



NC YA Middle School Book Award 2010-2011 Annotated Book List

***Anything But Typical* by Nora Raleigh Baskin**

In the 3rd grade, Jason Burke was diagnosed as having Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), but this is only one of the 3 letter labels that he is stuck with. As Jason points out, sometimes people say he has Nonverbal Learning Disorder (NLD) and sometimes they say he has Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), but Jason knows that he just thinks differently than the "neurotypicals" who rule the world. Now in sixth grade, he relates how he does not fit in and how, if only he could act on what he knows he needs to do, his life would be so much easier. Through the fictional stories that he is able to post on an online social network called "StoryBoard" Jason meets PhoenixBird -- a girl whose friendship helps him along the road to self-acceptance.

***The Brooklyn Nine* by Alan Gratz**

Felix, Louis, Arnold, Walter, Frankie, Kat, Jimmy, Michael and Snide have two things in common: they all make up one distinctive family spanning nine generations, and they all love baseball. *The Brooklyn Nine* is divided into nine "innings." Each inning tells the unique story of each family member and their equally unique connection to baseball. Louis Schneider carries his father's treasured souvenir baseball into battle during the Civil War, trading it for an original Louisville Slugger from a wounded rebel. The bat then plays a role in his son's misplaced worship of a fading legend. Another descendant has his illusions shattered when the hometown team is unmasked as racist. Girls are represented, too: one leaves Brooklyn to play for the Grand Rapids Chicks during World War II. Whether you're a baseball fan or not, you will love this book!

***The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* by Jacqueline Kelly**

Callie Tate is just 11 years old when she wonders why the yellow grasshoppers in her Texas backyard are so much bigger than the green ones. With a little help from her crabby grandfather, she figures out that the green grasshoppers are easier to see against the yellow grass, so they are eaten before they can get any larger. As Callie explores the natural world around her, she develops a close relationship with her grandpa, navigates the dangers of living with six brothers, and comes up against the reality of being a girl in 1899 – a time when she is expected to be a young lady and not a budding scientist.

***Found* by Margaret Peterson Haddix**

When thirteen-year-olds Jonah and Chip, who are both adopted, receive two mysterious letters in the mail, one reading "you are one of the missing" and the other reading "They're coming back to get you!" the friends realize that they are part of a conspiracy involving smuggling, suspense and the FBI. Soon, the boys learn they were discovered on a plane that appeared out of nowhere, full of babies with no adults on board, they realize that they have uncovered a mystery involving time travel and two opposing forces, each trying to repair the fabric of time. Were they part of a kidnapping? Who are the "Witnesses?" and who are the "Survivors!"

***Heist Society* by Ally Carter**

Ever since she can remember, Kat's family has been grooming her to be a thief. However, just when she thinks she has escaped "the Life," she's promptly kicked out of her new school for stealing the headmaster's car and mounting it on the school fountain. Although she could have easily done it - ironically, she's innocent. In fact, she was framed! But, by whom? Meanwhile, Kat's best friend, and fellow thief, Hale shows up to bring Kat back to the "the Life" and for good

reason: A powerful mobster has just been robbed of his priceless art collection. Only a master thief could have cracked this vault, and Kat's dad is the prime suspect. Now, caught between the police and the mob, Kat's dad needs her help. Kat must track down the paintings and steal them back!

***The Maze Runner* by James Dashner**

Thomas wakes up with amnesia only to discover that he is in the middle of a labyrinth called "The Glade" along with 200 other boys who have been there - trapped for two years. Like all the boys, Thomas wakes up remembering nothing but his own name. He emerges into a world where the other teen boys have learned to survive in an enclosed environment, subsisting on their own agriculture and supplies from "below." A new boy arrives every 30 days, but after 2 years of trying to escape, the "gladers" have begun to lose. Then, a comatose girl named Teresa, arrives with a strange note reading "everything is going to change." Soon Thomas, Teresa and the other gladers are in the fight of their lives against time and the terrible Grievors that come out at night to destroy them.

***The Other Half of Life* by Kim Ablon Whitney**

In May of 1939, the MS St. Francis sets sail from Germany, carrying a ship full of refugees away from Hitler's army. The passengers believe they are bound for freedom in Cuba and eventually the United States, but not all of them are celebrating. Fifteen-year-old Thomas didn't want to leave Germany because his father, a Jew, had been imprisoned and his mother, a Christian, had been left behind, alone. On the other hand, fourteen-year old Priska has her family with her, and she's determined to enjoy the voyage, excited about their new lives in America. However, none of them are prepared for what happens next. The tragedy of the fictional MS St. Francis depicts the real-life deception of the MS St. Louis during World War II.

***Toby Alone* by Timothée De Fombelle**

Toby Lolness may be just one and a half millimeters tall, (which is smaller than a pea!) but he's the most wanted person in "the world of the Great Oak Tree." Toby's father has made two groundbreaking, but controversial, discoveries: 1) the Tree, which is the only world they've ever known, is alive, flowing with energy, and 2) there may be a world beyond it. Greedy developers are anxious to exploit these discoveries, risking permanent damage to the Tree which sustains them. Toby's family has been exiled to the lower branches, and only Toby has managed to escape... but for how long? And more importantly, how can Toby convince others that if they don't change the way they live, their home will be destroyed?

***When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead**

As her mother prepares to be a contestant on the *Twenty-Thousand Dollar Pyramid*, twelve year old Miranda tries to make sense of a series of strange events, all while reading and rereading her favorite book *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle. First, the new kid in their New York City neighborhood beats up her best friend Sal and Sal completely stops talking to her. Then "the laughing man" shows up on her block and won't go away. Finally, she starts receiving a series of anonymous notes that claim someone is "coming to save her friends life." Strangest of all, these notes seem to defy the laws of physics and time.

***The Strange Case of Origami Yoda* by Tom Angleberger**

Sixth grader, Tommy, is trying to decide whether or not the paper finger puppet of Yoda, worn by their weird friend Dwight, is actually real. On the one hand, Yoda is a finger puppet that offers puzzling but oddly astute advice to Tommy and his classmates. On the other hand, he is simply the 'green paperwad' animated by Dwight, who "wears shorts with his socks pulled up above his knees" and stares into space 'like a hypnotized chicken.'" Despite Dwight's social ineptness, Origami Yoda predicts the date of a pop quiz, guesses who stole the classroom Shakespeare bust, and saves a classmate from popularity-crushing embarrassment with some well-timed advice leaving Tommy to wonder how Yoda can be so smart when Dwight himself is so clueless.