

Rat by Jan Cheripko
Boyd's Mill Press, 2002, 205 pp., \$15.95

Sexual Abuse/Basketball/Friendship
ISBN:1-9078-034-5

When he catches the popular basketball coach molesting a cheerleader, 15-year-old Jeremy, "Rat," testifies in court against him, angering the boys on the team. Since Jeremy is the team's manager, this is an extremely uncomfortable situation.

Along with trying to get into the team's good graces, Jeremy has to come to terms with the fact that he was born with a birth defect, a withered arm, which hinders his ability to play the sport he loves. At this point in his life, Jeremy is feeling very alone. With the help of the new coach and his wife, young Jeremy understands that he made the right decision in testifying. The question is whether the coach can get Jeremy's teammates to believe this also.

This well-crafted book is intriguing. The reader will be able to relate to Jeremy and feel eager to see what happens next—a definite page-turner. With its vocabulary and plot detail, it is probably best suited for kids in middle school, or the reluctant reader.

Jennifer York
Knoxville, TN

True Confessions, by Martha Brooks
Groundwood Books, 2003, 181 pp., \$16.00

Relationships/Teen Pregnancy
ISBN:0-374-37806-1

17-year old Noreen is driving around lost on a rainy night and ends up at a small town café. Her arrival stirs up the lives of the café owner and friends. The grandmother figure, Delores, learns from Noreen that she has run away from her boyfriend and family because she doesn't know how to handle life's unexpected turns. Noreen also tells Delores that she is pregnant, and has not told the baby's father.

Noreen is allowed to stay at the café, but seems to cause trouble, no matter what she does. Readers experience a fire, fights, and a café remodeling, not to mention the emotional conversations between Noreen and Wesley, her boyfriend.

This coming of age novel is realistic and easy to read. What will Noreen do about the baby? Will she tell Wesley that she is pregnant? What will the other characters decide about their own lives? This is a well-written novel for the more mature teen reader.

Jennifer York
Knoxville, TN

Dating Hamlet by Lisa Fiedler
Henry Holt and Company, 2002, 192 pp., \$16.95

Romance/Adventure
ISBN: 0-8050-7054-0

Lisa Fiedler writes Hamlet's story from Ophelia's point of view. His plan to feign madness and to avenge his father's murder includes Ophelia and her brother, Laertes. Ophelia and Hamlet are madly in love and effectively trick Claudius and Gertrude into believing that he is deranged.

The plot is serious, romantic, and intriguing. Most teenagers would enjoy reading this novel before analyzing Shakespeare's play. The author's writing style has the flavor of Elizabethan language, and Ophelia and Hamlet's character traits fit Shakespeare's portrayal. The ending is not tragic — Ophelia and Hamlet survive and leave; Fortinbras will rule at Elsinore.

Fiedler manages to include many plot details from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: the play within a play, Ophelia's drowning, the sword duel between Hamlet and Laertes, even the gravedigger. This novel is a strong bridge to the tragedy of *Hamlet*.

Sarah K. Herz
Westport, Connecticut

Young Adult Books In Review Recently Published Titles

Jeff Kaplan, Editor

3x5 inches to "Clip & File"

<p><i>Heir Apparent</i>, by Vivan Vande Velde Harcourt, 2002, 315 pp., \$17.00</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Fantasy ISBN 0-15-204560-0</p> <p>A plucky fourteen-year-old protagonist from sometime in the future, Giannine Bellisario, receives a birthday gift certificate from her absentee dad. Redeeming it at a local Rasmussen Gaming Center Virtual Reality Arcade, she enters a Total Immersion Game Room and elects to play a dangerous new virtual reality game: <i>Heir Apparent</i>.</p> <p>Suddenly, Giannine becomes Janine de St. Jehan, sheepherder in a fantasyland version of Medieval England, and heir to deceased King Cynric. In this computer-generated reality, Janine must play to survive, a task complicated by morality protestors in the real world who create a glitch in Rasmussen's ability to return her. Thus, she must win the game by defeating dragons, completing a quest or two, answering riddles, subduing the villains—all the requisite cast members of a fantasy written with humor, realism, and historical accuracy.</p> <p>The only problem is that every time Giannine makes a mistake that kills her character, she must begin at the start of the game. As she plays, the activist group, People from the Society to Prevent Cruelty to Children, takes over the arcade and damages the equipment that controls <i>Heir Apparent</i>. Now in order to escape, Giannine must win the game or literally die.</p> <p><i>Heir Apparent</i> is a rollicking, suspenseful adventure with a female dragon slayer who can become king and just possibly save her own life.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Judith Hayn Wilmette, Illinois</p>	<p><i>Sonny's War</i> by Valerie Hobbs Female Coming of Age/Historical - Vietnam Frances Foster Books/Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2002, ISBN: 0-337371136-9 224 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Cory is fourteen years old and living in Ojala, California. It's a sleepy town where all there is to do is "cruise" Main Street, and watch her brother drag race. She is growing into young womanhood during the exciting, idealistic, confusing, tumultuous 60's. In one year her father dies, her brother is drafted and sent to Vietnam, her favorite history teacher (on whom she has a crush) is a conscientious objector, and she and her mother are forced to become independent.</p> <p>Valerie Hobbs eloquently depicts the turmoil and bittersweet humor of a young girl who deals simultaneously with loss, betrayal, and love within her own life and the lives of people she holds most dear. The story is gripping, memorable, and readable. It is historically accurate and significant.</p> <p>Set during the Vietnam Conflict, the reader "experiences" living the effects of the war on those persons left home.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Linda Broughton Mobile, Alabama</p>
<p><i>The Secrets of the Twisted Cross, Case No. 6, The Belltown Mystery Series</i> by T. M. Murphy J. N. Townsend Publishing, 2002, 164 pp, \$9.95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mystery/Holocaust ISBN: 1-880158-43-4</p> <p>When a series of anti-Semitic hate crimes plagues his Cape Cod town, 16-year-old sleuth Orville Jacques is hired by a rabbi to investigate the situation. Believing that the offenders are teenagers, the rabbi feels that Orville, being a high school student, is in the best position to discover the miscreants.</p> <p>Unfortunately for Orville, his attempt to infiltrate the hate group backfires, resulting in his being labeled prejudiced and shunned by his classmates. Furthermore, his life is endangered when he learns that these actions are not committed by mischievous teens, but by a sinister group of neo-Nazis. However, Orville's perseverance pays off as he helps bring to justice members of the local chapter of the Sons of Hitler, uncovers the identity of its evil leader, and solves a murder as well as a series of robberies.</p> <p>Middle school boys—especially reluctant readers—will enjoy this fast-paced, action-packed mystery filled with numerous twists, identify with Orville's romantic and peer problems, and discover a great deal about the Holocaust . . . without realizing it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Bill Mollineaux Granby, CT</p>	<p><i>Water: Tales of Elemental Spirits</i> by Robin McKinley and Peter Dickinson G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002, 266 pp., \$18.99</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Fantasy: Short Story ISBN: 0-399-23796-8</p> <p>Robin McKinley and Peter Dickinson weave fanciful tales in their short story anthology <i>Water: Tales of Elemental Spirits</i>. This is a collection of six enchanting tales – three by each author - linked by an aquatic theme.</p> <p>The stories are filled with Greek and Roman underworld myths, and possess a near reverent tone, as the opening story, "Mermaid Song" sets the tone between those who dwell land and those who dwell on sea – only the landsman who has listened to stories passed down through generations can accord the sea its proper respect. The authors alternate stories in the text, but each brings his and her own seamless quality to the telling. In Dickinson's stories, characters are easy for readers to relate to, as in "Mermaid Song." Dickinson also makes the sea monster, Kraken, a creature to be pitied. Similarly, McKinley's stories make the reader wish to be in them. Her "The Sea-King's Son" will undoubtedly become a new fairy tale.</p> <p>The writing duo have created a book that challenges ideas about other worlds as well as about our own world. The stories explore the spirits of water, and those who live with it. McKinley and Dickinson push the reader's imagination to its limits while delighting it as well.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">JoAnna M. Ball Lawrence, Kansas</p>

<p><i>The Boy Who Could Fly Without a Motor</i> by Theodore Taylor Harcourt Children's Books Division: 2002, 138 pp., \$15.00</p> <p>Nine-year-old Jon Jeffers lives nineteen miles off the coast of San Francisco with his mother, father, and dog, Smacks. Jon thinks he is the loneliest boy in the world, with nothing to do but watch the lighthouse beacon.</p> <p>The nation fears the coming war and President Franklin D. Roosevelt wants to know about every advancement that might help the fight. Jon would like to be involved in some of the adventures he can only imagine. He thinks to himself, "If only I could fly." Soon, Jon begins wishing so hard for his dreams to come true that he is visited by mysterious man who teaches him the secrets of levitation. Jon fails to keep his promise of secrecy, and soon things go awry.</p> <p>Taylor has given us a story of pure fantasy, set in a real time. The story reads almost like a parable and might be studied for its unique genre and deeper message more rather than content. The short text makes for a perfect read aloud, especially to younger children. Suggested target audience: Upper elementary to middle grades.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lu Ann Brobst Staheli Spanish Fork, Utah</p>	<p><i>The Secret Within</i>, by Theresa Martin Golding Boyd's Mills Press, 2002, 240 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Thirteen-year-old Carly Chambers keeps secrets. Her peers can't breach her armor of silence. No one in the resort community of Oceanside knows that her father causes the bruises she wears.</p> <p>And her parents have no idea that she sneaks out of her window each night to lead a second life on the balmy summer boardwalk. Carly also uncovers other people's secrets. Eddie the newsstand man has a son who doesn't know he exists. Aileen, the strange girl in the long flowing skirts, could really be a special friend. And, Nick, the popular athlete, honestly likes her.</p> <p>When a tall stranger follows her, and she discovers that the "candy" deliveries her father forces her to make aren't candy, and the house of cards crumbles.</p> <p>Carly finally musters enough strength to admit the truth, stand up to her father, and accept help from others. Recommended for ages 12 and up, <i>The Secret Within</i> sensitively depicts internal conflict that silences abuse victims, and shows readers the situation is escapable once the truth is revealed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Michele Winship Columbus, Ohio</p>
<p><i>Kotuku</i>, by Deborah Savage Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002, 291 pp., \$16.00</p> <p><i>Kotuku</i> tells the compelling story of Charlotte Williamson (Wim) Thorpe's road to self-re-discovery while reconnecting with her family and reconciling the past. Savage writes a tightly connected story of loss, love, and longing. Wim's family relationship exhibits an honest approach to how adolescents and adults often mis-communicate with one another, causing tension and misunderstanding.</p> <p>A major twist in the story is the unexpected arrivals of an elderly relative and a stranger from New Zealand. These two opposites of past and future remind Wim that life is meant to be embraced and celebrated. The visitors help Wim let go of her hurt and anger to realize how important it is to accept her family, live her life, and learn to love again.</p> <p>As Savage brings together the pieces of Wim's family and friends, she weaves in an historical tale of New Zealand that lends an informative segment to the story.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Melinda Byrd Murphy Monroeville, Alabama</p>	<p><i>Once Upon a Marigold</i>, by Jean Ferris Harcourt, Inc. 2002, 266 pp., \$17.00</p> <p>This is a funny fairy tale about a little prince who runs away to the forest and finds a friendly troll to live with.</p> <p>Edric, the troll, really doesn't want to take the prince home with him, but is too kindhearted to leave him. Years pass and Prince Christian, who has forgotten about his royal lineage, falls in love with the princess who lives across the river. Through a series of misfortunes and adventures he wins the princess Marigold, and defeats the evil stepmother just as expected in fairy tales.</p> <p>The most non-traditional part of this story is Edric the Troll, who spices his speech with mangled proverbs as he advises his foster child/prince through his teenage growing pains. Young readers from middle to secondary levels will enjoy this tongue-in-cheek tale about a troll, a prince, and the search for eternal love.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Freya Zipperer Savannah, Georgia</p>

<p><i>Coraline</i>, by Neil Gaiman HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002, 176pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Fantasy/Adventure/Horror ISBN: 0-3809-7778-8</p> <p>Educators and parents: Here is a book you will actually want to read alongside your charge! Almost like a Buddhist sutra with its complex themes veiled by more simplistic ones, <i>Coraline</i> does not disappoint.</p> <p>If you are looking for a twist on an old standard—a black cat instead of a rabbit, a couple of washed-up actresses in place of Tweedledee and Tweedledum, and a parade of mice replacing a retinue of other worldly creatures—it is all in this phantasmagoric fantastical horror novel. <i>Coraline</i> is <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> set in the 21st Century.</p> <p>Themes in the book include the power of imagination, the relationship of parents to their children, and a child's emerging sense of self, and how this growing individuality leads to the development of courage and fortitude to face life's difficulties. Because of graphic depictions and startlingly vivid imagery, I would be likely to suggest a middle school and older readership.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Laura Bullock Petal, Mississippi</p>	<p><i>Thorn Ogres of Hagwood</i> by Robin Jarvis Harcourt, 2002, 244 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Fantasy/Animal/Shape-Shifting/Evil ISBN: 0-15-216752-8</p> <p>In this <i>Book One</i> of the <i>Hagwood Trilogy</i>, werlings, diminutive human-like creatures who can change shape and live in a forgotten forest, are drawn into a war with their evil neighbors, blood-thirsty thorn ogres led by the evil, (literally) heartless High Lady Rhiannon.</p> <p>Young Gamaliel Tumpin, insecure and unable to change into a mouse in his early days of werling school, finds that he is more courageous than he might have thought. In concert with his fellow students, and led by an older, talented student, Finnan Luffkin, Gamaliel meets danger he never imagined. Finnan has his own weakness, which complicates the plot and will ultimately give meaning to the trilogy.</p> <p>An assortment of odd and humorous characters quickens the pace of this plot-driven tale. Highly imaginative, ornately descriptive, and vividly gory, <i>Thorn Ogres</i> will appeal to lovers of fantasy, and the ending will make readers want to find the next volume.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cyrene Wells Machias, Maine</p>
<p><i>Black-Eyed Susie</i>, by Susan Shaw Boyd's Mill Press, 2002, 167 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Mental Illness, Abuse ISBN: 1-56397-729-X</p> <p><i>Black-Eyed Susie</i> features a twelve-year old girl, Susie, who no longer eats, sleeps, or speaks. Her father is rarely home, and her mother insists that Susie is only "going through a stage."</p> <p>While visiting, Susie's Uncle Elliot realizes something is drastically wrong. He insists that she be taken for care. Susie is admitted to a mental hospital where she begins a long journey toward health. During her stay, Susie meets a therapist, Stella, and two other children—one who terrorizes her, and one who offers friendship while dealing with his own struggles.</p> <p>Author Susan Shaw, at most times, handles skillfully the topic of mental illness in adolescents. The book is written in a fashion that makes it understandable to young adolescents who may recognize themselves as Susie works her way out of her psychological prison. Susie moves to a new understanding of why she has been ill, and finally does make sense of her world with the book ending realistically. "They lived happily ever after" doesn't happen in this realistic story, but a feasible solution is found. This book is a good addition to any classroom library.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Connie Russell Chippewa Falls, WI</p>	<p><i>Flight to Freedom</i> by Ana Veciana-Suarez Orchard Books, 2002, 208 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Immigrant experience ISBN: 0-439-38199-1</p> <p>As one of the two novels in of the new First Person Fiction series by Scholastic, <i>Flight to Freedom</i> is a first person fictional account, written in the form of a diary, of Yara Garcia's immigration to Miami.</p> <p>The first quarter of the novel takes place in Cuba, as Yara and her family wait for the government to process their visas to the United States. In the meantime, Yara's Papi must work out in the fields, and she and her sister Ileana spend forty-five days laboring on a tobacco farm. Finally, they arrive in the U.S. only to face a new set of challenges. Yara has left her brother and other relatives behind, and she must contend with learning a new language, and a new way of life. Her Mami (mother) learns to drive and gets a job, while Papi (father) joins an anti-Castro group which hopes to end his rule, by force if necessary.</p> <p>Readers will relate to Yara's struggles with her parents as she tries to convince them to allow her to attend parties and travel with her friend, and as she keeps her sister's secrets.</p> <p>After the end of the diary entries, Veciana-Suarez recounts her own journey from Cuba to the United States, and how she gathered information for Yara's story. The First Person Fiction series resembles the <i>Dear America</i> series, and Scholastic has future accounts planned from Chinese Americans, Haitian Americans, and Puerto Rican Americans.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jackie Bach Claremore, OK</p>

<p><i>Paint by Magic</i> by Kathryn Reiss Harcourt Inc, 271 pp, \$17.00</p> <p>Mystery/Time Travel ISBN: 0-15-216361-1</p> <p>When Connor's mother starts acting strangely, the whole family becomes alarmed. She throws out the TV's, computers and cell phones; she insists on firing the cook, gardener and babysitter; she becomes very possessive about an art book that had been sitting on the coffee table.</p> <p>She also begins to fall into frightening periods of paralysis that become harder and harder to break. Connor solves the mystery of his mother's new behavior, and learns to understand it when he is transported back in time to 1926.</p> <p>Kathryn Reiss uses wonderful descriptions of places and atmosphere to tell this story. Dialogue, people and places jump off the page. Furthermore, as Reiss moves her story back and forth from 2002 to 1926 to 1479, she never breaks her rhythm or intensity. Though the ending is not unexpected, the journey there is fraught with challenges and surprises. This book is an excellent choice for younger teenagers or those who want a fast, exciting plot.</p> <p>Audrey Berner Montreal, Quebec, Canada</p>	<p><i>The Parallel Universe of Liars,</i> by Kathleen Jeffrie Johnson Roaring Brook Press, 2002, 192 pgs., \$15.95</p> <p>Sexual abuse/Family/Self-esteem ISBN:0-7613-1746-5</p> <p>Fifteen year-old Robin Davis, overweight and insecure, feels like she lives in a "parallel universe" where lies and secrets are commonplace.</p> <p>First is the affair she discovers between Frankie, the handsome model next door who abuses drugs and alcohol, and her silicone-enhanced stepmother, Janice. Second, is her secret voyeurism through which she learns about sex. Then, there is her own illegal sexual relationship with Frankie, which both excites and scares her. Finally, surrounding these secrets are the relatively normal teenage problems: first dates, dysfunctional families, and self-esteem issues.</p> <p>In her debut novel, Jeffries tells a compelling story whose multiple issues and problems would relate to a number of adolescent readers, especially females. However, because Robin's "abusive" association with Frankie is never brought to the attention of adults, and is not ended cleanly nor clearly enough, I would hesitate to recommend this novel for students below high school age.</p> <p>Lisa Scherff Knoxville, TN</p>
<p><i>The Bagpiper's Ghost</i> by Jane Yolen Harcourt, 2002, 125 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Magic/Ghost Story ISBN: 0-15-202310-0</p> <p>In this third installment in Yolen's <i>Tartan Magic</i> series, thirteen-year-old twins Jennifer and Peter are lured by a magical dog to a cemetery to see the Lady in White.</p> <p>The dog speaks in a Scottish brogue and provides much of the comic relief in the novel. When the ghost of Mary McFadden appears, she points a long, white finger at the twins, screaming with "anger, fear, loathing, horror...and longing." Jennifer decides to help Mary fulfill her purpose here on earth, which soon appears in the ghost of bagpiper Iain McGregor. Mary thinks that now they can finally be together, but the cold iron fence that separates them is harmful to magical creatures.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the spirit of Mary's twin brother possesses Peter's body. Peter-as-Andrew admits lying to Mary about Iain's death to prevent the marriage of his sister to a man of lower standing. Before there can be any resolution, the sun rises, and the ghosts disappear, but Andrew is still trapped inside Peter. If Jennifer can't rid Peter of Andrew's spirit soon, Peter will be lost forever.</p> <p>While the story will appeal to reluctant readers, the Scottish dialect is complex enough to warrant a glossary at the end of the book. Students who read the other books in the series will better understand the allusions to events and characters from <i>The Wizard's Map</i> and <i>The Pictish Child</i>.</p> <p>Cindi Carey Lacey, Washington</p>	<p><i>Doomed Queen Anne</i> by Carolyn Meyer Gulliver Books/Harcourt, 2002, 240pp., \$17.00</p> <p>History/Young Royals ISBN 0-15-216523-1</p> <p>Promising Henry VIII a male heir to his throne, Anne Boleyn manipulates him to her will by refusing to submit to his conjugal wishes. She convinces him to have his first marriage annulled to make their union legal and to maintain her integrity. When the Pope does not support this action, Henry splits the Church of England from the Catholic Church, an act that enrages many of his subjects.</p> <p>Anne does become Queen, but when she does not produce a male child, she falls from favor. Though innocent of adulterous treason, she is convicted and beheaded. However, Elizabeth, the daughter whom she and Henry VIII conceive, does eventually become Queen. Given her options at the time, Anne Boleyn behaves in an understandable, if not exemplary, way.</p> <p>Readers age 12 and up will gain a more profound understanding of the intrigue and the behind-the-scenes treachery of life in the British Royal Court in the 1500s.</p> <p>Edgar H. Thompson Emory, Virginia</p>

<p><i>Kicked Out</i> by Beth Goobie Orca Book Publishers, 2002, 92 pp., \$7.95</p> <p><i>Kicked Out</i> is the story of fifteen-year-old Dime's struggles to discover her own self-worth. Still reeling from her guilt over her complete recovery from a car accident that left her beloved older brother a quadriplegic, Dime feels that she does not deserve the life she has. This attitude manifests itself in many ways. She has conflicts with her parents, is failing at school, and has a relationship with a boyfriend who treats her like she feels: terrible. Finally, her parents kick her out of their house to live with her older brother.</p> <p>With this fresh start, Dime faces new challenges, learns to appreciate herself, and begins to make better choices in her life.</p> <p><i>Kicked Out</i> is a good choice for older students who tend to lose interest in longer books. The story involves situations common to teens (arguments about curfews, dating, demands for more respect/responsibility) that will provide good grounds for discussion. The storyline, dialogue, and vocabulary are written at a reading level that would provide a successful experience for struggling readers, but would likely prove too simplistic for students reading at or above grade level.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Maryanne Obersinner Eugene, Oregon</p>	<p><i>King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-Advised Autobiography</i> by Chris Crutcher Greenwillow Books, 2003, 208 pp., \$16.99</p> <p><i>King of the Mild Frontier</i> is an autobiography by Chris Crutcher. Chris Crutcher, the renowned author of <i>Chinese Handcuffs</i> and <i>Staying Fat for Sarah Burns</i> (among other award winners), has strung together a set of Christmas lights in his "Ill-Advised Autobiography." In this book, fresh incidents are mingled with favorites that he has included in many of his talks before audiences of young adult literature fans.</p> <p>Crutcher offers a composite of the characters who appear in his fiction. Though he occasionally jumps back and forth chronologically, the style, the sarcasm, the pity, the heart—indeed all the issues that pack his novels—are in this non-fiction book about his very own life. The events he chooses to write about allow the reader to speculate on those he didn't share, though he names name, even unflatteringly, in an effort to explore truth.</p> <p>The book reads fast; it is engaging, and satisfying. The qualities that permeates the book and endears Chris to his fans, is the element that he applies to his hero Michael Jordan, and one he shares with him: humor and humility.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Len DeAngelis Newport, RI</p>
<p><i>Heading Out</i> edited by Gloria Kamen Careers Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2003, 200 pp., \$15.95</p> <p><i>Heading Out</i> is a biography edited by Gloria Kamen. Editor Kamen aims to answer how career decisions are made via twenty-four individuals categorized as writers in the arts, science, medicine and invention, business and politics, and sports. She selects people who exemplify persistence, self-confidence, and talent, and explains the path they took that led them to success, hoping that readers learn "how others coped and succeeded should send its own message to readers."</p> <p>Ken Burns, Pauline Fisk, Dean Kamen (whose name and selection stirs questions), and Katherine Paterson, write pieces for the book. Others have excerpts from their writings chosen by the editor. Short introductions preceded the words of each person. Why the editor made the choices she did among the many available is not explained, and hence, tends to limit the book's usefulness. Reading to a class, though, and discussing each person on the basis of the book's purpose serves a readership. Some pieces (Sydney Poitier, Nelson Mandela, Vernon E. Jordan, Boris Yelsin, Dan Rather, Lance Armstrong) excel, and will tease the reader/listener to explore more.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Len DeAngelis Newport, RI</p>	<p><i>A Circle Of Time</i>, by Marisa Montes Harcourt, 2002, 261 pp., \$17.00</p> <p><i>A Circle of Time</i> is a time travel mystery by Marisa Montes. <i>A Circle of Time</i> opens with a dramatic accident that simultaneously thrusts fourteen-year-old Alison Blair into a coma, and into the body of Becky Lee Thompson, a teenager living in California at the beginning of the twentieth century. Alison's mission—which she has no choice but to accept—is to save Becky from the disastrous fate that awaits her.</p> <p>Initially, Alison has little understanding of the source of Becky's danger. However, when Teresa Cardona Pomales, a daughter of a wealthy Spanish landowner, takes Alison under her wing, she begins to unravel the mystery, which lies within the complex history and relationships of the Pomales family. Joshua Winthrop, Becky's attractive and sensitive boyfriend, also helps Alison, and in so doing develops a bond that extends through time.</p> <p>Middle school readers who enjoy fantasy, mystery, and romance will especially appreciate this ambitious second novel. Although the plot is somewhat repetitive and predictable, the writing is strong and the ending creative. The exploration of issues such as life after death, and cultural change and diversity, makes this novel not only entertaining, but educational, with potential for readership across many different ages and grade levels.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tom Phillon Oak Park, Illinois</p>

The 1980's: Earthsong (The Century Kids),
by Dorothy and Tom Hoobler
The Millbrook Press, 2002 158 pp., \$22.90

The 80's and Popular Culture;
Environmental Issues
ISBN 0-7613-1608-6

The *Century Kids* Series, of which *Earthsong* is a later installment, follows several families through the decades with a focus on the history, culture and issues of that decade.

This particular volume features cousins Suzanne, Eric and Jason as they battle the owners of an unscrupulous leather tanning company which is dumping toxic chemicals into Lake Chohobee.

The text is liberally sprinkled with references to the icons and inventions of the decade – personal computers, Rubik's Cube, point and shoot cameras, *Rolling Stone*. In addition, photographs of these icons accompany snapshots of the characters sporting the hairstyles and dress of the decade.

The text of this book and others in the series would be great for a study of the decades and a cross-curricular language arts/social studies link. Unfortunately, the characters are not very engaging. The stereotypical, undeveloped characters move through a flat, predictable plot linked to the signature topic of the 80's – environmental concerns.

Marge Ford
Campbell, Ohio

Women In Politics by Karen Zeinert
Twenty-First Century Books, 2002, 112 pp., \$29.90

Women/Politics/Leadership
ISBN: 0-7613-2253-1

In the latter portion of the twentieth century, no single movement has had a greater impact on social change in political life than the introduction of women into higher office. Now, it is commonplace to see women, of all races and status, occupy prominent national positions, and even, allude to running for the presidency itself.

In an easy to read, smartly designed nonfiction work, Twenty-First Century books presents another in its series of books that tell interesting stories about the lives of significant individuals. This time, the story is the useful history about women in American political life, not just those who ran for office, but also famous advisers and appointees (e.g., Eleanor Roosevelt and Sandra Day O'Connor). The book begins in 1774 when 51 North Carolina women agreed to become actively involved in the conflict between England and the colonies, and then moves on to the antislavery movement and to suffrage. The black-and-white photos and reproductions that appear throughout are good touchstones for discussion, and a time line runs from 1774 through 2000 compliments the text.

Zeinert's book gives a sharp, historical and highly informative approach to the presence of women in American political life, and serves as a valuable primer for anyone who is even remotely interested in learning about both the sacrifices and glory of being in public office. This is a good resource for both middle and high school social studies classes.

Jeffrey S. Kaplan
Orlando, Florida

Body Marks: Tattooing, Piercing, and Scarification
By Kathleen Gay and Christine Whittington
Twenty-First Century Books, 2002, 112 pp., \$14.95

Tattoos/Body Piercing
ISBN: 0-7613-2352-X

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to get a tattoo? Or, maybe, you already have one. Did it hurt? Is it hidden? Revealed? Do you like it? Or are you filled with regrets?

Everything you would want to know about the art of tattooing and body piercing can be found in this complete guide to the latest in the art of decorating one's skin. This book, sure to be of interest to adolescents, discusses the history of various forms of body marking, the current popularity of body piercing and tattoos, the how and why this 'art' is done, and some things to think about before choosing to be pierced or tattooed.

Authors Gay and Christine Whittington trace the roots of body decorations and modifications from ancient cultures where tattoos were marks of ownership for slaves or punishment for criminals, to today's trends where celebrities and teens often sport both tattoos and piercings. The authors include good sections about safety precautions, as well as warnings about the social implications of body modification.

The tone throughout remains neutral, and the text is well researched and well organized. Good-quality, full-color and archival photos appear throughout.

David Quill
Setauket, New York

The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler by James Cross Giblin
Clarion Books, 2002, 246 pp., \$ 21.00

Biography/Dictator/Nazis
ISBN: 0-395-90371-8

A book about Adolf Hitler is never an easy read. One wonders: How can someone grow up to be such an evil human being—as if "human being" is a fit description for such a demented soul.

Yet fascination, curiosity, and a basic need to know compels the most reluctant reader to learn about this most heinous of all people. Complete with photographs and timelines, this good read (if you can call a book about Hitler, a good read) is bound to interest high school students who want to learn more about the individual who singlehandedly mesmerized the masses and changed the world.

A brilliant politician, Hitler swayed the entire German nation with promises of renewal and prosperity, even as he managed a strategy to dominate most of Europe. As he systematically carried out his plan, he set World War II in motion. Meanwhile, he managed to convince many rational German citizens that Jews were the cause of all evil, devising and ordering the deaths of more than six million men, women, and children.

In a straightforward and matter of fact manner, James Cross Giblin explores the forces that shaped the man as well as the social conditions that furthered his rapid rise to power. Beginning with his childhood in Austria to his final days in a Berlin bunker, we learn of why this enigmatic, deranged despot was able to destroy the civilized world.

Jeffrey S. Kaplan
Orlando, Florida

<p>The Way Science Works by Robin Kerrod and Sharon Ann Holgate Dorling Kindersley Publishing, Inc., 2002, 160 pp., \$24.95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Science/Physical World ISBN: 0-7894-8562-1</p> <p>This wonderful book is complete with exquisite full-color illustrations and photographs of the fascinating world of scientific exploration. Young and old readers alike will delight in the jam-packed and detailed information about the history, principles, and procedures behind scientific experiments, and discoveries. The experiments within the book will particularly intrigue science teachers, as they provide the step-by-step directions needed to experience science in action. The book primarily discusses the processes that occur in the real world: experiments involving such physical properties as matter, atoms, elements, forces, energy, heat, sound, light, color, electricity, and magnetism.</p> <p>This terrific resource explains key theories in clear and accessible language, and highlights even the smallest of detail with clear and vivid images. From creating your own polymer slime to investigating rocket power, budding and accomplished scientists will relish the chance to experience vicariously how science really works. This is a perfect complement to a science curriculum at school, or making science fair projects at home.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Judith Johnson Oviedo, Florida</p>	<p><i>The Cannibals: Starring Tiffany Spratt</i> by Cynthia D. Grant Roaring Brook Press, 2002, 148 pp., \$</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Teen Problems/Humor ISBN: 0-7613-2759-2</p> <p>Tiffany Spratt, head of the cheerleading group called the Cannibals, is into celebrities, glamour, and little else. In her journal, Tiffany recounts the events of her senior year at Hiram Johnson High. Readers are privy to Tiffany's triumphs and tragedies, not to mention her beauty tips. She tries to pursue a relationship with the new guy in school, Campbell MacLaine, but Campbell seems to want a girl with less style, and more substance.</p> <p>It seems as if all Tiffany's dreams will come true when she successfully lobbies to have <i>Scream Bloody Murder</i> filmed at her school. But, when the movie people back out unexpectedly, Tiffany is blamed for the ensuing chaos: the swimming pool is filled with fake blood; two major soft drink companies sue the school; and all her friends desert her. Will Tiffany be ever able to show her face again?</p> <p>This novel will primarily appeal to high school girls who revel in its confessional format. The novel's greatest strength is its humor. Author Cynthia Grant pokes fun at everything—from teen slasher flicks to 1-800 numbers—but she is never preachy or heavy-handed. Instead, the author gently reminds her readers what really matters in life. Hint – it is the cake, and not the frosting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Eileen Callery Shrub Oak, New York</p>
<p><i>The Doomspell: A Battle Between God and Evil</i> by Cliff McNish Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2002, 214 pp., \$17.99</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Witches/Magic/Good and Evil ISBN: 0-8037-2710-0</p> <p><i>Doomspell</i> is the captivating story of Rachel and her younger brother Eric, two adventurous young children who discover that they have magical powers. Written in a style reminiscent of Harry Potter, this novel is a superb first effort by McNish.</p> <p>This novel begins as Rachel and Eric are suddenly snatched from their home on earth, and taken to the land of Ithrea by Dragwena, an evil witch with blood red skin, four sets of teeth, and a snake-like mouth. Dragwena, who has controlled the gray, sunless, snowy Ithrea for hundreds of years, has captured and killed thousands of children, and now she has her eyes set on Rachel.</p> <p>Dragwena believes Rachel is the one and only 'child-hope,' the child whose magical powers will one day rule Ithrea, but others have different ideas; specifically, they want Rachel to lead a rebellion against the evil Dragwena.</p> <p>When Dragwena, though, tries to use her most powerful spell, the Doomspell, this nasty witch finds that her evil is no match for Rachel, Eric, and the good wizard Larpkenya. A fun read for youngsters who enjoy fantasy adventures.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Deena Williams Newman Rockledge, Florida</p>	<p><i>The Hero's Trail: A Guide for a Heroic Life</i> by T.A. Barron Philomel, 2002, 131 pp. \$14.99</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Inspiration; Setting high goals ISBN: 0-399-23860-3</p> <p>T. A. Barron, author of the popular <i>Lost Years of Merlin</i> series and <i>Kate in the Heartland</i> trilogy, is an active advocate for the many adolescents who can—and do—have a positive impact on the world. In this moving collection, Barron weaves together stories of young heroes. Some, like Anne Frank, are names with whom young readers are familiar. Others, like Keema McAdoo, a young teen who set up an after school program in her Massachusetts town as a way to provide kids in her neighborhood with an option to gangs and street violence, are new to readers. All of the book's heroes inspire readers to take action in our own neighborhoods and situations. Barron's gentle strength and optimism are evident in the narrative portions that he composes as he connects the threads of this wonderful book.</p> <p>Barron is also the creator of the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, a competition named for his mother, in which young people are honored for their truly fine and selfless works. For more information, see barronprize.org, and his Website, www.tabarron.com.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sissi Carroll Tallahassee, FL</p>