



2021 – 2022 It List Nominees



Nowhere Boy by Katherine Marsh

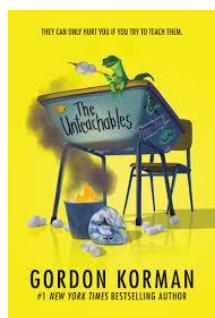
Published June 12th 2018 by Listening Library

A timely, poignant tale of family, sacrifice and the friendship between a young Syrian refugee and an American boy living in Brussels.

Fourteen-year-old Ahmed is stuck in a city that wants nothing to do with him. Newly arrived in Brussels, Belgium, Ahmed fled a life of uncertainty and suffering in Syria, only to lose his father on the perilous journey to the shores of Europe. Now Ahmed's struggling to get by on his own, but with no one left to trust and nowhere to go, he's starting to lose hope.

Then he meets Max, a thirteen-year-old American boy. Lonely and homesick, Max is being bothered by a bully at school, he doesn't speak a word of French, and just can't seem to do anything right. But with one startling discovery, Max and Ahmed's lives collide, banding the boys together to help Ahmed survive.

As their friendship grows, Ahmed and Max defy the odds, learning from each other what it means to be brave, and how hope can change your destiny. Set against the backdrop of the Syrian refugee crisis, award-winning author Katherine Marsh delivers a gripping, heartwarming story of resilience, friendship and everyday heroes.



The Unteachables by Gordon Korman

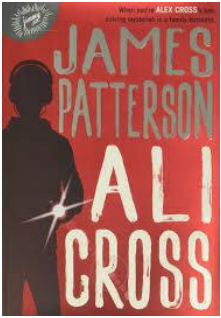
Published January 8th 2019 by Balzer + Bray

A hilarious new middle grade novel from beloved and bestselling author Gordon Korman about what happens when the worst class of kids in school is paired with the worst teacher—perfect for fans of *Ms. Bixby's Last Day*.

The Unteachables are a notorious class of misfits, delinquents, and academic train wrecks. Like Aldo, with anger management issues; Parker, who 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. Zachary 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. After years of phoning it in, 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. And Mr. Kermit never thought he would actually care about teaching again. Over the course of a school year, though, room 117 will experience mayhem, destruction—and maybe even a shot at redemption.



Ali Cross

by James Patterson

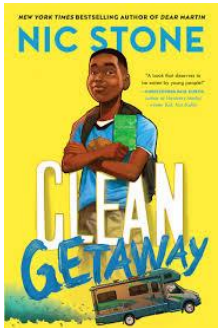
Published November 25th 2019 by Jimmy Patterson Books

Alex's son Ali is eager to follow in his father's footsteps as a detective, but when his best friend goes missing, what price will he have to pay to solve the mystery?

Ali Cross has always looked up to his father, former detective and FBI agent Alex Cross. While solving some of the nation's most challenging crimes, his father always kept his head and did the right thing.

Can Ali have the same strength and resolve?

When Ali's best friend Gabe Qualls is reported missing, Ali is desperate to find him. At the same time, a string of burglaries targets his neighborhood---and even his own house. With his father on trial for a crime he didn't commit, it's up to Ali to search for clues and find his friend. But being a kid sleuth isn't easy---especially when your father warns you not to get involved! --- and Ali soon learns that clues aren't always what they seem. Will his detective work lead to a break in Gabe's case or cause even more trouble for the Cross family?



Clean Getaway

by Nic Stone

Published January 7th 2020 by Crown Books for Young Readers

From New York Times bestselling author Nic Stone comes a middle grade road-trip story through American race relations past and present perfect for fans of Jacqueline Woodson and Jason Reynolds.

How to Go on an Unplanned Road Trip with Your Grandma:

* Grab a Suitcase: Prepacked from the big spring break trip that got CANCELLED.

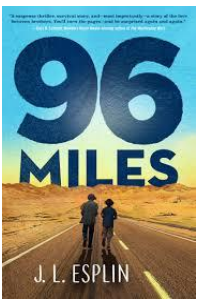
* Fasten Your Seatbelt: G'ma's never conventional, so this trip won't be either.

* Use the Green Book: G'ma's most treasured possession. It holds history, memories, and, most important, the way home.

What Not to Bring:

* A Cell Phone: Avoid contact with Dad at all costs. Even when G'ma starts acting stranger than usual.

Set against the backdrop of the segregation history of the American South, take a trip with New York Times bestselling Nic Stone and an eleven-year-old boy who is about to discover the world hasn't always been a welcoming place for kids like him, and things aren't always what they seem--his G'ma included.



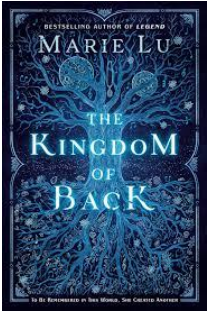
96 Miles

By J.L. Espin

Published February 11th 2020 by Starscape

Dad always said if things get desperate, it's okay to drink the water in the toilet. I never thought it would come to that. I thought I'd sooner die than let one drop of toilet water touch my lips. Yet here I am, kneeling before a porcelain throne, holding a tin mug for scooping in one hand, and my half-gallon canteen in the other.

The Lockwood brothers are supposed to be able to survive anything. Their dad, a hardcore survivalist, has stockpiled enough food and water on their isolated Nevada ranch to last for months. But when they are robbed at gunpoint during a massive blackout while their dad is out of town, John and Stew must walk 96 miles in the stark desert sun to get help--and they have only 3 days before their time runs out....



The Kingdom of Back

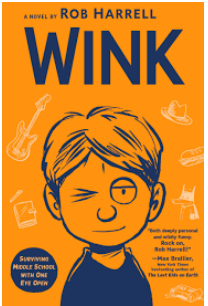
By Marie Lu

Published March 3rd 2020 by Putnam/G.P. Putnam's Sons

Born with a gift for music, Nannerl Mozart has just one wish: to be remembered forever. But even as she delights audiences with her masterful playing, she has little hope she'll ever become the acclaimed composer she longs to be. She is a young woman in eighteenth-century Europe, and that means composing is forbidden to her. She will perform only until she reaches a marriageable age—her tyrannical father has made that much clear.

As Nannerl's hope grows dimmer with each passing year, the talents of her beloved younger brother, Wolfgang, only seem to shine brighter. His brilliance begins to eclipse her own, until one day a mysterious stranger from a magical land appears with an irresistible offer. He has the power to make her wish come true—but his help may cost her everything.

In her first work of historical fiction, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Marie Lu spins a lush, lyrically told story of music, magic, and the unbreakable bond between a brother and sister.



Wink

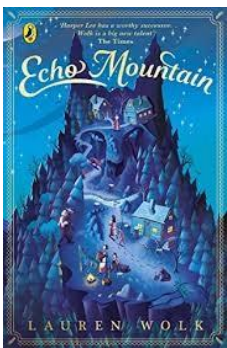
By Rob Harrell

Published March 31st 2020 by Dial Books

A wrenching and hilarious story about embracing life's weirdness and surviving an unthinkable diagnosis, based on the author's own experience with a rare eye cancer.

Twelve-year-old Ross Maloy just wants to be normal. Not to have a rare eye cancer, not to lose his hair, not to have to wear a weird hat or have a goopy eye full of ointment. Just *normal*. But with a sudden and horrifying diagnosis, Ross can't help standing out. His new life is medical treatments that feel straight out of a video game, vision loss in one eye, disappearing friends who don't know what to say to "the cancer kid," cruel bullying, and ultimately, friendships new and old that rise above everything.

Just when Ross starts to feel like he's losing his footing, he discovers how music, art, and true friends can change everything. Filled with Rob Harrell's comic panels (Batpig for the win!) and spot art, this novel brings effortless humor and hope to an unforgettable, uplifting story of survival.



Echo Mountain

By Lauren Wolk

Published April 21st 2020 by Dutton Books for Young Readers

A young heroine in Depression-era Maine is navigating the rocky terrain of her new life on Echo Mountain.

After the financial crash, Ellie and her family have lost nearly everything--including their home in town. They have started over, carving out a new life in the unforgiving terrain of Echo Mountain. Though her sister Esther, especially, resents everything about the mountain, Ellie has found more freedom, a new strength, and a love of the natural world that now surrounds them. But there is little joy, even for Ellie, as they all struggle with the sorrow and aftermath of an accident that left her father in a coma. An accident for which Ellie has accepted the unearned weight of blame.

Urgent for a cure to bring her father back, Ellie is determined to try anything. Following her heart, and the lead of a scruffy mutt, Ellie will make her way to the top of the mountain, in search of the healing secrets of a woman known only as "the hag." But the mountain still has many untold stories left to reveal to Ellie, as she finds her way forward among a complex constellation of strong women spanning generations.



Amari and the Night Brothers

By B.B. Alston

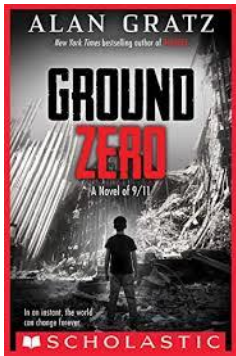
Published January 19th 2021 by Balzer+ Bray

Quinton Peters was the golden boy of the Rosewood low-income housing projects, receiving full scholarship offers to two different Ivy League schools. When he mysteriously goes missing, his little sister, 13-year-old Amari Peters, can't understand why it's not a bigger deal. Why isn't his story all over the news? And why do the police automatically assume he was into something illegal?

Then Amari discovers a ticking briefcase in her brother's old closet. A briefcase meant for her eyes only. There was far more to Quinton, it seems, than she ever knew. He's left her a nomination for a summer tryout at the secretive Bureau of Supernatural Affairs. Amari is certain the answer to finding out what happened to him lies somewhere inside, if only she can get her head around the idea of mermaids, dwarves, yetis and magicians all being real things, something she has to instantly confront when she is given a weredragon as a roommate.

Amari must compete against some of the nation's wealthiest kids—who've known about the supernatural world their whole lives and are able to easily answer questions like which two Great Beasts reside in the Atlantic Ocean and how old is Merlin? Just getting around the Bureau is a lesson alone for Amari with signs like 'Department of Hidden Places this way, or is it?' If that all wasn't enough, every Bureau trainee has a talent enhanced to supernatural levels to help them do their jobs – but Amari is given an illegal ability. As if she needed something else to make her stand out.

With an evil magician threatening the whole supernatural world, and her own classmates thinking she is an enemy, Amari has never felt more alone. But if she doesn't pass the three tryouts, she may never find out what happened to Quinton.



Ground Zero

By Alan Gratz

Published February 2nd 2021 by Scholastic Press

In time for the 20th anniversary of 9/11, bestselling author Alan Gratz delivers a breathtaking, multifaceted, and resonant look at this singular event in US history -- and how it still impacts us today.

It's September 11, 2001. Brandon, a 9-year-old boy, goes to work for the day with his dad . . . at the World Trade Center in New York City. When two planes hit the towers, Brandon and his father are trapped inside a fiery nightmare as terror and confusion swirl around them. Can they escape -- and what will the world be like when they do?

In present-day Afghanistan, Reshmina is an 11-year-old girl who is used to growing up in the shadow of war, but she has dreams of peace and unity. When she ends up harboring a wounded young American soldier, she and her entire family are put in mortal danger. But Reshmina also learns something surprising about the roots of this endless war.

With his trademark skill and insight, Alan Gratz delivers an action-packed and powerful story of two kids whose lives connect in unexpected ways, and reminds us how the past and present are always more linked than we think.