

<p><i>Absolutely, Positively Not . . . Gay</i> by David Larochele Scholastic, 2005, 224 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Steven is a normal sixteen-year-old dealing with ordinary things that any teenager would have to deal with, such as passing his driving test. One thing that has been on his mind lately is girls, but unlike many boys his age that dream of the female species, he is curious whether or not he is attracted to them at all. He has hidden magazines under his bed for the past couple of years. These magazines aren't <i>Playboys</i>, but instead the pages are filled with male underwear models. After twenty-three dates with twenty-one different girls, Steven has finally come to the conclusion that he has known all along: he's gay.</p> <p>This novel deals with a serious subject in a clever and humorous manner. Any young man struggling with these issues should find relief in this book.</p> <p>Julie Davenport Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Boy Proof</i> by Cecil Castellucci Candlewick Press, 2005, 203 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>High school can be tough. Between battles with friends, agonizing over what lies beyond graduation and crazy parents, any teenager may find himself not knowing where to turn.</p> <p>In <i>Boy Proof</i>, readers are whisked away on a journey of self-realization. Victoria Jurgen is a 16-year-old girl struggling to find herself amongst the sea of teenagers in a Beverly Hills high school. As a founding member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, Jurgen loses herself in films whenever she has the chance. Obsessed with the film <i>Terminal Earth</i>, Jurgen changes her name to "Egg" after her favorite character. Egg hides her insecurities beneath her shaved head and white cloak—the same cloak worn in <i>Terminal Earth</i>.</p> <p>Egg is confident in her spot as valedictorian until Max Carter arrives at school. Carter's arrival changes everything for Egg—who begins to realize there is more to life than being invisible. This book is the ideal novel for any teenager who has ever felt as though he/she does not fit in.</p> <p>Katie Copeland Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>Candy</i> by Kevin Brooks Scholastic, 2005, 364 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Joe Beck's parents are divorced, and he and his older sister, Gina, live with their father, a medical doctor, in an upscale area outside London. Joe, a gifted and lonely musician, meets Candy, buys her coffee and falls hopelessly in love. As Candy's secret life of prostitution and heroin addiction unveils, Joe is pulled into her violent and fearful world. Despite threats from Iggy, Candy's pimp, Joe takes Candy to his family's cottage, where she goes cold-turkey off heroin. Iggy kidnaps Gina, and Joe must decide between Candy and his sister. Which will he choose? Or will he have to? Can Mike, Gina's boyfriend, help them?</p> <p>A riveting and suspenseful love story set in a vicious underworld of drugs, poverty, and prostitution. The plot is well-paced; characters are well-defined. An unnerving account of heroin addiction and withdrawal. For 16 and up.</p> <p>Pam B. Cole Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>Dealing with Mom: How to Understand Your Changing Relationship</i> Relationships by Laurence Gillot and Veronique Sibiril Amulet Books, 2005, 112 pp., \$9.95</p> <p>Relationships are always hard. The older we get, the harder they get. You are going through so many changes in life as it is (your body, your friends, your relationships) and now you have to worry about your mom going crazy on you. What is with her anyway?</p> <p>In <i>Dealing with Mom</i> teens and preteens alike can find the answers to many questions that they have about their relationship with their mother. The book goes step by step through four different phases of relationships. Phase one: Mothers: Can't live with them, can't send them back; Phase two: If it's not one thing, it's your mother; Phase three: My mother....myself; and Phase four: How are you feeling? Stories you might be able to relate to. While Gillot and Sibiril hit on many important issues of dealing with relationships between mothers and teens, it seems to be more targeted to the younger generation of teens: the pre-teens.</p> <p>Marcia Woodward Wamego, KS</p>

<p><i>Deliver Us from Normal</i> by Kate Klise Scholastic, 2005, 226 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Coming of Age/Depression ISBN: 0-439-52322-2</p> <p>Junior high does not begin well for Charles Harrison. Quiet and thoughtful, Charles is haunted by his family's lack of social standing and their oddness. His wish is to be normal, like the other families in their hometown—Normal, Illinois.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Charles' outsider status deepens, in part the result of his embarrassingly emotional response to <i>The Yearling</i> during the previous term. When his older sister's campaign for class president is disrupted by malicious popular students, Charles' parents flee Normal, bound for a new life on a rickety boat in the Gulf of Mexico.</p> <p>More allegorical than realistic, <i>Deliver Us from Normal</i>, offers a glimpse inside the head of a thoughtful young adolescent and his journey toward acceptance of himself and his family and his rejection of shallow definitions of what it is to be normal. Literary references to various mystery novels, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, and <i>The Yearling</i> are skillfully woven into the text. This one is for the quiet, thoughtful adolescent wishing to explore what it means to be normal.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Do You Know the Monkey Man?</i> by Dori Hillestad Butler Peachtree, 2005, 193 pp., \$14.95</p> <p>Identity/Family/Intrapersonal Relationships ISBN: 1-56145-340-4</p> <p><i>Do You Know the Monkey Man?</i> successfully transforms ordinary dilemmas of teenage life into an adventure. At age thirteen, Samantha Wright's once predictable world in Clearwater, Iowa is being forever altered. Her mother is remarrying, the family is moving, and she wonders if she will fit into her new family. A fear of what the future holds awakens her to a need to rediscover her past. With the help of a psychic, her friend Angela, and an Internet detective, Samantha seeks the truth to unanswered questions about the mysterious drowning of her sister and the father she barely remembers. The result is a fairly predictable, yet still adventurous plot interwoven with themes of identity, intrapersonal relationships, and a redefinition of family. Although parts of the novel and some characters resemble an after-school special, younger readers will appreciate the protagonist's struggles with her parents, friends, divorce, and the blending of families. An appealing aroma of teenage rebellion permeates much of the book such as when, despite her mother's wishes, Samantha sneaks away to Minnesota to seek the answers to her questions about the past.</p> <p>Curtis Chandler Wamego, KS</p>
<p><i>Don't Tell the Girls</i> by Patricia Reilly Giff Holiday House, Inc., 2005, 130 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Family Memoir ISBN: 0-8234-1813-8</p> <p>In <i>Don't Tell the Girls</i>, Patricia Reilly Giff is on a quest to find her family's history. The story is told through the eyes of Giff and the memories she has of her grandmother, Nana. Giff has a close bond with Nana, which sparks her curiosity about her other grandmother, Jennie.</p> <p>Grandmother Jennie passed away before Patricia was born, so Patricia never had the opportunity to know her. Giff searches for records of her Grandmother Jennie and hopes to understand her life. Giff researches in libraries and even takes a trip to her grandmother's native land, Ireland, to find the answers for the past. Giff is able to find the truth about her grandmother's life, even though it is far from what she believed.</p> <p><i>Don't Tell the Girls</i> is a story about a family's connection between generations and the history behind the family. The story would be best suited for middle school readers.</p> <p>Kristine E. Tardiff Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>47</i> by Walter Mosley Little Brown & Company, 2005, 240 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Slavery/African Americans/Magic ISBN: 0316110353</p> <p>Slave number 47 knows no mother or father, only Mama Flore and her kindness. Shortly after being sent to the fields to work, 47 meets Tall John, whose favorite thought is that there are neither slaves nor masters in this world. Tall John is a runaway, but his story is more complicated than that: really Tall John is from another planet, and he has come to lead 47 to saving this planet from the evil Calash.</p> <p>Digesting this story takes time, with its complicated plot and its fast-moving development. What starts as a powerful slave narrative becomes an even more powerful fantasy read. This book had interplanetary travel and slave rights on the same pages, such that the battle for good and evil took on an even higher meaning in this novel. This story would fit in the hands of fantasy readers, even adult ones, and each reader would come away from the story with a slightly different idea of the book. One caution: As part of the story comes the use of racial slurs, appropriate to the historical aspect of the book, but the importance of slave rights, including the use of such language, is discussed.</p> <p>Jennifer Judy Oxford, OH</p>

<p>Hear My Sorrow, The Diary of Angela Denoto, a Shirtwaist Worker by Deborah Hopkinson Scholastic, 2004, 182 pp., \$10.95</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Dear America Series ISBN: 0-439-22161-7</p> <p>Attending school is a joy for Angela Denoto but a luxury that her family can no longer afford. Now that she is fourteen years old, she must begin work in a shirtwaist factory. Her disappointment in leaving school is tempered, however, by the pride that she feels in being able to help her family pay the rent and put food on the table.</p> <p>Angela quickly finds that the harsh conditions she and her peers must experience at work are nearly inhumane. Aching muscles, needle-pierced fingers, and conflicted feelings toward authority convince Angela that she must accept this new organization, called a union, and join the fight for fair treatment of workers. Things finally come to a climax when Angela helplessly watches as 146 young women and girls, including her beloved sister, needlessly lose their lives in the Triangle Waist Company fire of 1911.</p> <p>Through her journal entries, we are led through the turbulent years of 1909-1911 in New York City's Lower East Side where young Jewish and Italian immigrant girls worked in the garment industry. It is a wonderful glimpse of the time period and of those adolescent struggles of hope and fear, joy and sorrow, and dreams of the future that transcend time.</p> <p>Ingrid Seitz Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow by Susan Campbell Bartoletti Scholastic, 2005, 176 pp., \$19.95</p> <p>Nonfiction/World War II ISBN: 0-439-35379-3</p> <p><i>Hitler Youth</i> provides a readable and compelling examination of the manipulation of adolescents in the Third Reich. The stories of 11 young people are traced through the rise and fall of National Socialism in Germany. We follow teens smitten by Nazi ideology, teens who went along reluctantly, teens who became part of the resistance movement in Germany, and Jewish teens victimized by the Nazi regime. Along the way, we arrive at a deeper understanding of the complex forces targeting young people during this period.</p> <p>The book is oversized and filled with black and white photographs that capture the conflict of the time—both the conflict between nations and the conflict within individuals. <i>Hitler Youth</i> would certainly be a valuable addition to units of study devoted to the Holocaust and/or World War II, providing a view of the effects of the war on Germany's adolescents as well as the effect German adolescents had on the war.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>
<p>Key to Atern by Lynn Sinclair Brown Barn Books, 2005, 192 pp., \$8.95</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 0974648175</p> <p><i>Key to Atern</i>, Lynn Sinclair's first book of a proposed trilogy, is a fantasy romance told by lead character Jodi Greer. Like the characters in K.A. Applegate's <i>Everworld</i> series, Jodi's friend Neil find himself in a different world after Neil falls asleep. Jodi joins him by touching his sleeping body. Is the world all part of Neil's dream, or is it a real world with real consequences? Sinclair offers this as a potential question dealing with how we differentiate between dreams and reality. Sadly, this question is quickly abandoned as Jodi and Neil find themselves in trouble with giant spiders, and later caught in the middle of tribal conflicts.</p> <p><i>Key to Atern</i> offers fascinating characters, especially with the enchanting yet dangerous Aladar, who has the power to control plants. Unfortunately, Jodi's first-person perspective limits the development of the other, often more interesting characters. The book has very little humor and instead thrives on melodramatic romance and entirely predictable plot twists. The ending of the novel, however, sets up intriguing possibilities that make the second book in the series worthy of a glance.</p> <p>John Ritchie Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>The Keys of the Kingdom, Book Three: Drowned Wednesday by Garth Nix Scholastic, 2005, 400 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 0439700868</p> <p>In this third book of his series, Nix's unlikely hero Arthur Penhaligon continues his adventures in the House. This time he must meet with Drowned Wednesday who is suffering from a strange eating disorder—her fierce hunger has forced her to grow to gargantuan dimensions. Unfortunately for Arthur, she eats most of her guests. Arthur survives the meeting, but discovers he must confront the powerful pirate Feverfew to gain the third part of the Will and claim the Third Key from Drowned Wednesday.</p> <p>Readers will enjoy Nix's complex, imaginative universe (the House and the Border Seas) and his cast of intriguing characters, including clerks trying to be sailors and talking rats trying to pilot a submarine. Arthur's common sense, good nature, and loyalty make him a suitable protagonist for this charming story.</p> <p>Virginia Beesley Quinter, KS</p>

<p><i>Ladies First: Women Athletes Who Made a Difference</i> by Ken Rappoport Peachtree Publishers, 2005, 146 pp., \$14.95 ISBN: 1-56145-338-2</p> <p>In <i>Ladies First: Women Athletes Who Made a Difference</i>, Ken Rappoport tells the story of more than a dozen famous female athletes. Among those is Manon Rheume, the first woman to play professional hockey. As goalie for the Tampa Bay Lightning, she had the toughest position on the team. Rheume achieved her dream with hard work, perseverance, and talent.</p> <p>Twelve more chapters include women who broke barriers: Julie Krone in horse racing, Shirley Muldowney in auto racing, and more traditional sports, Wilma Rudolph in track and Nadia Comaneci in gymnastics.</p> <p>Readers will find inspiring stories of women athletes who made their dreams come true.</p> <p>Ruth Prescott Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>The Land of Elyon Book 1</i> by Patrick Carman Orchard, 2005, 251 pp., \$11.95 ISBN: 0-439-70093-0</p> <p>This book began as a series of bedtime stories for the author's children and was originally self-published in Seattle, Washington, where, apparently, it did well enough to be picked up by Orchard Books for national distribution. Projected as the first book in a trilogy, the fantasy tale recounts the adventures of 12-year-old Alexa, who lives within a complex of walled cities unable, along with her compatriots, to experience the world outside. Alexa, in the spirit of fantasy protagonists everywhere, is too curious and bold to be held back from exploration of the forbidden by rules, guards, culture, and custom. Indeed, she finds her way beyond the walls to discover talking animals and a plot to destroy the kingdom. She is, of course, with the aid of her animal allies, ultimately able to save the day by bringing down the walls. However, her adventures are apparently <i>to be continued</i> . . . Young fantasy readers will enjoy this story of a small female heroine although the adventures are far from as engaging as those in Narnia or Hogwarts. The underlying message that sneaking around leads to great deeds may be disturbing for some adults, yet it taps into the covert desire of all children to have a hand in saving the world.</p> <p>Myrna Dee Marler Lafayette, HI</p>
<p><i>The Last Universe</i> by William Sleator Amulet Books, 2005, 214 pp., \$16.95 ISBN: 0-8109-5858-9</p> <p>William Sleator's new novel for young adults is a riveting tale of psychological suspense. This suspense is heightened by the first-person narrator, also the main character. Susan is so unwilling to enter all the dangerous situations in the garden behind her house that she makes you as the reader want to go there even more. Sleator paints a convincing picture of what it is like to be a 14-year-old girl in a world of confusing twists and turns. The mysterious maze in the middle of the garden is a metaphor for the labyrinthine mind games Sleator plays with his readers. There is just enough science in this book to interest the intellectually inclined. This is a truly engaging science fiction thriller where all the action takes place in a seemingly innocent garden behind an old house. There are no light sabers or wookies, but this story will take you on a psychological journey as you wonder if the universe really makes any sense at all. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in alternate realities.</p> <p>Kenan Metzger Shawnee, KS</p>	<p><i>Looking for Alaska</i> by John Green Dutton Books, 2005, 256 pp., \$15.99 ISBN: 0525475060</p> <p>Relationships/Loyalty/Death</p> <p>Based on the last words of Francois Rabelais, narrator Miles Halter leaves Florida to attend his last two years of high school at Culver Creek boarding school in Alabama because "I go to seek a Great Perhaps." He finds this potential both in his new group of friends and in the discussions of his World Religions class, taught by Dr. Hyde.</p> <p>Green's book is a thrilling novel that lacks chapters, but is divided by headings that are counting down to a life-changing event in Miles's life, and later by headings that count days after the event. It is a tribute to Green's capabilities as a writer that the event is open to multiple possibilities that make it unpredictable until it happens. Throughout the novel, Green challenges the reader's perceptions of friendship, loyalty, relationships, sex, life, suffering, and death. The book is filled with scenes that are both laugh-out-loud funny and bury-one's-head-and-cry tragic.</p> <p>A warning to readers: Green's novel contains a lot of explicit language, some drug use, and explicit sexual situations. However, each of these situations is handled with depth and maturity and is vital to the development of plot and character.</p> <p>John Ritchie Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment by James Patterson Little, Brown, 2005, 432 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Max, the winged teenager from Patterson's <i>The Lake House</i> and <i>When the Wind Blows</i>, is back in a book of her own. Guess who else is back? The bad guys from the school where Max's first memories come from, and the Erasers, a band of mutant wolf-like assassins, out to get Max and her flock of winged kids. Max's journey takes her back to the school to rescue her friend.</p> <p>This novel was typical Patterson, with the heart pumping action and close calls, mixed with a new feeling of teenage anxiety. The point of view switches from flock member to flock member, making this not as much Max's book as her flock's book. This change is disorienting instead of being insightful, but I found the action and captivating characters made Max's ride inviting.</p> <p>I recommend this novel to action-adventure fans, especially those thirsting for the thriller novel from the mostly female point of view. Patterson's adult readers will not be disappointed, and he will definitely gain a teen audience with this exciting novel.</p> <p>Jennifer Judy Oxford, OH</p>	<p>Merlin and the Making of the King Retold by Margaret Hodges, Ill. by Trina Schart Hyman Holiday House, 2004, 39 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Exactly why the world needs another retelling of Arthurian legend is unclear. However, this version seems aimed more at children than young adults, recounting three tales featuring Merlin as kingmaker and the hand that guided the hand of King Arthur as he fought relentless enemies, set up the round table, lost and regained his sword, and established truth and justice. The three stories are "The Sword in the Stone" (already recounted by Disney), "Excalibur," and "The Lady of the Lake." It lightly covers King Arthur's troubles with Guinevere and Lancelot and the eventual demise of the great dream. The prose is clear and engaging, telling the stories well. Its best feature, however, are the lush illustrations and the simulation of illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages. This is an excellent book for young fantasy readers to cut their teeth on. The prose and paintings suggest a host of unseen magical forces in the world waiting to be unleashed against evil and even hints at the possibility of Arthur's eventual return. Thus, it becomes a book themed around hope and the triumph of good over wicked men's vengefulness.</p> <p>Myrna Dee Marler Laie, HI</p>
<p>Out of Boneville by Jeff Smith Scholastic, 2005, 138 pp., \$18.95</p> <p>Tapping the popularity of book-length comics, Scholastic has launched its new graphic novel imprint, Graphix, by releasing a hard-cover edition of volume one from Jeff Smith's Boneville series. <i>Out of Boneville</i> was first published in 1991, the first in a series now at nine volumes. The new Scholastic edition maintains the original content but introduces color illustrations.</p> <p>The book traces the adventures of the Bone cousins—Phoney Bone, Smiley Bone, and Fone Bone. The characters are endearing, and the plot is a blend of comedy and adventure. Social satire is just beneath the surface, but the messages are subtle.</p> <p>Fans of Boneville will want to examine the color artwork. Those new to graphic novels will find in <i>Out of Boneville</i> a nice introduction to the genre, and teachers interested in exploring the possibilities of graphic novels will find the Boneville series safe for classroom consumption.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>Paradise City (The Big Empty, Book 2) by J. B. Stephens Penguin RazorBill, 2004, 268 pp., \$6.99</p> <p>Six teens have survived <i>Desolation Angels (The Big Empty, Book 1)</i> and have arrived in Novo Mundum after the Midwest has been abandoned following a viral outbreak called Strain 7. This attempt to recreate a Garden of Eden exists at an isolated small liberal arts college in the Eastern United States where a commune is controlled by two brothers, one a former research scientist at the college and the other an ex-Marine. The hero is Michael, who with two pals, journeys across the deserted prairie to uninhabited St. Louis and brings back security system devices to the ideal community where survival of the youthful and brilliant seems to be the focus. As with any so-called paradise, things are never quite as idyllic as they seem. Michael must decide who is friend or enemy to save the surviving "angels" he trusts.</p> <p>Judith Hayn Skokie, IL</p>

<p><i>Rhymes with Witches</i> by Lauren Myracle Amulet Books, 2005, 224 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Popularity ISBN: 0810958597</p> <p>A freshman in high school, Jane has two friends, Alicia and Phil. Unfortunately, she doesn't always get along with Alicia, and Phil has a crush on her. When we first meet Jane, she is in the cafeteria wishing she were sitting with the Bitches, a group of three girls considered the coolest girls in school. Jane is wearing a new dress in hopes the bitches will notice her, which they eventually do. After a series of imitations, Jane is inducted into their group.</p> <p>Written in response to "Flowers for Algernon," author Lauren Myracle designs a similar story line addressing the price paid for turning into someone new and putting a price on popularity. Elements of magic infiltrate the book, giving it an impossible reality. However, despite the unrealistic ideas supporting the main theme that popularity can be obtained through theft, Jane is a believable character. Issues of popularity will resonate with a teenage crowd, as will other topics such as underage drinking, sex, and the need to fit in.</p> <p>Elle Wolterbeek Tempe, AZ</p>	<p><i>The Royal Ballet School Diaries: Ellie's Chance to Dance</i> by Alexandra Moss Grosset & Dunlap, 2005, 141 pp., \$4.99</p> <p>Friendship/Interpersonal Relations ISBN: 0-448-43535-7</p> <p>Ellie never thought she would be leaving her friends in Chicago and moving to London. But things got a little easier when she found out she would be auditioning for The Royal Ballet School's Junior Associate Program. Who would have thought that she would ever have the chance to dance at the best ballet school in England! Ellie quickly made new friends at school and in dance class. There was only one person who was a pain in the neck, Rachel. But Rachel finally comes around when she is forced to be Ellie's partner for a school project and finds that Ellie doesn't have the perfect life of a "prima ballerina" after all.</p> <p>This is a good book for middle school adolescents to read. They can really connect with the troubles Ellie has with uprooting from the only home she knows, moving to a new city, and not getting along with everyone there.</p> <p>Marcia Woodyard Wamego, KS</p>
<p><i>The Search for Bell Prater</i> by Ruth White Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005, 170 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Appalachian Culture ISBN: 0-374-30853-5</p> <p>Fans of <i>Belle Prater's Boy</i> will welcome this long awaited sequel. A year after the disappearance of Woodrow's mother (Belle Prater), Woodrow has been living with his grandparents and has become close friends with his adventurous cousin, Gypsy. The two make a friend in Cassie Caulborne, a new girl in school, who has a "sixth sense"—Cassie can look into the past and Woodrow hopes her talent can aid him in finding his mother. A mysterious phone call on New Year's sends Woodrow, Gypsy, and Cassie on a quest to Bluefield, a neighboring town, in search of Belle. On the bus ride there, the three meet Joseph, a thirteen-year-old black boy searching for his father. They become friends, and the four help one another find what they're searching for.</p> <p>White effectively balances sadness with humor, and comedy with tragedy, creating a charming and memorable portrait of 1950s rural Appalachia, its people, and language. Excellent for Appalachian Studies.</p> <p>Pam B. Cole Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family</i> by Barry Denenberg Scholastic Press, 2005, 240 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Nonfiction/Historical Fiction ISBN: 0-439-41678-7</p> <p>Utilizing an unconventional format, Denenberg creates another viewpoint using the voice of Margot Frank, Anne's older and quieter sister. She apparently kept a diary while in the attic, too, and in her words, as the author imagines them, Anne is revealed with additional fictional insight.</p> <p>Following meticulous research, the reader moves from Frankfurt, Germany, to Amsterdam, and then to the death camps through vivid, horrific detail. Heartbreaking oral histories of camp survivors, many who knew the Frank women, complete the history of the family in the moving final section. Pairing this text with <i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i> provides accurate information to satisfy questions adolescents may have about the Franks, the end to their ordinary middle class family life, the tense years in the attic, and the final days in Bergen-Belsen. Denenberg creates a riveting addition to Holocaust literature, a must read.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Skokie, IL</p>

<p><i>Smiler's Bones</i> by Peter Lerangis Scholastic, 2005, 160 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Much as Mene hears the calling of his father's spirit to return home in <i>Smiler's Bones</i>, Peter Lerangis felt the calling to breathe life into history by recreating the emotional experiences of this young Eskimo. Mene was the sole survivor of six native Eskimos transplanted to America at the turn-of-the-century by the famed explorer Robert Peary. Records indicate Mene was bounced among caretakers, contemplated suicide, and publicly threatened the Museum of Natural History for his exploitation. However, the person behind the headlines had yet to be discovered until this novel.</p> <p>Swept from the icy white arctic to the industrial prowess of New York, readers share in Mene's account of both the Eskimo people's bold journey south and the tumultuous repercussions felt after their relocation.</p> <p>Eloquent descriptions, historical basis, complex character development, ethical dilemmas and cultural exploration make this novel an excellent addition to any classroom and a great read.</p> <p>Elaine A. Cobb Lenexa, KS</p>	<p><i>So Yesterday</i> by Scott Westerfeld Razorbill (Penguin Group), 2004, 225 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Seventeen-year-old Hunter Braque works as a "cool spotter," that is, he is paid by corporations to notice and report back what he predicts will be the next big trend. Occasionally he attends "cool tastings," (known as "focus groups" yesterday). Hunter meets Jen when he asks to take a photograph (using his cell phone, of course) of the innovative way she has tied her shoelaces. He invites Jen to a cool tasting, and the mystery begins. Readers will enjoy challenging themselves to identify the most current cool products from Hunter's descriptions of them (he refuses to do product placement—naming brands—in his story).</p> <p>This clever novel is full of visual detail and would make an entertaining movie. Don't delay in offering it to students, however, because it is saturated with the newest and the coolest and will not stay current very long. Westerfeld has built obsolescence right into his novel; soon it, too, will be "so yesterday."</p> <p>Jaime Hylton Scarborough, ME</p>
<p><i>Talk</i> by Kathe Koja Frances Foster Books, 2005, 133 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Although Kit has never been in a play, he has won the lead role in his high school play, <i>Talk</i>. But when he thinks about it, he's been acting his whole life so that no one would know he is gay. Lindsay, the drama queen, plays opposite Kit and questions, for the first time, what she wants in life, particularly in a boyfriend. Her conclusion that she wants, no needs, Kit causes an eruption within the school about the nature of the play, hate crimes committed against Kit, and the severing of ties with so-called friends.</p> <p>Koja masterfully weaves several stories throughout this stream of consciousness, alternating the voice of the narrator across the books, and providing teases of the script <i>Talk</i> throughout. The result is a realistic account of understanding identity and coming to grips with reality.</p> <p>Faith H. Wallace Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>Tiger's Blood</i> by Laurence Yep Harper Collins, 2005, 204 pp., \$15.99</p> <p><i>Tiger's Blood</i>, sequel to <i>The Tiger's Apprentice</i>, dives from the San Francisco Pier into the mysteries of the uncharted ocean, as Tom Lee and his fantastical crew of cross species companions rely on magic, wit, and skill to renew their defense of the ancient phoenix egg from power-hungry villains. Tom, a Chinese-American boy, becomes the apprentice to Mr. Hu, a shape-shifting lion who is the guardian of the phoenix egg. Mr. Hu sacrifices his own life blood to save Tom Lee; now the two are linked in purpose and heart as they protect the egg from the deceptive intrigues of the Dragon Kingdom and the villain Vattan.</p> <p>Tom learns about courage, honor, loyalty, trust, and friendship. These values, blended with Chinese lore and magical escapades, make this novel the perfect recommendation for both beginning and devoted readers of the fantasy genre.</p> <p>The award-winning author has seamlessly woven Chinese mythology, fantasy, and adventure into this didactic tale of good versus evil.</p> <p>Elaine A. Cobb Lenexa, KS</p>

<p>24 Girls in 7 Days by Alex Bradley Dutton Books, 2005, 265 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>After Jack fails to get a date for the prom, his best friends place a personal ad in the online school newspaper. Jack has seven days to date twenty-four girls and pick his prom date, and that is the easy part. Jack Grammar, the geek who can name all of Shakespeare's plays from memory and has the maximum number of AP credits allowed, is suddenly the coolest kid in school.</p> <p>Jack faces two drunken flashers, group dates, a wheelchair bound jock, and illegal rockets. He takes kissing lessons, centered around the word "olive," and faces his own awkwardness. As Jack races to narrow down the prospects to that perfect girl, he faces two tough questions: Who is Fancy Pants and who is Jack Grammar?</p> <p>An interesting twist on the usual prom story, <i>24 Girls in 7 Days</i> explores the definitions of true love and self-identity. While the situations are amusing, the ending is almost predictable. <i>24 Girls in 7 Days</i> is most appropriate for high school aged readers.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>The Unsuspecting Gourmet (Missing Persons Book 4) by M. E. Rabb Speak, imprint of Penguin Group, 2004, 169 pp., \$5.99</p> <p>This delightful mystery centers on two orphaned girls, Sophie and Sam, who are living incognito in Venice, Indiana due to a conniving stepmother.</p> <p>Working part time at a detective agency, the girls are familiar with missing persons. When the mistress of the local diner turns up missing, the sisters help solve the case. The twists and turns of the mystery keep the reader engaged as do romance and the insecurities of growing up.</p> <p>This book is the fourth in a series and is sure to be a book for readers interested in recurring characters.</p> <p>Joy Ferichs Chatsworth, GA</p>
<p>The Year They Won by Gerald Purciello Brown Barn Books, 2005, 118 pp., \$8.95</p> <p><i>The Year They Won</i> is a delightful adventure into the future of baseball. One does not have to be a baseball fan to enjoy this book, but it certainly doesn't hurt. The syntax and usage of the novel places the reader squarely in the midst of a preteen dilemma. Should these twelve-year-old boys rescue the struggling Boston Red Sox or should they let fate play out its course? As the boys play their own game of baseball nearly every day they watch in anguish as their beloved team goes on another losing streak. There is just enough future slang and technology to make the reader believe they are in 2024, but not too much to take away the universal appeal of a coming-of-age story. The boys battle super computers, nosy parents, a faceless creature who hides in the sewer, and an evil maintenance man in a wheelchair.</p> <p>Kenan Metzger Shawnee, KS</p>	<p>Sports Heroes/Urban Life ISBN: 0-974648159</p> <p>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to: Lori Goodson 409 Cherry Circle Manhattan, KS 66503</p> <p>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Lori Goodson at lagooodson@cox.net</p>

