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October 2006

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city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

Letter from the editor



With the waning of summer, the blazing summer sun finally starts to fade. There's a little less light, and the shadows stretch longer. In honor of the coming fall, we'll take a look at what skulks in those shadows: witches, goblins, standardized testing. All the things that make you break out into a cold sweat.

Mary Beth Hutchinson
Co-Editor, Open Shelf

Story Time

By Edward Bloor

★★★★

Demons and standardized testing—what else could a YA book need? How about complicated families, a satanic disgust for Andrew Carnegie, octopus-shaped school boundaries and the ever-necessary SAT . . . really, it can't get any better than that.

Now, the school at the center of this novel is nothing like your school- better or worse, I can't say. The hall to the school is graced by a large portrait of Andrew Carnegie burning in hell, and from there, the nameless and generally replaceable teachers reveal a world of high scores and evil. For those of us who always suspected the connection between AIMS and Lucifer, this is a lovely explanation.

—Alyssa Ratledge

The Hollow Kingdom trilogy

By Clare B. Dunkle

★★★★★

The series is the story of an underground kingdom of goblins and the women that live above them. The first book the *Hollow Kingdom* is the story of two sisters, Kate and Em, who get taken up into an age-old ritual where Marak, the king of goblins, kidnaps a bride. Kate refuses to go but in the end is forced to acquiesce. In the second book, *Close Kin*, it's the story of Em and Seylin (another goblin). Seylin has loved Em for a long time but when he proposes and Em turns him down, he leaves to find another. Em gradually realizes how much she loves Seylin and leaves to find him and tell her feelings to him. In the third book, *In the Coils of the Snake*, it's the story of the girl Miranda who was raised to be the bride of the next goblin king. When she isn't chosen, she runs away and accidentally becomes a ward of the Elf Lord Nir. Because of this, the goblins want her back and a war is nearly declared.

Personally, I love these books because of the ideas and the fact that they have a unique writing style.

—Paige Davis

What Happened to Cass McBride

By Gail Giles

★★★★

Cass McBride is perfectly, painfully popular. David isn't. Nothing in his life is, but because he's in a cycle of self-destruction he asks out Cass, who obviously rejects him. So he kills himself. *What Happened to Cass McBride* is

about, well, what happened to Cass McBride. Those who are claustrophobic would do well to stay away from this book.

The plot line is good, if a bit overused (boy asks out girl, boy gets rejected, boy dies, someone gets revenge). If you are willing to get past the predictable plot, the book is pretty good. Told from the points of view of Cass, Kyle (David's brother), and Ben, the detective. It really does pull you in.

My favorite part of the book was the way the author portrays Cass. At first, Cass seems the average popular girl. As the book goes on you discover layers in her, and that the way she is isn't necessarily her fault. All in all, this book is worth your time.

—Oonagh Maquarrie



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!

New Moon

By Stephanie Meyer

★★★★★

In *New Moon*, sequel to *Twilight*, Bella and Edward continue their relationship until the Cullens move away. No one feels this change as much as Bella. She finds comfort in her friend, Jake Black. He and Bella become good friends, but Jake hates Edward and the Cullens, because as a werewolf Jake hates “the cold ones,” or vampires. When Edward comes back to Forks, Bella is best friends with Jake. Edward, devastated, flees to Europe. Read the book to find out what happens next in this vampiric series.

—Samantha Mannes

Lost

Gregory Maguire

★★★★★

Winifred Ridge, amateur author, travels to her ancestral family home in the heart of London for inspiration for her next book. Once she arrives, she finds her home deserted and her cousin gone without a trace (not to mention the strange knocking coming from the other side of the pantry wall). Winnie is then embroiled in an ancient mystery involving senile elderly boarders, the ghost of Jack the Ripper, and Winifred’s possible family ties to Ebenezer Scrooge. Things get even more complicated when she meets a handsome American professor in a musty Indian apothecary. The plot thickens... I won’t tell you more—go out and read it yourself!

This is by Gregory Maguire—need I say more? It’s a bit confusing in a few parts, but the characters are really well developed, and the plot takes a really interesting twist at the very end. It’s a fantastic book.

—Gabrielle Hall

Wicked

Gregory Maguire

★★★★★

For those who had the extreme good fortune/right mob connections to see *Wicked* when it came to Gammage, you may be tempted to pick up the book. If you do, you’ll be so confused your head will spin. Basically the only things that went untouched in the transition from page to stage were the names. Now don’t get me wrong, I love defying gravity when I get the chance, but the play doesn’t even compare to the book.

Maguire is a master of word craft and description. The images he stirs of Oz are razor sharp, but he doesn’t shy away from the unnerving and strange because, well,

sometimes the world is unnerving and strange. Such is Elphaba the main character (I’m reluctant to say heroine) of *Wicked*. Born with skin more verdant than human and teeth more suited for a shark, she is odd to the highest degree. But she is more than just strange in physiology—she is silent and watchful even as a toddler. We follow her to Shiz University where she is forced to room with the flamboyant, pretentious socialite Glinda. From there we follow the twists and turns of her turbulent life: Student, revolutionary, recluse, and finally witch. You love her for her will and wit. However, throughout, Maguire is never afraid to make Elphaba unlikable or downright unpleasant and never shows the reader more than glimmers into her character at a time. This just makes her all the more fascinating (Ask yourself what was the last YA book you read in which the main character was actually the most interesting).

The length of the book is instrumental in making this work. The long story makes it so no one point, theme, or relationship seems forced or heavy-handed. Things simply evolve subtly. In a genre that tends to have all the delicacy of a two-by-four to the back of the head, this book is a much-needed break.

Even though the book takes place in Oz, fantastic country of talking animals and incantations, it is easily one of the most realistic stories I have ever read. Perhaps this is because within the book is a meditation on evil, a universal topic. Is the Wicked Witch really wicked? An easy yes or no means you weren’t reading close enough.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson

Poppy

Avi

★★★★

This book may be an “easy read”, but it has an amazingly sophisticated plot. It starts off with Mr. Ocax, the owl, watching two mice. The two mice, Poppy and Ragweed, are on a hill without asking the permission of the owl. As punishment for stepping out of line, Mr. Ocax kills Ragweed. The beginning is a bit slow, but the action really picks up later on. Poppy ends up searching for the truth behind the “New House” because something there is making even Mr. Ocax nervous. The rest of the mice need to move soon or else they will starve—but Mr. Ocax forbids them to move.

I think this book is worth reading for anyone.

—Catherine Millar-Haskell

Rowan Hood: Outlaw Girl of Sherwood Forest

Nancy Springer

★★★★★

Rosemary is the daughter of Celadine and the traveling Robin Hood. Her mother is considered a “wood witch,” but really she is a healer and is a daughter of a fairy spirit. Her mom dies and Rosemary wants revenge somehow, but for right now she looks for her father. She makes herself look like a boy and calls herself Rowan. She finds Robin but doesn’t tell him who she is. Along the way she meets new friends like Lionel, a huge boy with a beautiful singing voice and harp. Rowan also meets Etty, a runaway princess who was supposed to be forced into marriage. Together, they make an outlaw band.

—Beth Weser

Where’s FRANK?

Look for the 2006 issue of FRANK later this year

You can also sign up to join the teen editorial staff.

Check

<http://mesalibrary.org/teens/frank/> for more information.



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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