

Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *The Friendship Matchmaker*. New York: Walker & Company, 2012. 978-0-8027-2832-6. 179 p. \$15.99. Gr. 4-7.

Seventh grader Lara Zany thinks she understands the psychology of making and keeping friends. She believes in her discoveries so much that she works diligently on her how-to manual. She is so busy writing that she doesn't need friends. To help others, she classifies people and friendships in all kinds of ways and runs mediation sessions. But when a new girl comes to school and doesn't follow Lara's rules, Lara is blown away by her success at fitting in and helping others fit in. The moral of the story is: Don't follow any of Lara's rules; just be yourself. The bulk of the story is spent explaining and living the "rules" that we don't want our children and students to follow. Girls who enjoy friendship stories will like this light read.

Realistic Fiction

Jamie Rongione, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Aguirre, Ann. *Outpost (Book 2, Razorland Trilogy)*. New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2012. 9780312650094. 320p. \$17.99. Gr 7-12.

In this exciting follow-up to Aguirre's *Enclave*, Deuce and her fellow survivors are hard at work adapting to life above ground in the seemingly perfect town of Salvation, while the threatening, evolving "Freaks" roam beyond its walls. In addition to questioning her identity and place in the town's gender-stereotyped hierarchy, Deuce is also torn between love and friendship with her close companion Fade, as the Freaks begin to threaten her new home. Fast-paced and engaging, readers may not recognize plot points that resemble Steven King's *The Stand* or newer author Justin Cronin's *The Passage*, but these may be good follow-up recommendations for advanced readers. Recommend this one for those looking for a strong female protagonist, or anyone who is looking for a read-alike to the *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* trilogies.

Dystopian

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

Anderson, Jodi Lynn. *Tiger Lily*. New York: Harper Teen, 2012. 978-0062003256. 304p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12

Tiger Lily is a bittersweet tale of Peter Pan's first love narrated by Tinker Bell. Despite her best effort and the dark sides of Neverland, Tiger Lily falls in love with Peter, but she cannot fit him into the life she is destined to live as a Sky Eater. It is a story that shows the sorrow of change, the price of loyalty, and the danger of ignorance.

Fairytale

Erica Affleck, Teacher, Abington Senior High

Andrews, Jesse. *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0176-4. 295p. \$16.95. Gr. 9-12.

Winner of the YALSA 2013 Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Readers, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* is about Greg, a senior in high school who has made it this far by remaining socially invisible, and he'd like it to stay that way. He has one friend, Earl - more of a co-worker, really - with whom he produces very bad DIY remakes of cult classic movies that nobody has ever heard of. Everything's hunky dory until Greg's interfering mom convinces him to rekindle a friendship with Rachel, a buddy from grade school, when it's discovered she has cancer. From then on, nothing is low profile in the lives of Greg, Earl or Rachel. Andrews' first novel is laugh out loud funny with authentic high school situations, characters, and dialog. But warning: it's packed with foul language and therefore more appropriate for later teens.

Realistic Fiction

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Applegate, Katherine. *The One and Only Ivan*. New York: Harper, 2012. 978-0-06-199225-4. 305p. \$16.99. Gr. 3-7.

Ivan is a Silverback gorilla who lives in a rundown mall at the end of Exit 8 where he is billed as the one and only, Ivan. Ivan has lived here his whole life and has a few friends in Stella, the elephant, and Bob, the homeless dog. He has been raised by Mack, who owns this rag tag show and is not happy that profits are down. George cleans the stalls and his daughter, Julia, does her homework and draws. When Stella falls ill and Mack brings in a baby elephant, Stella exacts a promise from Ivan that he will make sure Ruby has a safe place to spend her life. Ivan loves to draw, and he is able to communicate to Julia through his pictures that Ruby needs to spend her life in a zoo. Based on a true story, Ivan and Ruby's plight will pull at your heart. Animal lovers will enjoy this beautiful, brave book. Winner of the 2013 Newbery Medal.

Realistic Fiction; Gorillas

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Arcos, Carrie. *Out of Reach*. New York: Simon, 2012. 978-1-4424-4053-1. 250 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Anyone who has dealt with some form of drug addiction in their family will be able to connect with Rachel, the persevering protagonist in Carrie Arcos' debut novel. Rachel has grown up worshiping her older brother, Michael. They are only a year apart and have a bond that many siblings never develop. Their relationship begins to change as Michael experiments with and gradually becomes addicted to crystal meth. Despite their parents attempts to help Michael by enrolling him in a rehab clinic, nothing helps, and a few months before his high school graduation he runs away. Allie and her parents look for Michael, but ultimately try to go on with their lives, until Allie gets an anonymous email saying that Michael is in Ocean Beach and warning that he is in serious trouble. Leaving her parents in the dark, Allie recruits Michael's old friend, Tyler, to accompany her in trying to find her brother. Throughout

her two day search, Allie learns just how deep her brother is into the drug scene and how lost he really is. She also learns that sometimes you can't help someone who doesn't want to be helped.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Armistead, Cal. *Being Henry David*. Park Ridge, IL: Albert Whitman & Company, 2013. 978-0-8075-0615-8. 312p. \$16.99. Gr. 9 and up.

I loved first time author Cal Armistead's *Being Henry David*; it will hook you from the first page. A teenage boy wakes up with a lump on his head in Penn Station with no recollection of who he is or where he came from. He finds a copy of *Walden* beside him and decides to call himself Henry/Hank. He has a few flashbacks of the past and knows that he must be hiding from something horrible, but has no idea what it is. Henry travels to Walden Pond to hide. You will read this book in one sitting because it is impossible to put down.

Realistic Fiction; Family

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Ashley-Hollinger, Mika. *Precious Bones*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-385-74219-1. 344p. \$16.99. Gr. 4-7.

Living in the quiet, secluded, Florida Everglades, ten-year-old Bones resides with her mom and dad, Nolay, who is part Miccosukee Indian. Life is good, even when the high waters flood their house, but when two Yankees start snooping around and asking questions about the land, Nolay takes measures into his own hands and lets them know how unwelcomed they are. Soon one of the men is missing, and all evidence indicates Nolay is responsible. Bones struggles as she begins to doubt her father's innocence. Only strong family bonds and her best friend Little Man will help her now, and of course a little investigating on her own. Ashley-Hollinger's debut novel is full of rich culture and lightly explores racism in a manner reminiscent of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Nolay wonders if Bones's generation will see a change in how people are treated based on the color of their skin. Bones is a lively, endearing character who will capture readers' hearts.

Historical Fiction

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia. *Poison Tree*. New York: Delcorte, 2012. 978-0-385-73754-8. 225p. \$15.99. Gr. 9 and up.

If you like vampires, witches, and supernatural powers, then this brilliantly written book is for you. In the *Poison Tree* we meet Sarik and Alysia who are trying to escape their past. We follow these two through some intriguing situations and the plot is great. This fast paced book is definitely worth the read.

Supernatural

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Drowned Cities*. New York: Little, Brown, 2012. 978-0-316-05624-3. 437p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

This companion novel to *ShipBreaker* is totally gripping, but the torture was beyond what any child or adult during a time of war should have to endure! Totally despicable was what Mahlia, Mouse, and any of the child soldiers were put through minute by minute, never knowing if they would be killed by war maggots, leaders, or even their own friends. The characters Mahlia, Mouse, Tool, and Ocho are very well drawn and Bacigalupi did a terrifyingly good job with the evil characters; there was never a short supply of them. Mahlia's hope was buoyed by recalling her Chinese mother and her teachings about survival. Mahlia is now one of my favorite heroes and so is Tool (I loved him in *Ship Breaker* too!) with his augment status and his allegiance to no one but himself. Highly recommended; you will keep thinking about this book again and again and cringing again and again.

Science Fiction

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Backes, Molly. *The Princesses of Iowa*. New York: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-763653125. 464p. \$17.99. Gr. 8 and up.

High school junior, Paige Sheridan, has a perfect life. She has two BFF's, is pretty, popular, and has a wonderful boyfriend. Life is great until a night of partying ends in a car accident. Paige is sent away for the summer to work as an au pair and returns for her senior year of high school to find her BFF's and her boyfriend acting cool and distant. Obviously senior year isn't going as she hoped. The one bright spot in her life is the creative writing class she has with new teacher, Mr. Tremont, who encourages his students to be true to themselves. Paige begins hanging out with some not so popular kids and begins to become a kinder, nicer person. It is interesting to watch Paige as she changes and grows. This was a heartfelt book that dealt with pertinent teenage issues including peer pressure, family relationships and homophobia.

Realistic Fiction

Nora Neumann, Enfield Elementary

Baggott, Julianna. *Pure*. New York: Grand Central, 2012. 978-1-45550-306-3. 434p. \$25.99. Gr. 10 and up.

Baggott's first volume in this new dystopian trilogy will appeal to fans of *The Hunger Games*. Pressia is a 16-year-old living outside the dome "after the detonations" that changed the world and killed off most of the world's population. Anyone who was outside of the dome and survived has been changed, mutated, and scarred. At the age of sixteen, all citizens either become soldiers or live targets for the military. Pressia knows that with a fused doll's head on her hand she will be a live target and decides to run on her sixteenth

birthday. On the run Pressia meets Partridge, a Pure (unscarred survivor), who has left the safety of the dome in search of his mother. A rich story that is sure to be a hit for fans of dystopian stories, *Pure* is a Notable Book of the Year 2012 and an Alex Award winner.

Science Fiction; Dystopian

Robin Burns, Salisbury High School

Bardugo, Leigh. *Shadow and Bone*. New York: Henry Holt, 2012. 978-0805094596. 368p. \$17.99. Gr 7-12.

In the first novel of a planned trilogy, orphan Alina lives in Ravka, a nation split by The Shadow Fold, a thick line of impenetrable darkness and inhabited by flesh-eating, winged creatures known as Volcra. As a member of the army, Alina and her best friend Mal are part of a regimen that must cross the Fold with supplies to reach the ocean. Soon the Volcra swarm, and when Mal is under attack, white light surges from Alina and the Volcra retreat. Alina is quickly taken to the Darkling, the leader of the Grisha, an elite group of men and women with magical powers. Alina learns she is a Sun Summoner, and contains a power that could save her war-ravaged country. Or is that just what the Darkling wants her to think? This dark and moody story is carried by an impressive fantasy world with rich descriptions and vivid characters, along with magic mixed with romance and angst that will keep teen readers satisfied.

Fantasy

Victoria Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

Barnes, John. *Losers in Space*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0-670-06156-3. 433p. \$18.99. Gr. 10-12.

A good book for fans of *Star Trek* and other space epics, this will hold the attention of teens interested in space travel and astronomy, in survival in space, and in the interactions of a group of "losers", as they call themselves, who are stuck together on a spaceship that has lost its crew. As with any group of teenagers, unexpected leaders emerge, there is a murderous killer in the group, and there are several teens who find great strengths in themselves as they are forced to put their own abilities to the test. The spaceship can maintain life for a long time, but their problem is getting back to either Mars or Earth. The killer in the group makes sure that everyone suffers and that mayhem is a frequent visitor on board. For teens who like science fiction, this book combines technology, space travel, suspended animation, and even a pink elephant, with survival, murder, and teen drama.

Science Fiction; Space

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Barracough, Lindsey. *Long Lankin*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7 636-5808-3. 464p. \$16.99. Gr. 8 and up.

Set in Britain in post-World War II time, *Long Lankin* is the story of Cora and Mimi who are sent to live with their Aunt Ida at Guerdon Hal. Upon arrival they receive a less than warm welcome. It is clear Aunt Ida doesn't want them in her home. Is she too set in her ways? Doesn't she like her nieces? No! What the girls do not know is that in their family there is a history of children disappearing and dying. Despite Aunt Ida's warning to stay away from the parish church building the girls go exploring with their new friends from the village, Roger and Peter. Cora is determined to solve the mystery before it's too late for her and Mimi. I really enjoyed the characters in this book and the way the story is told. It's moving and gripping. This is a creepy and dark page turner that I thoroughly enjoyed!

Horror; Folklore

Nora Neumann, Enfield Elementary

Barrowman, John and Carole E. Barrowman. *Hollow Earth (Hollow Earth Book 1)*. New York: Aladdin, 2012. 978-1-4424-5852-9. 382 p. Gr. 5-8.

Matt and Emily, 12-year-old twins, have the ability to communicate telepathically. No big deal, right? Actually it is because it's their ability to bring art to life that makes them the target of villains trying to gain access to the mythological beasts of Hollow Earth. When their mother disappears, Matt and Emily must use art to battle the bad guys. Some plot points may strain credulity, but readers who are fans of Rick Riordan will likely enjoy this. The sequel, *Bone Quill*, which has been published in the U.K., will be released in the U.S. in July 2013.

Supernatural; Fantasy

Mary Fran Torpey, Friends' Central School

Bastedo, Jamie. *Nighthawk!*. Toronto: Red Deer, 2013. 978-0-88995-455-7. 245p. \$12.95. Gr. 8-12.

This is a unique story told from the point of view of a migrating nighthawk. For readers who like animal stories, this one is a winner. Wisp is a nighthawk with a secret: he has an inability to read the stars and navigate using them, an essential skill for nighthawks. He tells the story of what happens after his father is killed in a fire, and he, his mother, and sister are imprisoned in a South American bird colony. Wisp decides to escape and migrate north to the Arctic near where he was born. His trip is full of danger; he isn't even sure he can find the way, and he is resentful of his sister, a weaker flyer, when she tags along. Help comes to him from unlikely places though, and his sister does turn out to be helpful. This is an amazing animal story told as only Jamie Bastedo can tell it.

Animals; Fantasy

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Beaudoin, Sean. *The Infects*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5947-9. 375p. \$16.99. Gr. 11 and up.

For causing an accident at the chicken factory where he works, Nick Sole is sentenced to do time in a juvenile detention camp. When the counselors and some of the campers eat tainted chicken (Yes, chicken plays a major part in the storyline.), they are infected with a virus that turns them into walking dead, and from there the book becomes a zombie lover's favorite nightmare. Of course, the book is

full of graphically revolting carnage (What fun would a zombie book be without it?), but it is also infused with humor. Explicit violence, strong language, and sexual content make this book appropriate for older teens.

Horror

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Bennett, Holly. *Redwing*. New York: Orca, 2012. 978-1-45980-038-0. 201p. \$11.06. Gr. 9-12.

After his parents and little sister are ravaged and killed by the gruesome plague, young Rowan must take his musical talent and caravan on the road in hopes of finding a job. Along his dreadful journey, Rowan meets a fellow young musician, Samik, who he joins up with in a tedious partnership. Samik is also on the move, trying to run from the warlord he nearly killed while trying to save his younger brother. As the two form an unlikely friendship, both boys could be in danger as the warlord closes in.

Fantasy; Orphans; Musicians

Nicole Starner, Biglerville MS/HS

Bennet, Holly. *Redwing*. Victoria, BC: Orca, 2012. 978-1-45980038-0. 201 p. \$12.95 Gr. 7-10.

Thrown together by fate, orphaned Rowan meets Samik, who is on the run from an evil warlord. Traveling as minstrels, the boys form a tenuous friendship, as Rowan learns to deal with his grief and craft a life for himself without his family's support. Strength comes from an unsuspected quarter when the warlord captures and tortures both boys. This medieval sword and sorcery novel is at times a ghost story and at times a suspense novel, but all the time a great story of friendship and adversity.

Fantasy

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Benoit, Charles. *Fall from Grace*. New York: HarperTeen, 2012. 978-0-06-194707-0. 292p. \$15.34. Gr. 9-12.

Sawyer is the average high school guy who gets good grades and plays video games, but his overbearing parents have already planned out his future, down to the college he is going to attend along with the career that he will choose. His better-than-average looking girlfriend also keeps a close eye on Sawyer and will continue to do so when they go to the same college. Things change, though, when Sawyer meets Grace, a girl from the “trashy” neighboring high school. Grace has her own meticulous plans for everything, and some of these plans include illegal happenings and theft. As Sawyer finds freedom in devising his own plan for his life, he may find himself on the other side of the law. *Fall from Grace* has a captivating plot with an interesting ending.

Realistic Fiction

Nicole Starner, Biglerville MS/HS

Blume, Lesley M. *The Wondrous Journals of Dr. Wendell Wellington Wiggins: Describing the Most Curious, Fascinating, Sometimes Gruesome, and Seemingly Impossible Creatures That Roamed the World Before Us*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-86850-4. 242 p. \$16.99. Gr. 4-8.

This quirky book is the fictional diary of Dr. Wendell Wellington Wiggins, a paleo-zoologist during the 1850's. He discovers, with the help of his dog-like pet Gibear and the omnipresent voice of his mother, strange and unusual FOIs (fossils of interest). He travels all over the world in search of these FOIs and has many adventures. Fantastical and pseudo-scientific, this book is delightfully strange. It is an easy read and moves quickly. It is reminiscent of the world in the Pixar movie, *Up*.

Science Fiction, Fantasy

Laura Hill, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Bonk, John J. *Madhattan Mystery*. New York: Walter & Company, 2012. 978-0-8027-2349-9. 292 p. \$16.99. Gr. 4-7.

This novel is rich in detail and advanced vocabulary. The main characters, a brother and sister, are uprooted while their father is away on his honeymoon with his new bride. They land at their eccentric aunt's house for the summer. Metropolitan life is new to them, and the author reveals their naivety as they explore the city. The two children accidentally become privy to information about an elaborate jewelry heist. Surrounding the mysterious crime is a lesson in friendship, trust, and believing in oneself. Readers will enjoy the humor and excitement this book discloses.

Mystery

Christine Roberts, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Bracken, Beth and Kay Fraser. *A Wish in the Woods (Faerieground Book 1)*. N. Mankato, MN: Stone Arch/Capstone, 2012. 978-1-4342-3303-5. 96p. \$16.99. Gr. 5 – 9.

Bracken, Beth and Kay Fraser. *The Shadows (Faerieground Book 2)*. N. Mankato, MN: Stone Arch/Capstone, 2012. 978-1-4342-3306-6. 96p. \$16.99. Gr. 5 – 9.

Soli and Lucy are thirteen year-old best friends who live on the edge of the woods and share their story in alternating, first person chapters in the new *Faerieground* series. Soli is shy and sometimes fearful, and Lucy is bold and brave. In Book 1, we quickly discover that their friendship is not without drama and some rivalries. As they argue over a boy in the woods, they accidentally stumble on the faeries and their magic, and the book ends with Lucy held captive by the faeries. In Book 2, Soli must figure out how to bargain with the faeries to get her friend back. These books are written with spare text and beautiful illustrations, perfect for pre-teen to younger teen girls who love magic and adventure stories with a little teen drama thrown in. The books end in cliffhanger fashion and there are currently four titles in the series.

Fantasy; Magic; Low Level/High Interest; Illustrated

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Bray, Libba. *The Diviners*. New York: Little, Brown, 2012. 978-0-316-12611-3. 578p. \$19.99. Gr. 9-12.

Readers will not be able to rip themselves away from the 1920s world of flappers, murder, mystery and an impending evil that is being felt by the diviners (those who have supernatural powers to see, feel, and predict). Evie is seventeen, bored with her restricted family life but also aware she has powers, which she sometimes uses. This gets her into trouble, and she goes to live with her Uncle Will in NYC. He is a college professor who also owns the Museum of American Folklore, Superstition, and the Occult. Evie accompanies the police with her Uncle Will and his student, Jericho, to the scene of a murder, and it is when she touches the dead girl's shoe buckle that she sees the girl's murderer. There is a fascinating cast of characters with secrets they want to keep hidden. As more are murdered Evie, her Uncle Will, and Jericho try to unravel a mystery that involves ghosts, haunted houses, demons, and evil in 1920s New York.

Mystery

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Brenna, Beverley. *The White Bicycle (Wild Orchid Book 3)*. Ontario: Red Deer, 2012. 978-0-88995-483-0. 198p. \$12.95. Gr. 8 and up.

Taylor Jane was diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome when she was eleven. As she narrates her story, she reflects back on a suggestion from her English teacher about how journaling can help her explore her feelings. She explains how she ended up in France as a personal care assistant for Alan Phoenix's youngest son and her connection to a mysterious stranger she once saved from certain drowning at the beach. In the third installment of the *Wild Orchid* trilogy, Taylor continues to strive for independence and struggles to connect with her mother and be heard. Her frank, candid, narration is authentic and made even more powerful by beautiful, figurative language as she confronts past memories that will help guide her future.

Realistic Fiction

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Brennan, Sarah Rees. *Unspoken*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-87041-5. 373p. \$18.99. Gr. 9-12.

Kami Glass is like many other teenage girls in love with a boy, but Kami has never met the boy she loves. The boy is just a voice in her head, an imaginary friend, who suddenly appears one day in Kami's village. Jared and Kami's psychic connection has been a fixture in their lives since birth, and after a seventeen year absence, Jared's family returns to the village and strange things begin to happen. The small Cotswolds village is full of family secrets, magic, sorcerers, and romance. *Unspoken* is the first book in a trilogy, and readers will be eagerly waiting for the second book to be published; a good addition for lovers of fantasy and supernatural romances.

Fantasy; Mystery

Robin Burns, Salisbury High School

Bridges, Robin. *The Gathering Storm*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-385-74022-7. 386p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

This novel is a very interesting take on Russian history. It reads like historical fiction, but has the aristocracy of Russia cast as vampires and witches, with a few zombies thrown in for good measure. It is the story of Katy, a Russian duchess who has the ability to raise people from the dead, although they come back as the 'undead'. She catches the eye of a vampire prince from Montenegro, who knows about her ability, and decides he will marry her so that his family can become the most powerful of all the vampire families. She, however, is attracted to the tsar's son, who is also attracted to her, but she can't let herself fall for him, because the vampire prince has threatened to harm her family and those close to her if she doesn't marry him. This is a story of intrigue, history (of sorts), and lots of paranormal creatures, some of whom are likable, and some of whom the reader loves to hate.

Paranormal

Nancy Chrimer, Juniata High School, Retired

Bright, Amy. *Before We Go*. Ontario: Red Deer, 2012. 978-0-88995-471-7. 222p. \$12.95. Gr. 7-10.

Although this is a YA book, it is an amazing story that adults will enjoy also. It is the story of Emily, whose grandmother is dying, and two siblings, Alex and Lucy, who have a devastating secret of their own, plus an even deeper secret that involves Emily, unbeknownst to her. Most of the action takes place on New Year's Eve, and begins as a very lonely Emily is leaving the hospital to return to her grandmother's empty house. What happens at that moment is something that will affect Emily for the rest of her life. A very quick read, this story is one that will stick with the reader for quite a while after the book ends.

Realistic Fiction

Nancy Chrimer, Juniata High School, Retired

Brooks, Kevin. *Johnny Delgado: Private Detective*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2012. 978-1781121160. 81 p. \$22.60. Gr. 6-10.

Johnny Delgado: Private Detective is a great short book to read. It is filled with mystery and a plot twist. I would recommend it to anyone in middle school and up who likes books where you do not know what is going to happen next.

Mystery; High Interest

Jackson O., Student, The Haverford School

Brunt, Carol Rifka. *Tell the Wolves I'm Home*. New York: Dial, 2012. 978-0-679-64419-4. 360p. \$25.00. Grades 9 and up.

This book takes place in 1987 when AIDS was a death sentence and people lived in fear of coming into contact with anyone who had contracted it. Fourteen-year-old June adores her Uncle (and best friend) Finn, so when he succumbs to the dreaded disease, she feels heartbroken and alone. Shortly after his death, she receives a package containing her uncle's exquisite Russian teapot with a note from his companion Toby, whom June's mother holds responsible for "murdering" Finn. A covert friendship develops between June and Toby, who find comfort in their memories of Finn, and believe that they are honoring his wishes by taking care of each other. There is so much more to the book, such as the estranged relationship between June and her sister, and the portrait that Finn painted of the two of them before his death. This Alex Award winning book is a touching and insightful examination into love, family, and friendship.

Historical Fiction

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Bukiet, Melvin Jules. *Undertown*. New York: Amulet, 2013. 978-1-4197-0589-2. 293 p. \$16.95. Gr. 5-8.

This is an adventure of two teens, Timothy and Jessamyn, who get bored on a boating trip with their parents. In the middle of Manhattan while waiting for their parents to get egg creams, they unhitch the boat from Tim's father's truck and go backwards faster and faster down the streets of Manhattan. After plowing into a construction site, they fall into a great hole into the Manhattan underground. At times, the book is like a thrill ride in an amusement park, with its vertical drops and swift current. They encounter homeless people and Malomi, who is "Queen of the Underground," and her army of crenblers, who capture the homeless and make them slaves. Will Timothy and Jessamyn return above ground, or will they become slaves of Malome, or be fed to the rats? This is an enjoyable adventure story for ages 10-14.

Adventure

Josetta Murphy, Book Club Member

Busby, Cylin. *Blink Once*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. 978-1-59990-818-2. 288p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

When West is in a biking accident that causes him to be paralyzed, Olivia, from the hospital room next door, becomes the only friend he has. She teaches him to communicate through blinking and is able to communicate with him in ways that are intense and deeply emotional. Things change when West leaves to have surgery on his spine, and Olivia must stay at the hospital, but those changes are nothing compared to what West realizes after his surgery when he is beginning to heal. A gripping, traumatic story that makes the reader question what is real and what is not.

Realistic Fiction

Nancy Chrimer, Juniata High School, Retired

Calame, Don. *Call the Shots*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-76365-5563. 352p. \$16.99. Gr. 10-12.

In this third humorous book by Don Calame, the hilarious trio of Cooper, Matt, and Sean have come up with another wacky idea to gain notoriety with girls (they think); produce a scary movie, win the prize money, and help Sean who will have to give up his bedroom due to the arrival of a new baby in his family and live with his sister. For Sean, worse than living with his twin sister, is listening to her constantly call him gay, which he is not; he is just sensitive and a little bit weird. Readers will love characters Uncle Doug, Nessa, crazy Nick, and Evelyn. Although at times crude with lots of boy (sexual) humor, this novel is still lots of laughs.

Realistic Fiction; Humor

Amy W., Student, Abington Senior High

Calonita, Jen. *Belles (Belles Book 1)*. New York: Little Brown, 2012. 978-0-316-09112-1. 352 p. Gr.7-12.

Fifteen-year-old Isabelle's life is turned upside down when her grandmother's dementia forces her to leave her beloved beach community and move in with distant relatives, a state senator and his wife and children. Izzy tells the story in alternating chapters with her cousin Mirabelle, who especially chafes at adding an outsider to their posh lifestyle and her class at Emerald Prep. Astute readers will suspect the soap-opera "secret" before they even crack open the cover of the book, but they shouldn't be put off if they're looking for a frothy read with some romance and cattiness thrown in for good measure. Izzy and Mira return in two more books, *Winter White* and *The Grass is Always Greener*, which conclude the *Belles* trilogy.

Realistic Fiction; Romance; Family

Mary Fran Torpey, Friends Central School

Carey, Benedict. *Poison Most Vial*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0031-6. 215 p. \$16.95. Gr. 5-8.

A famous scientist is found poisoned and Ruby Rose's father, the janitor, is the prime suspect! Young Ruby Rose now has to try to find the culprit all by herself. Using her skills of deduction, determination and her friends, she must solve the mystery before her father is arrested. Through the aid of Rex, her big, lovable friend and the mysterious old lady who lives in the apartment upstairs, Ruby must piece together the clues and figure out the suspects before it is too late. This book is a delightful mystery that will be flying off the shelves of any library. Quirky and with witty dialogue, this novel is a fun book for any age and will keep readers guessing and trying to figure out "Who dunit?"

Mystery

Hanna F., Student, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School

Carson, Rae. *The Crown of Embers*. New York: Green Willow, 2012. 978-0-06-202651-4. 410 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

In this sequel to *The Girl of Fire and Thorns*, Queen Elisa is seventeen and struggling against both internal and external enemies who want the power of her Godstone and her kingdom. Still in search of her destiny, Elisa sets out on a perilous journey following ancient clues to find the ultimate magic power of her Godstone and secure her throne. Throughout the adventure, Elisa struggles to balance her love for Hector with her responsibility to the kingdom. She ultimately triumphs in her final quest as she grows to understand her true power. The rich characters and adventurous plot make this a page turner. Readers will be anxious for the next book in the series.

Fantasy; Adventure

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Cashore, Kristin. *Bitterblue (Graceling Book 3)*. New York: Dial, 2012. 978-0-803-73473-9. 576p. \$19.99. Gr. 9-12.

Bitterblue has been queen since the age of 10, and at eighteen, she has never left the castle. Disguised, she enters a bar where stories are told about her father, Leck, and her friend, Katsa. Never revealing who she is, she meets a young man Saf (Sapphire for the color of his eyes); he is a Graceling, but doesn't know his grace. Bitterblue views Saf and his friend Teddy as colorful characters who like to fight and lie. She learns she doesn't really know her subjects (many can't read, but her advisers tell her they have a high literacy rate). As Bitterblue tries to become a queen that is revered, she runs into many insurmountable problems. She does not veer, and along the way uncovers deceit, murder, and many other horrors. Bitterblue finds advisers she can trust with the loyal support of Katsa, Po, Giddon, Hava, and many others. The rich characters and storyline are Cashore at her best in this third *Graceling* installment.

Fantasy

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Cass, Kiera. *The Selection*. New York: HarperTeen, 2012. 978-0-062-05993-2. 327p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-12.

A cross between *The Hunger Games*, *Cinderella*, and *The Bachelor*, this book takes place in a future where the United States is now a monarchy called Illea and the citizenry are part of a caste system. When the prince comes of age to marry, he chooses a bride via a televised process called "The Selection". Girls of all caste levels are eligible to register, and 35 contestants are chosen to compete. America Singer is a Level 5, the caste of musicians and artists, and her family is in constant financial struggle. She has no desire to participate because she is in love with handsome Aspen Ledger, a member of Level 6, the serving class. Succumbing to pressure from her mother and Aspen himself, America reluctantly registers and is chosen as one of "the Selected." While living at the palace brings luxury beyond anything America has ever experienced, there is also the ever-present danger of rebel attacks. The book ends at the perfect point for a sequel. This was the choice for the YA book club at our local library and was popular with the members who relish romance.

Dystopian Romance

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Castellucci, Cecil. *The Year of the Beasts*. New York: Roaring Brook, 2012. 978-1-59643-6862. 192p. \$16.99 Gr. 9-12.

With alternating chapters of prose and comics, Cecil Castellucci has woven a gripping tale of sisters, young love, a summer of changes, and jealousy that will rip them apart. Tessa and her younger sister, Lulu, have always hung around together and been very close, but this summer Tessa is old enough to go to the carnival alone. Tessa will not be allowed to just hang out with her best friend, Celina. If Tessa wants to go to the carnival with her best friend; younger sister Lulu must come too. When she gets separated from her crush, Charlie, in line, it is Lulu who goes into the sideshow with him and emerges holding hands. This is the beginning of Lulu's first relationship and Tessa's mounting jealousy toward her sister. Castellucci doesn't just paint these sisters black and white, though; there are irrational feelings and moods too. Tessa loves her sister, and wants the best for her, just not with Charlie. When strange boy Jasper seems to keep popping up, Tessa begins a secret relationship with him, and as the summer rolls on, Tessa really does begin to care for Jasper, but is still angry with her sister. Tessa hates herself for feeling this way, but she just can't help it. What will happen to the sisters, Charlie, and the secret boy, Jasper?

Realistic Fiction; Familial Relationships

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Catmull, Katherine. *Summer and Bird*. New York: Dutton, 2012. 978-0-525-95346-3. 344 p. \$16.99 Gr. 7-12.

Sisters Summer and Bird wake up one morning in their forest home and find that their parents are gone. They head into the woods like so many fairy tale children before them and become separated in the magical world of Down, which is populated by birds. In Down, each girl's physical journey is a mirror for her inward one. Catmull's prose is somehow sparse but rich at the same time, and this works to pull the reader along a story that might otherwise be weighed down by its complexity and emotional depth. This was marketed as a middle grade novel, but the sophistication of the storytelling may lend itself to older readers.

Fantasy; Folklore

Mary Fran Torpey, Friends' Central School

Chambers, Aidan. *Dying to Know You*. New York: Abrams, 2012. 978-1-4197-0165-8. 275p. \$16.95. Gr. 9 and up.

I started and finished this book in one day - something that I rarely do because I read slowly. WOW! It isn't like anything else I've read. This is the story of 18-year-old Karl Williamson and "The Author," a 75-year-old writer Karl approaches to help him pen some letters, ala Cyrano de Bergerac. Seeing something of himself and his own experiences in the boy, the author and Jake set out on a voyage of discovery about life, love, and purpose. I loved *Postcards from No Man's Land*, the Printz Award winning earlier novel by

Chambers, but I also knew that I needed to be cautious in recommending it because there were some things in there that people (parents especially) would be offended by. Like his earlier work, this book has a great story along with characters who offer much to think about. It would be a great book club choice for teens or adults! I like *Dying to Know You* even better than *Postcards From No Man's Land* and wouldn't have to have a moment's pause about giving it to anyone!

Realistic Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

Clare, Cassandra. *City of Lost Souls (Mortal Instruments Book 5)*. New York: M. K. McElderry, 2012. 978-1-44241-6864. 544p. \$19.99 Gr. 10-12.

Clary and Jace are still my favorites! There was so much adventure, drama, secrets, and lies in the world of ShapeShifters, Shadow Hunters, and vampires. Sebastian is detestable and when he tried to reach Clary by working on the "sister" angle it was really wrong. It was really creepy to see Sebastian and Jace getting along. It was so good to see more of the characters Simon and Isabella, Alec and Magnus, and Jordan and Maya. Clare does such a superb job with her characters, their worlds, and with all of the ensuing action going on; I really hated to see the book end, but so happy to just wait for another one of Cassandra Clare's books!

Supernatural

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Coats, J. Anderson. *The Wicked and the Just*. Boston: Harcourt, 2012. 978-0-547-68837-4. 342 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Cecily's father has just moved the family from England to newly conquered Wales after her uncle returns from the Crusades to reclaim Edgely Hall, her mother's family's estate. Newly homeless, at least from Edgely Hall, Cecily tries to adjust to life in Wales as the Lady of the house, but Cecily is too occupied with clothes and material goods. This bothers Gwenhwyfar, a servant the same age as Cecily, who hates Cecily at first sight; a feeling that becomes mutual. It is through Cecily's relationship with Ned, an evil man who targets Welsh women, that she begins to realize that her "problems" of material possessions are nothing compared to the violence and cruelty facing the newly occupied Welsh people. Although the exposition lacks in certain areas, especially concerning Cecily's background and history, the alternating chapters and girls' points-of-view provide readers with an authentic look at 13th Century Wales, a historical time and place that is often not central to YA literature.

Historical Fiction

Elizabeth Hawkins, Teacher, Lincoln JSHS

Cochrane, Mick. *Fitz: a Novel*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-95683-6. 177p. \$14.49. Gr. 8 and up.

After living with his mom for the past fifteen years, Fitz is your quintessential teenager. He's in a band and has a passion for music. He's respectful, kind to others, and has a crush on a special girl, but his life is about to change. Fitz is about to come face-to-face with the father who abandoned him. Since desperate times call for desperate measures, Fitz kidnaps his father at gunpoint. Throughout the day, his father gradually reveals stories about his relationship with Fitz's mom. As the day draws to an end, actions always have consequences, and Fitz can live with that. Yet when his father offers him a second chance -- what he has longed for his entire life -- it may be too much for him to consider. Fitz is an incredible character. This lonely young man yearns for a relationship with his father, the only thing that will fill the void inside him. His earnest struggle to find answers has the reader clinging to the covers of the book hoping Fitz will find a happy ending after all.

Realistic Fiction

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Condie, Ally. *Reached (Matched Book 3)*. New York: Dutton, 2012. 978-0-52542-366-9. 384 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

The third book in the phenomenal *Matched* Trilogy is the best of the three books. It ties up all the loose ends and explores the bond of love and friendship in the love triangle between Cassia, Ky and Xander. We see how those bonds are tested by societal changes, disease, and a race against time to save the ones they love. The infamous "Rising" also plays a key part and we discover who the Pilot is and must question where our faith lies, with the controlling Society of the dangerous Rising.

Dystopian

Julia H., Student, Abington Senior High

Cooner, Donna. *Skinny*. New York: Point, 2012. 978-0-545-42763-0. 260p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Ever has been eating her feelings away ever since her mom passed away. Skinny is the voice within who tells Ever she will never have anything because she is fat. Ever makes a decision that might change her life forever, or it might end up killing her. This is a sad and truthful look into childhood obesity. Ever is trapped in a prison that she herself has created, and the reader is hoping that she will reach out for help before it is too late. This book is recommended to anyone who has ever felt trapped, alone, or out of control.

Realistic Fiction; Obesity

Holly Frabizio, Teacher, Abington Senior High

Cooney, Caroline. *Janie Face to Face*. New York: Random House, 2013. 978-0-385-74206. 352p. \$17.99. Gr. 8 and up.

Janie Johnson is back, all grown up, and in college. Yes, this is the same Janie who found herself on a milk carton many years ago. She is trying to start a new life in college where no one will know that she is the girl who was kidnapped when she was three years old

by the daughter of the family who ended up raising her. Janie's "real" family and "kidnapped" family are all approached by a true-crime writer who is trying to bring Janie's kidnapper to justice, and Janie wants them to honor her wishes by not talking. Her kidnapper gets wind of information about Janie and has plans for Janie. This is a well-written conclusion to a twenty-year span of suspense.

Suspense; Familial Relationships; Kidnapping

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Cooper, Brenda. *The Creative Fire (Ruby's Song Book One)*. New York: Pyr, 2012. 978-1-61614-684-9. 348p. \$ 17.95. Gr. 9-12. The Creative Fire is a spaceship where thousands of people have been living out their lifetimes while flying through space. Ruby is a "gray", the lowest level of humankind on the ship, much akin to slaves. When a tragedy happens to part of the ship where Ruby is and she meets a "red", a person from a higher level, she must make some life-altering decisions. Ruby is a rebel who wants to save the ship to make things more equal for her fellow grays as well as others in the red and blue levels. Most of all though, she wants to develop her talent for singing. The ship is nearing home after many generations of being away, and Ruby is instrumental in the rebellion to make everyone equal before they arrive home. To do so, Ruby must make life-threatening and life-altering decisions, and she must have courage and inner strength when it seems that things are going all wrong. This is the first in a series, *Ruby's Song*, and although this book has a satisfying ending, the reader will want to know what happens to Ruby next.

Science Fiction

Nancy Chrimer, Juniata High School, Retired

Coriell, Shelley. *Welcome, Caller, This Is Chloe*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 1-4197-0191-6. 320 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Chloe is a witty teenager with an addiction for buying vintage shoes. Her two best friends are giving her the silent treatment, and she has no idea why. To add to the drama, Chloe's new guidance counselor has rejected her graduation project. Her new project, which she needs to complete in a couple of months in order to graduate, is to revitalize the drowning school radio station. As part of the project, Chloe is forced to work with a couple of misfits who eventually become her friends. To add to the turmoil, Chloe has to come to terms with her aging grandmother with whom she has a special bond. The reader will enjoy Chloe's humor as she navigates the obstacles in her life and tries to please friends and family members. The book is fun, but the reader realizes this is truly a work of fiction. Chloe's wealth and freedom along with a unique public high school are too good to be true. This slightly over the edge setting is what draws the reader into the book.

Realistic Fiction

Lisa Gleason, Teacher, Warwick HS

Crilley, Paul. *The Lazarus Machine (Tweed and Nightingale Book 1)*. Amherst, NY: Pyr, 2012. 978-1-61614-688-7. 269p. \$16.95. Gr. 7-12.

This opening novel in the *Tweed & Nightingale Adventure* series is a blend of sci-fi, action, adventure, mystery and intrigue. The book is set in a steampunked version of Victorian era London, and the author borrows characters from some other literary works of the time period. (*Sherlock Holmes* fans may not be happy with what Crilley does with Doyle's beloved detective.) While the convoluted plot may turn off some readers, steampunk enthusiasts will relish the explosive action and admire the ingenuity of the adolescent characters.

Science Fiction; Steampunk; Adventure

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Cross, Sarah. *Kill Me Softly*. New York: Egmont, 2012. 978-1-60684-323-9. 331 p. \$17.99. Gr. 8 and up.

Sarah Cross takes the town of Beau Rivage and adds magic. It seems that the Grimm brothers told the truth. The fairy tales are true stories of people stricken with curses, and they live in the town of Beau Rivage. For soon-to-be sixteen year old Mirabelle, Beau Rivage is the answer to her past. She disobeys her two guardians for the first time to find out the answers about her birthplace and her past. What she does not realize is that she, too, is cursed. To make matters worse, she is torn between two brothers, Blue and Felix, who have curses of their own. For a fan of fairy tales, the story will work like a puzzle as the reader tries to figure out what fairy tale goes with what character. Cross also reminds the reader that fairy tales are not just happy ever afters; there is violence, gore, and pain.

Fairy Tales

Jody Weir, Teacher, Lincoln JSHS

Crossan, Sarah. *Breathe*. New York: Greenwillow, 2012. 978-0-06-211869-1. 373p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-10.

Alina, Quinn, and Bea live in a world where oxygen is at a premium because the air is too thin to breathe. The world has been changed forever due to pollution and other environmental factors, but even in this bleak reality love survives. The three friends leave the safety of their glass dome for a camping trip, but when things go badly they are forced to work together for survival. The teens only have enough oxygen for two days and must rely on each other despite a developing love triangle. The Outlands, home to the resistance, exposes the teens to new ideas and a new way of life outside the dome. This book is recommended for science fiction collections at the middle and high school level.

Science Fiction

Robin Burns, Salisbury High School

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Mighty Miss Malone*. New York: Wendy Lamb, 2012. 978-0-385-73491-2. 307p. \$15.99. Gr. 3-7.

For fans of *Bud, Not Buddy* and *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963*, this is a must read! Deza Malone is a dirt poor girl in 1936 Gary, IN. Her mom and dad are smart and funny, and her brother Jimmie has the singing voice of an angel. When her father sets off to look for work in Flint, MI, their lives take a variety of twists and turns as readers learn what life must have been like to be poor and black during the Great Depression. Once again the Newbery Medal-winning Curtis offers funny and poignant situations with believable characters. Highly recommended!

Historical Fiction; Great Depression

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Dahl, Michael. *Skyfall (Troll Hunters Book 1)*. North Mankato, MI: Stone Arch Books, 2012. 978-1-43423-307-3. 105p. \$18.04. Gr. 5-8.

Skyfall (Book One of the new *Troll Hunters* series) introduces four youngsters who are gearing up to see the biggest meteor storm of the century. When strange things begin to happen in their small town, a house catches on fire, Zak's family gets into a car accident, and an odd smell permeates the quarry where the town has gathered, the kids head into the woods to experiment. Here they find trolls who have dug their way up from underground and are very hungry for human flesh. Doctor Hoo comes to the rescue, but even his knowledge of trolls may not be enough to save the town from the dark trolls.

Supernatural; Fantasy; Illustrated

Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/MS

Danforth, Emily M. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. New York: Balzer + Bray, 2012. 978-0-08-202056-7. 470p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Cameron Post is a lesbian. When her parents die in a car crash she is sent to live with her born-again-Christian aunt, Ruth. After being involved in several relationships, her aunt finds out and sends her to "be fixed" at a Christian camp. Cam's compelling journey brings forth her challenges, her authentic voice, and her resolute resolve that she is who she is. A moving coming-of-age-story.

Coming-of-Age

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Deutsch, Barry. *Hereville: How Mirka Met a Meteorite. Boldly Going Where No 11-Year-Old Orthodox Jewish Girl Has Gone Before*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0398-0. 128 p. \$16.95. Gr. 4 and up.

Mirka is an Orthodox Jewish girl who loves sports, sword fighting, and playing in the woods, is decent at math but not crazy about school, and has a wild imagination. When she makes a deal with the local troll to play a trick on the witch, he goofs and unleashes a meteorite headed right for their town of Hereville. Mirka doesn't like the witch, but doesn't want to see her killed, so she runs to warn her. Her compassion backfires as the witch plucks some of Mirka's hair and transforms the meteorite into Mirka's doppelganger. Filled with funny situations, normal kids, and a liberal sprinkling of Yiddish phrases with translations, this is a fun, quick read with lots of action. You need not read the prequel, *Hereville: How Mirka Got Her Sword*, to appreciate this book.

Fantasy; Graphic Novel

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Dominy, Amy Fellner. *Audition and Subtraction*. New York: Walker & Company, 2012. 978-0-8027-2374-1. 264 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-7.

This book is an account of common experiences in middle school. A young girl is trying to establish her identity through friendship, music, and a love interest. At this vulnerable time during adolescents, she is also dealing with her parents' separation. The book explores the newness of dating and competition. It is written on-level and should be a "breezy" read for most early middle school girls. The basic theme revolves around music and involvement in school. It also delves into important issues such as self-esteem and loyalty. This book kept my interest, and I think a young person would be intrigued to find out what happens next. The characters are well-developed and have unique backgrounds. Most children will identify with their dilemmas and viewpoints.

Realistic Fiction

Christine Roberts, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Ellis, Deborah. *True Blue*. Toronto: Pajama Press, 2012. 978-0-9869495-3-1. 229 p. \$19.95. Gr. 5-8.

Casey and Jess are best friends and have been going to Ten Willow summer camp for years until they are finally counselors. They have one troublesome camper named Stephanie, who likes to wander, and ruin the other campers' fun. She goes missing on the last day of camp. When Casey is accused of her murder, Jess doesn't do anything to defend her. Her guilt makes her remember the events of that day and recount them to tell the story. This is a good mystery.

Mystery

G.J., Student, Sandy Run Middle School

Ellison, Kate. *The Butterfly Clues*. New York: Egmont, 2012. 9781606844175. 352 p. \$9.99. Gr. 8 and up.

Penelope (Lo) is a collector, but since her brother's mysterious death her collecting has become an obsession to the point of OCD. At the beginning of the book, Lo finds herself in the wrong place at the wrong time and becomes part of a murder mystery that she can't forget. She embarks on a mission to find the murderer of a young woman that is somehow linked to her brother. Along the way, she

meets a young man that is a mystery in its own. He takes her into the depths of a city where lifestyles are completely different than what she has been living. She is hoping that the butterfly necklace she stole from a flea market will provide her with the answers she's looking for to find the murderer or to become the next victim.

Mystery; Realistic Fiction

Krista Goodzinski, Blackhawk Area School District

Erdrich, Louise. *The Round House*. New York: Harper, 2012. 978-0-06-206524-7. 336 p. \$27.99. Gr. 10-12.

Louise Erdrich's newest book is a difficult coming-of-age story, a bit of a mystery, a riveting story of a family caught up in a tragic event, and a story about the lengths we go to protect those we love. Joe Coutts, the narrator, tells the story of events that occurred when he was thirteen when his life was shattered and forever changed by the brutal beating and rape of his mother. As Gerladine Coutts spirals into a deep depression, her husband Bazil (a tribal judge) and her son desperately try to help her and find out who did this to her. This story is filled with difficult and heart-wrenching situations. Winner of both the National Book Award and the Alex Award. Anyone who has read Erdrich's novels over the years will know that her work is often quite a challenge to read. This book, however, is much more accessible than many of Erdrich's novels. Without losing any of the power and beauty of the prose she is known for, Erdrich has told a story that teens will love, but I believe that it is still a challenging read for teens. While not written for younger teens, older teens will be totally riveted by this novel.

Realistic Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

Erlings, Fridrik. *Fish In The Sky*. New York: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5888-5 275 p. \$16.99. Gr. 8-12.

Josh Stephenson is just trying to grow up. Pressures at school, romance, a busy father, bullying and sexual development cause Josh much torment. The reader grows with Josh as he finds his way.

Coming of Age

Orvil G., Student, Abington Senior High

Eulberg, Elizabeth. *Take A Bow*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-33474-7. 280 p. \$15.34. Gr. 7 and up.

Emme, Sophie, Ethan, and Carter are all beginning their final, and most important, year at the New York City High School of the Creative and Performing Arts. Emme, a song writer and guitar player, is discovering her true potential after finally escaping Sophie's shadow. Sophie is learning that she may not be the star she always assumed she would be, while former childhood star, Carter, is figuring out that maybe acting isn't his passion. Ethan finds himself thinking of his band mate Emme in a different way and begins to finally mature after a night full of bad decisions almost ends his career. Together they struggle to pull their performances together for the Senior Showcase and figure out what the future holds. This book is full of drama and will attract theater arts fans and *Glee* addicts.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Fforde, Jasper. *The Last Dragonslayer (The Chronicles of Kazam Book 1)*. New York: Harcourt, 2012 (U.S.). 978-0-547-73847-5. 287 p. \$16.99. Gr. 4-10.

Jennifer Strange has a few problems. She is a foundling sold into servitude by the Blessed Ladies of the Lobster; the Great Zambini has disappeared leaving 16 year-old Jennifer to manage the House of Kazam, one of the few mystical arts employment agencies and Houses of Enchantment remaining in the Ununited Kingdoms, and a premonition has come that the last dragon, Maltcassion, is to die ending the Dragon pact. On top of everything else, Jennifer has learned that she is the last dragonslayer, which means it is up to her to kill Maltcassion, end the Dragon pact, and help King Snodd claim the Dragonlands. The problem: Maltcassion has not broken the Dragon pact, so Jennifer cannot kill him. Or has he? Similar to his Thursday Next series for teens and adults, Jasper Fforde intricately designs a world of fairy tale, mystery, compassion, friendship, and quirkiness in *The Chronicles of Kazam*. This is an excellent addition to any middle school library.

Fantasy

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Fitzpatrick, Huntley. *My Life Next Door*. New York: Dial, 2012. 978-0-8037-3699-3. 394 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Samantha is the privileged seventeen-year-old daughter of a senator. They live next door to the Garrets, a family with many children and the type of people Samantha's mother does not approve of. Samantha falls in love with Jace Garrett, and their summer romance blossoms until one fateful night when a terrible accident threatens to tear the teens apart. Samantha must make a tough decision: either protect her mother's prominent career, or do the right thing and be true to Jace.

Realistic Fiction

Kathy Babin, Guidance Counselor, Sandy Run Middle School

Flake, Sharon G. *Pinned*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-05718-9. 228p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Autumn professes her love for Adonis, the smart kid in the wheel chair without legs. Adonis mutters his true thoughts under his breath wanting nothing to do with Autumn. Autumn's best friend, Peaches, is in her ear telling her to get over Adonis; that she deserves better. Readers will wonder what could Peaches not like about Adonis and why does Adonis share the same feelings about Peaches? Sharon Flake's use of multiple narrators, from the perspective of Autumn and Adonis, gives readers a

glimpse into teen love, secrets revealed, and accepting others. *Pinned* is a quick, easy read with lots of high school drama that will keep even reluctant readers engaged.

Realistic Fiction; People with Disabilities

Laurie O'Connor, Teacher, Abington Senior High

Fleming, Candace. *On the Day I Died: Stories from the Grave*. New York: Swartz & Wade, 2012. 978-0-375-86781-1. 199p. \$16.99. Gr. 7-10.

Some teens die young. When Mike stumbles into a Chicago graveyard little does he know that by the time he leaves he will have heard the “death” stories of nine of its teen “residents.” In this collection of ghost stories, Fleming uses true stories of teen deaths since 1870 to inspire creepy first-person accounts of how each was killed. Middle schoolers unfamiliar with the horror genre will get a good dose of it here. Previous *Goosebumps* fans will move a broad step closer to being life-long horror aficionados. All readers, including teachers who use individual stories to introduce the genre, will be hooked...but we hope not literally!

Horror

Sarah Braxton, Juniata Valley School District

Flinn, Alex. *Bewitching (Kendra Chronicles Book 2)*. New York: Harper/Teen, 2012. 978-0-06-202414-5. 342p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-11.

The second book in the *Kendra Chronicles* finds snarky Kendra, who is a witch, befriending Emma, who doesn't have any friends and is excited about the arrival of her half-sister, Lisette. All too soon though, sweet Lisette shows her true conniving nature. Before “helping” Emma, Kendra relates some of her mishaps and successes as a witch. Flinn brings alive many other fairy tales in this retelling of Cinderella, where romance and adventure abound.

Fantasy

Geena R., Student, Abington Senior High

Forman, Gayle. *Just One Day*. New York: Dutton, 2013. 978-0-525-42591-5. 320 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.

Allyson Healey has always played it safe: safe clothes, safe schools, safe choices, but now a risk has presented itself: go to Paris with Willem, a boy she just met, or stay in London with her best friend, Melanie, and play it safe. Allyson, or “Lulu” as Willem calls her, decides to go for just one day. It is in this one day that she learns about love, “stains”, adventure, and loss. Though her trip lasts just one day, it changes Allyson forever for both good and bad. As Allyson begins college, she realizes the impact her day in Paris with Willem truly made on her life; she no longer wants to study medicine and has developed a driven personality instead of one of compliance. It is through her new sense of self that Allyson decides to return to Paris, find Willem, and learn the truth behind their day together.

Realistic Fiction

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Fredericks, Mariah. *The Girl in the Park*. New York: Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 978-0-375-96843-3. 217 p. \$16.99. Gr. 8-12.

Rain used to be Wendy's best friend until they went their separate ways. Wendy became known as a party girl, and tragically, one night her body is discovered in a park. Rain, usually quiet, is determined to help figure out what happened to Wendy as she tries to piece together the mystery. The focus of the police investigation and the rumor mill are on a boy who was last seen with Wendy at a party. However, the plot twists to reveal some surprises that shake up their prestigious private school. This is a page turner.

Mystery

Kathy Babin, Guidance Counselor, Sandy Run Middle School

Frost, Mark. *The Paladin Prophecy (Paladin Prophecy Book 1)*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-87045-3. 547p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

This is a very good YA novel that adults will also enjoy. Will West has been encouraged by his parents to be “invisible” in the sense of not doing things to get himself noticed. However, one day when he goes out for his morning run men in a black car chase him in an attempt to kidnap him. At the same time, he is chased by some strange beasts as he runs in the woods to lose the men. When he gets home, he finds his mother acting strangely and not at all like his mother would act. He suddenly realizes that something is terribly wrong. In an attempt to escape everything, he boards a plane to a boarding school in Wisconsin that is offering him a scholarship. What he soon realizes though, is that he has jumped from the frying pan into the fire, as more and more bizarre and dangerous things happen to him. With a group of friends and lots of nonstop action, he manages to survive and along the way uncloaks the bad guys. Will's adventures are to be continued in a sequel.

Fantasy

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Gagnon, Michelle. *Don't Turn Around*. New York: Harper, 2012. 978-0-06-210290-4. 310 p. \$17.00. Gr. 7 and up.

Get ready to meet Noa, a YA version of Lisbeth from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Noa wakes one morning in a sterile room attached to an IV. She has no idea how she got there, but she knows it can't be good. She has been living off the grid for years and earned a living hacking computers. After she escapes the center where she was being held, she has to use her survival skills to stay

ahead of her pursuers. It seems that Noa holds essential information that could get her killed. This is a dark, exciting, well-paced adventure. The second book in the series is due out in July.

Adventure; Thriller

Sandra Krieg, The Haverford School

Gaughen, A.C. *Scarlet*. New York: Walker, 2012. 9780802723468. 292p. \$17.99. Gr 6-12.

Will Scarlet is not as he seems. In fact, this skilled, knife throwing, risk-taker in Robin Hood's clan of thieves is actually a troubled girl in disguise. Running from her mysterious past, Scarlet finds herself face-to-face with an unexpected figure from her past, the bloodthirsty Sheriff of Nottingham, Gisbourne. As Scarlet's story unravels, her loyalty to handsome Robin Hood is questioned, and readers will see her grow from an incensed, young girl to a resourceful, fierce young woman. This twist on the traditional Robin Hood story is a breath of fresh air in the sea of YA dystopia. Recommended for fans of historical fiction and fairy tale retellings or anyone looking for a good romance, but beware, *Scarlet* is the first in a planned trilogy.

Fairy-Tale Retelling

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

George, Elizabeth. *The Edge of Nowhere*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0-670-01296-1. 440p. \$18.99. Gr. 8-12.

Elizabeth George has created a novel with richly developed characters who are complex, flawed, interesting, and believable. The suspense felt from the beginning built throughout the story with several different plot lines added as it progressed. While most were very satisfyingly wrapped up, there is one left as a climactic cliff-hanger at the story's end that made me want to scream because I can't rush right out and grab the next in this series! It is easy to see why this book was nominated for both the Edgar and the Agatha Awards for young people's fiction. Hopefully she is writing fast so the story can continue.

Mystery; Suspense

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

George, Madeleine. *The Difference Between You and Me*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0-670-01128-5. 262p. \$16.99. Gr. 10-12.

This is the story of Jesse, a high school girl who cuts her hair with a knife and wears ugly, rubber boots, and Emily, the pretty blonde student council officer in the cardigan. These girls seem to be as different as night and day, but they are strangely attracted to each other. At first the characters in this story seemed to me to be falling into one-dimensional stereotypes, and I thought I could see where the story was going, but I kept reading because of the glowing comments from Laurie Halse Anderson. If she liked it there had to be more there, and there was. While there is, obviously, a strong lesbian storyline, it is not just about that. All readers will find characters who struggle with the same things as they do. As one reviewer said, if you believe in any cause and standing up to be counted, you will relate to the characters in this book. If I had any criticism of this book, it would be that while there is a tolerance for all sorts of people and lifestyles, there is what has become the stereotypical Christian bad guy. I would have liked to see the tolerance extended to all a bit more even-handedly. I would keep this book for high school audiences due to several steamy encounters that might be a little much for younger students and/or their parents.

Realistic Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

Gephart, Donna. *Olivia Bean, Trivia Queen*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-0-385-74052-4. 278p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.

Jeopardy enthusiast Olivia Bean is thrilled to be selected to participate in a Kids' Week *Jeopardy* competition. Besides being an avid fan of the show, she sees Kids' Week as an opportunity to reconnect with her dad who has moved to California with her best friend's mom and her friend, Nikki. Olivia is angry that her dad does not keep in touch and jealous that Nikki has him now. To make matters worse, Olivia's mom's annoying boyfriend has moved in, creating additional conflict for Livi. Gephart captures Olivia's emotional angst as she deals with changes resulting from her parent's divorce while using *Jeopardy* as an opportunity to show Olivia's personal growth and new understanding of who her dad really is. With a bit of preteen romance for added interest, *Olivia Bean, Trivia Queen* is sure to be a pleasing read.

Realistic Fiction; Familial Relationships

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

Gidwitz, Adam. *In a Glass Grimmly*. New York: Penguin, 2012. 978-0-525-42581-6. 314p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.

This fun companion novel to *A Tale Dark and Grimm* gives readers another clever spin on the traditional fairy tale that middle school readers will love. This book weaves tales primarily from Grimm and Anderson with Mother Goose's Jack and Jill leading the way. With adventure, excitement, snarky humor, and horror, Gidwitz captures readers' interest in the first few pages and does not let go. Highly recommended!

Fantasy; Fairy Tales

Carol Breen, Springfield Township Middle School

Godbersen, Anna. *The Lucky Ones: A Bright Young Things Novel*. New York: HarperCollins, 2012. 978-0-06-196270-7. 384p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

The story of these ambitious, roaring twenties girls comes to a close in this action packed conclusion to the *Bright Young Things* series. Letty finally gets her big break when a well-known actor takes her under his wing, but the mutual feelings between them complicate things, especially with his wife. Astrid discovers that being a bootlegger's wife is lonely and meets an unknown, dangerous

side of her husband that strikes fear within her heart. Cordelia continues her hidden romance with famous stunt pilot, Max, but both face public scrutiny when their bi-racial relationship is exposed. The ending is slightly bittersweet and leaves the reader thinking maybe these girls aren't "The Lucky Ones".

Historical Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Goobie, Beth. *Jason's Why*. Toronto: Red Deer, 2012. 978-0-88995-484-7. 72p. \$8.95. Gr. 6-12.

This is a very short story that is heartbreaking and hopeful at the same time. It is the story of a little boy who has anger management issues that make him uncontrollable at home. As the story unfolds and Jason is placed in a safe house for children with similar issues, the reader sees that Jason's mother also has issues that have impacted Jason's behavior. This is a sad story that is so often true in our society, and one in which some students may recognize themselves.

Realistic Fiction

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Grant, Michael. *Fear (Gone Book 5)*. New York: K. Tegen, 2012. 978-0-06144-9154. 528p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Book Five in the *Gone* series delves into the fear that invades each character living in the FAYZ in Perdido Beach; a fear of each other; fear of the parents who wait on the other side of the barrier hoping to find out anything about their children, and now there is something happening to the barrier that surrounds them. It begins to turn black and move upward to the top of the barrier; blocking out light, stopping the fishing, the farming, and the daily life activities the kids have been working on to eke out a living. Diana is pregnant and has left Caine and joined Sam and his boys. Lana is still curing everyone and living with Sanjit and his family on top of the hill. Astrid returns as a much different character from the previous books; she is lean, mean, and has learned to live off the land and always carries a gun. Ork has become more sensitive, but Drake and Brittney are still vying in the same body. Penny is used by Caine to punish Cigar; she tortures him, and he almost dies. Once again, Grant does a tremendous job of terrorizing everyone in the FAYZ and leaves us all ripe for Book Six.

Supernatural

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Grant, Michael. *Fear (Gone Book 5)*. New York: Katherine Tegen, 2012. 978-0-06-144915-4. 509 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Fear is an apt title for this fifth volume in the *Gone* series. As darkness begins to envelope the dome, the kids in the FAYZ have new evils to face. Little Pete is resurrected as a god; the Darkness wants Diana's baby, and fear spreads as supernatural forces overpower and kill the survivors of the plague. Grim and unrelenting this latest segment amps up the stakes and leaves the reader hanging.

Supernatural

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Grant, Michael and Katherine Applegate. *Eve and Adam*. New York: Feiwel, 2012. 978-0-312-58351-4. 291 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

All is not as it seems at Spiker Biotech. After an accident that should have left her maimed for life, 17-year-old Evening makes some shocking discoveries about herself, the orphaned teen living at the institute, and the assignment her mother gives her to alleviate her boredom. *Eve and Adam* is a chilling tale of genetic engineering.

Fantasy

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York: Dutton, 2012. 978-0-525-47881-2. 336 p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

The Fault in Our Stars is a funny, yet somber story of two teens meeting at a cancer support group. Augustus Waters falls for Hazel, but her love will bloom slowly as his optimism breaks down her cynicism. Hazel has a very supportive mother and father as does Augustus, but his family is much larger. I just loved the way John Green described these characters; their worlds, which include their homes, especially their bedrooms, and then the dreaded hospital. Green uses sarcasm, laughter, and empathy in describing how cancer has totally defined their lives, but through their meeting, their relationship, their support group, friends and family, Green brings together friendship, romance, and sorrow in a MUST READ for young adults and also adults.

Realistic Fiction; Cancer

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York: Dutton, 2012. 978-0-525-47881-2. 336 p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Green is a master craftsman of dead-on authentic teen characters and dialog; once again he writes a YA book I frequently recommend to my adult friends. While the subject matter, kids with cancer, is daunting, Green somehow makes the story heartbreaking and uplifting at the same time. Hazel is the smart and funny protagonist who hates being called brave, and Augustus is the irresistible, new friend she meets at the Cancer Kid Support Group in the church basement. Sometimes laugh-out-loud funny, there are also some sex-related adult moments in the book. While tastefully written, these scenes lead me to recommend the book for later high school readers. The takeaway from this story is sometimes people who are "dying" figure out how to be much more alive than most of us. Highly, highly recommended.

Realistic Fiction; Cancer

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Greenwald, Lisa. *My Summer of Pink and Green*. New York: Amulet, 2013. 978-1-4197-0413-0. 259 p. \$ 16.95. Gr. 5-8. This sequel to *My Life in Pink and Green* continues the story of Lucy, a very sweet teenager who manages to save the day while giving life lessons along the way. Some of these lessons include, "Listen to advice and consider it, even if you don't end up taking it." Lucy's family is about to open a pharmacy/spa in their hometown, yet the path is not smooth. Lucy negotiates adult relationships, dating, friendships, and, most importantly, being true to her own self. She is empowering and makes girls feel like they "can do stuff". This is an easy, breezy, summer "beach read". Readers need not have read her first book in the series to enjoy this one. Just make sure to follow Lucy's advice!

Realistic Fiction

Kim Stern, Teacher, Upper Dublin High School

Griffin, Adele. *All You Never Wanted*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-87082-8. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Alex and her younger sister, Thea, went from a life of food stamps and welfare checks to living in a castle-like mansion and no limit credit cards when their mother remarried. Alex has it all, including the highest level of popularity, an older boyfriend, and a much sought after internship at a high fashion clothing line. The internship, however, causes her to have an intense and embarrassing breakdown that ultimately ruins her. She doesn't eat and has panic attacks at the thought of getting in her car to drive to school. Tired of quietly living in her sister's shadow, Thea decides that she wants Alex's life, especially her boyfriend, Josh. Her inner conflicts reflect the loyalty she still feels toward her sister and her insatiable desire to be her. She doesn't care who she hurts or what she has to do; she will be popular. The story builds up when Thea and Josh organize an epic party, against Alex's wishes, during which Thea learns a painful lesson about getting what she wants. The relationship between the sisters reflects the loyalty siblings feel when they only have each other and complicated dynamics of sisterhood.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Griffin, Bethany. *Masque of the Red Death*. New York: Greenwillow, 2012. 978-0-06-210779-4. 324 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Griffin transforms Edgar Allen Poe's short story into a dark, devious world of sorrow and death. The Weeping Illness has overtaken Araby's city. Only the wealthy can afford the masks that protect from the disease ridden air, leaving the poor vulnerable, and the undertaker's cart full. Since her scientist father invented the mask, Araby is safe, but every evening she and the darkly adventurous April, niece of the ruler, Prince Prospero, escape their safe tower to lose themselves in the Debauchery Club. Here, the wealthy enter, take off their masks, and indulge in the dark party in hopes of forgetting what is going on around them, or in Araby's case, the death of her twin brother. Deceit becomes a common theme in this dystopic, steampunk novel as Araby enters a love triangle between Will, the Debauchery Club employee struggling to protect his young siblings, and Elliot, April's conniving and mysterious brother. When April is kidnapped, Araby must leave her drug hazed world of self-pity and face the truth about her society to save her friend, all while a new plague is evolving. The cliffhanger ending will leave readers eagerly anticipating the sequel, *Dance of the Red Death*, due June 11, 2013.

Dystopia; Steampunk

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Griffin, Paul. *Burning Blue*. New York: Dial Books, 2012. 978-0-8037-3815-7. 291p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.

Jay keeps to himself. In fact, after having a seizure in front of the entire student body during his freshman year, he home-schooled for a year and a half. Now back into the school day, he finds himself caught up with a very unlikely girl. Nicole is the perfect student; straight A's, student council, athlete, beauty pageant beautiful, and extremely popular. Her life is shattered one day as she turns the corner at school and is hit in the face with acid. After the accident that claims half of her face, Nicole hides. She eventually comes to know Jay and sees someone who accepts her and sees beyond surface appearance. Convinced that the police are not able to solve the crime, Jay is determined to use his hacking skills to find the person who attacked Nicole. This is a story full of twists. Readers will be caught up in the lives of these characters and the search for the attacker. Adding to the theme that appearances are not everything is the fact that most of the characters are not what they seem at first glance or at least have surprises in store. Great read with well-developed characters that are very realistic.

Realistic Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

Gunnery, Sylvia. *Emily for Real*. Toronto: Pajama, 2012. 978-0-9869495-8-6. 202 p. \$14.95. Gr. 7-12.

The strands of seventeen-year-old Emily's life all seem to be unraveling at once. First, her boyfriend breaks up with her, and then her grandfather's death causes several stunning family secrets to emerge. A friendship develops between Emily and Leo, a newcomer to her school with family issues of his own. While it doesn't cover new ground and nothing earthshattering happens, the book is well-written and interesting; the characters are likeable, and teenage girls will find it engaging.

Realistic Fiction

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Hagar, Mandy. *Blood of the Lamb (The Crossing Book 1)*. New York: Prometheus, 2013. 978-1-6164-698. 272p. \$16.95. Gr. 9 and up.

The Crossing is book one in a new trilogy, and I can't wait for the next one to come out. As soon as you finish *The Crossing* you are going to want more. Maryam is from a dystopian society that is stark and dreary, and she has to leave everything she knows so she can "cross" from being a child to becoming a woman. Once she crosses over, Maryam realizes that it is not at all what she expected it to be. Once girls cross over, they are chosen to be either a "bleeder" or a "breeder", and the Apostles are trying to break her. The suspense in this book is incredible, and this is a must have for your high school library.

Dystopian Society

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Han, Jenny and Siobhan Vivian. *Burn for Burn*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012. 978-1-44244-075-3. 356p. \$17.99.

Jar Island might be a tourist destination for some, but for Lillia, Mary, and Kat it is home. All three girls have lived on Jar Island most of their lives, but although it is a small island they have lived very different lives. The one thing that brings all three together is revenge. Revenge for those who have wronged, bullied, and humiliated each girl unifies them to act in each other's best interest. This is the first book in a trilogy which adds a supernatural plot at the end of the book. Two very popular young adult authors have teamed up to create a gripping story of revenge told through flashbacks and present day dialogue.

Realistic Fiction; Fantasy

Robin Burns, Salisbury High School

Harrington, Hannah. *Speechless*. Ontario: Harlequin, 2012. 978-0-373-21052-7. 268p. \$9.99. Gr. 10-12.

This is a book that should be read by every high school student. Chelsea, the main character, is part of a shallow, popular, and very cruel group of girls. At a New Year's Eve party, she sees two gay boys making out and immediately trumpets it to the rest of the kids at the party. This results in two basketball players following the boys as they leave the party, and then beating the one boy nearly to death. When Chelsea realizes what her disclosure started and who did the beating, she tells the police. It was the right decision, but since Chelsea's mouth has caused all of this trouble, she decides to stop speaking and spends the next month without saying a word to anyone, despite being punished for not participating in class at school and lots of pressure from her parents to talk. Through her silence, though, Chelsea finds out about herself and finds true friends, and eventually forgives herself, grows up, and makes peace with those she harmed.

Realistic Fiction; Bullying

Nancy Chrismer Juniata High School, Retired

Harrison, Troon. *The Horse Road*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2011. 978-1-59990-846-5. 312 p. \$16.99. Gr. 6-10.

This is a wonderful story about a girl named Kalli and her bravery, loyalty and most of all her love of horses. Set in an ancient culture, the story takes the reader from Kali's early life through her growth into a young woman fighting for what she believes to be right. She has major obstacles to overcome in this very exciting and colorful saga. Kali and her friend Batu go on a quest to save her dearest horse. As Kali follows her heart, she learns about herself and those closest to her. This is an amazing book. It is one that will be enjoyed by people of all ages, especially those who love horses and adventure!

Historical Fiction

Barbara Gross, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Hartman, Rachel. *Seraphina*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0375866562. 512p. \$17.99. Gr.6 and up.

In a fantasy world inhabited by two races--rational dragons and humans who can feel emotion--the 40-year peace is threatened. Sixteen-year-old, half-dragon Seraphina hides the scales that mark her true nature. She is hired as the royal court's music mistress to deliver lessons to young Princess Glisselda. Her music teacher, who is secretly her uncle Orma, is a dragon who guides and protects her. Like other dragons living in human society, Orma adopts a saarantras to blend in. As the anniversary celebration of the peace nears, Prince Rufus is murdered; dragons are accused, and tensions grow. Limited understandings and empathy between dragon and human society reflect racism in our own society. Seraphina's crush on Prince Lucian, Glisselda's betrothed, foreshadows serious romantic drama. With a war looming and the romantic triangle unresolved, you can feel a sequel coming on. Fresh fantasy ideas, nicely drawn characters, and a spunky, talented heroine make this a delightful read.

Fantasy

Joyce Valenza, Springfield Township High School

Hartman, Rachel. *Seraphina*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0375866562. 512p. \$17.99. Gr 6-12.

In the other-worldly, Medieval kingdom of Gorredd, Seraphina has only know mistrust between humans and dragons. Serving as ambassadors, teachers, and scholars, dragons long ago learned to blend into human society by transforming into human shape; only they cannot mimic human emotion and appear to those who do not know them as cold and distant. On the eve of a peace treaty between humans and dragons, a murder in the royal family has everyone on edge, and the dragons fall under heavy suspicion. A gifted musician, Seraphina, finds herself drawn into the mystery and tries to protect herself from a truth she has been so desperate to hide, and a secret that could destroy her life. Hartman has written a beautiful novel that is easily one of the most original and creative of the year. Do not hesitate to put this into the hands of any music lover or fantasy reader!

Fantasy

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

Harvey, Sarah N. *Three Little Words*. Victoria, BC: ORCA, 2012. 978-1-4598-0065-6. 218p. \$12.95. Gr. 9 and up.

Sid, abandoned by his mother when he was two, has surprisingly found a permanent home with loving foster parents. His life is suddenly turned upside down when he discovers his biological mother had another child, and now both have unexpectedly disappeared. Sid's biological grandmother, who just discovered his existence, beseeches him to help. As he faces the past, the memories and similitudes of his mother may be too much for this 16-year-old boy to manage. This coming-of-age novel delves into issues of abandonment, mental illness, and family problems in a realistic, mature manner. Readers will enjoy Sid's honesty and patience as he tries to help others.

Realistic Fiction

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Harvey, Sarah N. *Three Little Words*. Victoria, BC: Orca, 2012. 978-1-4598-0065-6. 218p. \$12.95. Gr. 7-12.

Sid, foster child of Caleb and Megan, leads a routine, content, teenage life on a small island until the arrival of Phil, a friend of Sid's birthmother. Suddenly, Sid is immersed in a search for his birthmother and half-brother. The novel grabs the reader's attention and holds interest throughout the narrative that explores family ties, compassion, and the healing power of love. Young adults will find the characters believable, the action and setting contemporary, and will gain an understanding of personal interrelationships.

Realistic Fiction

Donna Robinson, Retired Teacher, Columbia HS

Hassman, Tupelo. *Girlchild*. New York: Farrar, Strass and Giroux, 2012. 978-0-374-16257-3. 288p. \$24.00. Gr. 10-12.

I will admit that this was a very difficult book to wade through; Rory Hendrix's life in a Reno trailer park with a mother who tries to do her best is disturbing. Through letters from her grandmother, files from the county social worker, her mother's arrest records, and memories and lies she learns as she grows up, we see Rory's history and life. There definitely will be many troubles and hurt for this girl who comes from a family with a bad history. This is a story about what it is like to live a dead-end life as trailer park trash; to be smart and live with alcoholics, gamblers, and bad decision makers. Rory is strong and determined like her mother and grandmother; will she break the cycle of abuse and poverty and make it in a world that seems destined to go nowhere?

Realistic Fiction; Familial Relationships

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Hassman, Tupelo. *Girlchild*. New York: Farrar, Strass and Giroux, 2012. 978-0-374-16257-3. 288p. \$24.00. Gr. 10-12.

Hassman's Alex-award-winning novel tells the story of Rory Dawn Hendrix, a young girl who lives with her mother in a poorest of poor trailer park. Her mother, a bartender, is following in the path of her own mother, and it is assumed that Rory will also. Her mother's history of finding the wrong men has a devastating effect on Rory's childhood and has steeled Rory's determination to live her own life. The cover depicts the card inside the library's copy of the Girl Scout Handbook which Rory has signed out so many times that she has filled the card. She is a GS Troop of 1 - no badges, no uniforms, but there is the book. I loved this book! The writing blew me away. It is episodic; told in vignettes much like Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* as well as in reports from the social worker, diaries, letters and legal records. It took me a long time to read this book partly because of the weighty story and partly because I kept going back and rereading passages that were so beautifully written or so powerful that I needed to stop and enjoy it. It is not an easy book to read. The events are often devastating. The language in the book had me rereading passages for the beauty of her words or the cruelty. It will take a mature teen reader to get all of the nuances of the novel, but they will be rewarded with a great story.

Realistic Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Retired, Biglerville HS/MS

Hautman, Pete. *The Obsidian Blade*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5403-0. 308 p. \$16.99. Gr. 8-12.

Hautman once again returns to science fiction. His realistic fiction novels have been block-busters, so this new Klaathu Diskos trilogy should already have some built-in fans. Hautman gives a new twist on time travel, as Tucker Feye goes in search of his parents by jumping through a disk of shimmering air hovering near his roof. His travels through space and time, twists reality and changes the future. Issues of religion, identity, and fate permeate, but it is the taut plot, memorable characters, and beautifully imagined universe that make this novel so memorable. The cliff-hanger at the end gives the realization that this book was just the set-up for the series, but makes it none the less satisfying. Hopefully the series will be a long one because the construction of this novel is virtually flawless. Bring on the Klaathu!

Science Fiction

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Hautman, Pete. *What Boys Really Want*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 0-545-11315-6. 297 p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-12.

Hautman has created a little something for everyone this year with his compelling science fiction novel, *The Obsidian Blade*, and this delightful novel about teen relationships. The plot may not be original, but the characters are funny, frank, and well-drawn. The story is told from two points of view, alternating between the first-person narratives of high school juniors Adam and Lita. Friendship is put to the test when Adam liberally plagiarizes a blog site named Miz Fitz for his book *What Boys Want*, not knowing that Lita is the author. While the very serious topic of plagiarism is explored, the ending is satisfying, and the friendship remains intact. Don't let

the title fool you, sexual references are mild and most of the relationships are definitely PG. Hautman proves that he can tackle serious subjects and characters, yet still give readers a fun and frothy romance. A fun read.

Realistic Fiction

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Heiligman, Deborah. *Intentions*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-86861-7. 272p. \$16.99. Gr. 9 and up.

This is a story about a young Jewish girl, Rachel, who looks up to her Rabbi. We meet Rachel as she is storming out of her house in the midst of her parents fighting so loudly that they do not even hear her as she yells up to them and slams out the door. She thinks she is going to find refuge and peace at her synagogue, yet instead she finds Rabbi Cohn in a compromising position with a woman who he is supposed to be counseling before she gets married. Rachel's idea of idol is crushed when she discovers them. Rachel must work through this situation as well as some of her own issues. The character development in this novel is worth the read.

Coming-of-Age

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Hiaasen, Carl. *Chomp*. New York: Ember, 2012. 978-0-375-86842-9. 290 p. \$16.99 Gr. 5-8.

Ever watch *Crocodile Hunter* or *Man versus Wild* and wonder what happens behind the scenes on those shows? Wahoo Cray is about to live it. He's grown up surrounded by alligators--one even bit his thumb off--snakes, monkeys, and all kinds of animals because his dad is an animal wrangler. His dad has just taken a job with a reality TV show called "Expedition Survival!" The star of the show, Derek Badger, is a certified idiot who's about to get lost in the Everglades. Hiaasen doesn't waste time getting to the action and skillfully weaves in facts about wildlife (and Latin species names) along with humor, satire, and of course, adventure.

Humor; Environmentalism

Mary Fran Torpey, Friends' Central School

Hiaasen, Carl. *Chomp*. New York: Ember, 2012. 978-0375868276. 304pp. \$8.99. Gr. 6-10.

Hiaasen parodies reality survivalist television in this adventure satire featuring financially-strapped Everglades wrangler Mickey Cray and his son Wahoo. The two are hired to provide wildlife for and to protect the flamboyant and phoney star of "Expedition Survival!" a new reality series. On their trip into the wild they are joined by Tuna, a girl running from an abusive father, who happens to be an expert in taxonomy. The story turns from a romp about filming a TV show to an action adventure as Tuna's alcoholic father arrives with a gun and hijacks a boat, and self-absorbed star Derek Badger is chomped by a bat (as well as a variety of other critters).

Satire; Humor; Family; Adventure

Joyce Valenza, Springfield Township High School

Hiranandani, Veera. *The Whole Story of Half a Girl*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-0-385-74128-6. 209 p. \$16.99. Gr. 6-9.

Sonja is a half Indian, half Jewish, middle school student dealing with several stressors in her life; family financial concerns, a new school, how to identify herself culturally, a parent with mental health issues, and friendship issues. Her father loses his job, which forces Sonja to leave her comfortable private school. Sonja must come to terms with how she fits in with two different cultures, a new peer group, and how she will define herself. This novel hits many important issues that many middle school students face.

Realistic Fiction

Kathy Babin, Guidance Counselor, Sandy Run Middle School

Hirsch, Jeff. *Magisterium*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-29018-0. 310 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-12.

Hirsch has blended fantasy and science fiction in his compelling second novel. Glenn Morgan dreams of entering Space Academy and flying to distant worlds. She doesn't imagine where she ends up; the Magisterium, a world ruled totally by magic, evil magic, and her mother is the Magistra who is orchestrating this. This novel is a roller-coaster ride of dark magic, memorable characters, and compelling suspense. Not for everyone, this is dark and violent, but an extremely satisfying read.

Fantasy; Science Fiction

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Holm, Jennifer L. *Eighth Grade is Making Me Sick*. New York: Random, 2012. 978-0-37596851-8. 121p. \$15.99. Gr. 5-7.

This book is a detailed look into the mind of the average 13-year-old girl. Each page details the trials and tribulations of adolescence and offers the reader a character to sympathize and celebrate with. Notes, lists, posters, invitations, menus, and other memorabilia tell the story in this colorful "scrapbook" of a "year in the life" of Ginny Davis, eighth grader. Sure to be popular with middle-schoolers!

Realistic Fiction

Kevin Grummun, Springfield Township Middle School

Holm, Jennifer L. and Matthew. *Squish: The Power of the Parasite (Squish Book 3)*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-84391-4. 96 p. \$6.99. Gr. 3-8.

From the sibling author/illustrator team who brought us the *Babymouse!* series comes the graphic novel series starring Squish, the boy amoeba, whose life is pretty much like every other boy's. This graphic novel features a "story within the story," as the comic book

Squish is reading about super heroes Superamoeba and his rival Parasite, is interspersed within Squish's own adventures. While this is book three in the series you do not need to read them in order to enjoy the silly, funny stories and great illustrations. A quick and fun read for your young graphic novel fans, includes a fun science experiment and drawing lesson at the end.

Graphic Novel

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Hopkins, Ellen. *Tilt*. New York: Margaret McElderry, 2012. 978-1-4169-8330-9. 603 p. \$18.99. Gr. 10-12.

The young teens in Hopkins' novel, a companion to *Triangles*, make decisions for love that alter their lives. In this engrossing novel in verse, teens deal with issues that are gripping and devastating such as HIV, pregnancy, sexting, and the death of a family member. The book uses profanity and graphic sex in order to drive home the reality that love/sex is harsh and reminds teens to be more deliberate and smart.

Realistic Fiction; Dating; Novel in Verse

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Horvath, Polly. *One Year in Coal Harbor*. New York: Swartz and Wade, 2012. 978-0-75-86970-9. 216p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-7.

Twelve-year-old Primrose Squarp is thriving in the fishing village of Coal Harbor, British Columbia. Her character has matured and gained a surer footing than when her parents were lost at sea in *Everything on a Waffle*. Preteen readers will appreciate Primrose's many conflicts and moods. She is undaunted by the challenges she faces and meets them with delightful humor, insight, and quirkiness, but her ever-present optimism is tempered by realistic ups and downs. Primrose's many efforts to nudge Uncle Jack toward romance with Miss Bower seem to be failing. She longs for a best friend and sees a possibility in Bert and Evie's new foster child, Ked, who helps her write a cookbook to support the Fisherman's Aid. Their recipes appear at the end of each chapter. Rich language and delightful characters, Horvath-style!. Highly recommended.

Coming-of-Age; Relationships; Foster Care; Middle School

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

Hughes, Mark Peter. *Lemonade Mouth Puckers Up*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-0-385-73712-8. \$16.99. Gr. 8-12.

This is an excellent YA novel that will speak to many teens, especially those interested in music. There are many more levels to the story though, and many teens will be attracted to this story of a teen band whose band existence and personal lives seem to be on a roller coaster ride. Sometimes soaring with the stars and sometimes dropping all the way to the bottom, the teen band who named themselves "Lemonade Mouth" find fame nearly within their grasp as they are noticed by a big-time music promoter, but decisions are made that may take their chance away. A very good, hip, current, teen read, this book is a sequel to *Lemonade Mouth*, but can be read as a stand-alone.

Realistic Fiction

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Hughes, Susan. *The Island Horse*. Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can, 2012. 978-1-5545-592-7. 160p. \$16.95. Gr. 4-9.

Ellie is a young girl in the early 1800s, Nova Scotia, who has recently lost her mother. When her beloved Pa takes a beach rescue job on Sable Island, a tiny crescent-shaped land 100 miles from their Nova Scotia home, they must set off to start a new life. Ellie is lonely and despondent until she discovers the island's wild horses and one stallion in particular, who appears to trust her. Beautifully written, this volume contains an Author's Note detailing the research that went into the tale and more details about Sable Island, and its protected population of wild horses. Highly recommended!

Historical Fiction

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Huser, Glen. *The Runaway*. Vancouver: Trade Wind Books, 2012. 978-1-896580-21-0. 147 p. \$12.95. Gr. 6-9.

There comes a year when the everyday tediousness disappears only to be replaced with unforeseeable tragedy. Leroy, commonly referred to as "Doodlebug", is enjoying a burger with a friend when he learns a fatal automobile accident has taken his father's life and confined his mother to a wheelchair. Now he and his mother have to move four counties over to live with his aunt, Alvina. Alvina's sons claim to be honorable young men, but end up putting the fear of God into Doodle when they punish him with the hickory stick. His mother's health continues to fail, and soon she joins his father. Doodle decides it's time to run away. He steals half of the money his cousins owe him and borrows a horse. When Albert catches up to him, he hides out in a train car and ends up with the Chautauqua. Here he is able to put his artistic ability to practice and earn some money; all while impressing the youngsters in the junior tent and the lovely Maggie. Albert and Virgil have not forgotten about Doodle, the theft, or betrayal, and they continue to track him. They are not the only two looking for justice from one of the performers. Doodle is a sweet, lovable character who seems much younger than sixteen at times. Readers will enjoy his stories and quick-witted antics as well as the historical background of the Chautauqua and the birth of the film industry.

Historical Fiction

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Hyde, Natalie. *Hockey Girl*. Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2012. 978-1-55455-251-1. \$9.95. Gr. 7-10.

This book is a quick, fun read about a girls' hockey team in Canada. Tara and her championship softball team are challenged to play on a hockey team, and they accept the challenge, reluctantly at first, but then enthusiastically as they begin to get into the game. When

the town tries to cut the team to make more room for the boys' teams to practice, the girls decide to fight for their right to play, and along the way, decide to challenge the boys' team for some respect.

Sports; Realistic Fiction

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Johnson, Angela. *A Certain October*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012. 9780689865053. \$16.99. Gr. 8 and up.

Scotty, a 16 year old girl, is dealing with life and its realities. She spends a lot of time with her two best friends at the Endangered Café, as well as with her autistic seven-year-old brother. When planning for homecoming should be her priority, a terrible accident takes place that causes her brother, Keone, to be in a coma. Scotty feels responsible and questions what she could have done to avoid the accident. Don't let the number of pages in this book allow you to think that you will be able to read it quickly. Every word is important, often causing you to reread.

Realistic Fiction

Krista Goodzinski, Blackhawk Area School District

Johnson, Peter. *The Amazing Adventures of John Smith, Jr. AKA Houdini*. New York: HarperCollins, 2012. 978-0061988905. 176 p. \$15.99. Gr. 4-8.

John Smith, Jr., nicknamed Houdini after his favorite person, hears an author speak and decides that he would write a novel following the authors' rules for writing for teens. Hoping to write a best-seller so he can buy his father a new car and pay for college, Houdini introduces us to his friends and enemies. They all add up to a story that is both funny and realistic.

Realistic Fiction; Humor; Iraq War

Sandra Krieg, The Haverford School

Khoury, Jessica. *Origin*. New York: Razorbill, 2012. 978-1-59514-595-6. 393p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Seventeen-year-old Pia has always known that she was created by scientists and that her sole purpose in life is to begin a race of other "Immortals" just like herself. People like her cannot die and will live forever. Stationed within the confining walls of the research center, Pia has never been allowed to journey into the Amazon rainforest that surrounds them. One day she discovers a hole in the wall and risks everything for a taste of freedom. Once outside, she runs into a native boy named Eio who, though mortal, shows Pia what it is like to really live. Caught fulfilling her greatest dream or being with the one she loves, Pia discovers the awful truth about her origin and must fight to change her destiny.

Science Fiction; Immortality

Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/MS

Kincaid, S. J. *Insignia*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books, 2012. 978-0-06-209299-1. 446 p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-12.

In a future where virtual reality (VR) is part of everyday life, the only thing going for fourteen-year-old Tom are his gaming skills. He is recruited by the Indo-American Alliance to fight against the Russo-Chinese Alliance. Since WWII is being fought in VR, young recruits are surgically implanted with computer processors in their brains and an access port to plug directly into virtual scenarios. The implications are astounding as the teens are programmed, infected with viruses, and manipulated. Tom and his classmates are typical teens, and childish humor balances the competitive atmosphere of their training. Tom discovers that his VR skills far exceed his peers, as do Medusa's, the lead fighter for the Russo-Chinese. The two develop a relationship and secretly join forces to reveal the unscrupulous corporate manipulation of the war. This fast paced page turner will be very popular, especially with the boys.

Science Fiction; Adventure

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Kindl, Patrice. *Keeping the Castle: A Tale of Romance, Riches, and Real Estate*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0-670-01438-5. 261p. \$16.99. Gr. 7-12.

Finding a wealthy husband is a serious undertaking for Althea Crawley who must parlay her natural beauty into financial security for her family to maintain their rundown castle. Life in Lesser Hoo, a 19th Century hamlet in Yorkshire, England, offers a limited selection of suitors, so when Lord Boring arrives to visit at a neighbor's castle, Althea sets her sights on attracting him and becoming Lady Boring. Lord Boring's cousin and business manager, Mr. Fredericks, and Althea's two stepsisters add complications and drama as Kindl pokes fun at social classes and customs. Told with a witty charm, *Keeping the Castle* will entertain readers who crave a good, old-fashioned romance.

Romance; Period Fiction

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

King, A.S. *Ask the Passengers*. New York: Little Brown, 2012. 978-0-316-19468-6. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Astrid Jones has an indomitable spirit, but she doesn't know it yet. When she has questions about life, she wants to trust her best friend, Kristina, but how can you trust your best friend when she talks to your mom about you on the phone? Astrid has few friends in Unityville and works many weekends at a catering company. It is here that she meets Dee, and they find time to hug and kiss in the big freezer. Dee knows what she wants, but Astrid is just not sure. Astrid continually works her way back to real truth and acceptance. Through her many talks to the passengers who fly overhead in planes (she sends them her LOVE) as she lays on the picnic-table in her backyard and questions imaginary Phil Socrates, she is able to accept and love herself and her imperfect life.

Realistic Fiction

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Kinney, Jeff. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-41970584-7. 217 p. \$13.95. Gr. 5-8. As in all the previous novels, Greg Heffley manages to court havoc and end up without a date for the Valentine's Day Dance. When he miraculously finds a date at the last minute, readers will know that he will find some way to make the entire situation into a disaster. The humor will appeal to younger readers, both at the elementary and middle school level, especially when the senior citizens group takes over the dance. Kinney's illustrations are always perfect for the text, and the entire package will appeal to even the most reluctant reader. This novel is a must-have for elementary and middle school libraries.

Realistic Fiction

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Kinney, Jeff. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel (Diary of a Wimpy Kid Book 7)*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0584-7. 217p. \$13.95. Gr. 4-7.

Greg Heffley's at it again, telling us his life story, but this time he begins at the very beginning: his memories from the womb. Filled with his usual foibles and missteps, we chuckle as he struggles with sibling trouble, his dad's deadbeat brother "Uncle Gary" moving in, too many boys in the gym class merengue and waltz lessons, helping his buddy Rowley run for student government, and a middle school measles outbreak. Things get really interesting when Greg decides to enlist Rowley as his "wingman" to get a date for the Valentine's Day dance. As with the rest of the series, this is a fun, quick read, with engaging illustrations. It is especially recommended for reluctant readers and lower reading level older middle grade students. My "Wimpy Kid" collection flies off the shelf!

Realistic Fiction; Humorous; Illustrated; High Interest/Low Level

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Kinney, Jeff. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0584-7. 217 p. \$13.95 Gr. 5-8

You didn't really skip buying this one, did you? In case you did, Greg Heffley is back as always. His hilarious troubles are something to which a lot of young readers will relate. This time around he's got an unemployed uncle sleeping on the couch at home, is struggling with the ballroom dancing unit in gym at school, and is making some early--and awkward--steps toward navigating the waters of romance. Kinney's humor and illustrations are what will make this book popular with students, but adults will be won over by the fact that, through it all, Greg is just trying to figure out what kind of kid he wants to be. Can't we all relate to that?

Graphic Hybrid; Realistic Fiction

Mary Fran Torpey, Friends' Central School

Kipling, Rudyard. *The Jungle Book (Looking Glass Library)*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-86961-7. 305p. \$10.99. All ages.

"The Looking Glass Library series offers up yesterday's finest children's books, with introductions by today's foremost writers." This volume, with an introduction from award-winning, author Neil Gaiman, reintroduces readers to Mowgli and his stories that originally appeared in two volumes, along with Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. I'm excited any time I can get readers interested in a classic in a beautiful new package.

Classic; Adventure

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Knowles, Jo. *See You at Harry's*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2012. 978-0-76365407-8. 310 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7 and up.

Fern is your typical 'tween'. She's starting middle school, is embarrassed by her parents, has annoying siblings, and just can't get past the thought that she was responsible for a tragedy that took place. Fern's family owns a local restaurant, and her father has chosen the entire family to be the "poster children" of the business. Her younger 'surprise' brother, Charlie, is adorable, but is often left in her care because her older sister is too busy 'helping' the cook, and her mother is busy 'meditating'. Fern's older brother is bullied on a daily basis due to the fact that he is gay, but doesn't want to come out and admit it to his already knowing parents. The tragedy requires the family to come together and rely on each other like never before.

Family; Realistic Fiction; Homosexuality

Krista Goodzinski, Blackhawk Area School District

Knowles, Jo. *See You at Harry's*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5407-8. 310p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.

The action in *See You at Harry's* centers on a family with both middle and high school aged children. The kids struggle with typical adolescent issues, such as being embarrassed by their parents. They have some unique challenges as well, acknowledging homosexuality and dealing with the death of a young child. Middle school boys or girls will enjoy the engaging characters and realistic dialogue as family members learn about letting go of guilt, the changing nature of relationships and in spite of life's tragedies, finding a way to move on and find joy in family and friendships.

Realistic Fiction; Familial Problems

Peter Olsho, Springfield Township Middle School

Kokie, E.M. *Personal Effects*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-763-65527-3. 352 p. Gr. 9 and up.

Matt lives his life on egg shells and is constantly tip-toeing around his military minded father. His brother and confidant, T.J, was killed in Iraq six months ago. Matt struggles with his grief and copes by fighting, failing classes, and relying on his childhood friend, Shauna, to get him through. He knows that he could somehow make sense of things if only he could look through T.J's small bag of

personal effects, but his father has hidden them. Seven months after the funeral, his brother's lockers are delivered, and Matt works up the courage to go through them when his dad is out of the house. What he finds shocks him, and he realizes that he doesn't know his brother as well as he thought. Breaking all of the rules and risking his father's cruel wrath, Matt leaves home in attempts to provide closure not only for himself, but for a mysterious person who obviously meant a lot to his brother. Matt's pain is so intense and believable. Kokie is adept at demonstrating how a teenage boy would try to handle this situation, and it breaks your heart.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

LaCour, Nina. *The Enchantments*. New York: Dutton, 2012. 978-0-5254-2219-8. 304p. \$16.00. Gr. 9-12.

Colby loves Bev; she has been his best friend since forever, and he can't wait to go on tour with her all girl band, The Disenchantsments, before he and Bev tour Europe. Other band members include Alexa and Meg. Colby is the driver (of his uncle's prized van), set-up guy, and go-to guy for everyone. He is an awesome artist, so is Bev, which makes it even more difficult when Bev acts strangely at the start of the tour and tells Colby she applied to RISD and will attend in the fall! Colby is stunned when Bev gives him no explanation. They go to interesting stops on their tour, get involved in trying to solve a tattoo mystery, and meet some "different" people, places, etc.

Realistic Fiction

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

LaFevers, Robin. *Grave Mercy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 978-0547628349. 560 p. \$16.99. Gr 9-12.

When an herb witch saves thirteen-year-old Ismae from an abusive father and equally abusive arranged marriage, she is spirited away to the Abbey of St. Mortian, where the sisters serve the god of Death. Over the next five years, Ismae is trained in the various skills Mortian has gifted her, ranging from combat to seduction to poison brewing. Tasked with an assignment to protect the Dutchess, Ismae travels to the court of Brittany and assumes the identity of the handsome Gavriel Duval's cousin (ahem, mistress), while trying to uncover a traitor in the Duchess's court. Inevitably, Ismae finds herself attracted to Duval, and while questioning his allegiance, begins to fall in love and question her own allegiance to her sisters and St. Mortian. LaFevers has written an incredibly in-depth character driven and addictive story that will have readers clamoring for the sequel. Due to some violence and references to sex, this novel is recommended for older readers.

Historical Fiction

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

Lake, Nick. *In Darkness*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. 978-1-59990-743-7. 337 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.

An earthquake has struck Haiti, and 15-year-old "Shorty" is trapped in a collapsed hospital in Port-au-Prince. As Shorty waits to be rescued, he begins to hallucinate due to the lack of water, food, and oxygen that may never find him in the rubble. Shorty's hallucinations bring about memories of his past of gang violence, his lost sister and deceased father, and an odd connection to Toussaint L'Ouverture, a slave and later Haitian liberator from the Nineteenth Century. Through alternating chapters of present day and the past, Nick Lake shares the history of the Haitian slave liberation, poverty, religious beliefs, and violence that not only imprisoned Haitians in the past, but also in 2010, present-day. Lake's ability to intersect Haiti's history and present day only adds to Shorty's struggles and a better understanding of the Haitian peoples' violent struggles today. Winner of the 2013 Michael L. Printz book award, *In Darkness* is a truly haunting account of not only the devastation of nature, but the devastation society can cause on one another and the intensity of which history repeats itself, or perhaps never actually becomes history.

Historical Fiction; Realism

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Lanagan, Margo. *The Brides of Rollrock Island*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-86919-8. 305 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

The two-time Printz winner again serves up a dark thriller. For a price, the witch Missskaela will provide any young man with a devoted and adoring wife, but perhaps the price is too great. Lanagan's signature lush prose and the double-edged sword of love and cruelty permeate this compelling novel. Incorporating the selkie legend with the unhappy life of the protagonist, this eloquent story, told in multiple voices, will resonate with mature readers.

Fantasy

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Lancaster, Mike A. *The Future We Left Behind*. New York: Egmont, 2012. 367 p. 978-1606844106. \$16.99. Gr. 6-10.

In the book *The Future We Left Behind*, Peter Vincent and his friend, Alpha, discover that humankind is a product of an alien experiment. Every few years or decades there are updates to the human race that change their behavior, characteristics, or intellect, and constantly remove their previous memories to prevent them from finding out. In this futuristic book, the suspense builds up as Alpha and Peter come closer to unravelling the ultimate truth and surprise. This is a good book for people who like Sci-Fi based stories; however, it might be slightly dull for others.

Science Fiction; Suspense

William W., Student, The Haverford School

Larbalestier, Justine and Sarah Rees Brennan. *Team Human*. New York: Harper Teen, 2012. 978-0-06-208964-9. 344p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-12.

For readers who can't get enough of vampires, this is the story that could have been told if Bella had had a cynical but caring and sensible best friend. Mel Duan is chagrined when her BFF Cathy falls in love with a vampire, but she is absolutely horrified when Cathy decides to become a vampire herself so that she can spend eternity with her beloved Francis. Mel does her best to talk her out of it, but Cathy is determined, despite the danger that the transition process can result in zombification, which requires immediate termination of the patient. There is also a subplot involving another one of Mel's friends whose psychiatrist father has disappeared and is presumed to have run off with one of his vampire patients. What makes the book is narrator Mel's sardonic wit.

Urban Fantasy

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Larkin, Jill. *Diva (The Flappers Book 3)*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 0-385-74041-7. 306 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

This last book in *The Flappers* series revolves around the girls discovering that actions have consequences and finding that sometimes you have to work for what you want. Clara is becoming bored with her wild flapper lifestyle and is heartbroken when she discovers that her ex, Marcus, is already engaged to someone else. Upon learning that his new fiancée is a gold digger, Clara reunites with Lorraine to expose her for the fraud she is and get Marcus back. Lorraine thinks college will be a chance for her to start over and get close to Marcus, but her past regressions are still fresh on everyone's minds, and she is yet again an outcast. Gloria has been released from jail on the agreement that she will use her celebrity status to find out information on the mysterious Forrest Hamilton. Her double agent position is jeopardized when her fiancé, Jerome, comes out of hiding to enter her charade, which quickly turns deadly. I thought Larkin tied the story line up well and gave a satisfying ending to this thrillingly scandalous series.

Historical Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Leavitt, Martine. *My Book of Life By Angel*. New York: Margaret Ferguson, 2012. 978-0-374-35123-6. 241 p. \$17.99.

Gr. 9 and up.

Angel is a sixteen-year-old looking for love and acceptance. Soon she finds it in Cal, but does not realize that her new life of "love", "candy", and "friendliness" is enslaving her to the streets of Vancouver to turn tricks to support her man and her habit. Angel realizes that her life and innocence is lost when Cal brings her Mellie, an eleven-year-old runaway for her to train for the streets. Angel does not want her life to be Mellie's future, but how can she escape her habit and Cal? Without using graphic language or description, National Book Award finalist Martine Leavitt paints the poignant story of women disappearing from the streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a section poisoned by illegal sex trade, never to be seen or heard from again. This is a wonderful addition to high school collections, for both the currency and thematic aspects, but also as a contrast to the more graphic novels of the same nature.

Realistic Fiction; Novel in Verse

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Lee, Y.S. *The Agency: The Traitor in the Tunnel (The Agency Book 3)*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5316-3. 384p. \$16.99 Gr. 8 and up.

The Traitor in the Tunnel is set in Victorian England and continues the story of Mary Quinn. In an effort to solve a case of a petty thief, Mary poses as a parlor maid in the home of Queen Victoria. While she is there a murder occurs involving the Queen's own son. The person accused of the crime has the same name as Mary's own father. Is this her long lost father? In addition someone is using the tunnels which lay below the palace for unlawful purposes. James (Mary's love interest from the past) is on assignment to find out what is going on in the tunnels. Will their love rekindle? Do they work together to solve both mysteries? *The Agency* mystery series written by Y.S. Lee is one of my favorite series and this latest mystery doesn't disappoint. The plot is filled with twists and turns that weave together for an intriguing read.

Historical Fiction

Nora Neumann, Enfield Elementary

Lee, Y.S. *The Agency: The Traitor in the Tunnel (The Agency Book 3)*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5316-3. 384 p. \$16.99. Gr. 8 and up.

In the third installment of *The Agency*, inexplicable small thefts continue to occur at Buckingham Palace even after heightened security measures are taken. When an anonymous individual contacts the Agency, Mary finds herself posing as an upper house parlor maid, much to the consternation of Mrs. Shaw, the housekeeper. On the job for some time, Mary is unable to discover any leads, when suddenly the Prince of Wales arrives home, beaten and bruised, and in the company of the police and surgeon. Her most challenging and tantalizing case has arrived when she learns the prince was witness to a murder, but her long-lost father may be the accused murderer. Trying to solve this mystery, she is reunited once again with James Easton. Their passion and romance is quickly reignited, but tempers flare and verbal sparring is unavoidable and even enjoyable for the reader. Mary and James find themselves in the sewers under the palace looking for clues and trying to trust each other enough to solve the mystery.

Historical Fiction; Mystery

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Lemke, Donnie Ed. *Tall: Great American Folktales: the Comics Anthology*. North Mankato, MN: Stone Arch, 2012. 978-1-4342-4068-2. 139 p. \$12.95. Gr. 5-8.

Inspired by a summer-time excursion to the Paul Bunyan Amusement Park, Donne Lemke has created a compilation of tall tales in graphic format. Through collaboration with multiple authors and artists, Lemke has brought to life some of America's most popular "Giants of the Great Plains", "Heroes of the Heartland", and "Wranglers of the West". *Tall* focuses on Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, John Henry, and Johnny Appleseed. Readers learn that Paul Bunyan may have surprised and terrified his parents when the storks delivered him, but he and his blue ox, Babe, were famous for creating the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes, The Smokey Mountains, and matching strength with Old Man Winter. Known to wrestle for days, Paul and Babe were so big, people heard of their imminent arrival a week before they entered town. Pecos Bill, raised by wolves, invented the cattle brand, tamed Widow Maker, and settled down with the lovely Sue. John Henry, the man born with a hammer in his hand, decided to make his own mark on the world once slavery was abolished. He worked on the railroad, fell in love with Polly Ann, and supposedly, raced the steam-powered drill through the Big Bend Mountain. Legend claims he died from over-exertion after the race, but his heroic feats live on today. Johnny Appleseed traveled the land planting apple seeds and helping those in trouble, never choosing sides. Spreading a message of peace and compassion through his work, he became a living legend as the stories about him grew to epic tales. Vibrant illustrations work well with the text and drive the stories with a sense of strength and passion. Puns and clever witticism add a humorous element to the stories. Each tale begins with a character introduction and ends with a nonfiction layout in the format of a map, news article, or timeline.

Graphic Novel; Tall Tales

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Leveen, Tom. *Zero*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-86921-1. 304p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

In addition to the appealing cover, this book has a little bit of everything that teenagers can relate to; from dealing with dysfunctional parents, to navigating the world of rock bands and art, along with exploring relationships with peers. The main character Amanda, who goes by the name Zero, is dealing with the disappointment of not having received enough financial aid to attend her "dream" art school. Adding to this, Zero has a conflict with her best friend. One of the motivations for reading is to find out what happened between the two. Zero deals with her turmoil alone because she is unable to share her feelings with her parents with whom she has a fragile relationship as a result of her dad's alcoholism. Mike, a drummer in an up-and-coming band, walks into Zero's life, and the two develop a relationship in which they support each other's dreams of making it "big" in the art and music world. My ninth and tenth graders are enjoying this book. As soon as one is finished reading there is someone ready to sign it out. Zero, Jenn and Mike have qualities that teen readers can relate with.

Realistic Fiction

Lisa Gleason, Teacher, Warwick HS

Levithan, David. *Every Day*. New York: Knopf, 2012. 978-0307931887. 336 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7 and up.

When 16-year-old A wakes up each morning (we get a day count each day), he/she awakens in a different body, unable to predict what gender, ethnicity, class, emotional or family situation he or she will face. He/she knows it would be impossible to make real connections; to fall in love. A tries to leave no evidence of his/her existence behind. That is, until A. meets and falls in love with Rhiannon, while in the body of her loser boyfriend, Justin. Love gets complicated as A tries to find Rhiannon in his/her many shapes in the many houses in the Baltimore area. Trouble begins when Nathan, one of A's hosts shares the story of being possessed. *Every Day* is a fascinating premise for a story, and it poses serious questions about the nature of love. Can it exist despite the physical? What part of a person do we really love? Can love be gender-neutral? What does it feel like to quite literally walk in the shoes of another?

Fantasy; Romance

Joyce Valenza, Springfield Township High School

Levithan, David. *Every Day*. New York: Knopf, 2012. 978-0-3079-3188-7. 336 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Wow, I just really loved this book; A. and Rhiannon, and the many other people A. is each day. I was also very sad because when A. falls in love with Rhiannon you want everything to be possible for them, like their first day together at the ocean. A. isn't one person, but someone who becomes another person for just 24 hours. Levithan's A. is sympathetic because he has had to get used to something he cannot control since he was born; waking up every day somewhere else; male or female; black, white or any other culture; happy, sad, a jerk, suicidal, fat, geeky, etc., but the day he wakes up as Justin, A. falls for Justin's girlfriend, Rhiannon. It is only later, in another body, another day, that A.is driven to see Rhiannon, even if it is 5 hours away. A tells Rhiannon who he is, and Rhiannon, being touched by the special person A. is, decides to (a little unwillingly) meet up with A. whenever possible. Will they find true love?

Romance

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Levy, Joanne. *Small Medium at Large*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. 978-1-59990-836-6. 193 p. \$15.99. Gr. 6-8.

Twelve-year-old Lilah suddenly discovers her power to communicate with ghosts after being struck by lightning. She is a level-headed, sweet girl dealing with issues any girl her age deals with: bullies, body changes, friends, parent issues, and boys. Her group of living friends and her team of ghosts help her navigate through her supernatural powers and her normal middle school life. Middle school girls will relate to and enjoy this novel.

Fantasy; Humor

Jamie Rongione, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Lowry, Lois. *Son*. NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 978-0-547-887203. 393 p. \$17.99. Gr. 6 and up.

In her fourth and final book of *The Giver* series, Lowry once again takes us to the dystopian society where children are produced by birth mothers and then sent off to live with a family. The birth mothers are given pills to repress the emotions a mother would feel towards her baby. When fourteen year-old Claire has her baby something goes wrong, and she can no longer be a birth mother. She is sent to work at the Hatchery and begins to wonder what happened to her baby. She discovers her son is in the Nurturing Center and that he is not adjusting well and will be eliminated. One night, alarms go off and Jonas (from *The Giver*) and her son have disappeared. Claire leaves the community and spends years looking for her son. To find her son she has to give up an essential part of herself. Lois Lowry has reunited Jonas, Kira and the Trademaster from the first three books to bring this series to conclusion.

Science Fiction; Family

Sandra Krieg, The Haverford School

Lyga, Barry. *I Hunt Killers*. New York: Little Brown, 2012. 978-0316125840. 368 p. \$17.99

Wow; what a heart-stopping thriller. Imagine you are the son of a serial killer who has claimed 124 victims before being jailed. Jasper Dent's father, Billy, made sure he schooled his son from a very young age in his evil inclinations, but the reader sees Jasper as a truly likable hero who is tortured by what his father did. Jasper only wants to help law enforcement when it looks like a serial killer is on the loose mimicking his father's first victims. A true YA psychological thriller that is very, very disturbing, but oh so good.

Serial Killers; Suspense

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Manzano, Sonia. *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-32505-9. 205 p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-10.

It is 1969 Spanish Harlem, a neighborhood in transition, seen through the eyes of a young girl, Evelyn, who does not know who she really is and does not understand her Puerto Rican heritage. It takes her flamboyant grandmother and the social activism of the Young Lords to help her value herself and her culture.

Historical Fiction; Protest Movements

Marianne Deakne, Teacher, Abington Senior High

Marr, Melissa. *Carnival of Souls*. New York: Harper, 2012. 978-0-06-165928-7. 320 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Marr leads into another fantastical world in the start of this new series. All Mallory knows of "The City" is that it is full of daimons, evil creatures who kill with no remorse, and that her witch of a father will do anything to keep her away. She is a pawn in a game she does not know or understand and has been training since birth. Kaleb and Aya have both entered themselves as fighters in "The Carnival of Souls" deadly competition, one wanting to change his class position, and the other wanting to free herself from the demands her high society position expects of females. Belias has entered in hopes of getting Aya, his former betrothed, back and discovering the secret she carefully guards. Love, treachery, and deceit bring these characters together as they form an unlikely alliance to bring a revolution upon The City and overthrow the vindictive and dictator-like ruler, Marchosias. The ending leaves the reader eagerly anticipating the unnamed sequel that is sure to come.

Fantasy Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Marsh, Katherine. *Jepp, Who Defied the Stars*. New York: Hyperion, 2012. 978-1-42313-500-5. 385 p. \$16.99 Gr. 7-12.

Jepp, a 16th-century dwarf who has never known his father, struggles to determine whether his destiny is foretold by the stars, or up to him to control. This sprawling historical fiction book, told in three distinct parts, has a big dose of quirk, but is scrupulously researched. Jepp's adventures take him from his humble home to the court of the Spanish Infanta to the Denmark castle of astronomer Tycho Brahe, and he meets tragedy and triumph along the way. The story is slow, but realistic and gripping, and although Jepp's tale is unique, many adolescents will relate to his humor, desire for dignity, and search for himself.

Historical Fiction

Mary Fran Torpey, Friends' Central School

Matson, Morgan. *Second Chance Summer*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012. 978-1-4169-9067-3. 468 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7 and up.

Second Chance Summer is one of the best YA novels of 2012. Morgan Matson does an amazing job of weaving together teenage innocence, relationships, doubt, and realization. Taylor Edwards is about to face her greatest challenge, a summer back at Lake Phoenix, a place she had successfully avoided for five summers, ever since "that" summer. Five years previously, Taylor had hurt those she loved most, her best friend, Lucy, and her best friend/boyfriend, Henry. Now, it is time to face the music and deal with her mistakes, but her past mistake is more than a mistake. It is something Taylor must accept and deal with while also facing one of the hardest situations anyone, young or old, must face, the loss of a parent. As Taylor begins to accept who she is, she must face a realization that began five summers ago. "I was still running when things got too real-I'd just learned how to do it, at last, by staying in the same place" (442).

Realistic Fiction; Coming-of-Age

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Mazer, Harry & Lerangis, Peter. *Somebody Please Tell Me Who I Am*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012. 9781416938965. 148 p. \$9.99. Gr. 7 and up.

Ben is the popular boy at school with potential to do great things. He shocks everyone when he chooses to enlist in the military after the 9/11 attacks on New York. Little does Ben know that life can change in the blink of an eye. After being deployed soon after enlisting, his unit is involved in a horrible accident. Ben survives, but life will never be the same. Upon returning home, his battle begins with trying to remember who he is, while his family mourns the fact that he may never recover. He is not able to verbalize his thoughts, which include questioning who his fiancé is, but finds success in realizing that his name is “Ben”. Winner of the 2013 Schneider Family Teen Book Award.

Realistic Fiction; Military

Krista Goodzinski, Blackhawk Area School District

McCall, Guadalupe Garcia. *Summer of Mariposas*. New York: Tu, 2012. 978-1-62014-010-9. 355p. \$19.95. Gr. 6-8.

This story captures the reader from the beginning with real characters, situations, and adventure. It has a touch of supernatural, a touch of reality, and a touch of history, all wrapped up in an interesting story. I think many middle school readers will enjoy meeting these five sisters and learning about their journey to make things right in their family.

Adventure; Supernatural

Carol Breen, Springfield Township Middle School

McCarthy, Maureen. *When You Wish Upon A Rat*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0161-0. 281p. \$16.95. Gr. 6-10.

What do you do if you can't stand your brothers, your parents ignore you, your house is falling down, your friends have all deserted you, and the only person who understands you has died? That is 11-year-old Ruth Craze's situation in this novel from Australian YA author Maureen McCarthy. Right before her aunt gets sick, she gives Ruth a stuffed rat, but not just any stuffed rat. This one has magical properties, and the ability to give Ruth three wishes. When she uses the wishes, she realizes that there are worse things than being where she is in her real-life situation. This is a good book for junior high girls who think that the grass is always greener.

Realistic Fiction

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

McClintock, Norah. *Guilty*. Victoria, BC: Orca, 2012. 978-1-55469-989-6. 219 p. \$12.95. Gr. 8 and up.

Finn has never particularly liked his stepmother Tracie, and he's ashamed he doesn't feel a greater sense of loss or sadness after she is murdered in their driveway. The event does bring back haunting memories of his mother's murder, especially when he learns the gunman is the same drug addict who shot her ten years earlier. Lila, daughter of the accused, is dealing with the loss of her father when she meets Finn at the Police Station. Finn's interested in developing a friendship, but doesn't realize who she is. Both teens persist in discovering the truth, but their search leads them to a daring discovery and dangerous resolution that could end up putting their lives in grave danger. Narrated in alternating chapters, the characters pull the reader into a story filled with secrets and an astonishing conspiracy.

Mystery

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

McClintock, Norah. *I, Witness*. Victoria, BC: Orca, 2012. 978-1-55469-789-2. 144 p. \$16.95. Gr. 7 and up.

Edgy black and white illustrations, with only red used to depict blood, establish this noir graphic novel as a suspenseful, quick read. Seventeen-year-old David Boone is not a bad kid, so why is he continually at the scene of the crime when murders occur? Hounded by a detective, the victims' loved ones, and some shady kids at school, Boone can't seem to convince anyone that he's innocent and hasn't seen who's committed the crimes. Recommended for your graphic novel fans and reluctant readers, the reading level is quite easy, but the edgy situations and some language make this a better fit for your more mature readers.

Graphic Novel; Crime; Mystery

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

McCormick, Patricia. *Never Fall Down*. New York: Balzer and Bray, 2012. 978-0-0617-3093-1. 224 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-12.

Arn is a young teen who loves life in Cambodia until one day when the Khmer Rouge march into their village and change his life forever. In Arn's broken language, McCormick bases this work of fiction on the four and a half years Arn suffered as he witnesses the murder of friends and family. Toiling all day in rice fields with other young boys who were starved and murdered, Arn survives by learning how to play a musical instrument and singing songs glorifying the Khmer Rouge. He did what he had to do in order to survive---by never falling down. Arn is a survivor, but he suffers deeply as he witnesses horrors and then becomes a child soldier. McCormick's book is so difficult to read, but you can't put it down. The killing fields of Cambodia run with blood, but Arn survives to tell his story to the world, and he becomes a humanitarian who continues to spend most of his time helping Cambodia rebuild through music and other community outlets. I loved this book and hope it will be read by all teens just as *The Book Thief* and *Between Shades of Gray* tell the world about the genocide that has been exacted on innocent people.

Historical Fiction; Genocide

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

McDaniel, Lurlene. *Red Heart Tattoo*. New York: Delcorte, 2012. 978-385-73462-2. 217 p. \$15.99. Gr. 9 and up.

This story, about a school bombing, tells the events that led up to the bombing in which eight students and a teacher were killed, along with another thirty injured. The characters in the book are so vivid that the reader can picture them while reading this gripping book. *Red Heart Tattoo* will stay with the reader long after it is put down.

Realistic Fiction; School Violence

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

McDonald, Abby. *Getting Over Garrett Delaney*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5507-5. 336 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7 and up.

Sadie has been in love with Garrett ever since he moved to her quiet town two years ago. He is the only person who shares her love for Proust, wants to discuss her writing, and makes her feel like she isn't alone in the world. He also is her best and only friend and is clueless about her affections. When Garrett gets accepted into a summer writing camp without her, Sadie is convinced her summer will be ruined. The night before leaving she thinks Garrett is about to admit his feelings for her, so when he calls a week later to tell her he thinks he's fallen in love with a girl in his classes she is heartbroken. Sadie decides that she needs to get over Garrett Delaney once and for all. She gets some unrequested help from her new coworkers at the local coffee shop and creates a 12 step program. Leading a Garrett-free life, Sadie sets out to reinvent herself. She realizes that she has based her whole life on trying to be the type of girl that Garrett would like and can't even remember who she was before him. Through the summer, Sadie learns to embrace her own unique tastes and explore a world that she used to mock with Garrett. When Garrett comes back, the new and improved Sadie is challenged when he announces that he has been in love with her all along.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

McMann, Lisa. *Dead to You*. New York: Simon Pulse, 2012. 978-1-4424-0388-8. 272 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Ethan was abducted when he was seven years old and now, at the age of sixteen, he has been found and returned. What should be a wondrously happy time for the DeWilde family is dimmed by the fact that Ethan remembers nothing about his previous life. After years of being homeless and on the run, Ethan has trouble adjusting to a "normal" life. Blake, his younger brother, accuses Ethan of not really being his brother, but someone else. The whole family dynamic begins to crumble as they all, even Ethan, question whether or not he really is the missing DeWilde boy. This is a fast paced, intense read with a shocking ending.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

McNicoll, Sylvia. *crush. candy. corpse*. Toronto: Lorimer, 2012. 978-1-4594-0062-7. 219p. \$12.95. Gr.7-12.

Sonja is a Canadian high school student required to complete forty hours of voluntary community service. A bit rebellious, Sonja, or Sunny, as she is also called, wonders why it's called "voluntary" when you have to do it. She succumbs to signing up for service at a nursing home called Paradise Manor. At the Manor, Sunny, wearing a coffee bean necklace to escape the odors, sincerely wants to help the residents. However, dying a resident's hair pink was not appreciated by the woman's family. Following completion of her forty hours, Sunny decides she will continue to visit Paradise Manor to spend time with her friends and Cole, a young man who visits his grandmother often. Now as a visitor and not a volunteer, Sunny becomes a major suspect in the death of Cole's grandmother. As a result of that visit, she must decide whether to declare herself guilty and take a plea bargain agreement offered by the court or take a chance on the jury finding her innocent.

Realistic Fiction

Emily Arnold, Columbia HS, Retired Librarian

McQuerry, Maureen Doyle. *The Peculiars*. NY: Abrams, 2012. 978-1419701788. 359 p. \$16.95. Gr. 7-12.

Lena Mattacascar is a girl who, after reading a letter on her eighteenth birthday, ventures out to find her father in the mysterious Scree. Along the way she meets the young librarian Jimson Quiggley and gets sidetracked when she loses most of her money and must seek help from him and his new employer, the enigmatic Tobias Beasley. She is on a journey to find out about her origins and if she is truly, as her grandmother paints her, a "goblin". The characters are well fleshed out and the environment is very interesting. Unfortunately the story seems to get sidetracked at times, but it is still an interesting book. This could evolve into a riveting series and should be on any fan of steampunk's list. It is one of YALSA's Best Fiction for Young Adults 2013.

Fantasy; Steampunk; Adventure

Ian R., Student, The Haverford School

McQuerry, Maureen. *The Peculiars*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0178-8. 354 p. \$16.95. Gr. 8-12.

Set in an alternate 1880's America, this is the story of eighteen-year-old Lena, who leaves home to discover who she really is. Are her strange hands and feet a genetic anomaly, or is she really a Peculiar? Peculiars come from a remote and untamed area called Scree. The U. S. Government has deemed them inhuman and callously taken away all their rights. Before entering Scree, Lena is befriended by Jimson and Mr. Beasley, whom she discovers are aiding the Peculiars. When a brutal U.S. Marshall cons Lena into betraying her friends, they must flee into Scree where Lena discovers her true identity and much more. Fantasy and adventure readers will enjoy this peculiar story.

Fantasy; Steampunk

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Medina, Meg. *The Girl Who Could Silence the Wind*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-4602-8. 244 p. \$17.99. Gr. 6-8.

At the moment Sonja was born a terrible wind was stilled. Thus, she was deemed an angel in her superstitious and impoverished Mexican town. The townspeople rely on her to pray for them, until, at sixteen, Sonja realizes that her prayers go unanswered. Embarrassed, she leaves her family behind and escapes to the city to work in a wealthy home. With little hope for a future in their small town, Sonja's brother, Rafael, attempts to cross the border to America. Soon Sonja's dead grandmother visits and tells Sonja how to find Rafael. She and her friend Pancho discover that Rafael was deceived and left to die in the desert. The two commit themselves to improving the community so that others will have a more hopeful future. Spanish phrases are peppered throughout the story.

Realistic Fiction; Multicultural; Mysticism

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Meyer, Marissa. *Cinder*. New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2012. 978-0312641894. 400p. \$17.99. Gr 7-12.

Teenage mechanic Cinder is living a rough life. Not only does she have to put up with her foul tempered step-mother and step-sister, but she's a cyborg, part human, part robot, which society does not accept. Working in New Beijing, the capital of the Eastern Commonwealth, Cinder finds solace in using her mechanical skills to bring in money and get through the hard days. When her only human friend, step-sister Peony, is diagnosed with the deadly plague that's been killing earthlings for years, Cinder's step-mother lays the blame on her. To complicate things even more, handsome Prince Kai shows up at her mechanic shop asking for help. A decade long mystery begins to unravel with Cinder at the center. While the description of futuristic cyborgs might turn off some readers, Meyer is a gifted, creative storyteller, and Cinder is a strong protagonist; readers will be clamoring for the sequel.

Science Fiction; Fantasy

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

Miller, Ashley Edward and Zack Stentz. *Colin Fischer*. New York: Razorbill, 2012. 978-1-5951-4578-9. 256p. \$17.99.

Gr. 7 and up.

Colin Fischer is a teenager with Asperger's Syndrome who is starting high school and going, for the first time, without an aide to assist him. As he maneuvers and tries to find his place in school, he is trying to learn the social codes. After a gun goes off during a ruckus in the school cafeteria, Colin uses his powers of logic and emulates his hero Sherlock Holmes to find out who had the gun. This puts him in the odd circumstance of defending the boy who has bullied him for years. Through the story, they each discover things about each other and come to an understanding. Some of this story reminded me of another book I like, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, but is written for a younger audience. The story is well written, although I found some of the "footnotes" to be uninteresting and skimmed them. I think that the book offers a good story about believable characters and has the added benefit of offering kids the chance to consider these characters beyond what they seem to be at the start.

Realistic Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

Miranda, Megan. *Fracture*. New York: Walker, 2012. 978-0-8027-2309-3. 264p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Delaney Maxwell plunges through not quite frozen ice and is submerged for 11 minutes. When Delaney wakes up from a coma in a hospital, she begins a difficult journey to understand why she survived and for what purpose. She must also decide between Decker, her best friend who dove in to save her, and Troy, the mysterious boy who experienced the same kind of accident and seems to understand. The medical mystery/young romance will pull readers along with Delaney and her choices.

Supernatural

Julia Hayman, Student, Abington Senior High

Miranda, Megan. *Hysteria*. New York: Walker Books, 2013. 978-0-8027-2310-9. 336p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.

Hysteria is the second book written by author Megan Miranda, and I cannot wait for her next one to come out. This book will hook you from the first page where we meet Mallory as she confronts her parents about sending her to Monroe, an expensive boarding school, because she killed her boyfriend in their kitchen. Once Mallory is at Monroe she has a hard time figuring out what is real and what is in her head. No one is supposed to know what happened so she can start over, but of course this is not the case. *Hysteria* is a psychological thriller from the first page to the last.

Thriller

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Mitchard, Jacquelyn. *What We Saw at Night*. New York: Soho Teen, 2013. 978-1-61695-141-2. 243p. \$15.34. Gr. 9 and up.

Everyone dies sooner or later, so why not live in the moment? Allie Kim was born with Xeroderma Pigmentosum, a rare condition in which the skin and tissue covering the eyes are highly sensitive to ultraviolet light. She sleeps during the day and lives most of her life during the night. She has tutors for school work and spends most of her evenings with her best friends, Allie and Rob. When Allie returns from one of her mysterious absences, she introduces the radical sport of Parkour to her friends. After weeks of training and the bruises to show for it, the three amigos begin mapping out traces around the city. One night, everything goes horribly wrong when

Allie believes she has witnessed a murder. Now she thinks a madman is stalking her, but her friends think she's delusional. Filled with suspense, intrigue, and romance, this story grabs the reader from the first page and captivates him until the gruesome conclusion. Look for the sequel *What We Lost in the Dark*.

Survival; Murder-Mystery

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Moss, Marissa. *A Soldier's Secret: The Incredible True Story of Sarah Edmonds, a Civil War Hero*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-419700427-7. 400p. \$16.95. Gr. 6 and up.

When Sarah Edmonds leaves home to escape her father's wrath and the prearranged marriage to a much older man, she joins the Union Army as a soldier. She reinvents herself as Frank Thompson and immerses herself in becoming the best soldier she can be. She holds down fellow soldiers after they have been wounded when a limb must be amputated. *A Soldier's Secret* is based on the true story of Sarah Edmonds. This story brings to life the horrors of the Civil War.

Historical Fiction

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Myers, E.C. *Fair Coin*. New York: Pyr, 2012. 978-1-61614-609-2. 288p. \$16.95. Gr. 9-12.

Ephraim has a tough life living alone with his mother who is an alcoholic barely able to hold down a job. When he comes home from school one day and finds his mother nearly dead of suicide, he finds evidence indicating that she thinks Ephraim was killed that day by a bus. When he looks at the belongings of the dead teen, he finds his own library card and, more importantly, a strange coin that helps him and his friend, Nate, move between parallel universes. At first he thinks the coin can just grant him wishes, but soon he realizes that he is traveling to alternate universes and people are being hurt by what is happening, especially when an alternate Nate turns to violence, even threatening to kill Ephraim to get control of the coin. Ephraim tries to undo some of the bad things that happened and return to his own time and place, but it is a difficult task and one that nevertheless causes some harm along the way.

Fantasy

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Myers, E.C. *Quantum Coin*. New York: Pry, 2012. 978-1-61614-682-5. 324p. \$16.95. Gr. 9-12.

In this exciting sequel to *Fair Coin*, Ephraim is enjoying his senior prom with his beautiful girlfriend Jenna when Zoe shows up and kisses him. His days of traveling from universe to universe are far from over. Suddenly he finds himself returning to Zoe's universe, trying to contact Nathaniel to see what kind of help he needs. Traveling with his girlfriend and former love interest, Ephraim is now trying to figure out what is making universes overlap and causing unprecedented interaction. In the middle of the mission, Ephraim and Nathaniel are lost in another universe, but this time Nathaniel has another controller. If they can contact the others, so the LDC can be switched on again, they might still be able to help save the world and prevent Dr. Kim from creating her own perfect universe by sacrificing millions of others. But what if preserving your universe means choosing which of your friends will live? Myers adds enough Quantum physics terminology to make the plot exciting and plausible.

Science Fiction; Fantasy

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Myers, Kate Kae. *The Vanishing Game*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. 978-1-59990-694-2. 353 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7-12.

Jocelyn, a high school senior, is trying to escape her past in the foster care system and thinks her twin brother, Jack, is dead. When she receives a coded letter from him, she starts on a scavenger hunt to unravel Jack's clues. This is a real thriller. The various mysteries unfold slowly, culminating in big twists in the end. Sometimes scary and always mysterious, the chapters always end with a cliffhanger, urging readers to continue. This book is a quick read, giving plenty of questions for readers to resolve. Content includes some drug use and violence.

Mystery; Suspense

Laura Hill, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Myers, Walter Dean. *All the Right Stuff*. New York: Amistad, 2012. 978-0-06-196087-1. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Paul DuPree is a teen who has lost his hardly present dad to a shooting that is commonplace in Harlem. Working in a soup kitchen just to get by, he is forced to listen to the soup man, Elijah, talk about "the social contract" and how to feel good in a world that isn't fair for everyone. A gripping, extraordinary Myers book that will save lives with Paul's learned lessons.

Urban Fiction; Multicultural

Tiana P., Student, Abington Senior High

Neff, Beth. *Getting Somewhere*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0670012558. 448p. \$17.99. Gr. 7 and up.

There are four storylines and four points of view in *Getting Somewhere*. The main characters, Jenna, Cassie, Lauren, and Sarah, all have secrets and haunting pasts. They are thrown together when they choose to work at a farm style detention center run by three women as an alternative to jail. Three of the girls begin to enjoy the program, but one hates it. Three of them will heal the wounds of their pasts and discover strengths they never dreamed they had. One, though, driven by a deep secret of her own, will seek to destroy everything they've all worked so hard for. The story is compassionate and inspiring.

Realistic Fiction

Phyllis Breitegan, Library Assistant, Warwick HS

Newman, Leslea. *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0-7636-5807-6. 111p. \$15.99. Gr. 7-12.

This is a must read for young adults. With just 68 poems in this spare, yet piercing novel in verse, the author, Leslea Newman, who was scheduled to speak at Matthew Shepard's college and found out just before about the savage beating this young man received, kept her keynote engagement. As she spoke, she wept at the sheer horror of this hate crime toward an innocent victim who succumbs to death five days later. Newman has taken many elements of Matthew Shepard's last hours and imagined what may have been; the road, the fence he was lashed to, the biker, the murderers, the pistol, the deer and so much more. This book is a tribute to Matthew Shepard who died as a result of a hate crime at the hands of gay haters. This book is also a history lesson that every child, young adult, and reader needs to explore because in the reading of this book, you will be changed. This book needs to be read by everyone. I especially gained even more knowledge through the author's introduction, her epilogue, her afterword, notes, explanation of poetic forms and resources. Newman brings sympathy, anger, sorrow, and compassion to each and every word in this book. Highly recommended.

Realistic Fiction; Hate Crimes; Novel in Verse

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Newman, Leslea. *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard*. 2012. 0763658073. \$15.99 128 p. Gr. 10 and up.

In multiple voices and a moving collection of verse, Newman tells the story of the murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay, 21-year-old college student who was lured from a Wyoming bar and cruelly tied to a fence and beaten by two young men. Author Lesléa Newman was to be the keynote speaker at the University of Wyoming's Gay Awareness Week celebration in 1998. Ten years later, Newman, who was to speak about her *Heather Has Two Mommies* that night, continued to be haunted by the crime and responded with this volume. In her elegant cycle of 68 poems, she recounts the events from a variety of points of view, including the people connected to Matthew and the tragedy, as well as his cat, the stars, the deer that kept him company, the candles, and the fence. This is a powerful, moving tribute, one to share and study and should be in every high school collection.

Novel in Verse; LGBT

Joyce Valenza, Springfield Township High School

Nielsen, Jennifer A. *The False Prince (False Prince Book 1)*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-28413-4. 342p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-10.

The Hunger Games meets the medieval times in this first book of the *False Prince* trilogy. Sage is a crafty young boy who has been surviving on the street until he is abruptly drawn into a world of courtly drama where danger is lurking around every corner. With the death of the royal family, can Sage become the long lost prince to take over the crown, or will his true identity be discovered? This book is recommended for young adult fans of drama, danger, romance, suspicion and suspense.

Fantasy

Mary Eileen Kirchner, Teacher, Abington Senior High

Nielsen, Susin. *The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen*. Plattsburgh, NY: Tundra, 2012. 978-1-77049-372-8. 243 p. \$17.95. Gr. 8 and up.

Henry, the thirteen-year-old protagonist of this ultimate anti-bullying novel, is a complex, loveable boy trying to deal with his feelings and his life after "it". "It" is the day his brother murdered a bully and took his own life in an all too realistic school shooting. After having to move to a new town and losing his mother to a mental institution, Henry's father is smart enough to force him to go to therapy. The therapist, Cecil, encourages him to write in a journal. The journal quickly becomes his closest confidant. Students will be able to relate to this novel as it not only deals with the school shooting, but with the horribleness of bullying and other teen issues. It also delves into the lives of the shooter's family, showing how difficult it is for them to face others and to deal with their own emotions about such tragedy. Through it all, the author manages to have readers laughing and crying as they watch this family come to terms with the baggage they will carry for the rest of their lives.

Realistic

Jamie Rongione, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Oates, Joyce Carol. *Two or Three Things I Forgot to Tell You*. New York: HarperCollins, 2012. 978-0-06-211047-3. 277p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Through the point of view of two girls, this story tells what happens to them after the death of a friend. Merissa, who is the first to tell her story, cuts herself because she doesn't believe she deserves good things in life, especially after her emotionally abusive dad moves out. Nadia, also victim of her dad's emotional distance, is the second girl to tell her story. She fixates on her science teacher, believes herself to be in love with him, and almost gets him fired. Both the girls and their other friends believe that they hear the voice of their dead friend, Tink, talking to them and telling them what to do. This is an interesting portrait of grief and the grieving process for young adults.

Realistic Fiction

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

O'Connell, Mary. *The Sharp Time*. New York: Random House, 2011. 978-0-385-74048-7. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Eighteen-year-old Sandinista Jones has just lost her mother, and her grief and loneliness are overwhelming. She tries to hold things together, but when a nasty teacher in her school harasses her, she breaks, leaves school, and gets a job at a vintage clothing shop called The Pale Circus. Through her work there, she meets Bradley, who in a way helps her to find herself, helps her to maintain her sanity in the midst of troubling circumstances, and keeps her from doing the unthinkable. This is a very moving portrait of a young person's grief.

Realistic Fiction; Grief

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

O'Connor, Sheila. *Keeping Safe the Stars*. New York: G.T. Putnam's Sons, 2012. 978-0-399-25459-8. 295 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.

Pride, Nightingale, and Baby Star are orphans living on their grandfather's land as they grow up and learn to become self-sufficient under their grandfather, "Old Finn". But when Old Finn goes to the hospital for a fever and soon develops brain damage these three young children must learn how to truly be independent and feed not only themselves, but old Miss Addie who is supported by Old Finn. Pride, the oldest at thirteen, must support her younger siblings and also keep quiet about how they are living unsupervised to keep the land and their situation away from the prying eyes of the hospital and neighbors. This book was a pleasure to read and is a great addition to library shelves. Readers will hardly be able to put it down as they learn about the struggles and secrets of the Star family.

Coming-of-Age

Hanna F., student, Lincoln Jr/Sr HS

Oliver, Lauren. *Pandemonium (Delirium Book 2)*. New York: Harper, 2012. 978-0-06-197806-7. 375 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

This follow-up to *Delirium* has Lena struggling in the Wilds with little food, stamina, and the only way she survives is by keeping her memories of Alex alive. In "The Now" chapters, Lena is a resistance fighter spying on Julian and later imprisoned with him. Lena survives the lies, the torture, and falls into forbidden love with Julian (who has not received the cure). Oliver's writing was lush, fast paced, and totally suspenseful; I already have the third book, *Requiem*, on order!

Dystopian

Amanda S., Student, Abington Senior High

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-86902-0. 216p. \$15.99. Gr. 4 and up.

Possibly the best realistic fiction I read in 2012, August "Augie" is an eleven-year old who was born with an extremely rare combination of facial/cranial anomalies that cause strangers to gasp and stare. He's used to strange looks because he's had dozens of surgeries, and until now, his mom homeschooled him. Now he's about to enter fifth grade at a small private school near his Manhattan home, and he's got a tangle of emotions (fear, excitement, anticipation), and his parents and sister Via do everything they can to ease his transition. With eight parts consisting of chapters written in first person by Augie, his loving sister, and other characters, readers learn what it truly feels like to be "different," yet not at all different from the rest of us. First-time novelist Palacio's storytelling and adolescent dialog are heartbreakingly authentic, but never schmaltzy; you will laugh out loud and dry your eyes numerous times during this story, which I predict you will not be able to put down!

Realistic Fiction

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-86902-0. 216p. \$15.99. Gr. 4 and up.

Wonder is a must read for all! Auggie is a fifth grader who has been home schooled and is now going to enter middle school for the first time. Auggie is no ordinary child; he has been hit with two bad genes that have deformed his face and the resulting operations have not corrected his deformed face. Auggie has a wonderful family, a mother, father, sister, and dog, Daisy, who proclaim their love daily. The author hits home through different characters that Auggie's face will always elicit responses from screams, shudders, horror and panic, but this book is uplifting and with each chapter and character, Auggie finds an inner strength, friends and champions to combat those who disparage him, bully him, or just plain ignore him. You will root for his sister, Olivia and her fierce love. You will cheer for his parents, funny dad and sympathetic mom, and especially their dog, Daisy, who provides licks and warmth as she sleeps with Auggie, as they honestly deal with Auggie's lot in life. You will love Auggie's English teacher, Mr. Browne, and his precepts that help shape his students. Jack, Will, and Summer prove to be Auggie's best friends; their road to friendship is not easy, but it is steadfast. Students, teachers and parents will be inspired by Auggie and all that this book can teach us about the simple things and ourselves. Highly recommended!

Realistic Fiction

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Patterson, James and Maxine Paetro. *Confessions of a Murder Suspect*. New York: Little, Brown, 2012. 978-0-316-20698-3. 372 p. \$19.99. Gr. 6 and up.

Confessions of a Murder Suspect is a fabulous YA murder/mystery. First-person narrator and protagonist, Tandy Angel, awakens to police at her family's door only to learn that her parents are dead. With no signs of struggle, robbery, or break-in, the detectives

immediately look to Tandy and her siblings, Matty, Hugo, and Harry, and their mother's live-in assistant, Samantha Peck, as the prime suspects. Tandy knows that she and her siblings had strained relationships with their parents, but cannot imagine that one of them could actually kill their parents. Tandy is determined to find out who killed her parents, especially because she was the last child to receive a Big Chop, so she appears to have the best motive.

Mystery

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Paulsen, Gary. *Crush: the Theory, Practice, and Destructive Properties of Love*. New York: Wendy Lamb, 2012. 978-0-375-99054-0. 136p. \$12.99. Gr. 5-7.

Middle school students will enjoy reading about 14-year-old Kevin's "experiments" as he attempts to discover the secrets of love, or at least how to get a date with a girl. The scientific method provides a framework for his attempts to unravel the mystery of how to speak to the object of his desire. Lucky for him, his friends and family are willing to go along with his schemes, and he ends up learning a thing or two about relationships in spite of himself.

Realistic Fiction; Romance; Humor

Peter Olsho, Springfield Township Middle School

Paulsen, Gary and Jim Paulsen. *Road Trip*. New York: Wendy Lamb, 2013. 978-0-385-74191-0. 114p. \$12.99. Gr. 5-8.

It's a bumpy ride when reluctant 14-year-old, Ben, joins his enthusiastic dad and Border Collie, Atticus, on a trip to rescue a Border Collie puppy. While both father and son love dogs, narrator Ben is annoyed that his dad has quit his job to flip houses, making it uncertain that the family will be able to afford Ben's hockey camp. To retaliate, Ben invites his delinquent friend, Theo, to join the trip, which insures that bad guys will follow. Along the way, they add Mia, an attractive, street-smart waitress and Gus, a cranky mechanic to the travel group. With alternating voices of a perfectly-pitched, snarky Ben and an endearing wise-dog Atticus, the story moves quickly and with great appeal, particularly for reluctant readers. Thumbs-up to father and son team Gary and Jim Paulsen, both dog enthusiasts, for this lively road trip.

Realistic Fiction; Father/Son Relationship

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

Peacock, Carol Antoinette. *Red Thread Sisters*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0-670-01386-9. 231 p. \$15.99. Gr. 5-8.

This heartwarming story of Chinese adoption is told from the perspective of eleven-year-old Wen, as she is adopted by an American family. Adjusting to a new culture is complicated by a promise she made to her best friend, Shu Ling, to find her an American family of her own. When she realizes that Shu Ling only has months before she is too old to be adopted, she works tirelessly, with her parents support, until she succeeds. The theme of the story is based on a Chinese legend: "An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet..." This is a heartwarming story.

Realistic Fiction; Multicultural

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Pearsall, Shelley. *Jump Into the Sky*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-83699-2. 344 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7-9.

Levi Battle is a young black teen whose eyes are opened to prejudice and segregation when he travels from his northern home in Chicago to North Carolina and Oregon in 1945 in search of his paratrooper father. Like Kenny in *The Watson's Go to Birmingham, 1963*, Levi is attentive to his world, describing it with detail and humor in an entertaining way that draws the reader in immediately. The references to everything that is occurring in the world, from a 13-yr-old perspective, make this an important purchase for middle school libraries. Pearsall's historical novel is ideal for World War II units that intentionally explore broad perspectives as well as with readers whose broadening awareness of complexity in the world mirrors likeable Levi. Teachers and students, especially boys, will love (and learn from) this book.

Historical Fiction

Sarah Braxton, Juniata Valley School District

Pearsall, Shelley. *Jump Into the Sky*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-83699-2. 342 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-9.

Levi Battle is used to being left behind; first his mother left him in a car with a note for his dad, and then his dad left him with his aunt when he went to war. After three years, Levi's Aunt Odella decides it is time for Levi to travel from Chicago to South Carolina where Levi's dad is stationed. Levi is suddenly placed in situations that he is not prepared for. In 1945, the South is very segregated, and Levi discovers that the hard way, from having to travel in a cattle car when the train enters the South, to trying to buy a soda and being threatened with a gun. When Levi finally arrives at the base, he discovers his dad was sent on a mission. A member of LT. Battle's troop takes Levi in, and then takes him across the country to Oregon where his dad is now stationed. Levi and his father, a member of an elite unit of black paratroopers, start working on becoming a family. This is a well-researched look at a little known unit that was charged with protecting the west coast from Japanese fire balloons.

Historical Fiction; WWII; Family Relationships; Civil Rights

Sandra Krieg, The Haverford School

Petrucha, Stefan. *Ripper*. New York: Philomel, 2012. 978-0399255243. 432p. \$17.99. Gr 7-12.

Growing up in the late 1800s, all Carver Young has ever known is the New York City orphanage where he was left as a baby. Facing its destruction, sneaky and smart Carver is adopted by a retired, crippled detective who seeks Carver's help in finding the most elusive

murderer of all time, Jack the Ripper. Now in New York, Jack the Ripper is murdering again and taunting police with cryptic letters with hidden puzzles. Discovering friendship, family, and mystery along the way, Carver encounters a murder mystery that is not all it seems. While recommended for middle schoolers, the murder descriptions may be a difficult read for younger children. Plot twists, well-researched historical characters, and nail-biting action will keep readers turning the pages until the very end!

Historical Detective Mystery

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

Petrucha, Stefan. *Ripper*. New York: Philomel, 2012. 978-0-399-25524-3. 426p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Carver Young, Finn Walker, and Delia Stephens are all orphans living at Ellis Orphanage in the 1800s when they learn the orphanage is closing. All three are adopted, Delia by a *New York Times* reporter and his wife, Finn by the District Attorney and his wife, and Carver by Albert Hawking of the New Pinkerton Agency. Finn finds himself living in an insane asylum with his mentor searching for his father. The only information he has is a letter sent to the orphanage that throws Carver into the middle of mayhem. Jack the Ripper has surfaced in New York and is killing wealthy socialite women and scaring all New Yorkers. The New Pinkerton Agency is trying to solve the crimes. Carver realizes the letter from his father looks an awful lot like the notes Jack the Ripper is sending to the police and *New York Times*; a suspenseful adventure begins involving Carver, Delia, and Finn.

Mystery; Detective Stories

Sally Kapp, Teacher, Abington Senior High

Picoult, Jodi and Samantha Van Leer. *Between the Lines*. New York: Simon Pulse, 2012. 978-1-4516-3575-1. 352 p. \$19.99. Gr. 7-10.

Prince Oliver is stuck within the pages of a fairy tale, doomed to relive the same story over and over again each time the book is read. One reader, Delilah, an outcast in need of a friend, actually hears Oliver's voice and begins talking to him. He is smitten and determined to break out of the pages that tell his story. Readers who can suspend reality may enjoy Delilah and Oliver's plotting his impossible escape and the fairy tale adventures that ensue. Jody Picoult collaborated with her teenage daughter, Samantha Van Leer, to create this modern day fairy tale.

Fairytales; Fantasy

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

Poblocki, Dan. *The Ghost of Graylock*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-40268-2. 264 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.

A master of ghost stories, Poblocki packs this ghost story with twists, turns, and cliff-hanger chapter endings. Neil and his older sister Bree are sent to live with aunts in upstate New York after his mother's breakdown. An excursion with friends into an abandoned asylum awakens a ghost, who follows them home and wreaks havoc. The scenes are eerie and atmospheric, and readers will be swept along with everything a good ghost story for young readers should be. Fans of Mary Downing Hahn will want to discover Poblocki as well.

Supernatural

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Powell, Laura. *The Master of Misrule*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-96588-3. 363 p. \$16.99. Gr. 8 and up.

In the sequel to *The Game of Triumphs*, Cat, Blaine, Flora, and Toby have returned to the Arcanum to collect their prizes. To their great astonishment, queens and kings have been stripped of their power and doomed to repeat past cards, and the boundaries of the game are in ruins. Misrule, the former Hanged Man, has created a world where birthright no longer dictates men's fortunes but rather his lottery and fate have created equal grounds for all. This small group of champions are given a number of tasks to complete to restore order and rule in the Arcanum. Each member still hopes to fulfill a personal ambition, but this time around the stakes are higher. Full of daring risks and manipulation, the character cards and names at the beginning of the book will help readers monitor moves and predict who's good and evil.

Fantasy

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Powell, Laura. *Burn Mark*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. 978-1-59990-843-4. 403 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

The story is set in modern-day London where witches and non-witches lead an uneasy co-existence. Witchwork is forbidden by law, and anyone who develops "fae" must register with the government and become bridled in order to inhibit his or her powers. Lucas Stearne is the son of the Chief Prosecutor for the Inquisition, a division of the government that investigates and prosecutes witch crimes. Lucas has high aspirations for following the family tradition of obtaining an important position with the Inquisition. That is until one day when the "Devil's Kiss" appears on his shoulder, and he realizes that, despite no history of witches in his bloodline, he has acquired the fae. His life intersects with that of Glory Starling, a teenage girl from a family of witches who have managed to elude registration and live a life of organized crime. (Think *The Sopranos* with the ability to cast spells.) An absorbing blend of magic and mystery, *Burn Mark* is sure to fly off the shelves.

Fantasy

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Poznanski, Ursula. *Erebos: It's a Game. It Watches You*. Toronto: Annick, 2012. 978-1-55451-372-7. 434 p. \$19.95. Gr. 7-12.

A mysterious computer game called “Erebos” is being passed around among the students at Nick Dunmore’s school. Those who receive the game are sworn to absolute secrecy, and Nick is delighted when he finally receives a copy. The first half of the book takes us into the exciting world of this sword-and-sorcery virtual reality. Nick is intrigued that the game seems to know so much about him, and he is puzzled when, in order to advance levels, he is required to perform some real-world tasks. At first, these missions seem innocuous, and Nick is glad to do them in exchange for advancement in the game. Things get malicious though, when some students receive threatening notes, and Nick is given the task of poisoning the tea of one of his teachers. When he fails to do so, he is eliminated from the game with a warning to keep silent. At first, he is chagrined about no longer being able to play, but then his better judgment prevails, and, realizing that there is evil afoot, he teams up with some other gamers to discover who or what is actually behind this disturbing game. A thrilling read for gamers and non-gamers alike, the book was originally published in German and translated into English by Judith Pattinson.

Suspense

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Pratchett, Terry. *Dodger*. New York: Harper, 2012. 978-0-06-200949-4. 353 p. \$17.00. Gr. 8 and up.

Dodger is a tosher and one of the best toshers in early Victorian England, but he is more than a sewer rat. Dodger is a hero, or at least a hero to “Simplicity”, the young lady he saves one rainy evening from two thugs who are trying to return the runaway wife to her husband. As Dodger begins to understand his new acquaintances background, he realizes that he alone cannot be her knight-in-shining-armor, so he enlists the help of journalist, Charlie Dickens to save his new love from capture, but not without first fending off Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, and finding a few more acquaintances, like Benjamin Disraeli and Queen Victoria. Dodger, a 2013 Michael L. Printz Book Award Honor Book, combines some of the most well-known aspects of Victorian England with a genuinely amusing, somewhat snarky, and loveable story of adventure, love, and heroism with a very unlikely hero, Dodger himself.

Historical Fiction

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Preus, Margi. *Shadow on the Mountain*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0424-6. 261 p. \$16.95. Gr. 5-8.

In Norway during World War II, fourteen-year-old Espen joins the resistance movement against the Nazis. He begins by delivering illegal newspapers, and eventually, he is sent to spy on the Nazis. Although Espen is the main character, the story has three other interesting, important characters; Espen’s sister Ingrid, Espen’s friend Kjell, and Askel, who sides with the Nazis. The complex, well-developed characters each serve as narrators, providing different perspectives. As the story progresses, each character’s motivations are revealed. People are not always who they appear to be, and anyone is capable of being a hero. This is an engaging story that addresses the moral and psychological dilemmas people face when confronted with difficult situations. I would recommend this book for students interested in World War II. A pronunciation guide for names and words, a map of the town in which the story is set, and a timeline from 1940-1945 of important events, are all included. There are also actual photos related to the story, including pictures of Erling Storrusten, on whom the character of Espen is based.

Historical Fiction

Dave Mancini, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Preus, Margi. *Shadow on the Mountain*. New York: Amulet, 2012. 978-1-4197-0424-6. 286 p. \$16.95. Gr. 5-8.

The peaceful country of Norway changes drastically with the World War II Nazi invasion and occupation. Food shortages, harsh restrictions, and arrests of innocent people become the norm for the people of Killaby, leading locals to develop a strong resistance movement. Readers learn about a little known slice of wartime history as they follow fourteen-year-old Espen’s transformation from a schoolboy playing soccer with friends to a resistance worker. He begins by delivering underground newspapers. Over time his role and the risks he takes grows. Ultimately, he is a spy who infiltrates and maps a Nazi compound and must flee Norway for his life in a tense cross-country ski chase. Preus creates conflict between Espen and peers who support the Nazis and adds a timid romance in this compelling read. The story is based on the wartime experiences of Erling Storrusten who is shown in photos. Also included are a map, pronunciation guide, timeline, reading recommendations, and bibliography on code-breaking and code writing information. *Shadow on a Mountain* is a tense, dramatic, page-turner and highly recommended.

Historical fiction.

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

Price, Lissa. *Starters*. New York : Delacorte, 2012. 978-0-385-74237-5. 336 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-10.

In a dystopian future, where only the young and elderly have survived a plague, orphaned Callie is forced to “rent” her body to a wealthy senior. When the chip malfunctions, Callie finds that murder is only one of the things on the mind of her renter. Chilling and compelling, this is dystopian fiction at its best, and an excellent choice for fans of *The Hunger Games*.

Dystopian

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Price, Lissa. *Starters*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-0385742375. 352 p. \$17.99. Gr 6-12.

In futuristic California, the Spore Wars have killed everyone between ages twenty and sixty, including sixteen year-old Callie's parents. Their death has left Callie and her sick, younger brother, Tyler, homeless, running from the police, scrambling for food, and in a constant state of fear. Desperate for money and medication to treat her sick brother, Callie turns to Prime Destinations, a clinic in Beverly Hills where teenage "Starters" rent out their bodies to elderly "Enders" who wish to experience youth again. In the midst of a session, Callie's microchip malfunctions, and she wakes up in the life of her Ender, a life of wealth, success, fast cars, and cute boys. Everything seems perfect until she begins to uncover her Ender's real plan for renting out her body which may be sinister and even deadly! An edge of your seat read that, like so many others, can be put into the hands of readers asking what to read after *The Hunger Games*. Be prepared for a serious cliffhanger ending and a sequel due in 2014.

Dystopian

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

Prose, Francine. *The Turning*. New York: HarperTeen, 2012. 978-0-06-199966-6. 246 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-10.

Jack is an average high school student who takes a summer job on a remote island as a babysitter for two young children. There are no modern conveniences (TV, phones, internet, etc.), so Jack communicates with his girlfriend by writing her letters. This serves as the narration throughout the novel. Jack stays in an old, eerie house, and before long he believes he is seeing ghosts. He begins to question reality and even his own sanity. Throughout the story, the reader must question every event in order to determine what is real and what is imagined. The ending may leave the reader with some unanswered questions, but overall this is a very good read.

Horror; Mystery; Suspense

Dave Mancini, Teacher, Sandy Run Middle School

Purcell, Kim. *Trafficked*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0-670-01280-0. 384 p. \$16.99 Gr. 10-12.

Hannah is a seventeen-year-old from Moldova who has lost both her parents in a bombing. She is brought to the United States by an "agent" and believes she will make \$400 per week watching children and going to school to learn English and finish her education. This book shows slowly but surely how Hannah learns the real truth behind her trip to the United States. She toils long days doing housework and watching Maggie and Michael while their mother studies to become a doctor. Her husband Sergey is involved in some kind of shady business. Hannah is not allowed outside; she must speak only Russian to the children, and the family is not paying her. As Hannah remains isolated, she uses her inner grit and determination to survive this slave existence.

Realistic Fiction; Human Trafficking

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Quick, Matthew. *Boy21*. New York: Little, Brown, 2012. 978-0-316-12797-4. \$17.99. Gr. 7 and up.

From the author of *The Silver Linings Playbook* comes a novel about Finley, a high school senior, whose life revolves around training for basketball, his girlfriend, and trying to get out of his broken-down, mob-run town. His family's past mob involvement left them broken and toeing the line. Finley's carefully planned season is interrupted when his coach introduces and requests him to mentor a new student, Russ, who goes by the name "Boy21." Russ has just gone through a horrible tragedy that took his parents' lives and lives in a delusional world where he is an alien sent to earth. Russ is a former high school basketball superstar, and Coach wants Finley to get him to join the team, but ironically they share the same position. Torn, Finley agrees to help. Through nights of stargazing on the roof talking through Russ's stories about his father coming to get him in his space ship, he is able to slowly bring Russ back to earth and on the team. A bad game costs Finley his starting spot, and when his girlfriend Erin is brutally injured in a hate crime, he leaves the team. Roles are reversed as Russ helps Finley face his past demons and the unfair hand they have both been dealt. This book is raw and heartbreaking.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Rapp, Adam. *The Children and the Wolves*. New York: Candlewick, 2012. 978-0763653378. \$16.95. 160p. Gr. 10 and up.

Not for every collection, this psychological novel, told in three voices, examines an oddly matched friendship — angry, bored Bounce, a girl from an affluent family, and two troubled, needy boys Wiggins and Orange. The three kidnap a four-year-old girl whom they rename, the Frog and keep her hostage in Orange's basement. All day, the Frog plays a video game about wolves that seems to parallel the events in the world around her. In the end, Wiggins breaks from the guilt and leads Frog to a trusted adult, a poet hated by Bounce. This is a bleak, gritty, druggy, scary world and illustrates the type of children you want to reach out to and help. Rapp's prose is both poetic and hypnotic.

Realistic Fiction; Urban

Joyce Valenza, Springfield Township High School

Resau, Laura. *The Jade Notebook*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-0-385-74053-1. 365 p. \$16.99 Gr. 10-12.

In the sequel to *The Ruby Notebook*, Zeeta and her mother have traveled the world looking for a perfect life. Moving to a small town in Mexico, she hopes to learn more about her elusive father. Zeeta wants to settle down, find her father, and enjoy her boyfriend. Instead she finds trouble, dangerous poachers, a neighbor with a full grown panther as a "guard dog",

and devious people who are trying to scare her and her mother away. Full of mystery and intrigue, *The Jade Notebook* also includes a glossary and pronunciation guide of Mexican-Spanish words.

Realistic Fiction; Mystery

Marianne Deakynne, Teacher, Abington Senior High

Richards, Elizabeth. *Black City*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2012. 978-0-399-15943-5. 374 p. \$15.34. Gr. 9-12.

The first book in a trilogy and the debut novel by Elizabeth Richards, *Black City* is packed with adventure, romance, vampires, race-relations, dystopias; you name it! Natalie and Ash both live in Black City, a place destroyed by a recent war. Natalie is part of the Sentry, the human government that runs the county, while Ash is a half-blood Darkling, a mix between a human father and a Darkling mother. Destined to be together, but prohibited by law, Natalie and Ash must find a way to connect their warring races, but face losing each other and death if they stand up for their love.

Dystopian; Race Relations; Fantasy

Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/MS

Riel, Jorn. *The Shipwreck (The Inuk Quartet Book 1)*. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot, 2011. 978-1846-863356. 112 p. \$12.99.

Gr. 5-8.

This is the first English version of the adventure series first published in Denmark in 1979. Set in Iceland and Greenland circa the year 1000, Leiv is a young Viking from Iceland out to avenge his father's death. In the process he is shipwrecked on Greenland where his life is saved more than once by an eleven-year-old Inuit girl Narua and her big brother Apuluk. As the three children travel together and learn to communicate, they discover how different their lives and customs are, and we readers learn much about Icelandic and Inuit life and culture. Beautifully written, *The Shipwreck* is a combination of spare prose and elegant illustrations; highly recommended.

Historical Fiction; Adventure

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Riordan, Rick. *The Mark of Athena (The Heroes of Olympus, Book 3)*. New York: Disney Hyperion, 2012. 978-1423140603.

574 p. \$19.99. Gr. 5-8.

As Annabeth and Percy finally reunite, and it appears that the Greeks and Romans may finally have peace, tragedy strikes New Rome and Camp Jupiter. To help regain peace between the two camps, Percy, Annabeth, Leo, Hazel, Frank, Jason, and Piper, commit themselves to the Prophecy of Seven and begin an adventure that ends in the ancient lands, a place in which demi-gods are not welcome. As Annabeth searches for the "Mark of Athena", Hazel and the gang try to save Nico D'Angelo from death at the hands of Titans and close the Doors of Death. Riordan once again captures the reader with fast-paced adventure, while also introducing them to a variety of stories in both Greek and Roman mythology.

Greek/Roman Mythology

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Robinson, Mabel L. *Bright Island (Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Edition)*. New York: Yearling, 2012. 978-0-375-97136-5. 276p.

Gr. 4 and up.

This beautiful, new seventy-fifth anniversary edition of the 1938 Newbery honor book is sure to win the hearts of your middle grade historical fiction lovers! Thankful Curtis lives on Bright Island, off the coast of Maine. Nothing makes her happier than being near the sea and her family's farm. Thankful has grown, married brothers, and much to her dismay their wives suggest to her mother that Thankful would be better off getting a proper education. This requires Thankful to be sent to the mainland to a boarding school, a life change that proves extremely difficult for her. With beautiful charcoal drawings by Lynd Ward, this satisfying classic is highly recommended.

Classic Historic Fiction

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Rose, Caroline Starr. *May B.: A Novel in Verse*. New York: Schwartz & Wade, 2012. 978-1-58246-393-3. 228 p. \$15.99. Gr. 4-7.

Life on the Kansas prairie is difficult for the pioneers of the late 1800's. Twelve-year-old May B. has an additional challenge as she struggles with dyslexia and a teacher who thinks she's just stupid. After a bad harvest, May's parents reluctantly send her to work on the Oblinger farm, fifteen miles away. Soon, Mrs. Oblinger, a child herself and despondent about prairie life, sneaks off to return to Ohio. Mr. Oblinger runs off to catch her. Neither returns. Alone for the first time, May lapses into despair, only to realize that she's not prepared when the first snow hits. When food and fuel are nearly gone, May does what she must to survive. Fortunately, a neighbor finds May, exhausted and freezing, and takes her home. She returns to her family with the confidence of knowing that she is strong, brave, and intelligent. *Little House on the Prairie* fans will enjoy this quick read.

Historical Fiction

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Rosenfield, Kat. *Amelia Anne is Dead and Gone*. New York: Penguin, 2012. 978-0-525-42389-8. 304 p. Gr. 10 and up.

Becca has just graduated and is ready to leave her small town after one last summer with her boyfriend, James, who dropped out after his mother lost her struggle with cancer. James, however, is afraid of losing her and tells Becca it's over after sleeping with her in the bed of his truck on graduation night. What the two do not know is that a few miles away a young woman is being brutally murdered.

Rosenfield goes back and forth between the girl we learn is Amelia Anne and Becca's point of view. James wants Becca back, and she accepts, but as the summer goes on she begins to question his lengthy disappearances, shady friends, and refusal to discuss the murder that has swept through their sleepy town. Amelia Anne is a girl who has just graduated college. During her last semester, she had an epiphany and decided to go to graduate school to major in theater. Her straight laced boyfriend doesn't understand her new passion and is not happy about her changing their plan. Becca is strangely and deeply affected by Amelia's murder. With each chapter suspicion arises, new characters enter the crime scene, and each girl unknowingly puts herself in more danger. Rosenfield writes a lyrical, fast paced mystery that will give you goose bumps and leave you struggling to put the book down.

Mystery

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Rosoff, Meg. *There is No Dog*. New York: Putnam, 2012. 0399257640. \$17.99. 256 p. Gr. 10 and up.

What would God be like if he were an absolutely normal, sex-crazed teenage boy? Bob, or God, watches over the earth with the guidance of a tired and frustrated assistant, Mr. B. Too lazy to work harder, Bob creates earth in six days. He is plagued by his annoying mother Mona, a goddess who initially won Earth in a poker game. Bob falls deeply for and lusts after Lucy, a beautiful girl who works as an assistant at the zoo. Bob's desires and emotions tip the balance of the world, seriously affecting the weather. Mr. B must devise a solution. This is a funny and odd, but hilarious ride with clever commentary on faith, the environment, animals, miracles and more.

Fantasy; Satire

Joyce Valenza, Springfield Township High School

Roth, Veronica. *Insurgent (Divergent Book 2)*. New York: Katherine Tegen, 2012. 978-0-06223-493-3. 592 p. \$19.99. Gr. 9-12.

Just as thrilling as *Divergent*, *Insurgent* is the continuation of the suspenseful adventure of Tris' divergent world. There were so many surprises (Caleb and Peter) and depth in the Four/Tobias and Beatrice/Tris relationship and Tris' awareness of her surroundings was very visual; she liked the smell of "wet pavement." A favorite quote summing up Tris is, "Sometimes I feel like I am collecting the lessons each faction has to give me, and storing them in my mind like a guidebook for moving through the world. There is always something to learn, always something that is important to understand." The definition of insurgent fit the bill for Tris, "A person who acts in opposition to the established authority, who is not necessarily regarded as belligerent." This book was about choices and how those choices define you, destroy you, and free you. Tris and Tobias are brave in the face of such an uncertain world, but they are forging ahead toward a "good" world.

Dystopian

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Rudetsky, Seth. *My (awesome) Awful Popularity Plan*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-86915-0. 211p. \$16.99. Gr. 10-12.

This is a good YA novel for LGTBQ teens or anyone who wants a good read set in high school. Justin Goldblatt decides that he is going to be popular, makes a plan to take him to that goal, and sets it in motion. Justin fails to take into account that the best-laid plans rarely work out, especially when they are plans like his. A touching and humorous look at how one sophomore tries to avoid the pitfalls of high school and ends up falling into them. Justin surprises himself by figuring things out in the end.

Realistic Fiction; LGBTQ

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Ryan, Carrie Ed. *Foretold: 14 Stories of Prophecy and Prediction*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-0-385-74129-3. 351p. \$16.19. Gr. 8-12.

Popular young adult writers such as Meg Cabot and Matt de la Pena join together for a collection of short stories based on the authors' interpretations of foretold futures. "Burned Bright" tells the gruesome story of what happens to a cult when its famed prophecy does not come true. "Homecoming" describes the plan of three half-human, half-vampire beings to kill the evil, bloodthirsty vampires. "Gentlemen Send Phantoms" has the reader's stomach in knots trying to figure out if Pippin, the shortest and homeliest girl in town, will be matched with the love of her life. A great diversity of genres that will be sure to captivate readers!

Short Stories; Fate

Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/MS

Saenz, Benjamin Alire. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012. 978-1-44240-892-0. 359 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Dante and Aristotle meet in 1987 when they are 15 at a local pool and strike up an instant friendship. Ari is shy and has already seen firsthand how the world can be a cruel place with a brother in prison and a father suffering from post-traumatic stress from the Vietnam War. The two boys bond over similar interests and a shared Mexican American heritage. However, Dante is already out as a homosexual and Ari is still coming to terms with his own sexuality. The story culminates with Ari's loyalty and perception of self being tested. Ari's first person narrative is written beautifully and encaptures life in the 1980's and coming out as a teenager at the height of the AIDS crisis. A 2013 Michael L. Printz Award Honor Book and the winner of the 2013 Stonewall Book Award, this novel is a good addition to collections needing to include new and current LGBTQ fiction.

Coming-of-Age; LGBTQ

Robin Burns, Salisbury High School

Saldin, Erin. *The Girls of No Return*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2012. 978-0-545-31026-0. 345p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Lida arrives at the Alice Marshall School for Girls guarding her “secret thing” that landed her with other girls in the wilderness of Idaho. Lida is quiet and distrustful of her cabin-mates, especially Boone, and will not open up during circle. When a new girl, Gia, arrives, Lida is sucked in by her beauty and stories. It is this clandestine friendship that causes friction between Lida and Boone with severe consequences. The beauty of the wilderness and the girls’ adventures make this a gripping read.

Realistic Fiction; Emotional Problems

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Sand-Eveland, Cyndi. *Tinfoil Sky*. Plattsburgh, NY: Tundra, 2012. 978-1-77049-277-6. 216 p. \$17.95. Gr. 5-8.

Twelve-year-old Mel has followed her alcoholic mother, Cecily, to eleven different homes since she was three. Finally, they run away from Craig, Cecily’s boyfriend, and head home to Mel’s grandmother, Gladys. Unfortunately, Gladys is bitter for good reason, and won’t take them in. Mel and Cecily live on the streets until Cecily is arrested and jailed for thirty days. Gladys grudgingly takes Mel, though her mistrust is evident. When Cecily and Craig finally come for Mel, they promise that things will be better. Mel intends to leave with them, but quickly realizes that her mother hasn’t really changed. Mel stays with her grandmother, hoping for the stability she’s come to appreciate. This story shows the effects of addiction and will have readers rooting for Mel’s happy ending.

Realistic Fiction

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Schrefer, Eliot. *Endangered*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-16576-1. 264p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-12.

In this gripping story, fourteen-year-old Sophie goes to visit her Congolese mother who is passionately devoted to protecting bonobos, little apes whose DNA is almost identical to that of humans. On her way from the airport to her mom’s bonobo sanctuary, Sophie acquires an abused baby bonobo from a man in a crowded, corrupt street of Kinshasa. Sophie’s care for little Otto takes on new meaning when the sanctuary comes under attack, so Sophie and Otto flee from the chaos and murder into life-threatening dangers in the jungle. At every turn, Sophie must use her wits, stamina, and love for Otto to survive their ordeal and reach safety. A final chapter set years later relates a poignant conclusion to this richly told story of survival and love. Highly recommended.

Naturalism; Survival; Familial Relationships

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

Schreiber, Joel. *AuRevoir Crazy European Chick*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2011. 978-0547577388. 192 p. \$16.99 Gr. 9-12.

For the past nine months, Perry Stormaire’s family has hosted a weird Lithuanian foreign exchange student named Gobi. Imagine his chagrin when his parents force him go to the prom with Gobi, especially since that particular night his band is playing a gig in NYC. When other senior’s mock Perry and Gobi, they leave the prom and that is when a crazy night unfolds as Gobi takes Perry on a wild ride consisting of Gobi looking really hot in a short tight black dress, flowing hair and lipstick, oh and did I forget to mention guns and ammunition! Get ready for a wild ride as Perry is dragged along as Gobi seeks revenge.

Foreign Exchange Students

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Schumacher, Julie. *The Unbearable Book Club for Unsinkable Girls*. New York: Random House, 2012. 978-0-375-98571. 240 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9 and up.

This is an easy read that will keep you entertained. Fifteen-year-old Adrienne’s mother has signed her up for a mother-daughter book club over the summer with three other girls and their mothers. Adrienne tells the story of the book club from her point of view. The girls are polar opposites, but are all going into AP English in the fall so the books read are the books that are on their AP summer reading list. The girls learn a lot about each other and you will enjoy the drama and angst throughout the story.

Realistic Fiction

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Semple, Maria. *Where’d You Go, Bernadette?*. New York: Little Brown, 2012. 978-0-316-20427-9. \$25.99. Gr. 10 and up.

Bernadette Fox is an architectural genius who has fled Los Angeles with her husband and daughter to Seattle in order to escape success. Bernadette is a genius; Elgie her Microsoft husband is a genius, and fifteen-year-old daughter Bee is a genius, but all of their success has left her unable to cope with life. Bernadette has become an agoraphobic who pays a virtual assistant in India to do everything for her. Simple tasks such as making dinner reservations to planning the family vacation to Antarctica are farmed out to the virtual assistant. Days before the family vacation Bernadette disappears, and Bee is the only one who can solve the mystery. The story is told without prose instead using just emails, texts, letters, and articles. This title is an Alex Award winner.

Realistic Fiction

Robin Burns, Salisbury High School

Shan, Darren. *Zom B*. New York: Little, Brown, 2012. 978-0-31621-440-7. 192p. \$14.99. Gr. 10-12.

B is a teen living in England with a racist, abusive father who drinks too much and beats B and her mother on a daily basis. Weird thing is, B loves her father and hates him at the same time for his despicable bias. She has molded her personality to be able to deal with her father, love him and hate him, while also becoming a teen who is a trouble-maker, fighter, and racist herself. When zombies attack, B and her friends are racing to get out of the school and stay alive with B quickly becoming a leader. With spare black and white illustrations, Shen’s first zombie book will have your heart racing until the next book arrives.

Zombies; Racism

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Shank, Marilyn Sue. *Child of the Mountains*. New York: Delacourt, 2012. 978-0-385-74079-1. 249 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7-9.

“Never forget who you be.” These were the last words that Lydia’s mother said to her before she was taken to jail for killing Lydia’s brother. Since then, Lydia’s silence over the situation is noticed by everyone, including the teachers who recognize her “smarts.” Will she ever admit what she knows? In this tender novel set in 1953 West Virginia, Shank weaves dialect, landscape, and poverty into an Appalachian story that will immediately connect Pennsylvanian readers to Lydia’s story. In the end, readers will smile for Lydia and themselves as the tidy resolution gives them hope for their own Appalachian experiences.

Historical Fiction

Sarah Braxton, Juniata Valley School District

Shusterman, Neal. *Unwholly (Skinjacker Book 2)*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012. 978-1-4424-2366-4. 402 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-10.

This is the second book in the *Skinjacker* trilogy. The story takes place in a society that deals with difficult teens by “unwinding” them, a gruesome method of killing that salvages their body parts. The story follows the teens who escaped unwinding in the first book *Unwind*, as they struggle to survive in hiding at an aircraft graveyard. Here, Sharkey, a clever new arrival, undermines Connor’s authority and causes the Juvenile Authority to raid the camp. Hundreds are captured and killed while Sharkey and his followers escape. Meanwhile, a pro-unwinding organization constructs Cam, a boy composed completely of unwound body parts. Memories from each individual who contributed to his body and mind fill his head, causing unexpected results and support for those who wish to end unwinding. As usual, Shusterman’s characters, good and bad, are very real. Students will anxiously await the final book in the trilogy.

Science Fiction

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

Sloan, Robin. *Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Bookstore*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012. 978-0374214913. 304 p. \$25.00. Gr. 9 and up.

A fun read; I especially liked the meeting of the old (ancient bookstore) with the new (Google employees and start up techies). Clay Jannon, who worked at a web start-up, is now working the night shift at a bookstore open 24 hours a day. The customers and the books are mysterious. Soon Clay and a couple of friends are working to discover the secrets of the books, the store, and Mr. Penumbra himself. I believe that teenagers will love this book (not one that is listed as YA). The main character is a young man just finding his way as an adult so they will be able to identify with him. His friends, likewise young, are working in computer related fields and film. I also think they will love Mr. Penumbra, the old man, who owns the bookstore. Just a fun read and a real surprise when I discovered late one night as it sat on my nightstand that the cover glows in the dark! 2013 Alex Award winner.

Mystery

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

Smith, Jennifer E. *The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight*. New York: Poppy, 2012. 978-0-316-12238-2. 256 p. Gr. 7 and up.

Smith tackles the age long question of whether or not love at first is possible. Hadley doesn’t want to be on a plane to London for her father’s wedding, but if she wouldn’t have gotten on the plane then she wouldn’t have missed her first flight, and she wouldn’t have been seated next to Oliver. He is a British student studying at Yale, also on his way to a wedding. Throughout the lengthy flight the two connect and discuss everything from their jaded views on love, marriage, and fate. They lose each other without exchanging numbers at the airport and a few hours later Hadley realizes that the only reason she is capable of making it through the wedding is because of talking with Oliver. She sets out to find him, but only knows the name of the church his wedding is at.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Snadowsky, Daria. *Anatomy of a Single Girl*. New York: Delacorte, 2013. 978-0-385-73798-2. 240 p. \$16.99. Gr. 10 and up.

Anatomy of a Single Girl is the sequel to *Anatomy of a Single Guy*, which I now have to go back and read. This is a must read and would be a great read by the pool in the summer. I must preface this review by letting everyone know that there is a lot of sex in this novel...a lot! This story is a realistic story about the angst of teenage dating, romance, and love. Dominique, a sophomore at Tulane University, ended a serious relationship about six months ago where she was a bit addicted to her boyfriend and is nervous about dating again that is until she meets Guy. She has told herself that she does not want to fall in love again, so she grapples with herself about what to do about Guy. This book will hold your interest from the first page to the last.

Romance

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Sonneblich, Jordan. *Curveball: The Year I Lost My Grip*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-32069-6. 285 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Jordan Sonneblich has done it again combining humor and heartbreak as Peter has to say good-bye to his beloved baseball due to a major injury. What he gains freshman year is a cute girl partner who is an ace photographer, his grandfather's photography equipment, and a prize spot as the yearbook sports photographer. A great read for guys, girls, and reluctant readers.

Realistic Fiction; Photography

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Spinelli, Jerry. *Hokey Pokey*. New York: Random House, 2013. 978-0-375-83198-0. 304 p. \$15.99. Gr. 5 and up.

Remember back when you were a kid and you had no worries? *Hokey Pokey* is about that time. There are no grownups and kids play all day. Jack gets up in the morning and realizes that his bike, Scramjet, is missing. We realize that Jack is growing up, and it is time to leave Hokey Pokey. This was a little confusing at first, but then you will have an "ah-ha" moment, and it will all be clear. This book would be a wonderful addition to an elementary or middle school library.

Coming-of-Age

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Spotswood, Jessica. *Born Wicked*. New York: Putnam Juvenile, 2011. 978-0-399-25745-2. 272 p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-12.

Cate Cahill is faced with many challenges. She has to protect her sisters, decide her future, and determine what is most important to her. When Cate's mother died, she asked Cate to take care of her two younger sisters and protect their secret from the rest of the world. The secret? They are witches and could face death if discovered. On top of this challenge, Cate must make a decision now about her future, or it will be made for her. *Born Wicked* offers an exhilarating fantasy with characters who are compelling and will pull you in. Set in an alternate history of New England, there is a magical charm to the story as well as the ominous dangers that threaten the characters. Readers will be clamoring for the next installment in what will become the *Cahill Witch Chronicles* trilogy which is due out in June 2013.

Fantasy; Romance

Lynne Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

St. Claire, Roxanne. *Don't You Wish*. New York: Delacorte, 2012. 978-0-355-74156-9. 365. Gr. 7 and up.

Annie Nutter dreams about being the cute, popular girl who wears Abercrombie and Fitch instead of her band geek, Walmart, clothed self. She is tired of seeing her mother struggle to make ends meet while her head in the clouds, inventor father tears their toaster apart in the basement. After getting shocked by one of her father's inventions, she wakes up in a parallel universe where she is Ayla Monroe. Ayla is rich, popular, beautiful, and the most stuck up girl in her private school. She has the same mother, but it is obvious that she and Ayla do not get along. Her father is a famous plastic surgeon who cheats on his wife and cares little for his children. As Annie struggles to maintain Ayla's mean girl façade she finds herself pulled towards the outcast scholarship student, Charlie. Annie discovers that money doesn't equal happiness and finds herself homesick for her family and real friends. She shares her secret with Charlie and together they try to find a way to get Annie back to her real life.

Fantasy

Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School

Stead, Rebecca. *Liar and Spy*. New York: Wendy Lamb, 2012. 978-0-385-73743-2. 180 p. \$15.99. Gr. 5-8.

What is perceived is not always what is real in this intriguing story in which seventh-grader Georges copes with bullies at school, moving from a house to an apartment after his dad loses his job, and his mom's schedule working double shifts as a nurse. While his former best friend has joined the popular kids at school, Georges teams up with a home-schooled boy, Safer, in spying on a fellow resident in their apartment building. As with *As You Reach Me*, Rebecca Stead keeps the reader engaged and guessing. Georges and Safer both tell lies and have significant fears with which they struggle. Highly Recommended.

Realistic Fiction; Familial Problems; Bullying; Spies

Ro Becker, Springfield Township Middle School

Stead, Rebecca. *Liar & Spy*. New York: Wendy Lamb, 2012. 978-0-385-73743-2. 180 p. \$15.99. Gr. 5-8.

Georges' dad loses his job, and the family has to sell their home and move into an apartment building. Being bullied by an old friend and feeling alone, George finds a sign in the laundry room advertising a "Spy Club." Georges meets home-schooled Safer and his sister and joins their spy missions. Together they set out to get information about a mysterious neighbor who seems to come and go at strange hours. Soon Safer's daring acts make Georges uncomfortable. How do you maintain a friendship with someone who isn't telling you everything? Slowly the author exposes Safer's secrets and gives the reader a look at all the aspects of friendship; the secrets, the truths, and the empathy that make up relationships.

Realistic Fiction; Friendship; Family Relationships; Spies

Sandra Krieg, The Haverford School

Stevenson, Robin. *Hummingbird Heart*. Custer, WA: Orca, 2012. 978-1-55469-390-0. 280 p. \$12.95. Gr. 9-12.

By the age of 16, Dylan has never met her father. Her fun-loving, pot-smoking mom says that he was just a one-night stand and had never had any interest in caring for a baby girl. Then her dad calls out of the blue wanting to finally meet her. He now has a younger daughter in need of a bone marrow transplant. Dylan must wade through the lies she's been told by her mother and determine her father's motives as she decides who she wants to be a part of her life in the future.

Realistic Fiction

Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/MS

Stewart, Elizabeth. *The Lynching of Louie Sam.* Toronto: Annick, 2012. 978-1-55451-439-7. 288 p. Gr. 7 and up.

In the name of the Nooksack Vigilante, a posse of volatile pioneer men set out in the dead of night to hunt down the infamous, fourteen-year-old Indian renegade Louie Sam. Disguised in their wives' Sunday outfits, they cross the border into Canada on a mission to avenge the murder of one of their own. George and a friend decide to follow their fathers, caught up in the feverishness of the mob, but he soon realizes his father is not as enthusiastic as the other men. After they return home to their daily routines, George finds himself plagued with doubt and guilt, so he decides to launch his own search for the truth. In a town full of lies and deceit, George discovers in order to solve the mystery and become a man of character, he must come to terms with his own shame and cowardliness to find the truth while possibly putting those he loves in danger. Inspired by a true story, Elizabeth Stewart researched the events surrounding the solitary lynching that took place on Canadian soil in 1884.

Historical Fiction

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Stiefvater, Maggie. *The Raven Boys.* New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-54542-492-9. 416 p. \$18.99. Gr. 9-12.

Blue Sargent is a prickly, strong female protagonist in this fantastical adventure into psychics (Blue's family) and the prep school world of Aglionby Academy (Blue hates these privileged boys, calling them the Raven Boys). Blue is sixteen and has been told her whole life, when she kisses the boy she loves, he will die. It is at a spirit hunt that she meets the "ghost" Gansey. What a wonder when Gansey and his strange crew of Aglionby friends arrives later at her home for a tarot reading. Gansey believes in the power of ley lines and has traversed the world in a frenzied belief he can locate the Ancient Welsh King Glendower, raise him up, and be granted a wish of unprecedented worth. Stiefvater's writing keeps the pages turning, with the runes, séances, ghosts, and mystery; all providing a thrilling, mesmerizing read.

Mystery

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Stiefvater, Maggie, Tessa Gratton, and Brenna Yovanoff. *The Curiosities: A Collection of Stories.* Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Lab, 2012. 978-0-7613-7527-2. 292 p. \$17.95. Gr. 9 and up.

Three acclaimed writers of paranormal fiction teamed up for quite some time on a site called *The Merry Sisters of Fate* (merryfates.com) where they posted weekly stories. They then comment and critique the work and invite readers to do the same. This book is a compilation of some flash fiction stories from their online work. While fans of their novels and of the paranormal will love the stories in this collection, they will be treated to some additional bonuses. The stories are accompanied by hand-drawn drawings, handwritten notes, and introductory comments from the writers. Many of these notes and comments illuminate their writing process. Students who are budding writers will love the insight and the awareness of how these women work. *The Curiosities* is a great book to have for many reasons, but mostly because these are well-written, interesting stories that teens will love.

Paranormal; Short Stories

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville High School, Retired

Stiefvater, Maggie, Tessa Gratton, and Brenna Yovanoff. *The Curiosities: A Collection of Stories.* Minneapolis: Carolrhoda, 2012. 978-0-7613-7527-2. 291p. \$17.95. Gr. 9-12.

This is an interesting collection of short stories that were originally written on a blog by Maggie Stiefvater, Tessa Gratton, and Brenna Yovanoff. What makes the book most interesting to the reader is the fact that the authors comment on each other's work, in blog fashion, which adds a lot of interest to the stories and insight into the authors' writing. Many of the stories involve paranormal creatures and events, magic, faeries, and more. Teens who like similar novels will like these stories.

Short Stories; Paranormal

Nancy Chrimer, Juniata High School, Retired

Stinson, Kathy. *What Happened to Ivy?.* Toronto: Second Story, 2012. 978-1-926920-81-8. 146 p. \$11.95. Gr. 5 and up.

Don't let the size of this book fool you: this slim volume is a quick read, but the story, characters, and emotional content are powerful. David is a 15-year-old who alternately is annoyed by, and fiercely loves and defends, his profoundly disabled sister Ivy. While he resents that Ivy's needs have completely dominated family life for as long as he can remember, he also lovingly cares for her. His life gets a little easier when beautiful Hannah moves in across the street and becomes David's fast friend and fits right in with the rest of his family. Soon a tragic event at a family vacation presents David and Hannah with a stark moral dilemma that threatens to tear apart David's family and his friendship with Hannah. Heartbreaking and realistic, this novel pulls no punches. While I highly recommend this book, I warn my younger readers that it is sad and disturbing. This book would be an excellent choice for secondary level literature discussion groups.

Realistic Fiction; Disabilities

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Stork, Francisco X. *Irides.* New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2012. 978-0-545-15135-1. 304 p. \$17.99. Gr. 10-12.

Kate and Mary are two sisters with a strict minister father they love and a mother who has been in a vegetative state for two years since a car accident. Kate and Mary's lives are changed after their mother's accident when their father refuses to keep her in a facility. She comes back home with some outside help to care for their mother. Mary has always been a gifted painter, but finds it difficult to paint since the accident. Kate has secretly applied to Stanford; her wish to become a doctor and help others in her future. Suddenly

their father dies, and they are pressured to make decisions about their mother, their home, and their life. Stork uses imagery and the sister's thoughts, words, and actions to describe their lives before his death. As Mary and Kate struggle with their love and faith, they will meet people who help them deal with the crises that demand decisions during their time of sorrow. Mary and Kate have such different personalities, but their love for each other and their mother are steadfast. It is how they choose to move forward that is so compelling.

Realistic Fiction; Familial Relationships

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Strange, Jason. *The Demon Card*. North Mankato, MN: Stone Arch, 2012. 978-1-4342-3296-0. 62 p. \$17.99. Gr. 6 and up.

Mark and Alex cannot wait to open new packs of Epic Warrior cards so they can battle each other and challenge their undefeated classmate Greg. To Mark's utter excitement, he opens a new card, Death Bringer. His stats and special abilities are unlike any other warrior, but neither boy knows what a demon faction is. When they post their question in a gaming forum, a warning message appears almost instantly, "That Card Must Be Destroyed." Ignoring the foreboding content, Mark wonders if the strange accidents and misfortunes with his opponents are somehow connected to his new card. Perhaps the warning was accurate, but now good and evil must battle on Earth, and the boys have to choose a side. Black and white illustrations are spaced throughout the book. The police report and case notes found at the end of the story add more detail and a realistic element to the plot. A glossary lists challenging words and strong verbs. Appealing to reluctant readers.

Fantasy; Horror

Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School

Summers, Courtney. *This Is Not a Test*. New York: St. Martin's, 2012. 978-0-31265-674-4. 336 p. \$9.99. Gr. 10-12.

Sloane Price is one of six students barricaded in her high school when the world ends and the zombies are everywhere. Everyone wants to live, but they do not know that Sloane has made a pact to die, and she is just biding her time until she can take her own life. Why? Her sister Lily ran away six months ago. Their miserable father maliciously beats them on a daily basis, and Lily was going to run with Sloane to a better life, but the apocalypse struck! What happens inside the school is totally creepy and scary. Rhys becomes someone Sloane cares about. Rhys knows how to handle Sloane, and it is totally maniacal when they decide to run "outside" to a center for aid. Summers does not allow the reader any time to think in this book because there is constant paranoia, dread, and fear.

Zombies

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Swain, Gwenyth. *Hope and Tears: Ellis Island Voices*. Honesdale, PA: Calkins Creek/Boyd's Mills, 2012. 978-1-59078-765-6. 115 p. \$17.95. Gr. 4-8.

Meticulously researched, this handsome volume looks like a beautiful nonfiction book. However, Swain starts each chapter in the history of Ellis Island with a factual passage, followed by poetry and verse in the voice of fictional characters touched by Ellis Island including, Pilapeu, a Leni Lenape boy; Jarek, the Polish Immigrant, and Najeeb, the immigrant inspector. Each passage is accompanied by fascinating historic photos and images of documents. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of Ellis Island, such as the history, the experience of those who passed through coming to our country, and the life of those who worked there. This book would make a wonderful textbook companion when teaching any aspect of immigration to the U.S.

Historical Fiction; Novel in Verse

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Telgemeier, Raina. *Drama*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-32699-5. 233 p. \$10.99. Gr. 6 and up.

Winner of the 2013 YALSA Great Graphic Novels, *Drama* is "Glee" for your drama kids! This graphic novel combines the realistic behind-the-scenes drama behind every school production, with teen crush and friendship drama. Callie heads up set design for "Moon Over Mississippi", a Civil-War era romantic musical. She has a crush on Greg, who's obsessed with the stuck up Bonnie. Does Callie stand a chance against the "popular girl?" Lots of fun and realistic characters, who are ethnically diverse, are depicted in the very typical Eucalyptus Middle School student body. Highly recommended for your graphic novel fans and lower level, high interest readers.

Graphic Novel; Realistic Fiction; Drama/Theater

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Telgemeier, Raina. *Drama*. New York: Scholastic, 2012. 978-0-545-32698-8. 233 p. \$23.99. Gr. 7-10.

Callie is the set designer in her middle school's stage production of "Moon Over Mississippi", and with her can do attitude she will not let budget woes and squabbles between the crew members hold her back. This graphic novel takes the reader into the world of the school play; the fun, long hours, and companionship leading up to the school play. A thoroughly enjoyable, funny look at middle school friends, crushes, and everyone "behind" and "on stage" pulling off plays to entertain and inspire.

Graphic Novel; Theatre

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Tregay, Sarah. *Love & Leftovers: a Novel in Verse*. New York: Katherine Tegen, 2012. 978-0-06-202358-2. 432 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.

Marcie learns how to overcome the craziness of everyday life when her parents separate after 17 years of marriage along with her father's concession that he is gay. *Love and Leftovers* is a novel in verse about one girl's trials and tribulations in love and perseverance.

Novel in Verse; Family Problems

Madeline M., Student, Abington Senior High

Turnage, Sheila. *Three Times Lucky*. New York: Dial, 2012. 978-0803736702. 256 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.

Three Times Lucky is one of the quirkiest, well-written novels for middle school students written this year. Mo LoBeau, of Tupelo Landing, NC, is a rising sixth grader who writes to her "Upstream Mother", sends messages in a bottle, and on the side loathes Anna "Attila" Celeste. That is until Detective Joe Starr comes to Tupelo Landing and upsets the day-to-day happenings of this small community. Now Mo must protect the Colonel, run the cafe until Miss Lana returns from Charleston, and solve the murder of Mr. Jesse with her best friend Dale, all while pining over Dale's older brother Lavender (who she can officially date when she turns 18). Turnage's first novel for middle school students is spot-on. She intertwines friendship, enemies, murder, mystery, small-town life, and an exploration of the definition of family flawlessly. *Three Times Lucky* (and Mo herself) is a mixture of Harriet the Spy and Nancy Drew with a little bit of Theodore Boone thrown in for good measure (and the quiriness of a small-town like Norvelt in *Dead End in Norvelt*). This is the perfect addition to any middle school collection.

Realistic Fiction; Mystery

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Vanderpool, Clare. *Navigating Early*. New York: Random House, 2013. 9780385742092. 320 p. \$16.99. Grades 5-8.

After his mother unexpectedly passes away, Jack is forced to move to the East Coast with his father, who is in the military. He happens upon a friendship with Early that turns into the biggest adventure of his young life. Early is a mathematical genius and is also autistic. He is determined to unwrap the mystery of "Pi", and Jack agrees to go along for the trip. The two boys encounter pirates, bears, and a mystery that has been haunting a grieving mother for years. This is a page turner and a great follow-up to Vanderpool's Newbery Winner, *Moon Over Manifest*.

Adventure

Krista Goodzinski, Blackhawk Area School District

Vivian, Siobhan. *The List*. New York: PUSH, 2012. 978-0-545-16917-2. 332 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.

"The List", a tradition at Mount Washington High School, is published the Monday of Homecoming week each year and highlights "the prettiest" and "the ugliest" girls in each grade. This list, though a tradition, wreaks havoc for those named "ugliest" and brings glory, popularity, and "friendship" for those named "prettiest". Although no one knows who creates the list each year, Principal Colby, a young, new principal is determined to find out who would do such a cruel thing and put an end to "The List" forever. *The List* brings to light both the cruelty of high school through the identification of "the ugliest" and also the self-implied limitations presented to those considered "prettiest". She creates a passive school atmosphere of acceptance through "the list" without consequence for outright bully actions. Through the rotation of chapters told by a third-person narrator, each girl named to "the list" presents her story of struggle once labeled. Vivian covers the pressure of being "prettiest" by looking at what it does to young girls who have physical beauty, but lack self-esteem, and how being named "ugliest" can change one's own self-esteem of themselves, while also allowing young people to re-evaluate their own personality. This is a great addition to any high school library because it presents real issues and problems for high school girls without becoming another novel filled with clichés.

Realistic Fiction

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Vizzini, Ned. *The Other Normals*. New York: HarperCollins, 2012. 978-0-06-207990-9. 400 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7 and up.

This action packed entertaining book is a must read! Vizzini has veered away from his "normal" writing and has written another marvelous book that is definitely worth the read. Perry, an awkward teen, is the fifteen-year-old main character in the story who loves his video games. His life has been a bit difficult; his parents are divorcing and each parent is dating their divorce lawyer. Perry finds out from his older brother (as his brother breathes vodka and raspberries in his face) that he has to go away to summer camp. This camp is not the customary math camp that Perry usually goes to, but a camp for "normal" kids. We see the awkward teen trying to fit in, yet be himself. He pulls stunts that will make you laugh out loud while reading.

Fantasy

Jill Toye, Jenkintown High School

Volponi, Paul. *The Final Four*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-06-7001264-0. 245p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Volponi gets the suspense and excitement just right in this book about basketball and four overtimes in a March Madness game that will totally drive you crazy with anticipation. Who will win this Final Four game between the Michigan State Spartans (players Malcolm McBride and Michael Jordan) against the Troy University Trojans (players Roko Bacic and Crispin Rice) mounts as we follow the story through the four main characters, newspaper stories, and news reporting by sportscasters?

Realistic Fiction; Basketball

BJ Neary, Abington Senior High

Volponi, Paul. *The Final Four*. New York : Viking, 2012. 244 p. \$16.99. Gr. 8-12.

Volponi once again provides a compelling basketball story, this time ramping up both the action and characterization in the story of four players involved in the media-hyped battle for the NCAA championship. Readers will identify with the underdog Troy Trojans, and the four protagonists, each with a detailed backstory and their own reasons for winning this high-stakes game.

Realistic Fiction; Basketball

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Volponi, Paul. *The Final Four*. New York: Viking, 2012. 978-0-670-01264-0. 245 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Malcolm McBride strives to get into the NBA as soon as he can. Roko Bacic just wants to bring honor to his native country, Croatia. Crispin Rice just wants the girl of his dreams. Michael Jordan just wants a chance on the team. Through alternating chapters, each boy's story is shared as the college basketball season leads up to the Final Four. Tensions rise as the boys struggle through the season and learn what it means to be teammates and how to manage ambition, skill, and determination all to win not only the game, but find success in life. Readers will enjoy seeing the maturation of the young players, while sports lovers, especially basketball lovers, will not be able to put it down, especially as the season continues and the games become more intense and more is riding on wins and losses.

Sports

Hanna F., Student, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School

Walker, Melissa. *Unbreak My Heart*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. 978-1-59990-528-0. 231p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.

Clementine goes on a family boating trip for the summer when her friendship with her BFF, Amanda, is shattered due to a boyfriend incident. Finding new friends and experiencing a hint of romance on the trip, Clementine begins to feel worthy of happiness again.

Realistic Fiction

Tiana P., Student, Abington Senior High

Wasserman, Robin. *The Book of Blood and Shadows*. New York: Knopf, 2012. 978-0-375-86876-4. 431 p. Gr. 8-12.

With shades of *The Da Vinci Code*, murder and romance converge in this story of high school senior, Nora, and a well-drawn cast of characters, including her murdered best friend, and her boyfriend, the apparent murderer. Add in the secret Lumen Dei society, and a machine purported to enable the user to talk to God, and this novel becomes a spicy thriller, with a little romance on the side.

Extremely satisfying.

Thriller

Pat Naismith, Springfield School District (DelCo)

Wein, Elizabeth. *Code Name Verity*. New York: Hyperion, 2012. 978-1-42315-219-4. 368 p. \$9.99. Gr. 10 and up.

This story, told by two narrators, is one of survival, friendship, and bravery of World War II spies. After a plane crashes in Nazi occupied France, the two women on the plane must do whatever it takes to survive. British spy, Queenie, is forced to leave Maddie, the pilot, behind and is later captured by Gestapo. Queenie agrees to tell her secrets and radio codes all the while strapped to a chair for torture. The details are doled out on scraps of papers, and as the secrets are revealed, so is the story of the two women's friendship. Told in separate parts by Queenie and Maddie, this gripping novel is a must have addition for high school libraries. This title is a 2013 Michael L. Printz Award Honor Book and tops several Best Books for Young Adults lists for 2012.

Historical Fiction

Robin Burns, Salisbury High School

Weiner, Ellis. *The Templeton Twins Have an Idea (Book 1)*. San Francisco: Chronicle, 2012. 978-0-8118-6679-8. 232 p. \$16.99. Gr. 4 – 9.

This is one of the most original and creatively-written books of the year! When 13-year old twins Abigail and John Templeton's dad, an inventor and academic, accepts a professorship at Tickeredge-Baltock Technical Institute ("Tick-Tock Tech"), strange things begin to happen. This book is laugh out loud funny thanks to clever wordplay, outrageous characters with ridiculous names, whimsical illustrations, and the narrator's snarky tone. The reluctant narrator – "I am not writing this story because I want to. That is why I wrote THE END in the prologue" - alternately scolds the readers, wanders on wild tangents (including a detailed recipe for meatloaf), and fishes for compliments. Each chapter ends with a "quiz" that will leave you chuckling. I can't wait for the next installment of this new series!

Humor; Action; Mystery; Adventure

Kathie Jackson, Plymouth Meeting Friends School

Wells, Dan. *Partials*. New York: HarperCollins, 2012. 978-0-06-207104-0. 468 p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-12.

This dystopian story takes place in the near future after more than 99% of mankind has been wiped out by the genetically modified virus, RH. The virus kills babies a few days after birth, so the youngest children are eleven-years-old. Humans believe that Partials, genetically engineered humanoids created to fight the last war, released RH to wipe them out. The community is divided due to the senate's passing of the Hope Act, requiring all women over the age of eighteen to get pregnant, hoping that a baby will eventually survive. Desperate to find a cure, sixteen-year-old Kira, a medic in training, sets out with a group of friends to evade the armed city patrols, and capture a Partial. The mission succeeds, but before Kira finds a cure, the senate has other plans. Kira and her friends defy

their government and Kira is captured by the Partials. Their medical experiments reveal that she is herself, a Partial. Rescued by her friends, Kira and the rebels fight their way back to their city, hopeful that they have the cure. Kira doesn't reveal her true nature to anyone, but sets the scene for a sequel. This page turner hooks readers early on, and doesn't let up until the end.

Science Fiction

Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School

White, Ruth. *A Month of Sundays*. New York: Margaret Ferguson, 2011. 978-0-374-39912-2. 168 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7-12.

Garnet has never known any family but her mother, but now her mother has left Kentucky with a friend to find work in Daytona, and she has left Garnet with her father's sister and family in Virginia. Garnet's anger at being abandoned with strangers disappears and is replaced by the first sense of comfort and real family only to have that peace threatened by a family illness and the letter from her mother saying she would be sending the money to join her in Florida. Everything she has known her whole life is in question. This is a warm story of family and a search for a place to fit in. Set in rural Virginia in 1956, this coming-of-age story offers a lovely picture of a different time and way of life, rural churches, and the support a family can offer. This is a great read by a Pennsylvania author.

Realistic Fiction; Historical Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville HS/MS, Retired

Wilson, John. *Victorio's War (Desert Legends Book 3)*. Custer, WA: Orca, 2012. 978-1-55469-882-0. 176 p. \$12.95. Gr. 9-12.

This book continues the story of Jim Doolen, who in the two earlier *Desert Legends* novels traveled from the Pacific Northwest to Mexico and the Southwest in an attempt to find his father. In this part of the series, he has been taken prisoner by Mexican soldiers when he is working as a scout for the U.S. Army, after befriending, and at the same time antagonizing, a band of Apache warriors. The story is told in flashbacks and the reader needs to follow the dates closely that are at the head of each chapter in order to determine where the action in that chapter occurs in Jim's saga. This is a good read for students who like westerns.

Western

Nancy Chrismer, Juniata High School, Retired

Winters, Cat. *In the Shadow of Blackbirds*. New York: Amulet, 2013. 978-1-4197-0530-4. 407 p. \$16.95. Gr. 7-12.

The year is 1918, and America is surrounded by the specter of death. Young men are returning home in coffins, victims of The Great War; and on the home front, the Spanish Influenza is claiming thousands of lives every day. Desperate to make contact with their departed loved ones, the living are flocking to séances and to "spiritual photographers." Sixteen-year-old Mary Shelley Black is skeptical of such things, but when the spirit of her sweetheart Stephen, who was killed in battle, appears to her and begs her to save him from "the blackbirds," she uses her scientific mind to find answers and to help him rest in peace. This book is a marvelous blend of historical fiction and the supernatural with elements of mystery and romance.

Historical Fiction; Paranormal

Patricia Fischer, School District of Lancaster, Retired

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Beneath a Meth Moon*. New York: Nancy Paulsen, 2012. 978-0399252501. 192 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7 and up.

Laurel is a fifteen-year-old who has seen too much tragedy in her life. She lost the beloved women in her life, her mother and her grandmother, as Katrina swept through Pass Christian, Mississippi. Laurel, her father, and her baby brother eventually end up in a new town where Laurel seems to be settling in to the perfect teen life - new best friend, on the cheerleading squad and dating a basketball star, T-Boom. It is T-Boom who introduces her to moon, crystal meth. Laurel spirals out of control as her bittersweet memories flood her and the meth takes over her life and makes everything seem good again while she is high. She becomes alienated from all that she knows and loves, including herself. Her appearance and behavior become unrecognizable; her beautiful blonde hair fades and her weight drops precipitously. Laurel's story is both harrowing and ultimately hopeful. Jacqueline Woodson has delivered a wonderful story that rings with truth. This book provides a cautionary tale that teens will eat up.

Realistic Fiction

Lynne Vanderveen Smith, Biglerville High School, Retired

Committee Members

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