



2023 Nutmeg Book Award Middle School Nominees Grades 7-8



Black Brother, Black Brother

by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Biracial brothers Donte and Trey attend Middlefield Prep, an almost entirely white school. Trey presents as white, while Donte presents as black. When Donte is unjustly suspended, he begins to realize that life is not always fair. The unlikely world of fencing provides Donte with unique opportunities to learn more about himself and those around him.



Game Changer

by Tommy Greenwald

Teddy Youngblood lies in a coma after receiving a devastating hit at football camp. His teammates know what really happened, but will they find the strength to tell the truth? Details are slowly revealed as his friends, teammates, and coach visit Teddy and his grieving family.



The Line Tender

by Kate Allen

After twelve-year-old Lucy's mother dies, she is able to find meaning and comfort by pursuing the work of her marine biologist mother. This thoughtful novel reveals the depths of grief and loss coupled with moments of laughter and redemption.



Look Both Ways

by Jason Reynolds

Ten interconnected stories detail what happens after school lets out and kids are walking home. Skateboards, handshakes, and standing up to bullies are just a few of the detours faced on the way home.



The Magic Fish

by Trung Le Nguyen

Tien and his mom can't always find the right words, so they express themselves to one another by sharing fairy tales. His mother has a hard time opening up about her trauma coming to the United States, and Tien wanders a road of self discovery as he solidifies his identity. The two navigate their separate lives while communicating their perspectives within layers of fables.

96 Miles

by J. L. Esplin

When brothers John and Stew realize that it is impossible for their father to return home, they must attempt to survive on their own. Fear, danger, violence, and illness follow after a dramatic disaster hits. Will the brothers' resourcefulness, loyalty, and determination keep them safe?

Nowhere Boy

by Katherine Marsh

Ahmed doesn't belong in Brussels, not after he lost his family while fleeing war-torn Syria. American-born Max doesn't belong in Brussels either, but not being able to speak French is the least of his worries when Max finds a Syrian refugee living in his basement. Two worlds collide in this story of unlikely friendship, hope, and courage.

The Parker Inheritance

by Varian Johnson

While visiting family in Lambert, South Carolina over the summer, Candace uncovers a decades-old mystery involving her grandmother. She sets out with the help of a quiet neighbor, Brandon, to uncover the past while learning about historical injustices that happened in the town.

Suggested Reading

by Dave Connis

Clara Evans has earned a spot at an elite high school through a scholarship opportunity. But when the books that influenced her begin mysteriously disappearing from the school's shelves, Clara learns how far she and others are willing to go to give books to those who need them.

Superman Smashes the Klan

by Gene Luen Yang, art

by Gurihiru

Teens Roberta and Tommy Lee just moved to Metropolis, the city protected by Superman. After their family house is targeted by the Klan, Roberta and Tommy must help Superman foil the Klan's plot and defeat racism and hatred.

