

<p><i>Bittersweet Sixteen</i> by Carrie Karasyov and Jill Kargman HarperCollins, 2006, 230 pp., \$15.99</p> <p><i>Bittersweet Sixteen</i> is a look into the lives of a group of teenage girls living in New York City and attending an out-of-your-reach expensive all-girls school. The story is told from the perspective of Laura, who is attending the school only because of scholarships. While her friends are wearing designer clothes and renting private jets to fly to Europe, Laura gets caught up in the whirlwind of being a teenage girl trying to “keep up with the Joneses.” The language and descriptions used in this book remind me of a mix of Fox’s “The O.C.” and MTV’s “My Super Sweet 16.” <i>Bittersweet Sixteen</i> would be enjoyed by any teenage girl who wonders what it would be like to have a glamorous life in New York City, but who knows that the reality of life is having great friends and family who allow you to be yourself.</p> <p>Bonny Martens Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Call Me the Canyon: A Love Story</i> by Ann Howard Creel Brown Barn Books, 2006, 224 pp., \$8.95 978-09768126-4-7</p> <p>In the late 1880s, Lester Demming and his daughter Madolen scratch out a harsh life in the canyons of Southeastern Utah. Madolen’s mother was Navajo, and after her death, Demming retreats into silence. So when Mormon missionaries offer to take Madolen in, she quickly accepts. Creel sympathetically depicts Mormonism, but she excels at describing the typology of Utah—the rugged beauty of the rocks and plateaus where the spirits of the “Ancient Ones” still dwell. A strength of the novel is Creel’s ability to weave in archeological information about the ancient Indian civilizations of the region, while she also explains the spread of mining, ranching, and Mormonism in the area. Her female characters are well-drawn, but she is less successful in showing Madolen’s spiritual and emotional journey from embracing the Mormon faith, to her love affair with a wealthy Harvard law student, to her eventual marriage to a Navajo trader. Creel never fully develops what it means to Madolen to be part Navajo, and her depiction of Navajo culture is lacking in nuance.</p> <p>Johanna Denzin Bradley Fayette, MO</p>
<p><i>Call Me Henri</i> by Lorraine M. Lopez Curbstone Press, 2006, 233 pp., \$17.95</p> <p>In his required journaling, Enrique writes that sometimes there are more important things to worry about than listening to his teacher and peers during ESL class. This couldn’t be truer for Enrique. He is responsible for taking care of triplet infant brothers; his stepfather is abusive; his beloved dog, Boy, is missing; a new classmate commits suicide; and he watches his best friend be shot by local gang members. No wonder he is struggling in math class. Throughout, Enrique stays hopeful that his teenage life will have some sense of normalcy: finding a girlfriend and learning his favorite language, French. When all hope seems lost, the teachers at his school team up to provide Enrique with his best hope for escaping the troubles of his youth. Lopez authentically captures the struggles of a second language learner dealing with the trials and tribulations of being a teenager.</p> <p>Faith H. Wallace Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>The Cassandra Virus</i> by K.V. Johansen Orca Book Publishers, 2006, 151 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>This novel is disturbing, not only because it is at times illogical, but because the basis for its plot has been largely mined before in the 1983 Ally Sheedy/Matthew Broderick film, <i>War Games</i>. The main character, Jordan O’Blenis, bears a striking resemblance to the Broderick character in the film.</p> <p>In the novel, Jordan and his female sidekick begin to communicate with a computer Jordan builds one summer, to which the writer devotes an entire page. Once Cassandra, named after his sister, is up and running, it can hack into any computer in the world, can read email, can remove software and hard drives. The government wants to shut Cassandra down, just as the computer in <i>War Games</i> is determined to have hacked into NORAD, the early warning system established by the U.S. military to warn of incoming missiles from Russia.</p> <p>There are differences, largely made from the writer’s choice to set this book in the near future, but only the most computerwise and reluctant of readers will follow this novel through its anticlimactic ending.</p> <p>John Jacob Oak Park, IL</p>

<p><i>The Crow-Girl</i> by Bodil Bredsdorff Sunburst, 2006, 160 pp., \$5.95</p> <p>Compassion/Orphans/Relationships ISBN: 0-374-40003-2</p> <p><i>Crow-Girl</i> is a Danish folktale comparable to a Hans Christian Anderson story. Crow-Girl lives by the sea in a small house where she spends her time caring for her dying grandmother and gathering driftwood and oysters. Before her grandmother dies, she promises Crow-Girl she will continue to watch over her in order to guide and comfort Crow-Girl on her life's path.</p> <p>Now an orphan, Crow-Girl decides to travel until she can find a new family. Led by a crow (that's the reason she is called Crow-Girl), she journeys to various towns where she discovers that not all people make good family members, and that it is best to find happiness when you help others. She assists a number of people on her journey—a small abandoned boy, an abused mother and daughter, and a lonely old farmer. By selflessly helping others, Crow-Girl gains a family from those she has helped.</p> <p>Diana Harter Provo, UT</p>	<p><i>Crunch Time</i> by Mariah Fredericks Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006, 317 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 0-689-86938-X</p> <p>Following four high school juniors through the endless struggle of growing up, <i>Crunch Time</i> by Mariah Fredericks is a novel many students will relate to. Delving deep into the issues of friendship, relationships, failure, parents, and fear, this novel depicts the world of high-stakes testing and pressure to succeed in a refreshing, entertaining way. <i>Crunch Time</i> stands as a snippet of high school life, including the dramas and scandals typical in most schools today.</p> <p>Fredericks creates this high-stress world by giving first-person accounts of the four very different main characters who met by skipping a SAT prep course together. The characters tell their side of the story in their own unique voices, so readers know what's going on far before the characters do. This out-of-the-ordinary perspective allows for more suspense, insight, and connection as readers sympathize and relate to each specific character's personality and situation.</p> <p>Jennifer Hanni Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>The Dream Where the Losers Go</i> by Beth Goobie Orca Book Publishers, 2006, 204 pp., \$8.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 1-55143-455-5</p> <p>Beth Goobie's <i>The Dream Where the Losers Go</i> immerses readers into a world of silent darkness and screaming light where the main character, high school junior Skey, wants to wake up from the nightmare that is her life. To find relief from the pain and scars on her wrists, Skey must battle the Dragons, her boyfriend, her mother, and most importantly, her own mind that will not allow her to remember how she got to the dark. Happiness seems as hopeless as sleep, until a boy enters the darkness with her and helps her find the light.</p> <p><i>The Dream Where the Losers Go</i> is the emotional saga of a girl searching for her lost soul. The novel delves into themes of divorce, abuse, suicide, anger, and love through entwined images of dark and light. Readers find them selves sharing Skey's pain and illusions from beginning to end, showing Goobie's great skill at creating imperfect characters readers can relate to.</p> <p>Jennifer Hanni Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Escape: The Story of the Great Houdini</i> by Sid Fleischman Greenwillow, 2006, 206 pp., \$18.99</p> <p>Biography ISBN: 978-0-06-085094-4</p> <p>Harry Houdini is, perhaps, America's most enigmatic hero, and Sid Fleischman brings is considerable storytelling skills to bear in this attempt to capture his illusive subject. In <i>Escape</i>, Fleischman traces the journey of Ehrich Weiss, from the Jewish ghetto of Budapest, became the Great Harry Houdini, from Appleton, Wisconsin.</p> <p>Houdini was as much a social phenomenon as a performer. The details of his life says as much about the American culture in the first two decades of the 20th century as they do about the man (in no small part because, as Fleischman documents again and again, the details of his life are shrouded in mystery and outright deception).</p> <p>That Houdini remains a source of fascination says a great deal about our need to witness the impossible, all the while knowing it isn't real. <i>Escape</i> provides today's adolescents a glimpse at the life of the man hanging suspended in the water-filled torture cell. The book is an essential addition to secondary school libraries, and it would be an excellent text for interdisciplinary or social studies units.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>Exit Point by Laura Langston Orca Book Publishers, 2006, 110 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Paranormal Activity/Child Molestation ISBN: 1-55143-505-5</p> <p>Ostensibly a novel about the afterlife of narrator Logan, a 16-year-old victim of a car crash, the book may interest reluctant readers with its brevity and characterization of Logan and his grandmother, whom he meets in the afterlife, younger, smoking, and gambling. She is the most well-characterized person in the book. But close readers will notice that Logan is hardly sympathetic (he died racing cars after getting drunk one night, his preferred form of recreation), and that, while the afterlife is interesting, it can conform itself to almost anything the author wants to say.</p> <p>The author seems torn between developing her afterlife and making Logan's presence somewhat valid, by making his younger sister the victim of sexual molestation from their uncle.</p> <p>The novel becomes a race to stop another evening of molestation, and when Logan has accomplished his "mission," he is allowed to continue in his movement from the stations in the afterlife to a final resting point beyond.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">John Jacob Oak Park, IL</p>	<p>Exposure by Patricia Murdoch Orca Soundings, 2006, 102 pp., \$9.95</p> <p>Female Bullying ISBN: 1-55143-493-8 [pbk.] ISBN: 1-55143-523-3 [bound]</p> <p>Pudgy Julie has long been bullied by her high school's popular Dana. When Dana attends a party and exposes herself, she is photographed with Julie inadvertently finding the pictures. Julie, enjoying her new power, taunts Dana and eventually leaves the photo for the school to view. Dana threatens suicide and a chastised Julie visits her at home, where they discuss their antipathy and reconcile. Before Julie leaves, she discovers her visit stopped Dana from suicide.</p> <p>Although this large-print, fast-paced novel zips through female bullying and ends tidily, there is a compelling, albeit condensed, discussion of bullying from the viewpoints of the abuser and victim. The girls realize there were multiple factors leading to their actions, and understand that both are victims with difficult changes necessary to stop their behaviors.</p> <p>If educators embellish this subject it would be beneficial to all, for female bullying is increasing in school prevalence and violence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lisa A. Hazlett Vermillion, SD</p>
<p>French Kiss by Aimee Friedman Scholastic, 2006, 301 pp., \$8.99</p> <p>Romance/Friendship ISBN: 0-439-79281-9</p> <p>When sophisticated and fashionable Alexa St. James is abandoned in Paris by her insubordinate boyfriend, she turns to her estranged friend Holly, who is currently in England with her track team. Deserting her team, Holly rushes to Alexa's side. Both girls struggle with relationship issues, causing the distant friends to find comfort in each other's company and discover French romance seems to be just what the doctor ordered. Good girl Holly is torn between her love back home and a sizzling French suitor as risqué Alexa finds herself in over her head after being spurned by the mesmerizing artist that captures her heart.</p> <p>The bonds of friendship run deep as opposite personalities find balance with a few bumps and bruises along the way. Be swept off your feet and enjoy the ride as you experience the spiciness and worldly adventures that bring the two girls closer than ever.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Susan Gapp Vermillion, SD</p>	<p>The Frog Prince by Gillian McKnight Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster, 2006, 203 pp., \$8.25</p> <p>Romance/Friendship/Family Problems ISBN-13: 978-0-868-87735-3 ISBN-10: 0-689-87735-8</p> <p>Wealthy Alexis and Helene are seventeen, stepsisters, and best friends, especially as each pines for an absentee parent. Summer finds Helene's estranged father inviting her to Paris, with Alexis's mother proposing Greece. As Helene misses former boyfriend Lazlo, Alexis challenges her to attract Daniel D'Artois, dashing heir to Vedette, France's premier fashion house.</p> <p>Alexis joins Helene when her trip is cancelled, and they seamlessly enter Parisian high society. Alexis interns at Vedette with Helene named their new face, and romantic misunderstandings ensue among the girls, Daniel, and photographer Philippe. Happiness follows Lazlo's surprise arrival, Daniel revealing his homosexuality, Alexis and Philippe's pairing, and the girls' renewed parental relationships.</p> <p>Contrived plotlines assure tidy endings, and unfortunately Daniel is more device than character, with his attractiveness initially fostering the girls' jealousy and homosexuality ending their competition. Still, behind the opulence, younger girls will find likeable characters with universal parental and relationship problems and sound advice.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lisa A. Hazlett Vermillion, SD</p>

<p>Hard Hit by Ann Turner Scholastic Press, 2006, 167 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Coming of Age/Cancer/Grief ISBN: 0-439-29680-3</p> <p>Mark Warren has a great life. He has a cool best friend. He's the star pitcher on his high school team, thanks in part to the endless hours his father put in as his catcher. The new girl notices him, and thanks to his mother's advice, he is able to carry on an intelligent conversation with her. His younger sister turned 13 and is a pain, but not bad as sisters go. But one lousy phone call, and Mark's world is forever changed. His dad's pancreatic cancer is back.</p> <p>Ann Turner's free-verse poem depicts the tide of emotions that inevitably rages through a family battling cancer. Middle school and high school students will quickly become attached to the characters and will find themselves gripped by this sensitive, well-told story.</p> <p>Vicki Sherbert Wakefield, KS</p>	<p>Harlem Hustle by Janet McDonald Francis Foster Books, 2006, 192 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>African Americans/Music ISBN: 0-374-37184-9</p> <p>Harlem is full of energy, life, and diversity. Hustle embodies the spirit of Harlem as a young African American teen with the dream of making it big as a rapper. A smart homeboy, Hustle knows his way around Harlem, where to shoplift and who to get to know to make it in the biz. Hustle is discovered at a party and for a short time believes this is the break he needs to enter the world of hip hop. But he soon discovers the world of rappers in gold chains with music labels is as crooked as the streets of Harlem. McDonald's story is full of the vibrant life that is Harlem, complete with contemporary language of the hip hop culture that appeals to teens of all races and backgrounds. Hustle's story is not predictable in that he examines his old ideas of what makes good lyrics and studies poetry in order to improve his own word play. This contemporary novel provides the interest needed for teen-age boys to get hooked immediately.</p> <p>Deana Cowan Maple Hill, KS</p>
<p>Heat by Mike Lupica Philomel, 2006, 220 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Baseball/Family ISBN: 0-399-24301-1</p> <p><i>Heat</i> is a well paced, steadily building novel that examines baseball, cultural identity, first love, and adulthood. When their father dies, Michael and his older brother are forced to fend for themselves. But should anyone find out their secret, they will be split up or worse...sent back to Cuba, spoiling Mike's chances of playing in the Little League World Series. This coming of age tale uses the America's past-time as backdrop for exploring multiple adolescent themes. The fairy-tale ending borders on the unbelievable, but overall the work is a terrific read for those looking for a dose of childhood baseball nostalgia.</p> <p>Curtis Chandler Wamego, KS</p>	<p>Hell Phone by William Sleator Amulet Books, 2006, 237 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Good vs. Evil/Wealth/Rights ISBN: 0-8109-5479-6</p> <p>This was a suspenseful thriller mystery intertwined with fantasy and romance. The compelling story was an easy read. Although the beginning of the story lacked vivid descriptors, it improved. The quick pace of the story keeps the reader interested and would appeal to young readers who enjoy thrillers with the mention of ghoulish creepiness. Young readers with the same socio-economic background could easily relate to the problems of Nick, the protagonist, a foolish and easily duped teenager with a trusting character. The author was superb with his depiction of the innocent youth being the unsuspecting target of unscrupulous characters.</p> <p>Paulette Clark Junction City, KS</p>

<p>Incantation by Alice Hoffmann Little, Brown and Co., 2006, 166 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Coming of Age/Historical Fiction ISBN: 0316010197</p> <p>This coming-of-age story about Estrella deMadrigal, set in medieval Spain, looks at contrasts and appearances. At first Estrella sees herself as the look-alike and sister to her best friend, Catalina. She also sees herself as a Christian. But when Estrella witnesses a book burning in the town's plaza, her world begins to change. Soon public denouncements and executions follow as the town fathers accuse all Jews of witch craft and sorcery. Estrella finally sees what has always been around her. There is a secret her family is protecting—secret knowledge of the Jews or kabbalah, which is taught in her family's house. Family rituals are really Jewish rituals and family members have secret names. Along her journey to selfhood, Estrella falls in love, loses her best friend, and survives horrific persecution.</p> <p>The historical setting and Biblical allusions add richness to this coming-of-age story. Alice Hoffmann's characters are well developed and speak with unique voices. This story will foster discussions about diversity, religious freedom, friendships, and betrayal. But, most of all, it is a poignant and often painful tale of growing up.</p> <p>Larisa Schumann Laie, HI</p>	<p>Little Secrets—Playing with Fire by Emily Blake Scholastic, 2006, 149 pp., \$8.99</p> <p>Friendship ISBN: 0-439-81053-1</p> <p>Alison Rose struggles with the embarrassment of her rich, strong mother being incarcerated and losing her boyfriend to her best friend, her cousin Kelly. At the beginning the reader wonders if Alison's mother is framed and will the mystery be revealed. Members of the family claim the maternal grandmother is responsible for her daughter's incarceration. Many skeletons are exposed in Alison's family and the families of her friends. As the story unfolds, the characters demonstrate the importance of belonging, acceptance, and friendship. During her mother's incarceration, Alison experiences more freedom to grow and solve her problems. She is reunited with an old friend she betrayed during 5th grade. Now, as they both struggle to find acceptance and fit in, they work through their problems and become allies. A naïve' Alison grows during the story to become a strong opponent.</p> <p>Paulette Clark Junction City, KS</p>
<p>Long Gone Daddy by Helen Hemphill Front Street, 2006, 169 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Fathers-Son Relationships/Religions ISBN: 1-932425-38-1</p> <p>This was a delightful story that let the reader feel the emotions and battles of a teenage boy trying to understand his thoughts and life—separate from the thinking of his father, the preacher. His struggles bring out the bitter anger within himself when he tries to express his feelings and opinions. Harlan Q, the protagonist, begins his relationship with his paternal grandfather on the cold, mortuary-embalming table. While he and his father transport the grandfather's body to its final resting place in Las Vegas, they encounter a young philosopher, Warrior, who gently opens the minds of Harlan Q and his father. The journey unravels the mystery of the grandfather and the world to Harlan Q. He experiences a world outside his hometown and realizes his own vulnerability.</p> <p>Paulette Clark Junction City, KS</p>	<p>Monkey Town by Ronald Kidd Simon and Schuster, 2006, 259 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Evolution ISBN: 978-1-4169-0572-1</p> <p>Given the recent debate regarding “intelligent design,” Kidd's <i>Monkey Town</i> is especially timely. Inspired by a chance meeting with the daughter of one of the key players in the Scopes Monkey Trial, Kidd carefully researched the events of the summer of 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee, and young people with an interest in the evolution controversy should find this a compelling read.</p> <p>Kidd's novel retells the Scopes story as one of a small town struggling to survive in the face of economic hardship. Town leaders see in the ACLU's offer to defend any teacher charged under the state's new anti-evolution law an opportunity to bring attention, publicity, and prosperity to Dayton. With the consent of John Scopes, the trial moves forward, ultimately to become part of American mythology.</p> <p><i>Monkey Town</i> provides an accessible glimpse into an important incident in American history and culture. The book is especially well-suited for interdisciplinary studies, and the topic should be of interest to many contemporary students.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>

<p><i>Pretty Little Devils</i> by Nancy Holder Razorbill (Penguin), 2006, 250 pp., \$14.99</p> <p>Suspense/Murder/Mystery ISBN: 1-59514-030-1</p> <p>Hazel Stone longs to be part of the popular high school crowd, but her good looks and classy style haven't been enough to move her up the social ladder. Imagine Hazel's excitement when Sylvia Orly, the most popular girl, recruits her to be a member of The Pretty Little Devils, undoubtedly the most elite group. Hazel will pay any price to prove her worthy, enduring an induction of social lessons, devilish tactics, and sinister pranks. Alarm sets in when no one from within the group claims credit for mysterious threatening messages, casting suspicion on various outside enemies.</p> <p>This book will keep the reader on the edge of their seat as suspects' motives are revealed, but prepare for ultimate suspense when the murders begin. Cleverly written using personal blog style dialogue, it is a must-read for suspense thrillers.</p> <p>Susan Gapp Vermillion, SD</p>	<p><i>The Rise of Lubchenko</i> by Michael Simmons Razorbill (Penguin), 2006, 218 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Bioterrorism Espionage/Adventure ISBN: 1-59514-061-1</p> <p>Evan Macalister, teenage protagonist of <i>The Rise of Lubchenko</i>, is an even more unlikely hero than Clark Kent. Author Michael Simmons combines a rebellious yet insecure, sleep-through-class smart guy with a save-the-world adventure seeker to create one sarcastic, vulnerable, funny, likable, somehow believable character.</p> <p>Male readers will vicariously enjoy Evan's James Bondian adventures to prevent a smallpox epidemic planned by his father's business partner without revealing his own illegal theft and sales of his father's office equipment. They will identify with his more ordinary problems (a distant dad, failing grades), all of which Simmons handles lightly-handedly yet sincerely. They will also appreciate Simmons' fast-paced, no-nonsense, humorous style.</p> <p><i>The Rise of Lubchenko</i> offers something not always easy to find—a good casual read for middle-school and high-school guys.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>
<p><i>Sand Dollar Summer</i> by Kimberly K. Jones Simon & Schuster, 2006, 206 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Family/Friendship ISBN: 1-4169-0362-3</p> <p>Lise, a twelve-year-old girl, thinks her life is over when her mother moves the family to a beach in Maine for the summer. Unknown to Lise and her five-year-old brother, this is where their mother grew up many years ago. As the family deals with living in a ramshackle beach house, Lise is battling with her fear of the sea, and is constantly questioning why her mother has brought them here.</p> <p>Friendship, family, and love are continuing themes in the first novel of Kimberly K. Jones, who lives on the East Coast and brings knowledge of the sea into her writing.</p> <p>Bonny Martens Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Store-Bought Baby</i> by Sandra Belton Greenwillow Books, 2006, 246 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Death of a Sibling ISBN: 978-0-06-085086-9</p> <p>Leah's life as a high school teen-age girl has fallen apart. She should be worrying about chemistry and track practice, not wondering how her life will go on without her spirited brother Luce who had a way of making everyone feel special. Since the car wreck killed her brother, Leah questions her own life. Do her parents love her the same as they loved Luce? Why doesn't her mother take an interest in her life the way she did in Luce's? How can she go on living when Luce is no longer part of her life? Sandra Belton's novel not only explores the themes of death, family loss, coming of age, and love, but it also concerns adoption. In the story, Leah becomes obsessed with the fact that her brother Luce was adopted. As Leah comes to terms with her life and her family without Luce, she learns families are made, not necessarily born, and that life goes on after one of the family members dies.</p> <p>Deana Cowan Maple Hill, KS</p>

<p>Stuffed by Eric Walters Orca Soundings, 2006, 108 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/Moral Issues/Friendship ISBN: 1-55143-500-4 (pbk.) ISBN: 1-55143-519-5 (bound)</p> <p>When fifteen-year-old Ian views <i>Stuffed</i>, an exposé of the Frankie's fast food chain and similar to the real <i>Super Size Me</i>, his class project emerges. He likes Frankie's food, but dislikes their unhealthy ingredients, toys and gimmicks used to entice customers, and negative corporate policies. He posts his suggestion of a one-day Frankie's boycott on the Internet.</p> <p>Ian reaches millions with hundreds responding, including Frankie's attorneys, who offer his school a free Frankie's lunch in lieu of boycotting. Ian and Frankie's attorney present their positions to Ian's entire school, with students unanimously selecting to boycott. Tidily, Ian is offered a future position by opposing council, the girl he secretly likes calls, and Frankie's menu becomes healthier.</p> <p>Ian is an intelligent, witty narrator, and this fast-paced, large-print novel explores the seamy sides of the fast-food industry and legal profession while revealing the business tactics of each as being remarkably similar.</p> <p>Lisa A. Hazlett Vermillion, SD</p>	<p>To Catch a Prince by Gillian McKnight Simon Pulse, 2006, 254 pp., \$5.99</p> <p>Romantic Fiction/Travel/Humor ISBN-13: 976-0-689-87734-6 ISBN-10: 0-689-87734-X</p> <p>Two beautiful 16-year-old rich girls, Helene and Alexis, best friends and step-sisters, fly off to London for a summer of adventure and fun. On the way, they make a bet as to who can ensnare the heart of Prince William first. In the past, these two have made a point of choosing different activities to avoid competition. This ill-advised bet throws their relationship awry. Meanwhile, in their pursuit of a stodgy, self-centered, and unromantic prince, they don't see the two far superior boys pining for them in front of their noses until it is almost too late. In spite of the book's standard disclaimer that all the characters are fictional, the author does seem to delight in taking a few unnecessary potshots at the heir to the British crown. Nevertheless, the book is a light fantasy escape into the lives of the likes of more virginal Paris Hiltons.</p> <p>Myrna Marler Late, HI</p>
<p>Tyrell by Coe Booth Push (Scholastic), 2006, 310 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Inner-city Teen Struggles ISBN: 0-439-83879-7</p> <p>Tyrell's world is not easy to hear about. A homeless African-American teen in the Bronx, Tyrell's goal is to hold his family together and move his spaced-out mother and seven-year-old brother "home" to the projects. Available money-making ventures, though, also involve brushes with the law, and Tyrell doesn't want to end up in jail like his father: "I don't wanna be the kinda man my pops turned out to be. . . . Nah. I'ma hafta do better than him."</p> <p>Readers listen to Tyrell for just one week, but that is enough to recognize the frustration of his world. "I really wanna put my fist through the wall. . . . I gotta do something. I wanna go somewhere, but I don't got nowhere to go."</p> <p>Born in the Bronx, author Coe Booth continues to live there, and this first novel takes mature readers there, too.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>	<p>Vampire Beach: Bloodlust by Alex Duval Simon Pulse, 2006, 196 pp., \$5.99</p> <p>Vampirism ISBN: 978-1-4169-1166-1</p> <p>This is a well-written tale of school life in Malibu, and this book is only one in a series of books about Jason and his sister, Dani, and their "friends" in the high school where they have come to live.</p> <p>The vampires stay hidden for fully half of the book, allowing the reader to become familiar with the teens who inhabit the country's most elite high school. The parties, the obnoxious spending, and the cliques are largely glossed over as one of the vampires turns rogue and kills someone. In this haven for vampirism, the condition has existed for more than a century, and though some scenes come from films like <i>Fright Night</i> and <i>The Lost Boys</i>, Jason does seem to have something of a normal life. The vampire he lusts after—sexually—explains that vampires only take enough blood to stay relatively young. Only rogue vampires kill and, of course, Jason must confront both the rogue and his competition at school, in a tale that is meant to flow into other stories.</p> <p>John Jacob Oak Park, IL</p>

<p><i>Wait for Me</i> by An Na G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2006, 169 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 0-399-24275-9</p> <p>Creating a dream-like state through language and point of view in <i>Wait for Me</i>, An Na tells the story of a Korean-American girl searching for her own dreams, while trying to live up to her mother's high aspirations of a Harvard education. While some of the language and situations may be culturally specific, all readers will connect with the fear, anger, desperation, passion, and struggle with parents Mina feels, as well as fall in love with Ysrael, the boy who flips her tormented world upside down, forcing her to decide exactly what she, and not her mother, wants.</p> <p><i>Wait for Me</i>'s chapters switch focus between the protagonist, older sister Mina, and her younger hearing-impaired sister Suna. Mina's chapters are written in first person, while Suna's are written in third person, creating an interesting dynamic of voice and point of view. This point of view floats readers outside reality into a world where truth, reality, and fantasy intertwine.</p> <p>Jennifer Hanni Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Waking</i> by Alyxandra Harvey-Fitzhenry Orca, 2006, 119 pp., \$8.95</p> <p>Self Discovery/Death/Relationships ISBN: 1-55143-489-x</p> <p>Beauty feels alienated around her classmates. But so would you if you had to shave your legs at school and cover your scratches because your father was paranoid about sharp objects. Ever since her mother died, Beauty has had to deal with strange changes like being haunted by a Shadow Lady in her dreams.</p> <p>It isn't until Beauty is assigned to work with the odd new girl, Luna, that Beauty begins to find peace in her life. Luna introduces Beauty to the carefree, hippie-like philosophy of the Pre-Raphaelites who created the great works of art and poetry that Beauty admires. By adopting this new outlook, Beauty is able to discover herself and to find a place among her peers. In addition, her newfound confidence aids her to overcome her nightmares and leave behind the horrors of her mother's death.</p> <p>Diana Harter Provo, UT</p>
<p><i>The Winter Road</i> by Terry Hokenson Front Street, 2006, 175 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Coming of Age/Adventure ISBN: 1932425454</p> <p>Willia Raedl is frustrated with her life. School is unfulfilling, and at home she feels ignored and unimportant. Ever since her brother Ray died, it seems her family has been disconnected and numb to her feelings.</p> <p>On one particularly challenging day, Willia sees an opportunity to prove to her family—and to herself—that she is more capable and responsible than they often believe her to be. When she discovers her uncle is not in any condition to fly out and transport her mother from one city to another, she decides to fly his plane over to pick up her mother herself.</p> <p>After trying to navigate through a blizzard, the plane crashes in a snowy wilderness, and she must figure out how to survive deathly cold temperatures with only a few supplies and the knowledge she has gained over the years from her father and uncle.</p> <p>Terry Hokenson's first, <i>The Winter Road</i> is a story of survival and self discovery and shows how one girl finds value in herself through determination and perseverance.</p> <p>Suzy Oertel Topeka, KS</p>	<p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> 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>

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