



2010

# Full Issue

Children's Book Review

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Kramer, Andrew. *Pajama Pirates*. Leslie Lammler. Harper, 2010. ISBN 9780061251948. \$16.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Lauren Bangerter

Reading Level: Toddler, Preschool, Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture book;

Subject: Pirates--Juvenile fiction; Bedtime--Juvenile fiction; Adventure and adventurers--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Nighttime doesn't mean sleep for the Pajama Pirates, rather, that's when the adventure begins! Kramer's lilting poem chronicles the midnight escapades of the Pajama Pirates: they search for hidden treasure, are attacked by pirates, and cleverly find a way back to safe seas. Ultimately they land on "sandy shores" and go off to bed dreaming of the next adventures they'll take.

The words of Kramer's poem are excellently matched and imaginatively portrayed by Lammler's illustrations. Lammler's illustrations are done in blue-tinged watercolor and are wonderfully whimsical. Using curvy lines and reoccurring motifs, Lammler creates an adventurous and inviting atmosphere while retaining a sense of security and fun. *Pajama Pirates* would be a great addition to any bed-time-story-book collection.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/ October 2010)



Singer, Marilyn. *I'm Getting a Checkup*. Illustrated by David Milgrim. Clarion Books, 2009. ISBN 9780618990009. \$16.00. 32 p.

Reviewer: Laurien Clay

Reading level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Dependable

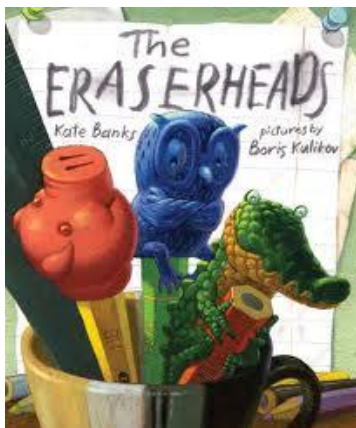
Genre: Informative; Informational books;

Subject: Children--Medical examinations--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Three young children go to the doctor's office with their parents for a checkup and learn about the various medical procedures and instruments used there.

Marilyn Singer is a well-known and well-loved children's poet with more than eighty books to her name, and David Milgrim has written and illustrated more than twenty books. While this book is a little generic as books go, Singer's poetry—with Milgrim's playful illustrations containing whimsical little animals going along with the children and their parents to see the doctor—would make any upcoming doctor's visit a little less stressful for any child.

Volume 31 no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Banks, Kate. *The Eraserheads*. Illustrated by Boris Kulikov. Frances Foster Books, 2010. ISBN 9780374399207. \$16.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Lauren Bangerter

Reading level: Preschool, primary

Rating: Excellent

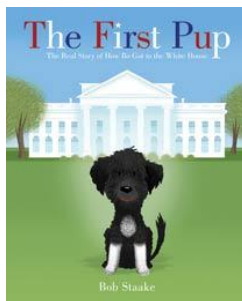
Genre: Informative; Picture books;

Subject: Erasers--Juvenile fiction; Drawing--Juvenile fiction; Adventures and adventurers--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

The eraserheads live on the desk of a boy who is very creative. They have a very important job; they erase mistakes! They each have special jobs. The alligator eraserhead was good with fixing numbers, the owl eraserhead fixed letters and words, the pig eraserhead would erase anything else. One day the boy draws an intricate drawing of a beach and the eraserheads come along for the ride. When they get into a difficult predicament they are able to erase the problem: a dead end, the teeth of a tiger, and the coils of a snake. Along their way they learn that it is okay to make mistakes and realize that without mistakes life wouldn't be any fun.

Kate Banks' *The Eraserheads* is a delightfully engaging picture book. The story is paired with Boris Kulikov's captivating illustrations which catch the unique perspective of the world from an eraser's point of view. This book is a great springboard for the imagination and is also able to convey the message that mistakes help us to learn.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Staake, Bob. *The First Pup: The Real Story of How Bo Got to the White House*. Illustrated by Bob Staake. Feiwel & Friends, 2010. ISBN 9780312613464. \$16.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Lauren Bangerter

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Dependable

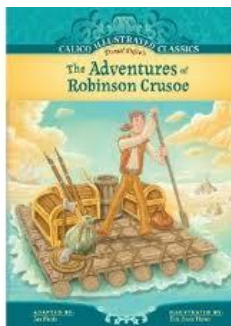
Genre: Picture books; Informational books;

Subject: Dog--Juvenile literature; White House--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

After President Barack Obama was made president he promised his daughters that they could have a dog. The Easter following his election they got a Portuguese water dog from a farm in Texas. They named him Bo and he became "the First pup" who lives in "the First House, with America's First Family."

Staake's geometrical computer illustrations are delightful as ever in *The First Pup: The Real Story of How Bo Got to the White House*. The colors are fun and lively and combined with Staake's telling of a recent current event, they make *The First Pup* unique.

Volume 31, no.1 (September/October 2010)



Fields, Jan. *Daniel Defoe's The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. Illustrated by Eric Scott Fisher. ABDO, 2010. ISBN 9781602707030. \$24.00. 112 p.

Reviewer: Gabi Kupitz

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young Adult

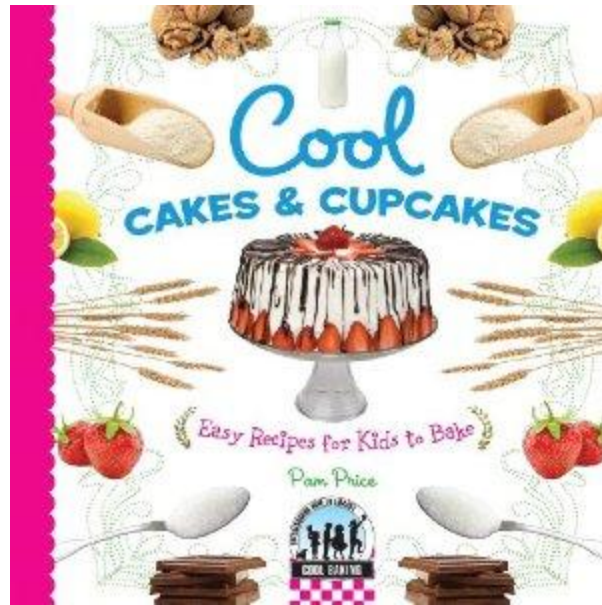
Rating: Excellent

Genre: Adventure stories

Subject: Shipwrecks--Juvenile fiction; Survival--Juvenile fiction; Adventure and adventurer--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Born in 1632 as the third son of English parents, Robinson Crusoe has no hope of an inheritance. Studying law and settling into a predictable life is not for him, so he escapes for a life of adventure at sea. Shipwrecks, slavery, pirates, and managing an island of his own are just some of the adventures Crusoe encounters. Being stranded for almost thirty years on "his" island tests Crusoe's resolve and ingenuity in many ways. Discovering that cannibals visit his island on a fairly regular basis at first sends Crusoe cowering into one of his well-disguised shelters until he determines to rescue a soon-to-be victim. The cannibals' intended victim so appreciates another chance at life that he becomes Crusoe's loyal friend Friday--so named because Crusoe's rescue of him took place on a Friday.

The two men have adventures on and off the island in this well-paced and "Cliff Notes" type of answer to the original tome which has over three hundred pages. Jan Fields has done a fine job of adapting a classic adventure that will appeal to many age groups.



Price, Pam. *Cool Cakes and Cupcakes*. ABDO Publishing Company, 2010. ISBN 9781604537741. \$25.65. 32 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational book;

Subject: Cakes--Juvenile Literature; Cupcakes--Juvenile Literature; Baking--Juvenile Literature; Books--Reviews;

Baking doesn't have to be complicated. Kids and adults alike can make the perfect cake or cupcake with these simple, clear recipes.. Integrated into each recipe are photos and descriptions of the tools and ingredients needed, as well as detailed pictures to help with each step of the baking process. Included are step-by-step recipes for cat in the hat cupcakes, luscious lemon pound cake, heavenly angel food cake, tunnel of fudge cake, chocolate flourless cake, and secret center cupcakes.

Price gives easy instructions that help kids understand each step of baking, allowing readers to take what they learn and apply it to recipes from home as well as those found in the book. Extra-eager bakers can continue their learning from the rest of the *Cool Baking* series, which include *Cool Pies and Tarts*, *Cool Quick Breads* and *Cool Cookies and Bars*, all of which use the same simple, helpful format. *Cool Cakes and Cupcakes* is a perfect cookbook for home use to help young bakers who are ready to begin making desserts on their own. It could also be used in a "Home Ec." section at school and as an aid to extend that section and learning at home.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Wiles, Deborah. *Countdown*. Scholastic, 2010. ISBN 9780545106054. \$17.99. 400 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963--Juvenile fiction; Best friends--Juvenile fiction; Brothers and sisters--Juvenile fiction; Families--Juvenile fiction; Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962--Juvenile fiction; School children--Juvenile fiction; Elementary schools--Juvenile fiction; United States--History--1961-1969--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Franny is an eleven-year-old girl trying to figure out the personal problems that have crept into her life. A stressed out mother, a too-perfect brother, a sister with a secret, an Uncle suffering from war trauma, and a feud with her best friend keep her on her toes at home. When President Kennedy announces that Russian missiles have been sighted over Cuba, Franny's life goes from complicated to terrifying. She learns how to "duck and cover" but that does little to assuage the fear growing in her and her community. Right as the Cuban Missile Crisis comes to an end, she finds courage when her friend's life is in danger, and learns from her sister that, even though she is small, she can still make a difference.

*Countdown* is a perfect example of how to use mixed media, making it a visually appealing book. Wiles includes photographs, quotes, and advertisements from the sixties to enhance the story and give readers a better sense of the impending doom and fear that Franny is feeling. The story itself is no trifling matter. Franny's journey feels very real and relatable, even for those who did not experience the 1960s themselves. Her embarrassment and concern over things big and small, as well as her desire to understand the world and find peace, will be something readers of all ages will appreciate. Fantastic prose, humor, and use of mixed media keep this historical fiction fresh and exciting to the last page.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)





Casanova, Mary. *The Klipfish Code*. Houghton Mifflin, 2007. ISBN 9780618883936. \$16.00. 217 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

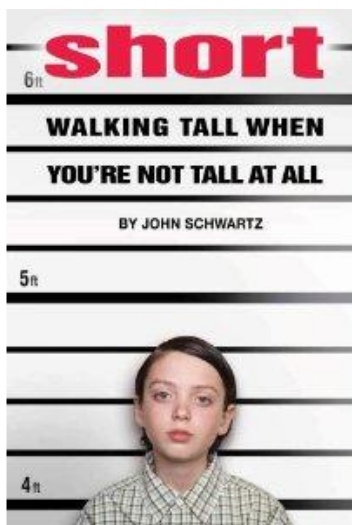
Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Family life--Norway--Fiction; World War, 1939-1945--Underground movements--Norway--Fiction; Norway--History--German occupation, 1940-1945--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Marit thinks Norway is safe from the Nazis—until the invasion occurs. Her parents send Marit and her brother, Lars, to live with their fisherman grandfather and Aunt Ingeborg on a small Norwegian island. Even though the island is somewhat secluded, Nazis constantly patrol, taking away such necessities as blankets, food, and radios from the villagers. In Marit's eyes, her grandfather is too willing to help the Nazis even after Ingeborg is sent away for refusing to teach Nazi propaganda in her classroom. Marit wants to help fight the Nazis in some way. She is given a chance to help when she discovers a wounded resistance soldier in the woods. The soldier has a secret mission for the resistance, but he is too badly wounded to complete it. He asks Marit to do the mission for him. She accepts and takes Lars along for the trip. She completes the mission and returns home to find that her family is under suspicion by the Nazis. Her grandfather surprises her and Lars by taking them to his boat to smuggle them, Ingeborg, and other refugees to Scotland, staying there until the war is over. Once Norway is safe again, they return back to their island and meet up with Lars and Marit's parents.

Casanova's story and characters are brilliantly written and beautifully complex. Many of the experiences described in the book are based on true events. This book would be an excellent resource for lessons on World War II.

Volume 31, no.1 (September/October 2010)



Schwartz, John. *Short: Walking Tall When You're Not Tall at All*. Roaring Book Press, 2010. ISBN 9781596433236. \$16.99. 132 p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

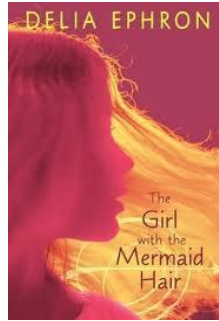
Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Schwartz, John, 1957- --Juvenile literature; Stature, Short--Social aspects--Juvenile literature; Human growth --Psychological aspects --Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews

John Schwartz stands five feet three inches tall. He writes of being well below average in a world obsessed with appearances. *Short* analyzes the motives behind expensive growth-hormone injections that allow kids to become a few inches taller. Schwartz challenges published studies which imply that short people are less happy, less successful, or less intelligent than taller peers. Schwartz celebrates Pablo Picasso, Danny DeVito, and George Stephanopoulos for their success despite their height. His advice on eliminating bullies is to stand up and gain respect. Schwartz's summation is that "being too short, or being too tall, or too whatever is only as big a problem as we let it be."

Schwartz defies society's view of perfection and promotes self acceptance. The theme of *Short: Walking Tall When You're Not Tall at All* is being happy with yourself regardless of looks and not comparing yourself with other. Readers will be probed to think about their own views on superficial treatment of others. Short, tall, or in between, readers will relate to Schwartz's message.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Ephron, Delia. *The Girl with the Mermaid Hair*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061542602. \$16.99. 312 p.

Reviewer: Anna Swenson

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Beauty, Personal--Juvenile fiction; Perfectionism (Personality trait)--Juvenile fiction; Pride and vanity--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Sukie Jamieson sees the world distorted through her mirror. She creates a perfect reality for herself and attempts to ignore the real life around her. Sukie is self-absorbed and only cares about other's perceptions of her. Eventually, though, she realizes the truth of the world and what actually matters in life through the cracks in her mirror. She learns to accept life the way it is, and care more about others.

Ephron's writing is beautiful, and the book is hard to put down, but the characters are too contrived and not very relatable. The only character who is developed even slightly is Sukie, and she hardly has any personality at first. Her self-absorbed spirit seems entirely exaggerated. However, her change in the end of the book is slightly redeeming. Altogether, the book is enjoyable and intriguing, but it can seem didactic at times. The themes are obvious, but the symbolism of the mirror and Senor, her dog, were spectacular.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Watson, Stephanie. *Heath Ledger: Talented Actor*. ABDO Publishing Company, 2010. ISBN 9781604537895. \$32.79. 112p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

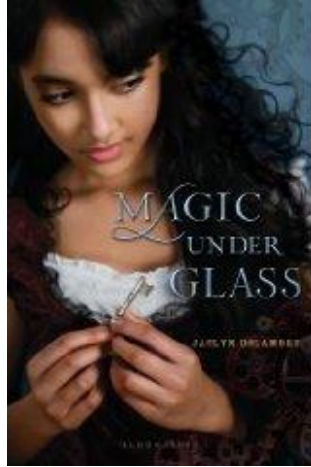
Genre: Biography;

Subject: Ledger, Heath, 1979-2008--Juvenile literature; Motion picture actors and actresses--Australia--biography--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

"I feel good about dying now, because I feel like I'm alive in her, but at the same time, you don't want to die because you want to be around for the rest of her life," so said Heath Ledger shortly before his death. Ledger was born in Perth, Australia, and after becoming involved in drama, he took any acting jobs that came to him. Moving to Hollywood helped Ledger land box-office movie roles. Ledger sought to control his life when he refused teen heartthrob roles from movie producers after his success in *10 Things I Hate About You*. Instead, Heath auditioned for a broad range of characters that would help develop his acting skills. He fell in love with Michelle Williams while the two were working together on *Brokeback Mountain*. His daughter Matilda Rose was born in October of 2005. Ledger passed away at the age of twenty-eight. He lives on through his daughter and his films.

Watson scripts an encompassing view of Heath Ledger's professional and personal life. This biography is filled with corresponding pictures of Ledger. Fans will love to read this memorable book about such a passionate and talented person.

Volume 31, no.1 (September/October 2010)



Dolamore, Jaclyn. *Magic Under Glass*. Bloomsbury, 2010. ISBN 9781599904306. \$16.95. 240p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fantasy Fiction

Subject: Robots--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Singers--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

As a "trouser girl," Nimira is poor and far away from home. When a handsome sorcerer, Hollin, appears after one of her performances it seems as if all her dreams may come true. He takes her back to his home so she can practice singing with a piano-playing automaton made by fairies. Nimira is surprised, however, when the strange automaton tries to speak with her. She learns that the automaton is a lost fairy Prince named Erris—a problematic discovery because humans and fairies are at war. As she spends more time with Erris, Nimira begins to fall in love with him. When a member of the sorcerer's council appears and wants to destroy Erris she decides to risk everything to save him. With the help of Hollin and his wife she manages to defeat the evil sorcerer and bring Erris back to life—almost. He's still part machine and must be wound with a key.

Readers will enjoy the growing romance between Nimira and the helpless Erris. The secondary plot which revolved around Hollin and his wife, however, seemed less important to the story, despite its "Jane Eyre" feel. The world Dolamore has created is intriguing, filled with historical details and magic to give the fantasy a richer feel. The writing is solid, though the pacing feels a bit off at times. The ending leaves something to be desired, as the fate of the fairy Prince is never fully resolved, possibly making room for a sequel. Fans of Libba Bray and Juliet Marillier will enjoy this almost-historical fantasy.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Cupala, Holly. *Tell Me a Secret*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061766664 \$16.99. 292 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Pregnancy--Juvenile Fiction; Secrets--Juvenile Fiction; Family problems--Juvenile Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Stuck in a family that's still in pieces after her sister's death, Miranda Mathison has ways to cope. A boyfriend, a best friend who is uncannily like her dead sister, and dreams of attending art school, keep her going. Everything goes wrong, though, when she finds out she's pregnant. Her friends and boyfriend abandon her, and her controlling mother is furious that Miranda wants to keep the baby. As punishment, she is no longer allowed to apply to art school. When Miranda tries to make amends with her boyfriend, she goes into a dangerously early labor. After the birth she lives at the hospital, hiding from her parents and her old life, taking care of her tiny NICU baby girl. While there, she realizes that she must forgive those around her and let go of the past if she wants a good future for her daughter. In the end she returns to her parents and finds another art school to attend, taking her baby with her.

*Tell Me a Secret* is a powerful and unique novel about teenage pregnancy. Though books about this subject can sometimes feel tired and overdone, Cupala stayed away from stereotypical characters and situations, and instead created a beautifully written and emotional story. Miranda is a likeable character, despite her flaws, and readers will enjoy seeing her grow and develop right along with her baby. The depth of her interactions with other characters, including her mother and supposed "friend" Delaney, add richness to the plot. Though not everything is completely resolved in the end, the book ends on a note of forgiveness and hope for the future.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Ehrenhaft, Daniel. *Friend Is Not a Verb*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061131066. \$16.99. 241 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr.

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Significant shortcomings

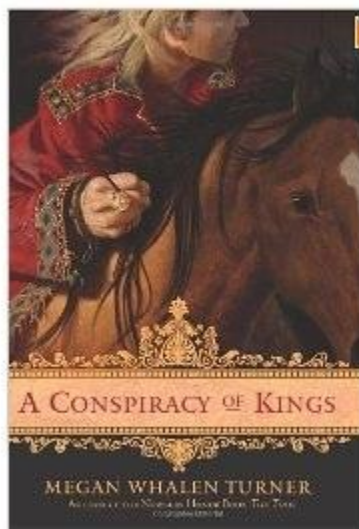
Genre: Fiction; Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Rock groups--Juvenile fiction; brothers and sisters--Juvenile fiction; Fugitives from justice--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

When Hen Birnbaum's sister, Sarah, returns after a yearlong absence no one will explain to him why she disappeared, he teams up with his friend Emma to figure out what happened himself. Hen tries to deal with his issues by playing the bass in a "90s nostalgic band." He tries to find answers with Sarah's friend Gabriel under the guise of bass lessons, but even after stealing a copy of Gabriel's memoir, things still don't add up. In the meantime, Hen begins to dream of being a rock star and tries to get his band off the ground. In the end Sarah reveals that she and Gabriel had stolen money from his father and had to hide out of the country until things were smoothed over. Hen no longer holds resentment for his sister, and realizes that while she is gone he has come to a better understanding of himself.

While the story has humor and strong characterization, the plot has a tendency to be slow and unrealistic. The book was at its best when concentrating on Hen's rockstar dreams and at its worst when focusing on Gabriel's memoir and the mystery behind Sarah's disappearance. The two plots didn't work well together and may leave readers confused or bored. However, the voice and inclusion of current media forms like Facebook may make this a good contemporary book for teenage boys, especially in a market that's flooded with teen girl stories.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Turner, Megan Whalen. *A Conspiracy of Kings*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061870934. \$16.99. 316 p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Adventure story;

Subject: Kings, queens, rulers, etc.--Juvenile fiction; Princes--Juvenile fiction; Adventure and adventurers--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

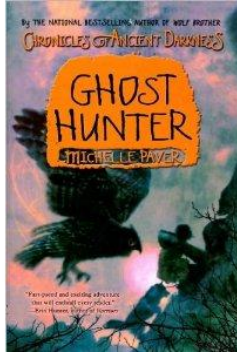
Sophos is the young heir to his uncle's kingdom, Sounis. His sweet temper and habit of yielding easily make him unfit to rule. One day Sophos is captured by a rebel baron, Hanaktos, who plans to use him as a puppet king. Sophos escapes Hanaktos and travels to the neighboring land of Attolia where his friend Eugenides is king. He hears the news of his uncle's death and so becomes king of a rioting country.

After swearing allegiance to the King of Attolia, Sophos goes back to his own country to win his barons' loyalty. He is captured by a Mede ambassador, Akretenesh, who claims to only keep Sophos as a guest. When Sophos goes to meet the barons to be officially elected as their king, they vote for a regent instead. Taking a hidden pistol from his coat, Sophos wounds Hanaktos and is forced to kill Akretenesh. He discovers that ten thousand Mede troops have landed at Sounis. Sophos defeats them with the aid of reinforcements from Attolia.

Turner once again produces an enthralling tale with her fourth book of the series *A Conspiracy of Kings*. The plot has mystery, character growth, and romance. Readers should start with the previous novels to fully grasp the many intricate characters and their motivations.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)





Paver, Michelle. *Ghost Hunter*. Illustrated by Geoff Taylor. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780060728403. \$16.99. 285 p.

Reviewer: Meriam Bates

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Occult fiction;

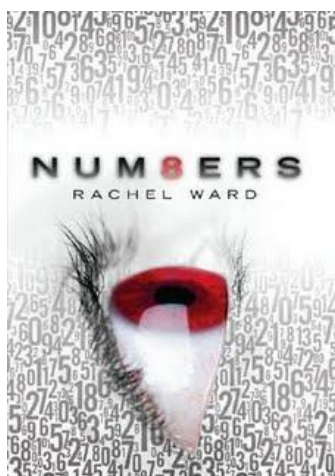
Subject: Prehistoric peoples--Juvenile fiction; Demonic possession--Juvenile fiction; Human-animal communication--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

In *Ghost Hunter*, Torak, Renn, and Wolf find themselves battling against the powers of Eostra, the final Soul-Eater; trying to stay together; and keeping alive. Prophecies say that Torak must find Eostra but die trying to defeat her. Meanwhile, Eostra waits in the Mountain of Ghosts lures Torak to her, desiring to use his gift of Spirit Walking to achieve her rise to power.

The prophecies come true as Torak's friends help destroy Eostra. Wolf is able to bring Torak back to life. Though Torak is revered and legendary among the tribes as a result, none want to live with him. Torak and Renn decide to remain wanderers in Wolf's pack.

In this fast paced climax, Paver continues her beautifully descriptive and eerie narration as she tells of a world before our own. Idealistic readers will be satisfied with the series ending, but to others it may seem a little rose-tinted. Deviating from previous practice, only minor characters die in this book. While Paver leaves the reader in suspense until almost the last page, the outcome is predictable. There are too many smooth edges for this to be completely satisfying, but readers of the series will enjoy this concluding novel.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Ward, Rachel. *Numbers*. Chicken House, 2010. ISBN 9780545142991. \$17.99. 325 p.

Reviewer: Anna Swenson

Reading level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

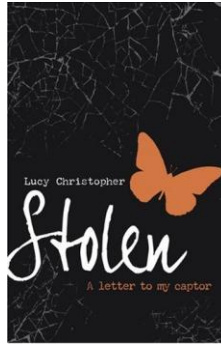
Genre: Fiction; Science fiction;

Subject: Psychic ability--Juvenile fiction; Interpersonal Relations--Juvenile fiction; Runaways--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Ever since her mother's death, Jem has been able to see numbers; signifiers of death dates. Because of this, she secluded herself from world. Until she met Spider, that is. Although he only had a few months of his life left, she became fast friends with him, and on one fated trip to the London Eye, they are sent on the run by police.

*Numbers* has the premise of being an intriguing science fiction novel, but that is not where the story truly excels. The true pleasure of the book lies in the characterization and the coming-of-age story told within the race from the police. The numbers seem to be only a plot device, and they are largely put off to the side for the majority of the book. Ward is truly fantastic at making the characters believable and lovable, and although the story is a bit loose, it has amazing details within it. The ending is where the true genius of her writing is seen, as she delivers a heart-wrenchingly poignant ending that is ironic, yet fitting. Another area where the novel fails to impress is in the plot. Many times, things seem to happen only to move the story along, and are never fully explored. *Numbers* is an excellent book, but if it were more to the point and less formulaic, it could have been spectacular.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Christopher, Lucy. *Stolen*. Chicken House, 2010. ISBN 9780545170932. \$17.99. 297 p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Cannot Recommend

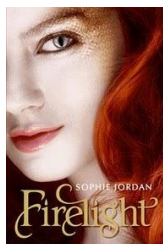
Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction; Fiction

Subject: Kidnapping--Juvenile fiction; Australia--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

A stranger buys sixteen-year-old Gemma a coffee in the airport after she stalks away from her parents. She is attracted to this man with deep blue eyes and lets him take her out of the airport and wakes up in Australia. Gemma tries to run away from her captor, Ty, but there is only desert for miles and miles. She pleads with Ty to let her go and finally he tells her that if in four months she does not love him, then he will let her go. He does not assault her in any way, but it is clear he wants their relationship to develop. Gemma is starting to develop feelings for Ty when she is bitten by a snake. The medicine Ty gives Gemma does not work and he is forced to take her to a hospital. Ty turns himself in and Gemma returns to her family.

Christopher's writing is detailed and compelling. The style of Gemma writing a letter to her captor is unique. The strong language in the book makes it one for mature readers. The theme of the book is unclear, and the ending is unresolved and unsatisfactory. This book of a girl falling in love with her kidnapper is not to be recommended.

Volume 31, no. 1 (September/October 2010)



Jordan, Sophie. *Firelight*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061935084. \$16.99. 336 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

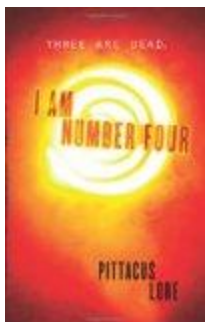
Genre: Informative; Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Dragons--Juvenile fiction; Shapeshifting--Juvenile fiction; High schools--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Jacinda is the first fire-breather born in hundreds of years. Her clan of half dragon–half human Draki is desperate to keep her protected. When she sneaks out for a day flight, hunters appear and chase her down. She escapes after a kind hunter lets her go, but her clan is furious. That night, her mother and sister, who have both lost their ability to manifest as dragons, take Jacinda and escape to a new home in the desert, hoping Jacinda’s inner Draki will die. On her first day of school, Jacinda meets Will, the hunter who helped her escape, and they fall in love. Whenever she is around Will her draki reawakens, making it hard for her to keep her secret. After many romantic moments and a fight with a popular girl, Jacinda accidentally reveals her true self to Will and his family of hunters. She flees with a member of her clan in order to keep her family safe, leaving the story on a cliffhanger for the sequel.

Fans of paranormal romance will be excited for this new twist in the popular genre, which adds dragons and hunters into the equation. The story, however, is more focused on the romantic tension between Jacinda and Will. The fantastical elements of the Draki are used more as a background, which may disappoint readers who are hoping for more action. Though the story mostly takes place at a high school, there is still plenty of tension and excitement to move the plot forward. *Firelight* is a great fit for teens looking for more paranormal romances after reading *Twilight* or *Shiver*.

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Lore, Pittacus. *I Am Number Four*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061969553. \$17.99. 420 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading level: Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Science Fiction;

Subject: Extraterrestrial beings--Juvenile fiction; High schools--Juvenile fiction; Love--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

John Smith has to move—again. He and his guardian, Henri, rarely stay anywhere for long. That's because John is the fourth of nine aliens sent to Earth from the planet Lorien. Three have been killed, and he's next. In their new home in Ohio, John falls in love with a human, Sarah, and gets entangled in a rivalry with her ex-boyfriend, Mark. Outside of school he works with Henry to develop his legacies (or superpowers) to help fight off the Mogadorians that are hunting him. Though he tries to stay unnoticed he ends up using his powers to save Sarah from a house fire, focusing unwelcome attention on himself. The Mogadorians come after him and John, along with alien number six, defeat the those who were sent after them. He has to leave town again, but hopes to return for Sarah in the future after all the Mogadorians have been defeated.

*I Am Number Four* does an excellent job of creating a realistic main character that teens can understand—even if he is an alien. The science fiction part of the story remains intriguing without overwhelming the contemporary feel of the novel, which helps the book appeal to a wide range of readers. *I Am Number Four* would be a great fit for teenage boys since John is a character they can relate to, and the plot is exciting. Because there is quite a bit of casual swearing, this book would be best for older teen readers.

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