

## 2011 Garden State Teen Book Awards Nominee Annotations

### Fiction: Grades 6-8

*Chains.* Laurie Halse Anderson.

In the early days of the War for Independence, 13-year-old Isabel and her young sister Ruth are sold to a Loyalist couple and are moved from a Rhode Island farm community to New York City. Isabel is determined to free herself despite the fact that there is no one willing to vouch for her previous owner's statement in her will that Isabel was to be freed upon her death. To this end, she is willing to work with whichever side, Patriot or Loyalist, will gain freedom for herself and Ruth.

*The Seer of Shadows.* Avi.

It's New York City, 1872, and fourteen-year-old Horace, a photographer's apprentice, becomes entangled in a plot to create fraudulent spirit photographs. When Horace accidentally frees the real ghost of a dead girl bent on revenge, his life takes a frightening turn.

*The Boy Who Dared.* Susan Campbell Bartoletti.

A young German becomes disenchanted with the Nazi regime and risks his life spreading counter-propaganda. This enthralling tale is based on a true story.

*The Compound.* S. A. Bodeen.

Eli's father gathered his family in a high-tech underground shelter during a nuclear attack – but he is becoming more and more secretive and irrational. Is the danger outside – or inside?

*Waiting for Normal.* Leslie Conner.

Sixth grader Addie longs for a “normal” life with her ex-stepfather and two half-sisters while coping with the challenges of living in a trailer with a dysfunctional mother who's often AWOL.

*The London Eye Mystery.* Siobhan Dowd.

Ted's cousin, Salim, disappears from a closed capsule on the London Eye, a 442-foot-tall Ferris wheel. Is Salim kidnapped? Dead? Ted has Asperger's Syndrome and his unique, analytical outlook may just solve the mystery of what happened to Salim.

*The Graveyard Book.* Neil Gaiman.

The boy Nobody has been raised by gentle ghosts in a graveyard following his escape from his family's murderer. What will happen when the murderer returns for him?

*The Diamond of Drury Lane.* Julia Golding.

Cat is an orphan living in a theatre and therefore has far more freedoms than a girl living in 1790s London would otherwise. She overhears a conversation about a diamond hidden in the theatre, and soon new people begin to arrive at the theatre, leading her to become a storyteller for some upper-class children. In the meantime, Cat desperately wishes to join one of the local street gangs. With so much going on, Cat wonders where the future will lead her, and if the diamond will ever be found. Part mystery, part adventure, and part historical fiction, this sharply written tale is sure to delight.

*Gone.* Michael Grant.

One morning everyone who is 14 years old and older in Perdido Beach, CA suddenly vanishes into thin air. The other kids are left behind to fight fear, hunger, and each other as some discover they are developing superpowers.

*Suite Scarlett.* Maureen Johnson.

Scarlett Martin is not looking forward to a whole summer at home in New York City. All of her friends are going on exciting vacations while Scarlett is stuck helping out in her family's aging hotel, getting no money and no break from her sisters and aspiring-actor brother. When the glamorous, wealthy, and potentially crazy thespian, Amy Amberson, takes residence in Scarlett's Suite, things become far from boring. Ms. Amberson nominates herself as the "director" of the Martin family – meddling with their time, theatrical pursuits, and of course, love lives.

*Wake (Dream Catcher, Book 1).* Lisa McMann.

Janie Hannigan is trying to rise above her dysfunctional family life by keeping her nose clean and preparing for college – that is, if falling into other people's dreams doesn't drive her insane first. With the passing of the years, Janie has learned to live with her "gift" and has even accepted their occurrences with a bored resignation – until one day, she is pulled into a horrifying dream unlike anything she has ever experienced.

*Princess Ben.* Catherine Gilbert Murdock.

Princess Ben is the story of a princess who was raised with the commoners, and never learned all that a "proper" royal should. Now that her family has been killed, she is left to the tender mercies of her aunt, the Queen. They clash constantly and when Ben is left locked in her room, she discovers some magical artifacts that change her and her world forever.

*The Door of No Return.* Sarah Mussi.

Zac Baxter never believed his grandfather's stories about the great treasure their ancestors left behind in Africa. When his grandfather is suddenly murdered, it becomes clear that stories were true, and that someone else knows too. Zac must travel from England to Africa in order to find the treasure for his grandfather. But time is running out.

*Morbito: Guardian of the Spirit.* Nahoko Uehashi.

Prince Chagum is possessed by a water demon and it is up to Balsa, a wandering bodyguard, to find out the true nature of the demon while keeping Chagum safe from his father's murderous intent.

*Fakie.* Tony Varrato.

Danny and his mom are in the Witness Protection Program, hiding from a murderer. They've moved and changed identity many times – but now the killers are closing in!

*Climbing the Stairs.* Padma Venkatraman.

1941 in India looks different than it did in the 19th century, but some things haven't changed. For Vidya, living with her modern father, she enjoys an education and dreams of a future for herself beyond marriage and children. When her father is gravely wounded in a protest against British rule, the family must return to live with their very traditional relatives. Can Vidya find a way to break from the confinements of women? Can her family escape the conflicts of India in 1941?

*Becoming Billie Holiday.* Carole Weatherford Boston.

Before she became a world famous jazz singer and changed her name to Billie Holiday, she was known as Eleanora Fagan. Eleanora fought to survive in Baltimore and make a career for herself in New York. This is a fictional look at her fascinating life, written in verse with sepia-toned illustrations.

*After Tupac & D Foster.* Jacqueline Woodson.

The day Neeka and her best friend meet D Foster is the day everything changes. Together, the three become teenagers, helping each other through hard times, sharing good times, and looking up to their hero, rapper Tupac Shakur. What will happen to their friendship when D Foster's missing mother shows up to take her away?

*Good Enough.* Paula Yoo.

Patti needs to figure out how to survive high school and prove to her parents that she is a PKD (Perfect Korean Daughter).

*Sweethearts.* Sara Zarr.

Cameron Quick was Jennifer Harris's only friend. They stood by each other when other kids called them weird (Cameron) or fat (Jennifer), and they really believed that they didn't need anyone else in order to be perfectly content. One day in third grade, Cameron and his dad disappear and when the kids at school tell Jennifer that Cameron is dead, Jennifer has no options left except to become a survivor. But what's the real story?

## Fiction: Grades 9-12

*Audrey, Wait!* Robin Benway.

Life is really harsh when you break up with your boyfriend. But it gets even worse when he writes a hit song about it. Audrey's life will never be the same once the hit song 'Audrey, Wait!' takes over the airwaves; she's suddenly famous, followed by paparazzi, and people want to know her just to get to her ex. Can Audrey live an authentic life and find real love while living in the media spotlight?

*What I Saw and How I Lied.* Judy Blundell.

It's 1947, and when 15-year-old Evie Spooner goes on a family trip to Palm Beach with her mother and stepfather, she becomes embroiled in a web of lies and intrigue involving a handsome young ex-GI who seems smitten with her. When events take a murderous turn, Evie must decide for herself what she must do. This one's a National Book Award winner.

*Kendra.* Coe Booth.

Raised by her strict grandmother, 14-year-old Kendra dreams of being reunited with the mother who abandoned her. Reality turns out to be tougher than Kendra expects, and both mother and daughter realize they have a lot of growing up to do. Drama with boys, friends, and family ensues.

*Debby Harry Sings in French.* Meagan Brothers.

Johnny has a secret. He loves Debbie Harry's music so much that he dreams sometimes of BEING her. He confides in his girlfriend Maria, who encourages him to wear and be comfortable in women's clothing. Can Johnny ever be brave enough to share his secret? Can he still be straight while enjoying wearing girl's clothes?

*Graceling.* Kristin Cashore.

Katsa has been graced with the ability to kill, something which her uncle the King has used to his best advantage. Katsa herself struggles with learning to interact with other people in a world where the graced are feared and her particular grace leaves her further ostracized. With the help of her friends she uncovers a plot against the kingdoms and establishes a place for herself in the world.

*The Hunger Games.* Suzanne Collins.

In Panem, winning the lottery changes the lives of 24 children each year, but not for the good. These girls and boys become contestants in The Hunger Games, a televised battle to the death.

*Mexican WhiteBoy.* Matt de la Peña.

Danny is half Mexican but doesn't speak Spanish and feels completely out of place when visiting family in Mexico. He's also half white, but feels equally awkward when he's amongst the students at his Southern California private school. The only place Danny is comfortable is on the pitcher's mound, throwing 95-mile-per-hour fastballs, but he has to face his demons before he can figure out who he is and where he really belongs.

*Little Brother.* Cory Doctorow.

After terrorists attack San Francisco, the Department of Homeland Security transforms America into a police state that monitors the movements and conversations of ordinary citizens in the name of keeping them safe. Teen computer hacker Marcus and his friends are erroneously arrested and brutally treated. Suddenly Marcus finds himself the center of an underground movement seeking to restore American freedoms, and an enemy of a government determined to stop him.

*Down to the Bone.* Mayra Dole.

Laura is a Catholic Cuban and a lesbian – two things that don't typically mix. She must struggle through the pain and confusion of first love, the resistance of acceptance from her mother, and most importantly, the difficulty of accepting herself. Luckily Laura has a wonderfully loving and varied set of friends to help her on her way.

*Night Road.* A. M. Jenkins.

Cole is a "heme" or hemovore – one who drinks blood. He is an expert at living on the road. Because of this, he is assigned to teach Gordon, a newly-made heme, how to survive on his own. Gordon is angry and bitter about his new fate, and Cole, in an attempt to atone for his own past sins, struggles to help him adjust. Their life on the road is further complicated by a rogue heme who is stalking their every move, putting them in danger.

*Playing with Matches.* Brian Katcher.

Leon really likes hanging out with Melody. They have a lot in common, but he CANNOT be interested in taking her on a real date because she is terribly disfigured from a fire. What would his classmates think? It's safer to dream of dating a cheerleader or beauty queen like Amy even if she is out of his league. What happens if he has a chance to date either of them?

*The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks.* E. Lockhart.

Frankie attends one of the most elite boarding schools on the east coast. During her freshman year Frankie goes largely unnoticed behind her sister's shadow, but during the summer between freshman and sophomore years, she changes both physically and mentally. Emboldened by the readings from her class on urban protests, Frankie challenges the established hierarchy, soon becomes the mastermind behind several school pranks, and is well on her way to becoming either a great world-leader or a criminal mastermind.

*Jellicoe Road.* Melina Marchetta.

Taylor Markham, now seventeen, was abandoned by her mother on the Jellicoe Road when she was eleven. Since then, she's been attending a boarding school and has been cared for by Hannah, her mother's friend. When Hannah disappears and clues to Taylor's past start to surface, her future depends on solving the mysteries that surround her.

*Madapple.* Christina Meldrum.

Natural herbs, hallucinogens, secrets, and lies are all factors in the murder trial Aslaug is facing. If even she isn't sure of what to believe, how can she convince a jury of her innocence?

*Hotlanta.* Denene Milner and Mitzi Miller.

Twins Sydney and Lauren Duke live the good life among the cream of Atlanta's African-American elite. But family secrets are taking them into dangerous territory!

*The Knife of Never Letting Go (Chaos Walking, Book One).* Patrick Ness.

Todd Hewitt is the last boy in Prentisstown. Since the Noise germ came and killed all the women and left the men able to hear each other's thoughts, he remained the youngest one in town. A month before the birthday that will make him a man, Todd and his dog stumble upon something most unusual: a spot of quiet in the woods. The town has been keeping a horrible secret from Todd and he must run away to protect himself. But when everyone can hear your thoughts, where is there to hide?

*The Adoration of Jenna Fox.* Mary Pearson.

Jenna wakes up from a coma remembering nothing and the pieces don't add up. Why is she in California while her dad is still in Boston? Will she ever feel like the girl in the endless videos her mother shows her? Who is Jenna Fox and what is her secret?

*Nation.* Terry Pratchett.

Nation, Mau's island home, is destroyed by a tsunami. Daphne's ship is wrecked there by the same wave. As desperate survivors from other islands arrive, the two must shape a new Nation and outfox cannibal raiders.

*Living Dead Girl.* Elizabeth Scott.

Alice, kidnapped and brainwashed by an abuser, is so close to losing her humanity that she prepares to help him capture a young replacement.

*Skim.* Mariko Tamaki.

Kimberly Keiko Cameron, a.k.a. Skim, doesn't fit in. Anywhere. She is sad, goth, Wiccan, half-Canadian, half-Japanese, her parents are getting divorced, and she has a crush on her English teacher (who is a lady). But in high school, who's really an outsider? This is a beautifully drawn graphic novel.

## Nonfiction: Grades 6-12

*War Is... : Soldiers, Survivors, and Storytellers Talk About War.* Marc Aronson and Patty Campbell, eds. **(Grades 10+)**

This book takes a stark look at the realities of war through essays, memoirs, letters, and fictional tales from 20 contributors and expresses a variety of views and experiences.

*What It Is.* Lynda Barry. **(Grades 9+)**

Little kids are bursting with creativity – always singing, dancing, and drawing. Where does all that creativity go once the teen years hit? Creativity champion Lynda Barry uses a heady brew of cartoons, memoir, collage, and probing questions to guide readers, writers, and artists of all kinds to rediscover and reclaim the artist within.

*Bodies from the Ice : Melting Glaciers and the Recovery of the Past.* James Deem.

**(Grades 5-8)**

The author of *Bodies from the Ash* and *Bodies from the Bog* takes readers on a captivating and creepy journey that explores mummified remains recovered from several glacial locations and time periods. Discoveries presented include the famous 5300-year-old Alpine Iceman Otzi, the mummified Incan children of the Andes Mountains, and the identification of George Mallory's body on Mount Everest.

*Eminem : The Way I Am.* Eminem. **(Grades 9+)**

One of the most influential rappers of all time allows readers to gain insight into his life and his emotional struggles. The book is as raw and personal as his music.

*Not Quite What I Was Planning : Six-Word Memoirs by Writers Famous and Obscure.* Rachel Fershleiser and Larry Smith, eds. **(Grades 9+)**

Can you describe your life in six words? That is what the editors of *SMITH* magazine asked their readers, and this book is the culmination of their responses. Alternately funny, sad, shocking, and just plain strange, these memoirs will offer new perspectives on one's own life.

*The Lincolns : A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary.* Candace Flaming. **(Grades 6+)**

A dual biography using a scrapbook format tells the story of both Abraham and Mary Lincoln, through childhood, courtship, and marriage. Readers will be surprised at how much they don't know about this famous family. Tons of photographs help bring the past to life.

*Biology.* Can Green. **(Grades 3-8)**

The world's cutest mitochondria, bacteria, and other biological entities tell all, in this offbeat illustrated Bio 101 survey.

*Christo and Jeanne-Claude : Through the Gates and Beyond.* Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan. **(Grades 6-9)**

Artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, partners in art and life, share their passion, drive, and love for creating grand-scale artworks such as 2005's *The Gates*, 23 miles of panels that stretched throughout NYC's Central Park.

*Gadget Nation : A Journey Through the Eccentric World of Invention.* Steve Greenberg. **(Grades 9+)**

This collection features clever, wacky, innovative, insane, and just plain silly inventions, all of which are described in detail with purchasing information included. It's a wonderful browsing book for consumers or budding inventors!

*Creepy Cute Crochet : Zombies, Ninjas, Robots, and More.* Christen Haden. **(Grades 9+)**

A how-to book on creating your own creepy little crochet dolls, including the grim reaper, zombies, and more!

*The Band Name Book.* Noel Hudson. **(Grades 9+)**

A vast compendium of band names organized by very helpful categories, like Food & Drink, The Human Body, and Welcome to the Couch. This is a great book to flip through to kill a few minutes or to see if your band name has already been taken. An index is included too!

*No Choirboy : Murder, Violence, and Teenagers on Death Row.* Susan Kuklin. **(Grades 10+)**

What does it feel like to be on death row? How does society treat those who have done horrible things? Get an inside look into U. S. prisons and hear directly from inmates sentenced to death as teenagers, as well as from families affected by the death penalty.

*What the World Eats.* Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio. **(Grades 6+)**

Twenty-five families. Twenty-one countries. One week. Pictures of what each family ate. You will never look at your plate the same way!

*We Are the Ship : The Story of Negro League Baseball.* Kadir Nelson. **(Grades 5-8)**

Before Jackie Robinson and the integration of baseball, African Americans played in the Negro League. With beautiful illustrations, this book tells the story in nine innings of the Negro League's history from Oct. 11, 1924 until Jackie Robinson's debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Extra innings show the league's final demise.

*Punk Rock Etiquette : The Ultimate How-to-Guide for DIY, Punk, Indie, and Underground Bands.* Travis Nichols. **(Grades 8+)**

If you see a future for yourself in punk rock, this is your guide to stardom, or at least your way into being a graceful third on a minor local festival bill, and moving some merch in the bargain. This book covers everything from booking gigs, touring, and designing and selling merchandise, to intra-band relationships, breaking up, and making up.

*Skulls.* Noah Scalin. **(Grades 9+)**

Follow artist Noah Scalin as he creates a skull a day using various mediums, including those found in traditional art, found objects, food, and architecture. A sample of the art is featured on his website at [www.SkullADay.com](http://www.SkullADay.com).

*King George : What Was His Problem? Everything Your Schoolbooks Didn't Tell You About the American Revolution.* Steve Sheinkin. **(Grades 5-8)**

Snowball fights, naked soldiers, and George Washington's love poems are just a few of the amusing details usually left out of most history textbooks. Fortunately, this book reveals the good stuff!

*I Am Scout : The Biography of Harper Lee.* Charles Shields. **(Grades 7+)**

This fascinating and readable biography chronicles the life of one of the most private and well-read authors of our time. The story follows Lee's life from her tomboy childhood years through her early years as a struggling writer in New York City.

*Peacejam : A Billion Simple Acts of Peace.* Ivan Suvanji Jeff and Dawn Gifford Engle.

**(Grades 5+)**

Can teens make a positive difference in the world around them? You bet they can! This book profiles some of the world's greatest peace figures and how their work with teens is changing the social landscape when it comes to human rights, peace, the environment, and so much more.

*Far From Home : Latino Baseball Players in America.* Tim Wendel and Jose Luis Villegas.

**(Grades 12+)**

Latino baseball players have revolutionized the game in America. Decades before Mariano Rivera and Vladimir Guerrero, players like Orlando Cepeda, Roberto Clemente, and the Alou brothers overcame tremendous barriers to get signed. This book tells their stories, along with brilliant photography.