

2021-2022 Georgia Chapter Book Award Nominees



The Canyon's Edge by Dusti Bowling

Exactly one year after her mother died in a random public shooting, Nora and her father go on a rock-climbing trip to the desert. After they descend into a canyon, her father and all their supplies get washed away in a flash flood. Nora is left to try to find her way to safety alone, facing dehydration, dangerous desert animals, and her PTSD. RL 4.8 (Action/Adventure)



The Benefits of Being an Octopus by Ann Braden

Seventh-grader Zoey looks after her much younger siblings after school, while her mother is working at the pizza parlor. Zoey and her friend Fuchia are the poor kids at school, and keep their heads and their problems down as much as they can—but Zoey cannot help wishing she were like an octopus, eight arms to do eight things all at once, with camouflage and great vision. Unfortunately, Zoey is not, and to make her life any better she will have to find her voice and face her problems. Realistic Fiction (RL 4.9 L 770)



Fighting Words by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Depending on an older sister who protected her when their mother went to prison and their mother's boyfriend committed a terrible act, ten-year-old Della tries to figure out what to do when her older sister attempts suicide. RL 3.6 (Realistic Fiction)



Efrén Divided by Ernesto Cisneros

While his father works two jobs, seventh-grader Efrén Nava must take care of his twin siblings, kindergartners Max and Mia, after their mother is deported to Mexico. RL 4.5, L 710 (Realistic Fiction)



Dress Coded by Carrie Firestone

Middle schooler Molly Frost starts a podcast in protest of her school's unfair dress code policies, which disproportionately affect young girls, especially those with curvy bodies. When her podcast gains notoriety, she faces not only bullying, but also the scrutiny of the local school board. RL 4.8 (Realistic Fiction)



Wink by Rob Harrell

Ross Maloy tries to navigate middle school after he's diagnosed with eye cancer. His radiation technician, Frank, helps him discover music as an outlet, and teaches him to play guitar. As one of Ross's close friends abandons him, he sees another side to a school bully who has ties to Frank. RL 3.9, L 580 (Realistic Fiction)



When Stars are Scattered by Victoria Jamieson

When Omar has the opportunity to get an education while living in a refugee camp, he must decide what is more important: education or taking care of his nonverbal brother Hassan. RL 3.7 L 530 (Graphic Novel)



As American as Paneer Pie by Supriya Kelkar

When a racist incident rocks her small Michigan town, eleven-year-old Lekha must decide whether to speak up or stay silent, even as she struggles to navigate her life at home, where she can be herself, and at school, where she is teased about her culture. RL 5.4 L 840 (Realistic Fiction)



Stand Up, Yumi Chung! by Jessica Kim

When eleven-year-old Yumi Chung stumbles into a kids' comedy camp she is mistaken for another student, so she decides to play the part. RL 4.4 (Realistic Fiction)



Pie in the Sky by Remy Lai

Knowing very little English, eleven-year-old Jingwen feels like an alien when his family immigrates to Australia, but he copes with loneliness and the loss of his father by baking elaborate cakes. RL 4.5, L 720 (Realistic Fiction)



Show Me a Sign by Ann Clare Lezotte

Mary Lambert has felt safe and accepted on her beloved island of Martha's Vineyard, comforted by the fact that her great-great-grandfather was the first deaf islander and paved the way for many to learn sign language. However, when Mary's brother dies and her family shatters amidst land disputes with the English settlers and Wampanoag people, it paves the way for an opportunistic young scientist to come and study the island's prevalent deafness, and, without moral scruples, he begins using Mary as a "live specimen" for increasingly cruel experiments. RL 5.1 L 730 (Historical Fiction)



From the Desk of Zoe Washington by Jamie Marks

On her birthday, twelve-year-old aspiring baker Zoe Washington receives a letter from her biological father, who is in prison for murder, telling her he is actually innocent. Determined to discover the truth, Zoe tries to investigate herself, perform well in her baking internship, and achieve her dream of auditioning for the Food Network's Kids Bake Challenge. RL 4.4, L 660 (Realistic Fiction)



Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky by Kwame Mbalia

Reading his dead best friend's journal allows seventh-grader Tristan Strong to see folk heroes John Henry and Brer Rabbit. Then, a character from the Anansi story steals the journal, and in his effort to retrieve it, Tristan accidentally rips open a hole into Alke, where African American folk characters are gods. Tristan learns that the people of Alke are suffering partly due to Tristan's actions, and in order to get back home and save his friends, Tristan, John Henry, and Brer Rabbit must seek out the god Anansi the Weaver and convince him to fix the chasm. RL 4.8 L 680 (Fantasy)



Prairie Lotus by Linda Sue Park

Fourteen-year-old Hanna, who is half Chinese, settles with her father in the frontier town of LaForge, in Dakota Territory in 1880. She hopes she can attend school before becoming a dressmaker in her father's dry goods shop, but first she must deal with racism from the local townspeople who are afraid to have their children attend class with her, grief from the loss of her mother, and a yearning to belong as she and her father struggle to find a place where they will be accepted. RL 5.2, L 730 (Historical Fiction)



Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Jason Reynolds

This adaptation of Ibram X. Kendi's "Stamped From the Beginning" explores the history of racist ideas in America by examining the lives of notable historical figures, from Cotton Mather and Thomas Jefferson to W.E.B. Du Bois and Angela Davis. Discusses how racist ideas spread and how they are also discredited. RL 7.4 L 1000



Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Twelve-year-old Donte is the darker-skinned brother of Trey, which in his racist, mostly-white school has earned him the nickname Black Brother. When the captain of the school fencing team successfully frames him for something he didn't do, Donte is arrested and suspended from school. Joining a local youth center, Donte meets former Olympic fencer Arden Jones and begins training to defeat his school bully and find courage to confront the racist system that got him arrested. RL 3.4 L 730 (Sports Fiction)



Mañanaland by Pam Munoz Ryan

After his father leaves on a trip to secure a new birth certificate for him, eleven-year-old Maximiliano Córdoba meets a refugee named Isadora from the war-torn country of Abismo and learns that the stories his grandfather has been telling him are true: his family are part of a secret society of guardians who lead refugees to safety through an abandoned stone tower named La Reina Gigante. Abandoning his dreams of becoming a soccer star, Maximiliano sets out on a journey to help Isadora reach safety and hopefully learn the truth behind the disappearance of his mother. RL 4.5, L 650 (Fantasy)



Wish in the Dark by Christina Soontornvat

All of the light in Chattana is made by one man, the Governor. The magical lights represent freedom for Pong, who was born in Namwon Prison and he dreams of walking among them. But when Pong escapes from Namwon, he discovers that the outside world is just as unfair as life in the prison. Nok, the prison warden's daughter, searches for Pong in order to restore her family's good name, but she uncovers secrets that make her question everything she's believed. Nok and Pong set out to make things right. RL 5.2, L 720 (Fantasy)



Brave Like That by Lindsey Stoddard

Cyrus was left on the steps of the Northfield firehouse when he was just a baby, but being taken in by brave firefighters and a football star dad hasn't made him brave. Instead, Cyrus is skittish and kind of scared of life, just like the stray dog Parker who parks his head on Cyrus's shoulder. Unfortunately, his dad has a strict no-pet rule, especially during football tryouts--but Cyrus doesn't want to try out for football. He would rather tap his feet and dance. Cyrus must find a way to live life and be brave on his own terms. RL 5.3 (Realistic Fiction)



Ways to Make Sunshine by Renée Watson

Ryan, a cheerful fourth-grader from Portland, Oregon, tries to look on the bright side of every difficulty life throws at her, including having a name that's typically a boy's name. When her father loses his job, they have to move to a smaller house and sell their second car. Ryan is sometimes sad, especially when she botches a well-practiced speech, but with her family and friends supporting her, she finds ways to make sunshine in her life.

RL 4.5 (Realistic Fiction)