

<p><i>Am I Right or Am I Right?</i> by Barry Jonsberg Alfred A. Knopf, 2007, 256 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Brash and sensitive, literal and over-imaginative, stubborn and sarcastic, Calma Harrison makes her way through Year 11 at her Australian high school. Balancing a part-time job at Crazy-Cheep, where she snags a handsome checkout guy for a boyfriend, with frustration over her uncommunicative single mother and an unemotional best friend, Calma manages to engage herself in complications galore.</p> <p>Written in multiple formats including soap opera dialogue, refrigerator sticky notes between mom and daughter, email advice on writing poetry from a marvelous English teacher, and Calma's "unreliable narrator" voice, the novel rockets along with humor and pathos. Calma intersperses newly acquired poetic forms to reveal her own emotional growth. Problems range from the dramatic to the mysterious to hysterically funny. A not-to-be-missed scene occurs when Calma acquires a buzz cut at a snobby hair salon while prepping for her first date with Jason.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>	<p><i>Baby</i> by Joseph Monninger Front Street, 2007, 173 pp., \$16.95 978-1-59078-502-9 978-1-59078-502-7</p> <p>Abandoned by her mother, Baby has one last chance before juvenile detention: aged-hippy foster parents who run sled dogs. First the dogs and then the Potters win Baby over. Then Bobby, an old boyfriend, draws her back into street life and more trouble. The dogs have tamed her, though, and from her bonds with them, she finds her way back and her place in the pack, both human and canine.</p> <p>Monninger captures the thrill of racing sled dogs and Baby's struggle to learn new choices. His smooth plot and non-sentimental prose will pull both males and females effortlessly along the trail. Yet his understated comparisons of animals to humans will leave readers much to ponder after they reach the finish line. A simple story, beautifully told.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>
<p><i>Billie Standish Was Here</i> by Nancy Crocker Simon & Schuster, 2007, 279 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>In this tale of friendship and healing, Nancy Crocker tells the story of Billie Marie Standish, an 11-year-old girl from a small Missouri town, 1968. When everyone else flees town fearing a flood, Billie and Lydia Jenkins, an elderly woman across the street, form an unlikely friendship. While Billie's parents work the farm all day, Billie spends her afternoons with Miss Lydia, learning to cook, crochet, and cleaning her big, unused house. During that summer, Billie experiences a tragedy that she can't endure on her own, and Miss Lydia helps her keep the secret and heal from the pain.</p> <p>This story both tore at my heart and made it sing. Crocker teaches about the value of friendship as well as the value of being a part of the world around you. I would recommend this book to high school and mature middle-school readers, as it deals with some adult themes.</p> <p>Elaine Clincik Wichita, KS</p>	<p><i>Choices</i> by Deborah Lynn Jacobs Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 189 pp., \$16.95 ISBN-13: 978-1-59643-217-8</p> <p>Deborah Lynn Jacobs takes readers on a multiple reality odyssey in <i>Choices</i>. Told through the vulnerable voice of Kathleen, whose guilt over the tragic death of her brother is all consuming, the story is a psychologically thrilling emotional drama.</p> <p>When Kathleen seeks her brother Nick's rescue from a party she never wanted to attend, dangerous driving conditions contribute to a fatal accident. Soon after, Kathleen begins experiencing the unsettling feeling of having lived two realities, each with its own set of conflicting memories. The only crossovers between the two realities seem to be Nick's death and the mysterious appearances of Luke, a young man whose past loss and present situation resonate with Kathleen. Life becomes even more complicated, however, when more realities open up—one with Nick alive—and Luke reveals a secret, forcing Kathleen to make a heartbreaking choice.</p> <p>Mature content and a complex storyline make Jacobs's book fitting for the high school student seeking an original story.</p> <p>Jennifer Funk Raleigh, NC</p>

<p><i>The Christopher Killer</i> by Alane Ferguson Murder Mystery/Family Problems Viking by Penguin Group, 2006, 274 pp., \$15.99 ISBN: 0-670-06008-9</p> <p>This dramatic novel revolves around a young girl named Cameryn who becomes an assistant to her father, the county coroner. After several mishaps and crime scene viewings that make her sick, she becomes entrenched in a case that will change her life. Woven into this plot is a subplot of Cameryn trying to find out who and where her mother is. The incredibly detailed descriptions of crime scenes are akin to the current Crime Scene Investigators television programs. Along the way we meet a psychic, a gothic friend of Cameryn's, and a 1960s-style, spiritual best friend.</p> <p>Ferguson's character development is so strong that you come to know and care about these people, to the point where you feel their pain and joy. It is also refreshing to see how close Cameryn is to her father, a strong role model. Readers will be taken on a thrilling ride from the beginning to the surprise ending.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Kenan Metzger Muncie, IN</p>	<p><i>The Darwin Expedition</i> by Diane Tullson Adventure/High Interest-Low Level Orca Book Publishers, 2007, 100 pp., \$8.95 ISBN: 978-1-55143-678-1</p> <p>In a hurry to get in one more snowboarding adventure before the spring thaw, Tej and Liam take a little used, and extremely muddy, logger road up the mountain. When Tej loses control and the truck tumbles down the mountain, the boys find themselves lost and struggling to survive against the elements and an angry bear.</p> <p>The adventure is not only a test of their survival skills, but also a test of their friendship and self-confidence. After Tej is injured, Liam has to struggle to overcome his own self-doubt to save his friend.</p> <p><i>The Darwin Expedition</i> manages to combine an exciting adventure with a reading level suited to struggling readers. Tullson uses vivid descriptions and foreshadowing to draw the reader in.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>Defect</i> by Will Weaver Allegory Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007, 199 pp., \$16.00 ISBN: 978-0-374-31725-6 0-374-31725-9</p> <p><i>Defect</i> is Will Weaver's allegorical tale that explores a misfit foster child's journey of coming to terms with his physical abnormalities. The protagonist, David, was born with a variety of deformities, chief among them wing-like folds of skin that allow him to glide, almost fly, from high places.</p> <p>While David's deformities (gifts?) cause him to be ostracized and eventually expelled from a rural Minnesota high school, he begins to come to terms with his uniqueness in an alternative school environment where students are more accepting of each other's "defects."</p> <p>Central to the novel is the question of whether David is a contemporary angel or a freak of nature, and he is forced to confront this issue directly when he is presented with the opportunity for corrective surgery that would make him "normal."</p> <p>The book should prompt interesting and productive discussions about difference, identity, and tolerance with high school students.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Do Not Pass Go</i> by Kirkpatrick Hill Family/Prison Simon & Schuster, 2007, 240 pp., \$15.99 ISBN-13: 9781416914006</p> <p>Deet is pretty much a loner and a neat freak. Sometimes he seems more responsible than his own parents. His mother seems to rarely plan for anything, and his dad works two jobs to pay for things they think they need. Deet would rather they keep things simple.</p> <p>When Deet's dad is arrested for drugs he used to stay awake at work, Deet starts to rethink his family and friends. Worried about what others will say about having a father in jail, he is surprised when two of the popular students share they have brothers in jail. Deet's mom has to work, so Deet cares for his little sisters. Through Mr. Hodges' journal assignments, Deet begins to really see his life. He realizes he has two parents who love him even though they are so different from him, and that not everyone in jail is a bad person. Deet becomes stronger from this experience and realizes jail is not the end of the world.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Barbara Ray Tulsa, OK</p>

<p><i>Dramarama</i> by E. Lockhart Hyperion Books for Children, 2007, 311 pp., \$15.99 Fiction/Friendship/Theatre ISBN: 978-07868-3815-8</p> <p>Sadye and Demi are two teenagers who are tired of their non-razzle-dazzle lives in Brenton, Ohio, and decide to apply to the Wildewood Academy for the Performing Arts Summer Institute, run by a well-known Broadway director. Both are fans of Broadway musicals, and they adore Liza Minnelli.</p> <p>Their summer is one of friendship, jealousy, and new love. From “Cats” to “Guys and Dolls,” this book tells of the ups and downs of their summer, their new relationships, and just how hard the kids must work to be the actors they want to become in order to leave boring old Ohio behind them once and for all.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>	<p><i>Eggs</i> by Jerry Spinelli Little, Brown and Co., 2007, 224 pp., \$15.99 Fiction/Friendship/Loss ISBN: 0-316-16646-4</p> <p>Two kids find friendship, despite their age difference, in this thought-provoking book. David is a 9-year-old boy who is coping with his mother’s death, while his workaholic father is emotionally and physically unavailable to him. Primrose is a 13-year-old girl who tries everything to stay away from her eccentric mother and only knows her father from a framed photo that is one of her most treasured possessions.</p> <p>Both kids hide the secrets of their pasts, which are as fragile as eggshells. Both share a love for a drink called Mango Madness and a yearning to have one person whom they each can depend on. Told from the point of view of several different characters, this book is one that should not be missed if looking for a good tale of friendship.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>
<p><i>The Faerie Path</i> by Frewin Jones HarperCollins, 2007, 320 pp., \$16.99 Fantasy/Romance ISBN: 0-06-087102-4</p> <p>Anita’s handsome new boyfriend Evan takes her for a speedboat ride on the Thames River for her 16th birthday surprise. The boat crashes, and she awakens in a hospital ward, only to be guided out of her reality into the land of Faerie by a young courtier. Anita is really Tania, missing for 500 years from King Oberon and Queen Titania’s kingdom, where she is the seventh daughter foretold to be the one who can cross the portal between Faerie and the Mortal World of modern London.</p> <p>Not everyone is what he or she seems, including those she trusts most. There is a plot to gain power in Faerie, which has emerged from the twilight Oberon induced when his youngest daughter disappeared and his beloved queen drowned. Will Tania discover the one she truly loves? Will she learn who is friend or foe in time? Readers who love fairy tales, romance, and boundless adventure will love Anita/Tania and her story.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>	<p><i>Flawless, a Pretty Little Liars Book</i> by Sara Shepard HarperTeen, 2007, 330 pp., \$16.99 Mystery/Social Jockeying ISBN: 978-0-06-088733-9</p> <p>Glitzzy, smooth, and fast—just like the lifestyle of its characters—Sara Shepard’s novel <i>Flawless</i> reveals the scandalous secrets and deadly struggles behind the perfect makeup and designer clothes of four bad little rich girls.</p> <p>Seduced by gossip and glamour, girls will race through the pages of this novel, seeking the identity of A, who threatens to tell all the secrets, only to be left hungering for <i>Perfect</i>, the third book in the series.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>

<p><i>Heaven Looks a Lot Like the Mall</i> by Wendy Mass Little, Brown, and Co., 2007, 251 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Self-Discovery/Relationships ISBN: 0-316-00218-6</p> <p>Sixteen-year-old Tessa tells her story through short poems in this quick read. Tessa is a lovable loser—a shy girl who seems nice, but doesn't have many friends.</p> <p>After being hit in the head during gym class, Tessa finds herself being whisked away from her body, eventually ending up in the mall. She figures it must be heaven, since she had seen her own crumpled body lying on the gym floor, but she can't figure out if she's dead or not. While in the mall, Tessa finds a new friend and a bag of her own possessions. She then goes on a journey through the various stages of her life, where each of the possessions comes into play.</p> <p><i>Heaven Looks a Lot Like the Mall</i> is a story that will have readers wondering about the death and the afterlife, but also about relationships, friendships, and all of those little mistakes one makes along the way.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>	<p><i>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</i> by Brian Selznick Scholastic, 2007, 544 pp., \$22.99</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Mystery ISBN: 0-439-81378-6</p> <p>It is 1931, and 12-year-old Hugo has spent the past year winding and fixing the clocks in a Paris train station. Since the deaths of his parents and his uncle, who used to hold the job he now occupies, Hugo has been trying to repair the only remembrance of his father—an automaton. This mechanical man, whose pen is poised over a piece of paper, draws a secret message from the past.</p> <p>Selznick craftily combines print text with crosshatch sketches, stills from Georges Méliès' films, and photographs from current events. Selznick startles the reader by stopping sentences in mid-action and then continuing the story with a series of drawings. Or he follows a picture with prose to continue the revealing of Hugo's story.</p> <p>The result of these juxtapositions is indeed cinematic, and the pages are framed in black to resemble a movie screen. Part historical fiction, part mystery, Selznick's work will continue to inspire readers and authors to invent.</p> <p>Jacqueline Bach Baton Rouge, LA</p>
<p><i>Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac</i> by Gabrielle Zevin Farrar Straus Giroux, 2007, 271 pp., \$17.00</p> <p>Amnesia/Discovery ISBN-13: 978-0-374-34946-2 ISBN-10: 0-374-34946-0</p> <p>She lost one coin toss, then lost four years. Suffering from amnesia, Naomi has forgotten everything—how to drive, her parents' divorce, all her friends. As she struggles to reconnect with her "previous" life, she begins to question her role in many parts of it—her boyfriend, her best friend, her relationship with her mother—and discovers more about herself than she knew before her head injury.</p> <p>Gabrielle Zevin develops believable characters in a believable story of a 21st century teen. I enjoyed following Naomi through her journey of self-discovery, and I would definitely recommend this book to my high school students, especially the girls.</p> <p>Elaine Clinck Wichita, KS</p>	<p><i>The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones</i> by Cassandra Clare Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2007, 485 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 1-4169-1428-5</p> <p>When Clary Fray witnesses a murder at a popular teen club, her life turns completely upside down. One of the murderers, the very handsome Jace, starts following Clary, and her mother disappears.</p> <p>Clary finds herself joining forces with Jace and the mysterious Shadow Hunters in a race against time. The evil Valentine is seeking a powerful talisman, and demons are trying to destroy Clary. Slowly, Clary discovers that everything she once believed about herself and her mother may be completely wrong. The surprising revelations will captivate and astound readers.</p> <p><i>City of Bones</i> is a suspenseful and captivating fantasy. Clare creates a vivid and descriptive world of wonder and mystery that exists beside our own. The plot twist will surprise even the most astute reader. This book is recommended for ages 14 and up.</p> <p>Karolinde Young, Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>The Mysterious Benedict Society by Trenton Lee Stewart Family/Science Fiction Little Brown & Co., 2007, 485 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 0-316-05777-6</p> <p>Four orphans answer this ad: “ARE YOU A GIFTED CHILD LOOKING FOR SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES?” Reynie Muldoon, an extremely gifted 11-year-old, is a super puzzle-solver; his best buddy, also 11, George “Sticky” Washington, has a prodigious memory; Kate Wetherall solves problems with ingenious use of common kid items, especially her bucket and rope; and Constance Contraire’s behavior matches her name.</p> <p>After a series of tests, the four answer Mr. Benedict’s challenge to save the world from a criminal mastermind by agreeing to infiltrate the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened. Their vague mission is to discover the means Ledroptha Curtain uses to send subliminal messages to the world’s population. Curtain uses young adolescents to control the minds and inclinations of his students, and the foursome must band together as a team to overcome evil and thwart his plans.</p> <p>A lengthy read, the novel will appeal to puzzle-lovers and those who love fascinating, complex plots revealed with wry humor.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>	<p>On My Journey Now: Looking at African-American History Through the Spirituals by Nikki Giovanni Candlewick Press, 2007, 116 pp., \$18.99 ISBN: 978-0-7636-2885-7</p> <p>In casual, opinionated, and passionate language, <i>On My Journey Now: Looking at African-American History Through the Spirituals</i> examines the deeply complex past of Africans on American soil. Beginning with the kidnappings of Africans in their homeland and concluding with the Fisk Jubilee Singers at one of America’s first African-American universities, Nikki Giovanni highlights how the development of soulful melodies connected and carried an entire population through a treacherous, but, ultimately, triumphant journey from the bonds of slavery to the freedom of the future.</p> <p>The brief book recounts African-American history with the creative aid of interspersed spirituals to tell the story of capture, passage, escape, and freedom. Giovanni also includes the complete lyrics of nearly 50 spirituals, as well as the names and descriptions of influential African-Americans throughout history.</p> <p>A suitable source for learning the storytelling power of song, this text would be a suitable supplement to language arts, social studies, and music curriculums.</p> <p>Jennifer Funk Raleigh, NC</p>
<p>Perfect Girl by Mary Hogan HarperTempest, 2007, 196 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 0-06-084108-7</p> <p>Ruthie, a high school freshman, needs to know more about love and boyfriends—she needs to become the perfect girl. She can’t talk to her overprotective mother, who knits baby blankets for a living. What would she know about love; after all, Ruthie’s dad was a sperm donor and not somebody her mother was once in love with. She can’t talk to her best friend, Perry, about her situation either because he happens to be the one she is swooning over. They only person who can tell Ruthie how to snag a guy is her suave, urbane Aunt Marty, who she has only met once.</p> <p>Ruthie calls Aunt Marty, New York’s “Goddess of Love,” to travel back home to Delaware and assist her in becoming the perfect girl. The only problem is that her mom will be furious with Ruthie for seeking Marty’s help. Now, she’ll be faced with learning about more than becoming the perfect girl.</p> <p>Lara Copeland Topeka, KS</p>	<p>Picture Perfect by D. Anne Love Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2007, 291 pp., \$16.99 ISBN-13: 978-0-689-87390-4 10: 0-689-87390-5</p> <p>When Phoebe’s mother decides to pursue a business opportunity that takes her away from home for several months, Phoebe fears that her “picture perfect” family will fall apart.</p> <p>The different family and personal relationships and their issues that ensue from this situation are well written and defined. Young readers can easily relate to the themes of betrayal, feeling unloved, and distrust. This book is written in first-person narrative by 14-year-old Phoebe, who involves the reader in all the different relationship issues that beset her during the year that her mother is absent from their home. As Phoebe learns, though, such relationships can only grow and thrive when love, trust, and forgiveness are part of the survival equation.</p> <p>The relevant events and topics contained in this bright new book will capture the interest of readers ages 12 and up.</p> <p>Peggy Jewell Wichita, KS</p>

<p><i>Raining Sardines</i> by Enrique Flores-Galbis Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 160 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Fantasy/Justice/Nationalism ISBN: 1-59643-166-0</p> <p>Enrique and Ernestina, adolescents growing up in pre-revolutionary Cuba, take a fantastic journey together as they try to save the culture of their community.</p> <p>It begins when a psychic, Clara, floats across the bay on a large couch while the two friends are fishing. She explains that, "There are big changes coming soon, and the people in Havana are going to need all the help they can get." (9) Enrique and Ernestina watch as Clara floats on to Havana, never realizing their lives will change forever. <i>Raining Sardines</i> could be a useful demonstration of creative writing, because it contains elements of magic realism. This book could also be useful to a classroom with any native Spanish speakers or students studying the Spanish language. Flores-Galbis incorporates many Spanish terms as a way to emphasize the Cuban culture. At the same time, the Spanish terminology throughout the text may make this novel a difficult read for students unfamiliar with the language.</p> <p>Valerie R. Frye Muncie, IN</p>	<p><i>The Red Shoe</i> by Ursula Dubosarsky Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 178 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>War/Family/Suicide/Depression ISBN-13: 978-1-59643-265-9</p> <p>As the war in Iraq touches more and more lives, it is vital for teachers to find a vehicle to trigger discussion about war and its aftermath; we need to think about its effects on the families of those who serve.</p> <p><i>The Red Shoe</i> could function as such a vehicle. It is the story of three Australian girls, Elizabeth, 15, Frances, 11, and Matilda, 6 growing up in the early 1950s. Their father, in the Navy and a veteran of World War II, struggles with his horror of the war, while their mother battles isolation and fear. The plot is loosely interwoven around actual events of the year as chronicled by newspaper clippings interspersed throughout the book.</p> <p>The narrative part of the story is told from the limited third-person point of view of the girls, primarily Matilda's. Through her eyes the reader enters the world of a beach home in a remote part of Sydney and meets the spy who lives next door. The family survives a personal crisis that mirrors the strange fairy tale of the red shoes and the chilling events of the Cold War.</p> <p>Virginia Beesley Quinter, KS</p>
<p><i>Right Behind You</i> by Gail Giles Little, Brown and Co., 2007, 292 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/Violence ISBN-10: 0-316-00203-8</p> <p>"On the afternoon of his seventh birthday, I set Bobby Clarke on fire." So opens the story of Kip McFarland, who, when he was 9 years old, was responsible for the murder of a child.</p> <p>Kip is committed to a psychiatric ward for violent youth offenders and receives years of therapy before being released to his father with a new name and the hope of starting over in another state. Kip's house has burned down during the time he's been locked up, and his father decides to move them far away, so no one will know of Kip's horrible deed.</p> <p>Will Kip, now living as "Wade," be able to live life normally on "the outside"? Will he burn others? Can he ever escape his past? This book will leave readers on the edges of their seats, turning pages frantically to get to the end.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>	<p><i>Silent Echoes</i> by Carla Jablonski Razor Bill, 2007, 344 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Science Fiction ISBN: 978-1-59514-082-1</p> <p>Lucy and her father are spiritualists, or at least that's what they tell their wealthy patrons. In truth, they're nothing more than talented scam artists. That changes when Lucy hears a voice from beyond seeking help. Soon Lucy is making predictions about the future and finds herself caught between two powerful and intriguing men.</p> <p>Lindsay thinks she's going crazy when she hears the voice calling her in the closet where she is hiding from her stepfather. When Lindsay hears the voice again, she finds herself admitted as a schizophrenic. Over time, Lindsay discovers Lucy is not a hallucination, but a voice from the past.</p> <p><i>Silent Echoes</i> is the story of two young women connected through time whose only chance for survival lies in each other. Jablonski weaves an intricate tale that makes much of the limited opportunities available to Lucy in the 1800s and Lindsay as the victim of abuse.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>Sold by Patricia McCormick Hyperion, 2006, 264 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Lakshmi is a poor 13-year-old girl. Her family lives in a small village on a mountainside in Nepal. She has dreams of the day she will marry Krishna, to whom she is betrothed. Lakshmi loves her mother and dreams of the day they can have a tin roof on their small hut.</p> <p>When monsoons destroy the family's crops, Lakshmi's stepfather tells her she is going to the city to work as a maid. Instead, Lakshmi is sold into prostitution. She must fight against the despair and hopelessness that engulf her just to survive every day.</p> <p><i>Sold</i> tells the story of one girl sold into a heinous and terrifying way of life. Although Lakshmi's story is a work of fiction, through her, McCormick tells the story of many real girls who find themselves caught in the same web. McCormick's short and powerful verse brings their stories of despair and hope to the reader and cannot be ignored. The book is based on excellent research and survivor interviews.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>The Theft and The Miracle by Rebecca Wade Katherine Tegen Books, 2007, 351 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>This captivating story is about a junior high girl named Hannah Price, who lives in southern England. She struggles academically and has a remarkably good skill for art.</p> <p>Her world whirls in unexpected mysteries when on one stormy day after classes she takes shelter in a cathedral. This is the same day as the theft of the statue in the cathedral, right after Hannah makes a remarkable drawing of the Virgin and Child statue.</p> <p>The police and others suspect her because of her unusual behavior from that day. Hannah and her good friend Sam struggle to find the mysteries behind what has happened, but then they find they are up against a force much darker than an ordinary thief.</p> <p>Sarah A. Gale Muncie, IN</p>
<p>The Train Jumper by Don Brown Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 128 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Set against the backdrop of the Great Depression, Ed "Collie" Collier embarks on a cross-country adventure, jumping from one freight train to another, in search of his older brother, Little Bill.</p> <p>After the death of their father in a lumberyard accident, Collie and Little Bill quit school and work to help the family make ends meet. But when an argument between Little Bill and their mother drives Collie's brother to run away, Collie is left to fend for himself. His solution is to jump a series of freight trains to track down his older brother and bring him home. Along the rails—and with the help of Scarecrow, a skinny, gray-haired hobo, and Ike, an African American drifter about Collie's own age—Collie encounters one obstacle after another: angry railroad workers, crooked policemen, scamming missionaries, hunger, racism, dust storms, and the inherent dangers of the fast moving trains themselves.</p> <p>An action-packed story told in the stark language of the times and brought to life with vivid imagery, the novel conjures up connections to both <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> and <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>.</p> <p>Matt Copeland Topeka, KS</p>	<p>The Traitor's Gate by Avi Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007, 351 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Adventure/Mystery/Historical Fiction ISBN-13: 978-0-689-85335-7</p> <p>Renowned author Avi's latest novel, <i>The Traitor's Gate</i>, is a page-turning adventure that will not disappoint those with a penchant for adventure, mystery, and unwitting detective work.</p> <p>John Horatio Huffam tried to tell everyone he was only 14 years old. It was unreasonable to expect him to restore his family's already questionable dignity. But, within hours of his father's humiliating public arrest, John is nonetheless thrust into the midst of a mind-bending mystery involving gambling debt, high-stakes military secrets, and an eclectic mix of memorable, shadowy characters.</p> <p>Ominous trappings of 19th century London—the Tower of London with its Traitor's Gate and the neighboring Church of All Hallows—loom in the background as John and his unlikely companion Sary the Sneak race through the city's crowded, maze-like streets in search of the truth buried beneath a puzzling jumble of lies.</p> <p>Jennifer Funk Raleigh, NC</p>

<p><i>Twisted</i> by Laurie Halse Anderson Viking, 2007, 250 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Do the right thing. Be a man.</p> <p>Tyler Miller—self proclaimed “zit on the butt of the student body”—is trying to accomplish both of these things. The trouble is that when he does the right thing, it gets <i>Twisted</i>.</p> <p>An act of school vandalism originally gets Tyler noticed. Not only do people at school know his name, but Tyler’s efforts to pay off his debt to society help him acquire muscles with confidence to match. Even the popular girl, Bethany, seems interested in him. Things are looking up—until Tyler attends a party with the “popular” kids.</p> <p><i>Twisted</i> is about more than fitting in with the popular crowd. It is about Tyler learning how to fit in with himself and his family. It is about thoughts and actions determining who you are, instead of letting someone else decide that.</p> <p>Anderson’s first book from the male perspective is intriguing. Readers will find themselves rooting for Tyler as he battles social hierarchies and power structures with integrity and honor. Tyler discovers what becoming a man is truly all about.</p> <p>Jill and Ryan Adams Lakewood, CO</p>	<p><i>Victory</i> by Susan Cooper Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2006, 196 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Sam Robinson is young sailor aboard the <i>H.M.S. Victory</i>, Nelson’s flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Molly Jennings, an English girl, is forced to move to Connecticut when her mother marries a “Yank.” When Molly buys a tattered biography on Nelson, the two teens’ lives become connected across time.</p> <p>Sam begins life as a poor farm boy with an abusive father. When his mysterious Uncle Charlie offers him an apprenticeship making rope, Sam leaps at the opportunity. Both Sam and his uncle are pressed into the Royal Navy, and Sam begins his transformation into a loyal sailor. Lonely, homesick Molly longs to return to England. Her homesickness seems to create an obsession over Nelson and the <i>Victory</i>.</p> <p>Sam’s story is told with a powerful and mesmerizing voice, especially the fateful battle that costs Nelson his life. Molly’s story is not as interesting or well developed, but the book is enjoyable nonetheless. <i>Victory</i> is appropriate for grades 5-8.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>The White Tiger</i> by Paul Park Tom Doherty Assoc., 2007, 304 pp., \$25.95</p> <p>Baroness Nicola Ceausescu is battling to maintain her power amid political upheaval in Romania. The kingdom’s rightful heir, Miranda Popescu, has been magically transported from her parallel life in Berkshire County, accompanied by the Chevalier de Graz and Lieutenant Prochenko, (in the Berkshires, Peter and Andromeda), pledged by slain Prince Frederick von Schenck to protect his daughter. Baroness Ceausescu uses sorcery and cunning to destroy Miranda, who must navigate a hidden world of surreal dreamscapes inhabited by sorcerers and shape-shifters to discover the powers that will make her mission successful.</p> <p>Park spins a complex, exciting tale peopled by richly drawn characters—evil yet sympathetic, noble yet flawed. Readers might benefit from his two previous novels in this four-book sequence.</p> <p>Dana Waters Fowler, KS</p>	<p>Fantasy/Coming of Age ISBN: 0765315298</p> <p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> <i>Lori Goodson</i> <i>409 Cherry Circle</i> <i>Manhattan, KS 66503</i></p> <p><i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Lori Goodson at lagoodson@cox.net</i></p>