

Open Shelf

November
2006

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city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

Letter from the editor



Here are some of the books that we have loved or simply liked reading in the last few months. It is mostly a hodgepodge, so there is something for any fancy you might want tickled. Enjoy.

Mary Beth Hutchinson
Open Shelf Editor

The Cay

Theodore Taylor
★★★★★

A book of survival and xenophobia, **The Cay** takes place in the West Indies during a war against the Germans. A boy named Philip leaves his home bound for mainland America with his town under attack. Unfortunately, a German submarine torpedoes the ship Philip is traveling on. Separated from his mother, he winds up on a boat with a black man. Will his xenophobia get in the way of survival?

I loved the setting of the book and its message: it is better to team up and forget differences. I was dismayed at the ending, though. So I don't recommend this book to anyone who gets emotional.

—Catherine Millar-Haskell

Follow the Blue

Bridgid Lowry
★★★★★

Bee is fifteen when her father has a breakdown and enters a mental institution. Tired of being "good, reliable her" she meets up with a new girl at school, dyes her hair, and throws her first real party. I really, really liked this one, which kinda surprised me. It seemed from the cover that the book would be a stereotypical "girl's-life-is-great-but-she-despises-it-anyway, something snaps, she goes crazy, life is perfect" book. It wasn't. Only semi-clichéd, this is a book to go out, get, read, and feel happy when you close it.

—Ooanagh McQuarrie

The Crucible

Arthur Miller
★★★★★

Miller uses the unbelievable horrors of the infamous Salem witch trials to parallel the 1950's McCarthyism witch-hunt. However, Miller's play is much more than dull, symbolic political commentary—it is about people.

In a puritan community in the seventeenth century, women's voices were stifled. However, several teen girls find a voice (and a shocking amount of power) by using witch accusations to hide their own sins. Not only is there the perpetual suspense of who will be the next victim of manipulative Abigail Williams, there is a secret affair and government corruption.

The play is exciting. Miller does a great job of characterizing every character, not just the major ones. Even the "bad guys" have a sympathetic aspect. Although **The Crucible** is a play, it is not particularly

tough to read and it's easy to get into. Furthermore, it's short—which is great.

—Mandi Levendowski

Simon Says

Elaine Marie Alphin
★★★★★

Rereading this book, as I did this last August, is a mildly painful experience. Knowing the ending brings to light all of the cracking plot holes in the beginning. Yet at the same time, the reread reminded me of what I had liked in the first place: this is one of the most "literary" of recent YA novels.



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!

Rather than the flat and fake characters rife throughout YA, these individuals respond to their situation with maturity. Given that every one is an artist or writer or magician, their speech should be mature. I found it incredibly refreshing. Everyone was smart, calculating, and appropriate to the situation. Even the struggles—an artist finding himself, an author following up his brilliant debut—gleam with literary strength. This book is not for the faint of heart or easily offended, but those who enjoy the strengths of literary fiction in adult books will love this unusual take on intelligent teens.

—*Alyssa Ratledge*

Captain Hook: Adventures of a Notorious Youth

JV Hart

★★★★★

Captain Hook is insane. After careful analysis I have concluded that Hook is a total nutcase. Come on, he has a pet spider (although that spider is pretty awesome), and he builds a guillotine. How cool is that? James Hook begins his schooling adventures and quickly earns a really shoddy reputation. He basically stands up to the “king” of the school... and gets whipped—really hard. Eventually, he regains his status and falls in love with an awesome princess. He tumbles head over heels, but never loses his cool.

The author leaves nothing untouched. The story engrossed me. Read it! And P.S., if you are a big fan of the movie *Hook*, it really ties together a loose end or two.

—*Ashley Mentzer*

Uglies

Scott Westerfeld

★★★★★

Scott Westerfeld presents a different look at the future of Earth in *Uglies*. Now, everyone is pretty. On your sixteenth birthday you are taken away from your ugly friends and become pretty by means of a body changing operation. When Tally Youngblood's best friend Shay runs away, the authorities give Tally a choice: find Shay and the rebels or stay ugly forever. The choice that Tally makes will change her life and her world for good.

Westerfeld does a great job in this book. The characters are well developed and the plot is certainly unique.

—*Gabrielle Hall*

The Thief

Megan Whalen Turner

★★★★★

Gen is a thief of unsurpassed talent. He is recruited to steal a stone that marks, according to Eddissian tradition, the ascension of kings. The Sounissians desire this stone in order to have a claim to the throne. But Gen has his own agenda and his own secret past.

This is a great, interesting, clever book. I love this author. Her descriptive abilities sometimes make me stop reading in respect of a witty turn of phrase. She always kept me guessing; even though I had some background knowledge of key points, I forgot them all in my avid reading of this novel.

—*Jenny Knatz*

Restaurant at the End of the Universe

Douglas Adams

★★★★★

After escaping Magrathea in the Heart of Gold, Arthur Dent, Ford Prefect, Zaphod, and Trillion are on their way to the nearest restaurant for a bite to eat. However, the Vogons may be a problem. Their mission: destroy Arthur and Trillion, the last two humans in the universe, to ensure the future of psychiatry. Jeez, try and answer the question of existence and suddenly everyone is after you to shut you up before you can answer it.

So, saddle up for time travel, the end of the universe, and Arthur's search for a decent cup of tea.

—*Patricia Langevin*

12 Again

Sue Corbett

★★★★★

Patrick is a twelve-year-old boy whose life is normal enough until his mother, Bernadette, vanishes the night before her birthday, the last day of summer, the day before 7th grade begins.

Bernadette, called Detta, about to turn forty, is an average journalist living in Long Island with her husband and three sons. But when the pressure is on after her mother, Fiona, dies and her husband acts like a jerk, she takes off to spend the night at her mother's house to make her deadline and get some sleep. Feeling sick, she dips into her mother's old medicines for homemade cough syrup, toasting her spent youth. Big mistake. She goes to sleep thirty-nine and

wakes up twelve. Her mother's entire house has become her home when she was twelve, complete with her mother. Unfortunately, the rest of the world has stayed the same.

So now, as Patrick searches for a mother who has vanished without a trace, Detta has to figure out how this happened in the first place. Now it's time to dig out the history books and start going through Irish folklore to try and figure out what the family's history has to do with what happened, and to discover how Fiona, an immigrant from Ireland and recently back from the dead, may hold all the answers—if only she can realize what's going on.

—*Patricia Langevin*

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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