

Summer 2011 Reading Suggestions for Students Fallston, High School

- * = Student Book Club book
- ^ = YALSA Best Book for Young Adults 2010
(Young Adult Library Services Association)
- *** = FHS student suggestion
- # = Award winner
- @ = 2010-2011 Black Eyed Susan nominee
- % = YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young
Adult Readers 2010



FICTION

* Avasthi, Swati. *Split*.

When 16-year-old Jace Witherspoon unexpectedly shows up on his older brother Christian's doorstep one evening, all the skeletons come rattling out of the closet. Christian has fled the violent abuse of their sociopathic father, and now, five years later, Jace follows in his wake, but both brothers deal with survivor guilt for the mother they left behind. As Jace acclimates to his new environment, and as the brothers work through their past, the story gains depth, culminating in a tense, thrilling trip from Albuquerque back to Chicago to rescue their mother. The resolution is not entirely happy, but it is realistic, and Jace confronts -- and takes responsibility for -- his own personal demons. **Horn Book 5/6-10**

^ # Bacigalupi, Paolo. *Ship Breaker*.

A fast-paced postapocalyptic adventure set on the American Gulf Coast. Nailer works light crew; his dirty, dangerous job is to crawl deep into the wrecks of the ancient oil tankers that line the beach, scavenging copper wire and turning it over to his crew boss. After a brutal hurricane passes over, Nailer and his friend Pima stumble upon the wreck of a luxurious clipper ship. It's filled with valuable goods—a "Lucky Strike" that could make them rich, if only they can find a safe way to cash it in. Amid the wreckage, a girl barely clings to life. If they help her, she tells them, she can show them a world of privilege that they have never known. But can they trust her? And if so, can they keep the girl safe from Nailer's drug-addicted father? Exciting and sometimes violent, this book will appeal to older fans of Scott Westerfeld's "Uglies." **SLJ 6-1-10**

* Bell, Alden. *The Reapers Are the Angels*.

Born into a crumbling society plagued by zombies, all 15-year-old Temple knows is to kill or be killed. When she is assaulted at a safe house, she murders her human attacker, Abraham Todd, and runs from his vengeful brother, Moses. Temple soon acquires a traveling partner, a slow mute by the name of Maury, and begrudgingly takes responsibility for his care, remembering a young boy she swore to protect but couldn't save. Fleeing Moses, the "meatskins," and her own battered conscience, Temple still finds moments of simple joy in the brutal world. Bell has created an exquisitely bleak tale and an unforgettable heroine. **Publishers Weekly 6-21-10**

***Black, Holly and Cecil Castellucci. *Geektastic*. (short stories –book club favorite)**

From Trekkers to science geeks, Buffy fanatics to Dungeon Masters, nerds of all persuasions are sure to find themselves in the pages of this anthology. It contains fun reads such as Black and Castellucci's "Once You're a Jedi, You're a Jedi All the Way" in which a Klingon wakes with a Jedi in her hotel room while at a sci-fi convention, and Tracy Lynn's "One of Us," in which a cheerleader enlists the school nerds to teach her the basics of geekdom so she can impress her Trekker boyfriend. The collection also includes more profound fare such as Kelly Link's moving and masterful "Secret Identity" about a 15-year-old girl who has pretended to be her 32-year-old sister on an online RPG. She must face the consequences of her lies when she arranges to meet the man with whom she has developed a relationship. Also included are stories by YA lit greats such as John Green, Libba Bray, Scott Westerfeld, and M. T. Anderson. Each story is followed by a comic-book-style illustration. **SLJ 8-1-09**

***** Briggs, Patricia. *Moon Called*.**

From Follett: "The first Mercy Thompson novel." Mercy Hamilton, a shapeshifter trying to live a normal life as a mechanic while surrounded by werewolves, vampires, and similar creatures, meets a newly-changed teen werewolf and turns to the werewolves who raised and then abandoned her for aid in helping the boy.

@ Brown, Jennifer. *Hate List*.

She doesn't have the answers for why her boyfriend chose a May morning to kill six classmates and wound several others, but Valerie Leftman is one of the only people who can still remember the good in Nick Levil. As she builds her post-Nick identity during her senior year, Valerie forms an unlikely friendship with one of the shooting victims, explores art therapy and watches her family structure dissolve. Blending flashbacks, current events and newspaper articles together, Brown creates a compelling narrative that drives readers forward. Valerie's fractured relationships break along genuine stress lines, creating rich and realistic characters; the cathartic argument Valerie has with her brother and parents writhes with pent-up emotion. **Kirkus 9-1-09**

@ Carbone, Elisa. *Jump*.

Two teenage runaways bond as they scale various challenging cliff faces in this romantic adventure that will please fans of both Anthony Horowitz and Meg Cabot. Critter is a fugitive from a mental institution to which he was committed after a suicide attempt. P.K. is desperate to escape her parents' plans to send her to boarding school. The two meet at a local gym, where Critter agrees to accompany P.K. on a spontaneous rock-climbing trip that will continue until they are captured or run out of cash. Critter's fresh enthusiasm for life, born from his near-death experience and based on a Buddhist-like philosophy, is positive and funny, deepening the plot and contrasting nicely with P.K.'s anxious personality. Soon they are sharing their life stories and falling in love. Suspense builds as they stay one step ahead of the authorities, and the climbing sequences are action-packed and intense. **Kirkus 4-15-10**

* Christopher, Lucy. *Stolen*. (a book club favorite)

This novel about an English teen's abduction and imprisonment in the Australian outback unfolds as a letter from captive to captor. From its compelling opening, the novel delivers taut suspense and a riveting plot in a haunting setting. Privileged Gemma, 16, is sympathetic and believable.

Her captor, Ty, in his late 20s, is a less-successful creation. Abandoned child turned wasted drifter and stalker, Ty is now an expert survivalist, bent on teaching his abductee admiration and respect for the harsh world in which he's imprisoned her. When Gemma's escape attempts end in near death, Ty rescues her, returning her to captivity, using such handy teachable moments to instruct her on outback ecology. While the landscape is beautifully portrayed and deftly mined for subtext and symbolism, the novel can't overcome its central contradiction. Ty--respectful of the struggling desert ecosystem from humblest succulent to deadliest snake, perceiving each element as part of a fragile, interconnected web--has kidnapped Gemma, in violation of her human rights and needs, and imprisoned her thousands of miles from home. **Kirkus 4-15-10**

***Condie, Allyson Brathwaite. *Matched*.**

In a tranquil future with clean streets and no illness, Cassia excitedly anticipates learning who will be her government-dictated marriage Match. Shockingly, it's her friend Xander. But when Cassia slides Xander's microcard into her port to learn his data (a system designed for the more typical Match to a stranger), Xander's face on the portscreen dissolves--and another face appears. It's Ky, their friend who's an Aberration, prohibited from Matching. This unheard-of glitch, along with an outlawed gift from her grandfather, sows doubt in Cassia's mind. She begins to want the forbidden: to run outdoors, to write words with her fingers instead of manipulating them on a screen, to read poetry beyond the sanctioned Hundred Poems--and she wants Ky, who feels the same. **Kirkus 10-1-10**

^ Donnelly, Jennifer. *Revolution*.

Andi Alpers, a 17-year-old music lover, is about to be expelled from her elite private school. Despite her brilliance, she has not been able to focus on anything except music since the death of her younger brother, which pushed the difficulties in her family to the breaking point. She resists accompanying her work-obsessed father to Paris, especially after he places her mentally fragile mother in a hospital, but once there works in earnest on her senior thesis about an 18th-century French musician. But when she finds the 200-year-old diary of another teen, Alexandrine Paradis, she is plunged into the chaos of the French Revolution. Soon, Alex's life and struggles become as real and as painful for Andi as her own troubled life. **Kirkus 10-1-10**

% Elkeles, Simone. *Rules of Attraction: A Perfect Chemistry Novel*.

In this sequel to *Perfect Chemistry*, Elkeles once again delivers a steamy page-turner bound to make teens swoon. After getting involved with a dangerous gang in Mexico, Carlos Fuentes is sent to live in Colorado with his older brother, Alex. Unwilling to straighten up and abide by Alex's rules, he soon gets into trouble when he is framed for narcotics possession by a drug lord with powerful gang ties. Carlos avoids expulsion from high school by living with Alex's former instructor, Professor Westford, and his family, and attending an after-school program for at-risk teens. Romance ensues when tough-talking, authority-flouting Carlos finds himself inexplicably drawn to Kiara, the professor's studious, outdoorsy, and vintage-car-loving daughter. Unfortunately, love is complicated, because while Carlos wants to be with Kiara, he is also struggling to extricate himself from the grasp of the drug lord who framed him. **SLJ 5-1-10**

***Emond, Stephen. *Happyface*.**

Happyface is a shy, artistic sophomore, awkwardly coping with life from the sidelines. When horrific tragedy tears his family apart, he finds himself living in a ratty apartment with his newly sober mom and attending a new high school. Bottling up his grief and fear, he pastes a big smile on his face and makes a fresh start as the class clown. It works for a while and, surrounded by

popular friends who know nothing of his real story, Happyface pursues the enigmatic Gretchen, struggling to interpret her mixed signals. Inevitably, the suppressed inner feelings build until Happyface blows up, finally giving him the chance to come clean and make an authentically fresh start without hiding behind a mask. Emond tells the story via the teen's illustrated journal, authentically capturing his up-and-down emotions. The pencil-and-ink sketches, comics, and doodles, paired with a disastrously small handwriting font, lend an intimate stream-of-consciousness feel to a story by turns funny, wrenching, quirky, and redemptive. **SLJ 3-1-10**

@ Flinn, Alex. *A Kiss in Time*.

Just before her sixteenth birthday, beautiful, headstrong Princess Talia of Euphrasia pricks her finger on a spindle; according to the causative curse, the entire kingdom will sleep until Talia's true love awakens her with a kiss. Flash forward three hundred years and Jack, a Florida teen on an educational tour of Europe, enters the scene. One fateful kiss later, Talia is helping Jack escape the castle dungeon -- on the condition that he take her home with him. This frothy, fun-filled update of "Sleeping Beauty" is essentially a comedy of manners, as Talia, with her formal comportment, stylized notions of love, and old-fashioned but effective people skills, navigates the anachronisms of the modern world and turns Jack's family and social life upside down. Flinn builds a credible romance around two vastly different (and highly entertaining) characters, injects a little magic and chivalry into the modern world, and lightly explores concepts of love and fate -- all on the road to a satisfying "happily ever after." **Horn Book 7/8-09**

***Grant, Helen. *The Vanishing of Katharina Linden*.**

Ten-year-old Pia, who lives in the quaint German village of Bad Münstereifel, is having an especially difficult year in school. Ever since the gruesomely freakish accident that claimed her grandmother's life, she has been unmercifully teased by her classmates. Forced to socialize with the other school outcast, StinkStefan, Pia is only able to forget her troubles when their kindly neighbor, Herr Schiller, invites them over for hot chocolate and beguiles them with ghost stories. When young girls start disappearing from their small town, many parents become hysterical, but Pia and Stefan decide to find out who has taken them. This is the rare debut novel that offers both excellent writing and deft plotting as the young protagonists, unmindful of just how dangerous the world can be, take all kinds of risks to ferret out the kidnapper. For them, it's one big glorious adventure, and their perceptive and often comical takes on the baffling ways of adults add a whole other layer to the central mystery. With a truly terrifying finale, this is a well-crafted, suspenseful blend of literary thriller and coming-of-age story. **Booklist 6-1-10**

@ Henry, April. *Girl, Stolen*.

This can't-put-it-down crime thriller unfolds through the viewpoints of both victim and criminal. Sixteen-year-old Cheyenne, blinded in an accident that killed her mother three years earlier, has pneumonia. As she sleeps in the back of her stepmother's car, Griffin steals it, inadvertently kidnapping her. Once Griffin's car-thief father learns she's wealthy, he decides to demand ransom. When the hapless Griffin realizes his dad and cronies will kill the girl to protect their identities, he tries to protect her. Clearly, the author did extensive research on blindness and its challenges. Her realistic depiction of the coping strategies and the strengths developed by the blind greatly enhances the novel, lifting it above the level of a mere escapist thriller. Constantly interesting and suspenseful. **Kirkus 8-1-10**

@ Jarzab, Anna. *All Unquiet Things*.

Jarzab transforms what could have been a formulaic story of boarding-school students behaving badly into a fresh, compelling tale. Part mystery, part character study, the story hooks readers immediately, propelling them through a serpentine path of secrets and lies. Seventeen-year-old Neily found the body of his ex-girlfriend, Carly, on the Empire Creek bridge. A year later, Carly's uncle is imprisoned for the crime, but neither Neily nor the victim's cousin, Audrey, is convinced that he is the murderer. Forming an often-acrimonious partnership, the two teens narrate the chapters in alternating voices as they follow the clues to a nail-biting conclusion and discover the truth not only about the murder but also about themselves. **Booklist 10-15-09**

% Keplinger, Kody. *The D.U.F.F. (Designated Ugly Fat Friend)*.

Downing Cherry Cokes and watching her two best friends hoof it out on the dance floor of the local teen club doesn't make 17-year-old Bianca Piper feel good about herself. Especially when high-school man-slut Wesley Rush tells her she's the Duff, her friends' "designated ugly fat friend," and tries to cozy up to her in order to get into her friends' pants. Later on, somehow, somehow, Bianca finds herself drawn to Wesley, and before she knows it, they've created a complex, enemies-with-benefits relationship that the YA market has never seen before. Their encounters are heatedly frank and full of humor, anger and rage, and soon the two learn they have more in common than they could ever have expected. **Kirkus 9-1-10**

King, A.S. *Please Ignore Vera Dietz*.

Beginning with the funeral of Charlie Kahn, high school senior Vera's neighbor and former best friend, this chilling and darkly comedic novel offers a gradual unfolding of secrets about the troubled teenagers, their families, and their town. Though Charlie's death hangs heavily over Vera, she has the road ahead mapped out: pay her way through community college with her job delivering pizza while living "cheap" in her father's house. But first she has to face her fractured relationship with her father, a recovering alcoholic who worries about her drinking; the absence of her mother, who left six years earlier; and the knowledge that she could clear Charlie's suspected guilt in a crime. Vera is the primary narrator, though her father, Charlie (posthumously), and even the town's landmark pagoda contribute interludes as King shows how shame and silence can have risky-sometimes deadly-consequences. The book is deeply suspenseful and profoundly human as Vera, haunted by memories of Charlie and how their friendship disintegrated, struggles to find the courage to combat destructive forces, save herself, and bring justice to light. **Publishers Weekly 10-11-10**

@ Magoon, Kekla. *The Rock and the River*.

This compelling debut novel set in 1968 Chicago vividly depicts how one African-American family is torn between two opposing approaches to the Civil Rights Movement. Fourteen-year-old Sam is the son of minister and civil-rights leader Roland Childs, a revered community figure and movement heavyweight whose counsel is sought by Martin Luther King Jr. Sam finds his faith in and respect for his father's stalwart commitment to nonviolence shaken when he discovers that Stick, his older brother and best friend, is involved with the Black Panthers. Sam is torn between the two people he looks up to most. As he poignantly wrestles over which direction to take, Sam both observes and experiences firsthand the injustice of racism. It takes a terrible tragedy for Sam to choose between "the rock and the river." **Kirkus 12-15-08**

^ **Marchetta, Melina. *Finnikin of the Rock*.**

Cursed by a dying wise woman, the land of Lumatere waits for its lost heir to open the walled gates and free the population from a depraved and predatory usurper who killed their royal family. Finnikin of the Rock, his mentor Sir Topher and the mysterious novice Evanjaline trek through a variety of kingdoms freeing exiled leaders and accumulating an army. Standard fantasy characters populate this book, but they develop in surprising, non-stock ways. Finnikin, the hero, surprises with contradictions: A linguist, a scholar and a sometime diplomat, he's also warrior, leader and barely reformed hothead. Although it's a long story, fantasy readers will enjoy the rousing and complex plot, filled with political intrigue and frequent red herrings and dotted with abductions, arrests and close escapes from a variety of dangers. Buy it for lovers of Marchetta's school stories, but its true audience is readers of fantasies like Kristin Cashore's *Graceling* (2008) and Christopher Paolini's *Inheritance* series. **Kirkus 1-15-10**

^ **Matson, Morgan. *Amy & Roger's Epic Detour*.**

After a recent car accident claimed her father's life, high-school actress Amy refuses to drive anywhere, so her mother arranges for rising college sophomore Roger, the son of a family friend, to drive Amy and the family car from their house for sale in California to a new home in Connecticut. Quickly detouring from the route carefully planned by Amy's mother, the young adults go where their hearts lead them, taking in breathtaking sights and regional fast food along the way. As they visit old family vacation spots, track down Roger's ex and sneak into the drug-rehab center where Amy's twin brother is recovering, Amy and Roger begin to let go of their pasts and focus on the future--together. **Kirkus 4-1-10**

^ **McBride, Lish. *Hold Me Closer, Necromancer*.**

Sam has dropped out of college and is stalled in a fast-food job in Seattle. Interrupting the boredom of days waiting on Plumpy customers and evenings watching old movies with his friends, a scary guy named Douglas enters Sam's world. After a few pithy verbal threats, Douglas has Sam beaten and mauled by a sidekick—and later delivers teen Brooke's pretty blond head to Sam's door. The good news is that Brooke seems to be in no pain and is as sassy as ever. The bad news, as Sam finds out in short order, is that Douglas is a necromancer and has identified Sam, who hasn't a clue what his strengths are, as a rival. Before the week is out, Sam finds himself in a cellar, caged with another pretty girl, who is part werewolf, part fairy. And then there's Ashley, the parochial-school-uniformed 10-year-old who can orchestrate salvation for Sam by using her Blackberry and brains. **Booklist 11-15-10**

*** **Moran, Michelle. *Cleopatra's Daughter*.**

Readers who know their ancient history are aware that both Cleopatra and Marc Anthony committed suicide when they realized that they had lost the Egyptian empire to Octavian of Rome. In one evening, 10-year-old twins Selene and Alexander lost their parents and their two older siblings, and became Octavian's prisoners. This is a fictionalized account of what happens to them after they are taken in chains by ship to Rome. Moran has done a terrific job of placing readers in the center of life in ancient Rome, letting them see the world of both the privileged and the enslaved. Her historical accuracy and detailed descriptions allow readers to experience the children's fate along with them. The additional bonus to this story is the grown twins' love interests and the political intrigue, woven throughout, that will impact them. **SLJ**

^ **Mulligan, Andy. *Trash*.**

It's *Treasure Island* meets *Slumdog Millionaire* in a rousing and hugely entertaining adventure set in an unnamed third-world country in the not-too-distant future. Fourteen-year-old Raphael Fernandez and his friend Gardo are "trash boys" in rubbish-town, picking through "one whole long world of steaming trash," never finding anything of interest or value...until one day they do: a leather bag containing a wallet, money, a map, and a key. The police arrive and off go Raphael, Gardo, and their friend Rat on a quest that will change their lives forever. They travel from their mountains of garbage to the depths of Colva Prison to the Naravo graveyard on the Day of the Dead to an astonishing end of their journey. Buried treasure, a map, a sinister villain...the ingredients are not new, but the setting and characters are so vividly realized, and the story is so engaging, that the book feels completely fresh. **Horn Book 11/12-10**

% **Neri, G. and Randy DuBurke. *Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty*. (graphic novel)**

In 1994, in the Roseland neighborhood of Chicago's South Side, a 14-year-old girl named Shavon Dean was killed by a stray bullet during a gang shooting. Her killer, Robert "Yummy" Sandifer, was 11 years old. Neri recounts Yummy's three days on the run from police (and, eventually, his own gang) through the eyes of Roger, a fictional classmate of Yummy's. Roger grapples with the unanswerable questions behind Yummy's situation, with the whys and hows of a failed system, a crime-riddled neighborhood, and a neglected community. How could a smiling boy, who carried a teddy bear and got his nickname from his love of sweets, also be an arsonist, an extortionist, a murderer? Yet as Roger mulls reasons, from absentee parenting to the allure of gang membership, our picture of Yummy only becomes more obscure. **Publishers Weekly 7-19-10**

^ **Perkins, Mitali. *Bamboo People*.**

Perkins pulls back a curtain on the current conflict in Myanmar (Burma) in this tensely plotted portrait of teens caught in the crossfire. The novel is narrated in two parts, the first by Chiko, a son of Burmese intellectuals who hopes to become a teacher. Perkins sets a chain reaction in motion when Chiko answers an advertisement looking for educators, only to be conscripted into the Burmese army, where an unlikely friendship alters the course of his life even more drastically. Perkins seamlessly blends cultural, political, religious, and philosophical context into her story, which is distinguished by humor, astute insights into human nature, and memorable characters. Teenage Tu Reh, a Karenni (one of the nation's ethnic minorities), narrates the second half, which begins when he and his father find an injured Burmese. **Publishers Weekly 6-14-10**

% **Rainfield, Cheryl. *Scars*.**

The scars that crisscross 15-year-old Kendra's arms are not for public consumption. Her cutting is kept secret from her parents, her friends, and even her beloved therapist. But things change when she meets Meghan, a classmate whose promiscuity with boys belies her budding romantic interest in Kendra. Like other books and movies on this topic, Kendra's story isn't really about cutting—she was sexually abused between the ages of 2 and 12, and the resulting trauma has blocked out her rapist's identity. What sets Rainfield's story apart is the stalking element: her rapist is still hounding her, giving her frightening reminders that she will be killed if she tells anyone the truth. **Booklist 3-1-10**

^ Reinhardt, Dana. *The Things a Brother Knows*.

In a Boston suburb, Levi's older brother, Boaz, has just returned from fighting in "some desert country half a world away." The U.S. Marines say Boaz is "healthy," but Levi thinks otherwise; Boaz doesn't want to ride in a car, sleep in a bed, or even come out of his room, and he dives for cover at unpredictable moments. Levi misses Boaz as he remembers him, before he left two years earlier: a high-school hero; a happy, well-adjusted son and grandson; and a difficult but still-wonderful older brother. Reinhardt's poignant story of a soldier coping with survivor's guilt and trauma, and his Israeli American family's struggle to understand and help, is timely and honest.

Booklist 10-1-10

*Ryan, Carrie. *The Forest of Hands and Teeth*.

Mary lives in a small village in the middle of the forest governed by the religious Sisterhood and bordered with a fence to keep out the Unconsecrated—a horde of the undead unleashed many generations ago by a mysterious and cataclysmic event. Life is simple but preordained; Mary fears her betrothal to a man she doesn't love almost as much as the hungry jaws slaving at the fence links. Under the colonial trappings, this is a full-blooded zombie thriller, reminiscent of the paragon of the genre, George Romero's 1968 film *Night of the Living Dead*. Soon Mary and a small band of desperate survivors are thrown together to outwit the undead and work through their own weaknesses, suspicions, and jealousies. Ryan's vision is bleak but not overly gory; her entry in the zombie canon stands out for how well she integrates romance with flesh-eating.

Booklist 1-1-09

^ Saenz, Benjamin. *Last Night I Sang to the Monster*.

Zach is full of words: An artist lives inside him. He loves reading, and some time ago he wished to be a good student, but now he only knows silence. Zach is brilliant, but he is confused, lonely and hopeless. He did not choose his alcoholic father, his depressive mother and his abusive brother. He wanted to escape from a house that was not a home anymore, from the monster that appears in his dreams, from his memories, nightmares and imaginary conversations. One day Zach wakes up in Cabin 9, bed 3, at a rehabilitation center. He does not want to remember how he got there; he just wants to forget. Zach's first-person voice is compelling and heartbreaking. Sáenz' poetic narrative will captivate readers from the first sentence to the last paragraph of this beautifully written novel, which explores the painful journey of an adolescent through the labyrinth of addiction and alcoholism. **Kirkus 8-15-09**

^ # Sedgwick, Marcus. *Revolver*.

Sedgwick's historical mystery, set in the Arctic Circle in 1899 and 1910, makes good use of the word chilling. Outside their remote Scandinavian village, Sig's father dies of exposure after trying to rush home across a frozen lake. The reason for his carelessness becomes apparent to Sig when a hulking beast of a man arrives at their tiny shack with a Colt revolver, demanding his share of a stolen wealth of gold. But Sig has his own Colt hidden in the storeroom, and some very pressing questions. Who is this brute at the door? Is there really a hidden treasure? And, most importantly, can he bring himself to use that revolver to save himself and his family? As the claustrophobic tension in the Arctic cabin mounts, Sedgwick doles out bits of backstory set a decade earlier in the Alaska gold rush, and the climax reveals that there hasn't been a single superfluous detail in the intricate, freezer-burn buildup. **Booklist 5-1-10**

***** Smith, Andrew. *The Marbury Lens*.**

In this brutal but highly effective dark fantasy, Smith tells the story of 16-year-old Jack, who gets drunk at a party and is kidnapped, tortured, and nearly raped by a serial killer. Jack escapes, but when he and his best friend Conner run into the kidnapper the next day, they abduct him in turn and accidentally kill him. Jack is highly traumatized by the experience and refuses to go to police, in part because he and Conner are leaving for England to check out a prep school. When Jack arrives in London, he is accosted by a mysterious stranger who seems to know him and hands him an odd pair of glasses. Looking through them, Jack is transported to the horrendous, postapocalyptic world of Marbury, where he is responsible for two younger boys, and Conner has been transformed into a murderous mutant, further destabilizing Jack's precarious sanity.

Publishers Weekly 10-25-10

@ Standiford, Natalie. *How to Say Goodbye in Robot*.

Surprising everyone at their private school, a sardonic loner befriends the new girl in this unusual story of an intense platonic relationship between two misfits. Dubbed a robot by her emotionally unstable mother after she fails to manifest sufficient heartbreak over the death of their gerbil, Bea meets pale, withdrawn Jonah, maliciously called 'Ghost Boy' by their peers. Almost immediately, she realizes that she has more in common with Jonah than with the catty, insular girls that surround her and begins to rely increasingly heavily on him even as she discovers more about his tragically strange past. **Kirkus 9-15-09**

@ Stork, Francisco X. *Marcelo in the Real World*.

Marcelo Sandoval is a high-functioning, extremely self-aware teenager with Asperger's syndrome. He has an empathetic mother and a father, Arturo, who appears to be less empathetic as he pushes Marcelo to live in the 'real world.' The form the real world takes is a summer job in the mailroom at Arturo's law office. The teen is forced to think on his feet, multitask, and deal with duplicitous people who try to take advantage of him. Over the course of a summer, Marcelo learns that he can function in society; he is especially surprised to find that he can learn to read people's expressions, even to the point of knowing whom he can and cannot trust. **SLJ 3-1-09**

% Summers, Courtney. *Some Girls Are*.

The familiar plot of a girl facing social exile after a near-rape at a party takes on a brutal twist. Popular Regina is ostracized by her clique after her best friend's boyfriend attacks her; Anna, the best friend, would rather believe that Regina led him on. The one truly enjoying Regina's fall from popularity is Kara, a member of Regina's circle who never quite fit in. Kara and Anna's attacks escalate, and Regina fights back with physical violence. Regina's suffering at her former friends' hands makes her regret the peer abuse she's committed at Anna's behest, but those she's harmed in the past aren't so willing to forgive her. Her one source of support is Michael, a fellow outcast whose life she and Anna made miserable. **Kirkus 11-15-09**

***Takami, Kouhun. *Battle Royale*. (a book club favorite)**

In an alternative future Japan, junior high students are forced to fight to the death! Takami's notorious high-octane thriller is based on an irresistible premise: a class of junior high school students is taken to a deserted island where, as part of a ruthless authoritarian program, they are provided arms and forced to kill one another until only one survivor is left standing. Criticized as violent exploitation when first published in Japan--where it then proceeded to become a runaway

bestseller--*Battle Royale* is a *Lord of the Flies* for the 21st century, a potent allegory of what it means to be young and (barely) alive in a dog-eat-dog world. **From BarnesandNoble.com**

* Teller, Janne. *Nothing*.

Indelible, elusive, and timeless, this uncompromising novel has all the marks of a classic. A group of Danish seventh-graders have their insulated suburban world jolted when classmate Pierre Anthon stands up and announces, "Nothing matters." He promptly takes up residence in a plum tree and creates an existential crisis among the group with his daily reports on the pointlessness of life. Feeling a need to refute the alarming notion, the kids decide to assemble a pile of objects that will prove Pierre Anthon wrong. It starts simply: Agnes gives up her favorite shoes; Dennis, his beloved books. But as each sacrifice grows in intensity, each kid enacts revenge by demanding an ever-greater sacrifice from the next. With chilling rapidity, the "heap of meaning," which they keep stored in an abandoned sawmill, is towering with gut-wrenching artifacts of their loss of innocence—if innocence is something that ever existed. Teller offers just enough character detail to make the suffering and cruelty palpable. **Booklist 12-1-09**

***Tennapel, Doug. *Ghostopolis*. (graphic novel)**

As an agent for the Supernatural Immigration Task Force, it is Frank Gallows's job to catch ghosts on Earth and send them back to the afterlife. However, during one particularly tricky deportation, he accidentally zaps a young-living-boy. Garth Hale suddenly finds himself surrounded by mummies and goblins in a crumbling, ghastly city, with a skeleton horse and his long-departed grandfather as his only friends. Gallows comes crashing into the afterlife, as well, on a daring rescue mission. As this bumbling team tries to find a way home, they end up face to face with the evil ruler of Ghostopolis, who doesn't look too kindly upon mortals in his city.

Kirkus 6-15-10

% Volponi, Paul. *Rikers High*.

Shackled to another inmate while being transported to Rikers, Martin gets caught in a slashing cross-fire between two inmates. The brutal slice on his face set him on a path of revenge. Martin quickly becomes engulfed in the darkness of Rikers where he is forced to give up everything, even his name. Called 40, he quickly learns that this abyss is filled with traps and holes. His only hope comes when he is transferred to Sprung #3, or Rikers High, for those attempting to earn their GEDs. **Library Media Connection 3/4-10**

***Westerfeld, Scott. *Leviathan*.**

The fate of many rests in the hands of an Austrian schoolboy and a British airman, both in disguise. Alek is the son of the recently assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, hiding from European nations hostile to his father. Midshipman Dylan is really Deryn, a girl passing as a boy in order to serve in the British Air Service. Alek has fled home in a steam-powered Stormwalker, one of the great manned war machines of the Central Powers. Meanwhile, Deryn's berth is on a massive airbeast, a genetically engineered hydrogen-breather, one of the Darwinist ships of the Allied Powers. The growing hostilities of what is soon to become the Great War throw the two together, and Darwinists and Clankers must work together if they want to survive. **Kirkus 9-1-09**

***Whitney, Daisy. *The Mockingbirds*.**

First-time author Whitney boldly addresses date rape, vigilantism, and academic politics in an intense and timely novel, set at the elite Themis Academy. The facts about what happened to high school junior Alex after a concert are fuzzy at first. She wakes up naked in a fellow student's bedroom with a hangover and no recollection of how she got there. Bit by bit, the horrors of the previous night come back to her, forcing her to conclude she's had nonconsensual sex with someone she barely knew. Avoiding the boy who took advantage of her during her drunken state doesn't ease her anxiety; neither does the prospect of telling authorities what occurred. Instead of going to the police or to school officials, Alex solicits the aid of the Mockingbirds, a clandestine group of students bent on serving justice. **Publishers Weekly 10-18-10**

NONFICTION

% Amason, Jessica and Richard Blakeley. *This Is Why You're Fat: Where Dreams Become Heart Attacks*.

Contains descriptions, photographs, and recipes for high-fat foods served mainly in the United States, such as bacon chocolate chip cookies, deep-fried grilled cheese sandwiches, and hot dog crepes. **Follett**

Angel, Ann. *Janis Joplin: Rise Up Singing*.

Rock singer Janis Joplin made herself a music icon during her short life. With the 40th anniversary of her death, readers will want to revisit her life, her troubles, and her music. Ann Angel writes a sympathetic biography of this young woman who was caught up in the hippie generation, including drugs, alcohol, and a non-conformist life. She was brought up in a loving, stable family and attended college, but her lack of self-confidence and her need for audience appreciation contributed to her risky behavior. This oversized book with psychedelic decorations in the margins has photos on almost every page. The description of her life is documented in the notes the author places at the end of the book, culled from diaries, letters, and interviews. The reader is reminded of the 1960s with references to the Vietnam conflict and the influence of blues music. **Library Media Connection 1/2-11**

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *They Called Themselves the KKK: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group*.

On a May evening in 1866, in Pulaski, Tenn., six men lounged about a law office. "Boys, let us get up a club or society," John Lester said. And they did. Two of the men suggested that they call themselves "Kuklos," the Greek word for "circle" or "band," but that wasn't mysterious enough, so they made up a variation: Ku Klux Klan, which literally means "circle circle." They delighted in dressing up in flowing white robes, riding about town pretending to be ghosts of Confederate dead and playing pranks, but they also understood the power of anonymity to stir up fear and thwart the new Freedmen's Bureau programs to help former slaves. **Kirkus 6-15-10**

Bowers, Rick. *Spies of Mississippi: the True Story of the Spy Network that Tried to Destroy the Civil Rights Movement*.

This interesting and well-written book looks at the civil rights movement from the perspective of its opponents and reveals the covert activities of the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a state agency that served as a propaganda machine for segregation and spied upon, harassed, and even harmed those who challenged white supremacy. Bowers draws upon both archival materials and his own research and interviews to detail how the Commission, formed in 1956, became a

shadowy power that used a wide network of spies and informants and coordinated with elected officials and state and local law enforcement agencies to thwart any progress on civil rights.

Library Media Connection 3/4-10

Janeczko, Paul. *The Dark Game: True Spy Stories.*

In this fascinating book the author explores the evolution of spies and espionage from the time of George Washington, when he used spies to topple the British, to spies of the Cold War. He also looks at spies and espionage during the Civil War, World War I, and World War II. Included are profiles of colorful personalities and stories of exciting missions, technological advances as applied to spying, and counterintelligence agencies such as the CIA and FBI. This book will appeal to anyone who is interested in spies and espionage throughout the history of our country.

Library Media Connection 11/12-10

Rubalcaba, Jill and Peter Robertshaw. *Every Bone Tells a Story: Hominin Discoveries, Deductions, and Debates.*

This ambitious exploration of archaeology approaches the popular subject through four important discoveries of hominin skeletons in the past 30 years. The famous finds, located on three continents and dated 1.6 million to 5,300 years old, include Turkana Boy, the most complete Homo erectus yet discovered; Lapedo Child, a Paleolithic ritual burial; Kennewick Man, whose bones became the subject of a major legal battle; and the Iceman, which had skin as well as bones preserved under a glacier. **Kirkus 2-15-10**

Stone, Tanya Lee. *The Good, the Bad, and the Barbie: a Doll's History and her Impact on Us.*

In the prologue, Meg Cabot describes her desire for a Barbie and her mother's reluctance to purchase one, basically summing up the conflict surrounding the doll since its introduction in 1959. Readers learn about Mattel Toys and the background behind Barbie's concept and development, how it was a solution for girls who wanted to imagine adult roles rather than just play mother, and details about inventor Ruth Handler. But more than that, Stone reveals the pathos behind so many relationships of girls with Barbie: those who cherished her and those who were negatively influenced. Was she a destructive role model or just a toy? **SLJ 10-1-10**

PERSONAL SUGGESTIONS OF STUDENT BOOK CLUB MEMBERS (these are older titles and a couple may be difficult to find):

Cashore, Kristin. *Graceling.*

Christie, Agatha. *And Then There Were None.*

Franzini, Michael. *One Hundred Young Americans.*

Pullman, Philip. *The Amber Spyglass; The Golden Compass; The Subtle Knife.*

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus.*

Tan, Shaun. *The Lost Thing.*

Westerfeld, Scott. *Uglies.*