



2026 Nutmeg Book Award High School Nominees Grades 9-12



THE 9:09 PROJECT

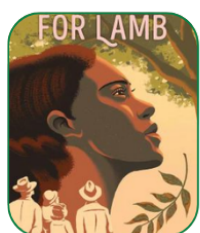
by Mark H. Parsons

Jamison Deeever is stuck. Every night at 9:09 p.m., he takes a photo as a way to capture moments he might otherwise miss- and to find some sense of control and meaning after the loss of his mother. As his project deepens, his lens reveals more than just images- it uncovers unexpected friendships, unspoken grief, and a glimpse of love, showing that what matters most is often unseen.

LUNAR NEW YEAR LOVE STORY

by Gene Luen Yang & Leuyen Pham

After discovering a painful family secret, Valentina Tran loses faith in true love - especially when Saint Valentine's spirit reveals she's cursed in romance. But at Lunar New Year, a lion dancer gives her a paper heart, sparking an undeniable connection with Jae, even as his charming cousin begins dating her.



FOR LAMB

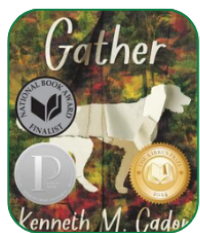
by Lesa Cline-Ransome

In 1930s Mississippi, Lamb, a sheltered African American teen, hesitantly befriends a white girl, with tragic repercussions for Lamb and her family.

THE SILENCE THAT BINDS US

by Joanna Ho

Timely themes of mental health, racism, and classism are explored with Maybelline Chen and her beloved and perfect brother, Danny. However, Danny secretly struggles with depression and dies by suicide. Racist accusations are hurled against May's parents. May challenges these ugly stereotypes, but consequences of speaking out run much deeper than anyone could foresee.



GATHER

by Kenneth M. Cadow

When Ian finds a dog in the woods he thinks life is finally getting better. He has his dog, his mom is recovering from addiction, and he has a steady income. Then tragedy strikes- pushing Ian to leave home and live in the wild with his loyal dog. Now, he must decide to stay lost or face his past.

SPIN

by Rebecca Caprara

Arachne embarks on a powerful, poetic journey of ambition, creativity, and resistance in this vibrant retelling of the Greek myth. Ostracized and finding strength through her weaving, she flees to Colophon after a tragic loss. Her talent attracts Athena, leading to a contest that exposes divine misdeeds and offers redemption.



THE GIRLS I'VE BEEN

by Tess Sharpe

Raised by a con artist mother, Nora O'Malley developed an unusual set of skills for a teenage girl. When violent bank robbers take her and her friends hostage, Nora has to draw on all her past experiences—including her dramatic getaway from her mom's clutches—to pull off the ultimate con: escape.

THE SPIRIT BARES ITS TEETH

by Andrew Joseph White

A haunting tale of survival and identity set against a backdrop of supernatural intrigue, the story follows a young protagonist grappling with loss and the dark secrets of their community. As spirits awaken, truths emerge, challenging everything they believe.



THE LESBIANA'S GUIDE TO CATHOLIC SCHOOL

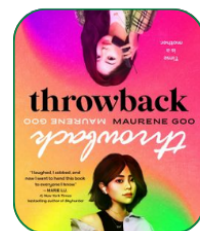
by Sonora Reyes

Yamilet is a queer 16-year-old Mexican American girl navigating her new Catholic school while hiding her sexuality. She's tackling family expectations, self-acceptance, and cultural identity, all while finding new friendships and love. Will she have the courage to embrace and share her authentic self with the world?

THROWBACK

by Maurene Goo

Sam and her mother Pricilla, a first-generation Korean immigrant, struggle to connect. When her grandmother falls ill, Sam is sent back to 1995, meeting her mother as a teen. With time running out, can she mend their relationship before her phone battery dies?



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