

# Summer Reading



Middle School | 2021

**McCALLIE**  
— HONOR TRUTH DUTY —



## Dear McCallie Middle School Families,

Welcome to those of you who are new to McCallie and hello to returning families! During this very strange and challenging year, many things have changed, but our core values have not. At McCallie, we strive to encourage young people to find joy in books and reading. Part of the way that we encourage McCallie students to read is our Summer Reading program, and I hope that you enjoy this year's selections.

This summer, every Middle School student will choose a book from a list of eight options. While this list is in no way exhaustive, we have tried to provide a variety of topics, formats, genres, and perspectives. During a Homebase meeting in the fall, students will share a creative response to the book they chose. The response can be a number of things, including but not limited to a piece of visual art, a poem or short story, or a video book trailer. You can find more ideas and examples on the Summer Reading Guide linked below.

In addition to the choice book, each grade will have an assigned book. 6th graders will read *The War that Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. 7th graders will read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. 8th graders will read *Just Mercy* (Adapted for Young Adults): *A True Story of the Fight for Justice* by Bryan Stevenson. Students will discuss the books in their English classes.

Finally, students are invited to participate in the [optional] Summer Reading Challenge!

Please see the Summer Reading Guide [link below] for more information about the 2021 book selections, the Summer Reading Challenge, as well as recommended books for additional reading, if you choose.

Summer Reading Guide:  
<https://libguides.mccallie.org/mssummerreading2021>

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Happy reading!

**Margaret Wadley**  
McCallie School Librarian

# FAQs



## How many books do I have to read?

Two. You will choose one book from the list of eight and you will read your grade-level book. You will also prepare a creative response to your choice book to share in a small group setting.



## Can I choose a book that I have already read?

Please choose a book that you have never read before.



## Am I allowed to read my book[s] on an eReader [Kindle, iPad, Nook, etc.]?

Absolutely!



## Can I listen to the audio-book version of one or more of my books?

Yes, but you must read along as you listen.



## There are several different versions of my book available to buy. How do I know which one to get?

We've provided an ISBN for each book to help you find a copy; however, you are not required to read that exact edition, unless noted. Please note that some of the titles have adult versions in addition to the young adult versions. Make sure you are getting the correct version of those titles.



## What summer reading materials do I need to bring with me when school starts?

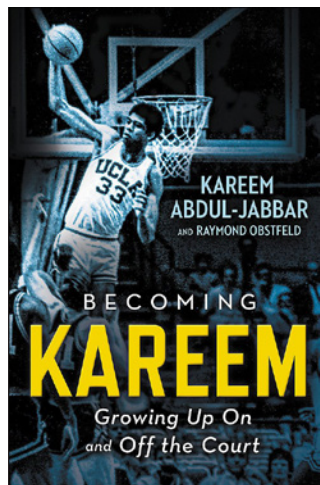
Bring your grade level book with you on the first day for your English class. When we have our summer reading Homebase meeting, you should bring your choice book and your creative response to share. The date will be announced at the beginning of the school year.



## I have another question about summer reading. What should I do?

Contact Mrs. Wadley at [mwadley@mccallie.org](mailto:mwadley@mccallie.org).

# Choice Book – Nonfiction



## **Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court**

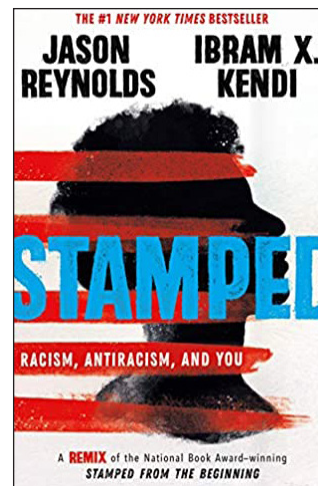
by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Raymond Obstfeld

ISBN-13: 978-0316555388

At one time, Lew Alcindor was just another kid from New York City with all the usual problems: He struggled with fitting in, with pleasing a strict father, and with overcoming shyness that made him feel socially awkward.

But with a talent for basketball,

and an unmatched team of supporters, Lew Alcindor was able to transform and to become Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. From a childhood made difficult by racism and prejudice to a record-smashing career on the basketball court as an adult, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's life was packed with ""coaches"" who taught him right from wrong and led him on the path to greatness. His parents, coaches Jack Donahue and John Wooden, Muhammad Ali, Bruce Lee, and many others played important roles in Abdul-Jabbar's life and sparked him to become an activist for social change and advancement. The inspiration from those around him, and his drive to find his own path in life, are highlighted in this personal and awe-inspiring journey.



## **Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You**

by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

ISBN-13: 978-0316453691

*Stamped* traces the history of racism and the many political, literary, and philosophical narratives that have been used to justify slavery, oppression, and genocide. Framed through the ideologies and thoughts of segregationists, assimilationists,

and antiracists throughout history, the book demonstrates that the "construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, whether financially or politically," and that this power has been used to systemically and systematically oppress Black people in the United States for more than four hundred years.



# Choice Book – Nonfiction



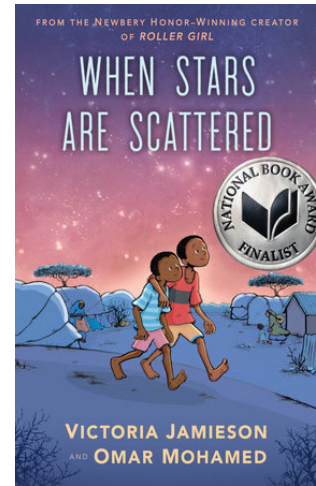
## **The Plot to Kill Hitler: Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Spy, Unlikely Hero**

by Patricia McCormick

ISBN-13: 978-0062411099

It was April 5, 1943, and the Gestapo would arrive any minute. Dietrich Bonhoeffer had been expecting this day for a long time. He had put his papers in order—and left a few notes specifically for Hitler’s men to see. Two SS agents climbed

the stairs and told the boyish-looking Bonhoeffer to come with them. He calmly said good-bye to his parents, put his Bible under his arm, and left. Upstairs there was proof, in his own handwriting, that this quiet young minister was part of a conspiracy to kill Adolf Hitler. This compelling, brilliantly researched account includes the remarkable discovery that Bonhoeffer was one of the first people to provide evidence to the Allies that Jews were being deported to death camps. It takes readers from his privileged early childhood to the studies and travel that would introduce him to peace activists around the world—eventually putting this gentle, scholarly pacifist on a deadly course to assassinate one of the most ruthless dictators in history.



## **When Stars are Scattered**

by Victoria Jamieson and  
Omar Mohamed

ISBN-13: 978-0525553908

Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, have spent most of their lives in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Life is hard there: never enough food, achingly dull, and without access to the medical care Omar knows his nonverbal brother needs. So when Omar has the opportunity to go to school, he knows it might be a chance to change their future . . . but it would also mean leaving his brother, the only family member he has left, every day. Heartbreak, hope, and gentle humor exist together in this graphic novel about a childhood spent waiting, and a young man who is able to create a sense of family and home in the most difficult of settings. It’s an intimate, important, unforgettable look at the day-to-day life of a refugee, as told to *New York Times* Bestselling author/artist Victoria Jamieson by Omar Mohamed, the Somali man who lived the story.

# Choice Book – Fiction



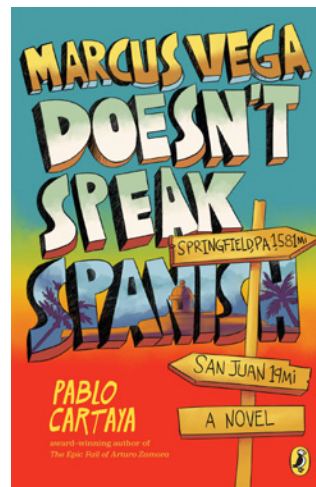
## **Front Desk**

by Kelly Yang

ISBN-13: 978-1338157826

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds

out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?



## **Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish**

by Pablo Cartaya

ISBN-13: 978-1101997284

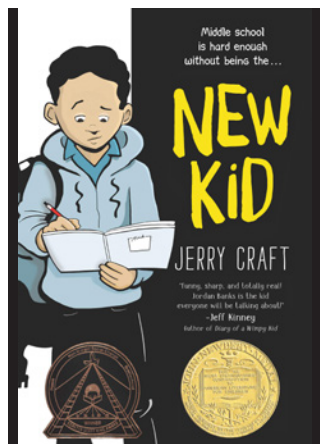
Marcus Vega is six feet tall, 180 pounds, and the owner of a premature mustache. When you look like this and you're only in the eighth grade, you're both a threat and a target. Marcus knows what classmates and teachers see when they look at him: a monster.

But appearances are deceiving. At home, Marcus is a devoted brother. And he finds ways to earn cash to contribute to his family's rainy day fund. His mom works long hours and his dad walked out ten years ago—someone has to pick up the slack.

After a fight at school leaves him facing suspension, Marcus and his family decide to hit the reset button and regroup for a week in Puerto Rico. Marcus is more interested in finding his father, though, who is somewhere on the island. Through a series of misadventures that take Marcus all over Puerto Rico in search of the elusive Mr. Vega, Marcus meets a colorful cast of characters who show him the many faces of fatherhood. And he even learns a bit of Spanish along the way.



# Choice Book – Fiction



## **New Kid**

by Jerry Craft

ISBN-13: 978-0062691194

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?



## **Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky**

by Kwame Mbalia

ISBN-13: 978-1368042413

Seventh grader Tristan Strong feels anything but strong ever since he failed to save his best friend when they were in a bus accident together. All he has left of Eddie is the journal his friend wrote stories in. Tristan is

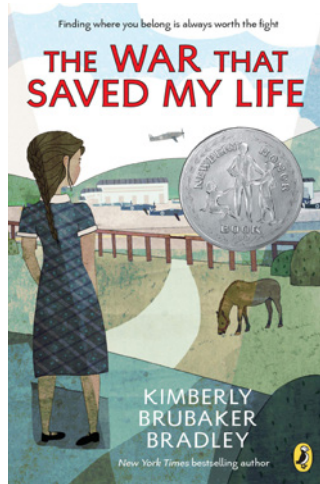
dreading the month he's going to spend on his grandparents' farm in Alabama, where he's being sent to heal from the tragedy.

But on his first night there, a sticky creature shows up in his bedroom and steals Eddie's notebook. Tristan chases after it—is that a doll?—and a tug-of-war ensues between them underneath a Bottle Tree. In a last attempt to wrestle the journal out of the creature's hands, Tristan punches the tree, accidentally ripping open a chasm into the MidPass, a volatile place with a burning sea, haunted bone ships, and iron monsters that are hunting the inhabitants of this world.

Tristan finds himself in the middle of a battle that has left black American folk heroes John Henry and Brer Rabbit exhausted. In order to get back home, Tristan and these new allies will need to entice the god Anansi, the Weaver, to come out of hiding and seal the hole in the sky. But bartering with the trickster Anansi always comes at a price.

# Required Reading

## 6TH GRADE BOOK



### **The War that Saved My Life**

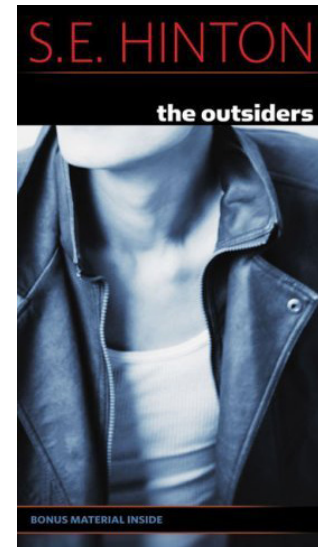
by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

ISBN-13: 978-0147510488

Ten-year-old Ada has never left her one-room apartment. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada's twisted foot to let her outside. So when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn't waste a minute—she sneaks out to join him.

So begins a new adventure of Ada, and for Susan Smith, the woman who is forced to take the two kids in. As Ada teaches herself to ride a pony, learns to read, and watches for German spies, she begins to trust Susan—and Susan begins to love Ada and Jamie. But in the end, will their bond be enough to hold them together through wartime? Or will Ada and her brother fall back into the cruel hands of their mother?

## 7TH GRADE BOOK



### **The Outsiders**

by S.E. Hinton

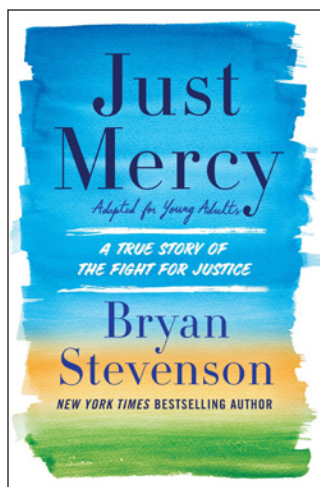
ISBN-13: 978-0142407332

According to Ponyboy, there are two kinds of people in the world: greasers and socs. A soc (short for “social”) has money, can get away with just about anything, and has an attitude longer than a limousine. A greaser, on the other hand, always lives on the outside and needs to watch his back. Ponyboy is a greaser, and he's always been proud of it, even willing to rumble against a gang of socs for the sake of his fellow greasers--until one terrible night...



# Required Reading

## 8TH GRADE BOOK



### **Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice**

by Bryan Stevenson

ISBN-13: 978-0525580034

In this very personal work--adapted from the original #1 bestseller--acclaimed lawyer and social justice advocate Bryan Stevenson offers a glimpse into the lives of the wrongfully imprisoned and his efforts to fight for their freedom.

Stevenson's story is one of working to protect basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society--the poor, the wrongly convicted, and those whose lives have been marked by discrimination and marginalization. Through this adaptation, young people of today will find themselves called to action and compassion in the pursuit of justice.

For more information contact:

Margaret Wadley

[mwadley@mccallie.org](mailto:mwadley@mccallie.org)

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