

Open Shelf

December 2004

city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor



Brr, it's finally getting cold! Somehow fantasy seemed like the right kind of genre this month, so that's what I went with. Enjoy. ^ _ ^

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Dune: The Battle of Corrin

By Kevin J. Anderson & Brian Herbert

If you have been reading the *Butlerian Jihad* series of the *Dune* books, then this is the one that you most likely have been waiting for. In a final effort to rid the galaxy of the thinking machines (Computers with Artificial Intelligence), the League of Nobles comes up with a brilliant, if potentially disastrous, plan. In the previous book, *The Machine Crusade*, a new technology was introduced, space-folding spacecraft. The plan was to use these space-folders to wipe out the machines in a matter of days. The plan was a success, except for a single planet where every machine world was razed with atomics.

Nineteen years down the line the one planet, Corrin, still exists. Humans whose

brains have been installed in machine bodies have begun to claim planets from the League, and the genius Norma Cenva finds a way to have safe travel in spacefolders.

What will happen? If you want to find out, you'll have to read this, after reading the first two, and be amazed by the storytelling genius of two authors. You won't regret it!

—Chris Smith ★★★★★

The Dark Tower Series

By Stephen King

The *Dark Tower* series is Stephen King's (supposed) final literary effort. The series is seven books long, starting with *The Gunslinger* and working its way through to *The Dark Tower*. The story is that of Roland of Gilead, the last of the Gunslingers. His goal in life: stop an all-consuming evil being, called the Crimson King, from destroying the unifying force that holds all the worlds of the universe in balance, the Dark Tower. Along the way, Eddie Dean, Susannah Dean, and Jake Chambers join him and a small, badger-like creature named Oy. Roland teaches them to be Gunslingers, and they travel with him in hopes of overthrowing the Crimson King and reaching the Dark Tower. Through these seven books, the five of them have to fight the used-up relics of the old world—which includes everything from flesh eating

This month:

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The Dark Tower Series by Stephen King

Clovermead by David Randall

The Lone Drow by R. A. Salvatore

Eragon by Christopher Paolini

The Safe-Keeper's Secret by Sharon Shim

Snakecharm by Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

lobster monsters to the Wizard from the Wizard of Oz. Of course there are more, but in the interest of time...

The series is far too complicated to explain by itself, but any actual explanation of the books would make this review about five pages long. These books are not the stereotypical Stephen King. The series falls more under the category of fantasy or sci-fi. The best part about these books is that King connects them to his other major works. He includes similar information, identical places, and familiar situations. These books explain how all the terrifying things that happen in King's other novels and stories occur because of the Crimson King and his servants. This is by far the best King I have ever read, and even if you are not a fan of his work, I would still recommend these books.

—Beth Dormandy ★★★★★



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!

Clovermead

By David Randall

Light and Dark. Past and Present. Lies and Truth. **Clovermead** takes place in a land where the light worships the Lady Moon and the evil idolizes the powerful and vengeful giant bear-god, Lord Ursus. Clovermead is a daring and, at the time, naïve 12-year-old tomboy whose head is filled with stories of adventure. But there is more to Clovermead than daydreaming and naïveté. She becomes ever-more perplexed as a stranger named Snuff, wearing a bear-toothed necklace, attacks her and her father, Waxmelt, accusing him of stealing something very valuable twelve years before. Clovermead, outraged at her father's thievery, fiercely defeats Snuff and claims the bear-tooth necklace as her prize. What Clovermead does not realize is that the necklace is a talisman of the priests of Ursus and that it is slowly making her a slave to the blood-lusting god and giving her strange powers over the bears of the land. As the battles between the followers of Lady Moon and the Lord Ursus erupt, another battle is raging within Clovermead herself—the battle to hunt and gain power or not to hunt and remain pure.

The book is extremely interesting, stunning, and imaginative. Its humor and wit and the exciting conflicts really keep you on edge and fully engaged to its satisfactory ending.

—**Gerald Del Rosario** ★★★★★

Editor's Note: And amazingly, this was Randall's FIRST novel!

The Lone Drow

By R.A. Salvatore

This is the latest chronicle of the adventures of one of fantasy's most beloved characters, Drizz't Do'urden. He's the totally awesome drow elf of doom and his buddies, Bruenor Battle-Hammer the "surly dwarf," Regis the Huffling, and Wulfgar the Barbarian. Yeah. Frankly, you must read every book by this guy!

—**Luke Lambert** ★★★★★

Eragon

By Christopher Paolini

This is definitely a book that I would read, no matter what! The main character, Eragon, is almost sixteen when our story begins in his homeland, Alagësia. While he is out hunting in a mountainous region named the Spine, he discovers a dragon egg. At the time, he does not recognize its true nature (is it a rock?), but when it hatches, well, let's just say all doubts are forgotten and poor Eragon is left with a supposedly extinct dragon baby to hide and raise. When enemies attack, Eragon must flee. A storyteller, who joins them for a brief time, suggests that since Eragon is the first Dragon Rider in generations, he ought to flee the Empire. After many trials, he makes it, but discovers that his journey is not yet finished. Thus ends **Eragon**—thus begins **Eldest**, book two of the **Inheritance Trilogy**.

As I'd said, this is an excellent book. It's reminiscent of many classical fantasy/science fiction novels—and written by a teen! Read it!

—**Deidre Oberpriller** ★★★★★

The Safe-Keeper's Secret

By Sharon Shim

Tambleham is a village full of secrets. A village kept by Safe-Keepers, where neighbors and strangers alike come one by one, in secret, to tell the safe-keeper things they dare not share with anyone else. It's Fiona's turn to be Safe-keeper, but Fiona's life itself is full of horrible, twisting secrets. What are they?

The Safe-Keeper's Secret is so beautiful and well written, with a plethora of exciting twists and mysteries that tingle your heart as you uncover the book's secrets one by one till the very end. This book is just delightful!

—**Gerald del Dosario** ★★★★★

Snakecharm

By Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

I was so depressed when I read this book. It's the sequel to **Hawksong**, which is one of my favorite books of all time, so I guess my expectations might have been a little high, but still... Let me explain:

The story is now told from Zane's point of view. Danica is pregnant and all sorts of hell is going down with the falcons. The plot thickens and builds through the first three quarters of the book, then suddenly a "miraculous" solution that involves no war and next to no difficulty just "happens" to appear. Everything was resolved within twenty pages. I think I missed the climax somewhere, but I honestly don't want to reread it. It seems that as Atwater gets older (she was 14 when she wrote her first book), her writing gets poorer. I hope that in her next book she recovers some of her old bounce.

—**Jenny Knatz** ★★ ★

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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