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April 2002

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mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor

'Tis April and spring is in the air. This may produce a sense of nostalgic romance, but if you are like us, this quickly gives way to nausea. The only way to escape it is to withdraw from the world and surround yourself with one of two things—books or video games. Since you can only play video games for about 6 hours at a time tops before your brain completely shuts down, and April lasts roughly 720 hours, books are the only feasible option. So hit the library or your local bookstore and stock up. The clock has started. 720 hours to go.

Leon Eubanks
open shelf Editor

Send comments and suggestions to tiepilot777@hotmail.com



rating system

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

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Following Fake Man

By Barbara Ware Homes

The reason I picked this book up is because it has a cool cover. While reading it, I liked it. After reading it (and re-reading it) I loved it. The basic plot is that a boy named Homer (who is named after his father) goes with his mother and housekeeper to Maine for an unknown reason. When he gets there he discovers that everything he knew about his deceased father (which wasn't much) is only half-truth. He gets involved in a town mystery about a man in disguise.

This book kept me interested until all the questions were answered. The characters were extremely realistic. I would recommend this book to anyone that wants a quick but great mystery.

—Alyssa Ratledge ★★★★★

The Princess Diaries

By Meg Cabot

If you've seen the movie and like it, you will adore the book. Mia Thermopolis is a freshman in Manhattan with yield-sign hair, a flat chest, an F in Algebra, and, thanks to her dad, she's the princess of Genovia. Gee, thanks Dad. This book is all about her life through her princess lessons and her experiences. Hilariously funny, I would give anyone this book.

—Jenny Knatz ★★★★★

Star Trek Sketchbook (Original Series)

By Herbert and Yvonne Solow

This is a good book, especially if you want to learn more about the costumes, the set, and all sorts of interesting things. It talks about Walt Jeffries, Wah Chang, and other people. If you ever wondered how the Enterprise was designed, or where they got ideas for costumes, or props, stuff like that, this is the book for you. But remember, it's only for the original series!

—Deidre Oberpriller ★★★★★

Sweep 8: Changeling

By Cate Tiernan

After waiting for this book for two months this was a let down. Morgan has dumped Hunter after finding out the identity of her father; I don't know why. She is hired by the Council to stop her father from destroying Skylochet, her close friend's coven. To do this she must get close to her father through her brother. All the time she tries to fight off her "dark side."

I love her writing style, but the plot is paper-thin. The book is wrapped up with a "gee wiz, let's all get together and hug" ending that I hate. Read the book, but don't expect a life changing experience.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson ★★★★★

The Scarlet Pimpernel

By Baroness Orczy

1800 France in the Reign of Terror. Madame la Guillotine claims nobles by the hundreds. Only one thing can save the old nobles of France, the Scarlet Pimpernel, an Englishman who is smart, fast, daring, and mysterious. He's so good at saving nobles that a spy is sent to England to talk "the cleverest woman in Europe" into figuring out who the Pimpernel is—in exchange for her brother's life. Her brother happens to be in league with the Scarlet Pimpernel and though she admires the Pimpernel, she'd rather have a living brother.

—Elizabeth Steimle ★★ ★★

Sailing Alone Around the Room

By Billy Collins

Do you think the majority of poetry is annoying, convoluted, and pretentious? Well then, this book is for you. Open to any page of Billy Collins' new anthology *Sailing Alone Around the Room*, and you will find yourself in a comfortable conversation with the author. Billy Collins starts out each poem with a touch of wry humor and ends it by totally twisting around your world view. This anthology compiles most of my favorite Billy Collins poems into one big greatest hits collection. If your life has been a little crazy lately, take a break with Billy Collins. You won't regret it.

—Erin Hutchinson ★★ ★★

America

By E.R. Frank

This book starts out in a very strange way, and the author jumps from flashbacks to the present arbitrarily, so it's kind of confusing. However, through the brief flashbacks, you eventually find out that America is currently in a mental hospital because of his past.

By the end of the book you really care about what happens to America and how

he solves his problems. I would recommend this to anyone who has the time to sit through the slow beginning.

—Jason Yan ★★ ★★

Exodus

By Leon Uris

Two thousand years ago, the Jewish people were driven from Israel and scattered "to the four corners of the earth." Dispersed across the globe, the disjointed people suffered two millennia of pointless hatred, violent rage, misplaced condemnation, and countless massacres.

The close of World War II found the Jewish community of Europe nearly wiped out. What remained of the nearly six million human beings was a mere half million survivors, each of whom would carry the scars of unimaginable horrors for the rest of their lives. Among these haunted eyes and broken hearts was a single shining light in their harsh existence. It came down to one simple objective: to return and reclaim their Promised Land, and to renew the former glory that was Israel.

Thousands upon thousands of these refugees, the vestiges of the European Jewish, from Germany, Poland, Russia, Denmark, France, and a myriad of other countries, flocked to the one place on earth where the word "Jew" was not a slander. Organizations rallied from around the globe advocating the creation of a Jewish homeland. The movement took on the name of Zionism, and "Eretz Israel" became the battle cry, embodying the revitalized spirit of an entire people.

It would be impossible to convey even a fraction of the story held within these pages, the scope of this novel is so immense. It is a history of the creation of the State of Israel, but goes far beyond a simple recounting. It stretches out in all directions, weaving and tying together the lives of main characters, and laying out the interplay and actions of the countries involved.

The language isn't notably elegant, and descriptions are often incomplete, but the true beauty of the novel lies in the emotion it invokes. You will find yourself connecting and caring about these people, crying at the atrocities and horrible injustice, and

cheering alongside the tireless redeemers of Israel. *Exodus* is truly a worthwhile and rewarding story and, I promise, you won't be disappointed.

—Ella Peterson ★★ ★★

The Black Gryphon

By Mercedes Lackey & Larry Dixon

It's about a Black Gryphon named Skandranon fighting a war to save his people from an evil mage named Ma'ar. His friend, Amberdrake, is an Empatic Healer. He finds out he is lifebonded to a woman named Winterheart.

Zhaneel is a Gryfalcon who falls in love with Skandranon.

The creator of the Gryphons, Urtho, Mage of Silence, wants Skandranon to continue his line.

Find out how all these characters are connected in this exciting fantasy.

—LaRae Hunter ★★ ★★



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