

# Open Shelf

October  
2004

city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

## letter from the editor



Ah, October. The seasons are changing (except in Arizona, because as we all know, there's only Hot and Less Hot), the leaves are turning brilliant colors in places with trees instead of cacti, and my favorite holiday is coming up: Legal Extortion Day, a.k.a. Halloween. Go out and have fun trick-or-treating, because, as I claim, you're never too old for free candy. Besides—it's still warm enough to go out without a sweater here.

However, if you'd rather spend the thirty-first reading a good book, there are a couple in here you might like to try. Though, I must reiterate: FREE CANDY!!!

**Jenny Knatz**  
open shelf editor



## rating system

bad ★  
so-so ★★  
good ★★★  
excellent ★★★★★

Visit the Library's Web Site:  
[www.mesalibrary.org](http://www.mesalibrary.org)  
and see the **Teens** page!

## Four Past Midnight

By Stephen King

(Three of the four stories in it reviewed below.)

### Secret Window, Secret Garden

★★★

This is the novella that inspired the fabulous movie starring Johnny Depp. \*swoon\* The story is very good...until the end. I decided to overlook that in the review, but the ending of the movie is soooo much better and more satisfying. See the movie FIRST, THEN read the book. Apart from the letdown ending, the novella was captivating and quite good.

### The Library Police

★★★★

OOH! **Library Police** was good. Super good. It's about a man in a small town who needs to make a simple speech. Thinking that a book at the local library could assist him, he drives down and checks out two books from the odd old librarian with the menacing pictures on the wall. He makes a roar-riot speech and (he thinks) that is that. But when his books become overdue, everything changes. He finds out secrets that no one should know, trying to unlock the secret that will set him free. With a surprising ending and fabulous character development, I'd recommend this to anyone, even if you're no a big Steven King fan.

## This month:

*Four Past Midnight* by Stephen King  
*Ceres: Celestial Legend* by Yû Watase  
*Battle Royale* by Koushun Takami  
*The Nine Lives of Chloe King, Vol. 1: The Fallen* by Celia Thompson  
*Religion and Its Monsters*  
by Timothy Beal  
*Tides of War* by Stephen Pressfield  
*Dragon Queen* by Alice Borchard

## The Sun Dog

★★★★

Wow. I am in awe of Steven King's ending. A boy gets a camera for his birthday, and no matter where he points it, the Sun 660 Polaroid takes photos of a menacing black dog. The rest of the novella is about the boy and his father asking for help from an untrustworthy source and trying to save themselves. This book has the single best ending by an author that I didn't read a lot of or respect before. ALL BOW TO THE SUN DOG'S ENDING!!!

—Mandi Levendowski

Editor's Note: **The Langoliers** is the last of the four novellas.

## Ceres: Celestial Legend

By Yû Watase

★★★

Aya Mikage and her twin brother Aki are celebrating their 16th birthday. But instead of going out with friends to party, they are forced by their parents to attend a family party at their grandfather's mansion. A single present is placed on the table—and when Aya opens the box, she finds a mummified hand. When the twins see it, a strange power bursts from Aya's body and bloody lacerations appear all over Aki. Shortly after, the Mikage family tries to kill Aya. She apparently possesses enough of the

blood of Ceres, a celestial maiden (*tennyo*) that, when stressed, causes this other soul to gain control of her body. Ceres had been tricked and forced into marrying the fisherman (Shiso) who had stolen her celestial robes (*hagoromo*) and to have his children. Well, Aya is her descendent, and as such has her powers.

Confused yet? That's probably because I just jammed most of the first book into one paragraph. Aya escapes and ends up living with Yuuhi and Suzumi Aogiri, the latter also sharing the blood of a *tennyo*. It appears that the *tennyo* legends occur all over Japan and the rest of the world, taking on different forms. (Ever heard of selkies? Same thing.) The Mikage family starts trying to capture those with the powers of their ancestors to create a race of super-beings. No fun, seeing as those with only weak powers end up getting killed by the Mikage detection methods. Somewhere down the line, Aya and Ceres have a little chat, and Aya agrees to help Ceres look for her *hagoromo*.

This series is entirely too complicated for a three-paragraph review, but it's good. We have Watase's fabulous drawing style (though, I admit, there's a Tamahome clone in here), her intricate plot and memorable characters. The manga is dark, and has been classified as horror (I don't really know why—it's not at all scary), but there is great comic relief, especially from my favorite character, Mrs. Q. It is also a great romance, but going into that would take another paragraph... So, let's just say it's there and be done with it. I'll warn you—there is nudity, language, and gore in here. It's definitely for those who can handle R-rated movies. But, if you're willing to skip a few frames now and then, it's really worth it.

—*Jenny Knatz*

## Battle Royale

By Koushun Takami

★★★★

Set in Japan in the far future, this novel is based on a utopia of the worst

sort. Every year, a group of ninth graders are chosen for a state program. They are shipped to an island, given random weapons, and left to kill each other. The rules are simple: if nobody dies in twenty-four hours, everyone dies; if three days pass and a winner has not been determined, everyone dies; and finally, if someone steps into a forbidden zone, their neck collar will explode. As can be imagined, chaos ensues. This is the story of a class of forty-two ninth graders, their lives...and their deaths.

—*Justin Millar-Haskell*

## The Nine Lives of Chloe King, vol. 1: The Fallen

By Celia Thompson

★★★★

On a regular foggy morning in the foggiest part of San Francisco, a girl's life suddenly becomes irregular and will forever change.

Chloe King, who will turn sixteen in less than a day, decides to ditch school and go to Coit Tower to party with her two best friends. Before she knows it, she has fallen from the two-hundred-foot tall tower.

This first book in the amazing story of Chloe King is extremely groovy and exhilarating. Aside from the use of profane language, which makes the book fall a little short, it is a spectacular read. This is "hotly" recommended to everyone!

—*Geraldine Del Rosario*

## Religion and Its Monsters

By Timothy Beal

★

To begin with a disclaimer: I didn't think this book was about monsters. I thought it was about crazy people who take things too far.

Sadly enough, I was wrong.

I ended up skimming through most of the book, mainly because I wanted to strangle this Beal guy once I reached the chapter "Are Monsters Kosher?"

Who cares if monsters are kosher? Would YOU want to eat one? Then, of course, there is the ever-pressing question: is Draco Malfoy a monster? Ah, the high logic of religion and monsters.

To be fair, Beal does bring up some interesting points (why do monsters love holy places? Why are so many monsters similar throughout different cultures? Why is cheese white?), but mostly, this book is just so *ack*.

And, if you're wondering, monsters aren't kosher, except the Behemoth.

—*Alyssa Ratledge*

## Tides of War

Stephen Pressfield

★★★★

This book is for anyone interested in Spartans and war and awesomeness. It's based in Greece (yeah, Spartans and whatnot) in the old times and is a great book. Just read it. There's a reason: I would have given it five stars if I could.

—*Luke Lambert*

## Dragon Queen

Alice Borchard

★★★★

This is (yet another) of the Arthur/Guinevere legends. It has Gwen raised by wolves and being magically inclined. Merlin, instead of being the good wizard, is evil, whilst Morgana is good. Merlin constantly tries to take control, but it's still a good book. If you like King Arthur legends and magic, then you have to read this book!

—*Chris Smith*

*Editor's Note:* Or, read a classic—**The Once and Future King** by T.H. White is also fabulous.

Learn more at:

 [mesalibrary.org](http://mesalibrary.org)  
City of Mesa Library on the Web



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