



Dear Northwest Middle School Parents/ Guardians,

In an effort to keep our NISD students engaged in literacy throughout the summer, **secondary students will be required to read at least one book of their choice** before the 3rd week of the 1st Quarter. We know that many students will want to get a head start on their book, and read it over the summer, so we want to support that effort. **It is important that students are reading books for enjoyment, where they are choosing books they personally relate to and can make deep connections with.** We also encourage students to select books that are appropriate and substantial enough for the grade they are entering.

**Below is a list of recommended/suggested titles for those students or parents that would like a guideline to help get started.** Again, students may choose a book not on this list; these are merely grade-level suggested texts. Accessibility to texts is crucial, so here are a few options for obtaining copies of these titles.

Purchase a personal copy	<a href="#">Amazon</a> , <a href="#">Barnes &amp; Noble</a> , <a href="#">Half Price Books</a> , etc.
Hard copy checkout from NISD libraries	<a href="#">Follett Destiny</a>
eBook checkout from NISD libraries	Access ebooks and Audiobooks <a href="#">HERE</a> Instructional video for using <a href="#">SORA</a>
Hard copy/ ebook checkout from local city libraries	<a href="#">Haslet Public Library</a> <a href="#">Justin Public Library</a> <a href="#">Rhome Public Library</a> <a href="#">Roanoke Public Library</a>

NISD Librarians have also developed an informative website with book trailers and additional information. **Please access the [site here](#) to learn more about suggested titles.**

In order to provide our students more choice within a wider variety of high interest text, there will be no distinction between which books are designated On-Level, Pre-AP, or GT for middle school summer reading. **Our main purpose for summer reading is for our students to read a book of their choice that they are interested in to continue to foster the love of reading, strengthen reading fluency and stamina, and build upon the idea that reading is important all year round.**

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

<i>Al Capone Does My Shirts</i> by Gennifer Choldenko	<i>New Kid</i> by Jerry Craft
<i>Counting by 7's</i> by Holly Goldberg Sloan	<i>Other Words for Home</i> by Jasmine Warga
<i>The False Prince</i> by Jennifer Nielson	<i>Playing Atari with Saddam Husain</i> by Ali Fadhil & Jennifer Roy
<i>Fast Break</i> by Mike Lupica	<i>Seedfolks</i> by Paul Fleischman
<i>The Fourth Stall</i> by Chris Rylander	<i>To Night Owl From Dogfish</i> by Holly Goldberg Sloan & Meg Wolitzer
<i>The Lions of Little Rock</i> by Kristin Levine	<i>Wings of Fire- The Dragonet Prophecy</i> by Tui T. Sutherland

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

<i>The Benefits of Being an Octopus</i> by Ann Braden	<i>Orbiting Jupiter</i> by Gary D. Schmid
<i>Booked</i> by Kwame Alexander	<i>Peak</i> by Roland Smith
<i>Chains</i> by Laurie Halse Anderson	<i>Restart</i> by Gordon Korman
<i>Genius: The Game</i> by Leopoldo Gout	<i>The Strangers</i> by Margaret Peterson Haddix
<i>Ghost</i> by Jason Reynolds	<i>Stepsister</i> by Jennifer Donnelly
<i>Harbor Me</i> by Jacqueline Woodson	<i>When You Reach Me</i> by Rebecca Stead
<i>Legend</i> by Marie Lu	

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

<i>A Night Divided</i> by Jennifer Nielsen	<i>Monster</i> by Walter Dean Myers
<i>Between Shades of Gray</i> by Ruta Sepetys	<i>Refugee</i> by Alan Gratz
<i>Brown Girl Dreaming</i> by Jacqueline Woodson	<i>Scythe</i> by Neal Shusterman
<i>Bruiser</i> by Neal Shusterman	<i>The Selection</i> by Kiera Cass
<i>Caraval</i> by Stephanie Garber	<i>The Story of Owen</i> by E.K. Johnston
<i>Faceless</i> by Alyssa Sheinme	<i>They Both Die at the End</i> by Adam Silvera

<i>The First Rule of Punk</i> by Celia Perez	<i>Towers Falling</i> by Jewel Parker Rhodes
<i>Ghost Boys</i> by Jewell Parker Rhodes	<i>The Unteachables</i> by Gordon Korman
<i>In the Shadow of the Sun</i> by Anne O'Brien	<i>Up From the Sea</i> by Leza Lowitz
<i>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</i> by Brian Selznick	<i>The War of the Worlds</i> by H.G. Wells

## Novel Summaries

### 6th

#### *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, Gennifer Choldenko (Historical Fiction)

12-year-old Moose Flanagan moves to Alcatraz when his dad takes a job as a prison guard at Alcatraz. "Today I moved to a twelve-acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd and surrounded by water. I'm not the only kid who lives here. There's my sister, Natalie, except she doesn't count. And there are twenty-three other kids who live on the island because their dads work as guards or cook's or doctors or electricians for the prison, like my dad does. Plus, there are a ton of bad men- hit men, con men, stickup men, embezzlers, connivers, burglars, kidnappers and maybe even an innocent man or two, though I doubt it. The convicts we have are the kind other prisons don't want. I never knew prisons could be picky, but I guess they can. You get to Alcatraz by being the worst of the worst. Unless you're me. I came here because my mother said I had to."

#### *Counting by 7's*, Holly Goldberg Sloan (Realistic Fiction)

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now. Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is *not* a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.

#### *The False Prince*, Jennifer Nielsen (Action/Adventure)

In this first book in a remarkable trilogy, an orphan is forced into a twisted game with deadly stakes. Choose to lie...or choose to die. In a discontent kingdom, civil war is brewing. To unify the divided people, Conner, a nobleman of the court, devises a cunning plan to find an impersonator of the king's long-lost son and install him as a puppet prince. Four orphans are recruited to compete for the role, including a defiant boy named Sage. Sage knows that Conner's motives are more than questionable, yet his life balances on a sword's point -- he must be chosen to play the prince or he will certainly be killed. But Sage's rivals have their own agendas as well. As Sage moves from a rundown orphanage to Conner's sumptuous palace, layer upon layer of treachery and deceit unfold, until finally, a truth is revealed that, in the end, may very well prove more dangerous than all of the lies taken together. An extraordinary adventure filled with danger and action, lies and deadly truths that will have readers clinging to the edge of their seats.

#### *Fast Break*, Mike Lupica (Realistic Fiction)

Forced to live on his own after his mom dies and her boyfriend abandons him, 12-year-old Jayson does whatever it takes to get by. He will do anything to avoid the foster care system. Besides, his real home has always been the beat-up basketball court behind the projects in the North Carolina hills, and his family has always been his friends and teammates. He manages to get away with his deception until the day he gets caught stealing a new pair of basketball sneakers. Game over. Within a day a social worker places him with a family from the other side of town, the Lawtons. New home, new school, new teammates. Jayson, at first, is combative, testing the Lawtons' patience at every turn. He wants out, yet the Lawtons refuse to take the bait. But not everyone in Jayson's new life is so ready to trust him--and even Jayson's old friends give him a hard time now that he's attending a school full of rich kids. It's on Jayson to believe that he deserves a better life than the one he once had. The ultimate prize if he can? A trip to play in the state finals at Cameron Indoor Stadium--home to the Duke Blue Devils and launching pad to his dream of playing big time college ball. Getting there will be a journey that reaches far beyond the basketball court.

#### *The Fourth Stall*, Chris Rylander (Realistic Fiction)

Do you need something? Mac can get it for you. He and his best friend and business manager, Vince. Their methods might sometimes run afoul of the law, or at least the school code of conduct, but if you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can pay him, Mac is on your side. His office is located in the East Wing boy's bathroom, fourth stall from the high window. And business is booming. Or at least it was, until this particular Monday. Because this Monday is when Mac and Vince find out that the trouble with solving everyone else's problems is there's no one left to solve yours. The school setting; fast-paced, cinematic, and funny story; and engaging voice make *The Fourth Stall* a perfect classroom read.

#### *The Lions of Little Rock*, Kristen Levine (Historical Fiction)

As twelve-year-old Marlee starts middle school in 1958 Little Rock, it feels like her whole world is falling apart. Until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. Liz is everything Marlee wishes she could be: she's brave, brash and always knows the right thing to say. But when Liz leaves school without even a good-bye, the rumor is that Liz was caught passing for white. Marlee decides that doesn't matter. She just wants her friend back. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are even willing to take on segregation and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families.

### **New Kid, Jerry Craft (Realistic Fiction/Graphic Novel)**

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

### **Other Words for Home, Jasmine Warga (Novel in Verse, Realistic Fiction, Poetry)**

*I am learning how to be*

*sad*

*and happy*

*at the same time.*

Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. The American movies that Jude has always loved haven't quite prepared her for starting school in the US—and her new label of "Middle Eastern," an identity she's never known before. But this life also brings unexpected surprises—there are new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.

### **Playing Atari with Saddam Hussein, Ali Fadhl and Jennifer Roy (Memoir)**

At the start of 1991, eleven-year-old Ali Fadhl was consumed by his love for soccer, video games, and American television shows. Then, on January 17, Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein, went to war with thirty-four nations led by the United States. Over the next forty-three days, Ali and his family survived bombings, food shortages, and constant fear. Ali and his brothers played soccer on the abandoned streets of their Basra neighborhood, wondering when or if their medic father would return from the war front. Cinematic, accessible, and timely, this is the story of one ordinary kid's view of life during war.

### **Seedfolks, Paul Fleischman (Realistic Fiction)**

A Vietnamese girl plants six lima beans in a Cleveland vacant lot. Looking down on the immigrant-filled neighborhood, a Romanian woman watches suspiciously. A school janitor gets involved, then a Guatemalan family. Then muscle-bound Curtis, trying to win back Lateesha. Pregnant Maricela. Amir from India. A sense of community sprouts and spreads.

### **To Night Owl From Dogfish, Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer (Realistic Fiction)**

Avery Bloom, who's bookish, intense, and afraid of many things, particularly deep water, lives in New York City. Bett Devlin, who's fearless, outgoing, and loves all animals as well as the ocean, lives in California. What they have in common is that they are both twelve years old, and are both being raised by single, gay dads. When their dads fall in love, Bett and Avery are sent, against their will, to the same sleepaway camp. Their dads hope that they will find common ground and become friends—and possibly, one day, even sisters. But things soon go off the rails for the girls (and for their dads too), and they find themselves on a summer adventure that neither of them could have predicted. Now that they can't imagine life without each other, will the two girls (who sometimes call themselves Night Owl and Dogfish) figure out a way to be a family?

### **Wings of Fire- The Dragonet Prophecy, Tui T. Sutherland (Fantasy)**

The story tells about a young dragon without heroic ambitions, learns that a prophecy predicted his four other dragonets demise. He decides to leave his sheltered life and fight for his and the other dragons' freedom. In this fantastic adventure, Clay and his friends leave the mountain and set the dragon world on a course that one could have predicted.

## **7th**

### **The Benefits of Being an Octopus, Ann Braden (Realistic Fiction)**

Seventh-grader Zoey has her hands full as she takes care of her much younger siblings after school every day while her mom works her shift at the pizza parlor. Not that her mom seems to appreciate it. At least there's Lenny, her mom's boyfriend—they all get to live in his nice, clean trailer. At school, Zoey tries to stay under the radar. Her only friend Fuchsia has her own issues, and since they're in an entirely different world than the rich kids, it's best if no one notices them. Zoey thinks how much easier everything would be if she were an octopus: eight arms to do eight things at once. Incredible camouflage ability and steady, unblinking vision. Powerful protective defenses. Unfortunately, she's not totally invisible, and one of her teachers forces her to join the debate club. Even though Zoey resists participating, debate ultimately leads her to see things in a new way: her mom's relationship with Lenny, Fuchsia's situation, and her own place in this town of people who think they're better than her. Can Zoey find the courage to speak up, even if it means risking the most stable home she's ever had?

### **Booked, Kwame Alexander (Novel in Verse)**

*As Like lightning/you strike/fast and free/legs zoom/down field/eyes fixed/on the checkered ball/on the goal/ten yards to go/can't nobody stop you/ can't nobody cop you...* In this follow-up to the Newbery-winning novel THE CROSSOVER, soccer, family, love, and friendship, take center stage as twelve-year-old Nick learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. Helping him along are his best friend and sometimes teammate Coby, and The Mac, a rapping librarian who gives Nick inspiring books to read.

This electric and heartfelt novel-in-verse by poet Kwame Alexander bends and breaks as it captures all the thrills and setbacks, action and emotion of a World Cup match!

### **Chains, Laurie Halse Anderson (Historical Fiction)**

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.

**Genius: The Game**, Leopoldo Gout (Fiction, Dystopian, Adventure, STEM)

*Trust no one. Every camera is an eye. Every microphone an ear. Find me and we can stop him together.*

**The Game:** Get ready for Zero Hour as 200 geniuses from around the world go head to head in a competition hand-devised by India's youngest CEO and visionary.

**The Players:**

**Rex**- One of the best programmers/hackers in the world, this 16-year-old Mexican-American is determined to find his missing brother.

**Tunde**- This 14-year-old self-taught engineering genius has drawn the attention of a ruthless military warlord by single-handedly bringing electricity and internet to his small Nigerian village.

**Painted Wolf**- One of China's most respected activist bloggers, this mysterious 16-year-old is being pulled into the spotlight by her father's new deal with a corrupt Chinese official.

**The Stakes:** Are higher than you can imagine. Like life and death. Welcome to the revolution. And get ready to run. the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.

**Ghost**, Jason Reynolds (Realistic Fiction)

Running. That's all that Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But never for a track team. Nope, his game has always been basketball. But when Ghost impulsively challenges an elite sprinter to a race -- and wins -- the Olympic medalist track coach sees he has something: crazy natural talent. Thing is, Ghost has something else: a lot of anger, and a past that he is trying to outrun. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed and meld with the team, or will his past finally catch up to him?

**Harbor Me**, Jacqueline Woodsen (Realistic Fiction)

It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat—by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it's safe to talk about what's bothering them—everything from Esteban's father's deportation and Haley's father's incarceration to Amari's fears of racial profiling and Ashton's adjustment to his changing family fortunes. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. And together, they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

**Legend**, Marie Lu (Dystopian)

What was once the western United States is now home to the Republic, a nation perpetually at war with its neighbors. Born into an elite family in one of the Republic's wealthiest districts, fifteen-year-old June is a prodigy being groomed for success in the Republic's highest military circles. Born into the slums, fifteen-year-old Day is the country's most wanted criminal. But his motives may not be as malicious as they seem. From very different worlds, June and Day have no reason to cross paths - until the day June's brother, Metias, is murdered and Day becomes the prime suspect. Caught in the ultimate game of cat and mouse, Day is in a race for his family's survival, while June seeks to avenge Metias's death. But in a shocking turn of events, the two uncover the truth of what has really brought them together, and the sinister lengths their country will go to keep its secrets. Full of action, suspense, and romance, this novel is sure to move and thrill teen readers.

**Orbiting Jupiter**, Gary D. Schmidt (Realistic Fiction)

When Jack meets his new foster brother, he already knows three things about him: Joseph almost killed a teacher. He was incarcerated at a place called Stone Mountain. He has a daughter. Her name is Jupiter. And he has never seen her. What Jack doesn't know, at first, is how desperate Joseph is to find his baby girl. Or how urgently he, Jack, will want to help. But the past can't be shaken off. Even as new bonds form, old wounds reopen. The search for Jupiter demands more from Jack than he can imagine. This tender, heartbreakin novel is Gary D. Schmidt at his best.

**Peak**, Roland Smith (Realistic Fiction)

In After 14-year-old Peak Marcello is arrested for scaling a New York City skyscraper, he's left with two choices: wither away in Juvenile Detention or go live with his long-lost father, who runs a climbing company in Thailand. But Peak quickly learns that his father's renewed interest in him has strings attached. Big strings. He wants Peak to be the youngest person to reach the Everest summit — and his motives are selfish at best. Even so, for a climbing addict like Peak, tackling Everest is the challenge of a lifetime. But it's also one that could cost him his life. He encounters the dangers of climbing, experiencing physical and emotional challenges that bring him to critical decisions testing his strength and maturity. Roland Smith has created an action-packed adventure about friendship, sacrifice, family, and the drive to take on Everest, despite the incredible risk. Peak is a novel that readers won't be able to put down.

**Restart**, Gordon Korman (Realistic Fiction)

Chase's memory just went out the window. Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, in fact, remember anything. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again . . . starting with his own name. He knows he's Chase. But who is Chase? When he gets back to school, he sees that different kids have very different reactions to his return. Some kids treat him like a hero. Some kids are clearly afraid of him. One girl in particular is so angry with him that she pours her frozen yogurt on his head the first chance she gets. Pretty soon, it's not only a question of who Chase is--it's a question of who he was . . . and who he's going to be.

**The Strangers**, Margaret Peterson Haddix (Mystery/ Suspense)

Told in alternating points of view from Chess, Emma, and Finn Greystone, *The Strangers* is the beginning of a new page-turning adventure that examines assumptions about identity, family, and home, from the master of middle grade suspense.

**What makes you you?** The Greystone kids thought they knew. Chess has always been the protector over his younger siblings, Emma loves math, and Finn does what Finn does best—acting silly and being adored. They've been a happy family, just the three of them and their mom.

But everything changes when reports of three kidnapped children—who share the same first and middle names, ages, and exact birth dates as the Greystone kids—reach the Greystone family. This bizarre coincidence makes them wonder: Who exactly are these strangers? Before Chess, Emma, and

Finn can question their mom about it, she takes off on a mysterious work trip. But puzzling clues left behind lead to complex codes, hidden rooms, and a dangerous secret that will turn their world upside down.

#### **Stepssister**, Jennifer Donnelly (Fantasy)

Isabelle should be blissfully happy - she's about to win the handsome prince. Except Isabelle isn't the beautiful girl who lost the glass slipper and captured the prince's heart. She's the ugly stepsister who's cut off her toes to fit into Cinderella's shoe ... which is now filling with blood. When the prince discovers Isabelle's deception, she is turned away in shame. It's no more than she deserves: she is a plain girl in a world that values beauty; a feisty girl in a world that wants her to be pliant. Isabelle has tried to fit in. To live up to her mother's expectations. To be like her stepsister. To be sweet. To be pretty. One by one, she has cut away pieces of herself in order to survive a world that doesn't appreciate a girl like her. And that has made her mean, jealous, and hollow. Until she gets a chance to alter her destiny and prove what ugly stepsisters have always known: it takes more than heartache to break a girl.

#### **When You Reach Me**, Rebecca Stead (Science Fiction)

Shortly after a fall-out with her best friend, sixth grader Miranda starts receiving mysterious notes, and she doesn't know what to do. The notes tell her that she must write a letter—a true story, and that she can't share her mission with anyone. It would be easy to ignore the strange messages, except that whoever is leaving them has an uncanny ability to predict the future. If that is the case, then Miranda has a big problem—because the notes tell her that someone is going to die, and she might be too late to stop it.

### **8th**

#### **A Night Divided**, Jennifer Nielsen (Historical Fiction)

From NYT bestselling author Jennifer A. Nielsen comes a stunning thriller about a girl who must escape to freedom after the Berlin Wall divides her family between east and west. With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, to think forbidden thoughts of freedom, yet she can't help herself. She sees the East German soldiers with their guns trained on their own citizens; she, her family, her neighbors and friends are prisoners in their own city. But one day, while on her way to school, Gerta spots her father on a viewing platform on the western side, pantomiming a peculiar dance. Then, when she receives a mysterious drawing, Gerta puts two and two together and concludes that her father wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin. However, if they are caught, the consequences will be deadly. No one can be trusted. Will Gerta and her family find their way to freedom?

#### **Between Shades of Gray**, Ruta Sepetys (Historical Fiction)

Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941. She paints, she draws, she gets crushes on boys. Until one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, tearing her family from the comfortable life they've known. Separated from her father, forced onto a crowded and dirty train car, Lina, her mother, and her young brother slowly make their way north, crossing the Arctic Circle, to a work camp in the coldest reaches of Siberia. Here they are forced, under Stalin's orders, to dig for beets and fight for their lives under the cruelest of conditions. Lina finds solace in her art, meticulously—and at great risk—documenting events by drawing, hoping these messages will make their way to her father's prison camp to let him know they are still alive. It is a long and harrowing journey, spanning years and covering 6,500 miles, but it is through incredible strength, love, and hope that Lina ultimately survives. *Between Shades of Gray* is a novel that will steal your breath and capture your heart.

#### **Brown Girl Dreaming**, Jacqueline Woodson (Nonfiction, Memoir, Novel in Verse)

Jacqueline Woodson, one of today's finest writers, tells the moving story of her childhood in mesmerizing verse. Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.

#### **Bruiser**, Neal Shusterman (Realistic Fiction)

Tennyson: Don't get me started on the Bruiser. He was voted "Most Likely to Get the Death Penalty" by the entire school. He's the kid no one knows, no one talks to, and everyone hears disturbing rumors about. So why is my sister, Brontë, dating him? One of these days she's going to take in the wrong stray dog, and it's not going to end well.

Brontë: My brother has no right to talk about Brewster that way—no right to threaten him. There's a reason why Brewster can't have friends—why he can't care about too many people. Because when he cares about you, things start to happen. Impossible things that can't be explained. I know, because they're happening to me.

#### **Caraval**, Stephanie Garber (Fantasy)

Remember, it's only a game... Scarlett Dragna has never left the tiny island where she and her sister, Tella, live with their powerful, and cruel, father. Now Scarlett's father has arranged a marriage for her, and Scarlett thinks her dreams of seeing Caraval—the faraway, once-a-year performance where the audience participates in the show—are over. But this year, Scarlett's long-dreamt-of invitation finally arrives. With the help of a mysterious sailor, Tella whisks Scarlett away to the show. Only, as soon as they arrive, Tella is kidnapped by Caraval's mastermind organizer, Legend. It turns out that this season's Caraval revolves around Tella, and whoever finds her first is the winner. Scarlett has been told that everything that happens during Caraval is only an elaborate performance. Nevertheless she becomes enmeshed in a game of love, heartbreak, and magic. And whether Caraval is real or not, Scarlett must find Tella before the five nights of the game are over or a dangerous domino effect of consequences will be set off, and her beloved sister will disappear forever.

Welcome, welcome to Caraval...beware of getting swept too far away.

#### **Faceless**, Alyssa Sheinme (Realistic Fiction)

When Maisie Winters wakes up, she's in the hospital. The last thing she remembers is running through the hills of her neighborhood one misty morning. Slowly, she puts the pieces together. Before she could make it home, a storm gathered. Lightning hit a power line and sparks rained down, the hot-burning electrical fire consuming her. Destroying her face. Where her nose, cheeks, and chin used to be, now there

is...nothing. Maisie's lucky enough to qualify for a rare medical treatment: a face transplant. At least, everyone says she's lucky. But with someone else's features staring back at her in the mirror, Maisie looks—and feels—like a stranger. The doctors promised that the transplant was her chance to live a normal life again, but nothing feels normal anymore. Before, she knew who she was—a regular girl who ran track and got good grades, who loved her boyfriend and her best friend. Now, she can't even recognize herself. New York Times bestselling author Alyssa Sheinmel has created a gripping and gorgeously written tale of identity and love. This is a story of losing yourself and the long, hard fight to find your way back.

#### ***The First Rule of Punk*, Celia Perez (Fiction)**

*The First Rule of Punk* is a heartfelt exploration of friendship, finding your place, and learning to rock out like no one's watching. There are no shortcuts to surviving your first day at a new school—you can't fix it with duct tape like you would your Chuck Taylors. On Day One, twelve-year-old Malú (Maria Luisa, if you want to annoy her) inadvertently upsets Posada Middle School's queen bee, violates the school's dress code with her punk rock look, and disappoints her college-professor mom in the process. Her dad, who now lives a thousand miles away, says things will get better as long as she remembers the first rule of punk: be yourself. The real Malú loves rock music, skateboarding, zines, and Soyrizo (hold the cilantro, please). And when she assembles a group of like-minded misfits at school and starts a band, Malú finally begins to feel at home. She'll do anything to preserve this, which includes standing up to an anti-punk school administration to fight for her right to express herself!

#### ***Ghost Boys*, Jewell Parker Rhodes (Realistic Fiction)**

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing. Soon Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened, on a journey towards recognizing how historical racism may have led to the events that ended his life. Jerome also meets Sarah, the daughter of the police officer, who grapples with her father's actions. Once again Jewell Parker Rhodes deftly weaves historical and socio-political layers into a gripping and poignant story about how children and families face the complexities of today's world, and how one boy grows to understand American blackness in the aftermath of his own death.

#### ***In the Shadow of the Sun*, Anne O'Brien (Adventure, Fiction)**

North Korea is known as the most repressive country on Earth, with a dictatorial leader, a starving population, and harsh punishment for rebellion. Not the best place for a family vacation. Yet that's exactly where Mia Andrews finds herself, on a tour with her aid-worker father and fractious older brother, Simon. Mia was adopted from South Korea as a baby, and the trip raises tough questions about where she really belongs. Then her dad is arrested for spying, just as forbidden photographs of North Korean slave-labor camps fall into Mia's hands. The only way to save Dad: get the pictures out of the country. Thus Mia and Simon set off on a harrowing journey to the border, without food, money, or shelter, in a land where anyone who sees them might turn them in, and getting caught could mean prison -- or worse. It's an exciting adventure that offers a rare glimpse into a compelling, complicated nation. It's also an unforgettable novel of courage and survival.

#### ***The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, Brian Selznick (Historical Fiction, Mystery)**

Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery.

#### ***Monster*, Walter Dean Myers (Realistic Fiction)**

Sixteen-year-old Steve is on trial for murder and could face the death penalty. During the trial, Steve, an amateur filmmaker, pictures all the events as if he were directing a movie.

#### ***Refugee*, Alan Gratz (Historical Fiction)**

Three different kids. One mission in common: ESCAPE. Josef is a Jewish boy in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world... Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety and freedom in America... Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe...

All three young people will go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers—from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But for each of them, there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, surprising connections will tie their stories together in the end.

#### ***Scythe*, Neal Shusterman (Thriller/ Science Fiction)**

A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery: humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now Scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own. *Scythe* is the first novel of a thrilling new series by National Book Award-winning author Neal Shusterman in which Citra and Rowan learn that a perfect world comes only with a heavy price.

#### ***The Selection*, Kiera Cass (Fiction, Dystopia)**

For thirty-five girls, the Selection is the chance of a lifetime. The opportunity to escape the life laid out for them since birth. To be swept up in a world of glittering gowns and priceless jewels. To live in a palace and compete for the heart of gorgeous Prince Maxon. But for America Singer, being Selected is a nightmare. It means turning her back on her secret love with Aspen, who is a caste below her. Leaving her home to enter a fierce competition for a crown she doesn't want. Living in a palace that is constantly threatened by violent rebel attacks. Then America meets Prince Maxon. Gradually, she starts to question all the plans she's made for herself—and realizes that the life she's always dreamed of may not compare to a future she never imagined.

#### ***The Story of Owen*, E.K Johnston (Fantasy)**

Listen! For I sing of Owen Thorskard: valiant of heart, hopeless at algebra, last in a long line of legendary dragon slayers. Though he had few years and was not built for football, he stood between the town of Trondheim and creatures that threatened its survival. There have always

been dragons. As far back as history is told, men and women have fought them, loyally defending their villages. Dragon slaying was a proud tradition. But dragons and humans have one thing in common: an insatiable appetite for fossil fuels. From the moment Henry Ford hired his first dragon slayer, no small town was safe. Dragon slayers flocked to cities, leaving more remote areas unprotected. Such was Trondheim's fate until Owen Thorskard arrived. At sixteen, with dragons advancing and his grades plummeting, Owen faced impossible odds armed only with a sword, his legacy, and the classmate who agreed to be his bard. Listen! I am Siobhan McQuaid. I alone know the story of Owen, the story that changes everything. Listen!

***They Both Die at the End*, Adam Silvera (Science Fiction)**

On September 5, a little after midnight, Death-Cast calls Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio to give them some bad news: They're going to die today. Mateo and Rufus are total strangers, but, for different reasons, they're both looking to make a new friend on their End Day. The good news: There's an app for that. It's called the Last Friend, and through it, Rufus and Mateo are about to meet up for one last great adventure—to live a lifetime in a single day.

***Towers Falling*, Jewel Parker Rhodes (Historical Fiction)**

A powerful novel set fifteen years after the 9/11 attacks.

When her fifth-grade teacher hints that a series of lessons about home and community will culminate with one big answer about two tall towers once visible outside their classroom window, Deja can't help but feel confused. She sets off on a journey of discovery, with new friends Ben and Sabeen by her side. But just as she gets closer to answering big questions about who she is, what America means, and how communities can grow (and heal), she uncovers new questions, too. Like, why does Pop get so angry when she brings up anything about the towers? Award-winning author Jewell Parker Rhodes tells a powerful story about young people who weren't alive to witness this defining moment in history, but begin to realize how much it colors their every day.

***The Unteachables*, Gordon Korman (Fiction)**

The Unteachables are a notorious class of misfits, delinquents, and academic train wrecks. Aldo has anger management issues; Parker can't read; Kiana, who doesn't even belong in the class—or any class; and Elaine (rhymes with pain). The Unteachables have been removed from the student body and isolated in room 117. Their teacher is Mr. Kermit, the most burned-out teacher in all of Greenwich. He was once a rising star, but his career was shattered by a cheating scandal that still haunts him. He is finally one year away from early retirement. But the superintendent has his own plans to torpedo that idea—and it involves assigning Mr. Kermit to the Unteachables. The Unteachables never thought they'd find a teacher who had a worse attitude than they did. Mr. Kermit never thought he would actually care about teaching again. Over the course of a school year, room 117 will experience mayhem, destruction—and maybe even a shot at redemption.

***Up from the Sea*, Leza Lowitz (Novel in Verse)**

On that fateful day, Kai loses nearly everyone and everything he cares about in the storm. When he's offered a trip to New York to meet kids whose lives were changed by 9/11, Kai realizes he also has a chance to look for his estranged American father. Visiting Ground Zero on its tenth anniversary, Kai learns that the only way to make something good come out of the disaster back home is to return there and help rebuild his town.

*Running through my ruined town,  
pack flapping like wings  
against my back.  
Plowing through blocks  
strewn with heaps of  
refrigeratorsblackboardsbicyclesstairs  
bustedpianosshelvesdesksstairs  
allmixedtogether  
in a marshland  
grave.*

***The War of the Worlds*, H.G. Wells (Science Fiction)**

With H.G. Wells' other novels, *The War of the Worlds* was one of the first and greatest works of science fiction ever to be written. Even long before man had learned to fly, H.G. Wells wrote this story of the Martian attack on England. These unearthly creatures arrive in huge cylinders, from which they escape as soon as the metal is cool. The first falls near Woking and is regarded as a curiosity rather than a danger until the Martians climb out of it and kill many of the gaping crowd with a Heat-Ray. These unearthly creatures have heads four feet in diameter and colossal round bodies, and by manipulating two terrifying machines - the Handling Machine and the Fighting Machine - they are as versatile as humans and at the same time insuperable. They cause boundless destruction. The inhabitants of the Earth are powerless against them, and it looks as if the end of the World has come. But there is one factor which the Martians, in spite of their superior intelligence, have not reckoned on. It is this which brings about a miraculous conclusion to this famous work of the imagination.