

<p><i>Anya's Ghost</i> by Vera Brosgol First Second, 2011, 224 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Graphic Novel/Growing Up/Supernatural ISBN: 978-1-59643-552-0</p> <p>Anya is a typical teen girl who is embarrassed by her family, struggling with her body image, and attempting to fit in at school. When she falls down a well, she thinks that this actually isn't the worst thing that has happened to her. At the bottom of the well, Anya finds a dead body and a new best friend—a ghost named Emily. At first Anya and Emily are close, but Anya realizes that some parts of the story Emily told about her death don't add up. As Anya struggles to sort out fact from fiction, she must also figure out life in high school. Emily begins to play dangerous pranks and Anya must clean up the mess.</p> <p>Brosgol's debut graphic novel provides a quirky, sardonic, and whimsical view into adolescence and the struggle to both fit in and be different from everyone else. Anya is sarcastic, caring, and thoughtful.</p> <p>Melanie Hundley Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Astfall</i> by Mike Mullen Tanglewood, 2011, 472 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Post-apocalyptic ISBN: 978-1-933718-55-2</p> <p>After the supervolcano at Yellowstone erupts, Alex finds himself plunged into an ash-covered world. Eager to find his family, who has gone on a family trip, Alex traverses 140 miles of dangerous terrain and meets people who have resorted to primitive ways of living in order to survive, including extreme acts of violence and utter hopelessness. Along the way, he meets Darla, another teenager who finds herself alone in this uninhabitable wasteland, and the two embark on an unforgettable journey.</p> <p>As in Pfeiffer's <i>Life as We Knew It</i>, Mullen manages to create a believably devastated world in which there are few people to trust and even fewer resources. He deals with some of the more adult aspects of life many teenagers encounter, such as having sex and the embarrassment of relieving bodily waste in public. Readers who appreciate a little romance with their action adventure stories will enjoy Alex and Darla's.</p> <p>Jacqueline Bach Baton Rouge, LA</p>
<p><i>Calli</i> by Jessica Lee Anderson Milkweek Editions, 2011, 184 pp., \$8.00</p> <p>Coping/ Nontraditional family/ Love ISBN: 978-1-57131-699-8</p> <p>Calli is just a normal 15-year-old girl. She has a popular boyfriend, a loyal best friend, and two of the greatest moms in the world. However, Calli's world turns upside down when her moms decide that they want to foster a girl named Cherish. Calli's new foster sister is nothing like Calli pictured or hoped for in a new family member. Cherish lies to Calli, steals her friends, kisses Calli's boyfriend, and constantly blames all of her troubles on Calli. Time and again, Calli is left wondering how someone so horrible can get away with the things she does. When an act of revenge turns haywire, Calli isolates herself from her family and friends in an attempt to come to terms with her guilt.</p> <p>This moving coming-of-age story portrays a world where the perils of adolescence can be rectified and mistakes can be undone, especially with the support of two loving and supporting mothers.</p> <p>Kim Coyle Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Chasing the Nighthbird</i> by Krista Russell Peachtree Publishers, 2011, 197 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Adventure/Social Issues/ Historical Fiction ISBN: 978-1-56145-597-3</p> <p>In 1851 New Bedford, Massachusetts, whaling ships came into port. A 14-year-old boy from Cape Verde, Lucky Valera, was preparing for his first real job as a sailor when he was shanghaied by Fernando Vergas, his half-brother. Fernando plans to keep Lucky working for him until Lucky comes of age, sending Lucky to work in one of the mills where the labor is dangerous and backbreaking. Lucky meets a Quaker girl who is an abolitionist and a fugitive slave. He thinks that her problems and concerns are not his, as he attempts his own escape, but in a daring finale, he realizes that slavery is his problem, too. He goes back to sea to help fugitive slaves escape. The ills of slavery, child labor, conditions in mills, and the whaling industry make this book ideal to launch discussions of social issues.</p> <p>Joy Frerichs Chatsworth, GA</p>

<p><i>Drought</i> by Pam Bachorz Egmont, 2011, 392 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Dystopia/Oppression ISBN: 978-1-60684-016-0</p> <p>For 200 years, Ruby Prosser has been collecting Water. Enslaved by the cruel Darwin West and his gang of Overseers, Ruby and her Congregation must scour the woods each day for the special healing Water, which has sustained their lives for many years but also fueled the greed and oppression surrounding Ruby's community.</p> <p>Waiting for their savior Otto while enduring the hardship of slavery is the Congregation's chosen purpose, but when Ruby meets the new Overseer Ford, she questions the wisdom of the Congregants. Carrying the secret of the Water in her blood, which she adds to the Water every night, Ruby must choose between sustaining her people or venturing outside the woods for the chance at a normal life. Mysterious characters, forbidden love, and one girl's quest for freedom create a gripping story about loyalty, leadership, and purpose in a world where suffering is profound and salvation uncertain.</p> <p>Meredith Suits Franklin, TN</p>	<p><i>Freak Magnet</i> by Andrew Auseon HarperTeen, 2010, 293 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Grief/Interpersonal Relationships/Family ISBN: 978-0-06-113926-0</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. They have more in common than a cup of coffee. Both suffer from incredible loss and grief—Charlie's mother is bedridden with a debilitating illness and Gloria's brother was killed in Afghanistan. Charlie copes by feigning courage as he wears his used Superman costume under his clothes, while Gloria does everything she can to annoy her mother.</p> <p>Andrew Auseon tells this unique story from both characters' point of view by alternating chapters. <i>Freak Magnet</i> isn't afraid to touch on timely, difficult topics and uses two likeable characters to address the issues. Teens will root for this unlikely couple to help each other through the most difficult times in their lives. The book would appeal to teens, ages 14 and up.</p> <p>Anne Minton Fayetteville, AR</p>
<p><i>Fighting in the Shade</i> by Sterling Watson Akashic Books, 2011, 330pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Sports/Belonging/Masculinity ISBN: 978-1-936070-98-5</p> <p>The year is 1964. Billy Dyer has just moved to the Florida Coast with his newly divorced and secretive alcoholic father. Billy finds a place in the town on the high school football team, the Spartans. Much like the original Spartans, being on the team is a symbol of honor, pain, and elitism. A bad hazing scene gone wrong forces Billy into exile from the team. Billy and his father are forced to make decisions that could potentially affect their lives within the new town forever.</p> <p>This story captures the essence of what it means to grow up, to come into oneself as part of society. The challenge of wanting to belong versus doing what is right is the dominant theme. Billy, his father, and the reader learn that life's decisions don't always turn out the way we plan. This tale transcends time, and will be enjoyed by football and history fans.</p> <p>Kim Coyle Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Hey, 13!</i> by Gary Soto Holiday House, 2011, 197 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Short Story Collection/Growing Up ISBN: 978-0-8234-2395-8</p> <p><i>Hey, 13!</i> is a collection of short stories about the pains and joys of being thirteen. The adolescents in Soto's story collection experience the multiple ways in which their expectations do not match their actual experiences. In <i>The Campus Tour</i>, a young girl visits a college campus expecting to see students studying, professors in tweed jackets, and people carrying on academic discussions about literature or science. What she experiences is completely different. In <i>It's Not Nice to Stare</i>, a young girl struggles with staring and self-image. In <i>A Simple Plan</i>, a boy is forced to abandon the family's dog. Soto's stories capture the naiveté and uncertainty that comes with wanting desperately to be older. These stories focus on issues of choice, perception, family, self-image, and honor. Like Howe's <i>13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen</i>, this collection shows what it is like to grow up.</p> <p>Melanie Hundley Nashville, TN</p>

<p>Horton Halfpott by Tom Angleberger Amulet Books, 2011, 206 pp., \$14.95</p> <p>Fiction/Humor ISBN: 978-0-8109-9715-8</p> <p>After M'Lady Luggertuck loosens her corset, unprecedented events and a desire to misbehave spread throughout Smugwick Manor. Horton Halfpott, one of the kitchen servants, however, is reluctant to disobey his superiors for fear of losing his job and his wages, which he hopes will one day pay for a doctor for his family. As precious items are stolen from the Luggertucks and preparations for an extravagant ball are being made, Horton must break the rules in order to help his friends, be with the girl he loves, and catch a truly loathsome thief.</p> <p>While the plot follows the traditional storyline of having a poor but noble hero win the heart of the most desired girl and foil treacherous schemes, Angleberger crafts his story with humor and unique characters in order to keep his audience entertained.</p> <p>Sarah Aronow Nashville, TN</p>	<p>HUMAN . 4 by Mike A. Lancaster Science Fiction/Relationships/Technology/Thriller Egmont, 2011, 231 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 978-1-60684-099-3</p> <p>When teen Kyle Straker volunteers to be hypnotized during the town talent show, he awakens to a different world. Computers and cell phones no longer work, and a strange language streams across the television screens. Everyone around him seems somehow disturbingly different, and Kyle and the three others who were hypnotized must solve the puzzle. The story is told through a series of cassettes taped by Kyle during the beginning of what he realizes is a human upgrade that he and the others missed while under hypnosis. The author's side notes explaining popular cultural references, such as "The Apprentice" and "Cracking Jokes," add depth and humor to this compulsive page-turner. The Editor's Notes pondering the significance of the gaps in Kyle's tapes heighten reader interest and add to the book's complexity. Readers will surely ponder the possible obsolete nature of humanity where even reading is an artifact of the past.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>
<p>I Am J by Cris Beam Little, Brown, 2011, 326 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Fiction/Transgender/Identity/Self-Discovery/Families ISBN: 978-0-316-05361-7</p> <p>Convinced that he is a boy born in a girl's body, J has always felt different from everyone around him. As his body began to change, he hid the undeniable physical changes beneath his clothing. Now, on the eve of his eighteenth birthday, a betrayal by longtime friend Melissa prompts him to embark on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. No longer will J hide—from his friends, his parents, and even himself. There's a whole new world of possibilities outside his front door, even a school where he might find acceptance. J's unhappiness, expressed through his photography, is palpable, and his journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance is inspiring. Navigating the often unfriendly New York neighborhoods, J embraces a hopeful but not easy future with difficult choices. This heartbreakingly honest book features complex characters, including parents whose acceptance is not certain. Back matter includes an Author's Note and Resources.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>	<p>Jane Austen: A Life Revealed by Catherine Reef Clarion Books, 2011, 155 pp., \$ 18.99 ISBN: 978-0-547-37021-7</p> <p>Devoted Austen fans rejoice; a new biography by Catherine Reef pieces together the life of "gentle Aunt Jane." Little is known of Austen's life, and many of her letters are missing due to the efforts of family and friends to censor the way Jane would be remembered in history. Reef attempts to paint a fuller picture of Jane's life within the context of Austen's time and culture, allowing the reader to search for the connections between a single woman dubbed an "old maid" and the novels she became so famous for creating. This text contains fascinating primary accounts from Austen's family members and acquaintances as well as family portraits, original letters, and cultural pieces from the time period. This biography will make the reader want to pick up his or her old copy of <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> once more and discover again why Austen continues to find devotees with each new century.</p> <p>Katie Harris Nashville, TN</p>

<p><i>Me, Myself, and Ike</i> by K. L. Denman Orca Book Publishers, 2009, 192 pp., \$12.95</p> <p>Identity/Friendship ISBN: 978-1-55469-086-2</p> <p>Kit Latimer used to be happy. Now, Kit is a shell of himself, and he won't let his inner feelings out to anybody. He begins to plan his own demise; heroic and fitting, he plans to freeze himself as a human time capsule. His pushy new friend, Ike, guides him on his journey, advising on which things should be frozen with Kit. Kit needs to come to his senses before it's too late, but can he with Ike's questionable guidance?</p> <p>K. L. Denman provides a look at mental illness through Kit. Her first-person retelling is reminiscent of <i>Fight Club</i> and provides a good story for children to read and get caught up in. Kit's story is one of scary perseverance, and his family's attempts to save him are wisely championed by Denman throughout. The story is compelling and offers an interesting take on what teenage mental illness looks like.</p> <p>Max Gertz Atlanta, GA</p>	<p><i>My Favorite Band Does Not Exist</i> by Robert Jeschonek Clarion Books, 2011, 324 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Fantasy/Romance/Identity ISBN: 978-0-547-37027-9</p> <p>Idea Deity is going to die in chapter 64. Idea believes that he is a vital character in a book written by a belligerent narrator, and he is destined to die. Then there is Reacher Mirage, a lead singer in a band that Idea is supposed to have made up in an Internet hoax. Reacher and Idea come together in the fantastical novel they are both reading—<i>Fireskull's Revenant</i>.</p> <p>The weaving of the three intricate plots makes the story a little difficult to follow at first. However, once the realities of the characters intertwine, the reader is in for a roller-coaster ride of suspense. <i>My Favorite Band Does Not Exist</i> is a thrilling combination of fantasy and reality where one discovers that both worlds can coexist through the imagination.</p> <p>Kim Coyle Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>Okay for Now</i> by Gary D. Schmidt Clarion Books, 2011, 360 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Fiction/Family/Teen Life ISBN: 978-0-547-15260-8</p> <p>Living in a home he has appropriately called "The Dump," Doug Swieteck is the new kid in a small town. Between his abusive father and bullying brother, Doug doesn't have much to look forward to during his new year at Washington Irving Junior High. The anticipated arrival of his other brother from Vietnam can only make things worse. However, Doug's life begins to change when he steps into Marysville Public Library and spots John James Audubon's <i>Birds of America</i>. Discovering the power of creativity, Doug begins a search that leads him to people and places within Marysville that he never knew existed. Gary D. Schmidt's second novel about Doug Swieteck will remind the reader why the transformative power of art will always triumph over despair.</p> <p>Katie Harris Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Original Sin</i> by Lisa Destrochers TOR/A Tom Doherty Associates Book, 400 pp., \$9.99</p> <p>Paranormal Romance/Fantasy/Relationships ISBN: 978-0-7653-2809-0</p> <p>Frannie Cavanaugh has everything she has ever wanted; after all, her love has turned demon Luc into a mortal in love with her. Under his watchful eye and the care of her guardian angel brother Matt, she should be safe. Nevertheless, Lucifer wants his demon back, and he also wants Frannie for reasons that are revealed late in the book. The demons he sends will stop at nothing to do his bidding.</p> <p>In the second book of the Personal Demons series, the battle of good and evil rages on with Frannie's soul hanging in the balance. Temptation surrounds Frannie, and it may be only a matter of time before she falls from grace. Because the story's perspectives shift among the characters, readers know a lot more about what's going on than Frannie and her friends do. Readers will be drawn to this independent-minded teen who vacillates between two angelic guys.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>

<p>Perfect by Girls by Alfred C. Martino Coles Street Publishing, 2011, 316 pp., \$9.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/Self-discovery/siblings ISBN: 978-1-59316-600-7</p> <p>Melinda is the lone girl on a prestigious wrestling team in a Michigan high school. While Melinda is a wrestler, she is not a tomboy as she sports 4-inch leather heels and designer dresses to events around town. She loves wrestling with her teammates, and since the team captain is her older brother, she scores extra points with the team. However, she struggles with making weight, balancing friendships, and the hostility felt from outsiders for being a girl wrestler. Things seem to be looking up for Melinda, until she chats with a reporter about her wrestling coach.</p> <p>In Martino's third novel on wrestling, he focuses on an adolescent girl trying to bridge the divide between her dream of wrestling and what others think and expect from girls, including members of her family. He addresses the concerns of many girls: weight loss, boyfriends, friendships, family expectations, and older siblings. An enjoyable, quick read.</p> <p>Emily Pendergrass Athens, GA</p>	<p>Pick-Up Game: A Full Day of Full Court Edited by Marc Aronson & Charles R. Smith Jr. Candlewick, 2011, 170 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Sports/Relationships/Short Stories ISBN: 978-0-7636-4562-5</p> <p>The basketball is put into play in a series of stories from nine young adult authors interwoven with poems about the popular game. But this isn't tournament play; rather, the focus is street ball as it is played on New York City's West 4th Street Court. Each of the stories picks up where the one before it left off, linking the characters and the action seamlessly. Walter Dean Myers starts the game with his contribution describing Boo guarding an eerily silent white player, and the pace never flags. Just as basketball is played in different styles, the stories are written in unique fashions, revealing their authors' personalities and offering brief vignettes of the games being played out, on and off the court. Rita Williams-Garcia even puts into the game the talented Dominique, a character from her earlier novel <i>Jumped</i>. An afterword and contributor comments make this one a slam dunk.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>
<p>Shelter by Harlan Coben G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2011, 304 pp., \$18.99</p> <p>Action/Adventure.Mystery ISBN: 978-0-399-25650-9</p> <p>This first YA book by the author is a riveting story of Mickey Bolitar who, besides dealing with his father's death and his mother's addiction, gets involved in a series of adventures. Mickey's new girlfriend is missing. His search for her leads him into the darker side of life, involving unscrupulous men and white slavery. The quirky friends, his natural athletic prowess, along with his experiences growing up with his nomadic parents give Mickey an edge on facing foes.</p> <p>Mickey is a white knight coming to save the day. A special symbol, a Nazi survivor, and the questionable death of Mickey's father leave much material for sequels. The realism and action of the book make it a page-turner and one that boys especially will enjoy. This book is an extension of the author's adult series about Myron Bolitar and is the first in a young adult series that should be most successful.</p> <p>Joy Frerichs Chatsworth, GA</p>	<p>Small as an Elephant Abandonment/Family Relationships/Mental Illness/Journeys by Jennifer Richard Jacobson Candlewick, 2011, 275 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>ISBN: 978-0-7636-4155-9</p> <p>When his mother disappears during a camping trip to Acadia National Park, Jack Martel must rely on his own survival instincts, since he fears seeking help from the authorities. He believes his mother will be right back, and if worse comes to worst, there's no way he can risk her being charged with abandonment, which is likely to happen if the authorities realize he's on his own. While it hasn't been easy, life with his mother is exciting, especially during her exuberant periods. But the ups are always followed by periods of malaise and depression, and Jack has learned to carefully hide his family's secrets. After his food and money run out, he decides to make his way home to Boston. Readers will root for him to arrive safely, helped along the way by the kindly strangers who befriend him. Especially poignant is his love for elephant-related trivia and totems.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>

<p><i>The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale</i> Intrigue/Historical Fiction/ Relationships</p> <p>by Carmen Agra Deedy & Randall Wright (Illus. Barry Moser) Peachtree Publishers, 2011, 229 pp., \$16.95 ISBN: 978-1-56145-595-9</p> <p>In the nineteenth century, Skilly, an alley cat, carries a secret. He loves to eat cheese, not mice. Skilly contrives to be allowed to live in Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, a tavern frequented by Dickens, Thackeray, and other writers. Secrets abound in the story. Dickens quickly takes note of the growing friendship between Skilly and Pip, the mouse. When Skilly's nemesis, Pinch, a ferocious alley cat, moves into the inn, mayhem breaks out. Even Queen Victoria makes an appearance.</p> <p>The story is compelling, the wordplay charming, the vocabulary enriching, and the use of 19th-century English enlightening. This is a good book for English class. Barry Moser's illustrations seem to make the characters jump off the page. The reader now knows where Dickens received the ideas for his famous beginning to <i>The Tale of Two Cities!</i></p> <p>Joy Frerichs Chatsworth, GA</p>	<p><i>The Coven's Daughter</i> by Lucy Jago Witchcraft/Historical Fiction Hyperion, 2011, 256 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 978-1-4231-3843-3</p> <p>As a bastard child living in the late 1500s, Cecily Perryn is proud of her job as poultry girl at the grand Montacute House, even though she is shunned by most of her village, except for her best friend William. On her 13th birthday, Cess discovers a mysterious locket in the poultry house just as the villagers discover the dead body of a young man from a neighboring village. During that night, William goes missing, and Cess knows she must save William to prove her innocence before the townspeople begin a witch hunt.</p> <p>Through this adventure, Cess becomes entangled in an intriguing plot to murder Queen Elizabeth and restore Catholicism to power in England. But more important, Cess discovers the origins of her own family and must confront her own witch heritage. Jago's novel is intended for older readers that can analyze serious topics, such as illegitimacy, witchcraft, and violence.</p> <p>Erica Cain Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>The End of the Line</i> by Angela Cerrito Social Issues/Identity/Guilt Holiday House, 2011, 212 pp., \$17.95 ISBN: 978-0-8234-2287-6</p> <p>"Ryan was dead, and I was a murderer," claims 13-year-old Robbie in his first-person account of his struggle at Great Oaks School for juvenile delinquents. Robbie is cold and hungry; however, the only way to get food and blankets is to earn points. He must follow all of the rules, listen to the adults, and come to grips with why he is in solitary confinement. Through flashbacks and his lists of identifying qualities, Robbie tells his tale of how he became incarcerated. <i>The End of the Line</i> is a powerful and suspenseful tale that asks the reader to confront these questions: did Robbie mean to kill his friend Ryan or did he kill him by accident? No matter how you answer the question, you continually want to sympathize with Robbie and the miserable, horrifying circumstances in which he finds himself.</p> <p>Kim Coyle Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>The Jaguar Stones, Book Two: The End of the World Club</i> Adventure/Fiction by J&P Voelkel Egmont, 2011, 384 pp., \$ 16.99 ISBN: 978-1-60684-072-6</p> <p>As the second book of The Jaguar Stones adventure trilogy, <i>The End of the World Club</i> brings Max Murphy and his Mayan friend Lola back to save the world from the villainous Lords of Death. Racing against time, Max and Lola must travel to the heart of Spain to retrieve the legendary Yellow Jaguar Stone from Max's ancestor's castle and return it to Xibabba. Max and Lola must overcome unprecedented challenges to uncover the horrifying secrets of the Yellow Jaguar Stone. Will Max succeed or will he and his parents be condemned to live out the rest of their lives trapped in Xibabba?</p> <p>This fast-paced action-adventure novel surpasses its prequel, and is filled with Mayan folklore and entertaining humor that will keep teen readers highly entertained. <i>The End of the World Club</i> is an easily recommended novel to pique the interests of adolescent readers in history and mythology.</p> <p>Christine Chau Staten Island, NY</p>

<p><i>The Lost Saint</i> by Bree Despain Egmont, 2011, 404 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Despain's gripping sequel to <i>The Dark Divine</i> continues the story of high school heroine Grace Divine and her struggle against the curse of the wolf. Grace's boyfriend Daniel, an ex-werewolf, is training her to control the superhuman powers her curse endows. Meanwhile, Grace's werewolf brother Jude has gone missing, and demons are terrorizing the city. When Grace turns her back on her boyfriend and her family to be trained instead by Nathan Talbot, she learns to harness her powers, but at the expense of her own spiritual balance.</p> <p>With ancient demonic wars and high school drama inseparable, <i>The Lost Saint</i> combines intricate mythology and dark mystery to create a thrilling novel that explores human determination and true love's redemptive power, all while whetting the appetite for a sequel.</p> <p>Jonathan Tomick Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>The Phantom Limb</i> by William Sleator and Ann Monticone Amulet Books, 2011, 208 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Isaac's having a tough time: he just moved to a new town, his mom is in the hospital, and the Fitzpatrick twins are already stuffing him in his locker. Isaac spends most of his time combing through his optical illusion collection. He then finds a new one in his house: a mirror box used by amputees to ease the pain of the "phantom limb." But when Isaac puts his hand into the mirror box, a different hand appears—and then starts sending him eerie signals: is the limb trying to hurt Isaac, or help him?</p> <p>As he puts the pieces together, Isaac unravels clues leading to either life or death. In this fast-paced, riveting novel, Sleator and Monticone combine elements of the supernatural and murder mystery to create the kind of reading experience that goes by all too quickly.</p> <p>Ty Hollett Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>The Year We Were Famous</i> by Carole Estby Dagg Clarion Books, 2011, 250 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>In this historical fiction, Carole Estby Dagg imagines the 1896 cross-country trek of her great-aunt and great-great-grandmother, Clara and Helga Estby, from Mica Creek, Washington, to New York City in an attempt to raise money to save their family farm. Shy, 17-year-old Clara and her bold, suffragette mother leave behind father Ole, seven younger siblings, and Clara's presumptive fiancé. They face hazardous weather, dangerous travel conditions, Clara's indecision about her future, and the truth about Helga's past, all while trying to meet their seven-month deadline.</p> <p><i>The Year We Were Famous</i> weaves together facts and artifacts from Clara and Helga's actual 4,600 mile trek with imagined conversations, journal entries, and characters met along the way. The result is a compelling story about what is possible for girls and women, and one historical journey that helped make it so.</p> <p>Elizabeth Self Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>The Sentinels</i> by R. A. & Geno Salvatore Wizards of the Coast LLC, 2010, 297 pp., \$17.95</p> <p>Maimun is a teenage orphan who has already seen more than his fair share of adventures. He is bound to a magical artifact of the goddess of good fortune, Tymora; yet somehow, this good luck charm seems to attract nothing but trouble. In this book, the third of a trilogy, Maimun sets out to destroy the Stone of Tymora with the help of his friend, the young pirate Joen. Maimun soon discovers that things—and people—are rarely as they first appear.</p> <p>The story is set in the world of the Forgotten Realms, a fully developed and richly layered fantasy universe. In this book, Maimun travels through locations such as Waterdeep, Longsaddle, and Silvermoon in search of answers to the many riddles he faces in his quest. He also encounters his occasional rescuer and mentor, the famous elf Drizzt, who is a beloved character in the Forgotten Realms universe.</p> <p>Simon Gooch Fort Worth, TX</p>

<p><i>Things I Know about Love</i> by Kate le Vann Egmont, 2010, 153 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Romance/Realistic Fiction/Illness ISBN: 978-1-60684-078-8</p> <p>Livia Stowe is a 17-year-old Brit off to America for a summer holiday. She keeps a blog about the experience, but it has a set purpose: Livia is on a mission to figure out love. This trip, and her goal, is complicated by her struggles with leukemia. Finally in remission, Livia looks forward to a chance at a normal life and sees her trip as a new beginning. Her hope continues to grow once she meets Adam, a fellow Brit also visiting America. Their romance, and its heartbreaking conclusion, make Livia's story impossible to put down.</p> <p>Le Vann captures the voice of a teenager looking for love in this short and fast-paced novel. The story doesn't dwell on Livia's cancer, so it's suited for readers looking for a lighter read. It's a novel that will make readers smile, laugh, and cry along with the characters from start to finish.</p> <p>Kelly Gotkin Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Words in the Dust</i> by Trent Reedy Arthur A. Levine Books, 2011, 272 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Afghanistan/War/Deformity/Literacy ISBN: 978-0-5452-6125-8</p> <p>Born with a cleft lip, Zulaikha, 13, is no beauty, and she is teased constantly because of her deformity. Even though her days are filled with household chores in her traditional Afghani family, she dreams of having more. At first her dreams are small: maybe one day she will find a husband, and she and her beloved sister can be together. Hope blossoms when American soldiers arrange surgery to fix her face; then she meets Meena, a former professor who teaches her to read and write. As Zulaikha slowly embraces the possibilities that lie ahead, her beautiful older sister's marriage to a careless older man leads to unnecessary tragedy.</p> <p>The poetic language and details about Afghani customs provide a glimpse into a world where much is changing while much stays the same. Back matter includes a glossary, an author's note, and suggested reading lists, offering more for interested readers.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>
<p><i>Wither</i> by Lauren DeStefano Simon & Schuster BFFYR, 2011, 385 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Marriage/Science/Dystopia/Sex/Relationships ISBN: 978-1-4424-0905-7</p> <p>Scientists, searching for a way to make people disease-free and almost immortal, tampered with humanity's DNA. The first generation who received this tampering were nearly immortal; however, in the next generations, males die at age 25 and females die at 20. Our heroine, Rhine Elley, 16 and full of life and cunning, is kidnapped to be the wife of Linden Vaughn, a wealthy, kind, and naive husband. Linden's father, an ambitious scientist, is the master of the mansion. His drive to invent a vaccine supersedes any sort of moral code. When Rhine realizes the horror of her situation, she becomes set on finding an escape. By rejecting her imprisonment, Rhine asserts the value of her life, in spite of its inevitable brevity.</p> <p>DeStefano's dystopia is full of rich, sensory surprises—each scene expertly designed with an ostentatious and futuristic flare.</p> <p>Rachel Wheeler Scarsdale, NY</p>	<p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> Melanie Hundley 1021 Delmas Ave. Nashville, TN 37216-3630</p> <p><i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Melanie Hundley at melanie.hundley@Vanderbilt.edu.</i></p>