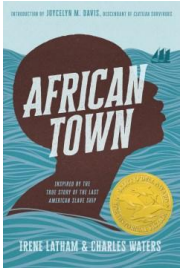




# 2025 Nutmeg Book Award Middle School Nominees Grades 7-8



## AFRICAN TOWN

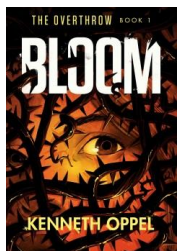
by Irene Latham and Charles Waters

In 1860, 110 Africans were taken and brought to America, as a wager to evade the prohibition on the importation of slaves. Fourteen characters relay the story through their thoughts and feelings. Once emancipated and unable to return to Africa, they established Africatown, a place where they could follow the customs and traditions of their ancestors.

## KING AND THE DRAGONFLIES

by Kacen Callender

King's world is falling apart; his brother Khalid unexpectedly passed away, his close-knit family is drenched with grief, and his once best friend Sandy is missing. Before his death Khalid warned King to stay away from Sandy because he's gay. When Sandy shows up in need of help, King is forced to face thoughts about his own identity and future.



## BLOOM

by Kenneth Oppel

When mysterious black plants suddenly appear and grow wild, engulfing and poisoning all in their path, teens Anaya, Petra, and Seth realize they have something in common- all three of them are immune. Now it's up to them to discover the secrets behind the botanical invasion.

## OBIE IS MAN ENOUGH

by Schuyler Bailar

Obie is a transgender tween trying to find where he belongs. He discovers that people once important to him react negatively to his transition. Luckily, he has support from his new friends, his family, and his first crush. Obie just might find his place in competitive swimming and prove that he is as good as any other boy.



## ELATSOE

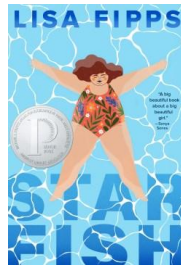
by Darcie Little Badger, art by Rovina Cai

When Ellie's favorite cousin Trevor dies in a terrible car crash, she doesn't believe it was an accident. As her search for clues leads her to the picture perfect but very private town of Willowbee, Ellie enlists her friends and family, both living and dead, to help her find his killer.

## STARFISH

By Lisa Fipps

Ellie has always struggled with body image. She is bullied at school and pressured by her mom to lose weight. The only time she feels herself is when she is swimming, taking up all the space she wants. With help from her dad, her friend Catalina, and her therapist, Ellie must learn to love herself.



## INVISIBLE

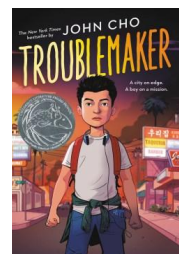
by Christina Diaz Gonzalez, art by Gabriela Epstein

Five students with nothing in common aside from their Latinx roots form an unlikely friendship after getting into trouble. The community service may have been assigned, but when they find an opportunity to really help, will they stand up for others or will they remain invisible?

## TROUBLEMAKER

By John Cho

Korean American Jordan makes a desperate trip through the streets of Los Angeles to help his father fortify the family store against the LA Riots. As the night wears on, he finds help and hindrances in surprising places, and ultimately has to decide the kind of person he wants to be.



## IVELIZ EXPLAINS IT ALL

by Andrea Beatriz Arango, art by Alyssa Bermudez

Iveliz records her struggles dealing with starting seventh grade, changing friend relationships, dealing with depression and PTSD, and a grandmother with Alzheimer's in the only place she can speak her mind: her journal. But can she find a way to say what she needs to say out loud before it's too late?

## YEAR OF THE REAPER

by Makiia Lucier

Lord Cassia finally returns home three years after being captured and catching the plague. His devastated country is at peace but he finds his castle overrun with the royal court taking refuge. When a killer starts attacking those closest to the foreign queen and threatening the shaky peace, it falls to Cas to unravel the treacherous secrets of what happened while he was gone.

