

Open Shelf

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city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

Letter from the editor



This month is another issue for everyone. Some fiction, some nonfiction, some zombies. Also there is also a review on all of the books that have helped me through the aca deca season. Pick your poison and enjoy.

Jenny Knatz
Open Shelf Co-Editor

My Secret and Post Secret

Frank Warren

★★★★★

Have you ever had a secret? Something terrible, overbearing, or maybe altogether creepy? You've got nothing on Frank Warren. The compiler of **Post Secret**, he created a social art project in which people mail their deepest secrets to him on postcards. I mean, being featured in a top 40 music video never is a bad thing... but these secrets range from deep, to confusing, to depressing to HILARIOUS. Reading a **Post Secret** book has such an incredible impact on you. It's a curious perspective on who you interact with every day—you never know who might have some inner turmoil. Read them all.

-Ashley Mentzer

The Zombie Survival Guide

Max Brooks

★★★★★

I grabbed this book expecting some jokingly informative satire. I did not expect the plug by my bed to be dominated by a bright night light.

Brooks is serious. Brooks does not want you to be preyed upon by mindless zombies searching for tasty meat-fleshes. He gives you the tools to survive (machetes!), thrive (office buildings!), and escape (zombie survival groups!). Brooks actually provides a lot of informative hints for any sort of siege-situation, but it isn't the "survival guide" part of the book that pushed me into a perpetual fear of attack (that part fulfilled by haha-satirical criteria). No, it's the last chapter about documented "zombie attacks" throughout history. Oh, you may be laughing now, but it's not so funny at midnight alone in your bedroom. **So** not funny then...

I bought the sequel **World War Z** at Changing Hands and one of the guys in my survival group (it's not a joke) told me it's just as fulfilling. I wouldn't know—Mom wouldn't let me read it until the weekend. Go. Read. Get educated.

-Mandi Levendowski

The Messenger

Lois Lowry

★★★

The **Messenger** is a wonderful addition to Lowry's **The Giver** and **Gathering Blue**. It's about Matty, the only boy who can travel through the Forest.

This month:

My Secret and Post Secret Frank Warren

The Zombie Survival Guide Max Brooks

The Messenger Lois Lowry

The Looking Glass Wars Frank Beddor

A Chinese Compendium Various Authors

Revenge of the Shadow King Derek Benz and J.S. Lewis

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead Tom Stoppard

Falling Through Darkness Carolyn MacCullough

When the Forest threatens to close its borders, Matty is sent to get Seer, the blind old man who raised him, from her home in a different city. As the two are traveling back through, the Forest gets darker and more evil.

-Alexandra Roanke

Editor's Note

*Call me sentimental, but I still long for the days when **The Giver** was a stand-alone novel. To me, the story ended in the snows.*

The Looking Glass Wars

Frank Beddor

★★★★★

Meet Alyss, Princess of Wonderland—and no, her name isn't misspelled. Her wicked Aunt Redd uses the powers of her dark imagination to take over the Queenship and Alyss is forced to flee with her bodyguard, Hatter Madigan, through the Pool of Tears to worlds unknown. Little Alyss ends up in Victorian England, where she is trapped for years in a world of parties and tea and lace pinafores, a place where the memories of her home are accounted for as childish fancy and nothing more. Even those who pretend to believe her only use her memories to help themselves—like Lewis Carroll, who took her memories and turned them into a fantasy novel. When Hatter Madigan finally finds his princess, it is a battle of imaginations to reclaim Wonderland's throne and restore Alyss to her former state (a great feat considering she has been convinced this world is all in

her head). An interesting version of **Alice in Wonderland**, the **Looking Glass Wars** is well-written and aptly detailed. I thoroughly recommend it.

-Jenny Knatz

A Chinese Compendium

Various Authors

China. World's oldest civilization. Inventor of gunpowder, paper and the magnetic compass. And, of course, most importantly, this year's Academic Decathlon topic. I thought it was time to give a shout out to my Ac Dec brothers and sisters. By now just the sight of USAD packets are enough to elicit nausea, a nervous tic, or spontaneous development of narcolepsy. I come with help. Here are some of the books I have been using to simultaneously escape USAD, in all its infinite wisdom, while still sticking to the curriculum.

To begin, there is **Red Scarf Girl** by Ji-li Jiang. This memoir is an excellent and riveting look into what growing up during the hysteria of the Cultural Revolution meant. An easy read, you could breeze through this book in a day or two. It is well worth it.

China Wakes has the broadest scope of all the books here. The two authors examine the past and changing present of China. Economy, politics, culture, history all are dissected. Perhaps my favorite listed here, **China Wakes** delves deep and will give you the most complete picture of modern China

If you are looking for the answers to every economics question you ever asked about China, **China Inc** will give you all you need. Jammed with stunning, hilarious, and terrifying stats, the book explains everything in plain English. **China Inc** gives a clear picture of why China will shape the Twenty First Century.

Pyongyang and Shenzhen I would recommend if simply from the exquisite pleasure one can get from looking up from a comic book and saying, "But, Coach, I am studying." Animator Guy Delisle illustrates his travels in East Asia. **Pyongyang** is a sometimes hilarious, often chilling look at life within the fortress borders of North Korea, and it is my favorite of the two. **Shenzhen** is more personal and rambling but still worth the read.

Hopefully these books will help you know what life in China is really like beyond the brief sentences in your packets.

-Mary Beth Hutchinson

Revenge of the Shadow King

Derek Benz and J.S. Lewis

★★★★

Full of daring adventure, **Revenge of the Shadow King** brings fun reading and captures fantasy at its darkest hour. Four friends (Max, Harley, Ernie and Natalia) are in a club called "The Grey Griffins" that plays a game called "Round Table." Max, the leader, finds the magical book "Codex." He opens it up and finds that tons of evil creatures burst out. Now he and the Grey Griffins must solve the mystery of the Codex and answer where exactly the game they play fits into it all.

This book is fantastically well-written and fast-flowing. Once I got into it I couldn't put it down! Note, though, that it seems to be aimed at a slightly younger age.

-Catherine Millar-Haskell

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

Tom Stoppard

★★★★

The top three reasons to read **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead**:

One: Tom Stoppard's writing style makes the drama a hugely entertaining and breezy read, full of complexity and witty repartee. Though the plot is one we all know—remember that Shakespeare guy?—Stoppard cleverly plays it as background, focusing instead on other characters.

Two: These characters are also curiously hilarious. Not really in an absurdist sort of way, nor in a comical sort of way, but in the ironic, Shakespeare-y (adopted) sort of way! One of the greatest aspects of this play is how Stoppard easily juggles the conventions of modern writing with the necessary adherence to the original. Unlike just reading for the alternate points of view, this is worth reading for the entertainment value, too.

Three: Plus, it's much easier than reading Shakespeare.

-Alyssa Ratledge

Falling Through Darkness

Carolyn MacCullough

★★★★

Falling Through Darkness is about a teenage girl named Ginny who

fell hard for a daredevil named Aidan. When Ginny and Aidan are in a car crash and only Ginny walks away, her life is ruined. She starts smoking more and more and falls in love with her family reenter, Caleb. Throughout the book, Ginny has flashbacks of the few precious moments from before the crash. When she finally comes to Aidan's death she starts to feel as though the world can keep spinning. This book was really good.

-Samantha Mannes



rating system

bad; needs work ★

so-so ★★

average ★★★

good ★★★★★

excellent; perfect ★★★★★

Visit the Library's Web Site:

www.mesalibrary.org
and see the Teens page!

What is YAAC?

The Young Adult Advisory Council (YAAC) is a group of teens from many of Mesa's junior and senior high schools. They hold meetings twice monthly to review books for this newsletter and to plan special activities. They also help the librarians in Mesa Public Library's Young Adult Room at the Main Library as volunteers and assist with programs.

If you are interested in becoming a member of YAAC, call (480) 644-2734 or stop by the Young Adult service desk and ask for an application.

Learn more at:

 mesalibrary.org
City of Mesa Library on the Web



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