

Open Shelf

January 2005

city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor



On a more serious note (mostly), this month we've turned to the ever-more-popular teen angst novels. They're a blend of comedy and tragedy, though sometimes just *weirdness*. Many of these come highly recommended—I'd pick one up!

Jenny Knatz
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Alice 19th

By Yu Watase

Alice Seno is a high school student who has always lived in the shadow of her older sister, Mayura. She has little to no confidence in herself—not even enough to tell the boy she likes how she feels. Mayura and Alice get into a fight about a boy, and Alice utters the fateful words, “I wish you would just disappear!” And, well...she does. She is absorbed into her “inner heart”—the place inside every human being that is our center, our true self. Except, Mayura’s heart is full of this nasty stuff called Mara, and she becomes possessed by it and the desire to exact revenge upon her poor sister. She becomes a master of the Maram—words that sum up everything BAD in the world (hatred, despair...that sort of thing.). From then on Alice is trained by an adorable fluffy bunny named Nyokzeka, and a handsome

Scandinavian named Frei, to use the Lotis words—opposite of Maram.

Stuff happens...la dee da, the series is FANTASTIC. Yu Watase once again continues her beautiful artwork, though this time with a more cutesy twist I find very becoming. And, no, the story is not all fluff—don't even think it. It's very dark at times, very emotional, but it is well balanced by characters obsessed with jam. ^.^~

—Jenny Knatz ★★★★★

Godless

By Pete Hautman

Frustrated by the rampant religiousness around him, a teenager named Jason Pock decides to create his own belief system—worshipping his town’s water tower. He quickly draws in several of his friends (including a pastor’s son), and even a former “enemy” named Henry. However, Henry thinks up new, adventurous ways to encounter the newborn religion known as Chutengodianism. Shin, one of the friends, becomes increasingly fanatical about creating testaments. Eventually, the Chutengodians get into trouble with their town and respective families, driving the members apart. The latter half of the book is actually surprisingly depressing and lonesome, though Jason’s voice remains full of wit and life until the end. Unfortunately, the novel has a fairly unsatisfactory conclusion. Don't let that get in the way; **Godless** is a quick and entertaining read.

—Joe Tuccillo ★★★

This month:

Alice 19 by Yu Watase
Godless by Pete Hautman
Go Ask Alice by Anonymous
Playing in Traffic by Gail Giles
The Ruling Class by Francine Pascal
Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie
by Jordan Sonnenblick
Dead Girls Don't Write Letters
by Gail Giles
Things Change by Patrick Jones

Go Ask Alice

Anonymous

Wow. What a completely mind-blowing book. I can't even imagine the life Alice lived and still be able to talk about it. **Go Ask Alice** is the diary of a teenage girl living a normal life in a normal neighborhood. Then, she moves to another city and her world gets turned upside down. Alice's diary chronicles her descent into the dark world of drugs. She details *exactly* what happened to her, to the point that the reader is unsure what to feel. Alice realizes that there are reasons to take drugs, and her own uncertainty rubs off on the reader. This is honestly one of the craziest, scariest and more intense books I've ever read. Not for the faint of heart, but definitely worth it.

—Alyssa Ratledge ★★★★★



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!

Playing in Traffic

By Gail Giles

Oh. My. Goddess. Another amazing book by the author of psychological thrillers. Her unexpected twists-and-turns and overall pleasing writing style is excellent yet again. In every school, you have the bad girl. The butt of every joke, the most feared, the most lusted-after and the most talked about—all rolled into one. In every school, you have the nerd—the hopeless freak of nature just trying to survive until graduation. But what you DON'T have in every school is a secret romance between the two. This book is so well written, it will feel like a letter from you best friend. And the ending will keep you thinking and clutching your seat long after the pages have stopped turning.

—Mandi Levendowski ★★★★★

The Ruling Class

By Francine Pascal

At one time I used to spend all my time reading the **Sweet Valley High** series, so when I saw another book by the same author, I was like, "This must be a great book!" Wrong. How horribly, terribly wrong. It was awful! Don't read it. You will be so disappointed that you will never want to read another Francine Pascal book again! She isn't a bad author, but this book was horrible.

—Lindsay Lutes ★★

Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie

By Jordan Sonnenblick

Now, here's a really good, true-to-life story readers will enjoy. **Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie** is the story of Steven and how his little brother, Jeffrey, tries to ruin his life (or so it seems). Sound familiar? Of course! Here you are: the best drummer in your entire school with a 5-year-old brother who exclaims to the whole world (and to his elder sibling's biggest crush) that his big brother is a rock star and practices in front of the mirror in his underwear. "He's ONLY five, he doesn't know better!" Oh, and what if

your mom shows up to the school dance in her pjs because your kid brother squeals on you? But, what if one day you find out he might die in less than a year?

This novel is a genuine laugh-aloud book that will not only fill you up with laughter, but also with sorrow. Throughout the book, from the very first page to the last, I was swept away with alternating laughs and sobs. With a good sense of humor and an easy-to-read approach of writing, this book is purely captivating and satisfying. Amazingly inspiring!

—Geraldine del Rosario ★★★★★

Dead Girls Don't Write Letters

By Gail Giles

What if you hated your sister? What if your sister died in a horrible fire? Now, what if that dead sister wrote you a letter saying she's coming home? Jazz is the kind of daughter parents love: popular, brilliant, beautiful, and obedient. Sunny, in contrast, is none of these things and despises her sister for possessing that perfection. When Jazz dies in a fire that hit her apartment in New York, Sunny thinks she is finally free of her sister's torment. That is, until four months later, when she receives a letter from Jazz. Jazz writes that she'll be home the next day. The next day, a cab pulls up and out walks a girl who bears a remarkable resemblance to Jazz, but is not Jazz. Not at all.

This novel was so intricately written with such vivid characters, that it truly is impossible to put down. It has a reader guessing even after they are finished. Who is this imposter and who will be killed next?

—Lora Eubanks ★★★★★

Things Change

By Patrick Jones

"I want you to kiss me." The most stupid, intelligent thing Johanna has ever said. She's the straight-A student, responsible, the smart one. So why is she being so stupid to say this to rebellious Paul? He makes her want something more—he's the

wild rebel. He's everything she wants, even though they're polar opposites. However, the problem doesn't lie in that she gets him—it's what comes after. She's convinced herself he was sweet and wonderful for so long that she's repressed his bad qualities despite the fact that she is estranged from her friends because of him. Everything in her life begins to slowly flip: where she was once responsible, he controls her. Slowly, though, her delusion fades as she sees more and more bruises on her arms despite his constant promises that he'll do better.

The writing in this book is wonderful. The poignant style allows you to think about everything in ways that draw you into the plot. It even shows a little from Paul's side as observed from letters to his dead father. The writing itself was great, but there were many scenes the book could have done without.

—Rosalinda Albrecht ★★

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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