

<p><u>A Love Story Starring My Dead Best Friend</u> by Emily Horner Realistic Fiction/Sexual Orientation/Love Dial Books, 2010, 259 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 978-0-8037-3420-3</p> <p>Cass Meyer has always thought of herself as an ordinary, unpopular girl. However, she had one best friend whom she loved more than anyone else—Julia. Julia introduces Cass to the drama crowd, and Cass forms friendships with them through her. When Julia is killed in a car accident, Cass's world is turned upside down. How would she make it without her?</p> <p>In Julia's memory, her friends decide to stage a top-secret play that she had been working on. Cass shifts back and forth from her memories of taking Julia's ashes to California (where they had planned to go together) and the process of preparing the play in honor of their friend. Throughout the story, Cass works through what her true feelings for Julia may have been and what her feelings toward a former enemy are now. This is a story of loss and the importance of friendship.</p> <p>Jessica Long Cincinnati, Ohio</p>	<p><u>Blindsided</u> by Priscilla Cummings Fiction/Blindness Dutton Juvenile, 2010, 240 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 978-0-525-42161-0</p> <p>Natalie O'Reilly was born with a congenital eye disease. At the age of 14, her sight had deteriorated so much that she feared losing her vision. Until this point, she believed that there would be a cure, that she would get better.</p> <p>At the start of her freshman year, Natalie's parents send her to the Maryland School for the Blind. They were hoping that she would have time to learn Braille and other ways to survive if she truly did end up losing her sight. One November morning, Natalie awakens to find her sight gone completely. Her world becomes gray. She hasn't spent enough time at the school to learn many things. Natalie is faced with deciding how she's going to react to her new reality. She faces several crises where having her sight wouldn't help her. Dealing with those crises helps her come to terms with the changes.</p> <p>April Wulber Yorkshire, OH</p>
<p><u>Blink & Caution</u> by Tim Wynne-Jones Fiction/Runaways/Crime Candlewick, 2011, 342 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 978-0-7636-3983-9</p> <p>The paths of two teens on the run collide on Toronto's streets. Blink survives on the street partly by dining on the leftovers from room service trays in ritzy hotels. But his breakfast is interrupted when he sees a kidnapping that isn't really what it's supposed to be. Through a careless mistake on the part of the culprits, Blink picks up the kidnapped executive's cell phone. When the media report the kidnapping, Blink realizes that he has valuable information. Phone calls from the man's daughter persuade Blink that she needs his help, and he agrees, dreaming of a monetary reward. Caution is also on the run, ostensibly from an abusive drug lord, but in reality from her own past, when a fluke accident changes her world completely. The fast-paced storyline forces readers to consider happenstance, fate, and probability, woven subtly but inexorably through the narrative.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>	<p><u>By the Time You Read This I'll Be Dead</u> by Julie Anne Peters Hypertion, 2010, pp. 198, \$16.99 ISBN: 978-1-4231-1618-9</p> <p>Daelyn is a troubled teen who attends a private Catholic girls' school—her parents' misguided attempt to salvage her by switching schools. Daelyn cannot speak due to another thwarted suicide attempt, yet she writes her own painful story. This powerful, disturbing novel covers her ongoing efforts to kill herself as she follows the guidelines of Through-the-Light.com.</p> <p>Daelyn has been victimized by taunting classmates, originally because she was fat. Now thin, she has become a "freak," harassed and isolated as she has always been. Will she carry out her path of self-destruction despite hopeful alliances with Santana, the boy who battles Hodgkin's lymphoma, or Emily, a fellow classmate whose size is setting her up for bullying? Peters writes important, challenging fiction for young adults, and this novel's examination of bullycide offers uncomfortable insights into the world of those who feel like losers from birth and trust no one.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>

<p><i>drizzle</i> by Kathleen Van Cleve Dial Books for Young Readers, 2010, 358 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Fantasy/Mystery/Identity ISBN: 978-0-8037-3362-6</p> <p>Polly Peabody is an unusual girl growing up in an extraordinary place—her family’s magical rhubarb farm. Although she’s at home with her best friend Harry, the chocolate rhubarb plant, and the other creatures on the farm, Polly feels like an outcast at school. When Grandmom dies, everything begins to unravel. Aunt Edith returns to manage the farm. Although the farm and family thrive for years, trouble erupts when Aunt Edith suddenly decides to sell the farm. The rain stops. The plants wilt. Polly’s brother Freddy becomes deathly ill. It’s up to Polly and her organic friends to solve the mystery linking the unfortunate events and save her loved ones from disaster.</p> <p>This fantasy tale combines faith, science, and magic as Polly discovers the farm’s secrets and her true identity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tamara Fyke Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Entrapment</i> by Michael Spooner Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2009, 320 pp., \$8.99</p> <p>Relationships/Modern Communication ISBN: 978-1-4424-0366-6</p> <p>A disgruntled shrew (Annie) and a bored poet-mastermind (Johnson) team up to test the relationships of their friends in this blithe comedy of errors. Annie convinces her two best friends to tell their devoted boyfriends that they will be out of town for a few weeks and unable to communicate. Meanwhile, Johnson tricks the boys into joining a chat room where they will be welcoming two alluring foreign exchange students to their school (the two girls in disguise). The stakes get higher and higher as the girls attempt to steal the hearts of the boys, all the while hoping they will be faithful.</p> <p>Told entirely in chat and blogs, this modern romance is an enjoyable riff on Shakespearean comedy. Love is attacked with barbed words, cynical plotting, beautiful strangers, and staunch disbelief, but still manages triumph. This book would appeal most to students in grades 8 through 10.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jessie Lorimer Rogers, AR</p>
<p><i>Finding My Place</i> by Traci L. Jones Farrar Straus Giroux, 2010, 181 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Prejudices ISBN: 978-0-374-33573-1</p> <p>It is 1975 in the suburbs outside of Denver, Colorado. Tiphania Jayne Baker is new, in the ninth grade, and the only Black girl at her high school. She has learned from her parents, members of the civil rights movement, how to carry herself above the fray and outperform her peers in order to represent her race. But it’s hard for her in the face of glaring eyes and some outspoken bigots in the hallways, especially when her friends from her old school accuse her of becoming “whitewashed” by her new surroundings.</p> <p>When she finally meets Jackie Sue, Tiphania knows she’s found a real friend, and one with an unbelievable vocabulary. But she quickly learns that being Black in a White community is not the only thing that keeps you outside the inner circle in ritzy Brent Hills.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Elizabeth Self Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Flirt Club</i> by Cathleen Daly Roaring Brook Press, 2010, 281 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Growing Up/Humor/Friendship/Relationships ISBN: 978-1-59643-572-8</p> <p>Where was this book when I was in junior high suffering from the anxiety of being the only girl without a boyfriend? Daly’s <i>Flirt Club</i> is a book about two self-proclaimed geeky drama nerds, Annie (Bean) and Izzy (Cisco), who form Flirt Club to help them overcome their shyness around boys and practice flirting with anyone (and <i>anything</i>) that comes their way.</p> <p>Told entirely through notes between Annie and Izzy, diary entries, and club minutes, <i>Flirt Club</i> captures the many struggles of being an adolescent girl caught between childhood and womanhood, while also showing the laughter and silliness that goes along with just being 13 years old. No matter your age, through laughter and tears, Daly’s novel reminds us of how it feels to have butterflies in your stomach just looking at a boy, as well as the value of a loyal friend.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Brittany Vorenkamp Baton Rouge, LA</p>

<p><i>Freak Magnet</i> by Andrew Auseon HarperTeen, 2010, 293 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>When “freak” Charlie Wyatt spies “magnet” Gloria Aboud in a coffee shop, he falls instantly in love and, despite warnings from a friend, does everything he can to meet her. Little does he realize they have more in common than a cup of coffee. Both suffer from incredible loss and grief—Charlie’s mother is bed-ridden with a debilitating illness, and Gloria’s brother was killed in Afghanistan. Charlie copes by feigning courage and wearing his Superman costume under his clothes, while Gloria does everything she can to annoy her mother. The two teens’ friendship is threatened by their families and Charlie’s impending internship.</p> <p>Andrew Auseon tells this unique story from both characters’ point of view by alternating chapters, and he isn’t afraid to touch on timely, difficult topics. Teens will want to root for this unlikely couple to help each other through one of the most difficult times in their lives.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Anne Minton Fayetteville, AR</p>	<p><i>Ghost Town</i> by Rachel Caine New American Library, 2010, 338 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>In the ninth installment of The Morganville Vampires series, Claire and her friends are still struggling to protect Morganville from problems inside and outside of the town. Morganville is a unique place where vampires and people coexist (mostly), and protecting the town’s secret is vitally important. Claire discovers a way to use the special powers that Vampires have to increase the town’s protection against discovery. Unfortunately, her discovery has deadly consequences for the people inside Morganville. Both vampires and people alike are forgetting who they are and what they believe in; Claire has to fix the problem before she forgets who she is and what she did.</p> <p>Caine’s series continues to be well developed and thoughtful. Claire and her friend go through typical adolescent struggles in addition to their more difficult challenges of living with vampires. Caine has several twists on vampire mythology that challenge the reader’s expectations.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Melanie Hundley Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>Gone</i> by Lisa McMann Simon Pulse, 2010, 214 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Janie faces her first year of college with an agonizing dilemma before her. This tough 18-year-old is a dreamcatcher: she gets pulled into the dreams of nearby sleepers, who implore her to save them from their nightmares. She has learned to use her ability for others’ good, but at a terrible personal cost. A fellow dreamcatcher has revealed to Janie that if she continues to use her power, she will become blind and crippled in a matter of years. The only solution, it seems, is for Janie to isolate herself from her mother, friends, and loving boyfriend—forever. As she struggles with her decision, her long-absent father appears on the scene, making Janie’s choice more difficult than ever.</p> <p><i>Gone</i> is best enjoyed in conjunction with the other books in McMann’s Wake trilogy, but Janie’s dark struggle is sure to intrigue readers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Allison Matthews Columbia, SC</p>	<p><i>Green Witch</i> by Alice Hoffman Scholastic, 2010, 144 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>A horrific explosion has destroyed Green’s city, and she is left an orphan, grieving for what she misses. Her idyllic world is destroyed, but she gradually begins to employ her instinctive gardening skills to create lush surroundings for her solitary hut. Her belief in the future is challenged at every turn, but her spirit of survival triumphs in this lyrical tale of loss and redemption.</p> <p>Green undertakes a quest to tell the stories of the Enchanted, witches who live outside her village. She is soon challenged to seek those who are imprisoned on a lonely island; on the journey, however, she finds strength in herself by implementing magical assistance from the witches, along with their charms and advice. The power of women who persevere is foremost in this lyrical novel of a teen whose bravery eventually destroys evil. This haunting fable will appeal to teens with a bent for soul-searching.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>

<p><i>Half Brother</i> by Kenneth Oppel Scholastic Press, 2010, 384 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Fiction/Experimentation ISBN: 978-0-545-22925-8</p> <p>On Ben's 12th birthday, his mom comes home with an eight-day-old chimp. Both of Ben's parents are scientists, and the chimp is their new project. Ben's father is clear that the chimp is to be used for science, but Ben's mother's project has a different twist, and she wants to really treat the chimp as a member of the family. Ben doesn't like Zan (the chimp) at first, but then he becomes attached to him as if he were his little brother. When Ben's father decides that Zan isn't learning language as well as he should, Zan gets sent to a refuge for chimps. When Ben realizes that Zan is going to be sold for medical research, he steals him back. Eventually, Zan ends up in a sanctuary where he is safe from research and can live with other chimpanzees in an appropriate and protected environment.</p> <p>April Wulber Yorkshire, OH</p>	<p><i>Heart of a Samurai</i> by Margi Preus Adventure/Coming of Age/International Travel Amulet Books, 2010, 304 pp., \$15.95 ISBN: 978-0-8109-8981-8</p> <p>At 14, Manjiro is swept away from his homeland of Japan by a terrible storm. At first, survival is all he and his crewmates worry about. But after being rescued by an American whaling vessel, the Japanese fishermen share the fear that the legendary "foreign devils" will poison their minds with barbaric ways of thinking. All except Manjiro. His curiosity and quick mind spur him to learn more about the possibilities of life beyond the shores of his village. He even becomes friends with the ship's captain, who eventually takes him to America as his adopted son. Life in America is full of opportunity and freedom, but not without a price.</p> <p>Preus's fictional retelling of this true story will captivate readers of all ages. Including archival illustrations by Manjiro, this hero's tale is a fascinating look at the original bridges built between the American and Japanese peoples.</p> <p>Julie Phillips Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>Home Is with Our Family</i> by Joyce Hansen Coming of Age/Abolition Movement Disney: Jump at the Sun Books, 2010, 272 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 978-0-7868-5217-8</p> <p>All that matters to Maria Peters is that she is about to turn 13—the age when she'll be considered grown up enough to attend abolitionist meetings. She's driven by the message of Sojourner Truth and longs to be a part of the anti-slavery movement. Maria's life becomes complicated when the city threatens to tear down the safe haven for free blacks and escaped slaves. Maria discovers that turning 13 may signify much more than she imagined.</p> <p><i>Home Is with Our Family</i> seamlessly weaves Maria's personal story with significant historical events. Hansen's characters, setting, and actions create for the reader a picture of life for free and enslaved blacks in 1855 that cannot be ignored. Readers will find themselves confronting one of the darkest moments in American history and emerging with a sense of hope for the nation and pride in the ones who fought to make it free.</p> <p>Evelyn Baldwin Fayetteville, AR</p>	<p><i>Ilyria</i> by Elizabeth Hand Teen Romance/Family Viking, 2010, 135 pp., \$15.99 ISBN: 978-0-670-01212-1</p> <p>The Tierney cousins live shrouded in darkness, held together by memories of a great grandmother. The two who keep the family alive are first cousins—and closest friends—Madeline and Rogan. When they are both cast in roles in the school production of <i>Twelfth Night</i>, their relationship begins to take a turn from friendship to forbidden love. Obsessed with each other, the two begin down a dangerous path.</p> <p>An intriguing combination of magical realism and a story of illicit love, <i>Ilyria</i> at turns surprises and shocks its readers as the characters push the boundaries of acceptability and reality. From magical stages to attic hideaways, Hand traces the characters through their relationships, ultimately shaping a novel that does not simply detail obsession, but one that is unafraid to reveal its consequences as well. <i>Ilyria</i> is an excellent novel for any reader caught up in stories about forbidden teen love and romance.</p> <p>Evelyn Baldwin Fayetteville, AR</p>

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<p><i>Imaginalis</i> by J. M. DeMatteis Katherin Tegen Books, 2010, 248 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Fantasy/Magic ISBN: 978-0-06-173286-7</p> <p>For most of Mehera's friends, <i>Imaginalis</i> is nothing more than a fairy tale book series, a story they gave up a long time ago. But for Mehera, <i>Imaginalis</i> is something more—a reality she almost believes in. When publishers decide to cancel the series, she begins a one-girl quest to keep the storyline alive, a quest that leads her right into the drama of <i>Imaginalis</i> itself. As the lines of her world begin to blur, Mehera discovers that she may be the only person capable of saving <i>Imaginalis</i> and, in a dangerous twist, our own world as well.</p> <p>With a story that brings together Narnian-like lions, Middle Earth-style magic, and wizardry that even Harry Potter would covet, <i>Imaginalis</i> is a perfect recommendation for lovers of fantasy writing. A fast-paced but well-developed read, DeMatteis's book leaves readers wondering if the imaginary isn't more real than we might believe.</p> <p>Evelyn Baldwin Fayetteville, AR</p>	<p><i>Misty Gordon and the Mystery of the Ghost Pirates</i> by Kim Kennedy Amulet Books: An imprint of Abrams, 2010, 240 pp., \$ 15.95</p> <p>Fantasy/Mystery/Humor ISBN: 978-0-8109-9357-0</p> <p>Misty Gordon's parents own the Dearly Departed Antiques Store, which they stock with items they purchase from the estates of recently deceased residents of Ashcrumb, a historic town on the Atlantic coast. Though Misty finds her parents' occupation mortifying, her mundane life changes when she discovers a hidden diary tucked inside an old phone from one of these estates. And this is only the first secret she uncovers as she encounters ghosts, a killer mayonnaise addict, and a fur coat that stalks her as she and her best friend Yoshi try to uncover the secret history of Ashcrumb and save the town from approaching ghost pirates bent on taking over the world.</p> <p>Part silly, part scary, and all adventurous, Kim Kennedy's debut novel (she previously collaborated with her brother on the <i>Pirate Pete</i> books for early readers) is a page-turning mystery that will satisfy elementary and middle school readers.</p> <p>Nathan Phillips Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>Shine</i> by Lauren Myracle Amulet/Abrams, 2011, 384 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Fiction/Drug Abuse/Bullying ISBN: 978-0-8109-8417-2</p> <p>While her former best friend Patrick lies in a coma, Cat investigates the hate crime that put him there, since local law enforcement officials seem reluctant to do so. Then, too, she feels guilt for having become withdrawn for years from everyone around her, including Patrick. Convinced that someone in their small town of Black Creek, North Carolina, is responsible for leaving Patrick brutally beaten with a gas nozzle taped to his mouth, she visits Patrick's local haunts and interviews their mutual friends. During the investigation, Cat unearths secrets about her friends and the production, distribution, and use of meth that permeates their lives. Unrelentingly, she pursues the investigation to its surprising conclusion, discovering truths about herself and conjuring her own strength along the way. As she descends into the seamy underbelly of the place she calls home, she realizes that she must let her own light shine if she ever plans to help others.</p> <p>Barbara Ward Pullman, WA</p>	<p><i>Sir Charlie Chaplin, the Funniest Man in the World</i> by Sid Fleischman Greenwillow Books, 2010, 267 pp., \$19.99</p> <p>Biography ISBN: 978-0-06-189640-8</p> <p>How does a Cockney street urchin change his fortune to become one of the wealthiest and most revered comedians of movie history? Fleischman traces the dramatic rise of Chaplin from a boy performing slapstick on a London street corner to an iconic actor who came to forever alter the Hollywood film industry. Fleischman tells Chaplin's tale with a clear fondness for "the Little Tramp," making the reader feel like a privileged listener to the memories of a personal friend. Chaplin's great heights of success and his devastating lows are narrated with carefully researched detail.</p> <p>While the writing style is clear enough for early preteens to understand, Fleischman's spinning of Chaplin's roller-coaster fame will have readers of all ages cheering as Chaplin bucks the bloated studios to follow his own creative instincts and mourns the loss of close family members.</p> <p>Evelyn Baldwin Fayetteville, AR</p>

<p><i>The Absolute Value of Negative One</i> by Steve Brezenoff Carolrhoda Lab, 2010, 290 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Fiction/Emotional Problems ISBN: 978-0-7613-5417-8</p> <p>Lily, Noah, and Simon are teenagers attending classes (when they aren't skipping to smoke cigarettes) at a Long Island high school. When family issues and the pressures of becoming an adult complicate their once-simple friendships, each deals with the changes differently. Lily worries that her love of math will betray her slacker reputation, Noah retreats to his basement to avoid an abusive father, and Simon joins the track team to get healthy and pursue a "normal" girl.</p> <p>The characters narrate the same events but from their own unique perspectives. As the story unfolds and the plotlines interweave, the profound and poignant realization comes to light: how deeply can you know another person—even a best friend? A series of misunderstandings, unspoken truths, and angry outbursts claw away at the trio. As they drift apart, they struggle to balance emotional wounds with the need to create their own identities.</p> <p>Kevin Sawyer Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>The Defense of Thaddaus A. Ledbetter</i> by John Gosselink Amulet Books, 2010, 240 pp., \$14.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 978-0-8109-8977-1</p> <p>If you are looking for the definition of a word, trying to remember the lyrics to a blues song, or wanting to rethink the layout of a school bus, then Thaddaus A. Ledbetter is the person to go to. In this story, Thaddaus Ledbetter sets out to defend his actions that have led to In-School Suspension for the rest of the year. Thaddaus finds ISS to be extremely boring but useful. He uses the time to take action to defend his purpose behind The True Emergency Drill, and create greater efficiency in the world.</p> <p>John Gosselink uses a unique page layout to create the feeling of a student file and uses different fonts and illustrations to portray the tone and voice of various characters within the story. Mr. Cooper, Uncle Pete, and Allison have the most contact with Thaddaus and ultimately contribute to his defense strategies and confinement.</p> <p>Kathryn Fry Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>The Lighter Side of Life & Death</i> by C. K. Kelly Martin Random House Children's Books, 2010, 231 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Sex/Family/Relationships ISBN: 978-0-375-84588-8</p> <p>Sixteen-year-old Mason thought his dreams had come true when he lost his virginity to his best friend Kat, because now they could finally be together. However, it soon becomes clear that Kat wants nothing more than to pretend that the night never happened. While he is trying to figure out what will happen to his relationship with Kat (and their mutual friends, who now seem to be torn between the two), he also meets Colette, a 23-year-old that he didn't think he even had a chance with, until the first time she invites him to her apartment. Unfortunately, Colette is also his new step-mom's sister's best friend, so they must hide their relationship from everyone. A story about a boy juggling his new-found sexuality, changing relationships, and a new family all at once, this novel follows the journey that will change his life forever.</p> <p>Jessica S. Joyner Memphis, TN</p>	<p><i>The Line</i> by Teri Hall Dial Books, 2010, 219 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Science Fiction/Family ISBN: 978-0-8037-3466-1</p> <p>In the not so distant future, Rachel and her mother live on the Property, far from civilization and from the eyes of the oppressive Unites States government. They are dangerously close, however, to the Line, an impenetrable border between the Property and Away. The Line, part of the National Border Defense System, keeps citizens from leaving, but it also keeps the Others from getting in. Rachel and her mother work for Ms. Moore, who owns the Property, and they live a relatively quiet life. But then Rachel stumbles across a garbled recording asking for help—from the other side of the Line. Her attempts to solve this mystery lead her to uncover dangerous secrets.</p> <p>This dystopian story about courage in the face of mortal risk presents a terrifying vision of the future; however, it rings in the end with a tentative but resounding note of hope.</p> <p>Michael Ebling Gainesville, FL</p>

<p><i>The Prince of Mist</i> by Carlos Ruiz Zafon Little Brown, and Company, 2010, 224 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>There is a war going on and Maximilian Carver, a watchmaker, decides to move his family. Eight years ago, he fell in love with a house on the beach, and he is finally moving his family there. When they arrive and strange things begin happening, Max (the son) chalks it all up to being shaken from the move. When Max and Alicia meet a local boy and go diving with him, there is a turning point in Max's thinking. He hears local legends about the dead son of the previous owners.</p> <p>When they discover that their younger sister, Irina, suffered an accident in their home on the beach, they know something is up. Perhaps the house really is haunted. While Max and Alicia's parents are at the hospital with Irina, they are working with their friend Roland to solve the case.</p> <p>April Wulber Yorkshire, OH</p>	<p><i>The River</i> by Mary Jane Beaufrand Little, Brown, 2010, 224 pp., \$ 16.99</p> <p>Veronica Severance was your typical pouty teen. Angry with her parents for uprooting her fabulous life in Portland for the dull rural countryside, Veronica believes her life is ruined. She is convinced that she will never feel connected to anything or anyone again. But her life begins to change the day she finds 7-year-old Karen Armstrong floating lifeless in the Santiam River.</p> <p>Fixated on finding the child's killer, Veronica begins to hear Karen in her dreams. But another, more urgent voice also finds its way into Veronica's world. Haunted by Karen's memory and the pulsing voice in her ears, Veronica is relentless in her quest for answers. As she searches, Veronica begins to discover pieces of not only her friends and family, but also of herself. Beaufrand's story depicts the beauty of human triumph over the ugliness of human vice.</p> <p>Leslie Ostrowski Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>The Steps across the Water</i> by Adam Gopnik Disney and Hyperion Books, 2010, 291 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Rose lives in New York with her brother Oliver and her adoptive parents. One day in Central Park, Rose notices an arch of steps over the park's water with small people walking on them. A friend from school introduces her to the magical city of U Nork that exists inside a snow globe and can be reached from New York by the steps across the water.</p> <p>Rose is called upon to rescue the city from an Ice Queen who seeks its destruction. Using the magic tricks she learned from her brother and by thinking fast, Rose combats the Ice Queen and her minions and learns that her family history is closely connected to U Nork. She discovers that although she is small and U Nork is simply part of a snow globe, her mission and the lives of the U Norkers are important, too.</p> <p>Jamie McGee Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>The Total Tragedy of a Girl Named Hamlet</i> by Erin Dionne Dial Books, 2010, 304 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Hamlet Kennedy doesn't just know her Shakespeare, she lives it. Her parents, both Shakespearean scholars, and her genius 7-year-old sister, Desdemona, who will attend the same middle school, all threaten to make this the worst start to a semester ever. It doesn't help that a secret admirer keeps giving her origami pigs and that her best friend, Tyler, might have a crush on her. In a semester filled with multiple embarrassing episodes, failed attempts to protect her sister from so-called friends who use her for her brain, and surrealist art projects, will Hamlet eventually cheer "Huzzah" or keep throwing Shakespearean insults at her classmates?</p> <p>Dionne crafts a sweet, often humorous, romance suitable for upper elementary and middle school readers. This novel also features a contemporary twist to Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>.</p> <p>Jacqueline Bach Baton Rouge, LA</p>

<p><i>They Called Themselves the KKK: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group</i> by Susan Campbell Bartoletti Houghton Mifflin, 2010, 172 pp., \$19.00</p> <p>ISBN: 978-0-618-44033-7</p> <p>Nonfiction/Civil Rights</p>	<p><i>Three Quarters Dead</i> by Richard Peck Dial Books, 2010, 193 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>ISBN: 978-0-8037-3454-8</p> <p>Fantasy</p> <p>Kerry is a sophomore who desperately wants to join the popular crowd. During lunch, the coolest girls at school befriend her and include her in their discussion. Kerry will do anything to make sure that they continue to include her during and outside of lunch. Her friends begin inviting her places and then give her tasks to perform. She fails to realize that the assignments given to her by these friends are hurtful to others and that she is being used. Kerry becomes so wrapped up in a world of texting, prom, and gossip that she continues to perform her popular friends' bidding—even after they suffer a fatal car crash. Are her friends still alive? Were they even dead?</p> <p>This story is packed with intrigue and leaves the reader questioning the power of the supernatural world. Kerry begins as a malleable girl, but grows into a strong young woman.</p> <p>Jackie Evans Baton Rouge, LA</p>
<p><i>Whisper</i> by Phoebe Kitanidis Balzer + Bray, 2010, 281 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Fantasy/Relationships ISBN: 978-0-06-179925-9</p> <p>On the outside, Joy Stefani is a well-adjusted high schooler whose helpful nature makes her everybody's favorite. Inside, like her sister and mother, Joy is able to Hear Whispers—the innermost thoughts of the people around her. Like her mom, Joy listens to people's desires and helps them. However, she has noticed recent changes as she hears shocking and hurtful thoughts, some of which are directed toward her. She also experiences excruciating headaches that no one seems able to explain or soothe.</p> <p>What's more, Joy's once strong connection with her older sister, Jessica, continues to disintegrate. Jessica views their ability as a curse and tries to sabotage Joy's happiness and popularity. Confused and concerned, Joy begins to question people and experiences. Through questioning, she finds an untapped confidence that leads her on a mission to rescue someone she loves and discover the truth behind who she is.</p> <p>Erin Bridges Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> <i>Melanie Hundley</i> <i>1021 Delmas Ave.</i> <i>Nashville, TN 37216-3630</i> <i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Melanie Hundley at melanie.hundley@Vanderbilt.edu.</i></p>