

<p>A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness, illustrated by Jim Kay Candlewick, 2011, 224 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Nightmares assail 13-year-old Conor each night. Frightened about losing his mother to cancer, Conor confronts a different type of monster who takes on the form of the yew tree near his bedroom window. The monster tells him three different stories, each revealing the problem with making assumptions, and then demands that Conor tell his own story. While Conor is facing down the monster, he must also deal with school bullies, a grandmother who is completely unlike his mother, and his own demons. When his teachers or classmates offer sympathy for his plight, Conor shuns them, insisting that his mother will be perfectly all right. As the disease ravages his mother, she lets him know that she has known his secret all along.</p> <p>This moving story about loss and the strength that comes from owning up to unpleasant truths is accompanied by haunting artwork that provides complementary texture to the tale.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>	<p>Loss/Grieving/Cancer ISBN: 978-0-7636-5559-4</p> <p>Among Others by Jo Walton Tor Books, 2011, 304 pp., \$24.99</p> <p>After confronting her mother in a tragic battle that leads to her twin sister's death, Morwenna "Mor" Phelps struggles to establish a relationship with her estranged father and adjust to her posh boarding school in England. At school, she would rather be feared than tormented for her Welsh accent and crippled leg. She struggles to recover from childhood with an insane mother who dabbles in witchcraft. Mor seeks solace in science fiction, and things take a turn for the better when she joins a SF book club. Mor, with a bit of magic and support from her books and friends, makes strides toward moving on with her life.</p> <p>For science fiction fans, this is a must read; Walton references many SF books and authors. Those familiar with these references will appreciate them. The book is written in journal format and would be appropriate for ages 13 and up.</p> <p>Annalise Miyashiro Kailua, Hawaii</p>
<p>Anna Dressed in Blood by Kendare Blake TOR Teen/A Tom Doherty Associates Book, 2011, 316 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Not only can Cas Lowood see dead people, but it is his task to put them to rest for good. Ever since his father died while dispatching a ghost, Cas has assumed the responsibility for getting rid of the murderous dead. He and his mother head north to Ontario, following a lead that takes Cas to a murderous ghost named Anna, supposedly killed so savagely that the white party dress she was wearing dripped blood long after her death. Although Cas has always kept any possible friends at arm's length, he is drawn to the high school Queen Bee, Carmel, and to geeky mind-reading Thomas.</p> <p>After a high school prank involving Carmel's ex-boyfriend Mike goes awry, the unlikely trio band together to put Anna's spirit to rest. The consequences of their actions are unexpected, and even more horrors await them in the next room or on the next page.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>	<p>History/Labor Camps/Survival ISBN: 978-0-399-25412-3</p> <p>Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys Philomel Books, 2011, 352 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>In 1941, 15-year-old Lina's world is forever shattered overnight. She finds herself arrested with her family by Soviet soldiers, separated from her father, and forced into a cramped cattle car with other "undesirables." In a harrowing journey across Russia and ultimately Siberia, she witnesses and endures horrors that verge on the unthinkable. Forced into slave labor, deprived of human amenities ranging from healthcare to solid food other than stale bread, Lina and her family seem to be in an utterly hopeless situation. Yet, through strength of faith and love, they find hope in the smallest of occasions and mercies.</p> <p><i>Between Shades of Gray</i> is valuable for its historical accuracy and its detail regarding the relatively little-known campaign of deportation and terror that befell many states annexed into the Soviet Union. This multilayered story is accessible, suspenseful, and powerful, delivering startling terrors and redemptive love in equal turns.</p> <p>Simon Gooch Fort Worth, TX</p>

<p><i>Bite Club</i> by Rachel Caine New American Library, 2011, 337 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Vampire Fantasy ISBN: 978-0-451-23318-9</p> <p>The Glass House foursome is back in the 10th installment of Rachel Caine's Morganville Vampires. Claire, Shane, Michael, and Eve are plunged into the middle of another battle for the town of Morganville, Texas, where the peace between humans and vampires is growing unstable.</p> <p>On her first day of fall classes at Texas Prairie University, Claire finds one of her classmates murdered in his dorm room. In a town full of vampires, the suspect list is long, but with the sinister Bishop on the loose, as well as several new faces—Vassily, the vampire martial arts instructor, and the alluring Gloriana—Claire knows it's more than just the normal vampire–human run-ins. When Shane starts training with Vassily, Claire's suspicions about the martial artist grow even stronger. She knows that he, Glory, and Bishop are up to no good, but trying to solve the mystery will put her in terrible danger.</p> <p>Meredith Milligan Jefferson City, TN</p>	<p><i>Carmen</i> by Walter Dean Myers Egmont USA, 2011, 150 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Appropriation of a Classic ISBN: 978-1-60684-155-0</p> <p>In this modern retelling of the classic opera, Carmen is a sassy and bewitching teenage factory worker in Spanish Harlem who falls in love with Jose, a violent, possessive police officer. When Carmen realizes that Jose is not who she thought he was, she leaves him for Escamillo, a wealthy hip-hop mogul who she thinks will get her out of the <i>barrio</i>. But Jose is not willing to let her go easily, and his passion ends in bloodshed.</p> <p>Walter Dean Myers presents his modern retelling in script form, complete with interspersed lyrics and Latino remixes of Bizet's music in the endnotes. Although teens who are not fans of the original opera may struggle to engage with the form and the sparse storyline, this book presents a great opportunity for reading aloud, cross-curricular work, or a study of modern appropriations of classics.</p> <p>Laura Herrmann St. Louis, MO</p>
<p><i>Dead Is Just a Rumor</i> by Marlene Perez Graphia, 2010, 201 pp., \$7.99</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 978-0-547-34592-5</p> <p>The fourth novel in the <i>Dead Is</i> series sees Daisy Giordano solving a number of supernatural mysteries plaguing the town of Nighthshade. Daisy's mysteries commence amidst the return of her father from his abduction and the near conclusion of her high school career. The internal conflict Daisy faces as she enters a new chapter of her life is relatable, but expressed in an often simplistic and predictable manner.</p> <p>This novel, ideal for pleasure reading, would not be suitable for the classroom due to the lack of complexity and depth. Perez's attempts to describe three mysteries and do justice to the emotional turmoil Daisy experiences within her family and with her werewolf boyfriend leave much to be desired. While the relationship between Daisy and her father might spark discussion about child–parent interactions, overall the novel is more suited for the beach, not the classroom.</p> <p>Lakendra Scott Marietta, GA</p>	<p><i>Everything I Was</i> by Corinne Demas Carolrhoda Lab, 2011, 209 pp., \$17.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 978-0-7613-7303-2</p> <p>Thirteen-year-old Irene is shocked when financial troubles force her parents to sell their Manhattan penthouse and move the family to her grandfather's farm for the summer. As she struggles to fit into her new surroundings, make new friends, and negotiate a relationship with her demanding mother, Irene begins to rethink many of the things she has always taken for granted. Eventually, she must choose between everything she was, and everything she is realizing she needs.</p> <p>In <i>Everything I Was</i>, Demas presents a likeable narrator trying to negotiate friendships, family, and first love. Although Irene's social class sets her apart from many readers, her concerns are universal, and she comes across as relatable and accessible. Readers will likely find themselves on her side as she comes of age in this earnest novel.</p> <p>Laura Herrmann St. Louis, MO</p>

<p><i>Girl Wonder</i> by Alexa Martin Hyperion Books, 2011, 304 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Charlotte Locke is new to Shady Grove High School, and things aren't necessarily going her way. Her luck starts to change when she befriends Amanda Munger, a spunky, pink-haired girl who has it all. Charlotte joins the debate team to get closer to Neal, the cool and intelligent editor of the literary magazine. Charlotte is getting an "A" in life, but when she and Neal begin a secret relationship, things start to fall apart.</p> <p>Through Charlotte's trials, Martin keeps readers engaged, evoking strong emotional ties to the characters. Charlotte, in particular, is relatable to readers who have faced parental and peer pressure. The book is recommended for readers ages 13 and up, as there are incidents of drug usage and sexual situations that require a mature audience. Martin has written a compelling story that lets readers into the world of a girl you'll want to root for.</p> <p>Annalise Miyashiro Kailua, Hawaii</p>	<p><i>Hard Bitten</i> by Chloe Neill New American Library, 2011, 368 pp., \$15.00</p> <p>Merit dropped out of graduate school to become an Initiate at Cadogan House, home to 300 or so Chicago vampires, where Master heartthrob Ethan Sullivan engages in serious flirtation with the heroine. Vampire drama takes on a double meaning: the novel is filled with exciting adventures for Merit as she seeks to end the proliferation of V, a drug being circulated to spur vampires to violence and mayhem against humans, while the daily interactions of vampires, shape shifters, trolls, and fairies create angst and tension.</p> <p>Merit is engaging, entertaining, and an exceptional Sentinel for her House as she tries to save her friends from destruction. The city of Chicago—its history, politics, wheeling and dealing—emerges as both a character and setting as the plotlines ebb and flow, the kind of kinky chaos that mature teens will enjoy. This is the fourth in the Chicagoland vampire series.</p> <p>Judith Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>
<p><i>Hothead</i> by Cal Ripken Jr. Hyperion Press, 2011, 144 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Connor Sullivan is the best 12-year-old baseball player around Eddie Murphy Field; the problem is, he also has its hottest temper. Connor's team, the Orioles, is on a winning streak and en route to win the championship with an undefeated season. But when Connor makes a mistake, his anger erupts like a volcano, and his position on the team is compromised. Connor needs to stay on the team, help them win a championship, and keep his temper under control, even with a pesky girl reporter, Melissa Morrow, on his case, and more issues flaring at home.</p> <p>Ripken's depiction of a 12-year-old little leaguer who loves nothing more than baseball is spot on. The baseball lingo throughout the novel makes it a compelling read for young baseball fans. Through the story, Connor learns about himself, his friends, and family.</p> <p>Max Gertz Atlanta, GA</p>	<p><i>I Am J</i> by Cris Beam Little, Brown, 2011, 326 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Fiction/Transgender/Identity/Self-Discovery/Families ISBN: 978-0-316-05361-7</p> <p>Convinced that he is a boy born in a girl's body, J has always felt different from everyone around him. As his body began to change, he hid the undeniable physical changes beneath his clothing. Now, on the eve of his eighteenth birthday, a betrayal by long-time friend Melissa prompts him to embark on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. No longer will J hide—from his friends, his parents, and even himself. There's a whole new world of possibilities outside his front door, even a school where he might find acceptance.</p> <p>J's unhappiness, expressed through his photography, is palpable, and his journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance is inspiring. Navigating the often unfriendly New York neighborhoods, J embraces a hopeful but not easy future with difficult choices. This heartbreakingly honest book features complex characters, including parents whose acceptance is not certain. Back matter includes an Author's Note and Resources.</p> <p>Barbara A. Ward Pullman, WA</p>

<p>Immigration: The Ultimate Teen Guide by Tatyana Kleyn Scarecrow Press, 2011, 227 pp., \$42.00 ISBN: 978-0-8108-6984-4</p> <p>The life of the average United States immigrant is one of hardship and confusion, combined with the pressures of overcoming stereotypes and language barriers in order to survive. While these difficulties seem arduous enough, the added struggles of being a teenager in a new country present youth with increasingly complex challenges. <i>Immigration: The Ultimate Teen Guide</i> provides these suffering adolescents with the knowledge and comforting guidance they need to understand the demands they face daily, in addition to helping them grasp the realities of living as an immigrant.</p> <p>Kleyn provides a thorough look at the teenage immigrant experience by offering teen readers a chance to see their story in the voices of others. Understandable explanations of history and current events, along with interesting quotes and charts, launch them into personal exploration of topics with the help of additional resources. This book creates a relatable platform appropriate for all impacted teenage students.</p> <p>Hilary Diaz Nashville, TN</p>	<p>Lost in the River of Grass by Ginny Rorby Lerner Publishing Group, 2011, 252 pp., \$17.95 ISBN: 978-0-7613-5685-1</p> <p>Adventure/Fiction/Identity</p> <p>It was supposed to be a simple school field trip.</p> <p>What began as a boring and miserable experience for the new girl in school, Sarah Emerson, quickly becomes a fight for survival when she sneaks away for an unauthorized excursion with Andy, a boy she just met. Sarah finds herself stranded with Andy in the marshes of Florida. While the waters and sea grass appear calm, Sarah is keenly aware of the dangers that lurk within, such as alligators and pythons. As they trudge their way to safety, Sarah learns not only what lies beneath the surface of the waters, but also the depths of her own courage. Over their five-day journey, Sarah faces her fears while coming into her own identity.</p> <p>With the relatable character of Sarah, this novel of suspense with intermittent spurts of humor leads you through the marshes in a way no school field trip ever could.</p> <p>Ashley Whitehouse Franklin, TN</p>
<p>NERDS: National Espionage, Rescue, and Defense Society by Michael Buckley Amulet Books, 2009, 306 pp., \$14.95 ISBN: 978-0-8109-4324-7</p> <p>Fiction/Humor</p> <p>Jackson Jones once lived the joys of being the most popular kid in school. He spent most of his days torturing nerds. As fate would have it, an unfortunate event occurred, and he became a social outcast. Not even the nerds wished to have him as a part of their group. Jackson accidentally discovers that five of the nerds he used to torture are actually spy agents, and he is invited to join their group.</p> <p>Jackson learns the difficulties of being an outcast, and desperately tries to gain acceptance amongst the NERDS. His interactions with the other members of the team help him overcome his superficial judgment of individuals, and appreciate people for their hidden potential. Jackson embraces his inner nerd, and the supporting characters learn how to put aside their personal prejudices to ensure the NERDS' success.</p> <p>Christine Chau Staten Island, NY</p>	<p>Paige by Paige by Laura Lee Gullledge Amulet Books, 2011, 192 pp., \$9.95 978-0-8109-9722-6</p> <p>Voice/Identity/Art ISBN:</p> <p>In order to make New York City her new home, young Paige starts to sketch. Through an inside look at her drawings, the reader sees Paige reinvent herself. Paige embarks with her new best friends to splash the sidewalks and trees of New York with color.</p> <p>The reader follows Paige throughout her journey. Large, expressive pictures dominate the page, allowing the author to portray a greater depth of emotion and duality in the main character. The pictures emulate the skilled hand of a young girl, rather than an expert cartoonist, providing a gateway for a struggling reader to understand the depth of Paige's experience and inexperience.</p> <p><i>Paige by Paige</i> is unique because it inspires its readers to author their own lives. The book has a mix of images and text that sweep the reader along as it conveys a clear message: that one need not fear honestly expressing oneself.</p> <p>Rachel Wheeler Nashville, TN</p>

<p>Personal Demons by Lisa Desrochers Tor Books, 2010, 368 pp., \$9.99</p> <p>Frannie has become excellent at keeping everyone at arm's length. That is, until Luc and Gabe come to town. What Frannie doesn't know is that Luc and Gabe are a demon and an angel sent to fight over her soul. Frannie is very valuable to the powers that be, and they are willing to do anything to win her soul to their side. To add to the problems, Luc is beginning to fall for Frannie. Not only does this mean destruction for him, but more danger for Frannie. Suddenly, they are joined by unlikely allies in order to save Frannie and the human race.</p> <p>Desrochers deals with some heavy themes, such as religion and the existence of God, but it is all done in a very effortless way. Teens can identify with the various struggles that the characters go through, and girls will admire Frannie's independent spirit.</p> <p>Katie Castro Miami, FL</p>	<p>Sidekicks by Jack D. Ferraiolo Amulet Books, 2011, 320 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Scott Hamilton is not the average teenager. When he's not completing his homework or finishing a term paper, Scott is flying across rooftops and halting crime by night as Bright Boy, loyal sidekick to the dynamic crime fighter Phantom Justice. After his latest heroics saving a hostage from the hands of masked villain Rogue Warrior, Bright Boy has a slight wardrobe malfunction and becomes the laughingstock of criminals, fans, and the entire school.</p> <p>What makes matters worse is the discovery that his evil archenemy Monkeywrench is actually the pretty girl who sits in front of him in science class, Allison Mendez. What begins as good old-fashioned hate turns into romance between the two. Scott must make a decision: will he remain loyal to the cause of defending justice, or will he fall for his sworn enemy, whom he must ultimately deliver to the law?</p> <p>Raef Williams Savannah, GA</p>
<p>Skin by Rick Jasper Darby Creek, 2010, 112 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>At first, Nick Barry's troubles, although still traumatic to a teenage boy, seem like nothing out of the ordinary: acne, a rise in anger, feelings of isolation and abandonment. However, Nick's case is too severe for anyone to ignore; something "other" is clearly involved. When Nick is suspected of committing acts of violence and murder, he decides to investigate the outside forces that have set their sights on him.</p> <p>This novel, reminiscent of (and referential to) Steven King, couples a thrilling horror story with a message important to early adolescents: No one is alone. Unlike King's work, however, the protagonist is not a tragic hero, but a victorious hero who resists evil. Accessible to adolescent readers, the story moves quickly (although at times a little too quickly), and the shortness of each chapter paired with the size and arrangement of print helps the novel's exciting pace.</p> <p>Molly Landholt St. Louis, MO</p>	<p>Starfish by James Crowley Disney Hyperion Books, 2010, 320 pp., \$16.99 978-1-4231-2588-4</p> <p>James Crowley's first novel, <i>Starfish</i>, is an exploration of self, culture, and the natural world in Montana in the early twentieth century. The plot unfolds upon discovery of a frozen corpse on the Chalk Bluff Indian reservation. This leads to violence and the desperate escape of siblings Beatrice and Lionel from the Chalk Bluff Boarding School. The siblings' only hope to survive a brutally cold winter (and their sworn enemy, Sergeant Jenkins) is to find their grandfather, a Blackfeet elder who lives on the edge of the reservation.</p> <p>This story is rich with characters and conflict, uncertainty and adventure, and growth and loss. Its nuanced imagery and dialogue draw a realistic depiction of the time and place, and its third-person narration provides detailed, developed characters. Ultimately, we witness Beatrice's story as seen through her younger brother's eyes. She is his leader, mentor, and protector, and she does nothing less than risk her life for their freedom.</p> <p>Kevin McCarthy Charleston, SC</p>

<p><i>Thaw</i> by Rick Jasper Darcy Creek, 2010, 106 pp., \$7.95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Thriller ISBN: 978-0-7613-6161-9</p> <p>Dani Kraft's hometown of Bridgewater suffers a major power outage. When the backup generators at the Institute for Cryogenic Experimentation fail, the townsfolk learn that the bodies of 27 dangerous cult members who had been frozen for years are missing. Shortly thereafter, Dani's best friend goes missing.</p> <p>In order to save her friend, Dani must travel to a parallel universe that exists in the dreams of a dangerous cult leader. Along the way, she comes to trust Trey, a boy who she learns is more than just a pretty face. Although she has traveled to a strange and disturbing world and overcome many fears, Dani's character development remains flat. The lesson to be learned from this tale is: "The past—even if it isn't our past—can reach out like a cat's paw and change our lives" (p. 103).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Russell Helsabeck Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>The False Princess</i> by Ellis O'Neal Egmont, 2010, 318 pp., \$16.99</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Fantasy/Falling in Love ISBN: 978-1-60684-079-5</p> <p>Nalia, the Princess of Thorvaldor, has just been told that she is not actually a princess at all, but a stand-in for the real princess to help ward off a bloody prophecy. Nalia—now renamed Sinda—has been stripped of her old identity and sent away to her aunt's house, where she discovers she has magical powers. Now bursting at the seams with dangerous and powerful magic, Sinda travels back to Thorvaldor, where she and her childhood friend, Kiernan, set out to discover answers about the true princess of Thorvaldor. With Sinda's magic and Kiernan's cunning, they seek to right the wrongs of a false prophecy, which would not only save the life of the rightful princess, but also the fate of all of Thorvaldor.</p> <p>Throughout this story, Sinda struggles between mourning her lost identity and discovering and embracing who she truly is—a powerful wizard.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Katie Riley Columbus, OH</p>
<p><i>The Kissing Game</i> by Aidan Chambers Amulet Books, 2011, 216 pp., \$16.95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Short Stories ISBN: 978-0-8109-9716-5</p> <p>This collection of 16 short stories, written by Michael L. Printz Award winner Aidan Chambers, uses seemingly banal circumstances to spark conversations between characters that touch on deep and meaningful topics. In "Sanctuary," a panic-ridden boy finds himself on a wild ride of right and wrong in a suspenseful thriller of abuse and faith. In "Kangaroo," a summer job becomes the site of a teenage girl's struggle with decency and sense of self. "The Kissing Game" gives students the opportunity to engage with how easily a simple situation can escalate to a dramatic and painful end. While all of the stories included might not be beneficial for a young adult curriculum, several would provide more than enough material for a study of major issues relevant to teens.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lakendra Scott Marietta, GA</p>	<p><i>The Outside Boy</i> by Jeanine Cummins New American Library, 2010, 360 pp., \$15.00</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Identity/Coming of Age ISBN: 978-0-451-22948-9</p> <p>Christy Hurley has grown up on the road. He is a Pavee Gypsy whose family travels Northern Ireland with their horse-drawn trailers and possessions in tow. The year is 1959, and Ireland is starting to change. Automobiles and assembly lines are making the Pavee life more difficult, and Christy and his family have to struggle to find work and welcoming communities. Christy's own life takes a dramatic turn when he discovers a newspaper clipping from his past, which he takes as a sign sent to him by his grandfather from beyond the grave.</p> <p>Jeanine Cummins masterfully crafts her prose with the intonations of an Irish accent while adhering to a writing style that is easily accessible to young adult audiences. Christy's character will speak to any young person who is harboring a guilty conscience or who has lost a loved one.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Russell Helsabeck Nashville, TN</p>

<p><i>The Popularity Papers, Book Two</i> by Amy Ignatow Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2011, 208 pp., \$15.95 ISBN: 978-0-8109-9724-0</p> <p>After spending a summer at camp together discussing the coming adventures of junior high, Lydia Goldblatt and Julie Graham-Chang are split apart; Lydia's family is moving to Great Britain. Each of the girls begins to form her own 6th-grade reputation at a new school. Lydia becomes known as the "Violent American," and Julia's acceptance into a popular 8th-grade clique pushes them to analyze their own choices involving friendship.</p> <p>Amy Ignatow puts her own signature style of graphic novels into this book through a series of cartoon correspondence between the girls, highlighting Julie's adjustments to junior high and Lydia's exploration of British culture. Their revelations to each other and themselves will keep the audience laughing about their funny intrigues and relatable tales. More important, the girls learn valuable lessons involving true friendship when exploring the meaning of popularity on two continents.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Erica Cain Decatur, AL</p>	<p><i>The Quicksilver Faire</i> by Gillian Summers Flux Books, 2011, 336 pp., \$9.95 ISBN: 978-0-7387-1571-1</p> <p>Although a bit disjointed at times, <i>The Quicksilver Faire</i> is an engrossing tale of elves, fae, goblins, dragons, talking cats, and other creatures of fantasy. Sixteen-year-old Keelie Heartwood (part elf, part human, and part fae) is on a mission to repair a rift from which magic is pouring, threatening the entire world.</p> <p>Keelie's adventure forces her to reach deep within herself in order to fully understand who she is and what she is capable of. Only by understanding herself will she be able to understand others. She must also maneuver her way through the lies and deceptions of those around her in order to determine who shares her wish to save the world. Readers young and old will enjoy this tale of magic and coming of age.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Neil Klein Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>The Protectors</i> by Val Karlsson Lerner Publishing Group, 2010, 106 pp., \$7.95 ISBN: 978-0-7613-6159-6</p> <p>Luke leads a life beset by death. His deranged stepfather, Sal, has apprenticed Luke in the mortuary arts at the Signorelli Funeral Home since Luke was nine. His mom serves their town, Bridgewater, as a medium for communicating with the dead. Little seems out of the ordinary until Luke's mom confides in him that her protectors are trying to warn her of impending danger. But when she fails to return home from a séance one evening and is declared dead, Luke, too, begins to receive messages—clues—from beyond the grave.</p> <p>The excerpt from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" that opens <i>The Protectors</i> is astutely chosen. Beyond the dark, macabre content that fills the tale, Karlsson weaves a story that is highly readable in one sitting—a quality Poe would appreciate—and a narrative fabric that finds its heritage in Poe's accounts of ratiocination, horror, and the grotesque.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Kevin McCarthy Charleston, SC</p>	<p><i>The Sentinels</i> by R. A. & Geno Salvatore Wizards of the Coast LLC, 2010, 297 pp., \$17.95 ISBN: 978-0-7869-5505-3</p> <p>Maimun is a teenage orphan who has already seen more than his fair share of adventures. He is bound to a magical artifact of the goddess of good fortune, Tymora; yet somehow, this good luck charm seems to attract nothing but trouble. In this book, the third of a trilogy, Maimun sets out to destroy the Stone of Tymora with the help of his friend, the young pirate Joen. Maimun soon discovers that things—and people—are rarely as they first appear.</p> <p>The story is set in the world of the Forgotten Realms, a fully developed and richly layered fantasy universe. In this book, Maimun travels through locations such as Waterdeep, Longsaddle, and Silverymoon in search of answers to the many riddles he faces in his quest. He also encounters his occasional rescuer and mentor, the famous elf Drizzt, who is a beloved character in the Forgotten Realms universe.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Simon Gooch Fort Worth, TX</p>

<p><i>The Serpent's Coil</i> by Christy Raedeke Flux, 2011, 312 pp., \$9.95</p> <p>Adventure/Conspiracy/Fiction ISBN: 978-0-7387-1577-3</p> <p>Caitly Mac Fireland is back in the second book of Raedeke's Prophecy of Days series. In her continuing attempt to unite the Earth's youth against the <i>Fraternitas</i>—the oppressive Shadow Government operated by the world's elite—Caitly travels across the world decoding mysterious symbols of ancient cultures. Caitly is quick and clever, loving and trusting her parents and the adults who support her while maintaining a distrust of new or unseen authority. <i>The Serpent's Coil</i> unfolds in a fascinating array of cultural, historical, and astronomic information, and readers will be easily engrossed by Caitly's adventures and discoveries. Nonetheless, young readers should maintain a critical attitude toward the information Raedeke presents, as much of the novel challenges the line between fact and faith.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jonathan Tomnick Nashville TN</p>	<p><i>The Water Wars</i> by Cameron Stracher Sourcebooks Fire, 2011, 240 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Dystopia/Environment/Friendship ISBN: 978-1-4022-4369-1</p> <p>Vera lives in Illinowa, a republic located in America's former Midwest region. After years of wastefulness, countries battle to control what little fresh water remains on Earth. Vera lives with a constant thirst and no memories of what Earth was like when water was plentiful. She makes do with little water unquestioningly until she meets Kai, a boy who doesn't mind wasting water because he claims to know the location of a river that could end the world's drought. Vera remains wary of her new friend and his secrets, but when he and his father disappear, she's spurred to begin a life-or-death adventure to rescue them.</p> <p>Stracher's environmental rhetoric is heavy-handed, and he drives the plot with coincidences and helpful strangers. For environmentalist readers or those looking for a fast-paced adventure story, though, this novel provides a compelling enough plot to hold readers' attention all the way to the end.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Kelly Gotkin Nashville, TN</p>
<p><i>What Can't Wait</i> by Ashley Hope Pérez Lerner Publishing Group, 2011, 234 pp., \$17.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/Cultural Identity ISBN: 978-0-7613-7163-2</p> <p>Marisa Moreno has been told her whole life what she's expected to accomplish in this world—help her family with her time and money above all, eventually marry a nice Mexican boy, and settle down with children. Internal conflict erupts, however, when she realizes her life goals of acing her AP Calculus exam, attending the University of Texas, and leaving her family far behind are growing increasingly at odds with the ideals of traditional Hispanic culture.</p> <p>In a heart-wrenching struggle of friendship, family allegiance, and finding love, Marisa discovers what it truly means to leave the expectations of everyone else behind and become an individual who follows after her hopes and dreams. Her genuinely relatable voice and passion allow readers to grasp for themselves how freeing oneself from the burdens of the world leads to the discovery that "there's no magic here. Just my own life."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Hilary Diaz Nashville, TN</p>	<p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> 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.</p>