Rhode Island Middle School Book Award 2020 Nominees

Please remember not all books are suitable for all readers

Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed*
In modern-day Pakistan, Amal must fight to regain her freedom and dreams after she is forced into indentured servitude. Realistic Fiction.

Be Prepared by Vera Bresgol
Vera is excited to attend sleepaway camp just for Russian kids like her. But when camp ends up being tougher than she imagined, Vera isn’t sure she will survive a whole summer of bugs bites and bullying bunkmates. Memoir/Graphic Novel.

The Benefits of Being an Octopus
Zoe knows life would be easier if she were an octopus. When a teacher sees through her camouflage, Zoe starts to wonder if maybe she can change her life. Can she gather the courage to make that decision, if the cost is leaving the only safe place her family knows? Realistic Fiction.

Bone Jack by Sara Crowe
Ash Tyler is dealing with a lot, between his father’s return home from war with PTSD and his ex-best friend’s increasingly strange and violent behavior. When Ash is chosen to compete in the annual Stag Chase he hopes to turn things around for his family – he just has to survive the chase. Fantasy.

City of Ghosts by Victoria Schwab
Since she almost drowned, Cass has gained two things: the ability to see ghosts and the ability to pull back the ‘veil’ separating the living and the dead and a new best friend, Jacob - who happens to be a ghost. Any hopes for a normal summer are dashed when Cass and her parents go to Scotland to investigate the world’s most haunted places. As it turns out, Cass’s ghostly problems have only just begun. Horror/Suspense.

Drum Roll, Please by Lisa Jenn Bigelow
Melly should be having a glorious summer at Camp Rockaway, but it’s tough dealing with her parents’ divorce, her best friend ditching her, a new crush on a girl named Adeline, and a fear she doesn’t have what it takes to be a real rock ‘n’ roll drummer. Quiet Melly needs to find her voice, get loud, and be heard. Realistic Fiction.

Echo’s Sister by Paul Mosier
El’s plans for a fantastic year at her new school are derailed when her sister is diagnosed with cancer. As the family struggles to meet everyone’s needs they learn the true value of community. Realistic Fiction.

The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora by Pablo Cartaya*
Can Arturo save his family’s Cuban restaurant and Miami neighborhood from a flashy (and wealthy) developer? Will he get the girl? Or is it all just an epic fail? Realistic Fiction.

Stranged by Ethan M. Aldridge
Edmund is not a normal teen boy - he is a changeling, a faerie swapped with a human baby, hiding his powers in our world. The Childe is his double, raised as a curiosity among the faeries. When an evil sorcerer takes the throne, Childe is forced into the human world, where he and Edmund must team up to find where they belong and save the fae from ruin. Fantasy/Graphic Novel.

Game Changer by Tommy Greenwald
Teddy Youngblood gets injured and falls into a coma after football practice. Teddy’s family, friends, and community wants to know if it was just an accident - or was it done on purpose? Readers are able to follow along with the characters as they unravel the mystery of what really happened on that fateful day. Realistic Fiction.

Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes*
Jerome was shot and killed by a police officer, who claimed it was an act of self-defense. As time passes between life and death, Jerome bears witness to the events around his killing, relying on the stories of those who have gone before him to make sense of the tragedy. A devastating tale of history repeating itself. Realistic Fiction.

Greetings from Witness Protection! by Jake Burt*
In this funny, action packed page-turner, foster child Nicki Demere is recruited by the US Marshals to help a family in witness protection hide in plain sight. Realistic Fiction.

How We Roll by Natasha Friend
 Ninth grader, Quinn, is happy to start at a new school. She hides the fact that she is bald from a medical condition and makes friends with the cool girls, but finds herself drawn to one of her new friend’s exes, Nick, whose legs were amputated after a car crash. Realistic Fiction.

Illegal by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin
This graphic novel tells the story of Ebo, an orphan from Ghana, who follows his older brother to seek asylum in Europe. Their epic journey alternates between present and past as it depicts the brutal journey of asylum seekers across the Mediterranean. Realistic Fiction/Graphic Novel.

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling*
Aven was born without arms, a fact that’s only the second-most interesting thing about her. The first is the fact that she and her parents just became the caretakers of an Old West amusement park where new friends – and a mystery – await her. Realistic Fiction.

Lifeboat 12 by Susan Hood
Kenneth is one of many children evacuated from London to escape the Blitz during WWI. But when the ship that was supposed to take them to Canada is wrecked, the children find themselves in a fight for survival they never imagined. This story is based on true events. Novel in Verse.

The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson*
When Candice and her neighbor, Brandon, discover a mysterious letter in her grandmother’s attic they must use clues to discover a hidden fortune - and uncover injustices from their city’s past. Mystery.

Small Spaces by Katherine Arden
Ollie finds herself in possession a mysterious book after she snatches it from an odd woman crying by the river. The book warns her to ‘Avoid large spaces. Keep to small.’ Little does she know that these words will guide her on a twisted, hair-raising adventure after a field trip gone wrong threatens the lives of herself and her classmates. Horror/Suspense.

The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle by Leslie Connor*
Mason Buttle has always been a bit of an outcast, but after his best friend was killed in Mason’s own backyard, life has gone from bad to worse. With the odds stacked against him, Mason will have to fight back against a suspicious town with the only weapon he has: the truth. Realistic Fiction.

A World Below by Wesley King
A ho-hum school field trip to the Carlsbad Caverns becomes a race to survive when an earthquake hits and separates the class underground. As the students look for a way out, they encounter dangers and a hidden kingdom in the world below. Action and Adventure.

*Audiobook Recommended

For more information about the award, please visit RI Middle School Book Award Home Page