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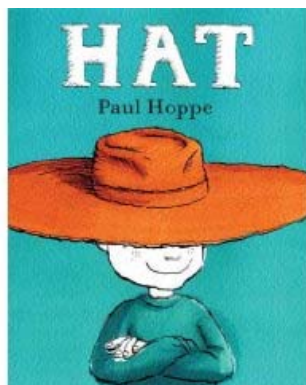
Children's Book Review

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Hoppe, Paul. *Hat*. Illustrated by Paul Hoppe. Bloomsbury, 2009. ISBN 9781599902470. \$14.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway

Reading Level: Toddler, Preschool;

Rating: Outstanding;

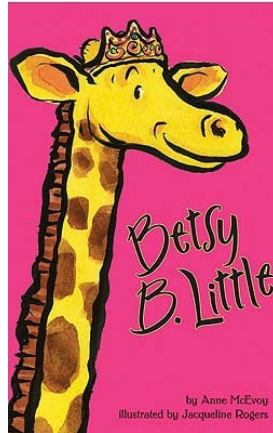
Genre: Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Hats--Juvenile fiction; Lost and found possessions--Juvenile fiction; Imagination--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Young Henry finds a wide-brimmed red hat while walking with his mother in the park and wants to keep it. His imagination quickly explores all the possible ways he could use the hat. His mother asks, "But, Henry, what if someone else needs the hat?" Henry thinks about those other possible owners and leaves the red hat on the park bench.

This moment-in-time story captures the childhood exuberance of finding a new possession with the concept of ownership. The pen and brush illustrations and a simple red, blue, green palate support both Henry's excitement and thoughtful reflection. An excellent choice for lap-reading. Parents and nursery school teachers also could use this little picture book to explain ownership to their toddlers.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)



McEvoy, Anne. *Betsy B. Little*. Illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers. HarperCollins, 2009. ISBN 9780060593377. \$19.50. 32 p.

Reviewer: Megan Harris

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

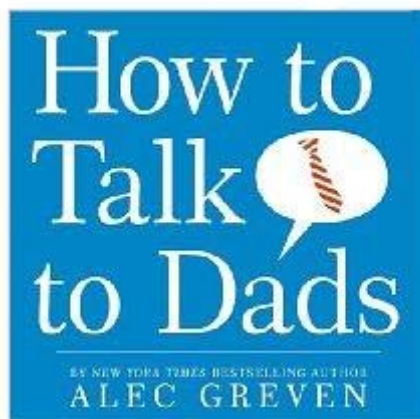
Genre: Picture books; Humorous poetry; Fiction;

Subject: Stories in rhyme--Juvenile fiction; Ballet dancing--Juvenile fiction; Giraffe--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Betsy dreams of becoming a ballerina. The only problem is that she is an eleven-foot tall giraffe. Betsy struggles with everything, from ice skating to fitting in her own bed. When her parents take her to a ballet studio, Betsy's height leads her to a painful, and less than graceful, crash on the ceiling. Overhearing her fellow aspiring ballerinas--and their mothers--say, "the great ballerinas have always been small," Betsy leaves the studio. Instead, she practices ballet alone in the park, where she gains fame by offering outdoor shows. She discovers that the problem is not being too tall, but, "dreaming too small!"

McEvoy tells this tale of perseverance in light-hearted, four-line stanzas, with an ABCB rhyming pattern. Even when dealing with Betsy's height-related struggles, the text remains hopeful. McEvoy includes details such as the way Betsy would "smile away" despite her struggles, and that her "spirits were high" even after leaving the ballet studio. In addition, Rogers' bright, colorful paintings offer support to the text. Using black acrylic paint and watercolors, she fills the book with images of Betsy with friends, loving parents, and a clean, safe neighborhood. These delightful images are not specifically referenced in the text, but are important to the hopeful feeling the book exudes. *Betsy B. Little* is a delightful read for children preschool to early third grade, and would be a great introduction to units on rhyming, poetry, and positive attitudes.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)



Greven, Alec. *How to Talk to Dads*. Illustrated by Kei Acedera. HarperCollins, 2009. ISBN 9780061729300. \$9.99. 48 pp.

Reviewer: Alison Canar

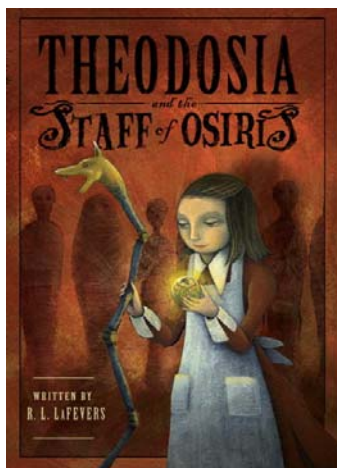
Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Fathers --Juvenile literature; Fathers --Psychology; Father and child --Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Most children know that mom and dad play different roles in the family and in a kid's life. That is why ten-year-old Greven is providing readers with his latest work, *How to Talk to Dads*, as a companion to the previously released title about communicating with mothers. In his new guide, Greven introduces "The Two Sides of Dad," which explains why a dad can be even trickier than a mom. On one hand, dads can be easygoing and laid back. However, if he is crossed, watch out for the dark side! Greven explains that dads hate whining and expect good behavior. One important tip Greven offers is to remember is that if mom is happy, then so is dad. *How to Talk to Dads* is a quick, fun read for sons and daughters of all ages. Greven's quaint observations remind readers of many reasons that dads are so lovable.



LaFevers, R. L.. *Theodosia and the Staff of Osiris*. Illustrated by Yoko Tanaka. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008. ISBN 9780618927647. \$16.00. 387 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

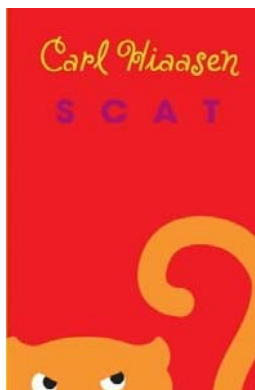
Genre: Adventure stories; Detective and mystery stories;

Subject: Mummies--Juvenile fiction; Museums--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Books--Review;

In the first book, *Theodosia and the Serpents of Chaos*, Theodosia uncovers the secret society of the Serpents of Chaos. They want to dominate the world by creating a world war. Before Theodosia can expose them, the Serpents of Chaos escape. At the beginning of the second book, *Theodosia and the Staff of Osiris*, Theodosia faces a new challenge with the Serpents of Chaos. While cataloging artifacts in the basement of her parents' museum, she finds a special staff and orb. When she puts the two together, mummies from all over London gather at her museum because of the staff's ability to raise the dead. The Serpents of Chaos find out about the staff and steal it from her. With the help from the Brotherhood of the Chosen Keepers and the Arcane Order of the Black Sun, Theodosia finds out that the Serpents of Chaos will use the staff to kill off the crew of the new battleship, *Dreadnought*, and resurrect them back to life so that they may begin a world war. Theodosia stops their plans in time, but the Serpents of Chaos escape justice again. In the end, the staff and orb are entrusted to Theodosia and Lord Wigmore, head of the Chosen Keepers, for safe keeping.

LaFevers does a wonderful job at maintaining Theodosia's colorful and refreshing character from the first book. And, like the first book, Tanaka's illustrations support the pace of the story and create a solid setting. This book would be an excellent resource to introduce children to the Egyptian culture and to see the importance of doing research in finding answers to a problem.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)



Hiaasen, Carl. *Scat*. Knopf, 2009. ISBN 9780375834868. \$16.99. 384 p.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction; Detective and Mystery Stories; Adventure;

Subject: Wilderness areas--Juvenile fiction; Florida--Juvenile fiction; Wildlife conservation--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Nick has the toughest biology teacher in the world. Mrs. Starch is not intimidated by anything or anyone, including the tough, pencil-eating, pyromaniac misfit, Duane. Then one day Mrs. Starch disappears when a fire breaks out during a field trip to the Florida Everglades. Nick and his friend Marta suspect that Duane, nicknamed Smoke because of his history of setting fires, is involved. As they investigate the matter further, they find themselves in the middle of a desperate struggle to save an endangered panther cub.

This book is full of interesting characters in complicated situations. Even the secondary characters are fully realized. The faithful friend, fire investigator, low-down crook, minion, bum father, and eccentric environmentalist all have a past and a story to tell. While the characters in this story are perhaps stronger than those in his earlier children's novels, (*Hoot*, 2002 and *Flush*, 2007 Knopf Books for Young Readers) the climax sequence stretches the boundaries of believability and logic. Why, exactly, did Nick have to climb the tree to return the panther cub? Despite the improbable ending, there is much here to interest upper grade school and middle school readers, both boys and girls, who might have interests in animals or the environment.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)

Polacco, Patricia. *Someone for Mr. Sussman*. Illustrated by Patricia Polacco. Philomel, 2008. ISBN 9780399250750. \$16.99. 40 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Humorous stories;

Subject: Grandmothers--Juvenile fiction; Dating services--fiction; Jews--United States--fiction; Books--Reviews;

Bubbie, Jerome's grandmother, is a *shadkhen* or Jewish matchmaker. She has found matches for difficult people. Mr. Sussman is the only customer she has not been able to find a match for. Jerome notices that every time Mr. Sussman comes over, Bubbie tries to impress him with the characteristics he wants in a woman. This goes on for quite some time until Bubbie gets frustrated that Mr. Sussman does not see her as his ideal match. After she tells him to never come back, he returns and finally begins to see that she is his ideal match.

Polacco creates another story where she introduces interesting Jewish traditions to readers. This story is enjoyable, but at times, a bit tedious. Readers realize that Bubbie is trying to be the perfect match for Mr. Sussman, but he does not realize it for quite some time. Elementary readers might not be able to handle length of the story, but middle grade readers might think the content is too juvenile.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)

Snipes, Larry and Vivian. *Old Dry Frye*. Anchorage Press Plays, 2007. ISBN 9780876023853.
Contact publisher for details. 49 p.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin;

Reading Level: Intermediate;

Rating: Excellent;

Genre: Folklore; Plays; Ghost plays; Humorous plays;

Subject: Folk tale; Haunting; Food; Drama--Reviews;

Theme: It is better to share what you have.

Production Requirements: Flexible—painted flats and props, puppets.

Acts: 1

Run Time: 1 hour

Characters: 13

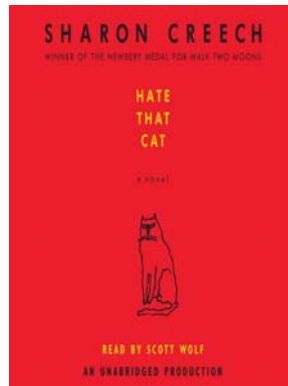
Cast: Variable, at least 2 males and 1 female

Time Period: 1800's

Loosely based on the folktale "Old Dry Frye", this play tells the story of a preacher (Dry Frye) in a small southern town. Frye dies but returns after his death to haunt his congregation due to their lack of sharing. While Frye is alive, he is known throughout the town for his huge appetite. When he comes to call, the families hide their food and do anything they can to avoid sharing with him. While eating dinner with the fourth family he visits one Sunday, he chokes on a chicken bone and dies. His body is haphazardly passed back to each family he has visited that day to avoid murder charges. The play is a flashback but it is also book-ended by a couple that has learned their lesson.

The play is well written with humorous and easy flowing dialogue. The accents and dialect capture the spirit of a small southern town. This play will definitely capture an audience's attention with its spooky beginning and comedic, action-packed scenes. The use of puppets is especially beneficial to the production. The puppets are endowed with characters in the writing and give lots of opportunity for physical humor. There is also audience participation with the recitation of "Everybody knows Old Dry Frye" each time a character says "the preacher man." One problem with the play is the question of a suitable audience recommendation. The dialogue, action, and puppets seem geared to an elementary school age level. However, the subject matter—a ghost and carrying a dead man around—is perhaps more suitable for an older audience.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)



Creech, Sharon. *Hate that Cat*. HarperCollins, 2008. ISBN 9780061430923. \$15.99. 160 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

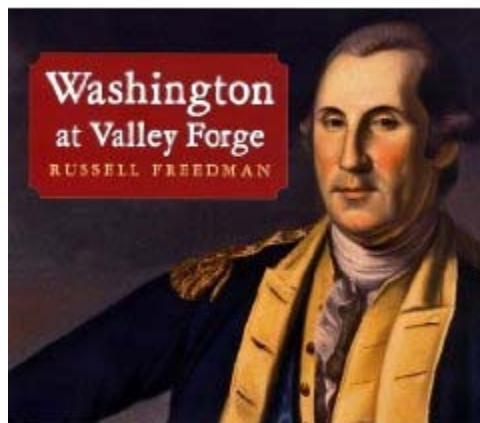
Genre: Fiction; Poetry;

Subject: Novels in verse--Juvenile fiction; Poetry--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

In this sequel to *Love that Dog*, Jack has moved to his next year in school, and he has the same poetry-loving teacher, Ms. Stretchberry. Jack's new poems sometimes reference his dog Sky from the previous book, but, as he puts it, he can't write about Sky "a-n-y-m-o-r-e". His current poetry explores his relationship with his deaf mother, the poets his class is studying, and a professor-uncle's opinions on poetry, and his overall dislike of cats. He also has a recurring interest in whether the poets he is studying are alive or not.

The storyline is conveyed entirely in poems. Each poem is dated and a few of them titled. As a book dealing with poetry in the classroom, a wide range of poets and poems are mentioned, but not so wide as to be overwhelming or busy. The writing style is crisp and succinct, but honest. Short lines coupled with careful white space and a few illustrated poem-shapes make the book visually appealing as well. The book is a great jumping-off point for poetry lessons and writing exercises. It is also a basic introduction to some discussion topics in poetry as a writing form, such as what makes a piece of writing poetry, why, and according to whom. *Hate that Cat* would be an excellent addition to classroom or school libraries when coupled with its predecessor.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)



Freedman, Russell. *Washington at Valley Forge*. New York: Holiday House, 2008.
ISBN9780823420698. \$24.95. 100p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Biography; Informational

Subjects: Washington, George, 1732-1799 -- Headquarters -- Pennsylvania -- Valley Forge -- Juvenile literature ; Washington, George, 1732-1799 ; United States. Continental Army -- Military life -- Juvenile literature ; United States. Continental Army -- Military life ; Valley Forge (Pa.) -- History -- 18th century -- Juvenile literature ; Books--Reviews

In the cold winter of 1777, newly appointed General George Washington selects Valley Forge as the army's encampment for the next six months. The men lack food, blankets, and even clothing. Washington faces the difficulties of obtaining supplies for the army, training his rag tag men for battle, and keeping his position from jealous American officers who attempt to slander him. Not only does Washington keep his tattered, starving army alive, but he sees to it that they become skilled militia men. Valley Forge was the turning point in the war. America would face a larger, stronger, more capable enemy and win their freedom.

Teachers and parents can share this history of the Revolutionary War full of illustrations from pen and ink sketches to oil paintings to photographs. The personal accounts of those who experienced the events weave a rich, relatable history. Little known details make it a compelling read, such as Washington's best spies were washerwomen. They did laundry for British officials in Philadelphia and informed Washington of the British retreat when they were ordered to have their laundry delivered at once "finished or unfinished." The hardships and victories help readers realize how much was sacrificed for the freedom of the United States of America.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)

Cohen, Frumi. *The magic flute reloaded*. Anchorage Press Plays, Inc., 2006. ISBN 9780876024157. Contact Anchorage regarding price. 51 p.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin;

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult;

Rating: Dependable;

Genre: Adventure play; Plays; Fantasy play;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Musicals; Mythical creatures;

Theme: Violence is not the way.

Production Requirements: Many scene changes, props, special effects, and costume changes.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 90 minutes

Characters: 21

Cast: 6–17 females, 6–11 males

Time Period: Present day and medieval times

The Magic Flute Reloaded tells the story of a modern-day student, Merton, and his quest to overcome his violent behavior. The play begins at school with Merton reacting violently to the bullies who are bothering Weird Melody. The principal arrives and sentences Merton to time in the magical world of Droon. When Merton arrives in Droon, King Meltdown sends him on a mission to rescue Princess Melody from Lady Notsofast, who has imprisoned her. In the process of rescuing the princess, Merton learns to control his temper and is transported back to his school where he rescues Weird Melody from the bullies in a non-violent way.

Although the play is inspired by Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, it is not strictly based on it. It is a musical but it does not use the music from Mozart's work except in one short scene in which music from *The Magic Flute* is played as background music. The six musical numbers are a pop/rap style and in no way equal Mozart's original music because they are monotone and repetitive. The dialogue is well-written at times but then falls into old clichés. The story is interesting but somewhat convoluted and hard to follow. The theme of non-violence is so didactically driven that it loses most of its meaning by the end. The play would be best suited for a group of junior high or high school students performing for their peers.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)

Silvey, Anita. *I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War*. Clarion Books, 2008. ISBN 9780618574919. \$17.00. 128 p.

Reviewer: Megan Harris

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: United States--History--Civil War, 1861–1865--Participation, Female--Juvenile literature.; United States--History--Civil War, 1861–1865--Women--Juvenile literature; Women soldiers--United States--History--19th century--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Hundreds of women openly and secretly fought in the American Civil War. Some women were able to serve as female “mascots” to their regiments. However, most women were forced to disguise themselves to avoid being detected and removed from their regiments. *I'll Pass for Your Comrade* covers the experiences of women fighting for either the Union or Confederate cause.

The information is approachable and comprehensible for even mid-grade elementary students. The book is roughly organized into chronological chapters, spanning from the First Battle of Bull Run to the lives of the soldiers following the Civil War. Silvey uses large photographs, prints, and copies of original documents to increase a reader’s understanding of the content. Silvey, a leading children's literature expert and author of several reference books, uses credible sources, such as journals and census tables, and provides honest conclusions. A bibliography and source notes are included. *I'll Pass for Your Comrade* can be a useful read-aloud book in a classroom or home library setting.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)



Jinks, Catherine. *Babylonne*. Candlewick Press, 2008. ISBN 9780763636500.
\$18.99. 384 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: War--Juvenile fiction; Orphans--Juvenile fiction; Middle Ages--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Babylonne has had enough of her abusive family. Everyday her aunts tell her how sinful and evil she is because she was conceived through fornication. So in the summer of 1227, Babylonne decides to run away to seek acceptance and work from the honorable English knights who have fought against the evil French. Babylonne's plans are sidetracked when she runs into the red-headed priest, Isidore. Isidore was a friend to Babylonne's unknown and recently departed father, Pagan. Isidore disguises Babylonne as a servant boy as they travel across the French country side. Yet when Babylonne finally meets the brave knights she has been looking for, she is torn from Isidore's protection and thrown into a horrid battle with the French. At the risk of his own life, Isidore saves Babylonne from the horrors of war to keep her safe within his care.

Jinks creates the setting of the Middle Ages using descriptive language. Even though the novel is set in the Middle Ages, Babylonne's character is attractive to modern readers because of her wit, intelligence, and courage. This would be a great book to use in history or English classes for a unit on the Middle Ages. Yet teachers should be aware that there are several graphic scenes of violence, which means that the audience for this book is older teens.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)

Marchetta, Melina. *Jellicoe Road*. HarperCollins, 2008. ISBN 9780061431845. \$18.89. 419 p.

Reviewer: Ben Crowder

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

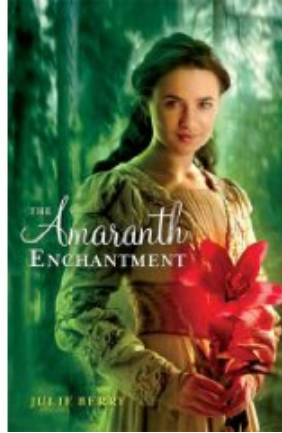
Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: New Zealand--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Reading *Jellicoe Road* is like swimming through a dream. This haunting tale tells the story of Taylor Markham, a New Zealand teenager abandoned by her mother at Jellicoe School. Territory wars dominate the atmosphere between the three factions: Cadets, Townies, and Jellicoe School. While things don't escalate to all-out mayhem, an unmistakable feeling of danger breathes through the book until the very end. On top of the rivalries, a serial killer is on the loose, a mysterious brigadier keeps showing up, and Hannah, Taylor's house mother, goes missing. While reading the manuscript Hannah has been working on, Taylor discovers that Hannah is her aunt. Through her new relative, Taylor eventually finds her mother.

Jellicoe Road gets off to a slow start, but before long the plot threads begin intertwining. These events carry the breathless reader toward a cohesive and ultimately satisfying ending as Taylor finds the family she didn't know she had.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)



Berry, Julie. *The Amaranth Enchantment*. Bloomsbury, 2009. ISBN 9781599903347. \$16.99. 308 p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fantasy fiction

Subject: Fantasy--Juvenile fiction; Princes--Juvenile fiction; Extraterrestrial beings--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

A carriage accident changes young Lucinda's world forever. After her parents' deaths, she must work in a jewelry shop with her uncle and his cruel second wife. She slaves away for ten years until one day a mysterious customer, a reputed witch, enters and commissions a resetting of her enormous glowing stone. The stone is stolen in the night by a young rascal thief and then sold to royalty. To get it back, Lucinda befriends the suspected witch, picks the pocket a prince, and defies the man behind her parents' murder. Her adventures lead her to prison, a royal ball, and eventually a prince.

This medieval tale of a young woman coming into her own demonstrates that happiness does not all depend on Prince Charming. Lucinda's spunk makes the reader cheer her on as she fights for what is rightfully hers. Fans of Tamora Pierce, Shannon Hale, or Catherine Murdock will enjoy Berry's debut novel. Young adult readers will become engaged in this fairy tale fantasy from the flaming flower on the cover to each surprising twist. The happily-ever-after comes once the heroine gains her freedom and independence.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)



Williams, Carol Lynch. *The Chosen One: A Novel*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2009. ISBN 9780312555115. \$16.95. 213 p.

Reviewer: Gabi Kupitz

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Polygamy--Juvenile fiction; Cults--Juvenile fiction; Coming of age--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Almost fourteen years old, Kyra Leigh Carlson is shocked and becomes physically ill when she learns that she is to marry her uncle, the Apostle Hyrum Carlson who "must be sixty, at least." Kyra "will be his seventh wife in the Lord," pronounces Prophet Childs who arranges all of the marriages in an isolated community of polygamists. But Kyra cannot marry a man she does not love nor can her spirit bend to another's will. Struggling with a decision to leave the Compound and risk losing her large family or worse, having her family lose their loving husband/father--men deemed to be disobedient or who have disobedient children are forced to leave, and their families given to other men--makes life a living hell for Kyra. Patrick, a bookmobile librarian and his cache of reading materials, offers Kyra enlightenment and an escape. Not only does Patrick listen and make reading recommendations, he becomes one of Kyra's dearest and trusted friends.

The author has created a story, that while fiction, asks a lot of questions about the current cultish societies in which young girls are forced to marry older men and where religious fanaticism has hijacked agency. *The Chosen One* is captivating and timely.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)

Stork, Francisco X. *Marcelo in the Real World*. Scholastic, 2009. ISBN 9780545054744. \$17.99. 312 p.

Reviewer: Alison Canar

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Autism--Juvenile fiction; Asperser's syndrome--Juvenile fiction; Interpersonal relations--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Marcelo has always seen the world differently. He is classified as autistic, so he attends a special school for children with disabilities. Marcelo believes the safe environment at Patterson enables him to flourish. His father, an accomplished lawyer, disagrees. He feels his son will never grow unless he experiences the challenges of the real world. They make a deal that if Marcelo can survive the summer working at his father's law firm, he can choose for himself how to spend his senior year. At the law firm, Marcelo witnesses all the gritty details of the self-serving, competitive society he has been sheltered from in school. When he discovers evidence of corruption within his father's business, Marcelo overcomes all varieties of prejudice and stands up for his beliefs.

Marcelo's internal dialogue gives the novel an intriguing style. Often the reader clearly understands the implications of a situation, while Marcelo must struggle to comprehend what is happening. This creates tension and keeps the reader engaged in the story. The real world is not always a pretty place, and the reader should be advised that this novel does contain strong language and sexual references. However, those who are not offended by the content will find *Marcelo in the Real World* an enlightening and thought-provoking read.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)



Headley, Justina Chen. *North of Beautiful*. Little, Brown and Company, 2009. ISBN 9780316025058. \$16.99. 373 p.

Reviewer: Anna Swenson

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

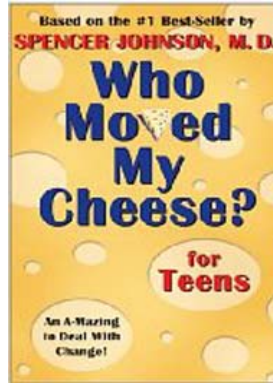
Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Beauty, Personal--Juvenile fiction; Birthmarks--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

Terra Cooper is a young beautiful girl with a port-wine stain on her cheek. She feels she has to hide her flaw in order to be beautiful. She secretly plans to move far away from her town, but her father does everything to keep her under his control. When she almost crashes into Jacob, a handsome Goth boy, he challenges her beliefs on what beautiful really means. Terra's brother sends plane tickets to China for Terra and her mother and they travel with Jacob and his mother Norah. While visiting the orphanage where Jacob was born, Terra sees a little girl hiding in a corner, ashamed of her port-wine stain. This experience causes Terra to realize that she doesn't need makeup to be beautiful. When they get back home, Terra feels confident enough to show her face without makeup on at school. She feels that she no longer has to be what her father wants her to be.

This book allows the readers to relate to the characters' problems and triumphs. The unique story of a marked girl struggling for independence never failed to grab one's interest. The story of romance and definition of true beauty will appeal to young adults. Overall, *North of Beautiful* is appealing because the characters give an interesting sense of perspective.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)



Johnson, Spencer. *Who Moved My Cheese? for Teens: An Amazing Way to Change and Win!*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2002. ISBN 9780399240071. \$19.95. 96 p.

Reviewer: Larysa Bordner

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Change (Psychology)--Juvenile literature; Teenagers--Juvenile literature; Conduct of life--Juvenile literature; Books-- Reviews;

Who Moved My Cheese? for Teens is a story within a story. It begins with a group of high school students complaining about a big change that is happening in their school. One boy shares a parable he heard from his uncle about dealing with change. Sniff and Scurry are two mice that live in a maze with two little people named Hem and Haw. Their four lives are centered on finding cheese. One day, they find a huge store of cheese and eat it without a second thought for a long time, until it suddenly disappears. Sniff and Scurry quickly get out and start searching for new cheese. It takes the little people much longer to admit that they need to face the change, but eventually Hem joins Sniff and Scurry at a new, superior center of cheese. After listening to the parable, the high school students discuss what characters they relate to and why. They also talk about practical ways to apply the story and face change with a better attitude.

Johnson presents an interesting parable. The way that the story is presented from the high school students' point of view shows a realistic application. There are helpful quotes about change that can be used as quick references. The cheese story may seem ridiculous to some, but if the reader can analysis and apply it to a real life situation, it is an entertaining way to think about significant changes that are a part of life.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)



George, Jessica Day. *Princess of the Midnight Ball*. Bloomsbury U.S.A., 2009. ISBN 9781599903224. \$16.99. 280 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

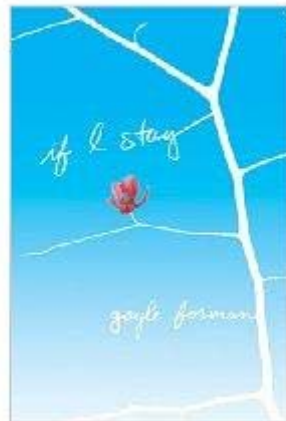
Genre: Fantasy fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Fairy tales--Juvenile fiction; Princesses--Juvenile fiction; Dancing--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Galen is a poor Westfalin soldier on his way back from the Analousian wars. As he walks to the capital of Bruch, he meets an old woman who gives him an invisibility cape and two balls of magic yarn. When he arrives at Bruch, Galen gets a job working in the palace gardens. While there, Galen becomes acquainted with the king's twelve daughters and the dilemma of the princesses' ruined dancing slippers. King Gregor proclaims that the man who can solve the mystery of the princesses' ruined shoes can marry one of his daughters and co-rule the kingdom. With his magical items, Galen finds out that Queen Maude, the princesses' mother, made a contract with the evil magician, King Under Stone, to bless her with children and to stop the war with Analousia. In return, she agreed to dance for him every night. The queen's death, however, passed the contract to her daughters. Galen uses various items from King Under Stone's kingdom to open the underworld portal, kill King Under Stone and several of his sons, and return the girls back home. Because of his efforts, Galen marries Rose, the eldest princess.

George bases her novel on the fairy tale of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, but George takes well-known tale a step further by adding in complex themes and an engaging plot. This book is expertly written with well-developed characters. *Princess of the Midnight Ball* is a great suggestion for young adults who enjoyed such books as *Goose Girl*, *Ella Enchanted*, or *The Tale of Despereaux*.

Volume 29, no.5 (May/June 2009)



Forman, Gayle. *If I Stay*. Dutton, 2009. ISBN 9780525421030. \$16.99.
196 p.

Reviewer: Alison Canar

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Coma--Juvenile fiction; Death--Juvenile fiction; Violoncellists--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

When Mia finds herself disconnected from her comatose body, she realizes that she is the only one who can determine her fate. After setting off for a drive with her family, Mia awakens to the scene of her parents lying dead on the roadside. She also sees her own body, but for her there is still time. She follows her body as it is rushed to the hospital and observes as her loved ones gather and hope for her recovery. Meanwhile, Mia revisits key memories from her life through flashbacks. She debates whether to join her immediate family on the other side or stay behind with her friends and her plans of attending Julliard. Just as she has decided to let go of life, her boyfriend uses the power of the music she loves to bring her back to the physical world.

This novel is full of highs and lows. At times, it is moving and beautifully written. Unfortunately, there are also distracting elements which throw off the mood. Early on, Mia's best friend Kim comes to visit her. Later, when Adam, Mia's boyfriend, wants to see her, he is told only family is allowed. Thus, Adam and his bandmates must come up with an elaborate and unbelievable scheme to get him into the ICU. In addition, Forman emphasizes the close relationship between Mia and her little brother, Teddy, yet Mia wastes hours before seeking conclusive evidence that he is gone. Despite these inconsistencies, interest in what Mia will choose and stronger passages from the flashbacks maintain the reader's interest.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)

Harrison, Ivie Mette. *The Princess and the Bear*. HarperCollins, 2009. ISBN 9780061553141. \$17.99. 327 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Adventure stories; Fairy tales; Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Fairy tales; Animal-human communication--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

The story starts off soon after the ending of the first book, *The Princess and the Hound*. Now that Prince George has changed Princess Beatrice back to her hound form, she keeps company with her new friend the bear. However, the bear has animal magic working in his life. In reality the bear is King Richon, who was transformed 200 years ago by the wild man. The wild man stuck Richon in a bear body to teach him a lesson about respecting animal magic. While the hound and the bear live peacefully in the forest, there is destruction lurking near their home. A cat man is been spreading unmagic all across Prince George's kingdom. The hound and the bear realize that they cannot conquer this problem alone, so they seek the aid of the wild man. When they find the wild man, he tells them that the unmagic problem started in Richon's kingdom. Their mission is to go back in time as humans, trace the beginnings of the unmagic, and destroy it so there will be hope for Prince George's future. Richon realizes the terrible state of his kingdom, and with the hound's help they conquer the unmagic and bring unity to Richon's kingdom.

Harrison's book is a definite page-turner. The story is intriguing and the characters are identifiable and beautifully created. This is a great supporting companion book to *The Princess and the Hound*. Teenagers and adults will enjoy this well-created book.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)

Godbersen, Anna. *Envy: A Luxe Novel*. Alloy Entertainment, 2009. ISBN 9780061345722.
\$17.99. 405 p.

Reviewer: Larysa Bordner

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Conduct of life--Juvenile fiction; Love--Juvenile fiction; New York (N.Y.)--History--1898-1951--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Rumors, the second book in the *Luxe* series, leaves readers hanging. Will is drastically killed when he and Elizabeth come back to visit her sick mother. Diana is left alone when Henry marries Penelope to protect Diana from Penelope's jealousy and anger. And, as always, Carolina is still self-centered and self-serving. It is on this dismal tone that *Envy* begins. All of the characters who were scattered in *Rumors* are brought back together in New York to deal with the complicated hardships that seem to control their lives. Elizabeth finds out she is pregnant with her dead husband's child and has no one to turn to. Carolina's benefactor dies leaving her rich but alone. Penelope and Diana are also both left alone when Henry joins the army. Events truly seem to go from bad to worse, with little hope of changing for the better.

The *Luxe* series began with the intriguing story of Elizabeth, her friends, and family. However, the series has continued to be one heartbreak after another. Godbersen's writing style is captivating and keeps the reader involved with well developed characters and an intricate plot. The story may not be appropriate for young or impressionable readers, because it contains many sensitive and sexual situations.

Volume 29, no. 5 (May/June 2009)

Thomson, Sarah L. *Pirates, Ho!* Illustrated by Stephen Gilpin. Marshall Cavendish, 2008. ISBN 9780761454350. \$14.99. 33 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: All

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Adventure poetry; Ghost poetry;

Subject: Stories in rhyme--Juvenile fiction; Pirates--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

A mean bunch of cut-throats sail the seas to a rhythmic beat. From Peg-Leg Tom to One-Eyed Jack, they are the worst lot of pirates. After chasing ships and making enemies walk the plank, this pirate crew gathers on the deck at night to tell ghost stories. The story that scares everyone is about a captain who sells his soul to gain gold and to chase after living pirates. No one can fall asleep afterwards, but the pirates soon calm themselves with dreams of counting their gold coins and having more high-seas adventures.

Gilpin's hand-drawn illustrations and Thomson's witty rhymes combine to create a humorous book that will be fun to read aloud to children of all ages. *Pirates, Ho!* is a great addition to any library. For teachers, this book can be used as a script for a children's play when teaching about the different types of poetry. For parents, this book can be a quick read for a bedtime story.

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