



## This Is My War!

**S**ave teachers and librarians from the onslaught of brutal cuts and criticisms. Schools and libraries, according to many, are places where budgets can be cut. Taxes can be reduced. Some politicians, even governors, have used virtual scalpels to cut to the bone the very essence of a good education for all. In many instances, new purchases of publications have been delayed or curtailed. These are considered “nonessentials.”

Is literacy a nonessential?

Is viewing what is happening in the modern world nonessential?

Is developing critical and creative thinking nonessential?

Reading for me is an integral part of my daily life. Is it because of my education? My age? My concern for the future?

There have been so many books that made me focus on ideas. While others might not feel these are the “prize-winners,” I enjoyed them! We must remember, though, that few things are as personal as reading. When the mind clicks on something that has been written, and the reader is jerked into the ideas, what kind of true evaluation can be developed to assess the qualities of learning? Of teaching? Just look at this variety of books,

with different takes and different literary styles to meet the needs, abilities, and interests of readers.

### Around the World

Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *Where the Streets Had a Name*. Scholastic, 2010.

Cross, Gillian. *Where I Belong*. Holiday House, 2011.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *A Million Shades of Gray*. Atheneum, 2010.

Kent, Trilby. *Stones from My Father*. Tundra, 2011.

Shecter, Vicky Alvear. *Cleopatra's Moon*. Scholastic, 2011.

Thompson, Holly. *Orchards*. Delacorte, 2011

Wallace, Jason. *Out of Shadows*. Holiday House, 2011.

### Biography

Fleming, Candace. *Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart*. S&W, 2011.

Henry, Nathan L. *Good Behavior*. Bloomsbury, 2010.

Holzer, Harold. *Father Abraham Lincoln and His Sons*. Calkins Creek, 2011.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Music Was It: Young Leonard Bernstein*. Charlesbridge, 2011.

Sheinkin, Steve. *The Notorious Benedict Arnold*. Roaring Brook, 2010.

Sommer, Shelley. *Hammerin' Hank Greenberg*. Calkins Creek, 2011.

Sundquist, Josh. *Just Don't Fall*. Viking, 2010.

Wooldridge, Connie Nordhielm. *The Brave Escape of Edith Wharton*. Clarion, 2010.

### Death

Cabot, Meg. *Abandoned*. Point, 2011.

Haber, Melissa Glenn. *Dear Anjali*. Aladdin, 2010.

Roth, Ty. *So Shelly*. Delacorte, 2011.

Schutz, Samantha. *You Are Not Here*. Push, 2010.

Taylor, Brooke. *Undone*. Walker, 2008.

Vigilante, Danette. *The Trouble with Half a Moon*. Putnam, 2011

Wesselhoeft, Conrad. *Adios Nirvana*. Houghton Mifflin, 2010.

Woon, Yvonne. *Dead Beautiful*. Hyperion, 2010.

### Family

Bauer, Joan. *Close to Famous*. Viking, 2011.

Bolden, Tonya. *Finding Family*. Bloomsbury, 2010.

Conney, Caroline B. *Three Black Swans*. Delacorte, 2010.

Dionne, Erin. *The Total Tragedy of a Girl Named Hamlet*. Dial, 2010.

Hansen, Joyce. *Home Is with Our Family*. Jump at the Sun, 2010.  
 Olin, Span. *Brother/Sister*. Razorbill, 2011.  
 Standiford, Natalie. *Confessions of the Sullivan Sisters*. Scholastic, 2010.  
 Stuber, Barbara. *Crossing the Tracks*. McElderry, 2010.

### Fantasy

Black, Jenna. *Glimmerglass*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2010.  
 Choldenko, Gennifer. *No Passengers beyond This Point*. Dial, 2011.  
 Condie, Ally. *Matched*. Dutton, 2011.  
 Marchetta, Melina. *Finnikin of the Rock*. Candlewick, 2010.  
 Michaels, Antonia. *Dragons at Darkness*. Amulet, 2010.  
 Nayeri, Daniel and Dina. *Another Pan*. Candlewick, 2010.  
 Pierce, Tamora. *Tortall and Other Lands*. Random House, 2011.  
 Whitley, David. *The Children of the Lost*. Roaring Brook, 2011.

### Friendships

Blundell, Judy. *Strings Attached*. Scholastic, 2011.  
 Castelucci, Cecil. *Rose Sees Red*. Scholastic, 2010.  
 Dessen, Sarah. *What Happened to Goodbye*. Viking, 2011.  
 Ferraiolo, Jack. *Sidekicks*. Amulet, 2011.  
 Ferris Aimee. *Will Work for Prom Dress*. Egmont, 2011.  
 Foreman, Gayle. *Where She Went*. Dutton, 2011.  
 Padian, Maria. *Jersey Tomatoes Are the Best*. Knopf, 2011.  
 Woods, Elizabeth. *Choker*. Simon & Schuster, 2011.

### Graphic Novels

Bruchac, Joseph (adapted by and art by Will Davis). *Dawn Land*.

:01 First Second, 2010.  
 Colbert, C. C. (illustrated by Tani-toc). *Booth*. :01 First Second, 2010.  
 Hinds, Gareth. *The Odyssey*. Candlewick, 2010.  
 Larson, Hope. *Mercury*. Atheneum, 2010.  
 Lee, Tommy (illustrated by Sam Hart). *Excalibur: The Legend of King Arthur*. Candlewick, 2010.  
 Neri, G. (illustrated by Randy Du-Burke). *Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty*. Lee and Low, 2010.  
 Townsend, Michael. *Amazing Greek Myths of Wonders and Blunders*. Dial, 2010.

### Historical Fiction

Dogar, Sharon. *Annexed*. Houghton Mifflin, 2010.  
 Friesner, Esther. *Threads and Flames*. Viking, 2010.  
 Hemphill, Stephanie. *Wicked Girls*. Balzer & Bray, 2010.  
 Hughes, Dean. *Missing in Action*. Atheneum, 2010.  
 Janeczko, Paul B. *Requiem: Poems of the Terezin Ghetto*. Candlewick, 2011.  
 Paulsen, Gary. *Woods Runner*. Random House, 2010.  
 Richards, James. *Three Rivers Rising: A Novel of the Jamestown Flood*. Knopf, 2010.  
 Rinaldi, Ann. *The Last Full Measure*. Harcourt, 2010.

### Identity

Beam, Cris. *I Am J*. Little, Brown, 2011.  
 Benoit, Charles. *You*. Harcourt, 2010.  
 Collins, Pat Lowery. *Daughter of Winter*. Charlesbridge, 2010.  
 Howse, Emily. *Zitface*. Marshall Cavendish, 2011.

Meyerhoth, Jenny. *Queen of Secrets*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.  
 White, Tracy. *How I Made It to Eighteen*. Roaring Brook, 2010.  
 Zalben, Jane Breskin. *Four Seasons*. Knopf, 2011.

### Illness

Cummings, Priscilla. *Blindsighted*. Dutton, 2010.  
 Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind*. Atheneum, 2010.  
 Hobbs, Valerie. *The Last Best Days of Summer*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.  
 Kelly, Tara. *Harmonic Feedback*. Holt, 2010.  
 Lowell, Pamela. *Spotting for Nellie*. Marshall Cavendish, 2010.  
 Nolan, Han. *Crazy*. Harcourt, 2010.  
 Selfors, Suzanne. *Mad Love*. Walker, 2011.

### Mystery & Suspense

Abrahams, Peter. *Bullet Point*. Harper, 2010.  
 Beaudoin, Sean. *You Killed Wesley Payne*. Little, Brown, 2011.  
 Lane, Andrew. *Death Cloud*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.  
 Lee, Y. S. *The Agency: A Spy in the House*. Candlewick, 2010.  
 Myers, Walter Dean, and Ross Workman. *Kick*. Harper, 2011.  
 Price, Charlie. *The Interrogation of Gabriel James*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.  
 Schreier, Eliot. *The Deadly Sister*. Scholastic, 2010.  
 Wildavsky, Rachel. *The Secret of Rover*. Amulet, 2011.

### Nonfiction

Berkley, Elizabeth. *Ask Elizabeth*. Putnam, 2011.  
 Gann, Marjorie, and Janet Willen. *Five Thousand Years of Slavery*. Tundra, 2011.

Guiberson, Brenda Z. *Disasters*. Holt, 2010.

Jocelyn, Martha. *Scribbling Women*. Tundra, 2011.

Macaulay, David. *Built to Last*. Houghton Mifflin, 2010.

Marrin, Albert. *Flesh & Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and Its Legacy*. Knopf, 2011.

Moore, Christopher. *From Then to Now: A Short History of the World*. Tundra, 2011.

### Problems in School

Carter, Scott William. *The Last Great Getaway of the Water Balloon Boys*. Simon & Schuster, 2010.

Dolby, Tom. *The Trust*. Katherine Tegen, 2011.

Farrar, Josh. *Rules to Rock By*. Walker, 2010.

Myers, Walter Dean. *The Cruisers*. Scholastic, 2011.

Quintero, Sofia. *Efrain's Secret*. Knopf, 2010.

Shulman, Mark. *Scrawl*. Roaring Brook, 2010.

Whitney, Daisy. *The Mockingbirds*. Little, Brown, 2010.

### Science Fiction

Black, Holly. *Red Glove*. McElderry, 2011.

Bush, Penelope. *Alice in Time*. Holiday House, 2011.

Lancaster, Mike A. *Human.4*. Egmont, 2011.

O'Brien, Johnny. *Day of Deliverance*. Templar, 2010.

Oliver, Lauren. *Delirium*. Harper, 2011.

Monir, Alexandra. *Timeless*. Delacorte, 2011.

Smibert, Angie. *Memento Nora*. Marshall Cavendish, 2011.

Hurd, Thacher. *Bongo Fishing*. Holt, 2011.

### Sports

Cohen, Joshua C. *Leverage*. Dutton, 2010.

Deuker, Carl. *Payback Time*. Houghton Mifflin, 2010.

Green, Tim. *The Best of the Best*. Harper, 2011.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Skate Fate*. Rayo/HarperCollins, 2011.

Messner, Kate. *Sugar and Ice*. Walker, 2011.

Shusterman, Neal. *Bruiser*. Harper, 2010.

Weaver, Will. *Checkered Flag Cheater*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.

### Supernatural

Fantaskey, Beth. *Jekel Loves Hyde*. Harcourt, 2010.

Feasey, Steve. *Dark Moon*. Feiwel, 2011.

Littlefield, Sophie. *Banished*. Delacorte, 2010.

Nichols, Lee. *Deception*. Bloomsbury, 2010.

Peck, Richard. *Three Quarters Dead*. Dial, 2010.

Pon, Cindy. *Fury of the Phoenix*. Greenwillow, 2011.

Shan, Darren. *The Saga of Larten Crepsley*. Little, Brown, 2010.

### Discoveries

Ann McKinstry Micou recently moved to Montclair, New Jersey, and she introduced me to her books—*A Guide to Fiction*, set in Vermont, for children and young adults (Vermont Historical Council, 2008), and *Fiction Set in Vermont 3* (Full Circle Press, 2009). These reference books emphasize the importance of “place in literature.” The works cited are excellently annotated and include useful bibliographies for each author listed. Among them are Peter Abrahams,

Julia Alvarez, Robert Newton Peck, Gregory Maguire, Katherine Paterson, Paul Zindel, Ann Brashares, M. E. Kerr, and Karen Hesse. Absolutely fascinating! Ann is currently researching a book about authors' works set in New Jersey.

Sir Ken Robinson is a strong advocate of creativity and changing the paradigm of schools. I was introduced to this native of Liverpool, and now California, through a presentation on television. He wants students, parents, and teachers to recognize the aptitude and passion within a person and to capitalize on these traits in developing meaningful instruction. His book, *The Element* (Penguin, 2009), is filled with ideas and case studies. Meet Gillian Lynne who loved to dance, but who was tagged as a child with a learning disorder. She then went to a school with a dance program and blossomed. She later auditioned for the Royal Ballet School in London and became a soloist. Later, she met Andrew Lloyd Webber and created with him some of the most successful musical theater events, including *Cats* and *The Phantom of the Opera*.

In *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle* (Nation Books, 2010), by Chris Hedges, one learns that “nearly a third of the nation's population is illiterate or barely literate . . . a third of high-school graduates never read another book for the rest of their lives and neither do 42 percent of college graduates. In 2007, 80 percent of the families in the United States did not buy or read a book.”

We must do better. ALAN is leading the way.