

# Open Shelf

February  
2007

## This month:

**Dream Spinner** Bonnie Dobkin

**The Princess Bride** S. Morgenstern

**Chicks in Chainmail** Edited by Esther M. Friesner

**Howl's Moving Castle** Diane Wynn Jones

**The Prophecy of the Stones** Flavia Bujor

**Dumb Love** Kathleen Jeffrie Johnson

**Midnight Predator** Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

## city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter



Jenny Knatz



Mary Beth  
Hutchinson

### Open Shelf Editors

Here are some reading suggestions for February.

## Dream Spinner

**Bonnie Dobkin**

★★★

In **Dream Spinner** you are taken to a world where dreams become reality to those who fall victim to the false reality. Jori becomes one of these victims as the temptation to get away from it all overtakes her. She used to be popular, happy, and loved. But ever since the car crash that scarred her and killed her father, everything has caved in. Betrayed by her best friend and with her little sister missing, Jori is willing to do anything to escape.

Then she meets a dark old man, and along with her new friend Newt, Jori is pulled into a magical world through a mysterious tapestry and is forced to make a choice: give up her dreams, or give up everything else.

I think that the **Dream Spinner** is a perfect book for someone who wants to read something a little different than most.

—Katie Macdonald

## The Princess Bride

**S. Morgenstern**

★★★★★

**The Princess Bride** is probably best known nowadays as an old but splendid movie.

But of course, it began with a book—a book about the beautiful but not-so-intelligent Buttercup and the love of her life, Westly, who risks life and limb to rescue her from a marriage to the barrel-esque Prince Humperdink. A book about the “inconceivably” vile Vizzini, a hunchbacked genius, and his henchmen, Fezzik, the friendly giant, and the sword-master Spaniard. It's got pirates and miracle men and Rodents of Unusual Size and Snow Sand and king bats and an albino...

Yes, it sounds like a typical fantasy story of sorts. But really, it's more than that. It's practically the basis for the typical fantasy story, and it's brilliant. Morgenstern made me laugh out loud more than once, and I will undoubtedly read this book again.

The version I read was the abridgement by William Goldman, and he did both good and bad things with it. Good things: he saves you from reading or skimming or skipping sixty-six pages of Florence's history, fifty-six pages of packing and unpacking clothing and the like, and seventy-two pages of princess-training, among other things. The Bad: he inserts a lot of self-anecdotes about his reaction to the book when his father read it to him, and he gives some spoilers. The anecdotes can be touching, and the spoilers are a bit of a shock-cushion, but they also taint the reading experience.

One last thing: If you do get the abridgement, and get to where Goldman talks about the “Reunion Scene,” I'll warn you before you write or email in that you can't actually get a copy of the “reunion scene.” The e-mail they sent me back about why they couldn't send out the reunion scene was pretty funny though.

—Nykaa Ryan

## Chicks in Chainmail

**Edited by Esther M. Friesner**

★★★★★

Some women in fiction go through life as the mothers of heroes; others get pulled into adventure. These girls, on the other hand, come at adventure with their broadsword swinging. Armor in place, weapons sharpened and at the ready, and a mindset that doesn't play well with others, these chicks in well-used armor are here. Ready and waiting for the reader who likes a female protagonist who doesn't throw off her clothes for whoever the random dude is that is so common in Harlequin romance novels.

Meet the **Chicks in Chainmail**, a collection of short stories featuring woman who don't wait around to be married off or rescued. These girls do the rescuing, monster-slaying, adventuring, and even PTA meetings (with a vengeance). Written by some of the best sci-fi and fantasy writers in the business, fun is had by all in these stories of courage, humor, and even some fractured fairytales.

—Patricia Langevin

## Howl's Moving Castle

**Diane Wynn Jones**

★★★★★

Recently, I've been looking for new blood—another author to read. What I found was actually in the blood bank's cold storage, waiting to be picked up by readers again.

Sixteen-year-old Sofie lives in a world of both good and bad witches, magic and wonder. Where the eldest daughter isn't all that remarkable and is always dealt the lame card in the deck of fate. So, when her father dies, Sofie resigns herself to working in the family hat shop

while her younger sister Martha is apprenticed to the bakery and her youngest sister, Letty, to a witch. At least, that is until the evil Witch of the Waste finds her way to the family Hat shop, cursing the young woman with a ninety-year-old body, and making her incapable of telling anyone what's happened to her.

Unable to face her family and hoping to break the curse, Sofie decides that if the rules are going to be broken, they might as well be shattered, so she sets off to seek her fortune. She finds plenty of adventure as her world is turned upside down after she flips the world of the wizard Howl.

To tell the truth, I'd never heard of Diane Wynn Jones before, but now I'm looking for more of her work.

—Patricia Langevin

## The Prophecy of the Stones

Flavia Bujor

★★★★

*The Prophecy of the Stones* was originally written in French by fifteen-year-old Flavia Bujor. Being translated to English has probably marred the unique voice and the elegance of its original language, but though the writing and the plot are simple, the story is still a pleasant look into a youthful imagination. While a young girl named Joa struggles against a life-threatening sickness in a modern hospital, she dreams of three girls that each hold something of herself: Jade, the haughty and vivacious daughter of a powerful duke; Amber, a compassionate and imaginative peasant girl; and Opal, a withdrawn but pure-hearted villager. These three bear the stones that are prophesized to aid the Realm in a battle against Evil, and it is on this battle that any hope of Joa's survival lies. The story seems childish at times, but there are layers of truth and reality beneath the fantasy that offer inspiration, if one only takes the time to see them.

—Nykii Ryan

## Dumb Love

Kathleen Jeffrie Johnson

★★★

Here's another one of those goofy teen books for girls in "love." Carlotta, our main character, begins the story in a creative writing class, stumped on how to write her romance novel. She's surrounded by those stereotypical high-schoolers—the geek, the pretty one, etc., etc., who just seem to bother her. After writing one page, she leaves due to utter frustration. She clamors up the hill, stopping to buy ice

cream for her recovering-alcoholic "father in spirit," Franklin Thomas. Realizing she's not going to be able to make it home before the ice cream melts, she swings by the local auto shop to get a ride from Pete, her dream boy. She then devises a plan to get Pete...in a way.

The book takes a lot of fairly obvious turns, and gets a bit confusing. It doesn't always follow through with the plot...but the ending is pretty cute. It's a light read, nothing too difficult, but not very memorable.

—Ashley Mentzer

## Midnight Predator

Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

★★★★★

Turquoise Draka might be human, but she is strong, powerful, and absolutely lethal. Important traits when you're an assassin, especially when your targets are vampires, shapeshifters and others of the supernatural brand. Turquoise is one of the most powerful members of Crimson, the Bruja Guild of assassins. But then a new assignment comes in—the most dangerous assignment of Turquoise's career, one that involves being sold into the vampire slave market and holds little chance of allowing her to come out alive, even if she completes her task. As she balances on a knife's edge, Turquoise finds herself facing an enemy that could destroy her, one she never expected to face: herself.

This book is so well written, drawing on the long exhausted theme of self-discovery in a refreshingly original way.

—Patricia Langevin



### rating system

bad; needs work ★

so-so ★★

average ★★★

good ★★★★

excellent; perfect ★★★★★

Visit the Library's Web Site:

[www.mesalibrary.org](http://www.mesalibrary.org)

and see the Teens page!

### Get registered NOW for Anthology's 2007 Voices of Youth Poetry Slam.

Anthology, Inc. invites you to join us for the greatest performance poetry event to EVER take place in the Phoenix area. Teens 13-19 will read in a series of qualifying poetry slams across the valley, and the top finishers will star in a final extravaganza on April 28th, 2007 at the Burton Barr Branch of the Phoenix Library.

The preliminary competition at the City of Mesa Library will take place on Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, from 1-3 p.m., at the Main Library branch, 64 E. First St., in downtown Mesa.

Registration is FREE, but each preliminary event is limited to 15 participants. So, be sure to reserve your spot today. For a complete schedule of preliminary events, and further details, visit the festival website at: <http://voy.anthology.org> and register for your spot in Anthology's 2007 Voices of Youth Poetry Slam.

### Meet the Authors of *Revenge of the Shadow King*, Jon Lewis and Derek Benz!

Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 11 a.m. to 12 noon, Youth Activity Room, City of Mesa Library, 64 E. First St.

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



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