Wild Man Island by Will Hobbs  
HarperCollins, 2002, 184 pp., $15.95  
ISBN: 0-688-17473-6

Fourteen-year-old Andy Galloway is with his mother on a sea kayak trip off the coast of Alaska. After going by himself on a personal pilgrimage to see the site of his archeologist father’s death, Andy is marooned on Admiralty Island. He soon discovers that he is not alone, but is being observed by a man living on the island, hoping to avoid detection. This adventure is driven by secrets only the man—who befriends Andy—knows. Together, they learn about the origins and arrival of the first Americans to land on this remote island off the coast of Alaska. Consistent with Hobbs’ other Alaska and Northwest Territory stories, readers ages ten-years-old and up will find this novel exciting to read, and historically informative. Hobbs provides much good context for his fictional narrative. A great read for all.

Edgar H. Thompson  
Emory, Virginia

City of the Beasts by Isabel Allende  
ISBN: 006050918X

Allende’s debut young adult novel is packed with intense adventure and mystical elements. Alexander Cold finds himself on an adventure in the rainforest of the Amazon, where his grandmother is searching for the legendary beast that is terrorizing the native tribes. He forms a powerful friendship with Nadia, the daughter of another member of the expedition. Through his adventures in the rainforest, Alex grows as a person and comes to terms with problems he experienced at home. Suddenly, in the midst of life-and-death adventure, his everyday adolescent problems seem trivial. Not only does he gain a new perspective on his daily life, but also he learns to confront and manage the emotions he has concerning his mother’s illness.

Allende does an excellent job of capturing readers from the beginning. This fast-paced novel takes readers on Alex and Nadia’s adventure with them, where they meet a variety of characters and encounter great mystery and intrigue.

Jennifer S. Dail  
Florida State University

Home of the Braves by David Klass  
Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2002, 312 pp., $18.00  
ISBN: 0-374-39963-8

David Klass is in a class of his own as a creator of likable, complex, believable male high school students. Joe Brickman, narrator and protagonist, is a multi-dimensional high school senior. He is proud of the soccer team that he captains, despite its poor record. He is jealous and suspicious of the new and phenomenally talented soccer player who arrives in time to take the team to the playoffs. He is stifled into inaction when he cannot figure out how to tell his life-long pal and neighbor that he longs for her. He is protective of his intelligent but geeky best friend, Ed the Mouse. He recognizes that his womanizing single father is not perfect, but respects him for trying to seek solutions to problems rather than giving in to defeats. And, although he enjoys working for his dad at the car wash, he questions the wisdom of his choice to pay little attention to his academics and to avoid applying for admission to college.

Further, Joe is intelligent enough to realize that the bullying that is allowed at his school is wrong and must stop. When Ed, who is trying to learn to stand up to the “hard guys” is harassed and humiliated by them, Joe begins to fear for Ed’s mental state. Eventually, he shares his fears with Ed’s dad, who acts quickly to reestablish contact with the son from whom he has become distant. Klass treats high school violence, and the conditions that breed it, subtly yet potently in this captivating novel. Ultimately, he offers hope through the power of friendships, family bonds, and promises of the future. Like his outstanding novel You Don’t Know Me (FSG, 2001), Home of the Braves is sure to speak directly to adolescent readers.

Sissi Carroll  
Florida State University
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<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<td>The Named</td>
<td>Marianne Curley</td>
<td>Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002</td>
<td>Fantasy/History/Time Travel</td>
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<td>Missing</td>
<td>Catherine MacPhail</td>
<td>Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002</td>
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<td>A Strong Right Arm: The Story of Mamie “Peanut” Johnson</td>
<td>Michelle V. Green</td>
<td>Dial, 2002</td>
<td>Biography/Women Athletes</td>
<td>0-8037-2661-9</td>
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The present lives in this book are affected by events in an unseen world where a battle rages between the mythological forces of the Order of Chaos and The Guard. The Order of Chaos tries to change the past so the present will be altered and made chaotic. The Guard fights the forces of Chaos to preserve history and the present, to fulfill written prophecy.

Ethan, a normal sixteen-year-old, and his fifteen-year-old friend, Isabel, are two of The Named who belong to The Guard. The Named complete missions throughout history, for example, in ancient Greece, in the time of England’s Richard II, and in Colonial New England, in order to prevent The Order of Chaos from prevailing.

Set in modern Australia, author Marianne Curley has created a powerful story that held my attention from beginning to end. If students like the Harry Potter books, or the Lord of the Rings, they will love The Named. In the same category as Lois Lowery’s The Giver, this book has Newbery Award possibilities. I highly recommend it.

Edgar H. Thompson
Emory, Virginia

Unfortunately, Derek’s death, Maxine’s mother resorts to psychics. Suddenly, Maxine begins receiving phone calls from someone claiming to be Derek, and she wonders—could it be a ghost? Or a prank pulled by the very same bully who tormented Derek? Or, perhaps, (no, it couldn’t be), is it Derek, himself?

Telling her father about the mysterious phone calls, though, proves to be a terrible mistake. Her father hursts harsh accusations at her that she is just lying for their attention. However, undeterred and determined, plucky Maxine, with the aid of a good friend, risks her life, and discovers the real truth about Derek’s disappearance.

Set in present-day England, this novel’s action and suspense are nonstop, as the story is filled with unexpected twists and turns that are sure to keep middle school girls—and reluctant readers—turning the pages.

Bill Mollineaux
Granby, Connecticut

Charlotte is frustrated by the baby’s frequent crying, her own lack of sleep, and her not being able to spend the time she would like with her new friend John, a boy who wants to see her as more than just a child. Eventually, she can no longer stand her adult responsibilities, and so one day, she abandons them, leaving the baby sleeping beneath her handcart, and taking off for a walk with her admirer, John. Unfortunately, when she returns, the baby is gone.

Frantically, Charlotte searches for the baby—only to find her in the hands a strange woman.

This coming of age novel demonstrates that adolescents experience doubts and uncertainty, no matter the time period or circumstance, and that guidance, patience, and perseverance are the guideposts towards becoming a fully functioning adult.

Lu Ann Brobst Staheli
Spanish Fork, Utah
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Genre</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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Shunned by her best friends, fifteen-year-old Amy’s loneliness leads her, as her Internet screen name Buzzybee, to an online chat room and to Zed. Despite parental warnings, Amy is simply positive that the young man joining her for private messaging is her dream come true. Zed is older and successful at his job in sales; plus, the photo he attaches shows an attractive blonde guy. Filled with anticipation and excitement, Amy’s own personal problems with friends, family, and school, suddenly seem irrelevant.

The plot unfolds through a series of interviews between Amy and a policewoman—and in the officer’s presence, Amy tells the story of her unfortunate series of events with the mysterious dreamboat Zed. And even though the reader knows that something has occurred between Amy and Zed, the revelation of “what has really happened on Amy’s innocent visit to meet Zed at his seaside town” are only revealed when Amy and a friend return to the scene of the incident.

Suspenseful and chock-full-of techno jargon, Amy’s story is fast-paced and believable. The British usage and slang won’t prevent understanding in this cautionary tale of possible risks in “online relationships.”

Judith Hayn  
Skokie, Illinois


Leah and her sister Ruth, both teenagers and Black, are growing up in segregated Sulphur, Louisiana, in the 1950s, long before the term African-American became vogue. They know a world of separate schools, “white” and “colored” water fountains, and of course, distinct social classes.

Their life changes, though, when they receive the unexpected surprise of train tickets to go visit their mysterious and generous Aunt Olivia in California. Suddenly, a world of freedom opens up for them. As Leah takes off on her journey West, she begins to realize the differences in the world outside her little town of Sulphur, LA. Traveling, she sees the contrasts of how races and individuals are treated elsewhere, and begins to wonder why “inequalities between white people and Negroes,” do exist, and why people cannot live together peacefully.

Leah and her sister’s lives change tragically when their parents are killed in a hurricane back home in Louisiana, and they are forced to live permanently with Aunt Olivia in California. They must cope with new friends, new rules, new freedom, and a profound loss.

Middle school readers will enjoy this book. It is a good read, and is filled with enough social historical information to be of great value to any classroom discussion. Teachers can engage their students in talks about race, prejudice, and a time in America when Blacks and Whites were far from equal.

Freyja J. Zipperer  
Savannah, Georgia


For fourteen-year-old Rodney, “The Shadow Place” represents an escape from reality: it is an escape from an abusive father; an escape from the pain of his mother’s leaving; and an escape from the growing alienation from his classmates. However, as he grows more and more angry, Rodney’s secret world begins to revolve around guns, bombs, and thoughts of violence towards others.

When Lissa, his friend and neighbor, suspects that Rodney is behind a school prank that has severely burned fellow classmates, she decides to spy on him to see what he is up to. Yet, once she discovers the magnitude of his violent side, she is torn between keeping his secret, or telling his parents. Lissa’s actions save not only her life, and her classmates’, but Rodney’s life as well.

In her very first book, author Carol M. Tanzman successfully incorporates suspense, a good story, and the language and interests of teenagers to create a true page turner.

Lisa Scherff  
Knoxville, Tennessee

Clip & File YA Book Reviews
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<tr>
<th><strong>Warriors of Alavna</strong> by N. M. Browne</th>
<th><strong>Crossing Montana</strong> by Laura Torres</th>
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Dan and Ursula are mysteriously transported from their twentieth-century school outing into what appears to be the midst of a first century Druid tribe. Along the way, Dan discovers a magic sword. He gains the powers of a Beur Sark, which transforms him into a “berserk” and ruthless, warrior. Ursula, whom the tribe believes to be a male warrior, discovers she can change gender at will, and can thus contribute, although reluctantly, to the tribe’s battle success. Both take an oath to avenge the massacre of the settlement of Alavna, as Ursula uses her emerging powers to transport a legion of Roman soldiers to aid in the definitive battle.

As a fantasy novel, *Warriors of Alavna* weaves an intricate and inventive plot that, at times, is difficult to follow. There is much graphic and bloody battle description, as Browne intertwines the fiction of Alavna with numerous historical links to first century Britain and the archeological studies of that period.

Margaret J. Ford
Campbell, Ohio

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Twelve-year-old Addie Goode lives with her attorney father and their housekeeper in a Pennsylvania town, moving there after Addie’s mother walks out. Now, Addie’s world revolves around her best friend, Luke, who in her words, is “a genius.”

One afternoon, though, Addie and Luke stumble across a young pregnant girl, who has been abandoned by the “creepy guy” who left her bruised and alone inside an old church. Luke, frightened and bewildered, insists to Addie that they keep their mouths shut, and leave the young girl where she is: alone, hurt, and abandoned. But Addie cannot stand to leave a fellow human being stranded; she insists that the young woman come home with her so that she can offer her food, clothing, and friendship. Instead of accepting Addie’s kindness, the young pregnant girl flees in despair.

As a fantasy novel, *Warriors of Alavna* weaves an intricate and inventive plot that, at times, is difficult to follow. There is much graphic and bloody battle description, as Browne intertwines the fiction of Alavna with numerous historical links to first century Britain and the archeological studies of that period.

Margaret J. Ford
Campbell, Ohio

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Callie decides to take charge, and search for her grandfather who has disappeared. And why shouldn’t she? After all, Callie has been in charge of her younger brother most of his life, and she has taken care of herself since her own father died. And now, to her dismay, all Callie’s mother and grandmother seem to care about is auctioning off the family farm.

Young Callie thinks that she knows exactly where her missing grandfather has gone—fishing in the lakes of Montana. So, Callie takes the car, some easy-to-grab-cash, and her mom’s handy credit card, and heads to the very state where her father died. What Callie doesn’t count on, though, is an unexpected stowaway in her car’s back seat; a credit card that simply won’t work; and literally hundreds of great fishing spots to search all over Montana. If ever there was a time she needed a friend to help her with her travails, the time is now.

In the spirit of Sharon Creech’s Newbery Medal winner, *Walk Two Moons*, author Laura Torres takes her readers on a journey towards self-understanding by underlining the importance of family history to uncovering who we really are.

Lu Ann Brobst Staheli
Spanish Fork, Utah

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*Crossing Montana* is a “problem novel” with somewhat coated didactic prescriptions for success. Rapp, though, cuts to the emotional core of his characters, leaving the reader with a strong emotional impact.

Some threads of the story—especially about gun control and sexual abuse—warrant more narrative comment. Still, this book will no doubt find a place with Rapp’s fans.
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<td>Bridging Beyond</td>
<td>Kathleen Benner Dubie</td>
<td>Philomel Books, 2002</td>
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<td>Mario Lemieux: Own the Ice</td>
<td>Kathleen Benner Dubie</td>
<td>Millbrook Press, 2002</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>Sports/Ice Hockey/Biography</td>
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Ann is involved in a tragic car accident after encouraging her best friend to drink and drive at a party. As her friend lies in a coma, she and her family relocate to her recently deceased grandmother’s house, and attempt to build a new life.

Shortly, though, after moving to her new home, Anna begins having unusual dreams. The characters in her dream take on an increasing familiarity to Anna. Drama builds until it is revealed that she is reliving the early life of her beloved grandmother. Through this harrowing and unusual experience, Anna helps her grandson’s dear old friends come to terms with events of their past, while Anna comes to terms with her own personal mistakes.

The flashback to the grandmother’s young life offers an original story line for this easy-to-read novel. The tone and style that will probably appeal to introspective adolescents, even those who are reluctant readers.

Rebecca A. Hines
Daytona Beach, Florida

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>A Mother to Embarrass Me</td>
<td>Carol Lynch Williams</td>
<td>Delacorte Press, 2002</td>
<td>128</td>
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<td>0-385-72922-7</td>
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Fifteen-year-old Lucien is dying of cancer in London, England. When his father gives him an old Italian blank journal, Lucien falls asleep holding it, and suddenly finds himself transported back in time, cancer free, to the Vienna-like other-world city of Belezza, 1577. Here, as a “stravagant,” or a wanderer between two worlds, he enters a realm governed by a masked Duchessa, named Silvia.

In this charming and lighthearted story, twelve-year-old Laura Stephens feels the same way about her embarrassing mother. She keeps a detailed list of all the things that she would like to change about her mother, and her emotion-packed lives.

Cyrine Wells
Machias, Maine

You can probably remember times when your parents embarrassed you. Their words, dress, and actions all combined to humiliate you in front of your friends, or, worst of all, the love of your life. And no matter what you tried to do, you could not stop them. Your parents became more embarrassing by the minute, and you thought that you would never be able to face the world again!

In this book, you will find out what happens when Laura’s mother does not mean to be embarrassing. She would do anything to keep Laura happy, but unfortunately, her best efforts all seem to be just plain wrong. After all, how could she have known that Laura’s father would break his neck after she encouraged him to break dance at Laura’s birthday party? And how can Laura prevent her mother from innocently talking behind her back to her best friend, Christian? And what can Laura do to prevent her mother from taking a modeling job even though she is several months pregnant?

Author Carol Lynch Williams takes a humorous look at mother-daughter relationships in this great read for young teens who feel embarrassed at their own parents’ behavior. Young people will relate to the parents’ all too familiar antics, and their desire to really “relate” to their teenagers’ emotion-packed lives.

Lu Ann Brobst Staheli
Spanish Fork, Utah

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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Pages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stravaganza: City of Masks</td>
<td>Mary Hoffman</td>
<td>Bloomsbury Children's Books</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>$16.95</td>
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Although this book is likely to be enjoyed most by young readers who are already hockey or sports fans, it is so well photographed, captioned, and researched that any reader with a keen interest in human events and challenges will enjoy this good read. I did!

Tom Phillion
Oak Park, Illinois
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<tr>
<td>I Smell Like Ham</td>
<td>Betty Hicks</td>
<td>Family Relationships/Basketball</td>
<td>Roaring Brook Press, 2002</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>$15.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Smell Like Ham is the story of a twelve-year-old Nick Kimble's struggle to adjust to a new life. Nick's mother recently passed away, and Nick's father has remarried, bringing a stepmother, Miriam, and a stepbrother, Dwayne, into their home. Dwayne, a brilliant eight-year-old who seems to share none of the interests or talents that Nick has, becomes a real irritant to Nick. Nick takes his anger out on Dwayne, insulting him and avoiding spending time with him. Nick is unaware of the silent suffering that Dwayne is going through until Dwayne runs away. In search for Dwayne, Nick learns about how difficult the changes in routine have been for Dwayne, and how much Dwayne wants to please his older stepbrother. Nick is able to step outside of his own suffering, and recognize Dwayne's affection. I Smell Like Ham is a good choice for reluctant readers; they will be satisfied by the compelling storyline and situations that are familiar to teens. This easy to read book could be used in classrooms to discuss many themes and topics, including change, conflict, character development, and of course, stepfamilies. Maryanne Obersinner Eugene, Oregon</td>
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<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Carolee Dean</td>
<td>Coming-of-Age/Relationships</td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin, 2002</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
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<td>0-618-13846-3</td>
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<td>The small town of Comfort, Texas, does not confine the dreams of high school freshman Kenny Williams, but his family's lifestyle threatens those dreams daily. His alcoholic, ex-prisoner father and desperate scheming mother provide little support even though they do care about Kenny, and three-year-old Roy, Jr. in their own ways. Kenny works like an unpaid servant in the family's truck stop café to fulfill his mother's dream of making Roy Dan Willson, Sr., a guitar singing star. Remarkably, Kenny finds his own talent in the University Interscholastic League Poetry Contest for high school students. Memorable characters are revealed against a fast-paced film-like setting. This author's first novel contains tragicomic elements, and mature subject matter related to physical abuse, alcohol, guns, robbery, and abortion. And to elevate the read, there are references to renowned poets Robert Frost and Maya Angelou, among others. Mary Annelle Baker Overland Park, Kansas</td>
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<td>One Night</td>
<td>Marsha Qualey</td>
<td>Drugs/Addictions/Politics</td>
<td>Dial Books, 2002</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>$16.99</td>
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<td>0-8037-2602-3</td>
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<td>At nineteen, Kelly Ray is recovering from heroin addiction. Although clean for now two years, Kelly struggles daily with staying sober, and leading a quiet life. The most excitement she has is working for her aunt, an infamous radio talk show host. Then, she meets Prince Tomas Teronovich, and embarks on a night of adventures and confessions as she tries to keep him away from his guards long enough to give her aunt an interview. For one night, Kelly must admit who she is, what she has done, and where she wants to be. As a protagonist, she is witty, humorously cynical, and completely human. Tomas is not as well-characterized, but readers will be able to relate to both him and Kelly, and enjoy tension and flirting between them. One Night is an enjoyable read; its theme is serious, and its style engaging. This is a great addition to anyone's library. Jennifer York Knoxville, Tennessee</td>
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<td>An impatient young Queen, a ruler of seven countries, demands one thing that seems unavailable to her: a fresh melidrop. In this whimsical story of a long ago time, we learn that no way has yet been found to bring this most delectable of all fruits to this young Queen in an edible state. Yet this is what she desperately wants. Then an unpretentious explorer by the name of Bartlett is brought before the Queen. Bartlett is different from than most of the Queen's subjects: he does not fawn over her. Instead, Bartlett ignores the Queen's demands to find this &quot;precious fruit,&quot; until she reluctantly strikes a deal with him. This delightful and inventive story of the adventures of Bartlett, which includes towing an iceberg by a ship, and of his challenging search for the divine edible melidrop, is a wonderful tale. Poking gentle fun at human foibles, this easy read would make a wonderful choice to share aloud with middle schoolers. Diana Mitchell Williamston, MI</td>
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Clip & File YA Book Reviews
In the Shadow of Pali: A Story of the Hawaiian Leper Colony

By Lisa Cindrich

G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2002, 245 pp., $18.99

In the 1860s, twelve-year-old Liliha is sent from Oahu Village to the leper colony on Molokai. The doctors have led her to expect an organized hospital and settlement, but she and other new arrivals find chaos instead when they are unceremoniously dumped on the island’s shores. The Englishman captain-in-charge does not speak Hawaiian, nor does he care about the people. Instead, brutal thugs amongst the lepers, ruled by Kalani, hoard the scant food and supplies. Liliha, alone and stunned by what has happened to her, must survive on her own. Only Manukekua, a boy who works for the Captain, helps her to find food and water, build a hut for shelter, carve wooden items to barter with, and escape Kalani’s wrath.

All through this exciting tale, readers will learn about both Hawaii, and Hansen’s disease. This book ends with an informative glossary about Hawaii, and a detailed historical note about this unique time in Hawaiian history.

Rebecca Barnhouse
Youngstown, OH

When the Emperor Was Divine by Julie Otsuka

Knopf, 2002, 144 pp., $18.00

A compelling and heartbreaking story, this book is about the tragedy of Japanese Americans interned during WW II and, by understated implication, it is a powerful indictment of the kind of racism still practiced in this country, now more commonly directed at Middle Easterners. First, the father is taken for “routine questioning,” not to be seen by his family for over four years. A few months later, mother, teen daughter, and ten-year-old son are sent to a fenced and guarded desert camp for three and half years.

Haunting, evocative, brilliantly written, with multiple points of view—mother, daughter, son, daughter and son (“we”), and finally, father, none of whom is given a name—this novel merits significant attention. Note: some young readers may benefit from teacher or Web explanations of the internment camps of WW II, and the treatment of Japanese Americans before, during, and especially, after their imprisonment.

Ted Hipple
Knoxville, TN

Ghosts at the Window by Margaret McAllister


Young Ewan Dart has moved to Scotland, and discovers that his brand new house, a huge stone mansion, has the strange habit of “playing tricks on his senses.” Out of nowhere, it seems, the new home changes “centuries.” For brief but startling moments, Ewan can see people from the past, and they can see him.

One night, alone in his bedroom, Evan encounters the ghost of Elspeth, a girl who died in 1937. The young Elspeth has never been able to leave the temporal world of the living, and join her friends on “the other side.” Terrified of something that lurks in Evan’s closet, and desperate to find eternal rest, the ghost Elspeth pleads for Ewan’s help.

Adventure and mishap ensues as Ewan helps Elspeth escape, and overcomes his own fears about the presence of more ghosts. Middle school students will embrace this fast-paced, easy read tale of adventure and mystery, and teachers will delight in a book that reluctant readers will find historically intriguing, and delightfully engaging.

Jeffrey S. Kaplan
Orlando, Fl

1000 Inventions and Discoveries by Roger Bridgman


The latest volume of handsome, informative, coffee table tope books published by Dorling Kindersley Limited, better known as DK, is Inventions and Discoveries. Completed in association with the Smithsonian Institution, this is another volume that will grace any library. This book, complete with color photos, highly informative and readable text, and easy-to-read layouts, will enhance elementary, middle and high school classrooms and lessons about the importance of humankind’s most significant inventions and discoveries since the dawn of time. Reluctant readers, experienced readers, and just plain pure enjoyment readers will delight in this wonderful volume that surpasses even the best Web page for its comprehensive, “easy to download” resource of the world’s most remarkable and life-improving discoveries.

Renee C. Kaplan
Orlando, Fl
Who is Jesse Flood? by Malachy Doyle
Coming-of-Age/Northern Ireland
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002, 173 pp., $14.95
Jesse Flood is a fourteen-year-old boy who is desperately trying to figure things out. But Jesse, like many awkward teenagers, is not very good at living in the everyday world.

Awkward around girls, terrible at sports, and clumsy to the touch, Jesse struggles daily to "fit in" with the teenagers who inhabit the sleepy seaside town of Greywater, in Northern Ireland. Embarrassed and confused, young Jesse tries to cope with a crowd that considers themselves more hip and with-it than this average, angst-ridden teenager. As he mulls through his loneliness, Jesse tells himself (and readers) stories pieced together from Irish folktales, his parents' troubled marriage, embarrassing moments from his awkward childhood, and his confused and troubling friends. Some of those friends turn out to be drug dealers, and one, unfortunately, loses his life in one last sale.

Told with humor and poignancy, this journalistic novel tells the tale of a teenager who is growing up across the ocean, yet whose life resembles a world that many teenagers, sadly, know all too well.

Martha Montgomery
Dixon, Illinois

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: Guardian of the Glades by Kieran Doherty
Biography/Everglades/Ecology
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002, 173 pp., $14.95
ISBN 0-7613-2371-6
Marjory Stoneman Douglas, who died in 1998 at 107 years old, made it her life's work to save the Florida Everglades from developers' bulldozers. This book tells her story, from her childhood through to her death. Accompanied by pictures, the book examines the impact of this remarkable woman on the ecology of Florida, and ultimately, the its governmental policies and daily lifestyle.

This book is very attractive to look at, with a two toned green and black cover that will enhance any home library or coffee table. The first page of each chapter and the photos are each etched with leaves and ferns. However, the text contains few direct quotations or thoughts from Douglas herself. Both the vocabulary and ideas are very mature, and may confuse younger and less-knowledgeable readers. Strong readers who like biography or who are interested in ecology, especially that of Florida, will likely enjoy this book for its praise of Marjory Stoneman Douglas' work and her enduring legacy.

Audrey Berner
Montréal, Quebec
Canada

Surfer Dog by Elizabeth Spurr
Boy-Dog Friendship/Surfing
Dutton Children's Books, 2002, 103 pp., $15.99
ISBN: 0-525-46898-6

Does your dog know how to surf? Maybe, not, but young Pete's dog does.

Pete has just moved to a new town where he knows no one. But, things are not all that bad: the nearby beaches are splendid for surfing, and from nowhere, a dog enters Pete's new life. The dog, which Pete names Blackie, is a stray black Labrador whose obsession with the sand and surf parallels Pete's own fondness for water and waves.

Soon, Pete is out on the water, trying to teach Blackie to surf, an event that captures the imagination and intrigue of a whole host of new grade school friends. Pete and his parents wonder, though, if these new found friends only interested in him because he has a dog who is learning to surf.

Obessed with Blackie and the ever alluring waves, Pete starts failing in school. He is grounded at home, during the time that he and Blackie are training for a major surfing contest. And to make matters worse, Blackie's long lost owner shows up to claim the dog.

Young readers will revel in the fun-loving and highly recognizable youngsters, Pete, and enjoy the authentic surfing details and lingo in this fast-paced, high interest read.

Jeffrey S. Kaplan
Orlando, Fl

Big City Cool: Short Stories about Urban Youth
Edited by M. Jerry and Helen S. Weiss
Short Stories
Persea Books, 2002, 192 pp., $8.95
ISBN 0-89255-278-6

This collection provides 14 reader-friendly stories that address not only concerns about being cool, but many serious issues with which adolescents grapple. The book includes stories by award winning authors including Walter Dean Myers, Amy Tan, John H. Ritter, and Judith Ortiz Cofer. Michael Rosovsky's "Freezer Burn" is about a boy and his father as they come to grips with their mother's and wife's death from ovarian cancer. Sharon Dennis Wyeth recalls her own experiences with racial stereotyping as a mixed race child when she writes about her family's attempt to buy real estate in "White' Real Estate." Amy Tan contributes an excerpt from The Joy Luck Club that portrays the pressure to succeed that is placed on children of immigrants. Joseph Geha places his story within the context of the September 11th tragedies. In John H. Ritter's "Old School/Fu Char School," a boy risks his reputation to befriend a strange girl, and plays his trumpet to save her life.

Like classic short stories, the ones in this contemporary collection quickly engage the reader. Like the other short story collections by M. Jerry and Helen Weiss, From Our Experience to Another, and Lost and Found, they provide fine literature for independent or classroom reading.

Lisa Winkler
South Orange, New Jersey