Absolutely, Positively Not . . . Gay by David Larochelle

Gender Issues
Scholastic, 2005, 224 pp., $16.95
ISBN: 0-439-59109-0

Steven is a normal sixteen-year-old dealing with ordinary things that any teenager would have to deal with, such as passing his driving test. One thing that has been on his mind lately is girls, but unlike many boys his age that dream of the female species, he is curious whether or not he is attracted to them at all. He has hidden magazines under his bed for the past couple of years. These magazines aren’t Playboys, but instead the pages are filled with male underwear models. After twenty-three dates with twenty-one different girls, Steven has finally come to the conclusion that he has known all along; he’s gay.

This novel deals with a serious subject in a clever and humorous manner. Any young man struggling with these issues should find relief in this book.

Julie Davenport
Manhattan, KS

Boy Proof by Cecil Castelluci

Self-discovery
ISBN: 0-7636-2333-4

High school can be tough. Between battles with friends, agonizing over what lies beyond graduation and crazy parents, any teenager may find himself not knowing where to turn. In Boy Proof, readers are whisked away on a journey of self-realization. Victoria Jurgen is a 16-year-old girl struggling to find herself amongst the sea of teenagers in a Beverly Hills high school. As a founding member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, Jurgen loses herself in films whenever she has the chance. Obsessed with the film Terminal Earth, Jurgen changes her name to “Egg” after her favorite character. Egg hides her insecurities beneath her shaved head and white cloak—the same cloak worn in Terminal Earth.

Egg is confident in her spot as valedictorian until Max Carter arrives at school. Carter’s arrival changes everything for Egg—who begins to realize there is more to life than being invisible. This book is the ideal novel for any teenager who has ever felt as though he/she does not fit in.

Katie Copeland
Manhattan, KS

Candy by Kevin Brooks

Drug Addiction/Heroin
Scholastic, 2005, 364 pp., $16.95
ISBN: 0-439-68327-0

Joe Beck’s parents are divorced, and he and his older sister, Gina, live with their father, a medical doctor, in an upscale area outside London. Joe, a gifted and lonely musician, meets Candy, buys her coffee and falls hopelessly in love. As Candy’s secret life of prostitution and heroin addiction unveils, Joe is pulled into her violent and fearful world. Despite threats from Iggy, Candy’s pimp, Joe takes Candy to his family’s cottage, where she goes cold-turkey off heroin. Iggy kidnaps Gina, and Joe must decide between Candy and his sister. Which will he choose? Or will he have to? Can Mike, Gina’s boyfriend, help them?

A riveting and suspenseful love story set in a vicious underworld of drugs, poverty, and prostitution. The plot is well-paced; characters are well-defined. An unnerving account of heroin addiction and withdrawal. For 16 and up.

Pam B. Cole
Kennesaw, GA

Dealing with Mom: How to Understand Your Changing Relationship by Laurence Gillot and Veronique Sibiril

Relationships
Amulet Books, 2005, 112 pp., $9.95
ISBN: 0-8109-9201-9

Relationships are always hard. The older we get, the harder they get. You are going through so many changes in life as it is (your body, your friends, your relationships) and now you have to worry about your mom going crazy on you. What is with her anyway?

In Dealing with Mom teens and preteens alike can find the answers to many questions that they have about their relationship with their mother. The book goes step by step through four different phases of relationships. Phase one: Mothers: Can’t live with them, can’t send them back; Phase two: If it’s not one thing, it’s your mother; Phase three: My mother….myself; and Phase four: How are you feeling? Stories you might be able to relate to. While Gillot and Sibiril hit on many important issues of dealing with relationships between mothers and teens, it seems to be more targeted to the younger generation of teens: the pre-teens.

Marcia Woodyard
Wamego, KS

Clip & File YA Book Reviews
Don't Tell the Girls
by Patricia Reilly Giff
Holiday House, Inc., 2005, 130 pp., $16.95
ISBN: 0-8234-1813-8

Don't Tell the Girls is a story about a family's connection between generations and the history behind the family. The story would be best suited for middle school readers.

The book, but the importance of doing research and understanding the place in which the story is set. The setting is significant, as it reflects the time period and the cultural context in which the story takes place. The author does an excellent job of using the setting to convey the atmosphere and mood of the story.

Don't Tell the Girls is an engaging and thought-provoking story that will appeal to readers who enjoy historical fiction and family memoirs. It is a great choice for classrooms or book clubs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Hear My Sorrow, The Diary of Angela Denoto, a Shirtwaist Worker</strong> by Deborah Hopkinson</th>
<th><strong>Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow</strong> by Susan Campbell Bartoletti</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scholastic, 2004, 182 pp., $10.95</td>
<td>Scholastic, 2005, 176 pp., $19.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending school is a joy for Angela Denoto but a luxury that her family can no longer afford. Now that she is fourteen years old, she must begin work in a shirtwaist factory. Her disappointment in leaving school is tempered, however, by the pride that she feels in being able to help her family pay the rent and put food on the table. Angela quickly finds that the harsh conditions she and her peers must experience at work are nearly inhumane. Aching muscles, needle-pierced fingers, and conflicted feelings toward authority convince Angela that she must accept this new organization, called a union, and join the fight for fair treatment of workers. Things finally come to a climax when Angela helplessly watches as 146 young women and girls, including her beloved sister, needlessly lose their lives in the Triangle Waist Company fire of 1911. Through her journal entries, we are led through the turbulent years of 1909-1911 in New York City’s Lower East Side where young Jewish and Italian immigrant girls worked in the garment industry. It is a wonderful glimpse of the time period and of those adolescent struggles of hope and fear, joy and sorrow, and dreams of the future that transcend time.</td>
<td><strong>Hitler Youth</strong> provides a readable and compelling examination of the manipulation of adolescents in the Third Reich. The stories of 11 young people are traced through the rise and fall of National Socialism in Germany. We follow teens smitten by Nazi ideology, teens who went along reluctantly, teens who became part of the resistance movement in Germany, and Jewish teens victimized by the Nazi regime. Along the way, we arrive at a deeper understanding of the complex forces targeting young people during this period. The book is oversized and filled with black and white photographs that capture the conflict of the time—both the conflict between nations and the conflict within individuals. <strong>Hitler Youth</strong> would certainly be a valuable addition to units of study devoted to the Holocaust and/or World War II, providing a view of the effects of the war on Germany’s adolescents as well as the effect German adolescents had on the war.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>F. Todd Goodson</strong> Mercedes, KS</td>
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**Key to Aten** by Lynn Sinclair

Key Barn Books, 2005, 192 pp., $8.95

**Key to Aten**, Lynn Sinclair’s first book of a proposed trilogy, is a fantasy romance told by lead character Jodi Greer. Like the characters in K.A. Applegate’s *Everworld* series, Jodi’s friend Neil find himself in a different world after Neil falls asleep. Jodi joins him by touching his sleeping body. Is the world all part of Neil’s dream, or is it a real world with real consequences? Sinclair offers this as a potential question dealing with how we differentiate between dreams and reality. Sadly, this question is quickly abandoned as Jodi and Neil find themselves in trouble with giant spiders, and later caught in the middle of tribal conflicts.

*Key to Aten* offers fascinating characters, especially with the enchanting yet dangerous Aladar, who has the power to control plants. Unfortunately, Jodi’s first-person perspective limits the development of the other, often more interesting characters. The book has very little humor and instead thrives on melodramatic romance and entirely predictable plot twists. The ending of the novel, however, sets up intriguing possibilities that make the second book in the series worthy of a glance.

Ingrid Seitz
Manhattan, KS

**The Keys of the Kingdom, Book Three: Drowned Wednesday** by Garth Nix

Scholastic, 2005, 400 pp., $15.95

In this third book of his series, Nix’s unlikely hero Arthur Penhaligon continues his adventures in the House. This time he must meet with Dr. owned Wednesday who is suffering from a strange eating disorder—her fierce hunger has forced her to grow to gargantuan dimensions. Unfortunately for Arthur, she eats most of her guests. Arthur survives the meeting, but discovers he must confront the powerful pirate Feverfew to gain the third part of the Will and claim the Third Key from Drowned Wednesday.

Readers will enjoy Nix’s complex, imaginative universe (the House and the Border Seas) and his cast of intriguing characters, including clerks trying to be sailors and talking rats trying to pilot a submarine. Arthur’s common sense, good nature, and loyalty make him a suitable protagonist for this charming story.

John Ritchie
Manhattan, KS

Virginia Beesley
Quinter, KS

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**Clip & File** **YA Book Reviews**
In *Ladies First: Women Athletes Who Made a Difference*, Ken Rappoport tells the story of more than a dozen famous female athletes. Among those is Manon Rheaume, the first woman to play professional hockey. As goalie for the Tampa Bay Lightning, she had the toughest position on the team. Rheaume achieved her dream with hard work, perseverance, and talent.

Twelve more chapters include women who broke barriers: Julie Krone in horse racing, Shirley Muldowney in auto racing, and more traditional sports, Wilma Rudolph in track and Nadia Comaneci in gymnastics. Readers will find inspiring stories of women athletes who made their dreams come true.

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Ruth Prescott  
Manhattan, KS

The Land of Elyon Book I  
by Patrick Carman

Fantasy Orchard, 2005, 251 pp., $11.95  
ISBN: 0-439-70093-0

This book began as a series of bedtime stories for the author’s children and was originally self-published in Seattle, Washington. Readers of all ages will be captivated by this story of a young girl named Shiloh who is forbidden to explore the forbidden by rules, guards, culture, and custom. Indeed, she finds her way beyond the walls to discover talking animals and a plot to destroy the kingdom. She is, of course, with the aid of her animal allies, ultimately able to save the day by bringing down the walls. However, her adventures are apparently to be continued.

Young fantasy readers will enjoy this story of a small female heroine although the adventures are far from as engaging as those in Narnia or Hogwarts. The underlying message that sneaking around leads to great deeds may be disturbing for some adults, yet it taps into the covert desire of all children to have a hand in saving the world.

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Myrna Dee Marler  
Laie, HI

The Last Universe  
by William Sleator

Life-threatening Illnesses/Generation Gap  
Amulet Books, 2005, 214 pp., $16.95  
ISBN: 0-8109-5858-9

William Sleator’s new novel for young adults is a riveting tale of psychological suspense. This suspense is heightened by the first-person narrator, also the main character. Susan is so unwilling to enter all the dangerous situations in the garden behind her house that she makes you as the reader want to go there even more. Sleator paints a convincing picture of what it is like to be a 14-year-old girl in a world of compelling friends and in the discussion of the world religions, faith by faith. This book is packed with twists and turns and the mysterious maze in the middle of the garden is a metaphor for the labyrinthine mind games Sleator plays with his readers. There is just enough science to make the book slightly believable and to keep the mind guessing. Sleator is a master at crafting a seemingly innocent garden behind an old house. There are no light sabers or wookies, but this story will take you on a psychological journey as you wonder if the universe really makes any sense at all. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in alternate realities.

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John Ritchie  
Manhattan, KS

Looking for Alaska  
by John Green

Relationships/Loyalty/Death  
ISBN: 0525475060

Based on the last words of Francois Rabelais, narrator Miles Halter leaves Florida to attend his last two years of high school at Culver Creek boarding school in Alabama because “I go to seek a Great...” group of friends and in the discussions of his World Religions class, taught by Dr. Hyde. Green’s book is a thrilling novel that lacks chapters, but is divided by headings that are counting down to a life-changing event in Miles’s life, and later by headings that count days after the event. It is a tribute to Green’s capabilities as a writer that the event is open to multiple possibilities that make it unpredictable until it happens. Throughout the novel, Green challenges the reader’s perceptions of friendship, loyalty, relationships, sex, life, suffering, and death. The book is filled with scenes that are both laugh-out-loud funny and bury-one’s-head-and-cry tragic.

A warning to readers: Green’s novel contains a lot of explicit language, some drug use, and explicit sexual situations. However, each of these situations is handled with depth and maturity and is vital to the development of plot and character.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment</th>
<th>Adventure/Thriller</th>
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<tr>
<td>by James Patterson</td>
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Max, the winged teenager from Patterson’s *The Lake House and When the Wind Blows*, is back in a book of her own. Guess who else is back? The bad guys from the school where Max’s first memories come from, and the Erasers, a band of mutant wolf-like assassins, out to get Max and her flock of winged kids. Max’s journey takes her back to the school to rescue her friend.

This novel was typical Patterson, with the heart pumping action and close calls, mixed with a new feeling of teenage anxiety. The point of view switches from flock member to flock member, making this not as much Max’s book as her flock’s book. This change is disorienting instead of being insightful, but I found the action and captivating characters made Max’s ride inviting. I recommend this novel to action-adventure fans, especially those thirsting for the thriller novel from the mostly female point of view. Patterson’s adult readers will not be disappointed, and he will definitely gain a teen audience with this exciting novel.

Jennifer Judy
Oxford, OH

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<th>Merlin and the Making of the King</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
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<td>Retold by Margaret Hodges, Ill. by Trina Schart Hyman</td>
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Exactly why the world needs another retelling of Arthurian legend is unclear. However, this version seems aimed more at children than young adults, recounting three tales featuring Merlin as kingmaker and the hand that guided the hand of King Arthur as he fought relentless enemies, set up the round table, lost and regained his sword, and established truth and justice. The three stories are “The Sword in the Stone” (already recounted by Disney), “Excalibur,” and “The Lady of the Lake.” It lightly covers King Arthur’s troubles with Guinevere and Lancelot and the eventual demise of the great dream. The prose is clear and engaging, telling the stories well. Its best feature, however, are the lush illustrations and the simulation of illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages. This is an excellent book for young fantasy readers to cut their teeth on. The prose and paintings suggest a host of unseen magical forces in the world waiting to be unleashed against evil and even hints at the possibility of Arthur’s eventual return. Thus, it becomes a book themed around hope and the triumph of good over wicked men’s vanities.

Myrna Dee Marler
Laie, HI

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<th>Out of Boneville by Jeff Smith</th>
<th>Graphic Novel</th>
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Tapping the popularity of book-length comics, Scholastic has launched its new graphic novel imprint, Graphix, by releasing a hard-cover edition of volume one from Jeff Smith’s Boneville series. *Out of Boneville* was first published in 1991, the first in a series now at nine volumes. The new Scholastic edition maintains the original content but introduces color illustrations.

The book traces the adventures of the Bone cousins—Phoney Bone, Smiley Bone, and Fone Bone. The characters are endearing, and the plot is a blend of comedy and adventure. Social satire is just beneath the surface, but the messages are subtle.

Fans of Boneville will want to examine the color artwork. Those new to graphic novels will find in *Out of Boneville* a nice introduction to the genre, and teachers interested in exploring the possibilities of graphic novels will find the Boneville series safe for classroom consumption.

F. Todd Goodson
Manhattan, KS

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<th>Paradise City (The Big Empty, Book 2) by J. B. Stephens</th>
<th>Futuristic/Adventure</th>
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</table>

Six teens have survived *Desolation Angels (The Big Empty, Book 1)* and have arrived in Novo Mundum after the Midwest has been abandoned following a viral outbreak called Strain 7. This attempt to recreate a Garden of Eden exists at an isolated small liberal arts college in the Eastern United States where a commune is controlled by two brothers, one a former research scientist at the college and the other an ex-Marine. The hero is Michael, who with two pals, journeys across the deserted prairie to uninhabited St. Louis and brings back security system devices to the ideal community where survival of the youthful and brilliant seems to be the focus. As with any so-called paradise, things are never quite as idyllic as they seem. Michael must decide who is friend or enemy to save the surviving “angels” he trusts.

Judith Hayn
Skokie, IL

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Clip & File YA Book Reviews
Rhymes with Witches
by Lauren Myracle

Popularity
Amulet Books, 2005, 224 pp., $16.95
ISBN: 0810958597

A freshman in high school, Jane has two friends, Alicia and Phil. Unfortunately, she doesn’t always get along with Alicia, who has a crush on her. When we first meet Jane, she is in the cafeteria wishing she were sitting with the Bitches, a group of three girls considered the coolest girls in school. Jane is wearing a new dress in hopes the bitches will notice her, which they eventually do. After a series of initiations, Jane is inducted into their group.

Written in response to “Flowers for Algernon,” author Lauren Myracle designs a similar story line addressing the price paid for turning into someone new and putting a price on popularity. Elements of magic infiltreate the book, giving it an impossible reality. However, despite the unrealistic ideas supporting the main theme that popularity can be obtained through theft, Jane is a believable character. Issues of popularity will resonate with a teenage crowd, as will other topics such as underage drinking, sex, friendship, and the need to fit in.

Elle Wolterbeek
Tempe, AZ

The Royal Ballet School Diaries: Ellie’s Chance
Friendship/Personal Relations
by Alexandra Gingras

The Royal Ballet School Diaries: Ellie’s Chance
Friendship/Personal Relations

The French Ballet Academy is a real gem. The Paris Opéra is an institution with a rich history, and the school’s reputation is built on excellence. Writing in response to “Flowers for Algernon,” author Lauren Myracle creates a riveting addition to the Royal Ballet School Diaries, Ellie’s Chance. The book follows a young girl, Ellie, as she navigates the complexities of life at a ballet school. The story is a beautiful portrayal of the challenges and triumphs faced by young dancers. The book is filled with vivid and emotional moments that will resonate with readers.

Marcia Woodyard
Wamego, KS

The Search for Bell Prater
Abandoned Children/Appalachian Culture
by Ruth White

Fans of Belle Prater’s Boy will welcome this long awaited sequel. A year after the disappearance of Woodrow’s mother (Belle Prater), Woodrow has been living with his grandparents and has become close friends with his adventurous cousin, Gypsy. The two make a friend in Cassie Caulborne, a new girl in school, who has a “sixth sense” — Cassie can look into the past and Woodrow hopes her talent can aid him in finding his mother. A mysterious phone call on New Year’s sends Woodrow, Gypsy, and Cassie on a quest to Bluefield, a town near where the Frank women once lived. They become friends, and the three meet Joseph, a thirteen-year-old black boy searching for his father. They become inseparable, and on the bus ride there, the three are transported back to 1950s rural Appalachia, its people, and language. Excellent for Appalachian Studies.

Pam B. Cole
Kennesaw, GA

Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family
Nonfiction/Historical Fiction
by Barry Denenberg

Utilizing an unconventional format, Denenberg creates another viewpoint using the voice of Margot Frank, Anne’s older and quieter sister. She apparently kept a diary while in the attic, too, and in her words, the reader moves closer to the girl who was “family” and “aunt” to Anne. Following meticulous research, the reader moves from Frankfurt, Germany, to Amsterdam, and then to the death camps through vivid, horrific detail. Heartbreaking oral histories of camp survivors, many who knew the Frank women, complete the history of the family in the moving final section. Pairing this text with The Diary of a Young Girl provides accurate information to satisfy questions adolescents may have about the Franks, the end to their ordinary middle class family life, the tense years in the attic, and the final days in Bergen-Belsen. Denenberg creates a riveting addition to Holocaust literature, a must read.

Judith A. Hayn
Skokie, IL

Ally’s War
Korean War

Ally’s War is a compelling and moving account of a young girl’s experiences as a war orphan. Ally was just eight years old when she was orphaned in the Korean War. The book follows her journey from a war-torn land to a new life in the United States. The story is a powerful reminder of the human cost of war and the resilience of the human spirit. Ally’s War is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of the Korean War and the experiences of war orphans.

Evelyn Worsham
Tempe, AZ
Smiler’s Bones

by Peter Lerangis

Culture/Exploration/Survival

Scholastic, 2005, 160 pp., $16.95


Much as Mene hears the calling of his father’s spirit to return home in Smiler’s Bones, Peter Lerangis felt the calling to breathe life into history by recreating the emotional experiences of this young Eskimo. Mene was the sole survivor of six native Eskimos transplanted to America at the turn-of-the-century by the famed explorer Robert Peary. Records indicate Mene was bounced among caretakers, contemplated suicide, and publicly threatened the Museum of Natural History for his exploitation. However, the person behind the headlines had yet to be discovered until this novel.

Swept from the icy white arctic to the industrial prowess of New York, readers share in Mene’s account of both the Eskimo people’s bold journey south and the tumultuous repercussions felt after their relocation.

Eloquent descriptions, historical basis, complex character development, ethical dilemmas and cultural exploration make this novel an excellent addition to any classroom and a great read.

Elaine A. Cobb
Lenexa, KS

So Yesterday

by Scott Westerfeld

Pop-culture/Mystery


Seventeen-year-old Hunter Braque works as a “cool spotter,” that is, he is paid by corporations to notice and report back what he predicts will be the next big trend. Occasionally he attends “cool tastings,” (known as “focus groups” yesterday). Hunter meets Jen when he asks to take a photograph (using his cell phone, of course) of the innovative way she has tied her shoelaces. He invites Jen to a cool tasting, and the mystery begins. Readers will enjoy challenging themselves to identify the most current cool products from Hunter’s descriptions of them (he refuses to do productplacement—naming brands—in his story).

This clever novel is full of visual detail and would make an entertaining movie. Don’t delay in offering it to students, however, because it is saturated with the newest and the coolest and will not stay current very long. Westerfeld has built obsolescence right into his novel; soon it, too, will be “so yesterday.”

Jaime Hylton
Scarborough, ME

Talk

by Kathe Koja

Realistic Fiction/Sexual Orientation

Frances Foster Books, 2005, 133 pp., $16.00

ISBN: 0374373825

Although Kit has never been in a play, he has won the lead role in his high school play, Talk. But when he thinks about it, he’s been acting his whole life so that no one would know he is gay. Lindsay, the drama queen, plays opposite Kit and questions, for the first time, what she wants in life, particularly in a boyfriend. Her conclusion that she wants, no needs, Kit causes an eruption within the school about the nature of the play, hate crimes committed against Kit, and the severing of ties with so-called friends.

Koja masterfully weaves several stories throughout this stream of consciousness, alternating the voice of the narrator across the books, and providing teases of the script Talk throughout. The result is a realistic account of understanding identity and coming to grips with reality.

Faith H. Wallace
Kennesaw, GA

Tiger’s Blood

by Laurence Yep

Fantasy

Harper Collins, 2005, 204 pp., $15.99

ISBN: 0060010169

Tiger’s Blood, sequel to The Tiger’s Apprentice, dives from the San Francisco Pier into the mysteries of the uncharted ocean, as Tom Lee and his fantastical crew of cross species companions rely on magic, wit, and skill to renew their defense of the ancient phoenix egg from power-hungry villains. Tom, a Chinese-American boy, becomes the apprentice to Mr. Hu, a shape-shifting lion who is the guardian of the phoenix egg. Mr. Hu sacrifices his own life blood to save Tom Lee; now the two are linked in purpose and heart as they protect the egg from the deceptive intrigues of the Dragon Kingdom and the villain Vattan.

Tom learns about courage, honor, loyalty, trust, and friendship. These values, blended with Chinese lore and magical escapades, make this novel the perfect recommendation for both beginning and devoted readers of the fantasy genre.

The award-winning author has seamlessly woven Chinese mythology, fantasy, and adventure into this didactic tale of good versus evil.

Elaine A. Cobb
Lenexa, KS

Clip & File YA Book Reviews
**24 Girls in 7 Days**

**by Alex Bradley**

*Self-discovery/Romance*


ISBN: 0-525-47369-6

After Jack fails to get a date for the prom, his best friends place a personal ad in the online school newspaper. Jack has seven days to date twenty-four girls and pick his prom date, and that is the easy part. Jack Grammar, the geek who can name all of Shakespeare's plays from memory and has the maximum number of AP credits allowed, is suddenly the coolest kid in school, complete with a wheelchair bound jock, and illegal rockets. He takes kissing lessons, centered around the word "olive," and faces his own awkwardness. As Jack races to narrow down the prospects to that perfect girl, he faces two tough questions: Who is Fancy Pants and who is Jack Grammar?

An interesting twist on the usual prom story, **24 Girls in 7 Days** explores the definitions of true love and self-identity. While the situations are amusing, the ending is almost predictable. **24 Girls in 7 Days** is most appropriate for high school aged readers.

**Karolinde Young**

Manhattan, KS

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**The Unsuspecting Gourmet**

**by M. E. Rabb**

*Mystery/Romance*


ISBN: 0-14-250044-5

This delightful mystery centers on two orphaned girls, Sophie and Sam, who are living incognito in Venice, Indiana due to a conniving stepmother. Working part time at a detective agency, the girls are familiar with missing persons. When the mistress of the local diner turns up missing, the sisters help solve the case. The twists and turns of the mystery keep the reader engaged as do romance and the insecurities of growing up. This book is the fourth in a series and is sure to be a book for readers interested in recurring characters.

**Joy Frerichs**

Chatsworth, GA

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**The Year They Won**

**by Gerald Purciello**

*Sports Heroes/Urban Life*

Brown Barn Books, 2005, 118 pp., $8.95

ISBN: 0-97464815-9

This book is the latest in a series and is sure to be a book for readers interested in baseball. One does not have to be a baseball fan to enjoy this book, but it certainly doesn't hurt. The syntax and usage of the novel places the reader squarely in the midst of a preteen dilemma. Should these twelve-year-old boys rescue the struggling Boston Red Sox or should they let fate play out its course? As the boys play their own game of baseball nearly every day they watch in anguish as their beloved team goes on another losing streak. There is just enough humor and sincerity to make the reader believe they are in 2024, day they wake in August to find their beloved team gone on another losing streak. There should these boys really take a role in the lives of a group of children and impress those of the total players the reader already knows in the midst of a preteen dilemma? And who are the total players the reader already knows in the midst of a preteen dilemma?

**Kenan Metzger**

Shawnee, KS