

Open shelf

April 2004

mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

This month:

Before Wings by Beth Goobie
Eric by Terry Pratchett
Redwall series by Brian Jacques
Return of the King by J.R.R. Tolkien
Eragon by Christopher Paolini
The Oresteia by Aeschylus
March Upcountry by David Webber and John Ringo
Bittersweet by Drew Lamm

letter from the editor



Ah, April. The school year has rounded the bend and we are on the home stretch. It's the time of year when seniors begin checking off the days on their calendars and summer is in the air. You'd think that our teachers would decide to cut us a break, but no. To relax your overtaxed brain, we YAACers offer a few literary suggestions to while away these pre-summer months. Happy reading!

teens_info@ci.mesa.az.us

Erin Hutchinson
open shelf Editor



rating system

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

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

Before Wings

By Beth Goobie

Two years before this story unfolds, 15-year-old Adrien had a brain aneurysm, an abnormal blood vessel resulting from a disease of a vessel wall, from which she could die. To take her mind off gruesome things, she takes a summer job at her aunt's summer camp. Around the camp, she sees spirits and ghosts that only she and her aunt can actually see and talk to. While Adrien sees spirits and ghosts, Paul, a maintenance worker at the camp, sees visions of the future. These visions are not good: he sees himself and Adrien die in hundreds of different ways. And his visions really do come true.

Read this wonderfully romantic book to find out what happens when Paul and Adrien try to make an impression on each other.

—**Gerald Del Rosario** ★★ ★

Eric

By Terry Pratchett

Eric, a young demon dog, is happy to summon a demon to give him his three wishes: to rule the world, to have the most beautiful woman in the world, and to live forever. Instead, he ends up summoning an inept wizard, probably the most inept wizard on Diskworld, Rincewind. Thinking that Rincewind is the demon, Eric makes him grant his wishes. Somehow, Rincewind does and every one of them goes wrong!

Resembling the "Monkey's Paw" story slightly, this Terry Pratchett book still has all

the hilarity of the others in the Diskworld series, but is less complex. It's much easier to read, but doesn't lose anything by being that way. A good read, especially if you are a beginning reader of Terry Pratchett.

—**Rosalinda Albrecht** ★★ ★★

Redwall series

By Brian Jacques

These are some of the greatest books that have ever existed! There are forest animals such as mice, hedgehogs, squirrels, otters and hilarious talking rabbits that go on amazing adventures to protect their huge and sturdy home, Redwall. Redwall was built long ago by their ancestors who intended it to be used for peace and harmony. All of the creatures have kept this up until their dreadful enemies, such as rats, weasels, and foxes, started causing trouble.

Redwall dwellers soon realize that they will have to stop their peaceful nature and to start protecting their Redwall Abbey from enemies. Everyone helps out, young and old, to protect Redwall. While working together, they succeed. Some die, and some live. It is a quest for survival, and together they share this quest.

These books were so incredible and kept me on my toes. It was so hard to put them down and I would even start to read them again. They were that good! I would recommend these books to whomever loves adventurous books with all sorts of humor in them.

—**Carolyn Massia** ★★ ★★

Return of the King

By J.R.R. Tolkien

As Sam and Frodo are literally crawling on their hands and knees across Mordor towards Mount Doom to destroy the Ring of Power, Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Merry, Pippin, and Gandalf have their own problems. Gandalf has taken Pippin to Minas Tirith in order to protect him from the Enemy, who now believes that he has the Ring, and manages to get himself tangled with a madman, Denethor, the ruling steward of Gondor. Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, meanwhile, have made a suicide pact by taking the Paths of the Dead with the twin sons of Elrond and a few of what's left of Aragorn's kin. Merry is also on a death wish mission to fight with the riders of Rohan, by sneaking a ride with one rider who sympathizes with him.

This is a very good story with a conclusion that leaves nothing open to wonder what happens next. It's also one of those rare stories where you feel like this is something that really happened, a long time ago.

—Patricia Langevin ★ ★ ★ ★

Eragon

By Christopher Paolini

This book by a 15-year-old author is better than I could do, but is a lot like "Star Wars." There's the evil empire, the rebel alliance, and yes, a nearly dead race of magical knights that is going to be restored by a farm boy. Nonetheless, Paolini's writing style, especially his characterization, is brilliant. If you plan on reading it for its plot, go watch Darth Vader on the TV, but for everything else, **Eragon** is fantastic.

—Matt Stone ★ ★ ★

The Oresteia

By Aeschylus

Ooh...I'm woozy in the way that only a story written in the epic poem-play-whatever can make you feel. It may be that I am just "unused to the medium," as some like to say. Not true! I mean, so what if I kind of read the novelization of **The Odyssey**, and as for **The Iliad**...well...does **Wishbone** count?

Anyway. **The Oresteia**. It's written by Aeschylus, the great Greek story-poem-play-whatever writer. It somewhat takes up where

Homer leaves off, beginning with the story of Clytaemnestra and moving onto Agamemnon.

A few more words on the story-poem-play-whatever style: it's hard to read. Very hard. It is shown in the way of Clytaemnestra: Blah blah blah blah blah;

Blah blah blah;

Blah blah, blah blah blah!

And, naturally, it doesn't quite rhyme and it doesn't quite flow smoothly (translations often don't), so you've got these people talking about weird stuff in a weird way, and they talk a lot but never quite get around to the point that someone is dead until 17½ pages have gone by and you're sitting there thinking: oh.

—Alyssa Ratledge ★ ★

March Upcountry

By David Webber and John Ringo

Roger, the prince of the Empire of Man, third in line to become Emperor of known space, always thought he was special. Perhaps it was the mysterious exile of his father, the way his mother never trusted him, or that whenever something important was happening, he would get shipped off to some fringe world on a diplomatic mission. An assassination attempt and an alien attack later, Roger and his bodyguard army, the Bronze Battalion, are stranded on an alien planet, half way across the world from any spaceport. It is now up to the Bronze Battalion to get the prince to safety, if they can avoid killing the insufferable idiot prince first...

This is a great beginning to the **March** trilogy, and a must-read for any sci-fi fan.

—Justin Millar-Haskell ★ ★ ★ ★

Bittersweet

By Drew Lamm

Taylor used to be inspired. She used to have ideas that she didn't even have to think about. She could just do it, just paint out the picture on the page and think nothing of it. She never considered the fact that perhaps she would not always have that ability. That she would have to think before she began to sketch. That the natural abilities and talents would turn to something else, to something unnatural. The thought of "artist's block" had never happened or occurred to her. Until Grams died.

Grams was life itself to her, her inspiration, her mother when her real one had died.

She lived each day like she would die the next day. But one day she had a stroke and Taylor herself seemed to be suffering the same effects. She couldn't draw, she couldn't even think of her friends the same way. Everything was different and she was falling into depression, into the land where art was more than natural, where she had no inspiration whatsoever where once it came like liquid.

Now she reaches out to her old friends and her once-despised enemy for comfort, for something to hold onto when her parental figure and her art fall deeper into oblivion and she is forced to get through it.

I have to say, I liked it. It transported me back to a magic time which still had the memory of a better time. In spite of all the darkness in the book, how it was supposed to be depressing, it really gave me a positive new feeling. I thought it was witty and hopeful, although there were some parts that made me angry. Sometimes the main character gets so annoying that you just want to scream at her to try and see the "big picture." Just bear with it. Despite the insatiable urge to slap the characters upside the head if you ever met them, I would say I liked the book. It brought me into the small-town life and the memories of Taylor, an interesting realm. I think the best part of the entire book was the memories and flashbacks and the feelings of hope. Even though the book was supposed to be about depression, I think it did a better job at giving me some inspiration.

—Rosalinda Albrecht ★ ★ ★ ★

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.



CITY OF MESA
Great People, Quality Service!