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## mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

### letter from the editor



December means one thing to a high school student—semester exams. There is actually a reason for the timing of these hell-spawned tortures. Although they deny it, teachers have a monthly stress quota. They must fulfill this quota to keep their jobs. Semester exams take a month's worth of stress and condense it into one week.

Instead of giving in to this demented system, kick back with a good book.

**Leon Eubanks**  
open shelf Editor

Send comments and suggestions to  
YaacEditor@hotmail.com



### rating system

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

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### Free Will

By Chris Lynch

Do you want a book with a clear plot? One that leaves you with a sense of understanding of what happened? One that you know if you like it or you hate it?

Then don't pick up **Free Will**.

It's very hard to get a one-star rating from me, but this book earned it. When I finished I couldn't even come up with a good reason to hate it. A summary of the plot: a boy works in a shop class, and some people in the town die. That's about it. There is really not more to get out of it than that. So...if you want a book that leaves you unsure of what the author was on at the time, check it out immediately.

—Janel Torkington★

### Saying Goodbye

By Marie G. Lee

Ellen has just arrived for her first year of Harvard. She has signed up for all the classes of her choice, has a great roommate, Leecia, a boyfriend, Joe, and is a member of the Taikwondo club. Ellen's school year suddenly changes for her in a way that will test her loyalty to her friends and culture. Ellen must decide between sticking to her roots of the Korean life or supporting her roommate Leecia's roots of African life. When a famous rapper plans to come and sing a song against Koreans, Ellen must make a decision that could

### This month:

*Free Will* by Chris Lynch  
*Saying Goodbye* by Marie G. Lee  
*Hannibal* by Thomas Harris  
*Drummer Boy at Bull Run* by Gilbert Morris  
*Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card  
*Girl Gives Birth to Own Prom Date* by Todd Strasser  
*I Never Loved Your Mind* by Paul Zindel  
*The Once and Future King* by T.H. White  
*Sweep Series* by Cate Tiernan

cost her a wonderful friendship. I recommend this book to anyone who is struggling with their own culture and its place in the world. I really enjoyed this book, however it was easy reading, and the author could have said more about the topic.

—Sarah Bahri ★★

### Hannibal

By Thomas Harris

If you hated the movie, read the book. The sequel to **Silence of the Lambs** is as good as it gets. Years after his escape Hannibal Lector has resurfaced in Italy. Once again, Clarice Starling is on the case. She, however, is in the midst of an FBI witch hunt. In the middle of the basic story is Mason Verger, one of Hannibal's early victims. He survived and has sworn revenge. If you liked **Silence of the Lambs**, you will love **Hannibal**.

—Joey Brennan ★★★★★

### Drummer Boy at Bull Run

By Gilbert Morris

Set at the beginning of the Civil War, this book tells of two families separated. The Majors family goes back to their home in Virginia, while the Carters stay in Kentucky. Jeff Majors' brother and father join the Confederate army. Royal Carter joins the Union. After spending a lot of time in prayer, Mr. Carter and his daughter, Leah,

become helpers in the Union with hopes of distributing Bibles to the soldiers. Due to many hardships, Jeff Majors makes several trips back and forth between Virginia and Kentucky. It was an OK book, not too interesting, though. There's a slight bit of romance in it, but not much.

—*Deidre Oberpriller* ★★

## Ender's Game

By Orson Scott Card

**Ender's Game** is the story of Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, a young boy in a family of three extremely bright children. Ender has incredible strength and is asked to attend the Battle School in space, to end the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bugger Invasion. The Battle School challenges him to his fullest extent.

This book was excellent, but it truly wasn't a feel-good story. It has a few disturbing parts, but all in all, it's really hard to put down.

—*Joe Tuccillo* ★★★★★

## Girl Gives Birth to Own Prom Date

By Todd Strasser

Nicole Maris was in the dark about how and why her parents divorced, but during the course of some odd events she found out why. It was close to prom time and Nicole was waiting for Brad Selden, the coolest guy in school, to ask her out. Only, he asked a girl named Dulcie with whom he so called "fell in love." Dulcie just so happened to be the sort-of girlfriend of Chase, Nicole's next door neighbor. Desperate times call for desperate measures, right? Well, for Nicole I guess they were desperate times, because she asked Chase if he would be her date for the prom. Nicole had big plans for the prom, which meant that big expenses were due. This brings us to the conclusion she needs to make a lot of money soon. Nicole gets a job as a tutor by a referral from her father. From then on her life took her places she never thought she would go. For example when the lady told her how Nicole's fa-

ther knew her, or that time when someone's sweater was on the chair at Nicole's house. Oh, wait, I know. That time when Brad and Dulcie saw Nicole and Chase together when they were...wait a minute. If I tell you this then you will know the end of the story, and you probably won't want to read the book. So, I guess you will just have to read the story to find out what happened to Chase and Nicole (hint or maybe not) and Brad and Dulcie. I enjoyed this book and recommend it to kids who are looking for hilarious fiction.

—*Jasmine Williamson* ★★★★★

## I Never Loved Your Mind

By Paul Zindel

Dewey is a high school dropout with a large vocabulary. Yvette is a vegetarian hippie who steals hospital supplies. The two meet on the job in the inhalation therapy ward of the hospital and, this being the world of YA fiction, they fall in love...well, sort of.

Now Paul Zindel, author of **The Pigman** and **My Darling, My Hamburger**, is a great writer and you should definitely read some of his stuff. But not this book. Okay, it's not excruciating to read, and it is quite amusing at times (mostly stemming from the use of the word "crapulous"), but it has no point whatsoever. If you enjoy books that leave you thinking, "Why on earth did I read this?," look no further.

—*Erin Hutchinson* ★★

## The Once and Future King

By T.H. White

T.H. White does his best to retell the famous story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The only problem is that White takes his dear sweet time in doing it. He divides his story into four segments, the first focusing on Arthur's life as a young boy up to the point in which he pulls the sword out of the stone and is crowned King of England. The second segment follows Arthur while he's fighting to control the Scottish clans of the north and his reasoning behind the creation of

the round table. The Ill-Made Knight focuses on the ugly, best knight in the world, Lancelot, and his career, including his affair with Guenivere, the quest for the Holy Grail, and the whole internal struggle he faces because he loves Guenivere. However, he doesn't want to hurt Arthur and the innocent Lady Elaine. He loves God as well, but in order for him to have Guenivere he has to hurt the others. The last segment follows the end of Arthur's life, though we don't actually get to see if the author is going to have Arthur die or sail off to Avalon.

If you can stand the long descriptions that White drags you through, then you will probably enjoy it.

—*Elizabeth Steimle* ★★

## Sweep Series

By Cate Tiernan

There are six books in the series so far. I've read one through 4 and all of them are very good. The basic plot is that Morgan is a witch, and all the people around her are too, but they keep changing from good to evil in her mind (and in real life too). These books are totally cult books, and I bet the author is a Wiccan because she knows so much about Wicca (and also because if she had to do a lot of research she wouldn't have six books out in one year). This series is great but if you condemn Wicca you shouldn't read it.

—*Alyssa Ratledge* ★★★★★

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teens

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