanee, dies, she finds out that she was cheating on her with someone else. The mysterious girl, Liana, doesn't know that Swanee is dead. So, Alix breaks the news of her death and they form a bond. But she isn't sure if she can divulge Swanee's infidelity. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Torn Away* by Jennifer Brown**

Due to a tornado demolishing her town, Jersey is forlorn. Along with the town, her mother and sister perished, forcing her to go to live with estranged relatives. Grappling with all she's lost, Jersey attempts to settle into an unfamiliar place. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***History is All You Left Me* by Adam Silvera**

Although Griffin has thought Theo, his former flame, would come back to him, Theo's death closes off this possibility forever. Through Griffin's sorrow, he seeks solace in a new love with Jackson. But his history is the key to moving forward. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***The Loose Ends List* by Carrie Firestone**

As Maddie readies herself for college, she learns of her grandmother's terminal cancer. Gram is taking charge of her final days by taking the family on a farewell cruise. Despite the extravagance, Maddie can't seem to come to grips with losing such a significant person in her life. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***DJ Rising* by Love Maia**

Aspiring DJ, Marley, struggles to manage his mother's heroin addiction and his scholarship status at a prep school. With an ideal opportunity, Marley is ready to take on his music career. When tragedy strikes, he must

decide how to proceed. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Wildlife* by Fiona Wood**

With a semester-long outdoor school program, Sib and Lou end up as roommates. Lou presents herself as a loner, content to deal with her grief in secret. Soon Sib's tumultuous friendship with Holly causes Lou to get involved. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***The Boy in the Black Suit* by Jason Reynolds**

In his life, Matt has dealt with the death of his mother and death at his position in a funeral home. Lovey's had even more misery, and as Matt gets to know her, he continues to encounter challenges and hardship. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***The Wolf's Curse* by Jessica Vitalis**

Gauge's life has been cursed since the day he cried Wolf and was accused of witchcraft. The Great White Wolf brings only death, Gauge's superstitious village believes. If Gauge can see the Wolf, then he must be in league with it. So instead of playing with friends in the streets or becoming his grandpapa's partner in the carpentry shop, Gauge must hide and pretend he doesn't exist. But then the Wolf comes for his grandpapa. And for the first time, Gauge is left all alone, with a bounty on his head and the Wolf at his heels. A young feather collector named Roux offers Gauge assistance, and he is eager for the help. But soon the two--both recently orphaned--are questioning everything they have ever believed about their village, about the Wolf, and about death itself. Narrated by the sly, crafty Wolf, Jessica Vitalis's debut novel is a vivid and literary tale about family, friendship, belonging, and grief. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Tear Soup* by Pat Schwiebert**

Affirms the bereaved. Educates the un-bereaved. A building-block for children..... WINNER! of the 2001 Theologos Book Award, presented by the Association of Theological Booksellers. [Link to Purchase](#)

### ***When a Friend Dies: A Book for Teens* by Marilyn E. Gootman Ed.D.**

The death of a friend is a wrenching event for anyone at any age. Teenagers especially need help coping with this painful loss. This sensitive book answers questions grieving teens often have, like "How should I be acting?" "Is it wrong to go to parties and have fun?" and "What if I can't handle my grief on my own?" [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***A Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teens and Friends* by Helen Fitzgerald**

In this unique and compassionate guide, renowned grief counselor Helen Fitzgerald turns her attention to the special needs of adolescents struggling with loss and gives teens the tools they need to work through their pain and grief. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Heaven's Child* by Caroline Flohr**

The book covers sudden loss; death of a child; relationships within a family; funerals and traditions; doubts, faith and hope; marriages, divorces, and parenting; forgiveness and healing; the power of memories and intuition; inner strength, and the resilience of the human spirit. Heaven's Child shows us that the grieving process is personal, that it's not just about death but also about any loss in our life; that grieving is not about

endings...but about new beginnings. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love* by Earl A. Grollman**

If you are a teenager whose friend or relative has died, this book was written for you. Earl A. Grollman, the award-winning author of *Living When a Loved One Has Died*, explains what to expect when you lose someone you love. [Link to Purchase](#)\*\*

### ***Chill & Spill* by Art With Heart**

Chill & Spill helps young people find words to express the difficult issues they are facing while promoting positive social and emotional learning skills. Using a blended therapeutic approach including art therapy, narrative therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy, this eclectic journal effectively combines guided creative writing with visual art activities, reducing symptoms of trauma, building resilience, and fostering emotional development. Chill & Spill is uniquely designed to reach teens who are reluctant to communicate, helping them explore both head and heart. It offers a combination of 20 different creative writing and visual art exercises, each followed by blank pages. [Link to Purchase](#)

### ***Ink About It* by Art With Heart**

Ink About It is a therapeutic activity book that uses creative expression to help middle & high school youth cope with difficult circumstances. Ink About It was developed in collaboration with experts in the mental health field and features a combination of writing and art prompts, blending therapeutic modalities with world-class illustration to support middle schoolers as they develop an understanding of themselves and their emotions. This book helps young people open the door to healing by helping them build resilience and other social and emotional skills as they unlock their own capacity for creative expression. [Link to Purchase](#)

***Please let us know if you have any favorites that we are missing. [Email Sarah](#)***

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