



## 28th Annual Garden State Teen Book Awards Grades 6-8 Fiction Nominee Annotations

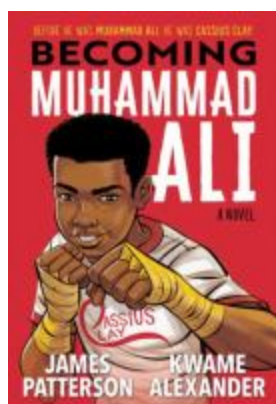
\*Annotations and images from title entries on [LMxAC](#).



### The Barren Grounds

**Author:** Robertson, David A,

**Summary:** Morgan and Eli, two Indigenous children forced away from their families and communities, are brought together in a foster home in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They each feel disconnected, from their culture and each other, and struggle to fit in at school and at their new home -- until they find a secret place, walled off in an unfinished attic bedroom. A portal opens to another reality, Askí, bringing them onto frozen, barren grounds, where they meet Ochek (Fisher). The only hunter supporting his starving community, Misewa, Ochek welcomes the human children, teaching them traditional ways to survive. But as the need for food becomes desperate, they embark on a dangerous mission. Accompanied by Arik, a sassy Squirrel they catch stealing from the trapline, they try to save Misewa before the icy grip of winter freezes everything -- including them. (summary from Amazon)



### Becoming Muhammad Ali

**Author:** Patterson, James, Alexander, Kwame, Anyabwile, Dawud,

**Summary:** A biographical novel tells the story of Cassius Clay, the determined boy who would one day become Muhammad Ali, one of the greatest boxers of all time.



### Flying Over Water

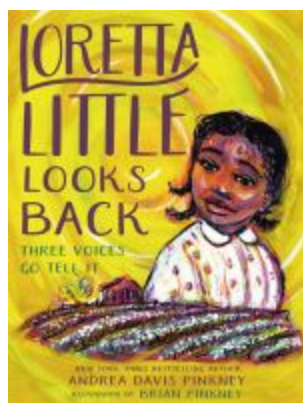
**Author:** Hitchcock, Shannon, Senzai, N. H.,

**Summary:** Twelve-year-old Noura and her family, fleeing war in Syria, have been granted asylum in the United States, but they arrive in Florida to the chaos of the president's Muslim ban; twelve-year-old Jordyn is a member of the Christian church that is

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sponsoring the Alwan family, and Noura's student ambassador in middle school; their inevitable culture clash is made far worse by the wave of hate crimes unleashed by the Muslim ban, and personal problems of both girls--Noura's fear of water (Jordyn is a champion swimmer) and Jordyn's worry over her mother's recent miscarriage.



### **Loretta Little Looks Back : Three Voices Go Tell It : A Monologue Novel**

**Author:** Pinkney, Andrea Davis & Pinkney, J. Brian,

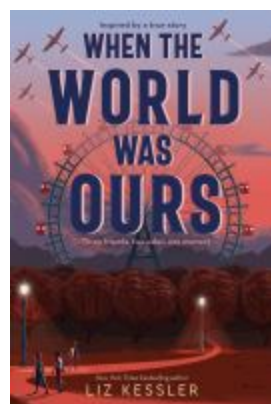
**Summary:** Loretta, Roly, and Aggie B. Little relate their Mississippi family's struggles and triumphs from 1927 to 1968 while struggling as sharecroppers, living under Jim Crow, and fighting for Civil Rights.



### **Maya And The Rising Dark**

**Author:** Barron, Rena,

**Summary:** "A twelve-year-old girl discovers her father is the keeper of the gateway between our world and The Dark, and when he goes missing she'll need to unlock her own powers and fight a horde of spooky creatures set on starting a war"--Provided by publisher.



### **When The World Was Ours**

**Author:** Kessler, Liz,

**Summary:** Torn apart by the historical events leading up to World War II, three friends from 1936 Vienna are scattered to different countries as darkness spreads throughout Europe, impacting their families and their bonds with each other.

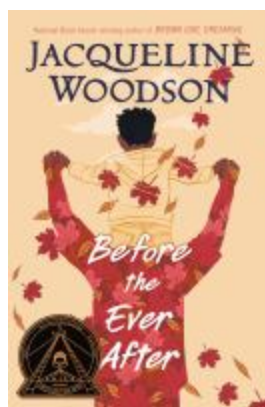
## 28th Annual Garden State Teen Book Awards Grades 6-8 Fiction Nominee Annotations



### Twins

**Author:** Johnson, Varian, & Wright, Shannon (Illustrator),

**Summary:** Twins Maureen and Francine try to distinguish themselves for the first time by pursuing separate interests at the beginning of the sixth grade.



### Before The Ever After

**Author:** Woodson, Jacqueline,

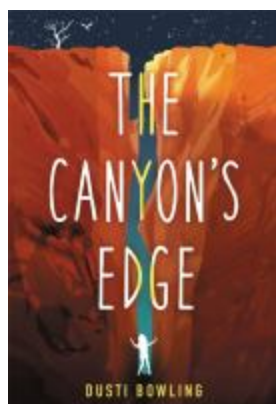
**Summary:** ZJ's friends Ollie, Darry and Daniel help him cope when his father, a beloved professional football player, suffers severe headaches and memory loss that spell the end of his career.



### Fly On The Wall

**Author:** Lai, Remy,

**Summary:** Twelve-year-old Henry Khoo embarks on a forbidden journey from Australia to Singapore to prove his independence to his overprotective family, while working out some problems with friends. Told in comics and prose.



### The Canyon's Edge

**Author:** Bowling, Dusti,

**Summary:** A year after the death of her mother in a restaurant shooting, Nora is left struggling to stay alive when a climbing trip with her father goes terribly wrong.

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### Land Of The Cranes

**Author:** Salazar, Aida,

**Summary:** Nine-year-old Betita and her parents fled Mexico after her uncle was killed by the cartels, and settled in Los Angeles seeking political asylum and safety in what her father calls Aztlan, the land of the cranes; but now they have been swept up by the government's Immigration Customs Enforcement, her father deported back to Mexico, and Betita and her mother confined in a family detention camp--Betita

finds heart in her imagination and the picture poems her father taught her, but each day threatens to further tear her family apart.



### Girl Giant And The Monkey King

**Author:** Hoang, Van,  
Quang, Nguyen, & Lien, Kim,

**Summary:** "Eleven-year-old Thom Ngho is keeping a secret: she's strong. Like suuuuper strong. Freakishly strong. And it's making it impossible for her to fit in at her new middle school. In a desperate bid to get rid of her super strength, Thom makes a deal with the Monkey King, a powerful deity and legendary trickster she accidentally released from his 500-year prison sentence. Thom agrees

to help the Monkey King get back his magical staff if he'll take away her strength. Soon Thom is swept up in an ancient and fantastical world where demons, dragons, and Jade princesses actually exist. But she quickly discovers that magic can't cure everything, and dealing with the trickster god might be more trouble than it's worth"-- Provided by publisher.



### The Girl & The Galdurian

**Author:** Probert, Tim,

**Summary:** "Deep in the heart of the planet Irpa stands the Salty Pig's House of Tonics & Tinctures, home of the wise Pig Wizard and his adopted granddaughter, Bea.

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As keepers of the Endless Flame, they live a quiet and peaceful life, crafting medicines and potions for the people of their once-prosperous world. All that changes one day when, while walking through the woods, Bea meets Cad, a member of the Galdurians, an ancient race thought to be long-extinct. Cad believes that if anyone can help him find his missing people, it's the Pig Wizard. But when the two arrive home, the Pig Wizard is nowhere to be found--all that's left is the Jar of Endless Flame and a mysterious note. Fearing for the Pig Wizard's safety, Bea and Cad set out across Irpa to find him, while danger fights its way out of the shadows and into the light. Will these two unexpected friends find the beloved Pig Wizard and prevent eternal darkness from blanketing their world? Or has Irpa truly seen its last sunrise?"--Provided by publisher.