

Susan N. Newcomer
LIB 262-11
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YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE DATABASE

1. AUTHOR: Anderson, Laurie Halse

TITLE: *Speak*

PUBLICATION: Puffin Books, 2001, ISBN: 014131088X, 208 p., \$7.99

SUMMARY: A high school girl becomes the school outcast because she called the police about a rowdy student party. As the new school year starts, she finds that she has lost her voice, seemingly for no reason, but the reason becomes apparent as she relives the events that happened on that summer night.

EVALUATION: A valuable look at an important subject, but rather grim reading.

ANNOTATION: Melinda is the class outcast, and the secret she keeps is keeping has taken away her voice.

USEFULNESS: Could help teens to look at issues of scapegoating and shunning of their peers. The issues of surviving rape may be more mature than some readers could handle.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: Class list

BOOKTALKS: Talk about the end of summer party when Melinda called the cops and touch on the way Melinda feels now that she is shunned by her classmates and unable to reveal her secrets.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, *Stargirl*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Ann Brashares, Jerry Spinelli

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Melinda Sordino, shunned by classmates and unable to speak, an aloof Mom and Dad, Andy Evans, the cause of all her troubles

2. AUTHOR: Anderson, M.T.

TITLE: *Burger Wuss*

PUBLICATION: Candlewick Press, 2001, ISBN: 0763615676, 192 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: Anthony's girlfriend, Diana, dumps him for another guy and Anthony tries to get even by working at a rival fast food restaurant. In the process, Anthony ends up having to work alongside his nemesis, and needs to solicit the aid of the vegan, anarchist fry cook in the O'Dermott's hamburger restaurant.

EVALUATION: Very funny for anyone who has ever worked in fast food or knows people who did during their teenage years.

ANNOTATION: After losing his girlfriend, Anthony discovers the real price of revenge.

USEFULNESS: Deals with themes of teenage jobs and dating situations. Would likely appeal mainly to teen boys.

GENRE: Humor with a realistic twist

WHY? Radical Reads description sounded interesting

BOOKTALKS: Paint a picture of Anthony in hamburger hell, spattered with frying grease and plotting revenge on the guy who stole his girlfriend.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Feeling Sorry for Celia*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Jaclyn Moriarty

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Anthony, who mourns the loss of his girlfriend and plots revenge on the boy who stole her away, Turner, Anthony's enemy who stole away his girlfriend, Diana, the girl who broke up with Anthony, Shunt, the vegan, anarchist cook, Mike, the manager of O'Dermott's.

3. AUTHOR: Banks, Russel

TITLE: *Rule of the Bone*

PUBLICATION: Harper Collins, 1996, ISBN: 0060927240, 400 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: This book tells the terrible tale of the life of Chappie, a boy who is molested by his stepfather, starts flunking school classes, and gets involved with drugs. After getting a tattoo with an image of crossed bones, Chappie changes his name and personae to Bone, a violent and destructive youth who sets out to find his actual father in Jamaica and gets help from a Rastafarian Jamaican named I-Man who has a particular fondness for the use of marijuana.

EVALUATION: This was pretty grim going and the book was really like two different books in one.

ANNOTATION: Chappie is flunking out of school, doing drugs, and concealing a terrible secret, until the day he gets a tattoo of crossed bones, changes his name to "Bone" and heads out on the road in search of a father he never knew.

USEFULNESS: More like an adult novel about young adult characters, but apparently appeals to YA readers since they check it out of my library pretty much constantly.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: Recommended by one of my students.

BOOKTALKS: Give the listener some idea of the terrible life of Chappie before he reinvents himself as Bone and goes on his quest for his real father.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Disappearance*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Rosa Guy

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Chappie/Bone, the main character, his evil stepfather, I-Man, a Jamaican who befriends Bone, Chappie/Bone's long lost father.

4. AUTHOR: Bauer, Joan

TITLE: *Squashed*

PUBLICATION: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, c 1992, ISBN: 0440219124, 194 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: Ellie is a girl who is trying to grow a prize-winning pumpkin for a competition in Iowa. She thinks that if she can get the pumpkin to gain another 200 pounds, and if she can get herself to lose around 20 to 30 pounds that she will be happy.

EVALUATION: As a gardener who has known people who have entered pumpkin growing contests, I found this book very enjoyable.

ANNOTATION: Can Ellie outwit the smelly and evil Cyril Pool to produce the biggest pumpkin in the upcoming competition?

USEFULNESS: Deals with issues that plague many teens including concerns about body image and a desire to have a "claim to fame."

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

BOOKTALKS: Give the listener a view into the mind of 16 year old Ellie as she contemplates her winning strategy for the upcoming pumpkin contest

SIMILAR TITLES: *Angus, Thongs and Full-frontal Snogging*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Louise Rennison

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Ellie, the main character, Max, her giant pumpkin, JoAnn Clark, her best friend, Grace McKenna, her second best friend, and Cyril Pool, a malodorous, conniving grower of pumpkins

5. AUTHOR: Berry, James

TITLE: *Ajeemah and His Son*

PUBLICATION: Harper Trophy a Division of Harper Collins Publishers, c 1991, ISBN: 0064405230, 83 p. \$12.80

SUMMARY: Atu, the son of Ajeemah, was on the way with his father to pay the bride price in order to marry Sisi. On the way to see Sisi's family, Ajeemah and Atu are captured by fellow Africans who were slave traders. Sold to plantations in Jamaica, the father and son were separated as they began their new lives as slaves in the Caribbean.

EVALUATION: An easy to read look at the horrors of the African slave trade.

ANNOTATION: In the early years of the 19th century, the importing of slaves was nearing an end, but no before a father and son were snatched from their home in modern-day Ghana and brought to a life of toil in the plantations of Jamaica

USEFULNESS: Good for reluctant readers, African American young people interested in their cultural history, and as a supplement to students studying the history of slavery in their social science classes.

GENRE: Historical Fiction

WHY?: 1993 Boston Globe—Horn Book Award

BOOKTALKS: Tell the story of Atu eagerly traveling with his father to make arrangements for a wedding only to find themselves captured and transported by ship to Jamaican plantations.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Runs With Horses*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Brian Burks

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Ajeemah, a leather worker from Ghana, his son Atu, Sisi, who was to be Atu's bride, Bella, a fellow slave who marries Ajeemah in Jamaica, and Sisi, their daughter

6. AUTHOR: Block, Francesca Lia

TITLE: *Cherokee Bat and Goat Guys*

PUBLICATION: Harper Trophy, an Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, c 1992, ISBN: 0060202696, 121 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: The continuing adventures of characters introduced in two previous books about the intentional community of young musicians, artists, and sorcerers, including Weetzie Bat and Angel Juan. The action centers on Cherokee Bat, adorned in rags, fur, feathers, and beads, and Raphael's band called the Goat Guys, who spend free time at the beach, surfing and playing volleyball.

EVALUATION: A very mystifying bunch of rambling prose, rather reminiscent of drugged ruminations from the late 1960s.

ANNOTATION:

USEFULNESS: This is supposed to appeal to the reluctant reader, but it might be far too poetic and allegorical to make much sense to someone who struggles with regular prose. Apparently the reader needs to read the earlier books in this series for this to make any sense of it at all.

GENRE: Hard to say what this is. Perhaps fantasy.

WHY?: An ALA Recommended Book for the Reluctant Young Adult Reader

BOOKTALKS: Convey what life is like in the Southern California canyons with a troupe of neo-Bohemian artsy folk, punks, and latter day hippies. Mention the relationship between Cherokee and her almost sister, Witch Baby, her boyfriend of the moment, Raphael, the wise medicine man Coyote, and the rest of the denizens of this particular “family.”

SIMILAR TITLES: *Go Ask Alice*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Beatrice Sparks

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Cherokee Bat, her almost sister, Witch Baby, Weetzie Bat. Brandy, Coyote, Raphael

7. AUTHOR: Bloor, Edward

TITLE: *Tangerine*

PUBLICATION: Scholastic Paperbacks, \$4.99

SUMMARY: A legally blind boy moves with his family to the very strange location of Tangerine Florida. In the process, he discovers memories that explain things about his past. He also discovers that he can “see” the truth about other people, including his brother the football hero.

EVALUATION: An odd story and somewhat disturbing.

ANNOTATION: What is the truth about Paul’s blindness, the special treatment that his parents give his brother Eric, and the very peculiar place called Tangerine.

USEFULNESS: Should be good for teens who feel alienated from their peers, especially those with disabilities. Some disturbing aspects such as the favoritism shown to Paul’s brother Eric and the acts of violence committed by jock types

GENRE: Gothic novel merged with contemporary realistic themes

WHY?: Class list

BOOKTALKS: Describe Tangerine, with its destroyed citrus groves, underground fires, and generally weird, gothic aspects. Look at the relationship of Paul and his brother Eric who is the favored son in the family.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Holes*, *Stargirl*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Louis Sachar, Jerry Spinelli

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Paul Fisher, an exemplary soccer goalie, his brother Eric, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, who favor their son Eric, Kerri Gardner, a girl liked by Paul

8. AUTHOR: Brashares, Ann

TITLE: *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*

PUBLICATION: Delacorte Press, Reprint edition 2003, ISBN 038570586, 304 p., \$8.95

SUMMARY: Four lifelong girl friends acquire a pair of thrift shop jeans with the magical ability to fit each of them despite their physical differences in size and shape. During the summer, while the girls are apart, they exchange the pair of jeans amongst themselves and discover that the pants make them all appear sexy and confident. Each of the four interesting characters records her experiences with the jeans as a sort of journal of a magical summer.

EVALUATION: A very fun story with likeable characters.

ANNOTATION: This book explores themes of friendship, fun, and romance in a magical way through the weaving of four plot lines.

USEFULNESS: Would be well liked by many teen girls.

GENRE: Romance with a magical twist

WHY?: I loved Patty's comments about the book at the face to face class.

BOOKTALKS: Give the background about the thrift shop pants, the perceptions of the girls as they realized that they could all successfully wear the pants, and hint at the

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Princess Diaries* series

SIMILARAUTHORS: Meg Cabot,

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Lena, who spends the summer in Greece with her grandmother, Carmen who goes to South Carolina to see her father, Tibby, who spends the summer working at Wallmans, and Bridget who goes to soccer camp in Baja.

9. AUTHOR: Brooks , Bruce

TITLE: *The Moves Make the Man*

PUBLICATION:: HarperTrophy, 1996, ISBN: 0064405648, \$5.95

SUMMARY: Basketball is a backdrop and metaphor for the real story that focuses on friendship, belonging, and the effects of mental illness on a family's dynamics. In Wilmington, Delaware, back in 1963 whites were on a higher social plane than blacks. Against that backdrop, a black teen named Jerome becomes friends with a white kid named Bix. Jerome's mother is in a hospital recovering from an elevator accident, and Bix has a mother in a mental hospital. Jerome's love of basketball leads him to practice it in a "court" in the woods, and Bix joins him there as they each perfect their game, but each for different reasons.

EVALUATION: The story works on many levels both as a story of transcendence and as a look at issues in interracial friendship

ANNOTATION: Jerome is a tough enough guy to survive the loss of his father, and the injury of his mother. He has learned all the right moves, the basketball court and in the rest of life, and he is about to teach those moves to his friend Bix.

USEFULNESS: Would appeal to reluctant readers with an interest in sports as well as inspiration for teens in overcoming adversity.

GENRE: Sports

WHY? Class list

BOOKTALKS: Tell the story of Jerome meeting Bix, crossing his path again in Home Economics class, and role played by their acquisition of skill on Jerome's basketball court.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Danger Zone*

SIMILARAUTHORS: David Klass

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Jerome Foxworthy, an African American teen who loves basketball, Bix, his moody white friend who has a mother in a mental hospital, Bix' father, who makes it difficult for him to visit his mother

10. AUTHOR: Brooks, Bruce

TITLE: *What Hearts*

PUBLICATION: Harper Collins Children's Books, c 1992, ISBN: 0-064471276, 202 p., \$13.80

SUMMARY: Asa is a boy whose mother has moved his place of residence ten times in his eleven years of life. When his mother gets a divorce, she moves Asa to a place where she has an old high school sweetheart, named Dave. Asa's mother marries Dave, which creates a somewhat difficult relationship between stepfather and stepson. Asa discovers many things about life, friendship, sports, as well as love when he falls in love with a girl named Jean.

EVALUATION: This was a very enjoyable book with some serious themes and a good look at the life of a child in the 1960s.

ANNOTATION: A coming of age story about a boy whose intelligence, resilience and self-awareness help him to survive the hard knocks of young life.

USEFULNESS: Would be of interest to young YA readers especially in middle school

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY? An ALA Notable Book, An ALA Best Book for Young Adults, and the Horn Book Fanfare Honor List.

BOOKTALKS: Give a look at Asa's life from his point of view where the behavior of adults often makes no sense and where he must overcome such obstacles as constant family moves, a gruff stepfather, and a mother with emotional problems.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Somewhere in the Darkness*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Walter Dean Myers

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Asa, an eleven year old boy, his bother, Dave, his stepfather, Joel, his first friend, Jean, the girl he is interested in.

11. **AUTHOR:** Burks, Brian

TITLE: *Runs with Horses*

PUBLICATION: Harcourt Bruce & Company, c 1995, ISBN: 0152009949, 118 p., \$14.00

SUMMARY: Runs With Horses is told by his father that "someday your people will be hungry" and that he needed to train and prepare himself for his future as an Apache warrior.

EVALUATION: Interesting book with a good glimpse of life for 19th century Native Americans.

ANNOTATION: In the last days of a dying way of life, Runs With Horses trains to be a Chiracahua Apache warrior.

USEFULNESS: Good way for YA readers to get an understanding of the sufferings of Native Americans and to understand a cultural rite of passage experienced by Apache boys.

GENRE: Historical Fiction

WHY?: An ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Readers, and a New York Public Library's Book for the Teen Age

BOOKTALKS: Introduce the characters, including the historical figure, Geronimo, and describe the training regimen for an Apache warrior.

SIMILAR TITLES: *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Margaret Craven

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Runs With Horses, an Apache teenager, Red Knife, his father, Stands Alone, a young warrior who helps with the training, Geronimo, warrior and medicine man who oversees the training of the boys.

12. **AUTHOR:** Cabot, Meg

TITLE: *The Princess Diaries*, Vol. 1

PUBLICATION: Harpercollins Juvenile Books, 2000, ISBN: 0380978482, 240 p., \$15.99

SUMMARY: When Mia finds out that her father is actually the prince of a small European country, and that she is his heir apparent, her first reaction is that she is “so not suited to being a princess.”

The story progresses with Mia receiving lessons in how to behave as a royal from her grandmother, while other wacky things go on with Mia’s mother and school friends.

EVALUATION: A somewhat wacky tale that has an appealing premise

ANNOTATION: Raised in a Greenwich Village loft by her artsy mother, Mia suddenly finds out that her father is the prince of a small European country called Genovia, thereby causing her to be a princess.

USEFULNESS: Would be of interest to mostly younger YA girls

GENRE: Humorous Fiction with a fairy tale aspect

WHY? Recommended by students

BOOKTALKS: Show what Mia’s life was like before the disruption of “princesshood” being thrust upon her.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Ann Brashares

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Mia Thermopolis, a typical teenage girl in New York who suddenly finds out that she is a princess, Her father, the Prince of Genovia, Josh Richter, a boy she has a crush on, her paternal grandmother, who tries to mold her into a proper princess

13. AUTHOR: Card, Orson Scott

TITLE: *Ender’s Game*

PUBLICATION: Tom Doherty Associates, Inc, 1991, ISBN: 0-812550706, 324 p., \$6.95

SUMMARY: An insectoid species of aliens has attacked the earth twice and almost destroyed the human race. As a result of this dire situation, the government is relenting on its rule of allowing only two children per family in order to breed children that are potentially good soldiers to fight the alien invaders. Ender Wiggin is one of these Thirds, or third children, who was born to a family with a tormenting older brother, and indifferent parents. Ender goes off to the Battle School where he encounters situations not that unlike more ordinary boarding school scenarios, but with a science fiction twist.

EVALUATION: An engrossing story with well developed characters.

ANNOTATION: When the human race is faced with almost certain annihilation, bad times call for the harsh measures of children bred and trained to be warriors to fight the insectlike alien invaders.

USEFULNESS: Should appeal to science fiction fans, and might be able to lure potential science fiction readers away from their video games.

GENRE: Science Fiction

WHY?: Winner of both Hugo and Nebula Awards, and recommended by one of my students

BOOKTALKS: Give some background on the alienation felt by Ender both at home and his struggles at the Battle School.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Giver*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Lois Lowry

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Ender Wiggin, main character, Peter and Valentine Wiggin, Bonzo, one of Ender’s adversaries at the Battle School

14. AUTHOR: Cormier, Robert

TITLE: *I am the cheese*

PUBLICATION: Dell, 1983, ISBN 0440940605, 220 p., \$13.30

SUMMARY: A young boy tries to understand his past yet knows he fights for his life by hiding his memories

EVALUATION: Gripping psychological thriller reminds me of the X-Files show.

ANNOTATION: A view of the world that shows YA readers what it feels like to be terrorized by malignant authority.

USEFULNESS: Would appeal to Y.A.s with a sense of alienation and an interest in suspense stories.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction.

WHY?: Class required list,

BOOKTALKS: A boy peddling to see his father and the the gradual revelation of the real story.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The chocolate war*,

SIMILAR AUTHORS: Crutcher,

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Adam (Paul), Amy, Mr. Grey

15. AUTHOR: Cormier, Robert

TITLE: *The Chocolate War*,

PUBLICATION: Dell, 1986, ISBN: 0440944597, 191 p, \$5.50

SUMMARY: A high school freshman discovers the results of refusing to join a school fund raiser.,

EVALUATION: Shows sympathy for those who "hear a different drummer" while demonstrating the consequences of non-conformity. A rather disturbing story.

ANNOTATION: This novel portrays moral ambiguity and the power of evil if it is not challenged

USEFULNESS: Could reach Y.A.s who grapple with issues of conformity and interaction with bullies.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction,

WHY?: Class required list,"

BOOKTALKS: Introduce Jerry, the almost reluctant hero, the swaggering Archie, and the sinister Brother Leon.

SIMILAR TITLES: *I am the Cheese*

SIMILAR AUTHORS: Crutcher

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Goober, Obie, Archie, Brother Leon, Jerry, Bailey",,,

16. AUTHOR: Crutcher, Chris

TITLE: *Running Loose*

PUBLICATION: Bantam Doubleday dell Publishing Group, Inc., c 1983, 190 p.

SUMMARY: In his senior year of high school, Louie finds himself kicked off of the football team and he grieves the death of his girlfriend.

EVALUATION: Far too much detail about football games for anyone with no interest in that subject.

ANNOTATION: For a high school senior in small town Idaho, a promising year of love and football starts to go terribly wrong.

USEFULNESS: Probably of interest to teens with an interest in sports who are grappling with the tougher aspects of life as a adolescent.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: Class list

BOOKTALKS: Give some of the flavor of life in Louie's small Idaho high school and hints of the conflicts and tragedy to come.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Ironman*, also by Crutcher, and *the Outsiders*

SIMILARAUTHORS: S.E. Hinton

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Louie, the high school student main character, his girlfriend Becky, and the Coach of his football team

17. AUTHOR: Cushman, Karen

TITLE: *Catherine Called Birdy*

PUBLICATION: New York: Harper Trophy, a Division of Harper Collins Publishers, c 1994, ISBN: 0064405842, 212 p.

SUMMARY: This book is done in the style of journal kept by the 14 year old daughter of a knight who is trying to marry her off to a wealthy suitor. Birdie is her nickname since she keeps pet birds in cages, which is something of a metaphor for the degree to which the girl feels confined by the will of her father and the lack of options for a girl in the Medieval period. Birdie fends off unsuitable suitors, including Stephen who is the son of a particularly disagreeable man that Birdie calls "Shaggy Beard." This man is described as greedy, dirty, stupid, and disrespectful, and Birdie is not too thrilled with his son either.

EVALUATION: The Medieval time period is brought alive and it is interesting how this account of a tom boy in the middle ages still shows the kinds of thought processes and insecurities found in teenage girls today.

ANNOTATION: Catherine, who is called Birdie due to her fondness for birds, is a Medieval teenager with a father who wants to marry her off to someone with money but who resists these matchmaking efforts.

USEFULNESS: This would have appeal for younger teenage girls and teens with an interest in history.

GENRE: Historical fiction

WHY? I was impressed by the booktalk by one of our students at the face to face class.

BOOKTALKS: Speak in the voice of Birdie, and tell a bit about her life in the 13th century, her desire for freedom from her father's will, and hint at her sense of humor as she talks about chasing away unwanted suitors.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Giver*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Lois Lowry

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Catherine, also called Birdy, Lord Rollo, her father, Edward, her brother who is a monk, her mother Lady Aislin, and her Aunt Ethelfritha.

18. AUTHOR: De Lint, Charles

TITLE: *Moonheart*

PUBLICATION: Tor Books, Reprint edition 1994, ISBN: 0312890044. 447 p., \$14.95

SUMMARY: Jamie is a young girl with dead parents who lives with her Uncle Jamie in his remarkable house which takes up an entire city block of Ottawa, Canada. The house is also inhabited by an oddball assortment of artists, musicians, and bikers. In addition to the residents, the house also has some interesting properties since it exists simultaneously in two worlds: the world of our ordinary mundane reality as well as an Otherworld that resembles both the Celtic Summer Land and the Native American world of the spirits.

EVALUATION: A wonderful story with good characters and an interesting mix of magical elements popping into the modern world.

ANNOTATION: An orphaned girl named Sara lives with her eccentric Uncle Jamie in a large house in the middle of Ottawa where magical things keep intruding into the mundane world.

USEFULNESS: Charles De Lint usually has main characters who are female young adults who suffer adversity, have no parents, and who demonstrate great courage and strength in adversity. This book would be of interest to YA girl readers with an interest in fantasy, magic, and anything Celtic.

GENRE: Fantasy of the Modern Urban Fantasy subgenre

WHY?: Recommended by a friend who knows about my fondness for books about multiple worlds

BOOKTALKS: Introduce the listeners to the intriguing environment of the House in Ottawa, which has a life of its own. Also introduce the characters and hint at the special relationship between Sara and Taleisin.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Golden Compass*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Philip Pullman

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Sara, the main character, Jamie, her uncle who owns the house, Blue, a biker with a heart of gold, and Taleisin, who was the mentor of Merlin back in Wales in ancient times.

19. **AUTHOR:** Flinn, Alex

TITLE: *Breaking Point*

PUBLICATION: Harpercollins Juvenile Books, 2002, ISBN: 0066238471, 224 p., \$11.17.

SUMMARY: Paul Richmond finds himself the butt of endless torments perpetrated by the bullies of an expensive private school. In an effort to fit in, Paul finds himself participating in some of the bullies misdeeds, but will he stop before it is too late.

EVALUATION: Very disturbing content that is supposed to stimulate student discussions about bullying and making ethical decisions.

ANNOTATION: When an ex-homeschooler named Paul Richmond arrives at Gate-Bicknell Christian high school he is mercilessly tormented by the school bullies, until he joins forces with them in a bid for acceptance.

USEFULNESS: Might be good reading for the teens who might be at risk of wandering off track into antisocial behavior, but would probably be too disturbing for reading by kids who have been tormented victims.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY? Because it was on the class list

BOOKTALKS: Portray the horror of Paul's arrival at a school where the bullies attack his locker, trip him in the classroom, and otherwise make his life hellish until he joins in their evil actions as a way to stop the torment.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Stargirl, the Outsiders*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Jerry Spinelli, S.E. Hinton

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Paul Richmond, his poor mother working in the school office to defray his tuition costs, the quirky girl Binky who is Paul's only real friend, David Blanco who is another victim of the bullies, the ironically named Charles Good who is the ring leader of the bullies, and his evil henchmen Meat and St. John.

20. AUTHOR: George, Jean Craighead

TITLE: *Shark Beneath the Reef*

PUBLICATION: Harper Collins Children's Books, a Division of Harper Collins Publishers, c 1989, ISBN: 0064403084, 182 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: This book tells the story of the difficulties of a boy in a family of professional fishermen who must decide if he can or should continue his education, or if he should try to help his struggling family by working on the fishing boat.

EVALUATION: Excellent writing and depiction of the natural environment of the Mexican coastline.

ANNOTATION: The struggles of Tomas with the shark serve as a metaphor for his internal struggles to make a decision about his future.

USEFULNESS: A positive role model for students at risk of quitting school

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: Because Jean Craighead George is a Newbery Medal winner

BOOKTALKS: Give the listener a chance to envision what it like to be out on the ocean in the Sea of Cortez, trying to catch a shark, while deliberating about your own school and work future.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Scott O'Dell

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Tomas Torres, age 14 who lives on the Sea of Cortez in Mexico, Ramon, his uncle and surrogate father, Miguel, another shark fisherman, Juan Fuertes, a science teacher at Tomas' school, who encourages him to go to high school

21. AUTHOR: Gerstein, Mordicai

TITLE: *Victor: A Novel Based on the Life of the Savage of Aveyron*

PUBLICATION: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, c 1998, ISBN: 037431429, 258 p.,

SUMMARY: At the end of the French Revolution, a naked, dirty child was found in the woods near Aveyron in France. He could not speak and acted like a wild animal. He was studied at the Institute of Deaf Mutes in Paris where most scientists thought he was hopelessly mentally retarded. One doctor, Jean Marc Itard, disagreed and realized that Victor was a normal child who had lived for six years without human contact. The doctor worked with him and came to various conclusions regarding the human acquisition of spoken language.

EVALUATION: This story has been documented in various non-fiction sources as well as the 1970 film by Francois Truffaut, *Wild Child*. This fictional rendition was made especially interesting since portions of the narrative are taken from the point of view of Victor.

ANNOTATION: The fictionalized version of the true story of Victor, the "wild child," found in the woods of Aveyron, France at the start of the 19th century.

USEFULNESS: Would be of interest to YA readers with an interest in science or psychology. For more mature readers of the older YA age group.

GENRE: Historical Fiction

WHY?: It received favorable reviews and subject matter seemed interesting.

BOOKTALKS: The listeners should get an idea of the range of emotions, especially fear, that accompanied Victor when he was first captured and wanted nothing but to eat or to escape from the scientists who studied him.

SIMILAR TITLES: Something about extreme alienation such as *Rule of the Bone* might appeal to readers of this book

SIMILARAUTHORS: Russel Banks

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Victor, the “wild child,” Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard, the doctor who worked with him, Madame Guerin, the kindly housekeeper of the Institute for the Deaf Mutes who cared for Victor for the rest of his life.

22. AUTHOR: Gordon, Sheila

TITLE: *Waiting for the Rain: a novel of South Africa*

PUBLICATION: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1997, ISBN 0440226988, 214 p. \$13.30

SUMMARY: Tells the story of nine years in the lives of two South African young people. One of them is black and the other one white and their friendship and conflicts happen against the backdrop of political events in their country. Tengo is the son of the housemaid and boss boy of a farm owned by the Afrikaans speaking uncle of Frikkie.

EVALUATION:

ANNOTATION: Gives the reader a personalized view of historical events and life in the confusing world of Apartheid in South Africa.

USEFULNESS: Goes well with the curriculum of 10th grade world history

GENRE: Historical fiction

WHY?: Recommended by a teacher colleague

BOOKTALKS: Describe the differences and similarities in the lives of Tengo and Frikkie

SIMILAR TITLES: *Things Fall Apart*,

SIMILARAUTHORS: Chinua Achebe,

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Frikkie, the white boy, Tant Sannie, his aunt, Oom Koos, his uncle, and Tengo, his black friend.

23. AUTHOR: Griffin, Adele

TITLE: *The Other Shepards*

PUBLICATION: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, c 1998, ISBN: 0786813334, 218 p., \$20.95

SUMMARY: Holland Shepard knows that there are secrets in her family, and that something happened to her older siblings. As she unravels the mystery of the family secrets, she discovers that feelings should be faced and that life should be lived instead of mourned.

EVALUATION: A gripping tale of a dysfunctional family dynamic.

ANNOTATION:

USEFULNESS: Could be useful for teens who find it hard to communicate with their family members.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: An ALA Best Book for Young Adults and School Library Journal Best Book of 1998

BOOKTALKS: Convey the pain and confusion that Holland experiences as she tries to understand the fate of her older siblings.

SIMILAR TITLES: *What Hearts*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Bruce Brooks

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Holland Shepard, and 8th grader, Geneva, her obsessive compulsive younger sister, Johnny, Kevin and Elizabeth, mysterious older siblings who have been dead for 18 years and of whom the parents never speak

24. AUTHOR: Guy, Rosa

TITLE: *The Disappearance*

PUBLICATION: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, c 1979, ISBN: 0440920647, 246 p., \$4.99

SUMMARY: A teenager named Imamu, who was previously in trouble with the law, goes to live with the Aimsley family. A girl named Perk, who is the youngest daughter of the Aimsley, turns out to be missing and Imamu is the prime suspect in her disappearance.

EVALUATION: An good YA mystery/suspense story with interesting plot twists

ANNOTATION: When Imamu, a boy with a criminal past comes to live with a family, and one of the daughters disappears, the obvious suspect might not actually be so obvious.

USEFULNESS: A good book for YA readers who like mysteries and for those whose life circumstances have been touched by exposure to high crime areas.

GENRE: Mystery

WHY?: An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

BOOKTALKS: Speak in the voice of Imamu as you give some of the background of his life as well as an idea of what life was like with the Aimsley family.

SIMILAR TITLES: *A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Alice Childress

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Imamu, the main character, Peter and Ann Aimsley who take him into their home, Perk, their daughter who disappears, Gail, the other daughter, Dora Belle an old lady who is Perk's godmother.

25. AUTHOR: Hesse, Karen

TITLE: *Out of the Dust*

PUBLICATION: Scholastic Paperbacks, 1999, ISBN: 0590371258, 227 p., \$4.99

SUMMARY: Billie Jo is a teenager who keeps a journal, written in verse, which tells the story of her family's life in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl years. In the course of the story, Billie Jo shows her core of inner strength as she suffers other losses.

EVALUATION: The verse format was an interesting mechanism, and the book gave good historical context that should help students in their understanding of the issues that were present in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

ANNOTATION: Living in 1930s Oklahoma, Billie Jo learns that she must be as tough as the grit that blows in the endless winds. in order to survive tragedy

USEFULNESS: A good coming of age story for teen girls.

GENRE: Historical Fiction

WHY?: Enjoyed the booktalk during our face to face class, also it was a 1998 Newbury Award winner

BOOKTALKS: Portray the bleak world of Oklahoma with the dust storms blowing, and tie in some details about Billie Jo's ways of coping with the dust, the loss of her mother, and other problems in her life.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Giver*, and *Bud, Not Buddy*

SIMILAR AUTHORS: Lois Lowry, Christopher Paul Curtis

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Billie Jo, a girl who loves to play the piano, Daddy who is a farmer faced with the difficulties of the dust storms, Louise, a woman who knows about ghost toes, Arley Wanderdale and Mad Dog Craddock who sing with the Black Mesa Boys

26. AUTHOR: Hinton, S.E.

TITLE: *The Outsiders*

PUBLICATION: Viking Press, 1967, ISBN: 0670532576, 192 p., \$16.99

SUMMARY: Three brothers struggle to stay together after their parent's death amid a conflicted adolescent society.

EVALUATION: A gritty view of teen life in the early to mid 1960s. ,

ANNOTATION: A story that redefines the idea of heroism in the pre-hippie world of 1960s Oklahoma.,

USEFULNESS This would likely appeal to reluctant readers, especially boys with a fondness for the "thug" persona.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?Class required list

BOOKTALKS: Introduce Pony Boy and his brothers and the tension between rich and poor teenagers.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Running Loose*, *Weetzie Bat*

SIMILAR AUTHORS: Crutcher, Francesca Lia Block

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Pony Boy, Soda, Two-Bit, Johnny, Dally, Bob Sheldon, Cherry Valance.

27. AUTHOR: Hobbs, Will

TITLE: *The Maze*

PUBLICATION: Econo-Clad Books, 1999, ISBN: 061319524, 339 p., \$7.99

SUMMARY: Fourteen year old Rick gets in trouble, ends up in a juvenile correction facility, and has to flee to save his life after being a "whistle blower" who reports corruption at the institution. He ends up in a remote part of Utah called the Maze in the company of a research biologist studying condors.

EVALUATION: Had many elements similar to other contemporary YA novels but had interesting descriptions of the Utah desert and its wildlife.

ANNOTATION: The story of an unlikely friendship between a troubled teen and a scientist that includes interesting details about condors and hang gliding.

USEFULNESS: Could appeal to reluctant readers and teens who have struggled with authority.

GENRE: Contemporary YA fiction

WHY?: Received an Honor Young Adult Edgar Award

BOOKTALKS: Portray the horror of conditions in the juvenile detention facility and the natural wonders of Canyonlands, Utah.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Holes*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Louis Sachar

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Fourteen-year-old Rick Walker, Lon, a biologist

28. AUTHOR: Klass, David

TITLE: *Danger Zone*

PUBLICATION: Scholastic Paperbacks, 1998, ISBN: 0590485911, 232 p., \$4.99

SUMMARY: Jimmy Doyle finds himself picked as a player on a team of high school students chosen to represent the U.S. in an international basketball tournament in Rome. At first there are racial and ethnic tensions between the U.S. team members, but eventually the tensions end up even more intense when a group of German skinheads starts harassing the U.S. team.

EVALUATION: Good story and exploration of racial diversity issues

ANNOTATION: When Jimmy Doyle, a white kid from Minnesota meets Augustus LeMay, a black player from South Central L.A., tensions mount until the team pulls together to deal with the threat of German skinheads.

USEFULNESS: A good book for teens with an interest in sports.

GENRE: Sports

WHY? Recommended by one of my students

BOOKTALKS: Give the background on Jimmy Doyle, and describe the first encounter of the multi-racial basketball teammates.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Moves Make the Man*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Bruce Brooks

LIST OF CHARACTERS Jimmy Doyle, a white student from Minnesota, Augustus LeMay, black basketball star from South Central Los Angeles, various German skinheads

29. AUTHOR: Lawrence, Iain

TITLE: *The Wreckers*

PUBLICATION: Laureleaf, Reprint edition 1999, ISBN 0440415454, 196 p., \$5.50

SUMMARY: Ship wrecked after a storm, a teenage boy discovers the evil secrets in an English, seaside town.

EVALUATION: An adventure story similar to *Treasure Island* with an intriguing mystery. A book I would have loved as a teen.

ANNOTATION: A tale of teenage heroism with the backdrop of maritime life on the Cornwall coast.

USEFULNESS: Could get reluctant readers, especially teenage boys, interested in reading books such as *Treasure Island*.

GENRE: Mystery/Adventure

WHY?: Winner of a 1999 Edgar Award

BOOKTALKS: Set the stage by describing the shipwreck, and hint at the mystery of the Cornwall town.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Robert Louis Stevenson

LIST OF CHARACTERS: 14 year old John Spencer, 13 year old Mary, the narrator, Ron Keith

30. AUTHOR: Lowry, Lois

TITLE: *The Giver*

PUBLICATION: New York: Bantam, Doubleday, Dell Publishing Group, Inc., c 1993.

SUMMARY: Jonas attains the age and ceremonial status of a 12 and is assigned his life's work by the emotionally suppressed society in which he lives.

EVALUATION: A fascinating story that sticks with the reader after finishing the book.

ANNOTATION: In a future society that has arisen from the ruins of an earlier world, a boy named Jonas comes of age and finds himself designated as the Receiver of the community's memories

USEFULNESS: This could appeal to alienated teens who have issues with the authority of parents, school, and police.

GENRE: Speculative Fiction/Fantasy

WHY?: Because I love anti-utopian novels.

BOOKTALKS: Give a bit of the flavor of a controlled life with physical human needs provided without a sense of beauty or of love.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Brave New World*, 1984

SIMILAR AUTHORS: Aldous Huxley, George Orwell

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Jonas, Asher, Caleb, the Giver, the baby Gabriel,

31. AUTHOR: Marsden, John

TITLE: *Tomorrow, When the War Began*

PUBLICATION: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1995, ISBN 0395706734, 288 p., \$4.99

SUMMARY: Seven young Australians go on a camping trip to a place called Hell, and when they return to town they find that their country has been invaded, people killed, and an occupying army is now in charge. As they realize what has happened, they discover what it means to fight as part of a guerilla resistance group.

EVALUATION: Pretty interesting application of a somewhat common Doomsday survivalist scenario.

ANNOTATION: What would you do if you were a teenager on a camping trip and come back to discover that your country has been invaded, and you need to form a resistance movement?

USEFULNESS: Would appeal to teens, especially boys, who enjoy war stories.

GENRE: The Speculative Fiction subgenre of the Science Fiction genre.

WHY?: Because this book appears in recommended lists of novels for YA readers.

BOOKTALKS: Give the background of the camping trip and the aftermath as the group realizes that they would either be in prison or dead if they had been back at home.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Postman*

SIMILAR AUTHORS: David Brin

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Ellie, whose idea it had been to go on the trip in the first place, Fiona, who has no background with physical work or the outdoors, Homer, a wild and crazy sort of guy, Robyn who is quiet but has leadership qualities

32. AUTHOR: Myers, Walter Dean

TITLE: *Fallen Angels*

PUBLICATION: Scholastic In., 1988, ISBN: 0590409433, 309 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry, leaves his high school in Harlem and ends up in Vietnam

EVALUATION: I loved this book since it portrayed very good, fictionalized account of the war in Vietnam.

ANNOTATION: An account of life in the steamy, hot, violent insanity of Vietnam in 1967.

USEFULNESS: This war story would appeal to many teens and it also brings up racial and class issues as it tells the tale of the people who fight America's wars. ,

GENRE: Adventure fiction,

WHY?: Having known a number of Vietnam veterans this book caught my interest. ,

BOOKTALKS: Catch the attention of the audience by portraying Richie's viewpoint as he arrives in the steamy jungles of Vietnam

SIMILAR TITLES: *Red badge of courage*, *Heart of darkness*

SIMILAR AUTHORS: Stephen Crane, Joseph Conrad

LIST OF CHARACTERS Richie, Peewee, Lobel, Jenkins, Johnson

33. AUTHOR: Myers, Walter Dean

TITLE: *Monster*

PUBLICATION: Harper Collins Juvenile Books, 2001, ISBN: 0064407314, 288 p, \$6.99

SUMMARY: A Harlem drug store is robbed and the owner was shot and killed. Sixteen year old Steve Harmon is now in jail accused of being involved in a crime he may not have committed.

EVALUATION: A gritty and powerful story.

ANNOTATION: When Steve Harmon was tried for his alleged role in the robbery and murder of a store owner, the prosecutor called him a "Monster." Was he really the lookout for the robbers, or just a person in the wrong place at the wrong time?

USEFULNESS: Would appeal to older teens especially those fascinated by urban crime stories

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: Because I enjoyed his writing style so much in *Fallen Angels*.

BOOKTALKS: Give details about Steve that show that he is not a typical criminal, but explore the real meaning of guilt and innocence when the innocent do nothing to stop evil.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Tangerine*, *Stargirl*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Edward Bloor, Jerry Spinelli

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Steve Harmon, is accused of murder, James King who is also accused of involvement in the murder, the prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, Richard Evans/Bobo, the real murderer

34. AUTHOR: Moriarity, Jaclyn

TITLE: *Feeling Sorry for Celia*

PUBLICATION: St. Martin's Press, 2001, ISBN: 0312269234, 272 p., \$16.95

SUMMARY: An epistolary novel that is made up of a collection of letters written to and from Elizabeth Clary. Elizabeth is a teenager in Australia who is not enjoying her life very much. Her father is mostly out of the picture in America, and her mother is a stereotypic career woman who

communicates by leaving notes around the house. Elizabeth's best friend, Celia, has run away and in the meantime Elizabeth has been love notes from a boy who remains anonymous.

EVALUATION: This has a similar feel to *Angus, Thongs and Full-frontal Snogging*. There is humor along with serious themes of teen life.

ANNOTATION: Elizabeth is an unhappy Australian teenager, with an indifferent mother and a father living in America, who writes her life's frustrations in a series of letters.

USEFULNESS: Would appeal to teenage girls wrestling with similar coming of age themes in their own lives.

GENRE: Humor with a realistic twist

WHY?: Read a review that was favorable.

BOOKTALKS: Present a picture of Celia's life and relationship with her distant parents and other frustrations.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Angus, Thongs and Full-frontal Snogging*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Louise Rennison

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Elizabeth Clary, an Australian teenager, Celia Buckley, Elizabeth's best friend,

35. AUTHOR: Nix, Garth

TITLE: *Lirael: Daughter of the Clayr*

PUBLICATION: Harper Collins Juvenile Books, 2001, ISBN: 0060278234, 496 p., \$17.99

SUMMARY: Lirael lives on the Clayr Glacier, but feels no affinity with her extended family. She also lacks the birthright of the Clayr which is called "the Sight," or the ability to see into the future.

EVALUATION: A good companion to the other book by Nix, *Sabriel*.

ANNOTATION: Lirael, a motherless child who lacks knowledge of her father's identity, holds the key to the survival of the Old Kingdom in this sequel to the book, *Sabriel*.

USEFULNESS: Of interest to teens who like fantasy fiction

GENRE: Fantasy

WHY?: From hearing a booktalk at our face to face class meeting

BOOKTALKS: Describe the magical but dangerous world of the Old Kingdom

SIMILAR TITLES: *His Dark Materials* trilogy

SIMILARAUTHORS: P. Pullman

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Lirael, her faithful companion the Disreputable Dog, and the Royal Family

36. AUTHOR: Nix, Garth

TITLE: *Sabriel*

PUBLICATION: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996, ISBN: 0060273224, 304 p., \$19.58

SUMMARY: Since childhood, Sabriel has lived away from the Old Kingdom, with its "Free Magic." She now needs to leave her safe life to seek her missing father.

EVALUATION: An entertaining fantasy story.

ANNOTATION: Traveling into the dangerous world of the Old Kingdom, Sabriel deals with sinister secrets with the help of companions found on the way.

USEFULNESS: An appealing books for teens who like fantasy

GENRE: Fantasy

WHY? From hearing the booktalk at the face to face class meeting

BOOKTALKS: Paint the picture of the Old Kingdom and introduce both Sabriel and the companions she encounters

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *His Dark Materials* trilogy

SIMILARAUTHORS: J.R.R. Tolkien, P. Pullman

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Sabriel, her father the Mage Abhorsen, a powerful feline entity called Mogget, and Touchstone, a young Charter Mage.

37. AUTHOR: Okuda, Hinoshi

TITLE: *No Need for Tenchi!*

PUBLICATION: Tokyo: Shoten Publishing Company, 1994, ISBN: 1569311803, 183 p., \$15.95

SUMMARY: Tenchi lives in Japan and in his spare time he studies sword fighting with his grandfather who is a Shinto priest named Katsuhiko. The grandfather is actually Yoshio, a warrior from the planet Jurai who periodically needs to fight with a generically engineered super weapon/killing machine called Ryoko. In this volume of the anime series, there is a collection of short stories that continue the tale as Yoshio and Tenchi fight with a clone of the evil Ryoko.

EVALUATION: Fanciful artwork and more sophisticated than a typical comic book.

ANNOTATION: Can Tenchi, and his sword fighting grandfather, Yoshio, succeed as they face battles with a powerful clone of the evil entity called Ryoko?

USEFULNESS: Appeals to teens who like anime TV series and reluctant readers.

GENRE: Graphic Novel (anime style artwork)

WHY?: Recommended by one of my students

BOOKTALKS: Introduce Tenchi, and his mild mannered grandfather who is actually a warrior from the planet Jurai. Hint at the battles with Ryoko and her evil clone.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Neon Genesis Evangelion*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Yoshiyuki Sadamoto

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Tenchi, Ryoko, Katsuhiko/Yoshio

38. AUTHOR: Paulsen, Gary

TITLE: *Harris and Me*

PUBLICATION: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1995, ISBN 0440409942, 157 p., \$4.99

SUMMARY: The narrator is a boy sent to live with relatives because of his bad home life with alcoholic parents. He meets up with his cousins, especially Harris, who is a scheming troublemaker. This book takes place in the upper Midwest on a farm in the 1950s and the author uses a dark humor to tell the story of the relationship between the narrator and the mischievous Harris.

EVALUATION: Contains some rather unpleasant acts of cruelty perpetrated by Harris

ANNOTATION: After he is sent to live with relatives, a young boy makes the acquaintance of his cousin Harris who is known for his mischievous nature.

USEFULNESS: Would likely appeal to younger YA readers and older students who are new to the English language, especially boys.

GENRE: Historical Fiction

WHY?: An ALA Best Book for Young Adults and an ALA Notable Book

BOOKTALKS: Set the stage for the arrival of the narrator dumped off in the hands of distant relatives and encountering a troublemaking cousin.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Running Loose*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Crutcher

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Harris, the bad boy cousin, his sister Glennis, the toothless farm hand, Louie

39. AUTHOR: Paulsen, Gary

TITLE: *Hatchet*

PUBLICATION: Aladdin Paperbacks, c 1987, ISBN: 0689826990, 289 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: Brian had an ordinary life until his parents got a divorce. Now he needs to fly up to a remote are of Canada to visit his father for the summer. On the way, the pilot dies of a heart attack and Brian must crash land the plane, and try to survive alone in the wilderness.

EVALUATION: This book held my interest with all the various adventures of Brian in the aftermath of the plane crash.

ANNOTATION: A boy traveling up to Canada in a two-seater plane experiences a plane crash and the ordeal of surviving in the Wilderness

USEFULNESS: Would appeal to reluctant readers, especially boys.

GENRE: Adventure

WHY?: Recommendations from an English teacher

BOOKTALKS: Set the stage of the major plot elements including the divorce of Brian's parents, the plane ride up to Canada, and the range of emotions experienced by Brian in the aftermath of the plane crash.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Deathwatch*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *White Fang*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Robb White, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jack London

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Brian Robeson, the pilot, the rescuer that finds Brian through the use of the transmitter beacon.

40. AUTHOR: Peck, Robert Newton

TITLE: *A Day No Pigs would Die*

PUBLICATION: New York: Random House Sprinter Books, 1972, ISBN 067985365, 150 p.

SUMMARY: A 13 year old Vermont boy had to take on the duties of a man in his rural society.

EVALUATION: Typical of many stories that involve animals and boys coming of age.

ANNOTATION: For a poor Vermont family, life is tough and everything must be viewed through the lens of practicality and usefulness. When a boy grows up in such a place, he soon learns what he needs to do to help his family survive.

USEFULNESS: Probably appealing to teen boys in middle school or perhaps up to 9th grade.

GENRE: Historical fiction

WHY?: An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

BOOKTALKS: Take the listeners into Robert's world

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Yearling*, *the Outsiders*,

SIMILARAUTHORS: Marjorie Rawlings, S. E. HintonWilliam

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Robert, a Vermont Shaker boy, Papa, Mama, Aunt Carrie, and Mr. Tanner, and Pinky the pet pig

41. AUTHOR: Pullman, Philip

TITLE: *The Amber Spyglass, His Dark Materials*, Book 3

PUBLICATION: Scholastic Limited, 2000, ISBN: 0590542443, 560 p., \$27.23

SUMMARY: This third and final volume of His Dark Materials trilogy winds up the story of Lyra and Will as well as many of the other characters. Lyra and Will each have their own quests to fulfill, and their own near misses and brushes with death, including a journey into the World of the Dead, as they also seek to understand the meaning of the mysterious “Dust” that permeates all universes.

EVALUATION: Plenty of suspense and excitement as the plot unfolds and more is revealed.

ANNOTATION: Will Lyra ever find out the significance of “Dust,” and can Lyra and Will find her friend and his missing father? Only the Shadows know....

USEFULNESS: Would be of interest to teens, perhaps especially girls, with a love of fantasy fiction.

GENRE: Fantasy

WHY?: Recommended by one of my students who loaned me her copy

BOOKTALKS: Hint at the excitement of escape through parallel worlds and the creepiness of the World of the Dead.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *the Chronicles of Narnia*

SIMILARAUTHORS: J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Lyra Silvertongue, Will Perry, His father, John Perry (known as Grumman and Jopari in various parts of Lyra’s world), and many of the same characters as the other books in the trilogy, including armored bears, witches, angels, etc.

42. AUTHOR: Pullman, Philip

TITLE: *The Golden Compass, His Dark Materials*, Book 1

PUBLICATION: Alfred A. Knopf, c 1995, ISBN: 0345413350, 399 p., \$6.99

SUMMARY: Lyra Belacqua, a child living in Oxford, England sets out to rescue her best friend, and other children, from evil experiments being conducted in a remote part of the Arctic.

EVALUATION: A wonderful manifestation of parallel universes in a fantasy novel

ANNOTATION: Little did Lyra know that the information she gained while hiding in the Scholar’s Retiring Room would lead her on an adventure to world’s she could not imagine in her wildest dreams.

USEFULNESS: A good exploration of heroism, friendship, faith, and treachery that should have great appeal to YA readers who are drawn to the fantasy genre.

GENRE: Fantasy

WHY?: Recommendation from one of my students

BOOKTALKS: Describe Jordan College, Lyra’s Oxford, and the mysterious Far North with its armored bears and flying witches.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the *Harry Potter* books

SIMILARAUTHORS: J.R.R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Lyra and her alter ego “daemon” named Pantalaimon, her Gypatian friend Roger, the Gyptians John Faa and Farder Coram, Lord Asriel, Mrs. Coulter and her daemon

the Golden Monkey, Iorek Byrnison, the armored bear, Lee Scoresby, a Texan aeronaut, and the witch queen, Serafina Pekkala.

43. AUTHOR: Pullman, Philip

TITLE: *The Subtle Knife, His Dark Materials, Book 2*

PUBLICATION: New York: Del Rey; Reissue edition, 1999, ISBN: 0345413369, 288 p.

SUMMARY: Continuing the story begun in Book 1 of His Dark Materials trilogy, the Golden Compass, Lyra and her daemon slip from the frigid North of her own world into the warmth but strange solitude of the Mediterranean world of Cittagazze. Here she meets a boy named Will Perry who had endured some hard knocks in his own life and had also slipped into the mysterious abandoned Cittagazze. Many other adventures ensue as the children are pursued through multiple worlds by an assortment of adversaries.

EVALUATION: An even more interesting volume than the first book of the trilogy

ANNOTATION: A tale of multiple worlds where Lyra Silvertongue meets Will Perry and the two of them encounter a tool that can fight off soul-eating Spectors and can cut through to any other parallel universe.

USEFULNESS: Would be of likely interest to teens who enjoy fantasy. Some themes, such as the dim view of Christianity, make it more appropriate for the older YA reader, who would presumably be less troubled by the notion of God as an old, decrepit, uppity Angel.

GENRE: Fantasy

WHY?: Borrowed a copy from one of my students because I enjoyed the first volume so much.

BOOKTALKS: Contrast the traffic and bustle of Will's world, the 19th century technology of Lyra's Oxford, and the creepy mysteries of the nearly silent world of Cittagazze.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy, A Chronicle of Narnia*

SIMILARAUTHORS: J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Many of the same characters introduced in the Golden Compass, plus the scientist, Dr. Mary Malone, the evil associate of Mrs. Coulter, Carlo, plus assorted street urchins in Cittagazze.

44. AUTHOR: Rennison, Louise

TITLE: *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging: Confessions of Georgia Nicolson*

PUBLICATION: New York: Harper Collins Juvenile Books, 2000, ISBN: 0060288140, 256 p. \$15.99

SUMMARY: Georgia Nicolson is a 14 year old, with embarrassing parents, an 11 year old sister who leaves wet diapers on the foot of beds, plus a cat that behaves like a wild fur demon. This book is an entertaining "diary" of a teenage girl humorously encountering such things as bras and boys.

EVALUATION: A very fun, quirky story.

ANNOTATION: By reading this "journal" of the life of Georgia, a British 14 year old, it is possible to learn how to deal with prudish parents, an annoying little sister, and the intricacies of "snogging," which is otherwise known as kissing.

USEFULNESS: Would be of interest with younger teen girls from middle school on to early high school.

GENRE: Humor

WHY? I heard interesting things about this book on the day of our face to face class.

BOOKTALKS: Give a taste of Georgia's family life, teenage angst, and a bit of the flavor of book's journal writing style.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Ann Brashares

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Georgia, her prudish parents, her little sister, Robbie, the 17 year old "Sex God," and Angus the cat from hell.

45. AUTHOR: Sebold, Alice

TITLE: *The Lovely Bones: A Novel*

PUBLICATION: Little Brown & Company, 2002, ISBN: 0316666343, 288 p., \$21.95

SUMMARY: Susie Salmon, age 14, is raped and murdered by a serial killer. The story unfolds from heaven as she watches over her family, friends, the serial killer, and the police detective who is trying to solve the case. This is actually a coming of age story told in a fairly unique manner as Susie muses over all sorts of issues of interest to teens including the memory of her first kiss.

EVALUATION: Pretty grim subject matter, especially the account of the crime.

ANNOTATION: Susie Salmon is the victim of a terrible crime and after finding herself in a high students idea of heaven, she ponders the events of her 14 years of life and the continuing activities of the people she left behind.

USEFULNESS: Could be of interest to more material YA girls who are not put off by the premise.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction with a Fantasy twist

WHY?: Read favorable reviews.

BOOKTALKS: Hint at the violence of the crime that killed Susie, and then give a taste of her viewpoint from a version of heaven that is like a high school without teachers, required work, or any other unpleasantness.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Disappearance*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Rosa Guy

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Susie Salmon, the main character, Her brother Buckley, her sister Lindsay, the serial killer, the police detective

46. AUTHOR: Spinelli, Jerry

TITLE: *Stargirl*

PUBLICATION: Knopf, 2002, ISBN: 037582233X, 192 p., \$8.95

SUMMARY: When Stargirl Caraway arrives at Mica Area High School as a new 10th grader, her classmates are intrigued by her eccentricities. After at first idolizing this strange new student, her classmates soon turn on her for being too eccentric in her behavior. The rest of the story focuses on Stargirl's need to be true to herself in the midst of a bastion of conformity.

EVALUATION: A really interesting twist on the premise of being the odd ball in the conformist society of a suburban high school.

ANNOTATION: An eccentric teenage girl produces quite a splash when she enters an Arizona high school and flouts convention in dress, behavior, and in being true to herself.

USEFULNESS: A good book for any teen girl who finds it difficult to fit in due to "hearing a different drummer."

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: I like books about eccentric characters

BOOKTALKS: Introduce the fascinating character of Stargirl and present a view of the high school students who at first find her charming, but later bristle at Stargirl's odder behaviors.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Speak*, *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Laurie Halse Anderson, Ann Brashares

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Stargirl Caraway, the main character who wears pioneer dresses and kimonos to school, Leo Borlock, the 16 year old narrator of the story,

47. AUTHOR: Sachar, Louis

TITLE: *Holes*

PUBLICATION: New York: Dell Yearling, c 1998, ISBN: 0440414806, 233 p., \$6.50

SUMMARY: Stanley Yelnats, in keeping; with his family's history of bad luck, finds himself unfairly sent to a hellish correctional camp in the Texas desert where the inmates dig holes in the ground as form of "character building."

EVALUATION: Interesting story if somewhat grueling at times.

ANNOTATION: An intense, quirky, funny story with a good plot and interesting characters

USEFULNESS: Would appeal to teens with a sense of life's absurdities and perhaps some issues with bureaucratic authority.

GENRE: Adventure/Fantasy

WHY?: Heard some recommendations from other librarians.

BOOKTALKS: Draw the audience into the reality of Camp Greenlake, which is neither green nor a lake. Introduce the quirky characters at the camp.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Deathwatch*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Robb White

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Stanley Yelnats IV and his father Stanley Yelnats III, the Warden, Mr. Sir, Hector (called Zero by the inmates), Squid, X-Ray, Armpit, and Zigzag.

48. AUTHOR: Takahashi, Rumiko

TITLE: *Lum: Urusei Yatsura*

PUBLICATION: San Francisco: Viz Communicaitons, Inc., 1994, \$1995

SUMMARY: The main character, Ataru Moroboshi, is both unlucky and lecherous. He encounters a number of demons, called Oni, who wear tiger skins. The Oni have visited our planet periodically. When they visit, they select a person at random to play a ngame of tag called "the On game." One of them is a particularly bad news she-demon called Lum.

EVALUATION: Artwork is fairly realistic in a comic book sense. Story is somewhat funny.

ANNOTATION: Ataru Moroboshi is the unluckiest man alive. When he encounters demons from outer space will he take the prudent approach and flee from them, or will his wandering eye lead him into the clutches of the worst she-demon of them all?

USEFULNESS: Suitable for older teens but not for middle school. Might appeal to the video game playing crowd.

GENRE: Graphic novel (*manga* style)

WHY?: Recommended by one of my students

BOOKTALKS: Give the background of the character Ataru Moroboshi, introduce the Oni game, and describe alluring she-demon, Lum.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Oh My Goddess!: Adventures of the Mini-Goddess*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Kosuke Fujishima

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Ataru Moroboshi, Lum, and various Oni

49. AUTHOR: Thomas, Rob

TITLE: *Rats Saw God*

PUBLICATION: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1996, ISBN: 0689807775, 202 p., \$4.99

SUMMARY: In order to avoid attending summer school, Steve York agrees to write his life story in order to explain to his high school counselor about the Grace Order of Dadaists and what terrible things happened to him before he moved to his mother's house in San Diego.

EVALUATION: The intelligent but twisted main character was very interesting.

ANNOTATION: Steve York is a brilliant underachiever, with a famous astronaut for a father, and a sense of the absurd that leads him to join a group of oddball classmates in a group called the Grace Order of Dadaists.

USEFULNESS: The teenage sex and drug usage indicate that this book is directed at the older YA reading audience.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA fiction

WHY?: Recommended by an English teacher at my school

BOOKTALKS: Take on the role of Steve telling his story. Introduce the motley crew in the Grace Order of Dadaists and their various "artistic" activities.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Catcher in the Rye*

SIMILARAUTHORS: J.D. Salinger

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Steve York, main character and teenage misfit forced to write his life story as a graduation requirement, Alan York, his famous astronaut father, Jeff DeMouy, high school counselor, Sarah York, Steve's sister, Luke "Sky" Walker, a teacher at Steve's high school, Wanda "Dub" Varner, Steve's charming but treacherous girl friend

50. AUTHOR: White, Robb

TITLE: *Deathwatch*

PUBLICATION: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, c 1972, ISBN: 0440917409, 220 p., \$5.50

SUMMARY: A college student in need of money accepts a job as a hunting guide with a dangerous wealthy client.

EVALUATION: I really enjoyed this book's clever use of plot elements and detail about desert survival.

ANNOTATION: The villain in this novel portrays evil that rises from selfishness and arrogance.

USEFULNESS: The plot twists show how money can nearly buy injustice. Teens with an interest in the outdoors or camping would certainly enjoy this book.

GENRE: Adventure fiction

WHY?: The subject matter was intriguing. This would make a good movie.

BOOKTALKS: Set the tone of survival in the desert with its heat, thirst, and exposure to the elements. Hint at the chain of lies and treachery perpetrated by the villain.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Holes*, *Hatchet*

SIMILAR AUTHORS: Louis Sachar, Gary Paulsen

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Ben (the college student), Madec (the evil hunter), Barowitz (Madec's slimy lawyer), Les, Strick, and Hondurak(doen the investigation)",,,

51. AUTHOR: Williams-Garcia, Rita

TITLE: *Fast Talk on a Slow Track*

PUBLICATION: Puffin Books Published by the Penguin Group, 1998, ISBN: 0141302313, 182 p., \$5.99

SUMMARY: Denzel was the valedictorian of his high school class. When he spends the summer at Princeton, in a special program for minority students, he deal with the fact that things are not going as well as he would have wanted or expected.

EVALUATION: An interesting look at

ANNOTATION: Denzel was accustomed to the success that led to his being a valedictorian, but now he is confronted with failure and difficulty while attending a special program at Princeton.

USEFULNESS: Could be a realistic bit of inspiration for disadvantaged youth to apply to challenging academic programs, while seeing how other young people coped with the stresses.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: ALA Best Book for Young Adults

BOOKTALKS: Speak from the point of view of Denzel and talk about his background and his surprise at the difficulty of the program he is attending at Princeton.

SIMILAR TITLES: *Feeling Sorry for Celia*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Jaclyn Moriarity

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Denzel Watson, the main character, Kerri, his sister, Schwanda, a friend at Princeton, Niels, his sloppy friend

52. AUTHOR: Wolff, Virginia Euer

TITLE: *Make Lemonade*

PUBLICATION: New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., c 1993

SUMMARY: A young girl in a poor neighborhood takes a job babysitting the children of a single mother who is in difficult circumstances. In the process, both girls are able to help each other with their personal goals.

EVALUATION: This seemed fairly realistic but interestingly enough it had a universal quality that transcended any specific city or ethnic group.

ANNOTATION: In any effort to save money for college, a fourteen year old girl babysits for a teenage mother.

USEFULNESS: Could have appeal for teenage girls living in socio-economically disadvantaged circumstances.

GENRE: Contemporary Realistic YA Fiction

WHY?: It was on the list.

BOOKTALKS: Set the tone of the filthy apartment occupied by Jolly and her young children with LaVaughan trying to take care of both the mother and the childrenj.

SIMILAR TITLES: *The Outsiders*

SIMILARAUTHORS: S.E. Hinton

LIST OF CHARACTERS: LaVaughan the babysitter, Jolly the mother, and the little children

53. AUTHOR: Yolen, Jane

TITLE: *Briar Rose*

PUBLICATION: New York: A Tom Doherty Associates Book, c 1992, ISBN 0812558626, 200 p.

SUMMARY: Rebecca Berlin hears her grandmother, Gemma, tell a particularly frightening version of the the story of Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty). Rebecca begins to realize that the story gives a clue to her grandmother's past. Rebecca travels to Poland and unearths clues from the fairy tale that are entwined with her grandmother's real story.

EVALUATION: A very well written and clever blend of a fairy tale with a tale of modern day horror

ANNOTATION: A retelling of the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty blended with the Holocaust era of World War II.

USEFULNESS: Would likely appeal to teenage girls

GENRE: Fantasy

WHY?: ALA Best Book for Young Adults, and a 1992 Nebula Nominee

BOOKTALKS: Begin by spinning the tale of Briar Rose, while hinting at the dark secrets of Gemma's real life.

SIMILAR TITLES: *White as Snow*, and *Silver Birch*, *Blood Moon*

SIMILARAUTHORS: Tanith Lee, Terri Windling

LIST OF CHARACTERS: Rebecca Berlin, the main character, Gemma, her grandmother, Josef Potock, Rebecca's guide through the clues of the past