

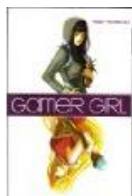
New Books – February 2010



The Long Way Home

Andrew Klavan

Sometimes you have to go home to find out who you really are. Charlie West went to bed one night an ordinary high school student. He woke up a hunted man. Terrorists are trying to kill him. The police want to arrest him for the stabbing death of his best friend. He doesn't know whose side he's on or who he can trust. With his pursuers closing in on every side, Charlie makes his way back to his hometown to find some answers. There, holed up in an abandoned mansion, he's joined by his friends in a desperate attempt to discover the truth about a murder he can't remember—and the love he can never forget.



Gamer Girl

Mari Mancusi

Maddy feels as though her life just keeps getting worse and worse. Because her parents have divorced, she has had to leave her friends in Boston and move with her mother and younger sister to live with Grandma in New Hampshire. She has developed a mad crush on handsome, unattainable Chad, whose friends refer to her as Freak Girl. Maddy's only consolations are her beloved manga drawings and the online game Fields of Fantasy, which her father gave her for her birthday. As Maddy becomes more involved with the game, she creates a new identity for herself as a magical Elfin maiden named Allora, and meets the handsome knight Sir Leo online. Eventually Maddy realizes that she cannot continue to use gaming as a refuge from her real-life problems, and she finds the courage to confront both the clique at her school and her neglectful father.



Ender in Exile

Orson Scott Card

Here is Card's answer to all those readers who asked, "What happened to Ender?" between *Ender's Game* (1985) and *Speaker for the Dead* (1986, both Tor), a gap that covers nearly 3000 years. Twelve-year-old Ender Wiggin should be coming home to a hero's welcome after wiping out the dreaded buggers—aliens who have twice defeated humanity in the past—in a fierce space battle. He is instead proclaimed a dangerous weapon and appointed titular governor of a colony world to keep him as far away from Earth as possible. His beloved sister Valentine joins him on the colony ship but is unable to penetrate the barriers he has erected around himself. Wracked with remorse at his genocide of the buggers, Ender searches for the reason the aliens allowed him to defeat them, knowing the answer will give him direction.



The Fire Within, Ice Fire, and Fire Star (Dragon Trilogy)

Chris D'Lacey

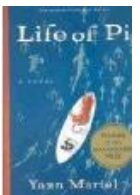
(The Fire Within is the first book of the Dragon Trilogy) This British import has a satisfying domestic reality, spiced with some very unusual dragons. When college student David Rain begins rooming at the home of Liz Pennykettle and her 11-year-old daughter, Lucy, he becomes aware of a variety of unusual happenings connected to the clay dragons that Liz creates and sells. As David slowly learns about the family's past and abilities, he has to decide whether to accept Gadzooks, the special dragon Liz made for him. Lucy's attempts to save the neighborhood squirrels from a scheming neighbor are a second plot focus. A fictional story David writes for Lucy about these animals mirrors real developments in their lives, creating an unusual story-within-a-story.



The Fire Eternal (Dragon Chronicles)

Chris D'Lacey

In this sequel to *Fire Star* (Orchard, 2007), university student David Rain has disappeared on a research trip to the Arctic and is presumed dead. His landlady, Liz Pennykettle; her daughter, Lucy; and his girlfriend, Zanna, mother to his five-year-old daughter, are devastated. Lucy is convinced that David is not dead and is determined to find him. She contacts a local journalist, Tam Farrell (read Lin?) to help her. Her potter mother's clay dragons are real and can come alive. Meanwhile, powerful alien beings called the Fain, who use mind control to gain power, have returned to Earth. They had used this planet as a breeding ground for dragons, but all of the original dragons have been destroyed except Gawain, who lies sleeping in a rock waiting to be awakened to activate the Fire Eternal, or creation force. An evil offshoot of the Fain, the Ix, wants to harness the force for evil. Wise polar bears, an ancient witch/raven, a shape-shifting cat, Arthurian imagery, and a terrifying "darkling" all contribute to a wild, sometimes confusing ride. Threats of global warming and ecological disaster frame the action.



Life of Pi (Unit 4)

Yann Martel

Yann Martel's imaginative and unforgettable *Life of Pi* is a magical reading experience, an endless blue expanse of storytelling about adventure, survival, and ultimately, faith. The precocious son of a zookeeper, 16-year-old Pi Patel is raised in Pondicherry, India, where he tries on various faiths for size, attracting "religions the way a dog attracts fleas." Planning a move to Canada, his father packs up the family and their menagerie and they hitch a ride on an enormous freighter. After a harrowing shipwreck, Pi finds himself adrift in the Pacific Ocean, trapped on a 26-foot lifeboat with a wounded zebra, a spotted hyena, a seasick orangutan, and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker ("His head was the size and color of the lifebuoy, with teeth"). It sounds like a colorful setup, but these wild beasts don't burst into song as if co-starring in an anthropomorphized Disney feature. After much gore and infighting, Pi and Richard Parker remain the boat's sole passengers, drifting for 227 days through shark-infested waters while fighting hunger, the elements, and an overactive imagination.