

Open Shelf

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mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor



November is here, and with it the start of the holiday season. There are two ways to approach the following months. First—you could follow the crowd and drive yourself insane as you search for the perfect gift for Great Aunt Martha. Secondly—you could actually enjoy the months ahead. Take the road less traveled! Avoid the insanity! And in your free time pick up a good book. Great Aunt Martha can wait.

Leon Eubanks
open shelf Editor

Send comments and suggestions to
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rating system

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

Visit the Library's NEW Web Site:
www.mesalibrary.org
and see the **Teens** page!

Whale Talk

By Chris Crutcher

Like other Chris Crutcher books, **Whale Talk** is about swimming. However, the difference in this book is that the swimming team is lousy. They have never won a meet, and will never win one.

The swimming team consists of one actual swimmer, an extremely fat boy, a guy missing one leg, a body builder, and a mentally challenged student. Basically, most of the members are the outcasts of their high school, and the book talks about the way they handle being different. This book, although not quite as good as other Chris Crutcher books, is very good, and I recommend it to everybody.

—Jason Yan ★★★

The Great Train Robbery

By Michael Crichton

The Great Train Robbery is about the Great Train Robbery, big surprise. Edward Pierce is trying to rob the gold shipment headed for the Crimean War. It takes a year of planning and a huge wad of cash to pull it off. With so many twists and turns it makes you wonder dozens of times if they'll pull it off. Anyone interested in Victorian England, adventure stories, or anything for that matter, should read this book.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson ★★★★★

This month:

Whale Talk by Chris Crutcher

The Great Train Robbery by Michael Crichton

Odysseus in the Serpent Maze by Jane Yolen

Stuck in Neutral by Terry Trueman

Reinventing Comics by Scott McCloud

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Brightly Burning by Mercedes Lackey

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt

The Shining by Stephen King

Odysseus in the Serpent Maze

By Jane Yolen

This book is about a young Odysseus and how he looks for an adventure with his best friend, Mentor. They end up in more of a mess than an adventure. Odysseus gets shipwrecked, meets his future wife, and eventually fights the evil of the Serpent Maze. It's a really great book!

—Starr Whitwood ★★★★★

Stuck in Neutral

By Terry Trueman

The main character is a teen who has cerebral palsy. Since he is unable to talk or move any muscles, everyone thinks he doesn't understand the world around him. He has no way of communicating with the world so he can't let them know that he does understand, that he is smart, that he can even read. He discovers later that his dad is thinking about killing him to put him out of his misery. But, he doesn't want to die and he has no way of letting his dad know that he isn't in any pain. This is a really sad story of this boy's struggle to live. It's a good book.

—Lisa Barcon ★★★★★

Reinventing Comics

By Scott McCloud

From the writer of **Understanding Comics** comes the next step in the comics revolution. He touches on comics as literature and as art. He also discusses creators' rights, industry innovation, public perception, institutional scrutiny, gender balance, minority representation, diversity of genre as well as internet innovations such as digital production, digital delivery, and digital comics.

Read more of his theories on his website www.scottmccloud.com, in his I Can't Stop Thinking!

—Chris Carbone ★★☆☆

Jane Eyre

By Charlotte Bronte

Jane has a nasty childhood. Her family is dead and she has to live with her aunt, Mrs. Reed, wife of the late Mr. Reed, where everyone hates her and everything is her fault. She gets shipped off to a charity school where tuberculosis kills a third of the population, including her first friend. Eventually, she does grow up and gets a position as a governess for Mr. Rochester's ward. Mr. Rochester isn't handsome but he's smart and funny and perfectly suited for Jane's taste. Naturally, they fall in love and plan to get married but there is only one small problem—Mr. Rochester is already married to a psychopath who has been trying to kill him.

Jane skips town because she's still in love with Mr. Rochester but can't marry him. Will things work out? Read it and see.

—Elizabeth Steimle ★★☆☆

Brightly Burning

By Mercedes Lackey

This latest book of the **Heralds of Valdemar** series is about a legendary hero of Valdemar's history, Lavan Firestorm. Before he becomes a legend, Lavan is an unhappy teenager being pushed into what his parents want for him.

He is sent to a school where the oldest students bully and torture younger students under the excuse of disciplining them. When Lavan becomes ill and then avoids the bullies, they find him and take him beneath the deserted school to torture him. In pain and anger, Lavan's gift of firestarting bursts out and kills four boys.

This begins his journey to becoming an altruistic Herald of Valdemar and a hero from his actions in a war against a fanatical neighboring country.

This book is an excellent addition to the **Heralds of Valdemar** series. However, if you like happy endings, don't read this!

—Jordan Brinkmoeller ★★☆☆

Angela's Ashes

By Frank McCourt

Angela's Ashes is about a boy, Frank McCourt, and his family. He writes from his point of view, starting when he's about four years old. The family lives in Ireland for most of Frank's childhood, but he and his younger brother, Malachy, were born in New York. Frank grows up during World War II. The story tells of all the things his family goes through. His poor mother survives a miscarriage, three small children dying, and an alcoholic husband who eventually leaves the family for England. **Angela's Ashes** is a story of survival and is realistic because it is written by the man who actually lived through it.

—Kali Self ★★☆☆

The Shining

By Stephen King

In the middle of the Rocky Mountains, there is an exclusive and very top-class hotel called The Overlook. It is the perfect location, the perfect getaway, and the perfect place for struggling writer Jack Torrance to finish writing his play. Jack, whose shady past is filled with violence brought on by drinking, takes the job as the Overlook's winter caretaker. It is his last hope for redemption, and it could give him a new start in life. He will stay there all winter, even when all of the roads leading

to the Overlook are blocked by Colorado's savage winter storms. Jack brings his wife Mary, and his seven year old son, Danny, to the hotel for company and support. Danny is a very special child; he has the shining—the ability to see things before they happen—and to read minds. From the minute Danny sets eyes on the Overlook, he suffers a deluge of horrible premonitions. As the family is shown around the hotel, Danny is bombarded with visions of the horrible deeds (murder, suicide, death) that were done here.

Left alone, the family is happy at first. Everything is fine, at least to Jack and Wendy's point of view. Danny still has visions, especially centered on certain places throughout the hotel and its grounds: the presidential suite (gangsters and a gunfight); room 217 (the bathtub); and the playground, where there is the feeling of being stalked by someone (something) just waiting to close its hands around your throat. Then, there are the hedge animals, the German Shepard, and the two lions, who move closer and closer but only when you are not looking, the roque court (and its mallets), the boiler, ("Watch her, she creeps.").

It's going to be a long winter.

—Beth Dormady ★★☆☆

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.



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