**The Adventures of Sir Balin the Ill-Fated** by Gerald Morris  
**Fantasy**  
ISBN: 978-0-547-68085-9

On the day of Balin’s christening, he was pronounced ill-fated. He would be the noblest knight in England who would also bring misfortune and calamity to all. He would also bring down two kingdoms and destroy the knight he loved the most. Young Balin lived by the prophecy, avoiding contact with King Arthur or his brother Sir Balan, only to find fate helping him in defeating the evil and saving the good. In the end, he decided that he would make his way.

This story of a knight is filled with dark and absurdist humor. It features brotherly love between Sir Balin and Sir Balan. It has a warm, happy ending with a surprising twist.

Linda Sun  
Hong Kong

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**The Ballad of Jesse Pearl** by Shannon Hitchcock  
**Historical American Fiction**  
Namelos, 2012, 140 pp., $9.95  
ISBN: 978-1-60898-142-7

Using a rural dialect of North Carolina, Hitchcock exposes readers to family life and traditions in the early 1920s. Fourteen-year-old Jesse Pearl plans to become a teacher during a time when women are expected to marry. She still hears her deceased mother’s voice encouraging her to continue her education. Unfortunately, Jesse must put her dreams aside to care for an older sister who suddenly comes down with tuberculosis. With that comes the sudden responsibility of caring for all of the males in the family—her father, her sister’s husband, and her sister’s newborn son—and “traditional women’s work” is not Jesse’s forte. To complicate matters, Jesse has real feelings for a local boy who is also interested in her, but who has a nemesis who gets her nose in Jesse’s business in more ways than one. This debut novel is packed with much to think and talk about and is a nice addition to the growing collection of charming Southern YA literature; the author will present at the ALAN Workshop in Boston.

Joan Kaywell  
Tampa, FL

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**The Bell Bandit** by Jacqueline Davis  
**Realistic Fiction**  

Evan and Jessie always spend their Christmas at their grandma’s and ring the New Year bell with the rest of the town. This year, there has been a fire at grandma’s house and the bell has gone missing. Moreover, grandma is suffering from memory loss and sporadically forgets who Evan and Jessie are. Evan and Jessie struggle to understand her condition, but they realize this holiday season is going to be rough.

The traumatic fire turns out to be a transformational event for this family. When one family member is in trouble, others jump in and help. Evan takes up the job of reconstructing grandma’s house while Jessie solves the mystery of the missing bell. They work together, take care of each other, and restore peace at their grandma’s house.

Linda Sun  
Hong Kong

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**Brianna on the Brink** by Nicole McInnes  
**Realistic Fiction/Identity**  
Holiday House, 2013, 170 pp., $16.95  

Brianna has never felt like part of a family. Her mother kicked her out on her sixteenth birthday, and now she lives with her sister, who pays more attention to her loser boyfriend than Brianna. At least at school, Brianna feels like she fits in. She has worked hard to be a popular, bad-girl cheerleader who everyone respects. All of this changes when Brianna has a disastrous one-night stand with a man she didn’t know was married to her English teacher.

Left deserted by her family and friends in the wake of her mistake, Brianna learns to accept help from the teacher she hurt so badly. Through this experience, she learns to let down her guard and become a part of a real, loving family. Brianna may teeter on the brink of bad decision making and its consequences, but she learns how to catch herself before she falls.

Laura Cockman  
Fishers, IN
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bruised</td>
<td>Sarah Skilton</td>
<td>Identity/Romance</td>
<td>Amulet Books</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>$16.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eleanor and Park</td>
<td>Rainbow Rowell</td>
<td>Romance/Identity</td>
<td>St. Martin's Griffin</td>
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<td>Call Me Oklahoma!</td>
<td>Miriam Glassman</td>
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<td>Enrique's Journey</td>
<td>Sonia Nazario</td>
<td>Nonfiction</td>
<td>Delacorte</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>$17.99</td>
<td>978-0-385-74327-3</td>
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Sixteen-year-old Imogen hides under a table at a local diner when an armed robber appears. She somewhat foolishly allows him to sit by her on the school bus to save her from the torments of her cruel classmates. Park is small and sickly, and his father is an abusive disciplinarian. Imogen, who is gay and a rebel, has just been allowed back home by her father and mother, and her young feelings for Park cover a lifetime of loneliness.

Eleanor is the new girl in 1986 Omaha; Park reluctantly allows her to sit by him on the school bus to save her from the taunts of his cruel classmates. Park is small and weak, and his father is an abusive disciplinarian. Eleanor, who is gay and a rebel, has just been allowed back home by her father and mother, and her young feelings for Park cover a lifetime of loneliness.

On the first day of fourth grade, Paige decides that she doesn't want to feel like a little mouse anymore. She is going to make a new name for herself. Paige decides that she is happy being Paige; there is nothing she can't do as Paige.

An adaptation for young readers of Nazario's original 2006 adult work, the book is subtitled "The True Story of a Boy Determined to Reunite with His Mother." Based on a series of Pulitzer Prize-winning articles, it is a disturbing, yet uplifting, story of the lengths to which some illegal aliens will go to stay in the US and reunite with their families.

Danielle's story is told in a series of flashbacks, revealing the lengths to which some illegal aliens will go to stay in the US and reunite with their families.

She encourages her mother to be patient and to let them reunite soon. After 11 years, the two finally reunite in a series of flashbacks, revealing the lengths to which some illegal aliens will go to stay in the US and reunite with their families.

The reconciliation is bittersweet as the plight of legal aliens threatens to destroy a dream.
### The 5th Wave by Rick Yancey
**Science Fiction/Identity**
Putnam, 2013, pp. 480, $18.99

Yancey delivers a dystopian, post-apocalyptic thriller featuring a kick-butt heroine. Aliens have come to destroy Earth’s inhabitants through a series of ever-worsening Waves. Once an ordinary high school girl with a crush on a guy who doesn’t know she is alive, Cassie Sullivan is now struggling for her own survival while seeking her younger brother, who vanished when children were transported out of a refugee camp. Packing a Luger and M-16, she dodges her relentless pursuers, including unyielding drones and ruthless snipers. Evan Walker rescues her from freezing to death after she is shot, and the two experience moments of closeness. Five-year-old Sammy is imprisoned at Camp Haven, a massive concentration facility designed to winnow out the weak, convert the inmates, and train killing machines. Who can she rely on when the Others are us and we are them? Will her obsession with a boy from the past doom or save her?

Judith A. Hayn  
Little Rock, AR

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### Hereville: How Mirka Met a Meteorite by Barry Deutsch
**Graphic Novel/Adventure**
Amulet Books, 2012, 128 pp., $16.95

Mirka Herschberg, the eleven-year-old Orthodox Jewish heroine, is back and she’s still marching to the beat of her own drum. After being un-grounded for sneaking out at night, fighting a troll, and talking to a witch, Mirka finds herself in trouble again. When a troll summons a destructive meteorite toward the Earth, a witch uses a few strands of Mirka’s hair to transform the meteorite into Metty. Mirka’s doppelganger, Metty, is not only clever, intelligent, and better at basketball, but also determined to replace Mirka. As Mirka plans to get rid of Metty, she starts to understand that being yourself—even if you are silly, goofy, or clumsy—is better than having a perfect copy of yourself.

Deutsch’s story is colorful and captivating in the way that it incorporates Jewish culture and faith. *Hereville* places great emphasis on the importance of understanding that everyone is special in their own way.

David Chang  
Chicago, IL

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### Frostbite by Richelle Mead, adapted by Leigh Dragoon
**Graphic Novel / Supernatural**

Like other teens, Rose Hathaway goes to school, has a crush, and deals with her embarrassing mom. But unlike most other teens, Rose is a dhampir—a half-human, half-vampire training to become a guardian in the battle between good and evil. Rose’s main goal is to protect her best friend Lissa, a vampire princess with the special power to control the spirit element.

Protecting Lissa is not always easy for Rose as she navigates relationships with boys, family, and friends. However, when some students leave their safe haven to attack the Strigoi, a group of evil vampires, Rose learns how far she will go to protect her loved ones and how she can use her intellect and powers to fight for good. This graphic adaptation of Richelle Mead’s original series tells Rose’s action-packed story in both words and stunningly bright pictures for a comprehensive story experience.

Laura Cockman  
Fishers, IN

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### Hunter Moran Saves the Universe by Patricia Reilly Giff
**Mystery**
Holiday House, 2012, 125 pp., $16.95

Hunter and Zach Moran might have been the twins who originated the phrase “Double Trouble.” Armed with only their wits and good intentions, Hunter and Zach must find a way to intervene before a sinister dentist, Dr. Digilo, sets off a bomb in their town—blowing the whole place to smithereens. The boys juggle nosy parents, tag-along siblings, and the preparations for their town’s “Lester Tinwitty Day,” all while attempting to save the universe. Everything comes down to last seconds—either before the town’s celebration, or before the town will meet its end.

Two-time Newbery Honor medalist Reilly Giff writes characters that charm readers who are thrilled to be along on their adventures. Her latest novel lands right in the middle of mountains of mischief and will not leave her audience disappointed.

Rachel Marie Morris  
Brooklyn, New York
Hurricane Heat
by Steven Barwin
Realistic/Athletics
Orca, 2013, 162 pp., $9.95
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0213-1

It's been five years since Travis's parents died in a car crash and he was separated from his sister Amanda. After Amanda moved to another state and Travis moved in with his grandfather, Travis has been struggling to balance his love of baseball with his family's needs and responsibilities. Hurricane Heat does a sufficient job in establishing the value of responsibility and familial importance.

Island of Thieves
by Josh Lacey
Action/Adventure
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, 228 pp., $15.99
ISBN: 978-0-547-76327-9

Two things come easily to Tom Trelawney: getting bored and getting in trouble. When his parents need somebody to take care of their house, Tom and his friends are left to fend for themselves. However, the house's former owner leaves behind clues and secrets about his own family. Island of Thieves links historical theory with action-packed adventure in a way that will keep readers interested and engaged.

Lauren Yanofsky Hates the Holocaust
by Leanne Lieberman
Teen/Romance
Orca, 2013, 227 pp., $12.95
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0109-7

Lauren Yanofsky, as the name suggests, loathes the Holocaust, despite her Jewish background. With a father who studies the Holocaust and a family history rooted in the genocide, Lauren finds it difficult to reconcile her feelings with her identity. Lauren Yanofsky Hates the Holocaust is a thought-provoking novel that explores the complexities of identity and the importance of understanding history.

In Too Deep
by Norah McClintock
Mystery/Juvenile Delinquency
Lerner, 2013, 218 pp., $17.99

Robyn moves to a sleepy town up north with her friend Morgan. The town seems pretty safe when they first arrive, but trouble begins to brew. Norah McClintock keeps her narrative and sentence structure simple, making her story accessible to less skilled readers.

In Too Deep
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>The Lives We Lost</strong> by Megan Crewe</th>
<th>Adventure/Teen Fiction</th>
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| Crewe’s suspenseful second novel in The Fallen World series opens with heroine Kae-lyn discovering a potentially lifesaving vaccine developed by her deceased father, a renowned scientist in their island community. As a deadly pandemic sweeps across North America, she rallies her friends on a journey to the mainland in search of researchers who can reproduce the healing medicine and rid their world of devastation once and for all. Their harrowing adventure brings them face to face with violence, desperation, and their worst fears, and reveals the tension between morality and survival in apocalyptic times. Kae-lyn displays courage and incredible selflessness in the midst of overwhelming danger, all the while struggling with what to think about the crumbling world around her. The Lives We Lost blends many elements of a great story—secret romance, anticipation, and characters with depth. | Rebekah Capps  
Nashville, TN |

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<tr>
<th><strong>Maybe I Will</strong> by Laurie Gray</th>
<th>Teen Fiction</th>
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| Is an act of sexual violence more traumatizing for a female victim than a male? Maybe I Will shares the story of a teenager who is the object of a nonconsensual sexual act. Sandy’s two closest friends turn away when they are needed the most. Other adults do not seem to care or do not believe. Lost, confused, and violated, Sandy turns to alcohol as a numbing agent and best friend. All the childhood dreams and ambitions are diluted. Not only does this story tell one victim’s response to sexual assault, it questions the meaning, or lack thereof, of gender roles as Sandy’s gender is never revealed. Readers can directly relate to Sandy as they are able to make him/her relevant to their personal experiences. Sandy deals with the assault the same way—the same trauma, the same betrayal, and the same substance abuse—regardless of her/his gender. | Anna Lee  
Minnestrista, MN |

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<th><strong>The Morning Star</strong> by Robin Bridges</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
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| Katerina Alexandrovna, the young Duchess of Oldenburg, dreams of becoming a doctor, not a necromancer. Tsar Alexander will not allow her to attend medical school, so she continues her studies with Tibetan medic Dr. Badmaev. Her love for the Tsar’s son, the ailing George Alexandrovich, is threatened by her desire to learn how to cure him. Vampires, werewolves, shape shifters, and wizards populate the Kremlin of Romanov Russia as Katerina’s former fiancé Crown Prince Danilo returns. The illicit tsar Konstantin has inhabited Danilo’s soul and now seeks the Morning Star, an ancient sword that will enable a necromancer to command a magical army. He also intends to marry Katerina and gain the throne. Kidnapped by Danilo, Katerina seeks the sword in Egypt. Will she wield the Morning Star to save Russia, and will her love for George win out over evil in the final volume of the Katerina trilogy? | Judith A. Hayn  
Little Rock, AR |

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<tr>
<th><strong>My Summer of Pink &amp; Green</strong> by Lisa Greenwald</th>
<th>Realistic Fiction / Relationships</th>
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| In this sequel to My Life in Pink & Green, 13-year-old Lucy Desberg is ready to spend the summer helping out with the eco-spa her family is building. But her summer doesn’t turn out as she had planned. The adults don’t need her around to help with the spa, and her sister and best friend always seem busy with their boyfriends. The only person left to spend time with Lucy is Bevin, the spa investor’s immature daughter. When even Bevin gets mad at Lucy for trying to give her a life makeover, Lucy realizes that maybe instead of always trying to make over other people, she should make over her own attitude. Lucy learns the importance of appreciating other people for who they are. As she strives to be a better friend, sister, and daughter, she offers tips to readers so that they can become the best versions of themselves, too. | Laura Cockman  
Fishers, IN |
Nantucket Blue

by Leila Howland

Young Adult Fiction/Summer Romance


When Cricket Thompson's best friend, Jules Clayton, invites her to Nantucket for the summer, she's expecting a... story about the fragility of friendship, the excitement of first love, and the importance of standing up for oneself.

Diana Liu

Nashville, TN

Tagged

by Eric Walters

School/Street Art


Ian Cheevers is enjoying spending his last year of high school with his two best friends, Oswald and Julia. One of his... Will Ian find a way to make his opinions heard? Will the Wiz ever reveal his true identity?

Candy Lee

North Brunswick, NJ

North Brunswick

Sean Griswold's Head

by Lindsey Leavitt

Young Adult Fiction/Identity


When Payton Gritas's guidance counselor tells her to express her suppressed emotions in a focus journal, she thinks that Leavitt tells the heartbreaking yet hilarious story of a teen girl navigating the aftermath of a devastating discovery.

Diana Liu

Nashville, TN

Teenboat

by Dave Roman and John Green

Graphic Novel/Humor


Teenboat, a high school student with the superpower to turn into a small yacht, wants to be popular so that his crush, ... Dave Roman and John Green present Teenboat as a series of short, comic-book-style issues that build upon each other to show Teenboat's development as a teen and as a superhero. As Teenboat navigates choppy waters and the high school social scene, Teenboat takes readers on a brightly colored, pun-filled journey through adolescence.
**A Soldier’s Secret** by Marissa Moss  
**Amulet Books, 2012, 387 pp., $16.95**  
ISBN: 978-2-4197-0427-7  

Private Frank Thomson of the Second Michigan Volunteer Infantry has his work cut out for him in the Union Army during the War between the States: running from battlefield to hospital as a nurse, delivering letters to his fellow soldiers as mail carrier, and gaining critical information from behind enemy lines as a spy. Yet the anxiety Frank feels going into battle is no match for the anxiety he experiences every day: Frank’s real name is Sarah Emma Edmonds. She is masquerading as a man.

Marissa Moss’s moment-by-moment account of the true story of Sarah Emma Edmonds provides an accessible avenue for adolescent readers to understand the Civil War, the rights of women, and the timeless struggle for equality. Blending historical facts, including photographs and character names, with a fresh voice for Sarah Edmonds, Moss breathes life into her story grounded in history.

Laura Cramer  
Nashville, TN

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**Time between Us** by Tamara Ireland Stone  
**Hyperion, 2012, 384 pp., $17.99**  

Growing up in 1990s suburbia, Anna Greene is a pretty normal teenager. She goes to school, runs cross-country, and works in her family’s bookstore. But one day, everything changes when Anna notices a shaggy-haired boy watching her on an early morning run. One moment, he’s there; the next moment, he’s disappeared into thin air. Anna is perplexed at first, but once she runs into the mysterious boy at school, she quickly realizes that her life will never be the same again, because Bennett Cooper has a secret—a secret that will not only bring them together, but can also tear them apart. In her debut novel, Tamara Ireland Stone weaves together a captivating story that addresses the classic question of whether or not love can truly stand the test of time.

Diana Liu  
Nashville, TN

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**Towering** by Sarah Skilton  
**HarperTeen, 2013, 304 pp., $17.99**  
ISBN: 978-0-06-202417-6  

Flinn continues her series of revamped fairy tales in this contemporary version of Rapunzel. As in the original, Rachel with her long golden hair is imprisoned in a tower in the woods, this time rural Slakkill, NY. Seventeen-year-old Wyatt has come to the isolated community to recover from the death of his best friend and sister. He stays with his mom’s acquaintance, elderly Mrs. Greenwood, whose daughter Danielle mysteriously disappeared years ago. Wyatt hears Rachel’s heartrending songs and follows her voice; their meeting eventually fulfills a prophecy that will help solve the mystery of Dani’s disappearance. The two lovers are destined to remove a curse grounded in modern society’s drug culture that has threatened the area for years. Enough of the fantastic is coupled with the tenderness of young love amidst the threat of impending violence—a magical read for fans of the genre.

Judith A. Hayn  
Little Rock, AR

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**Whatever Doesn’t Kill You** by Elizabeth Wennick  
**Orca, 2013, 202 pp., $12.95**  
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0083-0  

Jenna Cooper was born into tragedy. A few days after her birth, her father was murdered and her family began a tailspin that ended with her mother locked away in a nursing home, her sister addicted to alcohol, and her brother desperately trying to keep what was left of the family intact.

When Jenna finds a photo of her father’s murderer, Travis Bingham, staring back at her in a newspaper article announcing his release from prison, she becomes determined to find him and give him a piece of her mind. Despite friends and family urging her to move on, Jenna remains unwavering in her pursuit of Travis and begins to discover that the story behind her father’s death contains a bevy of buried secrets that could compromise her relationships with her loved ones.

Rachel Wilkinson  
Nashville, TN
### When You Wish upon a Rat
*by Maureen McCarthy*

**Fiction/Middle School**

Amulet Books, 2012, 288 pp., $16.95
ISBN: 978-1-4197-0161-0

What would you do if you were given the chance to perfect your life with three wishes? For Ruth Craze, an overworked and misunderstood seven-year-old changing her life sounds like a fabulous idea. What she really wants are more responsible parents, less ominous brothers, and true friends. But when her pet rat, Rodney, grants her wishes, the results are disastrous. This new book is sure to delight its audience and touch upon a variety of societal themes. Furthermore, readers are able to delight in McCarthy’s vivid storytelling.

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### William and the Lost Spirit
*by Gwen de Bonneval & Matthieu Bonhomme*

**Fantasy Fiction/Adventure**

Graphic Universe, 2013, 160 pp., $9.95
ISBN: 978-1-4677-0807-4

William de Sonac is unwilling to accept the death of his father. To make matters worse, his sister, Helise, disappears in the middle of the night. He encounters a mysterious ‘off-limits’ area where his father may live. He tries to save his sister. Will he ultimately discover the truth behind his father’s untimely death? This tale is not predictable and touches upon a variety of classical tropes. Furthermore, readers are able to delight in Bonhomme’s vivid storytelling.

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### The Wild Book
*by Margarita Engle*

**Poetry/Historical Fiction**

ISBN: 978-0-547-58131-6

In Fefa’s small community in the Cuban countryside, reading and writing poetry is the main pastime. But Fefa is diagnosed with dyslexia—a condition that makes it difficult for her to read and write. Fefa’s mother believes Fefa can overcome her problems with words. She helps Fefa become a “wild book,” where she can plant words and grow her reading and writing skills. But as Fefa becomes more confident in her abilities, she finds herself more and more isolated from her community. This novel explores what it is like to overcome fear from both the inside and the outside.
Which book review and book rating sites are worth considering? Here are the best ones. 1. Goodreads. Fantasy Book Review should be high on the list for anyone who is a fan of fantasy works. The site publishes reviews for both children’s books and adults’ books. It has a book of the month section, a rating system of 0-10 for books it’s reviewed, and a continually updated list of must-read books for each year. You can search through the old must-read archives, going right back to 1980. 7. LoveReading. Book of the day Writers & Lovers by Lily King review – a kind of gorgeous agony. From the complexities of romance to debt, the struggles of an aspiring writer are observed with humour and pathos. Published: 7:30 AM. Writers & Lovers by Lily King review – a kind of gorgeous agony. 12 June 2020. Science fiction roundup The best recent science fiction, fantasy and horror review roundup.