**The Adventures of Sir Balin the Ill-Fated** by Gerald Morris  
Fantasy  
ISBN: 978-0-547-68085-9

On the day of Balin’s christening, he was pronounced ill-fated. He would be the noblest knight in England who would also bring misfortune and calamity to all. He would also bring down two kingdoms and destroy the knight he loves the most. Young Balin lived by the prophecy, avoiding contact with King Arthur or his brother Sir Balan, only to find fate helping him in defeating the evil and saving the good. In the end, he decided that he would make his way.

This story of a knight is filled with dark and absurdist humor. It features brotherly love between Sir Balin and Sir Balan. It has a warm, happy ending with a surprising twist.

Linda Sun  
Hong Kong

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**The Ballad of Jesse Pearl** by Shannon Hitchcock  
Historical American Fiction  
Namales, 2012, 140 pp., $9.95  
ISBN: 978-1-608-98142-7

Using a rural dialect of North Carolina, Hitchcock exposes readers to family life and traditions in the early 1920s. Fourteen-year-old Jesse Pearl plans to become a teacher during a time when women are expected to marry. She still hears her deceased mother’s voice encouraging her to continue her education. Unfortunately, Jesse must put her dreams aside to care for an older sister who suddenly comes down with tuberculosis. With that comes the sudden responsibility of caring for all of the males in the family—her father, her sister’s husband, and her sister’s newborn son—and “traditional women’s work” is not Jesse’s forte. To complicate matters, Jesse has real feelings for a local boy who is also interested in her, but who has a nemesis who gets her nose in Jesse’s business in more ways than one. This debut novel is packed with much to think and talk about and is a nice addition to the growing collection of charming Southern YA literature; the author will present at the ALAN Workshop in Boston.

Joan Kaywell  
Tampa, FL

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**The Bell Bandit** by Jacqueline Davis  
Realistic Fiction  

Evan and Jessie always spend their Christmas at their grandma’s and ring the New Year bell with the rest of the town. This year, there has been a fire at grandma’s house and the bell has gone missing. Moreover, grandma is suffering from memory loss and sporadically forgets who Evan and Jessie are. Evan and Jessie struggle to understand her condition, but they realize this holiday season is going to be rough.

The traumatic fire turns out to be a transformational event for this family. When one family member is in trouble, others jump in and help. Evan takes up the job of reconstructing grandma’s house while Jessie solves the mystery of the missing bell. They work together, take care of each other, and restore peace at their grandma’s house.

Linda Sun  
Hong Kong

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**Brianna on the Brink** by Nicole McInnes  
Realistic Fiction/Identity  
Holiday House, 2013, 170 pp., $16.95  

Brianna has never felt like part of a family. Her mother kicked her out on her sixteenth birthday, and now she lives with her sister, who pays more attention to her loser boyfriend than Brianna. At least at school, Brianna feels like she fits in. She has worked hard to be a popular, bad-girl cheerleader who everyone respects. All of this changes when Brianna has a disastrous one-night stand with a man she didn’t know was married to her English teacher.

Left deserted by her family and friends in the wake of her mistake, Brianna learns to accept help from the teacher she hurt so badly. Through this experience, she learns to let down her guard and become a part of a real, loving family. Brianna may teeter on the brink of bad decision making and its consequences, but she learns how to catch herself before she falls.

Laura Cockman  
Fishers, IN

Sixteen-year-old Imogen hides under a table at a local diner when an armed robber appears; a young man huddles nearby. When she is tied up with the man, she realizes her new world consists of nightmares, vengeful rages, and psychosomatic illness.

Judith A. Hayn
Little Rock, AR


Eleanor is the new girl in 1986 Omaha; Park reluctantly allows her to sit by him on the school bus to save her from torment by her classmates. The two play out a familiar, yet suspenseful, drama told from their alternating viewpoints—a spellbinding young adult romance.

Judith A. Hayn
Little Rock, AR


On the first day of fourth grade, Paige decides that she doesn't want to feel like a little mouse anymore. She is going to prove that she can do anything. And, indeed, her name, Oklahoma, catches on. She decides that she is happy being just who she is; there is nothing she can't do as Paige.

Linda Sun
Hong Kong


An adaptation for young readers of Nazario's original 2006 work, the book is subtitled "The True Story of a Boy Growing Up in a Small Town in Guatemala and His Struggle to Reunite with His Mother." It tells the story of a boy leaving home to go north in search of work and love they are missing. The reconciliation is bittersweet as the plight of illegal aliens threatens to destroy a dream.

Judith A. Hayn
Little Rock, AR

Call Me Oklahoma!
**The 5th Wave** by Rick Yancey  
Science Fiction/Identity  
Putnam, 2013, pp. 480, $18.99  
ISBN: 978-1-399-16241-1

Yancey delivers a dystopian, post-apocalyptic thriller featuring a kick-butt heroine. Aliens have come to destroy Earth’s inhabitants through a series of ever-worsening Waves. Once an ordinary high school girl with a crush on a guy who doesn’t know she is alive, Cassie Sullivan is now struggling for her own survival while seeking her younger brother, who vanished when children were transported out of a refugee camp. Packing a Luger and M-16, she dodges her relentless pursuers, including unyielding drones and ruthless snipers. Evan Walker rescues her from freezing to death after she is shot, and the two experience moments of closeness. Five-year-old Sammy is imprisoned at Camp Haven, a massive concentration facility designed to winnow out the weak, convert the inmates, and train killing machines. Who can she rely on when the Others are us and we are them? Will her obsession with a boy from the past doom or save her?

Judith A. Hayn  
Little Rock, AR

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**Hereville: How Mirka Met a Meteorite** by Barry Deutsch  
Graphic Novel/Adventure  
Amulet Books, 2012, 128 pp., $16.95  
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0398-0

Mirka Herschberg, the eleven-year-old Orthodox Jewish heroine, is back and she’s still marching to the beat of her own drum. After being un-grounded for sneaking out at night, fighting a troll, and talking to a witch, Mirka finds herself in trouble again. When a troll summons a destructive meteorite toward the Earth, a witch uses a few strands of Mirka’s hair to transform the meteorite into Metty, Mirka’s doppelganger. Metty is not only clever, intelligent, and better at basketball, but also determined to replace Mirka. As Mirka plans to get rid of Metty, she starts to understand that being yourself—even if you are silly, goofy, or clumsy—is better than having a perfect copy of yourself.

Deutsch’s story is colorful and captivating in the way that it incorporates Jewish culture and faith. *Hereville* places great emphasis on the importance of understanding that everyone is special in their own way.

David Chang  
Chicago, IL

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**Frostbite** by Richelle Mead, adapted by Leigh Dragoon  
Graphic Novel / Supernatural  
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0398-0

Like other teens, Rose Hathaway goes to school, has a crush, and deals with her embarrassing mom. But unlike most other teens, Rose is a dhampir—a half-human, half-vampire training to become a guardian in the battle between good and evil. Rose’s main goal is to protect her best friend Lissa, a vampire princess with the special power to control the spirit element.

Protecting Lissa is not always easy for Rose as she navigates relationships with boys, family, and friends. However, when some students leave their safe haven to attack the Strigoi, a group of evil vampires, Rose learns how far she will go to protect her loved ones and how she can use her intellect and powers to fight for good. This graphic adaptation of Richelle Mead’s original series tells Rose’s action-packed story in both words and stunningly bright pictures for a comprehensive story experience.

Laura Cockman  
Fishers, IN

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**Hunter Moran Saves the Universe** by Patricia Reilly Giff  
Mystery  
Holiday House, 2012, 125 pp., $16.95  
ISBN: 978-0-8234-1949-4

Hunter and Zach Moran might have been the twins who originated the phrase “Double Trouble.” Armed with only their wits and good intentions, Hunter and Zach must find a way to intervene before a sinister dentist, Dr. Digilo, sets off a bomb in their town—blowing the whole place to smithereens. The boys juggle nosy parents, tag-along siblings, and the preparations for their town’s “Lester Tinwitty Day,” all while attempting the save the universe. Everything comes down to last seconds—either before the town’s celebration, or before the town will meet its end.

Two-time Newbery Honor medalist Reilly Giff writes characters that charm readers who are thrilled to be along on their adventures. Her latest novel lands right in the middle of mountains of mischief and will not leave her audience disappointed.

Rachel Marie Morris  
Brooklyn, New York
<table>
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<tr>
<th>YA Book Reviews</th>
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| **Hurricane Heat** by Steven Barwin  
Realistic/Athletics  
Orca, 2013, 162 pp., $9.95  
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0213-1 |
| It's been five years since Travis's parents died in a car crash and he was separated from his sister Amanda. After Amanda ... suspense, Travis's struggle of balancing adolescent concerns, baseball, and family becomes a very relatable experience. *Hurricane Heat* does a sufficient job in establishing the value of responsibility and familial importance.  
Aly Martin  
Nashville, TN |
| **Island of Thieves** by Josh Lacey  
Action/Adventure  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, 228 pp., $15.99  
ISBN: 978-0-547-76327-9 |
| Two things come easily to Tom Trelawney: getting bored and getting in trouble. When his parents need somebody to take ... secrets about his own family. He is also able to help Uncle Harvey find the treasure through his knowledge of history.  
Island of Thieves links historical theory with action-packed adventure in a way that leads readers to speculate about how what they have learned about the past may impact their present and how they can discover secrets about their own histories.  
Laura Cockman  
Fishers, IN |
| **Lauren Yanofsky Hates the Holocaust** by Leanne Lieberman  
Teen/Romance  
Orca, 2013, 227 pp., $12.95  
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0109-7 |
| Lauren Yanofsky, as the name suggests, loathes the Holocaust, despite her Jewish background. With a father who studies the Holocaust and a family history absorbed by France's World War II experiences, she finds it hard to understand why her grandparents are so passionate about this event. While Lauren's passion for the Holocaust is quite obvious, the author does a good job of making her story accessible to less skilled readers.  
Lauren Yanofsky Hates the Holocaust by Leanne Lieberman  
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0109-7  
Page 27, 2013, 227 pp., 12/13/13  
Aly Martin  
Nashville, TN |
| **In Too Deep** by Norah McClintock  
Mystery/Juvenile Delinquency  
Lerner, 2013, 218 pp., $17.99  
| Robyn moves to a sleepy town up north with her friend Morgan. The town seems pretty safe when they first arrive, but ... McClintock keeps her narrative and sentence structure simple, making her story accessible to less skilled readers.  
Lerner, 218 pp., 2013, 5/15/13  
Spencer Hodgeson  
Nashville, TN |
**The Lives We Lost** by Megan Crewe
Adventure/Teen Fiction
Hyperion, 2013, 288 pp., $13.28

Crewe’s suspenseful second novel in The Fallen World series opens with heroine Kae-lyn discovering a potentially lifesaving vaccine developed by her deceased father, a renowned scientist in their island community. As a deadly pandemic sweeps across North America, she rallies her friends on a journey to the mainland in search of researchers who can reproduce the healing medicine and rid their world of devastation once and for all. Their harrowing adventure brings them face to face with violence, desperation, and their worst fears, and reveals the tension between morality and survival in apocalyptic times. Kae-lyn displays courage and incredible selflessness in the midst of overwhelming danger, all the while struggling with what to think about the crumbling world around her. The Lives We Lost blends many elements of a great story—secret romance, anticipation, and characters with depth.

Rebekah Capps
Nashville, TN

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**The Morning Star** by Robin Bridges
Fantasy
Delacorte, 2013, 288 pp., $17.99

Katerina Alexandrovna, the young Duchess of Oldenburg, dreams of becoming a doctor, not a necromancer. Tsar Alexander will not allow her to attend medical school, so she continues her studies with Tibetan medic Dr. Badmaev. Her love for the Tsar’s son, the ailing George Alexandrovich, is threatened by her desire to learn how to cure him. Vampires, werewolves, shape shifters, and wizards populate the Kremlin of Romanov Russia as Katerina’s former fiancé Crown Prince Danilo returns. The illicit tsar Konstantin has inhabited Danilo’s soul and now seeks the Morning Star, an ancient sword that will enable a necromancer to command a magical army. He also intends to marry Katerina and gain the throne. Kidnapped by Danilo, Katerina seeks the sword in Egypt. Will she wield the Morning Star to save Russia, and will her love for George win out over evil in the final volume of the Katerina trilogy?

Judith A. Hayn
Little Rock, AR

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**My Summer of Pink & Green** by Lisa Greenwald
Realistic Fiction / Relationships
Amulet Books, 2013, 259 pp., $16.95
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0413-0

In this sequel to My Life in Pink & Green, 13-year-old Lucy Desberg is ready to spend the summer helping out with the eco-spa her family is building. But her summer doesn’t turn out as she had planned. The adults don’t need her around to help with the spa, and her sister and best friend always seem busy with their boyfriends. The only person left to spend time with Lucy is Bevin, the spa investor’s immature daughter. When even Bevin gets mad at Lucy for trying to give her a life makeover, Lucy realizes that maybe instead of always trying to make over other people, she should makeover her own attitude. Lucy learns the importance of appreciating other people for who they are. As she strives to be a better friend, sister, and daughter, she offers tips to readers so that they can become the best versions of themselves, too.

Laura Cockman
Fishers, IN

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**Maybe I Will** by Laurie Gray
Teen Fiction
Luminis Books, 2013, 206 pp., $14.95

Is an act of sexual violence more traumatizing for a female victim than a male? Maybe I Will shares the story of a teenager who is the object of a nonconsensual sexual act. Sandy’s two closest friends turn away when they are needed the most. Other adults do not seem to care or do not believe. Lost, confused, and violated, Sandy turns to alcohol as a numbing agent and best friend. All the childhood dreams and ambitions are diluted. Not only does this story tell one victim’s response to sexual assault, it questions the meaning, or lack thereof, of gender roles as Sandy’s gender is never revealed. Readers can directly relate to Sandy as they are able to make him/her relevant to their personal experiences. Sandy deals with the assault the same way—the same trauma, the same betrayal, and the same substance abuse—regardless of her/his gender.

Anna Lee
Minneerista, MN

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Laura Cockman
Fishers, IN
### Nantucket Blue by Leila Howland
Young Adult Fiction / Summer Romance

When Cricket Thompson's best friend, Jules Clayton, invites her to Nantucket for the summer, she's expecting a... story about the fragility of friendship, the excitement of first love, and the importance of standing up for oneself.

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### Teenboat by Dave Roman and John Green
Graphic Novel / Humor

Teenboat, a high school student with the superpower to turn into a small yacht, wants to be popular so that his crush, Eliza, will notice him. This beach town is full of secrets, and Ian Cheevers begins to fight back against the cafe manager, Wiz, who is secretly trying to destroy the town. Will Ian find a way to express his opinions and become popular?

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### Sean Cassidy's Head by Lindsey Leavitt
Young Adult Fiction / Identity

When Payton Gritas's guidance counselor asks her to express her suppressed emotions in a focus journal, she thinks it will be easy. Instead, Lindsey Leavitt tells the heartbreaking yet hilarious story of a teen girl navigating the aftermath of a devastating discovery.

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<tr>
<th><strong>A Soldier’s Secret</strong> by Marissa Moss</th>
<th>Historical Fiction</th>
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<td>Private Frank Thomson of the Second Michigan Volunteer Infantry has his work cut out for him in the Union Army during the War between the States: running from battlefield to hospital as a nurse, delivering letters to his fellow soldiers as mail carrier, and gaining critical information from behind enemy lines as a spy. Yet the anxiety Frank feels going into battle is no match for the anxiety he experiences every day: Frank’s real name is Sarah Emma Edmonds. She is masquerading as a man. Marissa Moss’s moment-by-moment account of the true story of Sarah Emma Edmonds provides an accessible avenue for adolescent readers to understand the Civil War, the rights of women, and the timeless struggle for equality. Blending historical facts, including photographs and character names, with a fresh voice for Sarah Edmonds, Moss breathes life into her story grounded in history.</td>
<td>Laura Cramer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Time between Us</strong> by Tamara Ireland Stone</th>
<th>Fiction/Romance/Time Travel</th>
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<td>Growing up in 1990s suburbia, Anna Greene is a pretty normal teenager. She goes to school, runs cross-country, and works in her family’s bookstore. But one day, everything changes when Anna notices a shaggy-haired boy watching her on an early morning run. One moment, he’s there; the next moment, he’s disappeared into thin air. Anna is perplexed at first, but once she runs into the mysterious boy at school, she quickly realizes that her life will never be the same again, because Bennett Cooper has a secret—a secret that will not only bring them together, but can also tear them apart. In her debut novel, Tamara Ireland Stone weaves together a captivating story that addresses the classic question of whether or not love can truly stand the test of time.</td>
<td>Diana Liu</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Towering</strong> by Sarah Skilton</th>
<th>Fantasy/Romance</th>
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<td>Flinn continues her series of revamped fairy tales in this contemporary version of Rapunzel. As in the original, Rachel with her long golden hair is imprisoned in a tower in the woods, this time rural Slakkil, NY. Seventeen-year-old Wyatt has come to the isolated community to recover from the death of his best friend and sister. He stays with his mom’s acquaintance, elderly Mrs. Greenwood, whose daughter Danielle mysteriously disappeared years ago. Wyatt hears Rachel’s heartrending songs and follows her voice; their meeting eventually fulfills a prophecy that will help solve the mystery of Dani’s disappearance. The two lovers are destined to remove a curse grounded in modern society’s drug culture that has threatened the area for years. Enough of the fantastic is coupled with the tenderness of young love amidst the threat of impending violence—a magical read for fans of the genre.</td>
<td>Judith A. Hayn</td>
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<td>Little Rock, AR</td>
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<th><strong>Whatever Doesn’t Kill You</strong> by Elizabeth Wennick</th>
<th>Drama/Mystery</th>
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<td>Jenna Cooper was born into tragedy. A few days after her birth, her father was murdered and her family began a tailspin that ended with her mother locked away in a nursing home, her sister addicted to alcohol, and her brother desperately trying to keep what was left of the family intact. When Jenna finds a photo of her father’s murderer, Travis Bingham, staring back at her in a newspaper article announcing his release from prison, she becomes determined to find him and give him a piece of her mind. Despite friends and family urging her to move on, Jenna remains unwavering in her pursuit of Travis and begins to discover that the story behind her father’s death contains a bevy of buried secrets that could compromise her relationships with her loved ones.</td>
<td>Rachel Wilkinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
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**When You Wish upon a Rat** by Maureen McCarthy
Fiction/Middle School

What would you do if you were given the chance to perfect your life with three wishes? For Ruth Craze, an overworked and underpaid 10-year-old, a wish to become a princess would mean the world. However, her wish comes true in a most unexpected way. She discovers a magical Rat named Rodney that will grant her three wishes, but with a catch: the wishes must be used wisely and with good intentions. Ruth learns that true happiness is found in friendship, hard work, and helping others, not in superficial desires.

Diana Liu
Nashville, TN

**William and the Lost Spirit** by Gwen de Bonneval & Matthieu Bonhomme
Fantasy Fiction/Adventure

William de Sonac is unwilling to accept the death of his father. To make matters worse, his sister, Helise, disappears in the night. William embarks on a journey through a land of imagination and adventure, encountering friends and adversaries along the way. In this heartwarming tale, young readers are introduced to the power of imagination and the importance of belief in oneself.

David Chang
Chicago, IL

**The Wild Book** by Margarita Engle
Poetry/Historical Fiction

In Fefa’s small community in the Cuban countryside, reading and writing poetry is the main activity. But Fefa is diagnosed with a rare disease that threatens to rob her of her ability to write. With the help of a mysterious book, Fefa learns to see the beauty in the world around her and to overcome her fear of the unknown. This novel in verse offers a powerful exploration of the power of art and the human spirit.

Laura Cockman
Fishers, IN

Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:

Melanie Hundley
1021 Delmas Ave.
Nashville, TN 37216-3630

To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Melanie Hundley at melanie.hundley@Vanderbilt.edu.

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When You Wish upon a Rat: poetry. ill. David Chang. When the Red Queen is dethroned by her recalcitrant subjects, she decides to use her wishes to become a princess... and a parasite. The book is full of magical moments and a page-turning adventure.

William and the Lost Spirit: fantasy. ill. Matthieu Bonhomme. William’s father is killed and his sister goes missing. To find her, William must travel through a magical land... and meet some very special characters. The book is illustrated with beautiful watercolor images.

The Wild Book: poetry. ill. Margarita Engle. In this novel, Fefa is diagnosed with a rare disease. She turns to poetry as a way to express herself... and to overcome her fears. The book is a powerful exploration of the power of art and the human spirit.