

Open Shelf

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city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

Letter from the editor



As the last issue before the summer issue, I hope these books can offer you some refuge from seemingly endless wasteland that we call AP test and finals.

Mary Beth Hutchinson
Open Shelf Editor

The Wedding

By Nicholas Sparks

★★★

All right— I gave this book an over all three stars but only because it can range from one to five depending on what your cup of tea is. **The Wedding** was given to me by my cousin Nate (yes, a guy) who absolutely loved it. It is a sort of sequel to **The Notebook** told from the point-of-view of one of Allie and Noah's son-in-laws, Wilson. Wilson believes that his wife Jane is no longer in love with him. With his daughter's wedding coming up, Wilson is trying to plan for that as well as win Jane's heart again, and the plans may be more intertwined than they seem. I found it to be pleasant, uplifting read— nothing spectacular perhaps, but a touching story of faith and redemption.

-Nykaa Ryan

Haters

By Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez

★★★★★

This novel introduces the character of Pasquala Rumalda Quintana de Archuleta

("Paski") who is very abruptly moved from Taos, New Mexico to Los Angeles, California, courtesy of her newly eccentric father. Paski is currently a hard-core mountain biker, and the sunny beaches of California don't appeal to her at all. It is on her very first day at her new school that Paski learns that the popular students may be diverse in ethnicity but are alike in cruelty. Upon meeting a beautiful boy, a few strange new friends, and the gorgeous and wicked Jessica Nguyen, Paski goes through overdose rehab, has a near death experience, learns how to ride a motorcycle, and falls in love. I recommend this novel for teens and older.

-Katie Macdonald

King Dork

By Frank Portman

★★★

This book came highly recommended by John Green, one of my very favorite authors, so I dove in expecting a YA novel nearly on par with Green's own work. I was highly disappointed. Though Portman has a reasonably believable teen voice, and his characters do from time to time find themselves in the hilarious situations promised on the back cover, for the most part I found myself expecting more.

The main character Tom finds himself a high school sophomore with few friends and fewer stereotypical high school social events. He and his sole friend Sam pretend bands and plans and constantly complain about what they call "the *Catcher* cult." A discussion on **The Catcher in the Rye**, its conspiracy, et al., should be hilarious. But like most of the book's subplots, this never really goes any where. Maybe this book has some sort of deeper meaning that, by virtue of my double X chromosomes, I can't understand. It is the

only explanation I can find for such a critically acclaimed work that I found to be just on the upper side of mediocre. Is it funny? Sure. But it never reaches hilarity, and never really reached a point, either.

-Alyssa Ratledge

Midnighters

By Scott Westerfield

★★★★★

This book is about how a family moves to a small town in the middle of nowhere and how their daughter had found a secret hour at midnight. Jessica, the daughter, finds that she is one of five that can be in the secret hour, but unlike the others she doesn't have a special "ability." So as the other "midnighters" try to find out what her ability is. Jessica is running from "darklings," monsters that only live in the secret hour. When they find out what Jessica's ability is, everyone is shocked. I loved this book and the one that followed it, although there is a sad ending to the trilogy.

-Kelsey Long

The Freedom Writers Diary

By The Freedom Writers and Erin Gruwell

★★★★★

Erin Gruwell wanted to teach, so she got a job at Long Beach High School as a freshman high school English teacher, and got the room 203. Her freshmen were made up of mostly kids that had grown up in The Projects. Most were expected to fail and drop out. Most were in gangs and stuck with their own "kind". Gruwell, after finding a very discriminating picture, wanted to change that. She told them

that their hatred of each other would only lead to another Holocaust. They had never heard of the Holocaust. So, she decided to teach them using the books by Anne Frank (**Diary of a Young Girl**) and Zlata (**Zlata's Diary**). Their lives were changed forever.

This book was made into the movie *Freedom Writers* with Hilary Swank. The film only follows the students through their sophomore year, but the book goes all the way to graduation. The book is very moving and really does make you grateful for what you have.

-Anna Gurevitz

The Possibility of Fireflies

By Dominique Paul

★★★

This novel takes place in 1987 with a girl named Ellie whose family life has gone down the drain. From her mother who is taking a "break from parenting" and becoming more violent, to her sister, Gwen, who is on her way to entering a lifetime of delinquency, Ellie is caught in a world of indecision. This is only made worse when she starts to have feelings for a boy seven years older than her, Leo. This novel contains some more mature content; however, getting pulled into the point-of-view of Ellie may be worth it for readers who enjoy dramatic and tragic teenage lives.

-Katie Macdonald

Car Trouble

By Jeanne Du Prau

★★★★★

Unbearably cute! When I first looked at this book, I thought, "Oh, just another road trip, car breaks down, etc." But much more happens to Duffy, the fifteen-year-old computer geek, than I could have ever expected. Duffy's mission was to travel from the East Coast to the West to get to a high paying job. As he travels, his car breaks down, picks up two hitchhikers, and gets into a whole lot of trouble. Duffy discovers a lot about himself but even then I couldn't stop laughing.

-Catherine Millar-Haskell

This Lullaby

By Sarah Dessen

★★★★★

Remy Starr has had her fair share of boyfriends, but before anything gets serious, she gives them "The Speech." She also had her own rules for boyfriends: tall, in shape, and most important; no musicians. These

rules have worked for her for all her life, until Dexter. He is a musician, disorganized, and clumsy. He is everything she is not, so why didn't this bug her? If he was any other guy, she would have kicked him to the curb already. When Dexter came along, Remy's whole life's beliefs changed. Maybe she does believe in love after all. Once again, Sarah Dessen enthralls readers in a book that has incredible characters and a useful lesson.

-Anna Gurevitz

That Was Then, This Is Now

By S.E. Hinton

★★★★

Bryon and Mark have been best friends, like brothers, since before either of them can remember. Both of them are tough guys, always ready for a fight, a poker game, or hustling pool, and where one is, the other is close by. But times are changing, the boys are growing into men, and while Bryon tries to understand and learn to live with the changes, Mark acts like nothing has happened, or could happen.

While Vietnam and the hippie movement rage in the background, lines are drawn in the sand that affect everyone, and no one can bury their head in the sand forever. Does growing up really have to mean growing apart? As Bryon struggles to answer that question, to somehow preserve his past while shaping his future, the choice is violently forced upon him again and again until one night when the world falls apart.

Just as amazing and compelling as her previous book, **The Outsiders**, Hinton's tale of growing up and change is a powerful story not only of a time period but of a universal period in people's lives. It's a story that needs rereading a few years apart, and with each reading, the story becomes more profound. No matter what, this book is a must read for everyone at least once in their life.

-Patricia Langevin

Fluke: or, I Know Why the Winged Whales Sing

By Christopher Moore

★★★★

Dr. Nathan Quinn is a marine biologist whom as dedicated his life to studying whales. The self-named "action-nerd" has spent his whole life pursuing one question, trying to find one simple answer. Why do humpback whales sing? Nate, more than anything, just wants to know. So it's not that

unusual that one clear winter day in Hawaii, while out on a boat with his research assistant Amy Earhart, Nate is watching and recording a group of singers. What it surprising is that while taking an identification picture of the whale's tale, there, painted in foot-high letters on the whale's fluke are the words "Bite me." That's when strange things begin happening. The lab is broken into and smashed, and all the recording destroyed. Then the developed pictures come back, missing the crucial one. What's going on here?

Going after the rarely written about subject of marine biologists, the actual people, not the research, Moore uses his unique blending of facts and satire to create a fish tale that will both hold you and have you in stitches.

-Patricia Langevin



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

Learn more at:

 mesalibrary.org
City of Mesa Library on the Web



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