

Anchorage School District  
**Battle of the Books Titles 2022-2023**  
Middle School

*ASD Board Policy requires that summaries be given to all participants prior to participation.*

**Challenger Deep** by Neal Shusterman

A captivating novel about mental illness. Caden Bosch is on a ship that's headed for the deepest point on Earth: Challenger Deep, the southern part of the Marianas Trench. *Caden Bosch is a brilliant high school student whose friends are starting to notice his odd behavior.* Caden Bosch is designated the ship's artist in residence to document the journey with images. *Caden Bosch pretends to join the school track team but spends his days walking for miles, absorbed by the thoughts in his head.*

**Ghost Boys** by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing. Soon Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened, on a journey towards recognizing how historical racism may have led to the events that ended his life.

**Girl in the Blue Coat** by Monica Hesse

Amsterdam, 1943. Hanneke spends her days delivering black market goods to paying customers, her nights hiding the true nature of her work from her parents, and every moment mourning her boyfriend, who was killed when the Germans invaded. On a routine delivery, a client asks Hanneke for help. Hanneke is shocked by the older woman's frantic plea to find a person—a Jewish teenager Mrs. Janssen had been hiding, who has vanished without a trace.

**Hatchet** by Gary Paulsen

Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson is

traveling by single-engine plane to visit his father for the first time since his parents divorced. When the plane crashes, killing the pilot, the sole survivor is Brian. He is alone in the Canadian wilderness with only his clothing and the hatchet his mother had given him as a present, and slowly learns survival skills. When Brian is rescued after fifty-four days, he emerges with new patience and maturity, and a greater understanding of himself and his parents.

**Island War** by Patricia Reilly Giff

Fourteen-year-old Matt never wanted to come to the remote Aleutian Islands—he was dragged here by his father for reasons he can't understand. Eleven-year-old Izzy loves it—the wild weather, the strange birds, all the new people she's meeting. The two have little in common. But when Japanese soldiers invade, Izzy and Matt are the only ones who escape being shipped off to a prison camp. The two kids must put their differences aside and work together if they're going to survive.

**Long Walk to Water** by Linda Sue Park

Two stories are told in alternating sections in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. Nya is fetching water twice a day from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home. Salva becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who search for their families and for a safe place to stay. Enduring every hardship from loneliness to attack by armed rebels to contact with killer lions and crocodiles, Salva is a survivor, and his story goes on to intersect with Nya's in an astonishing and moving way.

**Norse Mythology** by Neil Gaiman

The Norse gods: Odin, the highest of the high, wise, daring, and cunning; Thor, Odin's son, incredibly strong yet not the wisest of gods; and Loki—son of a giant—blood brother to Odin and a trickster and unsurpassable manipulator.

Gaiman fashions these primeval stories into a novelistic arc that begins with the genesis of the legendary nine worlds and delves into the exploits of deities, dwarfs, and giants.

**Restart** by Gordon Korman

Chase's memory just went out the window. Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof and hitting his head. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again. Who is Chase? When he gets back to school, he sees that different kids have very different reactions to his return. Some kids treat him like a hero. Some kids are clearly afraid of him. Pretty soon, it's not only a question of who Chase was but who he's going to be.

**Tale of Magic** by Chris Colfer

When Brystal stumbles across a secret section of the library, she discovers a book that introduces her to a world beyond her imagination and learns she is a fairy capable of magic! But in the oppressive Southern Kingdom women are forbidden from reading and magic is outlawed, so Brystal is swiftly convicted of her crimes and sent to the miserable Bootstrap Correctional Facility. But with the help of the mysterious Madame Weatherberry, Brystal is whisked away and enrolled in an academy of magic!

**When Stars are Scattered** by Victoria Jamieson

Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, have spent most of their lives in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Life is hard there: never enough food, achingly dull, and without access to the medical care Omar knows his nonverbal brother needs. So when Omar has the opportunity to go to school, he knows it might be a chance to change their future . . . but it would also mean leaving his brother, the only family member he has left, every day.