

## New Books 2007-2008

### Party Princess (Meg Cabot)

Princess just want to have fun . . . And Mia does too, despite the fact that the student government over which she presides is suddenly broke. But Grandmère's got a wacky scheme to raise the money, catapult Mia to theatrical fame, and link her romantically with an eligible teen bachelor who's not her boyfriend. No wonder Michael seems to think she's a psycho, or worse: not much fun. Is it possible that Mia, soon-to-be star of the stage, president of the student body, and future ruler of Genovia, doesn't know how to party?

### The Redheaded Princess (Ann Rinaldi)

Growing up, Elizabeth fears she can never be Queen. Although she is the King's daughter, no woman can ever hope to rule over men in England, especially when her mother has been executed for treason.

For all her royal blood, Elizabeth's life is fraught with danger and uncertainty. Sometimes she is welcome in the royal court; other times she is cast out into the countryside. With her position constantly changing, the Princess must navigate a sea of shifting loyalties and dangerous affections. At stake is her life—for beheading is not uncommon among the factions that war for the Crown.

With the vivid human touch that has made her one of the foremost writers of historical fiction, Ann Rinaldi brings to life the heart and soul of the young Elizabeth I. It's a portrait of a great leader as she may have been as she found her way to the glorious destiny that lay before her.

### Laika (Rick Abanzis)

Laika was the abandoned puppy destined to become Earth's first space traveler. This is her journey.

Nick Abadzis masterfully blends fiction and fact in the intertwined stories of three compelling lives. Along with Laika, there is Korolev, once a political prisoner, now a driven engineer at the top of the Soviet space program, and Yelena, the lab technician responsible for Laika's health and life. This intense triangle is rendered with the pitch-perfect emotionality of classics like *Because of Winn Dixie*, *Shiloh*, and *Old Yeller*. Abadzis gives life to a pivotal moment in modern history, casting light on the hidden moments of deep humanity behind history. Laika's story will speak straight to your heart.

### How Not to be Popular (Jennifer Ziegler)

Maggie Dempsey is tired of moving all over the country. Her parents are second-generation hippies who uproot her every year or so to move to a new city. When Maggie was younger, she thought it was fun and adventurous. Now that she's a teenager, she hates it. When she moved after her freshman year, she left behind good friends, a great school, and a real feeling of belonging. When she moved her sophomore year, she left behind a boyfriend, too. Now that they've moved to Austin, she knows better. She's not going to make friends. She's not going to fit in. Anything to prevent her from liking this new place and them from liking her. Only . . . things don't go exactly as planned.

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### The Entertainer and the Dybbuk (Sid Fleischman)

One night The Great Freddie, a young ventriloquist, is possessed by a dybbuk. A what?

A Jewish spirit. A scrappy demon who glows as if spray-painted by moonlight. The dybbuk is revealed to be the ghost of a twelve-year-old boy named Avrom Amos, a victim of the Nazis during World War II. In a plucky scheme to seek revenge, he commandeers The Great Freddie's stage act and entraps the entertainer in the postwar ashes of Germany. Behind the footlights, the dybbuk lights up the terrible fate of a million and a half Jewish children, including Avrom himself.

What tricks does the dybbuk have up his ghostly sleeve? Prepare to be astonished. . . .

### Underground (Jean Ferris)

In 1839, visitors from miles around come to Kentucky to tour Mammoth Cave. But sixteen-year-old Charlotte, the maid at Mammoth Cave Hotel, doesn't understand its appeal. As a slave, she is already trapped, and she doesn't see the point in risking being trapped underground as well. Still, she's curious when Stephen Bishop, another slave who is the cave's expert guide and chief explorer, makes some big discoveries underground, and she's interested in Stephen himself, with his quick mind and kind ways. Then Charlotte makes a discovery of her own: runaway slaves sometimes come to the hotel seeking refuge. As she helps them, she wonders if she should run away. Stephen, on the other hand, feels that he belongs with the cave and that he is free enough when he is underground. When an opportunity presents itself, Charlotte must decide whether she should stay with Stephen or risk everything for her own chance at freedom.

In this compelling novel, two young people explore what sorts of freedom they can find, even as slaves.

### Yellow Flag (Robert Lipsyte)

A Contender (HarperCollins, 1987) for racing fans. Born to a multigenerational racing family, 17-year-old Kyle Hillebrand gave up driving for his trumpet and his brass quintet. However, as his family struggles to get back into big-time racing, he is pulled between his love of music and his responsibility to his family. An injury to his brother, the heir apparent to the racing dynasty, puts Kyle back in the driver's seat in an attempt to continue the team's success in hopes of luring sponsorships that could lead back to NASCAR's Busch and Nextel Cup racing series. Kyle drives well in his substitute role and the team lands the sponsor, which leads to his family's planning a second car so that he can continue racing alongside the now-healthy Kris, forcing a decision by Kyle. His choice is complicated by pressure from his family and by friction with members of his quintet, who resent his time away to help out the racing team, as well as by two potential love interests, one in the quintet and the other an employee of the racers. Lipsyte maintains a good level of tension, leaving it unclear throughout most of the book which road Kyle will choose as he finds he enjoys both. Racing scenes are engaging and generally plausible, and they provide a good setting for the relationship issues and suspense inherent in a teen's choice between his desires and his family's expectations.

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### One Butt Cheek at a Time (Amber Kizer)

Gert Garibaldi isn't one of those people who believe high school is the best part of life. She has a whole notebook full of rants about high school, and she's fully aware of how ridiculous the experience is, thank you very much. Gert just wants to survive the next three years, one butt cheek at a time, with her best friend, Adam, by her side - and maybe Luscious Luke attached to her lips. With a stapler. Or something. But muddling through isn't even as easy as it seems - there are geriatric parents to deal with, Homecoming festivities (admit it! those words just sent a little chill down your spine), crushes, ed (both sex and driving), and potential new boyfriends - for both Gert and Adam. Frank, funny, and totally unique, Gert's ready to pull on the Pants of Life and start dancing.

### Don't Call Me Ishmael (Michael Gerard Bauer)

By the time ninth grade begins, Ishmael Leseur knows it won't be long before Barry Bagsley, the class bully, says, "Ishmael? What kind of wussy-crap name is that?" Ishmael's perfected the art of making himself virtually invisible. But all that changes when James Scobie joins the class. Unlike Ishmael, James has no sense of fear—he claims it was removed during an operation. Now nothing will stop James and Ishmael from taking on bullies, bugs, and Moby Dick, in the toughest, weirdest, most embarrassingly awful . . . and the best year of their lives.

### First Shot (Walter Sorrells)

Two years ago, David Crandall's mother was murdered—and with little evidence, no witnesses, and no motive, the crime was left unsolved. Now a high school senior, David is unable to shake the sense that someone knows more than they're letting on. His suspicion deepens as he uncovers clues to a scandalous family secret involving embezzlement. But when he spies his father burying an old rifle in a deserted lot during a rainstorm, suspicion turns to fear. Is his own father the killer? Critically acclaimed author Walter Sorrells crafts a shocking and fast-paced thriller inspired by a local newspaper headline.

### Cat Master (Bonnie Pemberton)

On a bright Texas night, the elderly and infirm Cat Master, the spiritual leader of all cats, tries to contact his successor, Buddy, through mind speak. Unfortunately, his message is telepathically intercepted by would-be usurper Jett. A chain of events is set in motion that causes Buddy to leave his pampered life indoors to return to the Outs and a feral lifestyle, in order to claim his birthright. This story is as old as Cain and Abel, and Pemberton has borrowed heavily from a tradition of stock characters and predictable situations. There are the annoyingly naive kittens, Zekki and Pris, who can't see danger while it's holding the door open for them, and the evil Jett, who's every dastardly deed cues maniacal laughter. There is an overuse of capital letters to indicate everything from The Law that dictates all areas of feline behavior to The Boy, left behind by Buddy, Zekki, and Pris while they fulfill their destinies. Fortunately, a strong cast of supporting characters covers a multitude of melodramatic sins and keeps the action moving to an ultimately satisfying conclusion. The use of swearing in a few situations seems

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unnecessary. The Cat Master should find an audience with readers waiting for the latest entry in Erin Hunter's "Warriors" series (HarperCollins).

### Genius Squad (Catherine Jinks)

Now that the Axis Institute for World Domination has been blown up; the founder, Dr. Phineas Darkkon has died; and Prosper English (who enrolled Cadel in the first place) is in jail for myriad offenses, Cadel Piggott has round-the-clock surveillance so he'll be safe until he testifies against Prosper English. But nobody seems to want Cadel. Not Fiona, his social worker; not Saul Greeniaus, the detective assigned to protect him.

When he is approached by the head of Genius Squad--a group formed to investigate GenoME, one of Darkkon's pet projects--Cadel is dubious Genius Squad can offer him a real home and all the technology his heart desires. But why can't he bring himself to tell Saul what the group is really up to? And how can Genius Squad protect Cadel once Prosper English breaks out of jail?

### Palestine (Joe Sacco)

With the Middle East's role in contemporary world politics, Sacco's Palestine has never been more relevant or more valuable to a country desperate to understand this long-running conflict. Based on several months of research and an extended visit to the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the early 1990s (where he conducted over 100 interviews with Palestinians and Jews), Palestine was the first major comics work of political and historical nonfiction by Sacco, whose name has since become synonymous with this graphic form of New Journalism.

Sacco's insightful reportage takes place at the front lines, where busy marketplaces are spoiled by shootings and tear gas, soldiers beat civilians with reckless abandon, and roadblocks go up before reporters can leave. Sacco interviewed and encountered prisoners, refugees, protesters, wounded children, farmers who had lost their land, and families who had been torn apart by the Palestinian conflict.

### The Hazards of Space Travel (Neil F. Comins, Ph.D)

Looking to the future of space tourism, which will include vacation packages to the Moon, Mars, and Jovian moons, physicist Comins relates the risks holidaymakers will be running. Some, such as equipment failure and physiological damage like muscular atrophy, are dangers already experienced in spaceflight. Landslides and volcanic eruptions, however, are the death dealers the extreme traveler will confront. Via the fictional device of a future voyager's log, Comins, in the course of categorizing hazards, imagines a range of crises faced by passengers and crew. An unremitting threat comes from dust and radiation, while an intermittent menace is a hyperkinetic rock. If mechanical failures or natural disasters don't provoke sufficient dread, the tourist can fret about the small percentage of mates who will mentally break down on the trip. Direct and sober on the science, Comins is fascinating on the morbid facts. Sure to enthrall space futurists.

### The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Sherman Alexie)

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Arnold Spirit, a goofy-looking dork with a decent jumpshot, spends his time lamenting life on the "poor-ass" Spokane Indian reservation, drawing cartoons (which accompany, and often provide more insight than, the narrative), and, along with his aptly named pal Rowdy, laughing those laughs over anything and nothing that affix best friends so intricately together. When a teacher pleads with Arnold to want more, to escape the hopelessness of the rez, Arnold switches to a rich white school and immediately becomes as much an outcast in his own community as he is a curiosity in his new one. He weathers the typical teenage indignations and triumphs like a champ but soon faces far more trying ordeals as his home life begins to crumble and decay amidst the suffocating mire of alcoholism on the reservation. Alexie's humor and prose are easygoing and well suited to his young audience, and he doesn't pull many punches as he levels his eye at stereotypes both warranted and inapt. A few of the plotlines fade to gray by the end, but this ultimately affirms the incredible power of best friends to hurt and heal in equal measure. Younger teens looking for the strength to lift themselves out of rough situations would do well to start here.

### Nory Ryan's Song (Patricia Reilly Giff)

Set at the beginning of the Irish Potato Famine in 1845, this survival story is told by lively, 12-year-old Nory Ryan. She shares a small dwelling with her family, hens, and a pig in a subsistence-farming village on the country's west-central coast. They are anxiously awaiting the return of their Da, who has gone to sea to earn money. Their English landlord is evicting tenants who cannot pay rent, forcing them into the streets, and destroying their thatch-roofed huts. Hunger is common before blight destroys the potato crop; with no potatoes, the people face starvation. The Ryans are eager to join the lucky ones who have obtained passage to America. Nory's observations of the land, cliffs, sea, and people in her community are woven with poignant memories and realistic conversations that vividly re-create this tragic period in Ireland's history. The child grows in strength and courage as she seeks food for her family and friends. The fast pace might occasionally force readers to pause and assimilate the details she shares, and to seek out more information. The book opens with a list of Irish words with definitions and pronunciation guide. Today's readers will appreciate this compelling story with a wonderful female protagonist who is spirited and resourceful, and has a song in her heart.

### Messenger (Lois Lowry)

Matty, who has lived in Village with the blind Seer since running away from an abusive childhood, is looking forward to receiving his true name, which he hopes will be Messenger. But he is deeply unsettled by what is going on. He has discovered his own power to heal others and learned of disturbing changes within his community. Under the gentle guidance of Leader, who arrived in Village on a red sled as a young boy and who has the power of Seeing Beyond, the citizens have always welcomed newcomers, especially those who are disabled. But a sinister force is at work, which has prompted them to close admission to outsiders. Also, it seems that Matty's beloved Mentor has been trading away parts of his inner self in order to become more attractive to Stocktender's widow. When the date for the close of the border is decided, Matty must make one more trip through the increasingly sinister Forest to bring back Seer's

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daughter, the gifted weaver Kira. On the return journey, Matty must decide if he should use his healing but self-destructive power to reverse the inexorable decline of Forest, Village, and its people. While readers may be left mystified as to what is behind the dramatic change in Village, Lowry's skillful writing imbues the story with a strong sense of foreboding, and her descriptions of the encroaching Forest are particularly vivid and terrifying. The gifted young people, introduced in *The Giver* (1993) and *Gathering Blue* (2000, both Houghton), are brought together in a gripping final scene, and the shocking conclusion without benefit of denouement is bound to spark much discussion and debate.

### Fingers (William Sleator)

Eighteen-year-old Sam has always been jealous of his younger brother, Humphrey, the famous "wonder child" pianist. But now that Humphrey is fifteen, the one-time child prodigy isn't able to get any more bookings. Sam's mother refuses to accept that Humphrey's career is over and devises a scheme to recapture his fame: Sam will compose "new works" by a long dead gypsy composer, and they will tell the world that the composer is dictating the music to Humphrey from the grave. The scheme is a wild success—until some ghostly occurrences convince Sam that the spirit of the dead composer has actually taken over Humphrey's fingers. Have Sam and his family unleashed a force from beyond the grave?

### Trudy (Jessica Lee Anderson)

Trudy's having a hard time at school: math class isn't going well, and her best friend, the one she pinky-swore she would always be friends with, has found a new group to hang out with. To top things off, her parents are old — really old — and while she loves them with all her heart, she dislikes it when other people mistake them for her grandparents. When Trudy's father starts acting strangely, Trudy and her mother can't figure out what the problem is. But when he forgets to pick Trudy up from school and starts to put groceries away in the wrong place, they decide to take him to the doctor. Once Trudy's father has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Trudy and her mother are faced with some tough decisions.

This is a touching, beautifully told story that young people relate to, particularly those who have parents or grandparents dealing with an illness. Trudy's challenges and her strength in dealing with them make her a heroine with whom young readers identify.

### Wing Nut (MJ Auch)

Since his father's death seven years ago, Grady, now 12, has followed his footloose, attractive mom, Lila, from one shaky living situation to another, staying put only until her optimism turns to anger over some affront. Feeling her work at the Sunward Path commune is underappreciated, she and Grady are heading for New York when their junker car breaks down in rural Pennsylvania. As usual, Mom lands on her feet, accepting a position cooking for cranky widower Charlie Fernwald, a retired farmer who is, in Grady's opinion, nutty about purple martins—not martians as Grady at first believes. The elderly man is willing to take them on temporarily to fool his son into believing that he's being properly looked after. Lila is willing to play this charade, while slipping

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healthful veggies into Charlie's diet in hopes of winning him over to obtain a more permanent position. Grady appreciates his host's willingness to teach him about cars, but steadfastly refuses to go to school, secretly releases invasive house sparrows from Charlie's trap, and worries about keeping his mom from becoming romantically involved with the local mechanic. While there is nothing terribly original in a lonely boy and a cranky elderly man overcoming differences to find common ground, Grady, Charlie, and Lila have sharp edges that reveal their individual personalities. Their emotions are heartfelt, and readers will be encouraged by the hopeful, upbeat ending. Nicely integrated plugs for both Katherine Paterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (HarperCollins, 1978) and the Web site of the National Purple Martin Association are woven into this simple, satisfying story.

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### The Invention of Hugo Cabret (Brian Selznick)

With characteristic intelligence, exquisite images, and a breathtaking design, Selznick shatters conventions related to the art of bookmaking in this magical mystery set in 1930s Paris. He employs wordless sequential pictures and distinct pages of text to let the cinematic story unfold, and the artwork, rendered in pencil and bordered in black, contains elements of a flip book, a graphic novel, and film. It opens with a small square depicting a full moon centered on a black spread. As readers flip the pages, the image grows and the moon recedes. A boy on the run slips through a grate to take refuge inside the walls of a train station—home for this orphaned, apprentice clock keeper. As Hugo seeks to accomplish his mission, his life intersects with a cantankerous toyshop owner and a feisty girl who won't be ignored. Each character possesses secrets and something of great value to the other. With deft foreshadowing, sensitively wrought characters, and heart-pounding suspense, the author engineers the elements of his complex plot: speeding trains, clocks, footsteps, dreams, and movies—especially those by Georges Méliès, the French pioneer of science-fiction cinema. Movie stills are cleverly interspersed. Selznick's art ranges from evocative, shadowy spreads of Parisian streets to penetrating character close-ups. Leaving much to ponder about loss, time, family, and the creative impulse, the book closes with a waning moon, a diminishing square, and informative credits. This is a masterful narrative that readers can literally manipulate.

### The Mysterious Benedict Society (Trenton Lee Stewart)

After Reynie Muldoon responds to an advertisement recruiting "gifted children looking for special opportunities," he finds himself in a world of mystery and adventure. The 11-year-old orphan is one of four children to complete a series of challenging and creative tasks, and he, Kate, Constance, and Sticky become the Mysterious Benedict Society. After being trained by Mr. Benedict and his assistants, the four travel to an isolated school where children are being trained by a criminal mastermind to participate in his schemes to take over the world. The young investigators need to use their special talents and abilities in order to discover Mr. Curtain's secrets, and their only chance to defeat him is through working together. Readers will challenge their own abilities as they work with the Society members to solve clues and put together the pieces of Mr. Curtain's plan. In spite of a variety of coincidences, Stewart's unusual characters, threatening villains, and dramatic plot twists will grab and hold readers' attention. Fans of Roald Dahl or Blue Balliett will find a familiar blend of kid power, clues, and adventure in Society, though its length may daunt reluctant or less-secure readers. Underlying themes about the power of media messages and the value of education add to this book's appeal, and a happy ending with hints of more adventures to come make this first-time author one to remember.

### Bounce (Natasha Friend)

At her 13th-birthday dinner, Evyn's hippie father, Birdie, drops a bomb. He is going to marry Eleni Gartos, a college professor with six children, and Evyn and her 15-year-old brother will be leaving their home in Maine and moving to Boston with him. Evyn feels that her world has collapsed, while Mackey just asks to have two desserts. Feeling alone, the girl begins a dialogue with her dead mother as she imagines her. Friend

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captures the emotions and angst of a teen on the brink of womanhood thrust into a large, vocal stepfamily while having to share her father with a woman she hardly knows and a house full of stepsiblings. Throughout her ups and downs, Birdie's love remains constant, her stepsiblings are accepting, and her brother is transforming himself from a nerdy computer geek into a fledgling thespian. When her stepmother becomes pregnant, Eryn sets out to hop a bus to Maine. The beginnings of acceptance and possibilities are ignited as she learns to follow her inner "wise woman"—her mother's advice—and to "bounce" with the changes in her life. Friend offers no fairy-tale ending but presents, through hip conversations and humor, believable characters and a feel-good story with a satisfying amount of pathos.

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### Lush (Natasha Friend)

To the outside world, 13-year-old Samantha's family seems perfectly happy. However, they are struggling to keep her architect father's alcoholism a secret, and the balancing act of enabling his addiction and protecting their image is becoming more and more difficult. Sam longs to be able to share her burden with a friend and reaches out by leaving an anonymous autobiographical letter in a library book. Her anger and frustration are palpable as she struggles with her love for her dad despite the fact that his promises to clean up never materialize. When Sam is chastised by her mother and grandmother for not believing in his ability to change, readers will sympathize with the injustice of her difficult situation. Yet, the author avoids a maudlin tone by infusing the plot with details of typical teen life, such as Sam's crush on an older boy and embarrassment at her developing body. Witty dialogue and smooth writing move the novel along at a clipped pace, and tension is successfully built and maintained as the teen's father's illness takes a dangerous turn, her budding relationship comes to a head, and her anonymous library pen pal is revealed. Despite the minor appearance of a stereotypical librarian, this is a perceptive novel featuring a likable protagonist to whom readers will easily relate. As in *Perfect* (Milkweed, 2004), Friend adroitly portrays a weighty topic with touches of humor and grace.

### Perfect (Natasha Friend)

Fine-!everything is fine. This has become the mantra for eighth-grader Isabelle Lee, her younger sister, April, and their mother in this novel by Natasha Friend (Milkweed Editions, 2005). In reality, nothing is fine at all. Still absorbing, and on many levels avoiding, the impact of the death of her father two years ago, Isabelle has found comfort in bingeing and purging. Her mother is an emotional mess, crying every night and refusing to talk about the loss. When April finds Isabelle with her head in the toilet she tells their mother. This sets up a new reality for Isabelle, one that includes group therapy each week and an unexpected friendship with Ashley Barnum, the most perfect girl in school. They both have an eating disorder. Through group therapy sessions, Isabelle slowly discovers that private pain, confusion, and sadness can be masked by outer beauty. With subtle voice changes and a clear personality for each character, narrator Danielle Ferland brings listeners a convincing and compassionate portrayal of teens struggling with self-esteem and body image, a mother struggling with life itself, and a family desperately needing to find a way to share their common grief. A satisfying novel that addresses common teen issues.

### Deadline (Chris Crutcher)

After being diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia, 18-year-old Ben Wolf elects to forgo treatment and keep his illness secret from his family and friends in an attempt to have a "normal" senior year at his small Idaho high school. Free from long-term consequences, he connects with his crush, frustrates his biased U.S. Government teacher, and tries out for football. However, Ben's illness slowly exacts its toll on him, and he begins to realize the consequences of keeping his condition hidden. Crutcher brings his signature blend of sports action and human emotion to this powerful novel. Emotionally spare but deeply touching, the relationship between Ben and his brother will resonate with many readers, while others may find the several strong father figures

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comforting. Secondary characters add humor and balance, though the government teacher's voice occasionally veers too far toward that of a right-wing pundit. Rudy McCoy, a former priest and child molester, evokes both compassion and revulsion through his confession of guilt and struggle to avoid hurting another child; reflecting Ben's secret-keeping behavior, McCoy serves as a foil for the destructive impact secrets can have. Some discussion of sexual molestation and child abuse is present in the text, but is not graphic or overwhelming in its depiction. Crutcher uses dark humor and self-deprecation effectively to avoid maudlin situations, and teens will appreciate the respectful tone of the work.

### Girls on Film (Zoey Dean)

The sequel to the *The A-List* (Little, Brown, 2003) is a combination of *Sex and the City* and *The Women*, complete with backbiting, sabotage, gossip, and scheming set in La La land where overprivileged, poor-little-rich-girls endlessly indulge themselves. Though the issues and scenes are current, the book reads like fantasy as this much intrigue would wear out even the most devious, superficial girl-on-the-go. The one stable figure in this milieu is Anna Percy, an East-Coast transplant who ventures to California to change her good-girl image, but who finds that she doesn't have the stomach for the escapades of her peers. Trying to get over her powerful crush on Ben Birnbaum, a guy she views as all wrong for her, and attempting to settle with Adam, the good guy who just doesn't light her fire, Anna is caught between her heart, body, and mind. Dean's dialogue is flip and slick, and all of the characters have a rapid-fire wit that makes for page-turning, guilty pleasure. *Girls on Film* is a fast-clipped, juicy read that picks up where *The A-List* left off, and those who haven't read the first installment are quickly brought up to speed. Irresistible mind candy that teens will devour.

### Sports Illustrated – The Football Book (Rob Fleder)

On the heels of the successful *Sports Illustrated 50th Anniversary Book* comes a spectacular celebration of professional football that will be treasured by fans of *Americas Game*. With the same kind of unforgettable photographs and award-winning writing that made the *SIs 50th Anniversary Book* a best-seller, this lavish coffee-table volume brings to life the bone-rattling action of NFL football and the extraordinary athletes who have made it *Americas* true national pastime. In 256 oversized pages, *The Football Book* commemorates the dynasties and the dominating players, the crucial plays and classic games, the personalities and performances that propelled the NFL during *SIs* first 50 years of publication, from a marginal, ragtag league to the biggest game in town.

### Son of a Witch (Gregory Maguire)

*Son* picks up where Maguire's highly successful *Wicked* (HarperCollins, 1995) left off, with the death of Elphaba the Wicked Witch of the West. She left behind a daughter, Nor, and Liir, who may or may not be her son. After her death, he enters into a decade of listless soul searching. He travels for a time and then joins the military, enjoying the structure it provides his life. But eventually his rearing by the Witch as well as his possible heritage catch up to him and he finds himself in demand to start a new revolution against the tyranny of Emerald City. An odd series of disfiguring murders

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starts occurring all across Oz. Liir discovers that the new Emperor sits behind the machinations and uses the strange killings to spread distrust among the various races of the land. Wielding Elphabas flying broom and donning her magical cape, Liir makes some small but bold gestures that help the populace of Oz and replants the seeds of hope that Elphaba spread a generation before. *Son* is a tighter work than *Wicked*, making deft use of flashbacks and varying viewpoints to create a quicker pace. And Liir's quest—both to find himself and to save the people of Oz—is easier to believe than the motivations that drove the bitter yet heroic Elphaba. A well-written, well-crafted fantasy that can stand on its own.

### Confessions of an Ugly Step-Sister (Gregory Maguire)

What were Cinderella's wicked stepmother and the ugly stepsisters really like? Maguire has come up with a fascinating hypothesis in this logical, not necessarily magical, retelling of the classic tale. Recently arrived from England, the Dutch-born widow Margarethe and her two children, ungainly and seemingly slow-witted Ruth and plain but intelligent Iris, move into the social mix that is Haarlem in the 17th century. Soon after her arrival, she marries a newly widowed tulip merchant with one child. The author firmly places his characters into the down-to-earth and stolid reality of a Holland fearful of the plague and intent on developing the tulip business that will make it famous, yet capable of nurturing Rembrandt and Hals. The well-drawn characters include a striving Dutch painter and his appealing apprentice; a beautiful, otherworldly child; her scatterbrained mother and burgher father; and even "The Queen of the Hairy-Chinned Gypsies." The plot is plausible and, given the fact that readers will think they know how it all works out, full of surprises. This is not an easy read, but the pretext is appealing and the resulting story worth the effort. Thoughtful YAs will enjoy a new take on a familiar tale, and be thoroughly involved in this historical romp.

### Mirror, Mirror (Gregory Maguire)

A dark and vivid retelling of *Snow White* transposed to the Italy of the Borgias. Lucrezia is the evil stepmother and five-year-old Bianca de Nevada grows into the role of *Snow White*. Vicente, a minor landlord beholden to Lucrezia and her brother/lover Cesare, unwillingly leaves his motherless daughter to go on a seemingly futile errand for Cesare. Journeying to Greece to seek out a branch of the holy Tree of Knowledge, Vicente languishes for years in the dungeon of the very monks who possess the relic. While her father is gone, Bianca develops into a lovely young woman, attracting Cesare's attention. Seeing this, Lucrezia orders her killed and sends a young hunter into the woods with the familiar instructions. Adding much historical flavor and returning to the edgy eroticism of the fairy tale, Maguire invests the journeys of the Borgias, Bianca, and Vicente with a compelling urgency. Readers will be intrigued by the new story and yet curious as to how the familiar elements are brought in. Sometimes seven, sometimes eight, the dwarves, slowly awakening to their possibilities, are droll and great fun to listen to. The language has an old-fashioned quality and the point of view shifts frequently, but teens who continue to the end will learn much of medieval Italy and a little of human nature, and have a new respect for the old tale. This is a great addition to the Maguire shelf

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### Band of Sisters – American Women at War in Iraq (Kirsten Holmstedt)

In Iraq, the front line is everywhere...and everywhere in Iraq, women in the U.S. military fight. More than 155,000 of them have served in Iraq since 2003--four times the number of women sent to Desert Storm in 1991--and more than 430 have been wounded and over 70 killed, almost twice the number of U.S. military women killed in action in Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm combined. Band of Sisters presents twelve amazing and often heart-wrenching stories of American women in the frontlines including Americas first female pilot to be shot down and survive, the U.S. military's first black female combat pilot, a 21-year-old turret gunner defending a convoy, two military policewomen in a firefight, a nurse struggling to save lives, including her own and more.

### The Sweet Far Thing (Libba Bray)

IT HAS BEEN A YEAR OF CHANGE since Gemma Doyle arrived at the foreboding Spence Academy. Her mother murdered, her father alaudanum addict, Gemma has relied on an unsuspected strength and has discovered an ability to travel to an enchanted world called the realms, where dark magic runs wild. Despite certain peril, Gemma has bound the magic to herself and forged unlikely new alliances. Now, as Gemma approaches her London debut, the time has come to test these bonds.

The Order - the mysterious group her mother was once part of - is grappling for control of the realms, as is the Rakshana. Spence's burned East Wing is being rebuilt, but why now? Gemma and her friends see Pippa, but she is not the same. And their friendship faces its gravest trial as Gemma must decide once and for all what role she is meant for.

### Parrotfish (Ellen Wittlinger)

As in *Hard Love* (S & S, 1999), Wittlinger tackles GLBT issues, introducing readers to Grady McNair, formerly known as Angela. This fast read follows Grady through the days between Thanksgiving and Christmas as he comes out as transgendered, faces issues of acceptance and rejection at school and at home, and falls in love with the hottest girl in school. Funny and thought-provoking in turns, the book does suffer from a few structural problems. The narrator's voice is very feminine for somebody who has internally always felt like a boy, and with little effort on his part, Grady ends the book with family approval, new and old friends, a previously forbidden pet, and the end of an embarrassing family holiday tradition. Flaws aside, the book is an excellent resource for building awareness about, and serving the increasing number of, transgendered teens. Helpful resources include Web sites and further-reading material. The lack of similar titles available, except for Julie Ann Peters's *Luna* (Little, Brown, 2004), and Wittlinger's captivating storytelling ability combine to make this a book that most libraries should stock. Grady eventually decides that he will always straddle the 50 yard line of gender, and the book should help teens be comfortable with their own place on that football field

### 13 Little Blue Envelopes (Maureen Johnson)

This whirlwind adventure begins as Ginny, 17, reads a letter from her free-spirited, unpredictable Aunt Peg, who has recently passed away. She is given several

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destinations, four rules, and the instruction to open one envelope upon her arrival at each place. Thus begins a rapid tour of Europe as the teen struggles to accomplish the tasks established by her aunt. The motivation: Ginny wants to understand the woman's wanderlust and, possibly, she just wants a connection to her beloved relative.

Throughout her adventures in Rome, Paris, Greece, England, and the Netherlands, the teen collects pieces of Peg's past and learns more about her rapid departure. She also learns much about herself. The reason Ginny is sent to meet certain people is not always clear; sometimes she (and readers) wonder about the point of the exercise. Overall, though, the novel drives home the importance of family, love, and the value of connections that you make with people. It is a quick read that will interest high school girls.

### Repossessed (A.M. Jenkins)

Don't call me a demon. I prefer the term Fallen Angel.

Everybody deserves a vacation, right? Especially if you have a pointless job like tormenting the damned. So who could blame me for blowing off my duties and taking a small, unauthorized break?

Besides, I've always wanted to see what physical existence is like. That's why I "borrowed" the slightly used body of a slacker teen. Believe me, he wasn't going to be using it anymore anyway.

I have never understood why humans do the things they do. Like sin—if it's so terrible, why do they keep doing it?

I'm going to have a lot of fun finding out!

### Evil Genius (Catherine Jinks)

Cadel Piggott has a genius IQ and a fascination with systems of all kinds. At seven, he was illegally hacking into computers. Now he's fourteen and studying for his World Domination degree, taking classes like embezzlement, misinformation, forgery, and infiltration at the institute founded by criminal mastermind Dr. Phineas Darkkon.

Although Cadel may be advanced beyond his years, at heart he's a lonely kid. When he falls for the mysterious and brilliant Kay-Lee, he begins to question the moral implications of his studies for the first time. But is it too late to stop Dr. Darkkon from carrying out his evil plot?

An engrossing thriller with darkness and humor, freaks and geeks, *Evil Genius* explores the fine line between good and evil in a strange world of manipulations and subterfuge where nothing is as it seems.

### Evolution, Me & Other Freaks of Nature (Robin Brande)

Your best friend hates you. The guy you liked hates you. Your entire group of friends hates you.

All because you did the right thing.

Welcome to life for Mena, whose year is starting off in the worst way possible. She's been kicked out of her church group and no one will talk to her—not even her own

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parents. No one except for Casey, her supersmart lab partner in science class, who's pretty funny for the most brilliant guy on earth.

And when Ms. Shepherd begins the unit on evolution, school becomes more dramatic than Mena could ever imagine . . . and her own life is about to evolve in some amazing and unexpected ways.

### Nobody's Princess (Esther Friesner)

She is beautiful, she is a princess, and Aphrodite is her favorite goddess, but something in Helen of Sparta just itches for more out of life. Not one to count on the gods—or her looks—to take care of her, Helen sets out to get what she wants with steely determination and a sassy attitude. That same attitude makes Helen a few enemies—such as the self-proclaimed "son of Zeus" Theseus—but it also intrigues, charms, and amuses those who become her friends, from the famed huntress Atalanta to the young priestess who is the Oracle of Delphi.

In *Nobody's Princess*, author Esther Friesner deftly weaves together history and myth as she takes a new look at the girl who will become Helen of Troy. The resulting story offers up adventure, humor, and a fresh and engaging heroine you cannot help but root for.

### The Alchemyst: The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel (Michael Scott)

Scott uses a gigantic canvas for this riveting fantasy. The well-worn theme of saving the world from the forces of evil gets a fresh look here as he incorporates ancient myth and legend and sets it firmly, pitch-perfect, in present-day California. At the emotional center of the tale are contemporary 15-year-old twins, Josh and Sophie, who, it turns out, are potentially powerful magicians. They are spoken of in a prophecy appearing in the ancient Book of Abraham the Mage, all but two pages of which have been stolen by evil John Dee, alchemist and magician. The pursuit of the twins and Flamel by Dee and his allies to get the missing pages constitutes the book's central plot. Amid all this exhilarating action, Scott keeps his sights on the small details of character and dialogue and provides evocative descriptions of people, mythical beings, and places. He uses as his starting point the figures of the historical alchemist Nicholas Flamel and his wife, who have found the secret of immortality, along with mythical beings, including the terrifying Scottish crow-goddess, the Morrigan; the three-faced Greek Hekate; the powerful Egyptian cat-goddess, Bastet; and Scathach, a legendary Irish woman warrior and vegetarian vampire. While there is plenty here to send readers rushing to their encyclopedias of mythology and alchemy, those who read the book at face value will simply be caught up in the enthralling story. A fabulous read

### Genesis Alpha (Rune Michaels)

Josh worships his older brother, Max. They look alike, they talk alike, and they both have the same interests, including their favorite massively multiplayer online role-playing game, Genesis Alpha. But Josh and Max have an even deeper connection. Because Josh was born for a reason. It was Josh's stem cells, harvested when Josh was newly born, that saved his dying older brother's life.

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Now that same beloved older brother is arrested, accused of the brutal murder of a teenage girl. Josh is bewildered. Is Max really a monster, or is all of this a terrible mistake? And if the worst is true and Max is guilty, does that mean Josh is guilty too? After all, Max wouldn't exist without him. But this is only the beginning. Before long, Josh will come to a number of searing revelations -- revelations that have dire implications not only for Max's future, but for Josh's as well.

Rune Michaels explodes onto the teen literature scene with this gripping, chilling debut - a compelling picture of the intersection where science, family, and morality collide.

### Football Genius (Tim Green)

Troy White has a phenomenal gift. He can predict football plays before they happen. Any position. Any player. Any team.

When Troy's single mom gets a job working in public relations for the Atlanta Falcons, Troy figures it's his chance to prove what he can do. But first he has to get to the Falcons—and with tight security and a notoriously mean coach, even his mom's field passes aren't much help.

Then Troy and his best friends devise a plan to get the attention of star linebacker Seth Halloway. With Seth's playing and Troy's genius, the Falcons could be unstoppable—if they'll only listen.

Bestselling author and former NFL player Tim Green scores a touchdown with this exhilarating novel, his first for young readers. *Football Genius* is an action-packed adventure with gripping suspense, a hero you can really root for, and an insider's look at the world of professional football.

### Peak (Roland Smith)

In this high-altitude adventure, 14-year-old Peak Marcello's passion for climbing is clearly in the genes, but when he is arrested for scaling tall buildings, his mom and stepdad make a deal with the judge to ship him out of the country to live with her ex-husband and squelch the media attention that might inspire "Spider Boy" copycats. The teen's father, Josh, and his Himalayan expedition company are preparing teams to climb Mount Everest and suddenly Peak is faced with the possibility of becoming the youngest climber to reach the summit. Excited about the adventure, he learns that Josh may have less-than-fatherly motives involving publicity and financial gain for his company, at the expense of his paying customers. Peak is handed off to his father's head Sherpa for training and altitude acclimation with a Nepalese boy his own age, named Sun-jo. At the same time, a media crew gathers at base camp to witness the climb, and an overzealous Chinese police captain doggedly searches for passport violations and underage climbers. Facts about Mount Everest, base camps, and the dangers of climbing are plentiful, depicting an international culture made up of individuals who are often self-absorbed and indifferent to the Tibetan Sherpas, who risk their lives for them. Peak's empathy for Sun-jo helps him make a critical decision as they near the summit, revealing his emotional growth and maturity. A well-crafted plot and exotic setting give the novel great appeal to survival adventure fans

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### Come Juneteenth (Great Episodes) (Ann Rinaldi)

The author's talent for bringing history to life is vividly showcased in this novel. When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Texas slave owners, fearing an uprising, kept the fact a secret. They were finally forced to reveal the truth two and a half years later, on June 19, 1865, which came to be known as Juneteenth and is celebrated to this day. In this story, 14-year-old Luli has grown up with Sis Goose, a young mulatto girl, technically a slave but raised as part of the family. Luli's father is an invalid and her mother is busy running the plantation, so her older brother, Gabriel, has assumed responsibility for her, teaching her to ride and shoot like a boy, and instilling in her a fierce independence. Although Sis Goose is like a sister to Luli, and Gabriel is in love with her, the family does not tell Sis Goose of her freedom, which results in a devastating tragedy. Luli's authentic voice demonstrates Rinaldi's ability to evoke the human side of history, and the novel's evenhanded approach portrays the moral ambiguities of the time fairly and honestly. Believable characters with human strengths and weaknesses, lively writing, and plenty of action and suspense make this book a real page-turner for lovers of historical fiction.—

### Manhunt – The 12 Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer (James L. Swanson)

The murder of Abraham Lincoln set off the greatest manhunt in American history. From April 14 to April 26, 1865, the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, led Union cavalry and detectives on a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia, while the nation, still reeling from the just-ended Civil War, watched in horror and sadness.

James L. Swanson's *Manhunt* is a fascinating tale of murder, intrigue, and betrayal. A gripping hour-by-hour account told through the eyes of the hunted and the hunters, this is history as you've never read it before.

### The First Men In (Ed Ruggero)

Of the nearly 15,000 Allied paratroopers dropped into France on D-14 (two weeks before D-Day), only one regiment—the 3,000 men of the 505 Parachute Infantry—had been tested in battle, and so they were given the toughest mission. For a few critical days, while the fate of occupied Europe hung in the balance, these troopers held their ground against savage assaults. In doing so, they changed the course of World War II. Within hours of landing in Normandy, the paratroopers of the 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment had gathered in the darkened fields outside Ste. Mere Eglise and moved rapidly to the edge of town. A French civilian pointed out the German positions, and in a lightning attack the GI's liberated the first town in Europe, planting the United States flag on top of city hall.

Shortly after daylight, as reports streamed in, Allied commanders were shocked to learn that the 505 was the only one of six U.S. parachute regiments to hit its mark. Because Ste. Mere Eglise was the gateway to Utah Beach, the regiment—now fighting virtually alone—hastily dug in to await the German counterattacks that were sure to follow. Colonel Bill Ekman and his men held critical ground: half of the American invasion force was to pass through this area, and that would only happen if the 505 held Ste. Mere Eglise. It was an almost unimaginable challenge: at ten that morning the German

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attacks began, and by early afternoon enemy armored columns were slamming GI lines from three directions in an attempt to reach the vulnerable invasion beaches.

But despite heavy losses, the 505 was still in control of Ste. Mere Eglise on June 8, when they were relieved by units that came across the beach. When their unseasoned replacements faltered, U.S. commanders called on the exhausted paratroopers to stay in the fight and lead the series of ground assaults that would secure the invasion. A single unit, a relative handful of men, had helped turn the course of one of the most important battles of the war.

### A Brief Chapter in My Impossible Life (Dana Reinhardt)

Simone's junior year of high school proceeds with common teen issues . . . in Dana Reinhardt's fast-paced novel (Wendy Lamb Books, 2006). Simone has a secure place in a loving family and knows it, resulting in some refreshing and self-aware musing on her part which narrator Mandy Siegfried handles beautifully. Whenever appropriate, she also musters the whatever tone in her voice, giving Simone an authentic teenage sound. Simone has always known she was adopted and that her birth mother is named Rivka, but never wanted to meet her. Something is different now and her parents seem to be pressing for a meeting. Touching encounters soon reveal that her birth mother is dying from ovarian cancer. Simone becomes an angel in Rivka's life and learns how Rivka's conservative Jewish upbringing led her to leave home, give up her baby, and forge her way on her own. Facing the usual teen problems comes into a different focus as Simone encounters life's unfairness, tragedies, and blessings in a thoughtful, well-crafted story. Siegfried offers a sensitive reading that is never maudlin, making the characters come alive. A great read that deals with important teen issues

### First Test (Protector of the Small) (Tamora Pierce)

Ten years after the proclamation that girls are eligible for a page's training at the court of King Jonathan of Tortall, 10-year-old Keladry applies and is accepted, but on probation, a condition never forced on male applicants. Resolutely accepting the challenge, the hostility of the royal training master, and harassment by fellow pages, Kel makes her way through this difficult year. Trained from early childhood by stoic Yamani warriors, she is capable of hiding her feelings, fearless in a fight, and willing to work hard to develop the necessary physical capacity. Her sympathy and support for the underdog and her sense of chivalry earn her the admiration of a group of fellow pages. She also befriends the sparrows that live outside her window and wins over a difficult horse. Kel performs well in her first real battle and is grudgingly allowed to stay for another year of training. The medieval/magical world of Tortall has been the setting for eight of the author's titles; in *First Test*, the first of a new series, this fantasy world is clear and well developed, allowing the book to stand on its own. Characters who may be familiar to readers of the previous titles are reintroduced successfully or remain on the sidelines. The scrappy Kel is an appealing and believable girl whose struggles to integrate a formerly all-male world are both familiar and freshly told. This is smooth storytelling and a satisfying read.

### Leaving Paradise (Simone Elkeles)

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Nothing has been the same since Caleb Becker left a party drunk, got behind the wheel, and hit Maggie Armstrong. Even after months of painful physical therapy, Maggie walks with a limp. Her social life is nil and a scholarship to study abroad—her chance to escape everyone and their pity stares—has been canceled. After a year in juvenile jail, Caleb's free . . . if freedom means endless nagging from a transition coach and the prying eyes of the entire town. Coming home should feel good, but his family and ex-girlfriend seem like strangers.

Caleb and Maggie are outsiders, pigeon-holed as "criminal" and "freak." Then the truth emerges about what really happened the night of the accident and, once again, everything changes. It's a bleak and [long] journey for Caleb and Maggie, yet they end up finding comfort and strength from a surprising source: each other.

### Snakehead (Alex Rider) (Anthony Horowitz)

What goes up must come down, and when we last saw Alex Rider, he was as up as can be—in outer space. When he crash lands off the coast of Australia, the Australian Secret Service recruits him to infiltrate one of the ruthless gangs operating across South East Asia. Known as snakeheads, the gangs smuggle drugs, weapons, and worst of all, people. Alex accepts the assignment, in part for the chance to work with his godfather and learn more about his parents. What he uncovers, however, is a secret that will make this his darkest and most dangerous mission yet . . . and that his old nemesis, Scorpia, is anything but out of his life.

### America's Navy and Marine Corps Airplanes: 1918-To the Present (Francis Dean)

A detailed pictorial review of U.S. Navy airplanes from the end of World War I to the present day. All mission types are covered, including fighters, scout dive and torpedo bombers, patrol planes, utility planes, and trainers. Many variants of basic types are shown with photos and data from informative captions. An introduction is provided for each mission category, and explanations of airplane designations are provided. Striking changes in U.S. naval airplane designs through almost eight decades of progress can be seen from the earliest wood, wire, and fabric craft to the latest types entering the naval inventory. The photo coverage is excellent, with many never before published pictures of Navy types., over 1200 b/w photographs, 8 1/2" x 11"

### A War of Gifts: An ender Story (Orson Scott Card)

Card returns to his Hugo and Nebula award-winning Enderverse saga (after 2005's *Shadow of the Giant*) with a heartwarming novella for the holidays. When Zeck Morgan, the young son of a puritanical minister, qualifies for admission into the International Fleet's Battle School, he is brought to the school against his will. Citing his pacifist religious beliefs, Zeck refuses to participate in any simulated war games, but when he sees a Dutch student give a friend a small present in celebration of Sinterklaas Day, he reports the violation of the school's rules against open religious observation and sparks an uproar over religious freedom and the significance of cultural traditions. Meanwhile, Zeck becomes a pariah until series hero Ender Wiggin finds a way to show him the real meaning of the holidays. Exploring themes of tolerance and compassion, this story about stuffing stockings is, fittingly, a perfect stocking stuffer for science fiction fans of all ages.

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### Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog (John Grogan)

Labrador retrievers are generally considered even-tempered, calm and reliable; and then there's Marley, the subject of this delightful tribute to one Lab who doesn't fit the mold. Grogan, a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer, and his wife, Jenny, were newly married and living in West Palm Beach when they decided that owning a dog would give them a foretaste of the parenthood they anticipated. Marley was a sweet, affectionate puppy who grew into a lovably naughty, hyperactive dog. With a light touch, the author details how Marley was kicked out of obedience school after humiliating his instructor (whom Grogan calls Miss Dominatrix) and swallowed an 18-karat solid gold necklace (Grogan describes his gross but hilarious "recovery operation"). With the arrival of children in the family, Marley became so incorrigible that Jenny, stressed out by a new baby, ordered her husband to get rid of him; she eventually recovered her equilibrium and relented. Grogan's chronicle of the adventures parents and children (eventually three) enjoyed with the overly energetic but endearing dog is delivered with great humor. Dog lovers will love this account of Grogan's much loved canine.

### The Quillan Games (D.J. MacHale)

Quillan is a territory on the verge of destruction. The people have lost control of their own future and must struggle simply to survive. The only chance they have of finding a better life is by playing the Quillan Games. Hosted by a strange pair of game masters, Veego and LaBerge, the games are a mix of sport and combat. They use the people of Quillan as pawns for their amusement as they force them to enter competitions that range from physical battles, to impossible obstacle courses, to computer-driven tests of agility. To triumph in the games is to live the life of a king. To lose is to die.

### The Pilgrims of Rayne (D.J. MacHale)

When Bobby Pendragon first arrives on the tropical world of Ibara, he finds paradise. As he works to uncover clues about the turning point this seemingly idyllic territory will soon face, all he can determine is that the people of Ibara are blissfully happy. It's not long before Bobby discovers, however, that they are also blissfully...oblivious. The leaders of Ibara are keeping a devastating secret from their people, one that gives Saint Dane all the opportunity he needs to launch his final assault on Halla. While Bobby struggles to learn the truth in time to thwart Saint Dane, Courtney Chetwynde desperately searches for Mark Diamond. On the heels of a shocking tragedy, Mark has disappeared. Worse, he seems to be under Saint Dane's influence. It's up to Courtney to find Mark and stop him from making a grave mistake that could change the future of all existence.

### Getting It (Alex Sanchez)

Carlos Amoroso, 15, loves video games, junk food, and hanging out with his buddies. The only thing he can't do is get a date with sexy, popular Roxy Rodriguez. After watching Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, he approaches a gay classmate, Sal, for a makeover. Sal agrees but insists that Carlos help him start a Gay-Straight Alliance at their predominantly Hispanic Texas high school. Carlos is conflicted—what if his friends think he's gay, too? In the process, the teen learns how to clean, dress, clear zits, and

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talk to girls. He also learns how to be honest with himself, and how to tell people, including his macho father and homophobic buddies, how he really feels.

### Empress of the World (Sara Ryan)

Written with understanding, humor, and heart, this first novel explores a teen love relationship bounded by time, inexperience, and an enclosed community setting. Nicola goes away to a summer program for gifted students, expecting to explore her interest in archaeology while also continuing her artwork. On the very first day, she is attracted to another girl, but she refuses to be labeled as a lesbian because she thinks she's also attracted to boys. And that is the rub with which Nic is faced in this realistically flowing plot: she thinks and analyzes everything she feels, everything others say to her, things left unsaid. This, rather than the gender orientation of her first serious relationship-which does unfold, collapse, and then bloom again before summer's end-is what she learns about herself. Ryan places Nic not only in a romantic relationship with a girl who herself is willing to explore sexuality with a girl and a boy in the same summer-school period, but also in credible friendships with an evidently straight girl and a couple of straight boys.

### Empire (Orson Scott Card)

Some video-game developers asked Card to write a scenario for "an entertainment franchise . . . about a near-future American civil war." They came to the right man and held off on releasing the game until he completed this relentless thriller, which couldn't be timelier and is, for all its hyperactivity and flip, Hollywoodish one-liners, heartfelt and sobering. Its heroes are two special-ops army officers who keep their oaths to defend the U.S. against all enemies when far too many of their ostensible colleagues have decided to abandon theirs. A rocket hits the west wing of the White House, killing the president, vice-president, and secretary of defense. While those directly responsible are Arabs, the next day, 14-foot-tall, bulletproof, armed globes on mechanical legs, backed by shooters on individual hovercraft, seize New York City by killing anyone in uniform. None of the new attackers looks anything other than American. A "Progressive Restoration" administration is established in the city, and it encourages other cities and states to join it to restore government as it should have been but for the stolen elections of 2000 and 2004.

### The Demonata Book #5: Blood Beast (Darren Shan)

"Locked inside Dervish's study. Breath coming quickly, raggedly. Trembling wildly. I still feel sick and dizzy, but maybe that's fear. I force myself to breathe normally, evenly. When I'm in control, I study my reflection, looking for telltale signs. Am I turning into a werewolf? I don't know..." Grubbs Grady has so far escaped the family curse, but when he begins to experience alarming symptoms at the onset of the full moon, he is scared that the jaws of fate are opening and about to swallow him whole. He has cheated death, defeated demons, moved on with his life. But Grubbs is torn between the world of magic and his wolfen genes. Can he fight the beast inside or will he fall victim to his tainted blood?

### Ripley's Special Edition 2008

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Turn the pages --- if you dare. But watch out for...

... gruesome ghosts that haunt your favorite hangouts!

... creepy spiders that can crawl all over you!

... a troll so huge, it can crush a car with one hand!

... and more mummies, crazy collections, and peculiar people than ever!

It's all weird, and it's all inside --- Believe It or Not!

### What My Mother Doesn't Know (Sonya Sones)

Drawing on the recognizable cadences of teenage speech, Sones (*Stop Pretending*) poignantly captures the tingle and heartache of being young and boy-crazy. The author keenly portrays ninth-grader Sophie's trajectory of lusty crushes and disillusionment whether she is gazing at Dylan's "smoldery dark eyes" or dancing with a mystery man to music that "is slow/ and/ saxophony." Best friends Rachel and Grace provide anchoring friendships for Sophie as she navigates her home life as an only child with a distant father and a soap opera-devotee mother whose "shrieking whips around inside me/ like a tornado."

### 1001 Nights in Iraq (Shant Kenderlan)

Kenderian, an Iraqi-American, traces his strange odyssey from American schoolboy to Iraqi soldier and U.S. prisoner of war in this unique and informative autobiography. Kenderian was a permanent U.S. resident when he traveled to Iraq in 1980 to visit his estranged father. While there, Saddam invaded Iran and closed the country's border, stranding Kenderian, who was eventually drafted into the Iraqi navy for three and a half years. After the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam invaded Kuwait in August 1990, recalling Kenderian to active duty before he could escape. When the landing craft he was on hit a mine in the Persian Gulf—ironically placed by his own unit—the survivors were picked up by an American frigate and the relieved Kenderian became a POW. Because of his flawless English, Kenderian was a favorite of his captors, worked informally as an interpreter and even became romantically involved with a female army reservist. After much diplomatic maneuvering, the self-described "man without a country" was granted "humanitarian parole" and returned to the U.S. Kenderian's decade-long ordeal is a bittersweet story, but after acknowledging his "really bad timing," he eschews the negative for an inspirational account of perseverance and survival.

### What My Girlfriend Doesn't Know (Sonya Sones)

This sequel to *What My Mother Doesn't Know* (S & S, 2001) stands completely on its own. Robin's life at Cambridge High School is miserable. The arty outsider's last name becomes the pejorative slang of the school—as in, "Don't be such a Murphy." His lot improves, however, when popular Sophie becomes his girlfriend despite the detriment to her reputation. Better still, the freshman is invited to audit an art class at Harvard. It is his homecoming; for once, he is the comedian rather than the butt of jokes. One of the college freshmen even shows some romantic interest in him. Written as a novel in verse, this title is a fast-paced, page-turning romp that gives authentic voice to male youth even when it is painfully truthful.

### Love, Stargirl (Jerry Spinelli)

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This brilliant sequel to *Stargirl* (Knopf, 2000) takes place a year later. Now living in Pennsylvania, Stargirl, 15, continues to pine for Leo, who dumped her, and struggles to make a place for herself in her new community. Fortunately, her eclectic neighbors, who include Dootsie, a five-year-old "human bean"; Betty Lou, an agoraphobic divorcée; and Perry Delloplane, an amiable thief, draw her back into life and happiness. Written in diary format—the "world's longest letter," as Stargirl calls it—this novel is as charming and unique as its sensitive, nonconformist heroine. Addressing loss, growing pains, and staying true to oneself, this stellar follow-up is both profound and funny.—

### The Off Season (Catherine Murdock)

This sequel to Murdock's *Dairy Queen* (Houghton, 2006) catches readers up with narrator D.J. Schwenk as she hits her stride in her junior year of high school. She's playing linebacker for her high school football team, hanging out with Brian (the rival high school's quarterback), earning passing grades, and pulling her weight on her family's struggling dairy farm. But "a whole herd of trouble" is coming her way. First, D.J. and, by extension, Brian become the unwitting subjects of a *People* magazine article. Then D.J. suffers a shoulder injury that threatens her sports career, her gay best friend runs away with an older girlfriend, and D.J. notices that Brian isn't too keen on being seen with her in public. These problems are all put into perspective when D.J.'s older brother, Win, suffers a serious spinal-cord injury during a college football game. D.J. stays by his side in the hospital, a task made even tougher by Win's refusal to communicate, and accompanies him to rehab in Minnesota. There's no too-tidy ending here; readers gain a sense of the wait-and-see and grueling nature of physical rehabilitation.

### Sealed with a Diss (Lisi Harrison)

Claire Lyons moves with her parents from Florida to wealthy Westchester County, NY. Until they can get settled, the family stays in the guest house of Mr. Lyons's college buddy, who happens to have a daughter who is also in seventh grade. Expected to welcome her, Massie instead chooses to make Claire's life miserable for no other reason than she's the new girl. Massie enlists her clique of friends at Octavian Country Day School, all part of the beautiful and popular crowd, to help with the harassment, which ranges from catty comments on Claire's clothes to spilling red paint on her white jeans in a conspicuous spot. Tired of it all, Claire tries to fight back, but then the abuse worsens. The book has trendy references kids will love, including Starbucks in the school, designer clothes, and PalmPilots for list making. However, this trendiness doesn't make up for the shallowness of the characters or the one-dimensional plot. Nor is the cruelty of the clique redeemed with any sort of a satisfying ending. The conclusion leaves one with the feeling that a sequel is in the works

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### Extras (Scott Westerfield)

It's a few years after rebel Tally Youngblood took down the uglies/pretties/specials regime. Without those strict roles and rules, the world is in a complete cultural renaissance. "Tech-heads" flaunt their latest gadgets, "kickers" spread gossip and trends, and "surge monkeys" are hooked on extreme plastic surgery. And it's all monitored

on a bazillion different cameras. The world is like a gigantic game of American Idol. Whoever is getting the most buzz gets the most votes. Popularity rules. As if being fifteen doesn't suck enough, Aya Fuse's rank of 451,369 is so low, she's a total nobody. An extra. But Aya doesn't care; she just wants to lie low with her drone, Moogle. And maybe kick a good story for herself. Then Aya meets a clique of girls who pull crazy tricks, yet are deeply secretive of it. Aya wants desperately to kick their story, to show everyone how intensely cool the Sly Girls are. But doing so would propel her out of extra-land and into the world of fame, celebrity...and extreme danger. A world she's not prepared for.

### The Choice (Nicholas Sparks)

In his 13th book, bestselling Sparks (At First Sight, etc.) limns the far-reaching implications of several seemingly ordinary choices made by Beaufort, N.C. veterinarian Travis Parker and his next-door neighbor Gabrielle Holland, a physician's assistant and recent arrival. After an inauspicious first meeting where Gabby accuses Travis's boxer of impregnating her purebred collie, the two fall hard for each other. Already dating someone else seriously, Gabby is faced with a dilemma: whether to stick with longtime boyfriend Kevin, or get involved with Travis. The first part of the tale paints a vivid picture of her decision-making process and its effects on Travis and Gabby's lives. That sets up Part II, which takes place 11 years later when Travis faces a life and death decision following a car accident. A tender and moving love story and a quick read, Sparks's latest does not disappoint.

### A Long Way Gone (Ishmael Beah)

This gripping story by a children's-rights advocate recounts his experiences as a boy growing up in Sierra Leone in the 1990s, during one of the most brutal and violent civil wars in recent history. Beah, a boy equally thrilled by causing mischief as by memorizing passages from Shakespeare and dance moves from hip-hop videos, was a typical precocious 12-year-old. But rebel forces destroyed his childhood innocence when they hit his village, driving him to leave his home and travel the arid deserts and jungles of Africa. After several months of struggle, he was recruited by the national army, made a full soldier and learned to shoot an AK-47, and hated everyone who came up against the rebels. The first two thirds of his memoir are frightening: how easy it is for a normal boy to transform into someone as addicted to killing as he is to the cocaine that the army makes readily available. But an abrupt change occurred a few years later when agents from the United Nations pulled him out of the army and placed him in a rehabilitation center. Anger and hate slowly faded away, and readers see the first glimmers of Beah's work as an advocate. Told in a conversational, accessible style, this powerful record of war ends as a beacon to all teens experiencing violence around them by showing them that there are other ways to survive than by adding to the chaos

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### Ten Things I Hate About Me (Randa Abdel-Fattah)

Ten Things is about Jamie, a teenage girl from Sydney's south west who lives two lives: at school and in the outside world she is 'Jamie', a bottle-blonde with an apparently Anglo Aussie background; at home she is 'Jamilah' a Lebanese-Muslim who is proud of her cultural identity. Jamie struggles to maintain her two personas as the rules of her over-protective father collide with the normal adolescence she perceives other teenagers to have and which she so desires.

### Tamar: A Novel of Espionage, Passion, and Betrayal (Mal Peet)

This lengthy Carnegie Medal-winning novel is masterfully crafted, written in cinematic prose, and peopled by well-drawn, multidimensional characters. Intense and riveting, it is a mystery, a tale of passion, and a drama about resistance fighters in the Netherlands during World War II. The story unfolds in parallel narratives, most told by an omniscient narrator describing the resistance struggle, and fewer chapters as a narrative told by 15-year-old Tamar, the granddaughter of one of the resistance fighters. The locale and time shift between Holland in 1944 and '45 and England in 1995. The constant dangers faced by the resistance fighters as well as their determination to succeed in liberating their country from German occupation come vividly to life. Dart, Tamar, and Marijke are the main characters in this part of the book. Their loyalty to one another and the movement is palpable though love and jealousy gradually enter the story and painfully change the dynamics. Other characters jeopardize the safety of the group and intensify the life-threatening hazards they face. Peet deftly handles the developing intrigue that totally focuses readers. After her beloved grandfather commits suicide, modern-day Tamar is determined to undercover the mystery contained in a box of seemingly unrelated objects that he has left for her.

### Twinkie, Deconstructed (Steve Ettlinger)

In this delightful romp through the food processing industry, Ettlinger, who writes on consumer products (The Complete Illustrated Guide to Everything Sold in Hardware Stores), says, "Believers of urban legends take note.... Twinkies are not just made of chemicals," nor will their ingredients allow them to last, "even exposed on a roof, for 25 years." But what exactly their ingredients are, and how they come from places like Minnesota and Madagascar to be made into what Ettlinger calls "the uber-iconic food product, the archetype of all processed foods," is the subject of his book. Each chapter looks at individual ingredients, in the same order as on a Twinkie package, so Ettlinger finds himself traveling to eastern Pennsylvania farms to study wheat, as well as to high-security plants that manufacture highly toxic chlorine used in minute amounts to make the bleached flour that is "the only kind that works in sugar-heavy" Twinkies or birthday and wedding cakes. His exploration of the manufacturing processes of cellulose gum ("perfect for lending viscosity to the filling in snack cakes—or rocket fuel"), for example, cleverly reveals how Twinkie ingredients "are produced by or dependent on nearly every basic industry we know."

### Eclipse (Stephenie Meyer)

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Readers captivated by *Twilight* and *New Moon* will eagerly devour *Eclipse*, the much anticipated third book in Stephenie Meyer's riveting vampire love saga. As Seattle is ravaged by a string of mysterious killings and a malicious vampire continues her quest for revenge, Bella once again finds herself surrounded by danger. In the midst of it all, she is forced to choose between her love for Edward and her friendship with Jacob --- knowing that her decision has the potential to ignite the ageless struggle between vampire and werewolf. With her graduation quickly approaching, Bella has one more decision to make: life or death. But which is which?

Tantalize

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* (9<sup>th</sup> Grade Challenge Free Read) (Khaled Hosseini)  
Afghan-American novelist Hosseini follows up his bestselling *The Kite Runner* with another searing epic of Afghanistan in turmoil. The story covers three decades of anti-Soviet jihad, civil war and Taliban tyranny through the lives of two women. Mariam is the scorned illegitimate daughter of a wealthy businessman, forced at age 15 into marrying the 40-year-old Rasheed, who grows increasingly brutal as she fails to produce a child. Eighteen later, Rasheed takes another wife, 14-year-old Laila, a smart and spirited girl whose only other options, after her parents are killed by rocket fire, are prostitution or starvation. Against a backdrop of unending war, Mariam and Laila become allies in an asymmetrical battle with Rasheed, whose violent misogyny—"There was no cursing, no screaming, no pleading, no surprised yelps, only the systematic business of beating and being beaten"—is endorsed by custom and law. Hosseini gives a forceful but nuanced portrait of a patriarchal despotism where women are agonizingly dependent on fathers, husbands and especially sons, the bearing of male children being their sole path to social status. His tale is a powerful, harrowing depiction of Afghanistan, but also a lyrical evocation of the lives and enduring hopes of its resilient characters.

*Prom Nights from Hell* (Meg Cabot, Stephenie Meyer, Kim Harrison, and Lauren Myracle)

This exciting collection of short stories by popular teen authors—Meg Cabot, Kim Harrison, Michele Jaffe, Stephenie Meyer, and Lauren Myracle—embraces the dark side of a revered tradition. It starts with vampire-hunting Mary, who takes her mission of revenge on Dracula seriously enough to evoke his wrath by killing his son at her high school prom, and ends with the horned demon Sheba, who tries to wreak havoc at her prom. With edgy writing designed to hook and captivate even the most reluctant of readers, each story is filled with strong, appealing characters who work their magic on the senses by appearing to be strong, daring, and passionate. Readers are taken on an exhilarating ride through the terrifying side of an otherwise common event, and the mood is cleverly sustained with an aura of fast-paced yet somber writing. One distinct highlight of the collection is the well-orchestrated balance between the different aspects of horror that each writer addresses.

*The Freedom Writers Diary* (Zlata Filipovic)

When Gruwell was a first-year high school teacher in Long Beach, CA, teaching the "unteachables" (kids that no other teacher wanted to deal with), she discovered that most of her students had not heard of the Holocaust. Shocked, she introduced them to

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books about toleranceAfirst-person accounts by the likes of Anne Frank and Zlata Filipovic, who chronicled her life in war-torn Sarajevo. The students were inspired to start keeping diaries of their lives that showed the violence, homelessness, racism, illness, and abuse that surrounded them. These student diaries form the basis of this book, which is cut from the same mold as *Dangerous Minds*: the outsider teacher, who isn't supposed to last a month, comes in and rebuilds a class with tough love and hard work. Most readers will be proud to see how these students have succeeded; at the end of their four-year experience, the Freedom WritersAs they called themselves, in honor of the Freedom Riders of the 1960sAhad all graduated; Grunwell now works at the college level, instructing teachers on how to provide more interactive classes for their students. Recommended for youth, education, and urban studies collections.

### Skate and Destroy

In January 1981, a group of San Francisco skateboarders put together the first issue of Thrasher magazine. Today, Thrasher is bigger and better than ever—its name synonymous with both skateboarding's roots and constant evolution. Marking Thrasher's anniversary, this jam-packed retrospective recounts skateboarding's twists and turns of the last two decades and offers a glimpse at its thriving future. New and old school skaters alike will love Thrasher: Skate and Destroy. Not only does it cover the first twenty-five years of the magazine, reprinting the best of the original columns—"Photograffiti," "Zounds," "Trash," among others—but it will feature unpublished photos, rejected covers, interview outtakes, and detailed profiles. Action-packed photos capture legendary skaters such as: Tony Hawk, Bob Burnquist, Andrew Reynolds, Tony Alva, Mike Carroll, and Lance Mountain.The definitive guide to the history and development of skateboarding, no other book will take you as close to the risk taking, bone breaking world of what has since become the world's fastest growing extreme sport. With an emphasis on the current trends that will especially appeal to today's hundreds of thousands of skaters, this will be the skateboarding bible for fans of all ages and levels. Like the tattoos carved into the arms of skaters worldwide, Thrasher is forever. This one's gonna be gnarly!

### Tempting Fate (Esther Freisner)

Ilana is relieved to get a summer job, but she wonders if she's made the right choice when the Divine Relief Temp Agency sends her to Tabby Fabricant Textiles, where she meets the three unusual sisters who will be her supervisors. Tabby, Dimity, and Georgette refer casually to work that they've been doing for the past several centuries, brandish extremely sharp scissors, and seem to know every detail of Ilana's life. When she is given an unusual typing assignment, Ilana wonders aloud why a textile business would be issuing death certificates. Georgette calmly replies, They're not death certificates, dear....They're death receipts. We're the Fates. It's what we do. Soon Ilana discovers that everyone employed by the agency works for the gods or the heroes. Learning that she isn't the only one with a bizarre job gives her the impetus she needs to persevere through a summer filled with unusual experiences. She also becomes a close friend of Arachne (currently residing in her web at Tabby Fabricant Textiles) and weathers her older sister's frequent wedding-planning anxiety attacks.

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### Ranger's Apprentice: The Icebound Land (John Flanagan)

Kidnapped after the fierce battle with Lord Morgarath, Will and Evanlyn are bound for Skandia as captives aboard a fearsome wolfship. Halt has sworn to rescue Will, and he will do anything to keep his promise—even defy his King. Expelled from the Rangers he has served so loyally, Halt is joined by Will's friend Horace as he travels toward Skandia. On their way, they are challenged constantly by freelance knights—but Horace knows a thing or two about combat. Soon he begins to attract the attention of knights and warlords for miles around with his uncanny skill. Even so, will they be in time to rescue Will from a horrific life of slavery? The smash hit series continues with another heart stopping adventure.

### In the Name of God (9<sup>th</sup> Grade Challenge Free Read) (Paula Jolin)

Grade 8 Up—In this believable depiction of the growth of religious zealotry, 17-year-old Nadia describes the period after her cousin's arrest by the Syrian secret police. Already committed to Islam, she moves toward fanaticism, actually seeking out an attractive man whom she hopes will help her to learn more about the revolutionary cause. Moderates in her family attempt to counter her extremism; this is not the kind of flirtation her mother expected of a teenage daughter, and the mother's quiet example of a different Muslim way is the most appealing part of this unsettling picture. Nadia's internal and external arguments provide a stark vision of how others see the U.S. Jolin effectively works in every negative impression, real or perceived, about America and its foreign policy. Beyond the usual stereotypes of American commercialism, there are comments on 9/11 and the war in Iraq, quotations from George Bush, and allegations of worldwide Jewish conspiracies. American readers may find that Nadia's change from an ambitious student to a suicide bomber comes a bit too quickly. But the author's Islamic studies and long residence in the Middle East help make this a convincing picture of life in present-day Damascus, and the suspense will keep readers engaged

### City of Bones (Cassandra Clare)

Clary Fray, short for Clarissa, is a normal girl in a normal world. When she sees a blue haired boy in a night club attacked and killed by a group of three strange looking teenagers, things change. But when a bouncer is called and no one can see the three but her, Clary starts to wonder what exactly is happening.

When Clary receives a strange phone call from her mom she rushes home to make sure that everything is alright. What she finds is an apartment in ruins and a demon waiting to eat her. But Clary isn't a normal girl and she is able to barely hold her own against the demon. Soon enough she is rescued by one of the strange teenagers. Jace takes her to the Institute, a place of safety for his kind.

What is happening is that Clary is starting to regain her 'Sight', the power that enables her to see the world, and the things in the world, as it really is. Soon she learns that the three teenagers are Shadowhunters: men, women, and teenagers created by mixing the blood of angels with that of man so that they could hunt and kill demons. Alec and Isabelle, the other two strangers from the club, are brother and sister, and Jace came to live with their family when he was ten years old, after the horrific death of his father.