



2007

# Full Issue

Children's Book Review

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

---

### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Review, Children's Book (2007) "Full Issue," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 28 : Iss. 1 , Article 27.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol28/iss1/27>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Andy Warhol's Colors*. Illustrated by Andy Warhol. Chronicle, 2007. ISBN 9780811857215. \$6.95. 22 p.

Reviewer: Rita Christensen

Reading Level: Toddler, Preschool, Primary

Rating: Significant shortcomings

Genre: Board books; Picture books;

Subject: Warhol, Andy, 1928-1987--Juvenile literature; Color in art--Juvenile literature; Animals in art--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Pop Art, colors, and animals are introduced to young children in *Andy Warhol's Colors* board book. Warhol's expressive animal illustrations are naturally appealing to children. The artwork is varied in style and medium—from ink and dye on paper to screenprints. The colors are saturated and intense. The text is large, descriptive, and easy to read.

Andy Warhol's work is important as he was a central figure during the Pop Art era. Artwork during this period centered on subjects that were considered recognizable or trendy in American popular culture and possibly mass-produced (like the Campbell's soup can). Warhol's art is certainly worthy of a board book; however, the images used should have been more judiciously selected.

Warhol's "Cow Pink on Yellow" is used to illustrate the text, "Pink cows lined up row by row." Warhol only used three colors in this work—pink, yellow, and an underlying black—which changed the cow motif from a pink hue to a tomato red color. This was no doubt intentional and it is a clever artistic concept, but it is too confusing to children who are learning their colors. Adults, who are not Warhol aficionados, will be confused as well. Use this book only for the older elementary school child who has the ability to recognize that the text and colors are not congruent.

Post, Peggy and Cindy Post Senning. *Emily Post: Emily's Everyday Manners*. Illustrated by Steve Bjorkman. Collins, 2006. ISBN 0060761741. \$16.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Preschool

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Etiquette for children and teenagers--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Emily and her friend Ethan practice basic etiquette with their family and friends and the strangers they meet. They practice the dos and don'ts of manners and show examples of how they should behave in public, at home, and when visiting friends.

The manners presented are important for young readers to learn, but the main goal discussed by the authors in a note to parents—teaching children respect and consideration—doesn't come across as easily in the text. Bjorkman's soft watercolors are clear and entertaining. They illustrate the text well, but it is sometimes difficult to match illustrations to the chunk of text they are supposed to accompany. A decent book for starting discussions and teaching opportunities about manners.

Mazer, Norma Fox. *Has Anyone Seen My Emily Greene*. Illustrated by Christine Davenier. Candlewick, 2007. ISBN 9780763613846. \$15.99. 32 pp.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Picture books; Poetry; Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Fathers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; Hide-and-seek--Juvenile fiction; Stories in rhyme--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

It's time for lunch and the table's all set, but there is no sign of little Emily Greene. So her father goes searching for her in the sink, in the drawer, in the tub, and in his hair. When he does find her they have a delightful meal and then cuddle together contentedly.

Mazer's simple rhyme is enchanting and Davenier's watercolor illustrations bring alive Emily (who drags along her red blanket as she giggles, hides, dances and waves while following her father's search) and her father (who wears an apron and obviously dearly loves his daughter). A delightful read aloud, but probably better for one on one than a group setting. Highly recommended for book loving fathers wanting something special to share with their daughters.

Covert, Ralph, and Mills, G. Riley. *Sawdust and Spangles: The Amazing Life of W. C. Coup*. Illustrated by Giselle Potter. Abrams, 2007. ISBN 9780810993518. \$16.95. 32 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary, All

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Biography; Informational Book; Picture Book;

Subject: Coup, W. C. (William Cameron), 1857-1895—Juvenile Literature; Circus owners--United States—Biography—Juvenile Literature; Circus--United States.; Books—Reviews;

A seemingly average boy named William Cameron Coup sets his fate in motion when he walks past a sign advertising a circus. He decides to see this circus and is immediately entranced by the magic and fun. He dreams of one day being able to travel and work for the circus. He accomplishes this dream, which further fuels his imagination, and he begins to dream even bigger. He decides to create and manage his own circus. William changes his name to W.C. Coup and becomes one of the most famous circus leaders of all time. Although Coup is successful in creating a circus, he keeps on dreaming, bigger and bigger. Coup, along with a business partner, decides to embark on the biggest dream of all: to create an underwater circus! The underwater exhibit becomes a huge success, making W.C. Coup a pioneer in entertainment whose daring dreams will be long remembered.

Through picture book format and the use of watercolors, the story of W. C. Coup is entertaining and captivating. Artist Potter shows the magic of the circus life with bright colors and imaginative pictures including a dog-faced boy and a variety of performing animals. With this book, authors Covert and Mills send the message to readers of all ages, that in order to accomplish great things one must be willing to dream. This book could be especially useful when studying American history, or as a fun informational read-aloud.

Editors of TIME for Kids. *Our 50 United States and Other U.S. Lands*. HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 0060815574. \$17.99. 70 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: U.S. states—Miscellanea—Juvenile literature; United States—Miscellanea—Juvenile literature; Books—Reviews;

California's state motto is "eureka"; seven states are visible from the top of Lookout Mountain in Tennessee on a clear day; Alaska was purchased from Russia for about two cents an acre. This book's state pages—one for each state—include interesting facts like these, as well as a map of the state marking important cities, the order and date of its statehood, a "Did you Know?" trivia blurb, a brief history of the state, two relevant photos with explanations, an "Earth Alert!" section highlighting environmental information related to the state and a "Mystery Person" clue (with answer upside down under the clue).

While many books on the 50 states are available, this book is more useful because it also includes information on territories and commonwealths of the United States (though in more brevity than the states). Facts about population, economy, and citizenship status are provided: for example, people in American Samoa are not U.S. citizens, but people in Guam are—although they can't vote in presidential elections. More thorough information is given for Puerto Rico, including the frequent debates regarding statehood. Finally, the unique situation of the District of Columbia is addressed.

Includes a "50 States at a Glance" section with state flags, postal abbreviations, capitals, nicknames, populations, land areas, and state symbols. Doesn't offer much new information, but the trivia will interest young readers. The inclusion of territories and commonwealths make this a better choice than many others on the same topic.

Browne, N.M. *Silverboy*. Bloomsbury U.S.A., ISBN 9781582347806. 2007. \$16.95. 298 p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Magic--Juvenile fiction; Birds--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

In a world where a power-hungry Protector rules his province under an iron fist, people who naturally have magic have been hunted down and killed. Any other magic is created by the Protector's dictations through the use of ground Spellstones. Fifteen-year-old Tommo refuses to die the miserable death of a spellstone grinder's apprentice. To escape his fate of the killing "quivers," Tommo runs away from his cellar but doesn't get very far due to his glowing skin—a gift of the many years living amongst the dust of the spellstones. After he is turned in to the sheriff he is granted eight days of sanctuary in which he must exit the Protectorate. After he falls ill with the quivers though he can't get very far without the help of the fearless Akenna, an abused fisherman's daughter he meets along the way. The two runaways struggle to make their way without being caught by Akenna's violent da, but a villain much worse—and a task much greater—is in store for them.

Browne's writing is the fruit of the imagination at its best. The world she creates in *Silverboy* is clever and intriguing. Her characters are believable and readers will be anxiously waiting to read to the end of their adventure that grows into a journey much larger than escaping the Protectorate. Exciting, engrossing, and thought-provoking.

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Tinderbox*. Illustrated by Bagram Ibatouline. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763620783. \$17.99. 40 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fairy tales;

Subject: Soldiers--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

On his way home from war, a common soldier meets a hideous witch who begs help from him and promises much wealth in return. He lowers himself into a hollow tree to retrieve a tinderbox for the witch. There he meets three unusual dogs, each of whom guard great treasure. After filling his pockets with as many coins as he can and getting the tinderbox, the soldier fights with the witch and slays her. He then continues on to the city, where he begins a life of decadence. In the city, he learns of the beautiful princess. The princess, because of a prophecy that she will marry a common soldier, is kept locked up by her father. Using the tinderbox to summon the dogs from the hollow tree, the soldier has the princess brought to him at night and falls in love.

Mitchell's retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's classic tale is reliable, but it is Ibatouline's masterful illustrations that make this book enchanting. Page after page the illustrations are meticulously rendered line drawings washed in muted colors and detailed with cross hatching. The three dogs are especially skillfully illustrated. The artist makes the dogs look terrible and frightening with their large, strange eyes, while simultaneously making them lovable, and endowing them with common dog characteristics such as loyalty and affection towards their master. This skill makes it hard for the viewer to truly fear the dogs. Through the use of mixture (muted earth tones with subtly brighter reds, pinks, and yellows) Ibatouline delicately draws the viewer's attention to where he wants without detracting from the illustration as a whole. The overall result is illustrations that will delight time after time.

Cooper, Michael. *Jamestown, 1607*. Holiday House, 2007. ISBN 9780823419487. \$18.95. 98 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Informational Books;

Subject: Colonists--Virginia--Jamestown--History--17th century--Juvenile literature; Colonists--Virginia--Jamestown--History--17th century; Jamestown (Va.)--History--17th century--Juvenile literature; Virginia--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775--Juvenile literature; Jamestown (Va.)--History--17th century; Virginia--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775. Books—Reviews;

In his book *Jamestown, 1607*, Cooper depicts the founding and first two years of the Jamestown settlement in Virginia. The book mostly follows the doings and concerns of the most famous Jamestown settler, John Smith, who was the most active settler in negotiating with local natives and leading the other settlers until his departure in 1609. The language is easy to read and deftly explains the politics involved within the settlement, and between the settlers and the natives. Cooper also skillfully tells the history of Jamestown without romanticizing either side or showing either side in a more sympatric light. The book is well written but a bit dull in places.

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village*. Illustrated by Robert Byrd. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763615789. \$19.99. 85 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Historical plays; Informational books;

Subject: Monologues--Juvenile literature; Middle Ages--Juvenile drama; Books—Reviews;

As stated in the forward Schlitz wrote this book to give the students at her school something to perform based on their studies of the Middle Ages. However, rather than write one long play she wrote monologues and dialogues so that each student would have an equal part--leaving no one feeling slighted. *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* contains 19 monologues and two dialogues, allowing for a total of up to 23 students to participate.

The skits themselves introduce characters, male and female from the ages of about 10 to 15, who live in a fictitious medieval village. They introduce jobs, customs, and concepts prevalent in the Middle Ages but that may be somewhat obscure for modern children. Specific terms or references that may not be understood are explained in side notes. Following certain skits are longer explanations: after the plowboy's monologue there is a page about the three-field system, and after an exchange between the moneylender's son and the merchant's daughter there is a discussion about Jews in the Middle Ages.

Byrd's illustrations are not in the style of the time period but are very accessible to the audience who will be using the book. Likewise, Schlitz uses modern diction and spelling rather than the language of the time period. The skits are fun but informative at the same time. Highly recommended for extending a Middle Ages library collection or for use in cross-curricular activities.

Beck, Ian. *The Secret History of Tom Trueheart*. Greenwillow, 2007. ISBN 9780061152115.  
\$16.99. 341 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Significant shortcomings

Genre: Fairy tale;

Subject: Storytelling--Juvenile fiction; Fairy tales--Juvenile fiction; Brothers--Juvenile fiction;  
Books--Reviews;

Enter the Land of Stories where all fairy tales take place. In this land, the Story Bureau starts a story, sets the stage, and then assigns an authorized adventurer (from one of the adventurer families) to play the role of the hero to complete the story. The adventurer then tells the story of his adventure to the Bureau so it can be published. Tom is the youngest brother of the adventuring Trueheart family. His six older brothers are everything a fairy tale hero should be: tall with broad shoulders and gleaming blonde hair, brave, and all are named Jack (or a variation thereof). As Tom's twelfth birthday approaches and he comes of age to become an apprentice adventurer, he fears that he is not cut out to be a fairy tale hero. Unlike his brothers, Tom is small with brown curly hair, and not brave. When all six of his brothers disappear midway through their stories, the Story Bureau sends Tom to find them and to help complete their stories so everyone can live happily ever after.

Beck playfully makes fun of fairy tale conventions in this story. By cleverly naming all six brothers with a variation of Jack, he pokes fun at the fairy tale heroes who seem interchangeable from one story to the next. Unfortunately, Beck's cleverness does not compensate for the irritating voice of the narrator or the flatness of all his characters. The reader, like Tom, will be disappointed with his adventure: Tom is disappointed that the villain got away, and the reader is disappointed that the promised adventure never begins. While fairy tales may also contain flat characters and be lackluster in the adventure department, they are grounded in a world that is easily understood. The world of the Land of Stories is so poorly developed that the reader cannot engage in the story. The inability to engage in the story makes it difficult to understand why the disappearance of a few adventurers is so frightening.

Desplechin, Marie. *Poor Little Witch Girl*. Bloomsbury, 2007. ISBN 9781599901282. 144 p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Significant shortcomings

Genre: Fantasy stories;

Subject: Witchcraft--Juvenile fiction; Mothers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; Grandmothers--Juvenile fiction; Interpersonal relations--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Eleven-year-old Verbena hates the fact that she is destined to be a witch. She and her mother don't see eye to eye on their plans for her future, and so Verbena's grandmother steps in to take her granddaughter one day a week to help her understand more about her heritage.

The story is told in the first person by each character in turn: Verbena's mother, Ursala; Verbena's grandmother, Anastabotte; Verbena herself; and the boy she likes, Soufi. None of the characters really stand out or make the reader care about them in any way. The main conflict of the plot is that Verbena isn't so much afraid of being a witch as she is afraid of turning out like her mother; that however, is glossed over in the end with the almost random introduction of Verbena's father. Mediocre plot and even more mediocre writing (though this may be the result of the translation and not the author's style)--this book is probably only appropriate for exceptionally large collections looking for fantasy titles for girls not yet quite ready for Harry Potter.

Marsden, Carolyn. *When Heaven Fell*. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763631758. \$15.99. 183 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Family life--Vietnam--Juvenile fiction; Aunts--Juvenile fiction; Culture conflict--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Nine-year-old Binh dreams of being able to go to school; however, it is her harsh reality that she must spend every day on the streets selling fresh fruit from a cart. Living in a small village, this Vietnamese girl must do all she can to help contribute to her family's meager income. One evening Binh's grandmother (Ba Ngaoi) confesses to having had a baby with an American Soldier during the war, and Binh's hopes seem as if they may become her new reality: Binh's aunt, Thao, who was adopted and grew up in America, is coming to Vietnam to meet Binh's family. Binh has seen American movies, and she knows that her aunt will come with many treasures and fortune to share. However, Binh's Vietnamese family is greatly disappointed with what actually occurs when Thao arrives. Binh must work with her aunt to teach her the ways of Vietnamese culture, while her aunt describes American culture. Finally, an understanding between the two cultures is reached, and Binh's dreams become more real than she could ever have imagined.

Marsden has created a simple story with many underlying cultural complexities. *When Heaven Fell* illustrates the common misunderstandings that can occur, and the learning that needs to take place, when two different cultures are thrown together. Although the reader may feel that the story is anti-climatic, the lesson of acceptance and understanding is profound. Binh is a young and lovable character, whose voice is accurately portrayed by her thoughts and feelings throughout the story. Useful for realistic depiction of life in Vietnam. A great addition to any multicultural section in a library or personal book collection. This story provides a refreshing reminder that sometimes it is the differences (instead of similarities) among people that build unity.

Russell, Christopher. *Hunted*. Greenwillow, 2007. ISBN 9780060841195. \$16.89. 254 p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction; Historical fiction;

Subject: Plague--Juvenile fiction; Mastiff--Juvenile fiction; Human-animal relationships--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Fourteen-year-old Brind, raised with Sir Edmund's pack of hunting dogs and the huntsman of Sir Edmund's manor, is banished from Dowe Manor when Sir Edmund's wife, Lady Beatrice, dies of the plague. A greedy friar blames her death on Brind, "the Devil's boy," and "the witch," Aurelie, Edmund and Beatrice's foster daughter. Mad with grief, Sir Edmund believes the friar's accusations and sends his remaining loved ones away, only realizing his mistake until it is too late. Brind and Aurelie, accompanied by two loyal mastiffs, flee from the friar, angry mobs, and the invisible enemy of the dreaded plague, trusting the dogs and luck for their survival, until Sir Edmund finally comes to their rescue.

An exciting story with great characterization of the dogboy, who speaks limited English in growls and barks, and the orphan Aurelie. The friar is a menacing and engaging villain, and the dogs are loyal heroes. Enjoyable, but the story lacks the spark of a great book. Dog lovers will especially enjoy it.

Pratchett, Terry. *Wintersmith*. Harper, 2006. ISBN 9780060890315. \$16.99. 323 p.

Reviewer: Jan Staheli

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Adventure stories; Humorous stories;

Subject: Witches--Juvenile fiction; Winter--Juvenile fiction; Fairies--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Crivens! They're back! The Nac Mac Feegles have returned to help Tiffany Aching out of another spot of trouble. While studying witching skills with Miss Treason, a blind old witch who uses others' eyeballs to see, Tiffany impetuously puts herself into the notice of the Wintersmith—Winter itself, an elemental force who now has a crush on a thirteen-year-old witch. While the Feegles, six-inch blue men with swords as long as they are and terrible Scottish brogues, race about fightin' and drinkin' and trying to keep up with Tiffany's adventures, she is also getting help from several other witches who have taken an interest. Nanny Ogg and Granny Weatherwax can be daunting, even for an elemental spirit, but in the end, Tiffany must take care of this problem of Winter on her own.

When Terry Pratchett sets out to write a story, he makes it a rip roarer! Funny, suspenseful and wise in turns, his brand of fantasy is a true delight. His characters are quirky, but real—if such a thing can be said in fantasy. He makes magic mostly the magic of really seeing, and actually thinking, and finally doing something about the problem at hand—ultimately a pretty magical way to behave. Highly recommended to all who love to laugh and think and escape, just for a while, into another wonderful world.

Coburn, Ann. *Glint*. HarperCollins, 2007. ISBN 9780060847234. \$17.99. 432p.

Reviewer: Kate Reynolds

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction; Fantasy Fiction; Adventure Stories;

Subject: Missing children—Juvenile fiction; Brothers and sisters—Juvenile fiction; Adventure and adventurers—Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews

When fifteen-year-old Ellie's younger brother, Danny, disappears on his eleventh birthday, Ellie draws strength and inspiration from Argent—a character in an imaginary world she and her brother made up when they were younger. Meanwhile, Danny finds comfort in the same story by following Argent on her quest to find a stolen dragon.

Coburn's novel is compelling and unique. The real world and the fantasy world never actually meet, but the parallel adventures intertwine and support each other wonderfully. *Glint* is truly more than the sum of its parts—either story alone would seem flat, but together they resonate. The villain of Ellie and Danny's story seems somewhat contrived, but overall *Glint* is a delightful work written in an innovative style.

Klages, Ellen. *The Green Glass Sea*. Viking, 2006. ISBN 0670061344. \$16.99. 318 p.

Reviewer: Laura Wadley

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction

Subject: Fathers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; Scientists--Juvenile fiction; Friendship--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

*The Green Glass Sea* is the story of two very different young girls living in Los Alamos during the waning years of World War II as American scientists race to create an atomic bomb before the Germans do. At first Dewey and Suze hate each other but slowly they become friendly under the unusual circumstances of their lives. They are often left to their own devices as their parents work long hours on "the gadget" a mechanism whose properties remain obscure to the children until, towards the end of the book, they perch on the edge of a mesa with other members of the Manhattan Project Colony to watch the sudden brilliance and mushroom cloud of the first nuclear blast.

Dewey, Suze, and their parents are fully-realized, deeply sympathetic characters facing the difficulties of being bullied, misunderstood, and abandoned by design and tragic circumstances. The narrative is enriched by the tension the reader feels between what the kids do not know and what he or she does--"after such knowledge, what redemption?" Klages' story is almost flawlessly wrought, but parents may want to know that there is some profanity in this text. *The Green Glass Sea* would be a fine book for introducing middle school kids to the nuclear age, but it is probably better for adult audiences.

Polacco, Patricia. *Ginger and Petunia*. Illustrated by Patricia Polacco. Philomel, 2007. ISBN 9780399245398. \$16.99. 40 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Intermediate, All

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Humorous Stories; Picture Books;

Subject: Pigs—Juvenile Fiction; Human-Animal Relationships—Juvenile Fiction; Celebrities—Juvenile Fiction; Books—Reviews;

Nobody loves their pet as much as Virginia Vincent Folsom loves her pig Petunia. Virginia, also known as Ginger, a member of high society and an elite pianist seems an unlikely match for Petunia, a lovable pig who enjoys taking mud baths. However unlikely this pair may seem, they are more alike than meets the eye! One day, Virginia must rush out of town, and calls a sitter to take care of Petunia for her. Unfortunately, the sitter never shows, and the lonely pig decides to take matters into her own hands (or hooves). To show her love and devotion for Ginger, Petunia sets out to accomplish everything Ginger would do if she were there. Pushing aside her strong desire for a mud bath, Petunia dresses in Ginger's extravagant gowns, teaches the piano students, attends art shows, goes to elegant dinners, and gets invited to a ball by the Mayor himself! After the ball, Petunia arrives home to find Ginger waiting for her. Finally the long days of Petunia pretending to be Ginger are over, and the two are reunited.

*Ginger and Petunia* provides a comic insight into the world of dedicated pet lovers and their spoiled pets. Polacco's attention-grabbing illustrations, done in pencil and marker, not only mirror the eccentric characters but give the reader a window into a humorous and even more entertaining storyline than is expressed in the text. The reader will smile at the depicted facial expressions, extravagant gowns, and the silly dance scene that takes place at the end of the book. Useful for read-aloud in elementary school and for any home library, Polacco has created a humorous and lovable story through text and pictures that every pet lover will cherish.

Krohn, Katherine. *Vera Wang*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2007. ISBN 9780822566120. \$29.27. 112 p.

Reviewer: Rita Christensen

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Biographies;

Subject: Wang, Vera--Juvenile Literature; Women Fashion Designers--Juvenile Literature; Books--Reviews;

Energy. Style. Talent. These words are used in *Vera Wang*, a young adult biography, to describe the celebrated American designer who rose to fame in the 1990s designing signature bridal wear. The biography covers Vera's growing up years, schooling, talents, disappointments, ambitions, business opportunities, awards, and family.

Vera was born into a wealthy family who came to the United States to escape China's Communist Revolution. She grew up traveling the world with her parents; often accompanying her mother to Paris to shop at couture boutiques. Vera was unsure what to do with her life when she was in college. She contemplated being a professional skater or a doctor; however, she loved art and foreign languages and graduated with a degree in art history. After college, Vera started out as a salesgirl in an exclusive New York City boutique. Through a series of fortuitous events, mixed with hard work, she became the senior editor of *Vogue Magazine*. She later landed the position of senior designer for Ralph Lauren. After Vera married, at 39, she quit her job to try to start a family. Vera's father encouraged her to return to fashion by giving her a large loan to start her own design business in bridal wear. The fashion community was skeptical that she could succeed but Vera followed her heart. Her design business has grown to multimillion-dollar proportions including: bridal wear, couture, ready-to-wear fashions, footwear, jewelry, fragrance, eyewear, fine papers, flowers, books, and even hotel suites.

Krohn's *Vera Wang* is a realistic look at what it takes to succeed in the design business. It details the sleepless nights and the many years of work it takes to be a top designer. The author also makes it clear that Vera's privileged background of education, culture, travel, and wealth was a great help to attaining her goals. Her many achievements in business and marriage are outlined. Success has its price, and the author looks at issues that plague Vera: the lack of time to relax and to mother her two adopted children, and feelings of self-doubt in a competitive environment. By all accounts, however, Vera seems to have it all. A great read for young adults who may be interested in pursuing a design career, or who have entrepreneurial aspirations.

Harrison, Mette Ivie. *The Princess and the Hound*. HarperCollins, 2007. ISBN 9780061131882. \$18.89. 410 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: fairy tales; fantasy;

Subject: Princes--Juvenile fiction; Human-animal communication--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

At first glance *The Princess and the Hound* appears to be a modern retelling of a fairy tale with enchantments, magic, and of course, romance. Although Harrison uses fairy tale motifs to weave her story, the tale is wholly original and a delightful departure from typically fairy tales. The story is narrated not by the Princess, indeed she is not even the main character, but by Prince George, the heir to a neighboring kingdom and the Princess's betrothed. Since Prince George's mother died, he has lived in fear of discovery; he possesses animal magic (the ability to speak with animals) that is reviled and feared by his subjects. Because of this gift he holds himself apart from everyone, afraid that they will discover his secret. Alone and alienated, the prince fears his power and his ability to rule the kingdom. When Prince George betroths himself to Princess Beatrice, the only child of the king of the neighboring kingdom, he finds someone who sees him for whom he truly is without fear of rejection. While Beatrice does not have animal magic she has long been over looked and harshly rejected by her father who desired a son; she too is alone and alienated except for her hound, Marit. As Prince George comes to know the princess and Marit, he discovers that she is under a curse that only his animal magic can reverse.

Harrison skillfully does not climax the story with the removal of the curse but allows the Prince and Princess to continue developing as they learn to step out of the shadows and force others to truly see them. Although the story is slow at points Harrison keeps the readers' interest; the overall story is compelling, and the intricate details weave a delightful tale.

Koertge, Ron. *Strays*. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763627058. \$16.99. 167 p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Foster home care--Juvenile fiction; Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Human-animal communication--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

When sixteen-year-old Ted O'Connor's parents die in a car accident, he is sent to live with two foster parents whom Ted is pretty sure are psycho. He inherits two foster brothers--Astin, a gearhead, and C.W., a wannabe gangster--and starts attending a new inner-city high school. As Ted becomes comfortable with the new people in his life he discovers that his extraordinary gift of communicating with animals--left over from his days working at his parents' pet store--begins to fade.

Ted's awkward teenage thoughts are authentic. Readers will relate to his quiet personality and follow his emotional journey with hope for Ted's future. The dialogue and plot are believable, but not extraordinary. Sensitive readers should be cautioned of the prevalent profanity.

Castellucci, Cecil. *Beige*. Candlewick Press, 2007. ISBN 9780763630669. \$16.99. 307 p.

Reviewer: Eliza Nevin

Reading Level: Young adult

2007. Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Fathers and Daughters--Juvenile fiction; Punk rock music--Juvenile fiction; Self-perception--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Katy lives in Montreal with her mom, a PhD student. She is sent to Los Angeles for two weeks when her mom goes to Peru for a field study. Katy will be catching up with her dad, The Rat, a recovering addict and drummer of the legendary punk band, Suck. Katy, however, finds little in common with her dad; she doesn't even like music. Her visit to California becomes an opportunity for Katy to find herself and step out of her quiet, good girl shell.

Katy is an interesting character, trapped inside her obedient, smiling body while raging with rebellion inside. She refuses to be associated with anything dangerous, especially her dad's music. Readers accompany Katy on her exploration of what's beyond her carefully drawn lines—including the infamously reckless punk rock world. The chapter titles are the titles of songs on a mix CD that a new friend makes for Katy as a punk rock tutorial, including "Should I Stay or Should I Go" by the Clash, "We Got the Beat" by the Go-Go's, and "Anarchy in the U.K." by the Sex Pistols. Readers who love the So-Cal punk scene or who just have anger issues will enjoy this book and its immersion in the joy of angry music. Profanity comes with the territory, so readers may want to be cautious.

Smith, Cynthia Leitich. *Tantalize*. Candlewick, 2007. ISBN 9780763627911. \$16.99. 310 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: fantasy;

Subject: Supernatural--Juvenile fiction; Restaurants--Juvenile fiction; Vampires--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

*Tantalize*: To torment with the sight of something desired but out of reach; to tease by arousing expectations that are repeatedly disappointment.

Fortunately, the book lives up to its title. Quincie Morris is tantalizingly in love with her best friend Kiernan, a hybrid werewolf. She cannot stand to be away from him, but his presence torments her. He is so close to her that she cannot believe he is oblivious to her love, and yet each day he moves further away from her as he prepares to leave in order to join a wolf pack. To distract herself from the pain of her unrequited love, Quincie throws herself into the re-opening of her family's vampire themed restaurant. After the chef is viciously murdered, suspicions rise about the involvement of a werewolf in the crime. Quincie must deal with these suspicions while finding a replacement chef who can not only cook like the devil but also portray a debonair vampire. Enter Henry Johnson, a nerdy cowboy who can cook extraordinary dishes, but can Quincie make him over as a sensual vampire cook in time for the opening? As the kitchen sizzles with scrumptious dishes so does the tension between Henry and Quincie.

As the title implies, the reader is teased with expectations that are repeatedly disappointed. The story has suspense, danger, wit, and tenuous romance. Quincie is smart and unlike any teenage heroine. The reader hopes that she will come out on top despite the werewolves and vampires that haunt her life. Although readers may be disappointed with the twist the story takes at the end, they will remain tantalized.

Dokey, Cameron. *Before Midnight: A Retelling of "Cinderella."* Simon & Schuster, 2007. ISBN 9781416934714. \$5.99. 194 p.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fairy Tales; Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Fantasy--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Will there ever be too many retellings of Cinderella? Not yet. In this latest, Cendrillon's mother dies soon after Cendrillon is born. Two weeks later, Cendrillon's father arrives with a small male infant. The father is heartbroken at his wife's death and leaves his baby daughter and the boy, Raoul, in the care of a kindly healer. The girl and boy grow up together both wishing for the family they have never had. When the two children are fifteen, a stepmother with two daughters shows up. The stepmother has her own secret wishes that at first keep Cendrillon and her apart, but eventually bring them together. In the end, it is the power of love, not a magic wand, which sends Cendrillon and Raoul to the royal ball to find their hearts' desires.

This is a very satisfying version of Cinderella. All the characters are sympathetic and complex. When there is "wickedness" it arises out of secret grief. No one is intrinsically evil and all the character's actions are well motivated and believable. The traditional elements of the Cinderella story are present, but are introduced in fresh and clever ways. This is probably the most "feel good" version of Cinderella to come along in many years. It is so upbeat that it probably will not receive the critical acclaim of more cynical versions like *Just Ella* (Aladdin, 1999). For teens who want a fun light read, it is a wish come true.

Ellis, Ann Dee. *This is What I Did*:. Little, Brown, ISBN 9780316013635. 2007. \$16.99. 157 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Bullying--Juvenile fiction; Interpersonal relationships--Juvenile fiction; Schools--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Logan witnesses a terrible event involving his best friend, his best friend's abusive father, and a cute girl from school. This horrendous event plunges him into depression. In order to try and help him his parents decide it is time to move to a new area of town where he can make new friends, attend a new school, and have a fresh start. Unfortunately, Logan's past follows wherever he goes, and Logan's demons of depression and guilt negatively affect his ability to fit in. Although Logan is faced with bullies, judgmental neighbors, and nasty rumors, an unexpected pleasant surprise surfaces in the form of Laurel: a strange, quirky girl from school who sends notes of creative palindromes to Logan. With the help of his family, a therapist, and Laurel, Logan begins to come to terms with his psychological troubles. Slowly, this brave (and slightly awkward) eighth grader opens up and embraces the opportunity to finally heal.

Ellis has addressed the mature themes of abuse and depression in a unique and profound way. The story is told through the narrative voice of her character Logan. The reader will struggle along with Logan as the character's innermost thoughts and feelings are revealed. Although it takes some time to piece together what exactly happened to Logan, this does not stop the reader from building a deep bond with the character. Because of the connection between reader and character, this disturbing novel is hard to put down. The mature themes may require adults to read the novel before recommending it to young adults. Useful addition for middle and high school libraries. Young adult and mature audiences will be deeply moved by the simplicity of format, and the complexity of story.

Parker, Robert B.. *Edenville Owls*. Philomel, 2007. ISBN 9780399246562. \$17.99. 194 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction; Detective and mystery stories; Historical Fiction;

Subject: Friendship--Juvenile fiction; Basketball--Juvenile fiction; Teachers--Juvenile fiction;

War--Juvenile fiction; Prejudices--Juvenile fiction; Coming of age--Juvenile fiction;

Massachusetts--History--20<sup>th</sup> century--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Bobby Murphy is more than the average eighth grader: Bobby Murphy is a detective. This may seem unlikely at first, as this small town boy struggles with normal teenage boy problems—such as making it to the basketball tournament without a coach, and understanding his strong feelings for his cute friend Joanie. However, as the story unfolds, Bobby's inner detective begins to show. One evening after school, Bobby oversees an angry conversation between his pretty school teacher and a mysterious (and dangerous) looking man. Bobby decides it is up to him to figure out who this man is and how to stop him before the school teacher gets in real trouble. With the help of his loyal basketball teammates and his adventure-loving friend Joanie, this mystery soon unravels.

This mystery will keep readers on the edge of their seats while they follow Bobby on his quest for answers. Bobby Murphy is a well developed character; he faces many typical challenges that for his age. An interesting twist comes from the setting of the story taking place at the end of World War II. This provides for interesting and unique characters, especially the dangerous and mysterious man that Bobby must spy on. The story seems innocent enough; however, an unexpected number of racial slurs and terms may offend some. Also, it was difficult not to notice the fast, simple, and slightly unrealistic ending. Despite some of its faults, the book was a fast read, and an entertaining mystery. Useful for middle or high school libraries. Could serve as a good recommend for reluctant readers who enjoy mysteries.

Sharenow, Robert. *My Mother the Cheerleader*. HarperCollins, 2007. ISBN 9780061148965.  
\$16.99. 304 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Young Adult, All

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Historical Fiction;

Subject: School Integration—Juvenile fiction; Race relations—Juvenile fiction; Mothers and daughters—Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews;

The 1960s in New Orleans is a conflicting time full of racism and prejudice, and 13-year-old Louise Collins is right in the middle of the conflict because her mother is a "cheerleader". The "Cheerleaders" are a group of women who openly protest integration in front of a formally all-white school and berate Ruby Bridges, a six-year-old black student. Louise never really reflects on the action of her mother and her mothers' friends until a stranger from New York comes to stay at the boarding house Louise's mother runs. Immediately Louise and her mother are both charmed by the new guest, Morgan Miller, his polite manner as well as his intelligence. It is not long until Morgan's mysterious past in New Orleans, his open-minded and contemporary political views begin to draw the wrong kind of attention from the locals. When danger approaches, Morgan Miller is forced to leave Louise and her mother behind, but the impact he has made on their lives will remain forever.

Author Sharenow has captured a new perspective regarding the tumultuous 1960's through his character Louise. Louise becomes a real and lovable character as she expresses her innermost thoughts and feelings to the reader. *Cheerleader* leaves the reader with something to think about concerning the real meaning of courage. Useful for middle and high school libraries, and for classroom units regarding United States history or racism. The story addresses many mature themes, and adults may want to read the story before referring young students or children to read it.