

Open Shelf

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city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

Letter from the editor



Here is a mix of genres, from fantasy to non-fiction. With winter break fast approaching, there should be at least one thing here to pique your interest and keep you reading through the winter.

Mary Beth Hutchinson
Open Shelf Editor

Fairest

by Gail Carson Levine

★★★★★

Ava, an abandoned baby at an inn, was said to be born singing. The owners of the inn took her in and raised her along with their two sons and young daughter. Ava is a talented singer, but she is heavy and somewhat ugly. A duchess stops by the inn on the way to the King's wedding and takes Ava with her to it. The Kingdom of Ayortha is full of singing. However, the king is marrying a woman from another land and she is not accustomed to singing all the time. The Queen finds that Ava can throw her voice, so she makes Ava sing for her. The King soon becomes ill and the young prince starts to fall in love with Ava. Many evil events befall the kingdom with the Queen in charge.

—Beth Weser

The Poisonwood Bible

by Barbara Kingsolver

★★★★★

A family of four girls living in the Congo slowly adjusts to African life. Rachel, the oldest sister, is used to being spoiled and having everything she wants, but has to experience such things as having no indoor plumbing to not being able to bake a simple cake. Nothing seems to go right. Adah was born with a disability. She limps, doesn't talk, and reads backwards. Leah, a twin to Adah, tries to be Father's favorite daughter. Little Ruth May easily makes friends in the Congo. **The Poisonwood Bible** is a great book and one of my favorites.

—Markie Palmer

Dracula

by Bram Stoker

★★★

Jonathan Hacker has been sent to Transylvania to sell Count Dracula a London estate. Once he arrives, he sees no servants, maids, or cooks, just the Count. Lucy is about to get married when she suddenly becomes deathly ill. Finding that she is losing blood, the doctor soon calls in Dr. Van Helsing. From observing Lucy, Van Helsing knows what is causing Lucy's illness, but he fails to keep her alive and save her soul. Jonathan, escaping from Dracula's castle is now in the hospital recovering from his ordeal. His fiancé Mina is summoned. Mina soon discovers what her fiancé had been through and also learns from Dr Van Helsing that her dear friend Lucy's fiancé and a Texas man set off to kill the

king of vampires, Count Dracula. The whole book is journal entries, memoirs, and letters really letting you get a real look inside the characters' heads.

—Anna Gurevitz

Enchantment

by Orson Scott Card

★★★★★

Enchantment, by the illustrious author of **Ender's Game**, is one of Orson Scott Card's best books. The story begins with young Ivan Petroski, a Jewish boy living in pre-iron curtain Russia. Ivan and his family escape to America with help from their cousin



rating system

bad; needs work ★

so-so ★★

average ★★★

good ★★★★

excellent; perfect ★★★★★

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Marek. While at Marek's, Ivan glimpses a beautiful woman guarded by a terrible monster. Shortly after seeing the girl, Ivan moves to America where he goes on with his life. However, the memory of the girl still haunts him and later he returns to Europe to look for her. He finds her still there, unaged, unchanged. But when Ivan wakes the girl with a kiss, his life changes forever. The girl, Princess Katerina as it turns out, comes from a time one thousand years ago. Ivan is pulled into Katerina's world and must become king and face the witch Baba-Yaga, both roles he is sorely unprepared for.

Enchantment is the story of how Ivan faces the odds when everything is stacked against him. Everyone should read it, a well-written book with a great ending.

—Rachel Starks

Leaves of Grass

by Walt Whitman

★★★★★

It is difficult to explain how revolutionary **Leaves of Grass** is. Whitman was basically the first person to be accepted for writing free verse poetry. It is no surprise why people loved the book—it is amazing. Every poem is luminous and glittering, reflecting bits of truth back at the reader. His words flow easily and, even though they mostly don't rhyme, have a deliberate artful quality. Whitman expresses all these insights about subjects that resound with all ages—the meaning of life, death, God, love and nature. **Leaves of Grass** has something beautiful for everyone.

—Mandi Levendowski

Prince of Tennis

Tabeshi Konomi

★★★

The series chronicles the journey of Ryoma Echizen, a twelve-year-old tennis prodigy, as he travels from America to Japan and joins a tennis academy. While the series is well-written and the art style great, the series is done with an avid tennis player in mind. Basically, if you are not reading Tennis Player's Monthly, you'll end up thoroughly confused. To sum up, if you know a western grip from an eastern grip and have any idea what a twist is, this is a great series. If not, do not touch this series with a ten-foot racket.

—Matthew Taylor

Payback

by Andy McNab

★★★

This sequel to **Traitor** has all the speed and intrigue of the original. Again, we follow Danny and Elena as they thwart the oh-so-corrupt British government. Danny's grandfather may or may not have been purposely labeled a traitor during his military work, forcing the family to go on the run from killer SAS agents and even a few members of Parliament. Throw in a few affluent, Caucasian teenage terrorists, and you have yourself a somewhat mediocre spy novel.

Payback isn't bad—just average. It utilizes the same devices and twists as every other book in the genre, and requires the same suspension of disbelief. Is it a literary masterpiece? No. But it easily entertains escapist readers, and it won't let fans of the genre down.

—Alyssa Ratledge

Batman: The Complete History

by Les Daniels

★★★★

First a confession, I read **Batman: The Complete History** purely for a school project. My economics teacher could make me write a product history but she could not make me write about anything mundane like Firestone tires, Quaker Oats, or Microsoft. Doing my best to fight the power whenever I can, I chose The Dark Knight for my subject.

The book traces the evolution of Batman from The Bat's first appearance in print in 1939. A combination of Sherlock Holmes, The Shadow, and Leonardo Davinci's sketches, Batman was an instant hit. Weathering allegations of "seducing the innocent," sci-fi plots that were downright embarrassing, and dorky Robins, Batman eventually returned to his dark roots. The book makes a compelling case that Batman is the most complex and fascinating American superhero. Given the hundreds of different permutations of the hero present today, it is clear that American artists agree.

For the serious Batphiles, this book is replete with knowledge from the well-known to the insanely obscure. Want to see Bob Kane's first commercial drawing or the scores of action figures made of the Bat? How about frames from *The Dark Knight Returns* or original batmobiles? They're

here along with hundreds of other images crammed into the book's pages. You get the feeling that Batman couldn't so much as twitch his cape without Daniels scribbling it down. For those who want this kind of detail, the book is fascinating. For others, it may be overwhelming. This is a great book, but for a very specific audience. If you're hungry for more Batman analysis, look up **The Many Lives of The Batman**.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson

Where's FRANK?

The 2006 issue of FRANK is now on sale at all three branches of the City of Mesa Library.

Submissions for the 2007 issue of FRANK will be accepted through March 31, 2007.

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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