

Stories from the Field

Editors' Note: We are pleased to introduce a new feature to *The ALAN Review*. **Stories from the Field** invites readers to share a story about young adult literature. This new section will feature brief vignettes (no more than 300 words) from practicing teachers and librarians who would like to share their interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators around young adult literature. Please send your stories to: jbach@lsu.edu.

"What did you do?"

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So, there I was, as the story often goes, sitting at my assigned table during parent–teacher conferences, waiting patiently for my next appointment to arrive. The commons area was abuzz with parents moving from table to table, collecting progress reports on their student's performance. I took a quick look at my appointment schedule and found that my next appointment was with Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, Cassie's mother and father.

On the first day of school, Cassie was the first to enter my room. She collapsed into a chair near my desk and asked, "Do we read in here?"

"Yes, we read in here all the time." I said, slightly taken aback by her question.

Without missing a beat, Cassie said, "Good luck with that. I hate reading."

Soon after our first exchange, Cassie found a copy of *Speak* in my classroom library. She asked if

she could borrow it for a while. I told her she could keep it as long as she needed. I watched her carry that book for weeks from class to class. And, every once in a while, I even caught her reading a page here and there.

Later that same semester, Cassie's mother contacted me to schedule a parent–teacher conference. We arranged a time during the evening set aside by the district for such meetings, and there I sat, waiting.

As Mr. and Mrs. Fisher approached my table, I could sense that Mrs. Fisher was quite frustrated about something. After Mrs. Fisher politely took a chair at my table, she waited a moment to collect her thoughts and said, "What did you do? Do you know that I have caught Cassie up past her bedtime, with a light on in her room, reading? She said it was *your* fault!"

Reading the Twilight Series through Student Responses

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I have not read all the *Twilight* books, but my students have. My disjointed "reading" of the series occurs through their response logs, book talks, and conversations in class. I may jump from Bella in biology to her bloodthirstiness when she becomes a vampire to scenes of Jacob's pining for his unrequited love.

Female students say they love Edward: he is, they say, their fantasy guy. They go on about how roman-

tic he is, how beautiful; they do say they know he's not real. From my reading of their reading, I think the real fantasy is that more than one powerful, dangerous guy loves and pursues Bella. The young female reader becomes the beautiful, desirable, besotted Bella when they read her. Perhaps the few male students who are reading want what Edward has and what Bella wants; if not, there is enough adventure, blood, and fighting to keep them interested.

I did read the first book in the series, but was not interested enough to complete them. I read Edward as the "bad guy," as one of my male students did. I was

amused that the Native American love-interest was a werewolf.

I go back to my own reading of *Twilight* and my original idea of Edward as the bad guy when a student quotes Edward in her reading journal, "I'm not always the most dangerous thing out there. . . ." The student writes, ". . . I don't know what could be more dangerous than a vampire in Forks." Sometimes, I feel like responding, "I don't know, how about a family of them? Or traveling bands of them? Or a vampire having a baby?"

Call for Proposals: NCTE Theory and Research into Practice (TRIP) Book Series

The NCTE Books Program invites proposals for its TRIP series (Theory and Research into Practice). These books are single-authored and focus on a single topic, targeting a specified educational level (elementary, middle, or secondary). Each book will offer the following: solid theoretical foundation in a given subject area within English language arts; exposure to the pertinent research in that area; practice-oriented models designed to stimulate theory-based application in the reader's own classroom. The series has an extremely wide range of subject matter; past titles include *Genre Theory*, *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language*, *Code-Switching*, and *Writing about Literature*. For detailed submission guidelines, please visit the NCTE website at <http://www.ncte.org/write/books>. Proposals to be considered for the TRIP series should include a short review of the theory and research, as well as examples of classroom practices that can be adapted to the teaching level specified. Proposals should be submitted through NCTE's Web-based manuscript submission and review system, Editorial Manager, at <http://www.editorialmanager.com/nctebp/>.
