Shadow on the Mountain
by Margi Preus
Historical Fiction
Espen, along with his family and friends, have watched the Nazis come and occupy their country. The war against the Germans was short, and the royal family has fled Norway for the allied countries. It is when it comes to knowing what to trust or doubt. This confusing story, where Espen’s friends and neighbors are sometimes helpful and other times dangerous, may have unique motives for his quickly growing love of dancing and reading classic literature in order to spend time with his friends when his parents are away. Espen must decide where he can stay safe and who to trust in order to preserve his country. Will Espen become a hero and still stay alive to see his country again? He will have to hide from the Shadow on the Mountain.
Margi Preus has crafted a historical fiction piece with such excellence, you will feel like you are in Norway and running around as a secret spy.
Clay Welch
Somerset, KY
Skylark
by Meagan Spooner
Science Fiction/Dystopia
Lark Ainsley should have been harvested of her Resource years ago, but still, she waits for her name to be called on the list. She knows that she wants no part of a life that forces her into being a source of power for the rest of those within the Wall. Lark’s journey takes her outside the Wall, a place that she has only heard about, and she encounters strange pockets of Resource as well as “shadow men” who threaten her life and are never too far behind. Spooner weaves a compelling story of survival and human nature twisted with a bit of magic.
Lark knows war and a life outside the Wall, a source of power for the rest of those within the Wall. What was once a life that she fiercely fought within her home of power for the rest of those within the Wall.
Adrienne Fehringer
Nashville, TN
Sick
by Tom Leveen
Horror/Apocalyptic
“The ER has been blocked off by police at this time. Patients are being asked to go to other local hospitals.” Brian and his friends must act quickly and undertake a rescue mission. Can they get to the girls before it is too late? Better yet, will they all survive or will they become Sick?
Tom Leveen’s first venture into the horror genre will take you on a ride through the mind of a teenager and lead you to see hidden bravery and hope in the next generation.
Clay Welch
Cary, NC
The Boy on the Bridge
by Natalie Standiford
Studying Abroad/Romance/Cultural Identity
Intrigued by Russia, Laura Reid spends a winter semester abroad in Leningrad in 1982. She and her classmates tolerate the occupation of Moscow, eat more abundant meals, and explore the city. The three friends often lead to desperate solutions, and Laura must decide whether to stay with her friends or go on to East Berlin. On the bridge, the children often lead to desperate solutions, and Laura must decide whether to stay with her friends or go on to East Berlin.
Barbara A. Ward
Pullman, WA
The Incredible Charlotte Sycamore
by Kate Maddison
Historical Fiction
Holiday House, 2013, 282 pp., $17.95
ISBN: 978-0-8234-2737-6
Charlotte Sycamore, the daughter of the surgeon to Queen Victoria, is none too pleased about her impending arranged marriage to the much older Nelson Abercrombie. Seeking some freedom, Charlotte abandons the palace grounds and her duty as a lady, finding herself in the company of a group of street children in London. She soon learns that these children have been brought together by a common enemy — a group of monster makers out to destroy the city. Charlotte must find who is responsible for the monsters and put a stop to it any way she can.

Charlotte's father always tells her, "be truthful to yourself and your beliefs," and she attempts to do just that. The events Charlotte faces force her to decide what it is she believes in and how to be true to herself. She learns to stand on her own and risk everything to fight for what she believes to be right.

Adrienne Fehringer
Nashville, TN

The Lightning Dreamer
by Margarita Engle
Historical Fiction
ISBN: 978-0-547-80743-0
With more wisdom and insight than the typical Cuban teenage girl, Tula longs for a life different than the one her family and society force upon her. Tula refuses to believe that girls are not fit for an education or that freedom is a gift reserved for only the fortunate. Instead, she begins to create her own education. She refuses to accept the limitations that others place upon her. Tula learns that just as she must fight for freedom, so must others who have lost their freedom. She fights to use her writing to help others experience freedom as well.

This novel is a series of poems written from Tula's perspective and the perspectives of others she encounters. The entire work is inspired by the real life and work of abolitionist poet Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, whose childhood name was Tula.

Laura Wilczek
Eden Prairie, MN

The Infinite Moment of Us
by Lauren Myracle
Romance/Identity
Amulet Books, 2013, 336 pp., $17.95
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0793-3
Wren has always done exactly what her parents want, including studying to get into Emory's pre-med program and avoiding thinking of her future. But when someone suggests that she drop everything she endures, only then is she able to experience freedom, the unexpected, and how much she loves herself. When she meets Charlie, she realizes that he is the only one who can give her the kind of love and freedom she desires. Wren and Charlie grow together over the summer as they experience love, loss, and freedom beyond the summer as they grow away from the people who have made decisions for them and grow into themselves.

Laura Cockman
Fishers, IN

The Quick Fix
by Jack D. Ferriolo
Noir/Mystery
Amulet Books, 2012, 208 pp., $15.95
ISBN: 978-0-8109-9725-7
Franklin Middle School is a typical noir scene. It has its crime lord, Vinny, who runs gambling on basketball games, its sleuth, Matt, who is mounting a takeover of the school underworld, and its plot twist — a tiny box everyone seems anxious to find. This sequel to The Big Splash stands on its own as mystery readers try to figure out whodunit alongside junior high detective Matt. Plot twists abound as suspects reveal secret motives, hidden feelings, and lies. The race to find the box leads Matt and the gang to unexpected places. The climax of the novel is a thrilling confrontation in which Matt must use his skills to expose the truth and bring the box to justice.
The Twelve-Fingered Boy
by John Hornor Jacobs
Fiction
Lerner Publishing Group, 2013, 264 pp., $17.95
ISBN: 978-0-7613-9007-7

Shreveport Justice Cannon is doing comfortable time at Casimir Pulaski Juvenile Detention Center in Arkansas, manipulating wards and pushing candy. Everything changes, though, when his new cellmate Jack ... in that he has twelve fingers and is hiding a huge secret that will lead him and Shreve on the journey of a lifetime.

Jacobs’s first YA novel is a fast-paced, twisted narrative told from the perspective of a juvenile delinquent who gains some mysterious powers after a chance encounter. The combination of realism and science fiction creates a captivating story that addresses the classic question of whether or not love can truly stand the test of time.

Joan F. Kaywell
University of South Florida

To Be Perfectly Honest:
Relationships/Verse Novel
A Novel Based on an Untrue Story
by Sonya Sones
Simon & Schuster, 2013, 496 pp., $17.99

A minor character from Sones’s One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies is thrown into the limelight in this novel in verse. Colette, who suffers from a “Daughter-of-a-Famous-Movie-Star-Disorder,” ... a young biker dude with orange and black hair, who falls for her instead of using her to get closer to her famous mother.

Anyone who knows anything about lying knows that one’s reality is affected by the lies, but what happens when a liar meets a liar? What happens when the lying starts getting people hurt, especially those you love? Readers will be smitten by Will—his innocence and lisp—and will learn a thing or two in the process.

Joanna P. Kaywell

Time Between Us
by Tamara Ireland Stone
Fiction/Romance/Time Travel
Hyperion, 2012, 384 pp., $17.99

Growing up in 1990s suburbia, Anna Greene is a pretty normal teenager. She goes to school, runs cross-country, and works in the family business. But when her parents disappear into the past, Anna must use her knowledge of the future to help them return.

Diana Liu
Nashville, TN

Trash Can Days
by Teddy Steinkellner
Realistic Fiction/Friendship
ISBN: 978-1-4231-6632-0

Four middle-schoolers narrate Trash Can Days: Jake Schwartz, his sister Hannah, his best friend Danny, and aspiring writer Dorothy Wu. While Hannah concerns herself with getting into the perfect high school, Jake longs to fit in with Danny’s popular friends until he finds out being popular means joining a gang.

As gang violence increases, the friendship between Jake and Danny strains. Instead of following the crowd, Jake and Dorothy begin a writing club and learn they can be cool just by being themselves. The multi-narrator format of Trash Can Days demonstrates how each child deals with his or her own issues, but some of the topics and language might be too intense for the younger readers to whom this is recommended.

Laura Cockman
Fishers, IN
When You Wish upon a Rat
by Maureen McCarthy
Fiction/Middle School
Amulet Books, 2012, 288 pp., $16.95
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0161-0

What would you do if you were given the chance to perfect your life with three wishes?
For Ruth Craze, an overworked and misunderstood 11-year-old, changing her life sounds like a fabulous idea. What she really wants in life are more responsible parents, less obnoxious brothers, and true... tale that will leave readers asking themselves what they might wish for if they ever come across their own Rodney the Rat.

Diana Liu
Nashville, TN

Will & Whit
by Laura Lee Gulledge
Graphic Novel / Identity
Amulet Books, 2013, 192 pp., $12.95

Wilhelmina, known as "Will," has lived with her aunt Ella since the deaths of her parents. She stays busy creating lamps that light up her world, but with her parents gone, she feels alone. In an attempt to find love, she buys a black-and-white picture to show her parents. Little does she know, the picture is a drawing of her shadow, which she hides. Will & Whit stands out for its use of entirely black-and-white pictures. Light and darkness play important roles, as drawings of Will's shadow reveal feelings she hides. The book is charming and thought provoking as Will transitions from fear about her tragedy to acceptance. Will learns to care for the girl who is now his family. He uses the love and support Will gives him to create art that uses light and darkness to pay homage to his parents. Will & Whit is a unique blend of poetry, artwork, and fiction that will leave readers asking themselves what they might wish for if they ever come across their own shadow picture.

Laura Cockman
Fishers, IN

Who I'm Not
by Ted Staunton
Realistic Fiction / Mystery
Orca Books, 2013, 186 pp., $12.95
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0434-0

Danny does not know who he is. However, he does know that he is not Danny. The real Danny is a boy who went missing three years ago and who would be about his age if he were still around. Danny is the perfect person to live in the home of the cops. Will & Whit is a boy who went missing three years ago, and who would be about the same age as Danny. Will & Whit does not know his family, but he knows who he is. However, he does know that he is not Danny. Will & Whit is a boy who went missing three years ago, and who would be about the same age as Danny. Will & Whit does not know his family, but he knows who he is. However, he does know that he is not Danny. Will & Whit is a boy who went missing three years ago, and who would be about the same age as Danny. Will & Whit does not know his family, but he knows who he is. However, he does know that he is not Danny. Will & Whit is a boy who went missing three years ago, and who would be about the same age as Danny. 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