

<p>The Black Brothers by Lisa Tetzner Front Street Publishing, 2004, 144 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Survival/Friendship ISBN: 1-932425-04-7</p> <p>Giorgio, a young boy, struggles valiantly to free himself from his master in <i>The Black Brothers</i>. A desperate situation results in Giorgio's father selling him to a strange man for labor in a far off city. A struggle for freedom, acceptance, and bountiful meals awaits young Giorgio in his new home of Milan. A friendship develops that will be the only force to sustain Giorgio's hope for a chance at a life other than chimney sweeping.</p> <p><i>The Black Brothers</i> is a phenomenally illustrated novel that entices the reader to turn the page again and again to follow the troubled life of Giorgio. The illustrations allow the reader to jump right into Giorgio's terrifying experiences in the chimneys of Milan.</p> <p>A book that will touch your heart, this novel reveals the importance of determination, acceptance, and friendship, as seen through the eyes of one young boy fighting for his freedom.</p> <p>Jolie Darby Topeka, KS</p>	<p>Blue Fingers by Cheryl Aylward Whitesel Clarion Books, 2004, 252 pp., \$15.00</p> <p>Taking a step into the past and a nation far across the seas, Cheryl Whitesel captivates her audience with a tale of ninja clans and samurai warriors. Koji, a Japanese twin, is desperately searching for belonging and acceptance in a place where twins are thought of as a sign of misfortune and disgrace. Through a strange twist of fate, a secret ninja clan captures Koji. Forced to endure ninja training, Koji must learn to accept this new ninja lifestyle and forget his family at home or die.</p> <p>I was intrigued by the ninja history intertwined throughout the text. Whitesel combines fact with fiction, giving her readers a glimpse of what ninja life may have been like. My favorite element of the novel was the relationship of Koji's family. The readers are able to examine sibling rivalry, as well as discover the importance of family and belonging.</p> <p>Christina Hosler Waverly, KS</p>
<p>Blue Moon by Marilyn Halvorson Orca Book Publishers, 2004, 109 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Relationships/Responsibility/Romance ISBN: 1-55143-320-6</p> <p>Bobbie Jean has saved up enough money to buy a barrel racing horse. At the auction, she decides to buy a blue roan horse that has seen better days. Feeling foolish, she, nevertheless, takes the horse home.</p> <p>Through good food, wise training, and the help of a friend, Bobbie Jean eventually gets Blue Moon into shape to compete in barrel racing. Attending a small rodeo, Bobbie Jean wins first prize, only to find that the horse has been stolen.</p> <p>This fast-paced novel will certainly appeal to all—horse lovers, as well as those who root for the underdog.</p> <p>Joy Frerichs Chatsworth, GA</p>	<p>Cold Tom by Sally Prue Scholastic, 2004, 187 pp., \$5.99</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 0-439-48269-0</p> <p>Tom lives in the common with the rest of his tribe, elf-like creatures with heightened senses and the ability to "call to the stars" and becoming invisible. He has no concept of family or friends, as he has been caring for himself since he was able to crawl. He fears humans as demons and believes they are an inferior race.</p> <p>Tom's only job was to warn others of approaching demons, but he has failed. In consequence, he faces death by Larn's silver sword, so he flees to the city of demons, where he might be safe. Within the city, he finds shelter in Anna's backyard shed. Tom's original intention was simply to avoid death, but instead he learns lessons that do much more than save his life.</p> <p>An intriguing interpretation of humanity, Prue's fantasy grips the reader from the start. I found myself not only wondering about the plot line, but also about the portrayal of human behavior. The book, broken into 48 short chapters, is easily read, and I will definitely recommend it to many of my students.</p> <p>Elaine Gruenbacher Clearwater, KS</p>

<p><i>Cruise Control</i> by Terry Trueman HarperTempest, 2004, 148 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>New Realism ISBN: 0-06-623960-5</p> <p>Paul McDaniell, a high school senior, is a grenade with his hand on the pin.</p> <p>Living in Seattle with his mother, his sister, and his retarded brother nearly pushes him over the edge. He despises his father for leaving the family, and he feels responsible for helping his mother with his brother. Paul loves and defends Shawn, although he guiltily resents him at times wondering what his life would be like without him. Sports, especially basketball, provide Paul with an outlet to release his anxiety; still, he struggles with how his family situation will affect his future and his dreams of an athletic scholarship to Georgetown University.</p> <p>His friends worry about Paul's angry demeanor, and at times step in to keep him from inflicting pain on his provokers. However, when Paul's mom confronts him with the reason his father "abandoned" the family, he is able to release the pent up anger and view his situation from a more realistic and accurate perspective.</p> <p>Rhea Spears Chandler, AZ</p>	<p><i>The Dating Diaries</i> by Kristen Kemp PUSH (Scholastic), 2004, 266 pp., \$6.99</p> <p>Dating/Self-discovery ISBN: 0-439-62298-0</p> <p>Katie James's life, like many high school girls, revolves around her boyfriend, Paul. They've been dating for almost five years, but he just turned her world upside down. After spending a week in bed feeling sorry for herself, she picks herself up off the ground, resolving to make up for lost time. Katie will have 12 dates in six weeks, with an ultimate goal of falling in love again before prom. Along the way, she undergoes a makeover, not just in a physical sense, but emotionally as well, realizing that there is more to life than having a boyfriend.</p> <p>I highly enjoyed following Katie through her journey of self-discovery, recalling many of my own high school dating memories. Kemp captures the essence of today's teen world, incorporating experiences with alcohol, music, same-sex relationships, and many more. I would recommend this novel to all my female (and some male) students looking for a realistic, easy-to-read, story about modern teen issues.</p> <p>Elaine Gruenbacher Clearwater, KS</p>
<p><i>Eager</i> by Helen Fox Wendy Lamb Books, 2004, 280 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Science Fiction ISBN: 0-385-74672-5</p> <p>In the twenty-first century, scientific study and technology have transformed human life. Humans co-exist in a world where robots are more than personal assistants. The new BDC4 robots, created by rich Technocrats, are programmed with the same interests as their owners. They are built to satisfy humans' physical and emotional needs. Protagonists Gavin and Fleur Bell are immersed in this world. The house they live in watches their every move, and there are few moments when they are alone.</p> <p>Helen Fox takes science fiction fans into a fantastical tale about Eager, a robot questioning the meaning of his feelings and whether he is alive. Eager comes to live with the Bells to replace Grumps, their older model. Considered new, improved, and much like the Technocrats' BDC4, Eager is physically and emotionally different. The BDC4s are considered the robot to own, but, as Gavin and Fleur discover, they are not as wonderful as everyone thinks.</p> <p>Eager teams up with the protagonists to pursue the truth behind the BDC4s' behavior. Along the way, Eager becomes a part of the family and finds the reasons for his existence.</p> <p>Gina Desai Glendale, AZ</p>	<p><i>Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War Orphan Became An American Boy</i> by Andrea Warren Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004, 106 pp., \$17.00</p> <p>Historical Biography ISBN: 0-374-32224-4</p> <p>This touching work chronicles the closing days of American involvement in the Vietnam War and "Operation Babylift," a last-ditch attempt by the American government to save orphaned children in Vietnam before the Communist Army marched into the city. If the children stayed, there would be little hope for survival. Most of the children were of mixed blood, half Vietnamese and half American. Northern Vietnam looked upon these children as having "the blood of the enemy" and would kill them outright. Matt Steiner became one of these orphans when his mother committed suicide, and his G.I. father was unknown. His grandmother gave him up to an American agency when she could no longer provide for Matt.</p> <p>Warren pieces a narrative of Matt's early years using what little Matt remembers, and the results are heartbreaking. Matt wrestles with abandonment and the rapidly approaching horrors of war. Warren also chronicles Mr. Steiner's harrowing trip to America and his adjustment to his American family. <i>Escape from Saigon</i> is compelling enough to read in one sitting and stays with you long after you put it down.</p> <p>Eldridge Tsosie Tempe, AZ</p>

<p>Exiled: Memoirs of a Camel by Kathleen Karr Cultural Awareness/Point of View/Adventure Marshall Cavendish, 2004, 240 pp., \$15.95 ISBN: 0-7614-5164-1</p> <p>Allah in his wisdom created the camel, Ali. Ali was born in the land of the Ancient Ones. Raised Muslim amid the pyramids and sand dunes of Egypt, Ali was captured and tamed by men-beasts; but in his heart, Ali never submitted. Sold to an American soldier in 1856, Ali and other camels journeyed by ship to Texas.</p> <p>Becoming acclimated to his new environment, one sees life through Ali's eyes as he finds purpose, selects a mate, starts a family, and secures his freedom in the Mohave Desert.</p> <p>Based on actual events in the history of the United States, this fictional story from the point of view of a camel is a delightful tale that takes the reader into two very different worlds that also have many similarities.</p> <p>Joy Frerichs Chatsworth, GA</p>	<p>First Crossing: Stories About Teen Immigrants Edited by Donald R. Gallo Candlewick Press, 2004, 224 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 0-7636-2249-4</p> <p>Gallo's latest collection of short fiction examines the immigration experience from the perspectives of teen-agers from ten cultural groups. <i>First Crossing</i> offers a variety of immigration stories.</p> <p>We have Ameen, a Palestinian working to gain the respect of his teammates necessary to play varsity quarterback. We have Marco, a Mexican boy making his first trip to America to work with his father. And we have Maya, a girl from Kazakhstan whose family's immigration was sponsored by an aunt who married an American through an international dating magazine. Other stories feature protagonists from Venezuela, China, Romania, Sweden, Korea, Haiti, and Cambodia. Authors in this collection include Pam Munoz Ryan, Alden Carter, and Lensey Namioka.</p> <p><i>First Crossing</i> is an invaluable resource for the contemporary middle school and high school classroom. The stories explore the challenges and possibilities faced by young people as their first cultures collide with the dominant American culture, and it offers a clear sense of empathy and shared humanity. This collection offers realistic situations and characters and should help temporary adolescents better understand complex cultural dynamics.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>
<p>Flux by Beth Goobie Orca Book Publishers, 2004, 258 pp., \$16.95 Speculative Fiction ISBN: 1551433141</p> <p>When her mother disappears, 12-year-old Nellie is left to manage on her own. She has a tough, lonely life on the streets, stealing money and food and evading a rough gang of boys called the Skulls. Nellie becomes aware of "flux," the ability to alter her vibratory rate in the molecular field, and she learns to travel back and forth to different "levels" of reality. During her travels to parallel worlds, Nellie glimpses horrifying experiments on children and wonders about her own unremembered past. She eventually finds a friend in 14-year-old Deller, the leader of the Skulls. Together they search for Deller's missing younger brother, who is trapped in another reality.</p> <p>I loved this book! The plot is imaginative; the characters are interesting and believable; the strange-yet-familiar setting is intriguing. Many of the mysteries of this story are left unanswered, leaving this reader happily anticipating a sequel. It's highly recommended.</p> <p>Wendy Street Pella, IA</p>	<p>A Heart Divided by Cherie Bennett and Jeff Gottesfeld Romance/Historical Fiction Delacorte Press, 2004, 306 pp., \$15.95 ISBN: 0-385-32749-8</p> <p>Kate Pride, at age ten, decides with passion her purpose in life, when her parents take her to see her first Broadway play in New York City. She wants to be a writer! Five years later, her parents enroll her in the appropriate classes for such a career, and Kate is chosen for an elite playwright club. So, when her father tells the family they are moving to Tennessee because of a job transfer, Kate feels her life is over.</p> <p>Although she finds their new home charming, and the townspeople extraordinarily friendly, the high school is a different story. She finds it filled with young adults of traditional views, a school divided between some white people who still want to raise the Confederate flag and some black people who view the flag as racism.</p> <p>Kate meets a boy named Jackson Redford. He and Kate fall in love and realize their hearts are not divided. When a family member is caught in the crossfire of a riot at a football game, Kate is able to write the play reminding the students of what they were fighting for.</p> <p>Vicki Boartfield Tempe, AZ</p>

<p><i>Heck Superhero</i> by Martine Leavitt Abandonment/Comics/Emotional Problems Front Street, 2004, 144 pp., \$16.95 ISBN: 1-886910-94-4</p> <p>Heck's mother, who suffers from depression, telephones Heck while he is at his best friend Spence's house. She tells him they have been evicted from their apartment, to stay with Spence, and she will call soon.</p> <p>Not wanting to acknowledge his mother's illness to others, Heck begins a search through the city to find his mother. While Heck lives on the street for five days, he does one good deed after another believing that his assistance will provide the way to find his mother before Social Services finds him. Within his mind, Heck is a superhero who needs to rescue his mother from hypertime—the time not connected to reality. Heck encounters many obstacles, but through his ability to draw, he finds comfort from his own reality.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Roger Caswell Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>The Hippie House</i> by Katherine Holubitsky Impact of Violence/Coming of Age Orca Book Publishers, 2004, 233 pp., \$16.95 ISBN: 1-55143-316-8</p> <p>In 1970 Emma is 14, living in a close-knit rural Canadian community and looking forward to a new high school. She is surrounded by loving family and friends, and everything seems safe and right with the world. But this all comes suddenly to an end when a local girl turns up missing and is discovered by Emma's brother, raped and murdered, in a small outbuilding, the Hippie House, on their farm.</p> <p>The community suffers as residents try to deal with this violence. Life is no longer as good or safe. Girls are warned not to roam freely. Neighbors begin to distrust each other; false accusations become commonplace. Nerves, nightmares, depression, and anxieties are rampant. A shadow covers the daily lives of Emma's family and her neighbors; no one can relax.</p> <p>Written in a somewhat honey, even flat, style, Holubitsky's story keeps us reading to piece together the clues. Readers won't be able to quit as they reach the climax and learn the identity of the murderer. Although dealing with a horrific event, Holubitsky celebrates the strength that comes from people bonding together to help each other in trying times.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jeanne M. McClim Asheville, NC</p>
<p><i>Honeysuckle House</i> by Andrea Cheng Friendship/Family Relationships/Multicultural Front Street, 2004, 136 pp., \$16.95 ISBN: 1-886910-99-5</p> <p>People are more alike than different. The reader is engaged through the use of two 10-year-old narrators, Sarah and Tiang, who relate the story in alternating chapters.</p> <p>Sarah, a Chinese American who does not speak any Chinese, is coping with the loss of her best friend, as well as her father's job which requires him to be absent from home for extended periods of time.</p> <p>Tiang, a Chinese girl, enters Sarah's school and is upset with her new surroundings, her father's endeavors to get a green card, and adapting to a new school.</p> <p>Paired together by their teacher, the two girls strive to find mutual ground for understanding. They not only have to work through their problems, but they also must deal with the stereotyping by others. When they eventually open up to each other, they find that there is a basis for friendship.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Joy Ferichs Chatsworth, GA</p>	<p><i>Hunger Moon</i> by Sarah Lamstein Family Problems/Coming of Age Front Street Publishing, 2004, 112 pp., \$15.95 ISBN: 1-932425-05-5</p> <p>Set in the 1950s, <i>Hunger Moon</i> follows the life of young Ruthie Tepper. Ruthie possesses the characteristics of the typical middle school student: she is interested in boys, popularity, stardom, and her best friend, Jeanie. However, Ruthie's world suddenly changes when she enters the walls of her home. Her family only seems to communicate through yelling. Ruthie's dysfunctional family leaves her the burden of taking care of her three younger brothers, one of whom is mentally disabled. Standing up for what she believes to be right leads Ruthie on a courageous journey.</p> <p>Ruthie's vivacious character and exciting dreams capture the audience in <i>Hunger Moon</i>. Her passion for what she believes in will leave the reader inspired by her persistence but aching for her in the end. Ruthie Tepper will steal your heart and make it impossible to forget her.</p> <p><i>Hunger Moon</i> is a story of compassion, survival, and hope for one little girl.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jolie Darby Topeka, KS</p>

<p><i>The Insiders</i> by J. Minter Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2004, 249 pp., \$8.95</p> <p>Written by J. Minter, the author of "Ben's Life" (a guy's point-of-view column) in <i>Seventeen</i> magazine, <i>The Insiders</i> chronicles the misadventures of a group of middle- and upper-class friends who waste the days away popping prescription drugs, having casual sex, and emotionally abusing each other, while only occasionally showing up for school.</p> <p>Mickey, Arno, David, Patch, and Jonathan are lifelong friends. Mickey is a pill-popping alcoholic, while Arno is only interested in the opposite sex. David is an emotional wreck, contributing occasional emotional outbursts. Patch appears in the last couple of pages to reassure the reader that his friends aren't completely self-centered. Jonathan fancies himself the group's glue.</p> <p>Minter paints 'guy' archetypes with a roller rather than a paintbrush, thereby missing any real detail and attempts to make up for this deficiency using glitzy backdrops. Minter moves the characters around New York. Rather than fully developing their characters, Minter painstakingly catalogs their music, restaurants, clothing, vehicles and accessories. All of these characters know what's cool in New York.</p> <p>Eldridge Tsosie Tempe, AZ</p>	<p><i>Kat's Fall</i> by Shelley Hrdlitschka Orca Book Publishers, 2004, 168 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Darcy has it all under control. His mom is in prison, his dad doesn't care, and he has to take responsibility for raising his deaf, epileptic younger sister. But the 15-year-old is handling it all, except for that small problem he has with cutting himself. Then his mom is released from prison, and Darcy is accused of a terrible crime. His carefully ordered world spins wildly out of control.</p> <p>This short novel addresses a number of social issues: self-injury, dysfunctional families, substance abuse, sexual abuse, and alternative high schools. But the tone is very matter-of-fact and never preachy or melodramatic. Bad language is minimal.</p> <p>Despite the grim subjects, it is not a painful book to read. There are strong themes about the transcendent power of hope, love, and forgiveness. There is also a terrific teacher who demonstrates the pivotal role a caring adult can play when she doesn't give up on a surly, troubled teen.</p> <p>The plot doesn't contain any surprises and the ending is just a little too neat, but overall it's a very enjoyable book.</p> <p>Wendy Street Pella, IA</p>
<p><i>Kissing The Rain</i> by Kevin Brooks New York: Chicken House, 2004, 336 pp., \$16.95</p> <p><i>Kissing the Rain</i> thrills the reader by retelling a story told through the eyes of its protagonist, Michael "Moo" Nelson. From its opening lines, Moo's narration leaps from the pages, grabs you by the collar, and dares you to finish the novel. Riddled with angst and inner turmoil, Moo shows the reader just how it feels to live in his world.</p> <p>Michael earns the nickname "Moo" because he is overweight, and his peers ridicule him at every turn. The rain in this novel is not the meteorological kind, but rather the metaphorical variety. Moo calls the constant harassment and bullying that he receives from his classmates "the Rain." Moo's only refuge is his bridge—the footbridge overlooking the A12 bridge to be exact.</p> <p>Moo's sanctuary, however, quickly becomes his largest source of stress, as Moo witnesses an incident of road rage, which results in a man's death. Moo gives his eyewitness account of the events and realizes he has stumbled into the middle of a conspiracy to frame a local gangster. Moo is forced to grapple with questions of truth while searching deep within himself for answers.</p> <p>Jason Corbett Tempe, AZ</p>	<p><i>Letters from Wolfie</i> by Patti Sherlock Viking Press, 2004, 240 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Thirteen-year-old Mark Cantrell's decision to enlist his dog, Wolfie, as a scout for the Army is encouraged by a letter from his brother, Danny, serving in Vietnam, and his father, a former trumpet player with the First Calvary obsessed with duty and responsibility. Mark hopes Wolfie's service to his country will quicken Danny's return and get his family's life back to normal, so he can deal with his girlfriend Claire, his best friend Rick's turbulent home life, and the strained relationship of his parents. Further complications arise when Mark learns of the Army's policy of treating dogs as their equipment. Realizing the horrible fate awaiting Wolfie, Mark campaigns to bring Wolfie home along with the other service animals. Mark comes to understand that his father's views on war and duty differ from his own and finds his brother comes home a complete stranger.</p> <p>The Vietnam War serves as the catalyst and the crux of the changes in the Cantrell family's life. Adolescent pet owners and non-owners will enjoy the bond between Mark and Wolfie, although some adult readers might be turned off by the anti-war sentiment that permeates work.</p> <p>Eldridge Tsosie Tempe, AZ</p>

<p><i>A Mid-Semester Night's Dream</i> by Margaret Meacham Holiday House, 2004, 154 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Humor/Fantasy ISBN: 0-8234-1815-4</p> <p>Morgan Yates thought her problems would be solved when she gets a surprise visit from a fairy godmother. After all, what girl couldn't use a little help winning the affections of the best looking boy in junior high, getting her dad to stop dating the wrong woman, and fixing her best friend up with the perfect date?</p> <p>Naturally, Morgan is delighted to discover her doll's house inhabited by Gretta Fleetwing, a fairy-godmother-in-training. Unfortunately, this fairy godmother hasn't quite mastered her trade. One miscast spell follows another and soon Morgan finds herself with more problems than ever. Morgan is ready to send Gretta home, but she needs her help to set things straight.</p> <p>While the plot is a clever take off on <i>Cinderella</i> and <i>Mid Summer Night's Dream</i>, the dialogue and relationships are realistically rendered. This funny, fast-paced book's humor, endearing characters, and clever plot twists are sure to delight a young audience.</p> <p>Virginia Beesley Quinter, KS</p>	<p><i>Norman Tuttle on the Last Frontier: A Novel in Stories</i> by Tom Bodett Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2004, 192 pp., \$15.95 ISBN: 0-679-89031-9</p> <p>The title of this collection of closely related stories refers to both Norman Tuttle's Alaskan home and his angst-filled and often hilarious journey toward adulthood.</p> <p>Norman's first fishing trip with his father falls dangerously short of high expectations when Norman, unnoticed, falls off the boat into the frigid water of Alaska. Norman struggles to clear his head, take stock of the situation, and do the right thing. He struggles atop an icy piling and contemplates his fate as his father and uncle float away into the deepening night. Surprisingly for a 13-year-old boy, Norman loudly proclaims to the night that he has survived.</p> <p>So begins the journey of Norman, who tackles very real issues facing adolescents today, from discovering girls and all the complications that come with dating, to becoming responsible for one's self and finding your place in the world. Frank and Norman's stormy relationship is the underlying theme in all of the stories. Both characters' viewpoints are expressed quite succinctly, allowing readers a peek into what their parents might be going through with them.</p> <p>Eldridge Tsoisie Tempe, AZ</p>
<p><i>Overdrive</i> by Eric Walters Orca, 2004, 102 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Peer Pressure/Integrity ISBN: 1-55143-318-4</p> <p>Sixteen-year-old Jake is lucky: he's got his driver's license. However, this freedom comes with a price—due to poor academic performance, he is repeating the ninth grade.</p> <p>Left behind by his former classmates, Jake spends his free time with Mickey, a fellow freshman. When his older brother loans Jake his car for a night on the town, Mickey sees this as a chance to pick up girls and drag race. Giving in to the pressure, Jake makes a poor decision that could have lifelong implications. Now he must do the right thing, as hard as it is.</p> <p>With its short chapters, easily defined conflict, and a main character who faces a tough and realistic decision, <i>Overdrive</i>, although written with teenage boys in mind, will be appealing to most reluctant readers.</p> <p>Lisa Scherff Kissimmee, FL</p>	<p><i>The President is Shot! The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln</i> by Harold Holzer Boyd's Mills Press, 2004, 144 pp., \$17.95</p> <p>Presidency/Civil War ISBN: 1-56397-985-3</p> <p>Harold Holzer explains the presidency and ultimate demise of one of the starkest icons in American history. He describes Lincoln as a man who, after a short career in the House of Representatives, was thrust back into politics when he learned of a piece of legislation that threatened to expand the role of slavery.</p> <p>Though unsuccessful at first, he finally won the nomination, and eventual presidency. Holzer reveals, in mature yet undaunting prose, that, as much as Lincoln was revered in the North, he was equally despised in the South. The author ushers in the names of the conspirators and their plot to kidnap Lincoln. The first family is also profiled. The personal grief of the Lincoln family, coupled with the war that plagued the nation on so many different fronts, deepened the eyes and the moods of the president. The book is peppered with pictures and illustrations. We know the unfortunate outcome of the shot speared through Booth's pistol, but Holzer does, what I assume any good historian does, ends with a couple of <i>what ifs</i>.</p> <p>Edward A. Wade Tempe, AZ</p>

<p>Pulling Princes by Tyne O'Connell Bloomsbury, 2004, 221 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Coming of Age/Relationships ISBN: 1-58234-957-6</p> <p>O'Connell has created a tale that appeals to many adolescent girls. Calypso, the main character, attends an elite boarding school in England while her parents live in Hollywood. As an American attending the school, Calypso has a difficult time fitting in. When Calypso returns for another year of schooling, she finds out she is rooming with Star, her best friend, and Georgina, one of the popular girls who berates Calypso on a regular basis.</p> <p>In a fencing match against Eades, the male counterpart to the girls' school, Calypso is up against Prince Freddie, next in line to the throne of England. After the match Freddie and Calypso talk, and Freddie becomes romantically interested in Calypso. As Freddie and Calypso's relationship progresses, Calypso's life at school becomes increasingly more difficult.</p> <p>Girls of all ages can relate to Calypso as she ventures out of the sheltered world she has created for herself and begins her first real relationship, deals with the difficulties involved in remaining true to herself, and recognizes the complexity of relationships and the strains relationships can create.</p> <p>Elle Wolterbeek Tempe, AZ</p>	<p>Remember: The Journey to School Integration by Toni Morrison Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004, 78 pp., \$18.00 ISBN: 0-618-39740-X</p> <p>Judging this book by its cover—and its use of a simple classroom photograph, it's obvious well-known author Toni Morrison will provide a gripping look at the road toward integration. She keeps her words to a powerful minimum, accompanying the stark, black and white archival photographs. The words and photos combine to provide an emotional simplicity to the history-shaping events of the Civil Rights movement.</p> <p><i>Remember: The Journey to School Integration</i> provides meaningful elements, such as a timeline of important events involving civil rights and integration in the United States and an extensive "Photo Notes" section that serves as an index of the photographs, including a brief note about each of the photos.</p> <p>Morrison's writing offers a fictional account of individuals' questions, thoughts, and dialogue to accompany the photographs, which provide an intense connection for the reader.</p> <p>While the written text may be limited, Morrison's book clearly illustrates the country's emotional upheaval of the time, and yet it demonstrates to young people the impact that period has on contemporary times. Morrison provides a lesson in history that all of us should know.</p> <p>Lori Atkins Goodson Wamego, KS</p>
<p>The Silent Boy by Lois Lowry Houghton Mifflin Co., 2003, 178 pp., \$15.00</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Mental Retardation ISBN: 0-618-28231-9</p> <p>Deeply reminiscent of Harper Lee's classic <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, Lois Lowry's <i>The Silent Boy</i> is a touching story of a series of tragic events in a small town in the years immediately preceding World War I. In the book's prologue we meet our narrator, Katy Thatcher, now an elderly woman and a retired physician. The rest of the book is her recollection of her friendship with and growing understanding of Jacob Stoltz, a mentally retarded boy who rarely speaks, loves animals, and possesses the capacity for tragedy and heroism.</p> <p>As in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, <i>The Silent Boy</i> describes the beauty and the ugliness of rural life through the eyes of a young girl, the only character in the story who understands Jacob's actions and his heroism.</p> <p>The text is enriched with antique photographs interspersed throughout, and Lowry inserts historical events (e.g. the San Francisco earthquake, the first automobiles) into the narrative to provide a rich historical context. <i>The Silent Boy</i> is a gentle, bittersweet, and well-crafted novel.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>Taylor Five by Ann Halam Wendy Lamb Books, 2004, 197 pp., \$15.95 ISBN: 0-385-73094-2</p> <p>LifeForce is a revolutionary company that has unlocked the secrets of preventing disease and aging. They have also created five clones who have grown up to be teenagers. Taylor is clone number five.</p> <p>Taylor hasn't always known her origins; that her DNA perfectly matches with someone else. Her parents loved her and only told her as much as she was ready to hear. Then, when she is 14, the cloning news goes public, and Taylor becomes international news.</p> <p>Taylor grew up with her family on the island of Borneo. Her parents ran an orangutan reserve owned by LifeForce (the company that created Taylor). Taylor and her younger brother Donny are as comfortable with the jungle and the orangutans as they are with people. But their lives are changed forever when a rebel group attacks the reserve. The only adult they can turn to for help is Uncle, an orangutan whose intelligence makes him seem almost human.</p> <p>As Taylor struggles to survive, she also searches to know what it means to be a copy of someone else and what it means to be human. She finds her answers in unexpected places.</p> <p>Holli Keel Mesa, AZ</p>

<p><i>Under the Sun</i> by Arthur Dorros Amulet Books, 2004, 216 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>War ISBN: 0-8109-4933-4</p> <p>Based loosely on the story of the “children’s village,” a community in Croatia rebuilt by a mixed group of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, many of whom were orphans of the war, <i>Under the Sun</i> traces the story of Ehmet, a thirteen-year-old who, with his mother, is displaced from Sarajevo and forced to wander across the countryside searching for sanctuary and missing family members.</p> <p>Dorros’ novel provides younger adolescents with a vivid description of the Bosnian conflict through a sympathetic and compelling character. Ehmet’s story demonstrates the futility and destruction caused by greed and ancient conflicts, but the novel also offers a vision of hope based on tolerance and compassion. Of particular interest is a diverse collection of compelling characters Ehmet meets on his journey in search of sanctuary.</p> <p><i>Under the Sun</i> is a memorable story set against an important and tragic series of events. It is not a particularly enjoyable book, but it is an important book.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Yankee Girl</i> by Mary Ann Rodman Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004, 216 pp., \$17.00</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Civil Rights ISBN: 0-374-38661-7</p> <p>Jackson, Mississippi, in the summer of 1964, seems like another country to new resident and former Chicago denizen Alice Ann Moxley. Alice learns that, among other things, she is a “Yankee girl.” Alice finds out that making friends is more difficult than in any other place she’s ever lived, especially since her father is an FBI agent assigned to Mississippi to protect the rights of blacks. Alice experiences alienation and fear for herself and her family, all the while keeping a personal journal including the daily headlines.</p> <p>Mary Ann Rodman draws on her own life experiences for this book. She was the 10-year-old daughter of an FBI agent in 1964 who moved to Jackson. <i>Yankee Girl</i> is rich with emotional detail interwoven through actual events and occurrences from the summer of 1964 to the summer of 1965. Rodman opens each chapter with a newspaper headline that might have been seen on the front page of the Jackson paper during that era. This book would be a terrific read for junior high school students when taking them through the complex issues of the 1950s and 1960s, especially for helping explain the complex issue of segregation.</p> <p>Cortney Milanovich Tempe, AZ</p>
<p><i>Zee’s Way</i> by Kristin Butcher Orca Book, 2004, 104 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Delinquency/Intergenerational Conflict ISBN: 1-55143-279-X</p> <p>Loiterers, punks—these are the names hurled at the 15-year-old boys in Zee’s gang by the merchants of Fairhaven Shopping Center. Unfair, discriminatory—retaliate the boys. A “war” is on, and Zee thinks he has the way to get the upper hand—paint graffiti on the wall of Feniuk’s Hardware. Graffiti is Zee’s statement of protest, to make the merchants aware they can’t push the boys around. They want to enjoy the shopping center too. This was their place to roller blade and hang out before the strip mall was built.</p> <p>Zee’s plan backfires. When Feniuk paints over the graffiti but keeps the picture Zee drew, he loses control of his art. Then when Feniuk catches him and makes him work to pay off his debt for the vandalism, Zee finds himself wanting to prove he is a real artist. In the process both sides begin to understand and respect each other.</p> <p>This novel, an easy-read for middle-grade students, explores the intergenerational conflict that often plagues relations between younger and older adults. In the end, both sides get beyond stereotypes and gain a bit of understanding—an important lesson in our conflict-ridden world.</p> <p>Jeanne M. McGlim Asheville, NC</p>	<p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review, send a copy of the book to:</i></p> <p>Lori Goodson 409 Cherry Circle Manhattan, KS 66503</p> <p><i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Lori Goodson at lagoodson@cox.net</i></p>