

Open Shelf

December 2002

mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor



You know, December could very well be my favorite month of the year. The semester is about halfway over, there is almost three weeks of free time right around the corner, the weather is wonderful, and it's the holiday season! Oh, and this year, both Harry Potter AND Lord of the Rings are going to be in theaters again! So, with all the free time that will soon be in your hands, you might want to revisit the original Hogwarts or Middle-Earth. Or you could check out this month's selections. Or both. Your choice.

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Jason Yan
open shelf Editor



rating system

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

Visit the Library's NEW Web Site:
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Timeline

By Michael Crichton

An old man is found wandering in the Arizona desert and spewing complex quantum physics theories. After the man dies, they find a map of a monastery in his pocket. It is more complete than any of the maps the excavators of the same monastery have. Four people from the same excavation site are whisked away to ITC (the company funding the site) after an impossible discovery. They have to go save one of their own after an accident.

If this review seems vague there's a reason. I can't give away any part of the book.

Crichton discusses quantum physics, technology, and the Middle Ages and makes it endlessly interesting. I blazed through this book and if you read it you won't be able to put it down.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson ★★★★★

The Fall of Reach

By Eric Nyland

The Fall of Reach is prequel to the X-Box game, Halo. Learn about the SPARTAN project and Master Chet's armor. Explore John III's past and find out who and what he is.

The book starts at the outbreak of the Covenant-Human war. Humans are outgunned and are beaten back to a few planets. Humanity has only one hope, John-III and his team of enhanced

This month:

Timeline by Michael Crichton

The Fall of Reach by Eric Nyland

CatSpeak by Bash Nibor

You Can Be Anything! From A-Z by Sarah Montague

The Hole by Marco Polio

The Firm by John Grisham

The Gospel According to the Simpsons by Mike Pinsky

Skellig by David Almond

The Wish by Gail Carson Levine

superhumans. They try to discover the truth behind the fanatical attacks by the ruthless covenant. The war is almost balanced, but then they discover Halo...

—David Justin Millar-Haskell

★★★★★

CatSpeak

By Bash Nibor

When I was in kindergarten, my parents bought me a cat. A cat who chews rubber bands (and then vomits them up), who cries at 4 a.m. for me to play with her, who enjoys stealing cobs of corn and carries them behind the couch, and who takes pride and joy in sitting on top of my computer monitor with her tail on the screen. I have had Cuddles (my cat) for six years now, and still didn't know why she did all these things, until I read **CatSpeak**.

CatSpeak is a book about cat behavior and the reasons behind it. The book discusses the different origins and behaviors of various cat breeds, which cats have longer nose hairs, which cats have bigger brains and which kitties like dogs more than other felines. **CatSpeak** also tells you how to (amazingly) teach your frisky feline friend tricks. I have tested several of the methods mentioned by Bash Nibor on teaching cats to sit, stay, fetch, reach and many others, and most of them have worked!

I think that **CatSpeak** is the perfect book for any cat owner who wants to explore their kitty companion's world.

—Mandi Levendowski ★★★★★

You Can Be Anything!

From A-Z

By Sarah Montague

"Clarence works in a cemetery. His budding love for dead animals blossoms into a fine career as the town gravedigger and undertaker. It also keeps him from actually becoming a serial killer." This wonderful anti-inspirational guide to adulthood covers everything from being adopted to a career as a zookeeper. It is only about 30 pages, but it is very much worth the time spent reading it, as well as looking at the beautifully drawn illustrations...wait, never mind. Just read it!!

—Andrea Alonge ★★★★★

The Hole

By Marco Polio

The city of Cowopolis is out for blood. Their beloved Bovines football team is threatening to leave unless they get a new state-of-the-art stadium. One man stands in the way of football bliss, the land owner's nephew. Depressed and drunk after his soulmate dies, the nephew is taken away to find himself and his time traveling abilities again. Meanwhile, he is being charged with treason for attempting to destroy the very fabric of life in Cowopolis for refusing to sell the land to the Bovines.

The nephew is very deep and not of this world mentally and so is this book. This book, while maybe not life changing, definitely leaves you thinking for weeks

SAT Strategy Session & Test Drive

Tuesday, Jan. 7, 7-8:30 p.m.

For college-bound students and interested parents. Get helpful free advice on how to achieve the highest score possible! Follow up with the free practice test on Saturday, January 11 from 1-4:30 p.m. Registration is required and begins on Monday, Dec. 30.

afterward. Read this book! Read it now! Read it now! Read it now!

—Mary Beth Hutchinson ★★★★★

The Firm

By John Grisham

Mitch McDeere has just gotten a job at the perfect firm. He has it all, but as time goes on he notices unusual things about his perfect job. Like the odd little fact that anyone who disagrees with the firm's decisions dies. When the horrifying realization of what the firm really is sinks in, Mitch tries to run, with the help of his wife, Abby and a woman named Tammy. Unfortunately, the firm doesn't want to let him go, so they do everything in their power to get him back—or kill him.

John Grisham's writing is intriguing and intense. However, the ending is anticlimactic, and somewhat of a let down. The fantastic chase scenes more than make up for it, though.

—Danielle Cotie ★★★★★

The Gospel According to the Simpsons

By Mike Pinsky

For a hard core Simpsons fan like myself, this was a dream come true. This book looks at the religion of the Simpsons. Luckily, this book was written by a man who actually watches the Simpsons and doesn't listen to the usual hatred of the show by the religious community. Pinsky shows that not only is the Simpsons a great show but is one of the most religious on television. Some misquotes irritated me but the book is a wealth of Simpsons goodness. This book rules on every imaginable level. Read it, even if you don't think you'd enjoy the religious perspective.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson ★★★★★

Skellig

By David Almond

Michael has just moved into a new home. He feels very helpless though be-

cause his baby sister has just taken ill. His world seems to be collapsing around him. Everything seems to be going wrong until he finds a creature living in his garage. Is he an angel, a human, or something more?

This was really good. Though the book is a bit surreal, it had to be to pull the story together. The characters were great and the book in general was candy for my imagination.

—Remy Albillar ★★★★★

The Wish

By Gail Carson Levine

The Wish is about a girl named Willma who meets an old lady on the train to school. She willingly gives up her seat to the old woman. Later on, the old woman grants Willma any wish. Willma wishes to be the most popular girl at her school. Then, once she gets to school, her wish kicks in. In her first hour she receives almost 25-50 notes. By the end of the day she's collected about 100 notes!

This book was good. It definitely wouldn't be one of my top ten favorite books though. (But, also by Gail Carson Levine, is *Ella Enchanted*. That book *is* the best and totally made my top ten favorite books.) You should read both of them.

—Ashley Egan ★★★★★



Happy Holidays
from YAAC

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 **CITY OF MESA**
Great People, Quality Service!