

Open Shelf

May 2004

mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor



The End Is Near!
The end of the school year, that is. The summer reading season is just within reach, which makes us YAACers all the more anxious to begin. So, consider these books a little sampler for what's to come in our "ginormous" summer issue.

Hey, at least it gives you something to do during those oh-so-painful graduation speeches.

Happy reading!

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open shelf Editor



rating system

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

Visit the Library's Web Site:
www.mesalibrary.org
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Interesting Times

By Terry Pratchett

The poor Wizzard Rincewind finds himself in the one place he never wanted to go, to the Counterweight Continent, where things are all too interesting for his tastes. The one thing he wishes for is somewhere very boring, where he can just sit back, safe. Unfortunately, he always has some great grand adventure by accident. As a flunked wizard, trouble always seems to follow behind him, and nothing good ever seems to happen.

Just when he is happy on a boring little island, where the sun will rise in the morning, and set at night, the same every time, without anything to do at all, he is transported away from it and taken to his old high school, the Unseen University. There he is told that he is wanted on the famed dangerous Counterweight Continent, where he finds a geriatric band of barbarians called the "Silver Horde." (Same as the color of their hair.)

He also finds a country on the brink of war, with an emperor about to die, and the underlying warlords waiting to take over, as well as a "rebellion." (Rebellion meaning that people stand around shouting out things that were sure to scare the enemy to death without ever having to go to war. They use frightening slogans, like "Death to Most Tyrants.") Trying to run away from it all, Rincewind finds himself more and more entwined in the affairs of the Counterweight Continent. Not because he

This month:

Interesting Times by Terry Pratchett
The Legacy by R. A. Salvatore
Crime and Punishment
by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
G Gundam #1 by Koichi Tokita, et al.
The Eyre Affair & Lost In a Good Book
by Jasper Fforde
The Eyre Affair by Jasper Fforde
Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison

cares, but because he can't get away fast enough.

This book is funny and complex, weaving itself around the plotting of several strategic and comical points. It seems confusing at first, until about the second half of the book, when you figure out what it all means, and get the bigger picture. It is hilarious, and for a book with such strategy, it should be considered a masterpiece, and a definite book on your list of ones to read, if you haven't checked it out already.

—**Rosalinda Albrecht** ★★★★★

The Legacy

By R. A. Salvatore

Here we have another great novel from R. A. Salvatore – a fantasy novel that has been compared to the *Lord of the Rings* series. However, there are many more battles in this than either *Lord of the Rings* or the *Icwind Dale* trilogy, which comes before this.

Drizzt Do'Urden, a dark elf, must elude capture by his sister, Vierna, who is trying to sacrifice him to the spider goddess, Lloth, to regain honor for their house in the Underdark, home of the dark elves. Filled with magical weapons (seriously, each person has at least one) and battles galore, this is a good book for any fantasy fan.

—**Jeremy Davis** ★★★★★

Crime and Punishment

By Fyodor Dostoyevsky

The latest entry in Alyssa's classic book reviews follows...

I know what you're thinking: Alyssa! No! Do not read the book by the crazy Russian man! Sadly enough, though, I did not listen to anyone's advice, even my own English teacher's. *sigh* On with the review...

Rashnolikov (actually, his name is Raskolnikov, but Rashnolikov is way more fun to say) is a guy, and he kills his landlady, and then there's another guy named Razmuhin who went to college with Rashnolikov, and then this other guy named Razmuhin who really had no purpose, and then this Vrazmuhin guy, and a bunch of other characters who have long, unpronounceable Russian names. Yeah, really, really complicated.

While I was about halfway through the book, I had to find a literary critique; and I stumbled across a man so evil that HE GAVE AWAY THE ENDING! Gak!

—Alyssa Ratledge ★ ★

G Gundam #1

By Koichi Tokita, et al.

G Gundam is an obscure spin-off of the incredibly popular Gundam series of manga. It takes place in a futuristic Earth where the nations (and respective space colonies) do battle with each other using Gundams (giant robots). Domon, the main character who is a martial arts champion, basically goes globetrotting with his friend Ronin, challenging various national representatives to Gundam fights. Oh yeah, he also has another objective, finding the Dark Gundam, which is—guess what—evil...

The formula seems a bit tired. Domon is Neo-Japan's heroic champion, fighting against all of the other nations' overly stereotyped counterparts, such as the Shenlong Gundam from China (gee, who saw THAT one coming?). Additionally, the storyline is tired and overused, and I felt little or no compassion for the story's characters. The art style also seems a bit bland

and contributes little to the overall presentation. If you are a fan of the anime or just a hardcore Gundam fanatic, check it out. For everyone else, there are plenty more fish in the sea of manga titles.

—Joe Tuccillo ★ ★

DUELING REVIEWS:

The Eyre Affair and Lost In a Good Book

By Jasper Fforde

Set in a twisted version of 1985, Thursday Next is a Spec-Ops Litera Tech. In this world, books are an enormous part of pop culture. Thursday's job is to check forgeries of Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Homer, and others, as well as go on special missions. But when a horrible serial killer is on the loose killing characters in classics, Thursday has to save the day by jumping into Jane Eyre. In the next installment, *Lost In a Good Book*, the saga continues. These are a very well written blend of science fiction and classic literature, and are fast-paced engaging reads. Pick them up.

—Andrea Alonge ★ ★ ★ ★

The Eyre Affair

By Jasper Fforde

Okay, this seemed like a really good book. The premise was interesting: literary cop in alternate-reality England fighting against vampires and alternately working with a werewolf and Edward Rochester, from Jane Eyre. But it was so bad!!! The characters were incredibly weak with under-developed personalities, the plot spent waaay too much time on the sorry love-life (or lack thereof) of Thursday Next, the literary cop.

The book was recommended to me by someone whose opinion I value, but I think perhaps she might have been inebriated whilst she was reading because *The Eyre Affair* is just plain awful.

—Jenny Knatz ★ ★

Song of Solomon

By Toni Morrison

If you're like me, when you hear of Toni Morrison, you're immediately struck with terrifying thoughts of scented candles, incomprehensible prose, and (worst of all) Oprah!

Given these preconceptions, I expected *Song of Solomon* to be bloated and self-important. Happily, I was completely wrong. Toni Morrison manages to combine a sinuous, fast-moving plot with waist-deep symbolism and allusions. Amazingly, Morrison's book is actually interesting to analyze.

In a nutshell, "Milkman" Dead grows up in a cold, loveless home in 1930s-1940s Michigan. As he grows older, he pulls away from his family and becomes fascinated by his aunt Pilate, a strong, loving bootlegger. Eventually, his relationship with Pilate leads him to the rural South where he discovers that his great-grandfather could fly.

Song of Solomon isn't always easy to understand, but the deeper you delve into this richly written novel, the better it gets.

—Erin Hutchinson ★ ★ ★ ★

**You Can't Win
If You Don't Read!**

**City of Mesa Library
2004 Teen Summer Reading:
June 7-July 31**

The more you read and enter, the more chances to win Harkins movie passes, Sonic coupons, Mesa Amphitheater concert tickets, and much more!



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