The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide reviews, from a Christian point of view, of both Christian and secular titles for the Christian reader. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of Christian Library Journal.


Published in the U.S.A. © 2010
Review Rating System

*5 Outstanding—a beautifully written book which impacts someone’s life or thinking
5 Excellent—well written, among the very best
4 Good—definitely worth reading
3 Fair—to be read for relaxation or to meet a need for information
2 Poor—poor writing or editing; read only if very interested
1 —What can we say? Not much going for this title.

Recommended with caution (may be used with any of the above ratings)—Note reservations within the review.

Not recommended (may be used with any of the above ratings)—Note problems within the review.

With fiction, the rating includes the quality of plot development/pacing, characterization, sense of time and place, mood and atmosphere, dialogue, depth of perception, sensitivity of writing, use of humor. Be aware that some books are character driven, so character development is extremely important. Others are plot driven, so character development isn’t as critical; plot is.

Commonly used abbreviations in CLJ reviews

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LCCN</td>
<td>Library of Congress Cataloging Number</td>
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<td>Canadian Library Cataloging Number</td>
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<td>Spiral bound book</td>
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The Berenstain Bears discover God’s creation / created by Stan and Jan Berenstain ; with Mike Berenstain. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zonderkidz, 2010. LCCN 2009037059.

PAP: 9780310719366, $6.99


PAP: 9780310719373, $6.99

The Berenstain Bears hurry to help / created by Stan and Jan Berenstain ; with Mike Berenstain. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zonderkidz, 2010. LCCN 2009037062.

PAP: 9780310719380, $6.99

The Berenstain Bears learn to share / created by Stan and Jan Berenstain ; with Mike Berenstain. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zonderkidz, 2010.

PAP: 9780310719397, $6.99

E 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 23 cm.

PRI Rating: 4

Originally published in 1992, these Berenstain Bears beginning readers serve three basic purposes: reinforce primary reading skills, teach a life lesson, and entertain with a smile. Each book begins with a short Bible verse opposite the title page. Together with their son, Mike, Stan and Jan Berenstain take their loveable family into situations where the children learn to use their unique talents, share, help others, and discover the beauty of God’s world. Although some words may be a little difficult, the rhyming text and familiar characters ease the transition for primary students just learning to read. Moreover, kindergarten/preschool teachers and parents will enjoy sharing the books with their children—discussing the lessons learned and making connections to children’s lives.

Papa Bear, that loveable, somewhat clumsy character, leads the way in two of the books. In Hurry to Help he leads the Bear Scouts to do some good deeds in situations where they actually are not needed and makes things worse for others. In the end, Papa gets hurt and the scouts do a good deed by helping him home in a wheelbarrow and Mama reinforces Timothy’s message that “...good works are easy to see. But even good works that are hidden to see can’t stay hidden.” Papa is the hero in Do Their Best, as he does his best while making a kite (with a little help from Mama) for a contest, albeit a plain kite—it is strong and wins the flying contest over the fancier kites.

The bear cubs are pretty much on their own in the next two books. In Learn to Share, Sister Bear explains how she loves to play with her toys, by herself, and does not like to share. She then learns how sharing can be fun—first sharing with her brother, then the neighborhood friends, and remembers that Jesus is there when people are gathered together. Finally, in Discover God’s Creation, Mama Bear puts her foot down concerning the bear cubs’ TV watching habit. With nothing else to do, they go outside and discover the beauty of God’s creation, coming home to tell Papa Bear, who is glued to the TV.

While some may criticize the Berenstain Bear gender stereotypes and Papa Bear’s bumbling personality, nevertheless, the characters are lovable, and the positive, Christian messages certainly override any negative ideas. Parents and children, alike, never tire of reading about the
Berenstain Bears. There is a sense of comfort in the series which has created these characters who have become household regulars for almost 50 years. While we've always learned some lessons from the Berenstain Bears, the Living Lights series links these lessons directly to Christianity, teaching a specific moral. This reprinted series will be welcomed into homes for a new generation to enjoy again and again.

Kristine Wildner

This is the day / written by Nancy White Carlstrom ; illustrated by Richard Cowdrey. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zonderkidz, 2009. LCCN 2007003751.

HBB: 9780310714286, $15.99
E 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 28 cm.
PRI Rating: 5

How can we rejoice and be glad? Nancy White Carlstrom offers ideas for each day of the week in This is the Day. Using the Bible verse: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24, Carlstrom paints a picturesque text with phrases like “dew diamonds” to draw readers into the beauty of God’s creation. Her artistry with words will stir the reader's heart to praise God.

Richard Cowdrey’s illustrations invite readers to touch the pages. His realistic, yet vibrant colors transport the reader to fields, oceans, cliffs, and waterfalls. Cowdrey’s fine details in the grain of wood, texture of rocks, individual hairs of animals, glistening droplets of water, blades of grass, and needles on trees give a 3-D appearance. His drawings will compel young observers to spend time looking at a page long after the text is read.

Suitable for any day or any time, Carlstrom’s text and Cowdrey’s illustrations will encourage readers to open the book again and again.

We highly recommend this book.

Mary Vee

The Handkerchief Quilt is a wonderful story based on Carol Crane’s mother’s teaching career in Flint, Michigan. Miss Anderson, a loving teacher, always wore a dress with two pockets in which two handkerchiefs hung. Two more handkerchiefs were tucked in her belt and sleeve for emergencies or tears. A cedar chest was full of her handkerchief collection, given by students over the years. One winter morning a broken furnace at Parkland School caused frozen pipes to burst. The school was flooded. Classes were canceled; books and supplies were ruined. The school district had little money to replace the items. However, Miss Anderson had a great idea. With the help of parents and students, they used her handkerchiefs to make a quilt in order to raise money for books and supplies. A museum purchased the quilt, and they had enough money to replace library books.

Gary Palmer’s watercolor illustrations give this book a soothing effect. Even though this story took place in the 1940s-1950s, our current school districts are finding themselves in financial crisis.
This inspiring story shows how one person can make a difference. If a school comes together, much can be accomplished. The dedication of Miss Anderson to her students is a superb example of a first-rate teacher. Not only should students read this book, but teachers as well. Perhaps the reading of this book could foster a discussion on how to help one’s own school’s needs.

Tina M. Cho

**Llama Llama misses mama / Anna Dewdney. New York: Viking, 2009. LCCN 2008037451.**

HBB: 9780670061983, $16.99
E 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.
PRI (K) Rating: 4

The awkwardness of school’s first day comes through in lively rhymed text and vibrant illustrations. Like her other Llama books, Anna Dewdney captures the mixed emotions of a child through her little furry protagonist. *Llama Llama Misses Mama* never downplays the true feelings of separation, instead allows the child to express them. Yet, the book also points out that there is fun to be had and that mama does return at the end of the day.

Little Llama’s poignant clutching of his stuffed animal while adjusting to daycare, clearly shows how traumatizing separation can be for children. School can offer fun, friends, and a new experience, but a child will always miss his or her mama. Dewdney’s book helps a child see that missing mama is okay without being didactic. Bouncy, bright, and filled with

**My garden / Kevin Henkes. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2010. LCCN 2008042364.**

LIB: 9780061715174, $17.99
E 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.
PRI (INT) Rating: *5

Noted children’s author Kevin Henkes has a large repertoire of picture books for young children. *My Garden* is brightly and engagingly illustrated. The story is told by a young girl who helps her mother in the garden—watering, weeding, chasing away the rabbits. She concedes that her mother’s garden is very nice but if she had a garden... and then the imagination runs wild. Her flowers would never die, the rabbits would all be chocolate, and the flowers could change colors at will, to name just a few of the fantastic ways this girl’s garden would differ from her mother’s. As the book ends, our young friend is found “planting” a seashell—who knows what might happen?

This is a thoroughly delightful book in text and pictures and would be great for one-on-one reading to a preschooler or to use in a storytime setting.

Ceil Carey
a realistic perspective of preschool/daycare, young children reluctant about school will surely find a satisfying solace in this book.

_Pam Webb_

**Little Chick / Amy Hest ; illustrated by Anita Jeram. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2009. LCCN 2008935296.**

HBB: 9780763628901, $17.99  
E 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.  
PRI (K) Rating: 4

These three warm stories about Little Chick are all about how she wants things to happen and doesn’t understand why they don’t. She learns all about growing a tall carrot, or skipping fast to fly her kite, or reaching for a favorite star. It’s a good thing Old Auntie is there with her encouraging words and advice. Amy Hest and Anita Jeram’s bright picture book is pleasing in presentation, both visually and through its text.

Little Chick embraces the now that most young children live in. Without resulting to tantrums or frustration, Little Chick shows her frustration at not getting what she wants. Old Auntie doesn’t so much provide the solution as she gives encouragement, allowing Little Chick to come to a resolution on her own. The relationship between Little Chick and Old Auntie is reminiscent of the two rabbits in _Guess How Much I Love You?_ which is also illustrated by Jeram. The large illustrations and text provide a sense of old-fashioned storytelling. The lesson of patience and encouragement is subtle, and the combination of youthful exasperation coupled with ageless wisdom comes through well.

_Pam Webb_


HBB: 9780310714781, $15.99  
E 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 28 cm.  
PRI PS Rating: 5

_Just Like You_ is a beautiful picture book that expresses the love between mothers and their newborn babies around the world. Marla Stewart Konrad began writing this book for her own family, and from her world travels it grew into a global masterpiece. She tells the story of other babies who were born on the same day. “On the day you were born, I looked into your eyes and cuddled you close.” These precious words introduce each new baby from China, the Amazon, the Arctic, Russia, Egypt, Africa, India, and Australia. Konrad describes the gifts and traditions of each culture as they greet their newest family members. Lastly, God’s love is revealed to these tiny babes as He watches over them, and all the stars sparkle.

Lin Wang’s full-page, colored portraits catch the beauty of this special event in each country showcased. The paintings bring the children to life and make you feel like cuddling them. This is an excellent book for mothers to read to their babies, toddlers, and young children. This book would be a wonderful gift for a baby shower. Teachers can use this book to highlight traditions of other cultures as they celebrate a new birth.

_Tina M. Cho_

In *Just Like Mama*, author Leslie Newman shows a close, fun relationship between a mother and daughter. The picture book is written from the perspective of a little girl explaining why no one does things quite like her Mama. The two garden together, play dress up, have tea parties, and snuggle together. Mama also wakes her, makes her meals and puts her to bed, all with fun and flair.

Julia Gorton’s colorful paintings are realistic and attractive, showing mother and daughter going through their day together.

As the mother of a five year old girl, I enjoyed this book but also found it a bit intimidating and unrealistic. It would be very hard for any mother to live up to the ‘perfect and always fun’ mother in this book. The two garden together, play dress up, have tea parties, and snuggle together. Mama also wakes her, makes her meals and puts her to bed, all with fun and flair.


Because *I Am Your Daddy* is an adorable picture book about all the things a Daddy is willing to do for his child. In each two page spread, author Sherry North has a rhyming couplet from the father’s perspective to his young daughter. He makes grandiose promises such as if he were a pilot, he would fly her to school.

Marcellus Hall’s beautiful color paintings have a slight cartoon quality to them and illustrate the father acting on all his promises.

As a parent, I completely enjoyed this book and my husband looks forward to reading it to our children. The only point of potential concern is that the second to last page says “If I were a wizard, I would make all your dreams come true.” The father is dressed in a dark gown covered in stars and moons and a pointed hat with the same decorations. He holds a wand in the air.

I believe children as young as two or three up to kindergarten would enjoy their father reading this book to them. I’m not sure I would recommend it for a school setting with children from different backgrounds. Unfortunately, not all children have fathers who are involved in their lives. It’s really written for a father to read to his child.

Amy Simon

HBB: 9780061456886, $17.95
E 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 21 x 26 cm.

PS PRI Rating: 5

In this charming picture book, A Penguin Story, we meet a little penguin in an Antarctic world of white ice, black night, and blue sea. She has all her penguin friends and they are anxious to make her happy, but she knows there has to be another color somewhere. The finding of that color and the Antarctic explorers who brought it happily changes both the men’s and the penguins’ world for a season.

A graduate from UCLA Fine Arts School, former creative director at Disney, and multiple award winning children’s picture book author and illustrator, Antoinette Portis demonstrates her expertise in A Penguin Story. This story has immediate entertainment appeal, and also provides material for discussing such ideas as friendship, inner longings, and the birth of creativity. The young reader will be in rhythm with Partis’ narrative, which draws their interest from page to page, and leaves them wanting a further adventure. Based on only the three colors of the story, the illustrations are imaginative, and exactly right for each page. Antarctica clear and uncomplicated, the illustrations portray this little penguin’s emotions with a dot here, or a lean there. Preschoolers will want to both look at this book themselves and have it read by another. Older children will enjoy discovering the story for themselves.

Donna Eggett

PRI (INT) Rating: 5

Kajikawa’s book, Tsunami, is a nominee for the 2011 Monarch Award, an Illinois list of suggested books for Kindergarten through 3rd grade. This is a fine recommendation for this folk tale of a wealthy man in a Japanese village who sets fire to his own rice fields in order to warn the innocent townspeople of an oncoming tsunami. The story is unforgettable as one man makes a huge sacrifice to save hundreds of lives. Illustrator Ed Young’s cut-to-paper collages add so much to the beauty of the book and make the legend that much more intriguing. Young readers will spend many hours listening to Tsunami! and studying the unusual illustrations.

Ceil Carey


PRI (INT) Rating: 5

Timothy Penland has written a number of books that have delightful illustrations and rhyming verses that will appeal to children of all ages, although some of them are geared to specific ages. Both of his first two books, The True Night Before Christmas, and The True Night Before Easter, are illustrated by Penland’s granddaughter, Savannah Adams. These books follow the same meter and rhyme as Twas the Night Before Christmas by Clement Moore. However, instead of a poem about Santa and his reindeer, it is a poem about the real reason for celebrating Christmas and Easter: the birth of Jesus Christ, and the


PRI (INT) Rating: 5

The night before Noah rode on the ark / by Timothy Penland; illustrated by Mary Alice Ramsey. Colorado Springs, CO: Dawson Media, 2010. LCCN 2010923111.

PRI (INT) Rating: 5

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death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The drawings capture the essence of the gospel message, illustrating the large print text. Younger children will enjoy these books. However, fourth and fifth graders will especially delight in knowing that these books were illustrated by Savannah when she was nine years old.

Penland wrote two more books following a similar pattern of large print poetry and imaginative illustrations. The Night Before Jesus Fed Five Thousand Men, and The Night Before Noah Rode on the Ark are geared towards younger children and are suitable for use in preschool and lower elementary grades. Mary Alice Ramsey’s watercolor illustrations are especially appealing for younger children. Even the size of these books makes it easier to read aloud to one’s own children or a Sunday School classroom.

Penland’s The Night Before Francis Wrote a New Song, and The Night Before Columbus Sailed on the Sea are beautifully illustrated by Kayee Au. Her illustrations are realistic and truly enhance the large print text. Like the other books in this series, Penland use poetry to teach the reader about the historical event—in this case, Columbus and Francis Scott Key. These historical books are the same size as the Bible stories and lend themselves well to reading aloud to an entire class from kindergarteners to fifth graders.

Carol R. Gehringer

When a mouse disturbs a dozing lion, the mouse will surely die. But the lion offers mercy and in so doing, rescues his own future.

The Caldecott Award-winning The Lion & the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney records this familiar Aesop's fable by using pencil and watercolor illustrations to capture the colors and expanse of the savannah while also portraying its minutiae. A fluid feel winds through the pages as readers absorb the details and textures found therein.

Author/illustrator Pinkney breathes new life into the fable with this pictorial adaptation set in a lion’s natural habitat. Few words are used—only the occasional animal noise appears as text—but the illustrations alone serve as narrative enough. The story shines clearly through the illustrations. Themes of forgiveness, mercy, and kindness lie within the tale: the reader ends the book feeling that goodness does exist in the world and that doing the right thing is not so far out of reach.

An artist’s note in back offers insights about the book to interested adults.

A strong adaptation of Aesop’s original.

Jaclyn S. Miller
PAP: 9781602602670, $5.99
Fic 158 p.; 20 cm.

PAP: 9781602602687, $5.99
Fic 159 p.; 20 cm.

PAP: 9781602602694, $5.99
Fic 158 p.; 20 cm.

PAP: 9781602602700, $5.99
Fic 159 p.; 20 cm.

PAP: 9781602602717, $5.99
Fic 157 p.; 20 cm.

PAP: 9781602602724, $5.99
Fic 158 p.; 20 cm.

**Rating: 4**

Six girls, six mysteries, and a lot of fun follow the camp club girls throughout the Camp Club Girls series. After meeting and forming their group at Camp Discovery Lake, their relationships and sleuthing continue as they visit each other throughout the next year. In addition to a mystery, each book contains a spiritual nugget to take away, references to modern-day technology from chat-rooms, text-messaging, and various other technological gadgets. Camp Club Girls and the Mystery at Discovery Lake introduces the six girls from cabin 12B, also known as the Camp Club Girls, at summer camp. Throughout camp they seek to apply biblical principles, win competitions, and solve the mystery behind the strange laughing noises and mysterious holes out by the campground’s abandoned golf course.

Sydney's D.C. Discovery follows camp, and Elizabeth gets to visit Sydney in Washington D.C. While visiting the Vietnam Memorial, Sydney and Elizabeth stumble upon another mystery. Through the use of chat rooms and text messaging, it takes all the girls to help solve the mystery and keep Sydney and Elizabeth safe.

Bailey visits McKenzie in McKenzie's Montana Mystery. Since Bailey's visit coincides with a commitment McKenzie made to help out at a horse camp at Sunshine Stables, the two girls both help with the horses and then practice riding to prepare for an upcoming competition. A missing horse allows the Camp Club Girls to practice their sleuthing skills again.

Alexis and the Sacramento Surprise brings Katie from Philadelphia to Sacramento to visit Alexis. When the rented, mechanical dinosaurs at a local nature park start “moving,” a combination of technology, footwork, and the efforts of all the Camp Club Girls are needed in the attempt to solve the mystery.

In Kate's Philadelphia Frenzy, Kate desperately needs Sydney to come for a visit. Kate needs Sydney’s knowledge of baseball to help her friend’s dad keep his job...
with the Philadelphia Phillies. Kate's technological genius and research from the Camp Club Girls aid in Kate's attempt to rescue her friend's job.

*Bailey's Peoria Problem* brings Bailey and California-girl, Alexis, to a sheep farm. The sheep farm, owned by Bailey's uncle, borders several other sheep farms including that of the mysteriously missing Marshall Gonzales. In addition to figuring out what happened to Marshall, Bailey and Alexis train for a sheep shearing competition. As usual, the Camp Club Girls turn to the Lord and each other for guidance.

Each Camp Club Girls book has a different author. All six books are plot-driven, move moderately fast, and provide an enjoyable read. The girls solve the mysteries with help from each other and a heavy reliance on the Lord, but without much adult input. In fact, in real life, some of the situations in which they put themselves would be unadvisable at best. From Washington D.C. to California, from Philadelphia to Montana, these books provide a peek into life in the United States as the settings change from book to book. All six books include dialogue in the traditional sense, and some include dialogue in the modern sense—text messaging. In book one, the focus of the action bounces between all six girls, causing the dialogue to be a little hard to follow. The books include some humor, including puns, awkward situations, and silly characteristics. The books each have a little bit different theme; however, one of the driving principles in the books is "Don't worry, but be strong and courageous because God is always with you." Joshua 1:9

*Kristi Wolcott*

**The case of the purloined professor / by Judy Cox ; with illustrations by Omar Rayyan. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish, 2009. LCCN 2008000293.**

HBB: 9780761455448, $16.99
Fic 245 p.: ill.; 22 cm.
INT MS Rating: 4

Frederick and his brother, Ishbu, are rats who reside in the safety and luxury of Miss Dove's fifth-grade classroom. Natasha slips in one night to seek their assistance in finding her kidnapped father, Professor Ratinsky. Frederick can't resist her appeal. Natasha picks the cage lock with her nail file, but Ishbu proves stubborn. He prefers the security of his comfortable home with its steady food supply to the risk of adventure.

Ishbu frets all night long before deciding to join the others. Several narrow escapes later, he is on his way to help rescue the professor. Following their scent, Ishbu tracks them through San Francisco to Chinatown. Much to his dismay, the criminal kingpin that they have outwitted in the past captures him. Hair-raising adventures ensue as the trio follows the clues that lead to Professor Ratinsky and his eventual rescue.

This story is designed to appeal to middle-grade students with short chapters of two to four pages with enough suspense to keep them turning the pages. Judy Collins has packed an astounding amount of painless education into her story. She takes the mice from San Francisco to Scotland, and on to Switzerland via Norway, Denmark, and Germany. Along the way, she gives the reader...
postcard glimpses of the scenery and culture. The networking of a secret society interweaves through the material.

Mrs. Cox dishes out the right blend of information and adventure that will satisfy even the most reluctant reader. A quote from a famous author prefaces each of the four parts, and she refers to Robert Burns and Edgar Allan Poe. Charming black and white sketches by Omar Rayyan illustrate the beginning of each chapter. Although the author’s notes at the end are informative, a vocabulary list for some of the more challenging words would be helpful.

Deborah H. Rabern


HBB: 9780310718123, $14.99
Fic 202 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.
INT (MS) Rating: 4


Peter and Julia visit their grandparents’ home in Oxford where Julia stumbles upon a mysterious garden. On moonless nights, the garden emits a silver glow, drawing them to the pond. When these young teens fall in, they end up in a new world—Aedyn.

Over 500 years ago, those who opposed a rebellion in Aedyn became enslaved by three evil overlords. Many forgot their roots—once they had been a peaceful people with a ruler who was guided by the Lord of Hosts. This oppression led these people to despair. Their only hope lay in the arrival of two strangers foretold in an ancient prophesy. Peter and Julia are these unlikely heroes. By the end of their journey, these two will learn how to overcome some of life’s toughest struggles—ambition, deceit, and selfish desire.

There are many similarities to The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, but with fewer animals and details about life in Aedyn. This appears to be intentional, making the book simpler and easier to read. Geared towards ages 9-12 year olds, Chosen Ones will also be liked by middle school readers.

The lessons presented on selflessness, pride, grace, and victory, are evident but not preachy. There is some violence as battles are fought, but none that would be inappropriate for its target audience.

Recommended for all elementary and middle school libraries and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer

HBB: 9781580893503, $15.95
811.54 viii, 48 p.: ill.; 22 cm.
INT Rating: 4

Susan Blackaby’s Nest, Nook & Cranny, a collection of nature poems about animals, birds, bugs, and sea creatures, is playfully written in a variety of styles to engage and sustain the reader’s curiosity. The author opens her book with an introduction to the layout of this poetry collection, a definition for the term “habitat,” and an invitation to explore the habitats of various creatures.

Prairies and deserts come alive with snouts that poke out of dark, buggy burrows and hares that burrow mazes in search of quiet places. Hawks circle majestically overhead, while field mice scurry into tiny hideaways. While tortoises and snails are at home wherever they go, snakes and lizards prefer a cool, shady abode. Spiders spin webs to welcome guests in. Coyotes howl boldly at the moon.

Tidal pools house sea anemones and hermit crabs. Otters float. Salmons splash and flip about. Herons feed in marshy spaces, then fly off to “treetop” homes. Beavers doze in cozy lodges. Ducks quack the day away. Bugs skitter about, while bees buzz through their daily chores. Bear snoozes until spring is new and doe nests in softest forest bedding.

Brief sections on habitat descriptions and poetry writing tips include details about where the author got her ideas, specific rhythms used in some of the poems, fun facts about several of the creatures included, and details about word play the author used to create the poetic scenery. Bird and deer poems are especially rhythmic and fun to vocalize. Jamie Hogan’s pastel and charcoal pencil illustrations are rendered on Canson paper and have a soft, approachable quality that enhances the poems.

Kimberley Harris


HBB: 9781570917752, $16.95
PAP: 9781570917769, $7.95
516/.22 31 p.: col. ill.; 25 cm.
INT Rating: 4

Pythagoras and the Ratios by Julie Ellis carries young mathematicians and musicians back to Ancient Greece where an ever-curious Pythagoras enjoys solving problems so much that he often forgets to finish his chores. Young Pythagoras helps his cousin Octavius tune his new pipes by comparing them to his own and realizing that because they are twice as wide, they also need to be twice as long. Using the same ratios, he ties rocks of varying weight to the lyres of Reyna and Amara so that all of the cousins can play their instruments together for the first time in history.

The book is one of 19 in the Charlesbridge Math Adventures Series and does an excellent job of explaining the mathematical and musical principles of string and woodwind instruments. Ellis includes an historical note and some additional math and music explanations at the end to help the reader separate
fact from fiction and make an “instrument” using six identical glasses containing various levels of water. Phyllis Hornung Peacock’s warm cartoon illustrations, created in acrylic and water color pencil on cold-press watercolor paper, delightfully depict the general landscape and dress of Ancient Greece.

Although the story and dialogue are entirely fictitious, the introduction of Pythagoras as a mathematician is sound. The in-depth explanation of ratios, including diagrams and charts that correspond directly with the story, crystallize the concepts simply for students in grades 3-6. Issues of responsibility and working cooperatively are nicely interwoven into the story, which ends on a humorous note. Ellis strikes a nice balance of fun and education in this charming picture book.

*Laurie A. Gray*


Jane Mouttet

**How to talk to your dog / Jean Craighead George ; illustrated by Sue Truesdell. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. LCCN 98041515.**

HBB: 9780060270926, $15.99
636.7/0887 26 p.: col. ill.; 23 cm.

INT MS Rating: 3

A conversation with a dog involves more than words. Tone of voice, facial expression, and body stance also communicate specific messages—for both the person and the canine! Author Jean Craighead George gives advice to her young readers on how they can “talk” and “listen” to their four-legged best friend.

The same words can have very different meanings depending on the speaker’s tone of voice. Similarly, children can learn to distinguish between different types of barking. Dogs also whimper, social squeak, and growl. In *How to Talk to Your Dog*, Ms. George explains what these different sounds mean.

The varying position of a dog’s ears and lips demonstrate different emotions. Five of these are illustrated and explained. Ms. George wisely
advises children not to stare at a dog, as some dogs find this threatening. Looking at the position of a dog’s tail is another way to know a dog’s mood. Sue Truesdell illustrates six different tail positions and the accompanying text explains the meaning of each position.

Dogs learn a great deal about their environment through their vastly superior sense of smell. Readers are encouraged to allow their dogs to sniff them and, to show their friendliness, to sniff back!

Though readers will discover fun information on how to “talk” to dogs, some advice may be dangerous. For example, Ms. George advises children to say “I am boss” by putting either his mouth or hand over the dog’s muzzle.

The author’s opening sentence is that no one loves the child as much as his or her dog. She also presents an evolutionary perspective. The book’s illustrations are an odd combination of the author’s photographs interacting with drawings of the dogs.

Johnnie Alexander Donley


LIB: 9780761428565, $24.95
918.66/5 96 p.: col. ill., maps; 25 cm.


LIB: 9780761428527, $24.95
578.77/8909943 96 p.: col. ill., map; 25 cm.

The Great Barrier Reef's floating post office, the killer "simoom" (wind) of the Sahara, and papyrus, the "paper plant" of the Nile, are just a few such details. The Great Lakes volume brings American readers closer to home and familiarizes them with their own culture’s natural treasures.

The books also portray human impact, both positive and negative, on the areas and address the effects of introducing foreign wildlife into the ecosystems.

In The Galapagos Islands title, Charles Darwin and his theory are discussed, as Darwin formed his ideas based on observations of this locale. The book does not necessarily affirm Darwin’s theory, but it does state that the theory is still accepted and supported by the scientific community. His influence on the Galapagos is considerable and therefore
he is mentioned throughout the book as a key historical figure. Several of the books speak in terms of millions of years. There is also a bit of ancient Egyptian religion included in *The Nile*. These issues aside, the series’ content remains strong and useful.

Each book in the series includes photographs, illustrations, maps and charts, as well as a glossary, Fast Facts, additional book, audio, video and web resources, and an index. Delineated sections, chapters, and headers help readers identify passages of particular interest.

This series offers an excellent, thorough overview of unique locations, perfect for researchers, cultural enthusiasts or naturalists.

*Jaclyn S. Miller*

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**A giraffe goes to Paris / by Mary Tavener Holmes and John Harris; illustrated by Jon Cannell. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2010. LCCN 2009019047.**

HBB: 9780761455950, $17.99
E  31 p.: col. ill.; 29 cm.
INT (PS PRI) Rating: *5

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A cheerfully written, true story, *A Giraffe Goes to Paris* narrates, in pictures and words, an exciting event in France’s history. It is 1827 and the Great Pasha of Egypt sends a special present to the King of France, Charles X. First a voyage across the Mediterranean; then, Atir, the loving Egyptian keeper, walks Belle Giraffe from Italy to Paris, France. The people all along the way are overjoyed to meet Belle; the people of Paris are ecstatic. Belle and Atir are feted and loved by Belle’s Parisian fans until her death eighteen years later.

No matter how you discover it, this story is exhilarating and fun. Presented once again in this picture book format, *A Giraffe Goes to Paris* will intrigue all. Designer, illustrator, and commercial artist Don Cannell uses artifacts and paintings from Belle’s era, as well as his own lively, unsophisticated illustrations to bring life to this vigorous bit of history. Award-winning, prolific author in many genres, art museum curator, and educator Mary Holmes brings in-depth knowledge and expertise to this book. In happy cooperation, Holmes and John Harris use whimsy and a love for their subject to tell us about Belle, Atir, and the people who loved them. Besides the many children who want to have the book read to them, and the ones who want to read it, *A Giraffe Goes to Paris* will find a willing audience in the classroom, whether home or school, for art, history, and reading practice. It will also make a good coffee table book, and be welcomed as a gift which will be enjoyed by the whole family.

*Donna Eggett*

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**Hip-pocket papa / Sandra Markle; illustrated by Alan Marks. Watertown, Mass.: Charlesbridge, 2010. LCCN 2008025334.**

HBB: 9781570917080, $15.95
597.8  1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.
INT PRI Rating: 5

Deep in Australia’s temperate rainforest, December has been a very dry summer. *Hip-Pocket Papa* is the story of a male hip-pocket frog that is no bigger than a thumbnail. He and his mate have been guarding a dozen pearl-like eggs from possible predators. A centipede, no longer than a grain of rice, arrives looking for food. The dad, using his
long tongue, snags that centipede and swallows it whole—even though it is far bigger than he is. For three more days the two hip-pocket frogs take their turns guarding and feeding their tiny eggs. Finally, when the twelve eggs hatch, the female hip-pocket frog has done her job and leaves the rest to her partner. He will care for the little tadpoles, feeding himself, and protecting his young until they are old enough to be on their own. One question is how will he protect the little tadpoles? Why is he called ‘hip-pocket’ papa?

Science is such a difficult subject to introduce to young readers. Authors have to decide how much information is enough, or how much is too much. Sandra Markle has done a remarkable job of introducing a type of frog that most readers, regardless of age, have probably never heard of. The information given is appropriate for the recommended ages. The illustrations are bright and engaging and bring the text to life. There is so much for the young readers to see on the pages. At the end of the book more information is provided in the animal glossary, and the author has provided more resources at the back. Markle does an excellent job on this book. It should not be missed.

*Debby Willett*

**Once upon a time in the kitchen : recipes and tales from classic children's stories / Carol Odell, Anna Pignataro. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2010. LCCN 2010006857.**

HBB: 9781585365180, $12.95 808.8/0355 47 p. : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

INT (Adult) Rating: 3

Carol O'Dell, author of children’s books and accomplished cook, presents 21 original recipes inspired by well-known children’s stories. *Once upon a Time in the Kitchen* starts off with an article on kitchen safety, followed by 3-9 recipes in these categories: breakfast foods, sandwiches and snacks, main meals, and desserts and treats.

The recipes include Do-very-little Sausages (inspired by *The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle*), Huckleberry Corn Rafts (from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), Turkish Delight (from *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*), Neverland Baked Bananas (from *Peter Pan*), and Cheese Pillows (from *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*). Each 2-page spread includes an excerpt from the story with the recipe on the opposite page.

Although written by an Australian author, the units of measurement are standard U.S. units. Anna Pignataro also has drawn whimsical watercolor illustrations that add to the reader's delight in using this book.

While not a comprehensive cookbook of recipes, this book will be very useful and entertaining to the teacher or librarian who wants to do cross-curriculum integration or activities integrating the stories within. This book is better suited for reading by adults than by children, but the subject may be of interest to some upper elementary students. The recipes and excerpts may inspire some older children to locate and read the original children's stories.

Recommended for all elementary schools and public libraries with cookbook collections and as a resource for teachers.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

LIB: 9781426304125, $18.95
978/.02
47 p.: ill. (some col.), col. map; 27 cm.
INT MS
Rating: 5

The nature of the book tends to persuade the reader that the diary and its author truly existed. Only a close look at a small, cryptic editor's note reveals the book as historical fiction (albeit highly accurate fiction), so there may be some natural confusion regarding the authenticity of the journal.

It also seems unlikely that the Reed family of this story emerges wealthier than when they began and with all family members surviving in fair health. That said, the travelers accompanying the Reeds experience death and loss, so the book does deal indirectly with those issues. The author has chosen to provide a new perspective on this historical event, but, while some families probably did arrive unscathed, the outcome feels a bit strange for readers familiar with the history of trail life.

This lively format results in a remarkable work from National Geographic that will certainly engage readers. An excellent addition to the annals of the West.

Jaclyn S. Miller


HBB: 9780823421091, $18.95
PAP: 9780823423088, $8.95
B or 940.53/18092
40 p.: ill. (chiefly col.); 29 cm.
INT (MS) Rating: 5

Simon Wiesenthal made it his personal lifelong mission to ensure that Anne Frank and others who died in the Holocaust would be remembered. In 1958, a group of teenagers disrupted the performance of The Diary of Anne Frank, claiming Anne Frank never existed and her diary was a hoax.

Simon spent the next 5 years searching for the Gestapo officer who arrested the Gestapo family. In 1963, he found the
officer. *Anne Frank Case* is more a story of Simon’s career leading to his 5-year journey to prove Anne’s story true, than a story directly about Anne Frank.

Susan Goldman Rubin, author of the award-winning *Fireflies in the Dark*, presents *Anne Frank Case*, a well-researched information picture book, with illustrations by Bill Farnsworth. The book is text-dense and straight-forward, clearly not meant for the casual reader. It would be useful in the classroom when studying World War II and the Holocaust because it is so informative and clearly written. According to the publisher’s website, *Anne Frank Case* is intended for students in 5th grade and up.

The use of dark colors and lighting, and the illustration size (covering 1-1/2 of a two-page layout) sets the tone and mood for the book. It illustrates the facts in a somber tone. An overview of Simon’s life, complete with photos, a bibliography and a glossary are also provided.

This book will appeal to children who are familiar with *The Diary of Anne Frank* or The Holocaust, and it is appropriate for this age group.

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**Carol R. Gehringer**


HBB: 9781580892001, $16.95  
PAP: 9781580892018, $7.95  
591.769/9 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.  
INT Rating: 2

The tide pools of the Atlantic and Pacific offer a wealth of fascinating wildlife waiting to be discovered. *Ocean Soup* by Stephen R. Swinburne examines these creatures through poetry.

While the concept of tide-pool poetry immediately enchanted this reviewer, sadly, the book does not deliver. It reveals an amateur’s attempt at poetry as many of the rhymes and rhythms lack an organic quality. The playful poems often feel forced and their silliness a bit out of place. Some poems feature unnecessary words that contribute nothing more to the poem than meeting the required meter. “A Starfish Interviews an Octopus” feels especially contrived.

Fortunately, the author (who is a former park ranger) includes an informational paragraph for each poem, which offers a more in-depth explanation of the creatures. Truly interesting facts can be found here. A glossary and a list of resources provide further information.

The simplistic, sparse pencil and paint illustrations don’t reveal the wonder or whimsy of nature. Rather, they are reminiscent of a certain spongy cartoon character. In a book meant to inform as well as entertain, more captivating illustrations would have been wise.

*Ocean Soup*’s premise had the potential to create in readers a love for the ocean; instead the book seems to trivialize the sea.

**Jaclyn S. Miller**
There are no words / Mary Calhoun Brown. Athens, OH: Lucky Press, LLC, 2010. LCCN 2009937593.

HBB: 9780977630073, $22.00
PAP: 9780977630028, $9.95
Fic 127 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
MS Rating: 4

Primarily historical fiction, with a touch of fantasy, There Are No Words is the story of 12-year-old Jaxon, who suffers from autism and lives with her grandparents. Although she cannot speak, she can read and understand everything. Her loving grandparents tell her stories and anticipate her special needs. Her grandfather tells her of his very dear childhood friend, a young black boy named Oliver who worked on his parents’ farm, and later left on a train to work in a gunpowder factory. In an old book, Jaxon discovers a newspaper article about the Great Train Wreck of 1918. Oliver’s name is on the list of victims.

One day, while staring at a painting in the living room, Jaxon touches the painting and is magically pulled back in time into another world by two children. Here, Jaxon can speak and makes friends with the children and another boy, Oliver. When Oliver boards the train, Jaxon remembers his connection to the accident and ignites a fast-paced pursuit to save him. In the end, Jaxon returns home; her life inalterably changed by the events in the past.

Although Mary Calhoun Brown based this story on a historical event, the characters are fictitious. Small period photographs identified as the people in the story add to the feeling of time and place. Although the train crash is the climax of the story, it is not the primary focus. The center remains on Jaxon, how she copes with autism and her feelings when she is in another world, free from her disability. The beauty of this story lies in Brown’s use of language, description, and insight into the mind of an autistic child. With a readers’ guide and list of websites, the book is an excellent vehicle for classroom discussion and further research. Recommended for grades 5-9.

Kristine Wildner


LIB: 9781580893169, $16.95
Fic 191 p. ; 22 cm.
MS Rating: 5

In 1974, Kyle has anticipated his summer at the family cottage after a difficult past. His dad left, his grandmother died, and his mother has troubles that only a single parent can really understand. The cottage has no indoor plumbing and the water is drawn from the pump outside. The family history is written on the walls and updated as seen fit. Kyle loves this family cottage and when his mother puts it up for sale; he does what is necessary to keep it in the family. The first buyers are not very impressed with the “homey” atmosphere and are more interested in tearing it down. Kyle, though, remembers something his dad taught him, about controlling his temper, and putting his energy to better use. Across the lake is the island he is finally old enough to explore by himself.

Kyle’s Island is a story of a young boy’s growth through loss, new perspective, and a willingness to learn. The author, Sally Derby, creates a scenario around Kyle and his siblings dealing with a series of life’s difficulties almost any
At almost thirteen and dealing with the death of a grandparent, Kyle does not want to lose the only physical representation of his family history—the cottage. Derby brings the frustration of youth through Kyle's voice, while juxtaposing those voices of his siblings—older sister Vicky, twin sister Andrea, and younger brother Josh. It is interesting to read through the eyes of a pre-teen boy and watch his growth over a summer. This is Derby's first novel, and she does it well.

Debby Willett


PAP: 9781400315932, $9.99 Fic xii, 268 p.; 22 cm.
MS (INT) Rating: 3

Kathleen Fuller, author of the Amish series, Hearts of Middlefield, pens a contemporary fiction series especially for children ages 9-12.

In A summer secret, 13 year old Mary Beth is tired of being the oldest girl in a family of boys; she’s tired of their pranks, smells, and her responsibilities. She finds solace in an abandoned old barn where she can hide from all the chaos.

Because the barn is in danger of falling down, her parents have forbidden their children to go there. Still, the lure of a secret place away from her brothers is too tempting to avoid.

Soon Mary Beth discovers she is not alone in using the barn. Someone else is living there and needs help. Her brother Johnny discovers her secret and becomes her co-conspirator in helping the stranger.

This book has more character than plot development. All Mary Beth wants is some time away from her family, some time to herself. By the end of the book, she realizes how fortunate she is, especially when the stranger shares his story. Child abuse is briefly touched upon, mainly in the background as he tells of his abandonment and abuse in the foster care system.

Although labeled a mystery, this book does not follow-through on its promise of danger and excitement. This is a good story with some mystery elements, but it doesn’t have the suspense of other mysteries. It might be considered general Amish fiction rather than a mystery. Still, Fuller knows her subject, tells her story well, and even includes a glossary of Amish terms to aid the reader.

Recommended for upper elementary and middle school libraries, as well as public libraries. Carol R. Gehringer


HBB: 9780525423843, $16.99 Fic 263 p.; 22 cm.
MS (INT) Rating: 5

Theodore Boone, Kid Lawyer is the first young adult work by well-known author John Grisham. It is a wonderful legal drama for younger readers with the characteristics of his other works: a legal thriller with suspense told by a skilled storyteller.

The main character is the 13-year-old son of lawyer parents. Theodore (or Theo as he is sometimes called) knows every judge, police officer, and court clerk in town. He
dreams of being a trial lawyer someday. Theo finds himself unexpectedly in the middle of a sensational murder trial, where he is the only one who knows the truth about a key witness. Without that witness, the killer will go free. But there are complications to bringing that witness to court.

In the meantime, others—friends, classmates, even adults he knows—come to him for legal advice and referrals because of Theo’s in-depth knowledge of the law and his connections to other lawyers. One is his friend since kindergarten whose divorcing parents are fighting over her custody; another has a brother who has been picked up for drug possession, and another whose house is being foreclosed and the family is facing eviction.

Grisham, a well-known author in legal mysteries, has crafted a plot and characters that draw in the reader. Theo is a likeable kid who wants to see justice served and the truth known. He knows the limits and boundaries of the law.

Readers will enjoy the twists and turns, as they try to solve the mystery in this legal thriller. Plot twists and plenty of action make this an excellent choice for readers in fifth grade and up.

Recommended for all middle school and teen collections. Makes a good gift for children, ages 10 to 16.

Carol R. Gehringer


PAP: 9781434765260, $14.99
Fic 426 p.; 19 cm.
MS HS Rating: 4

The Blue Umbrella by Mike Mason is an allegorical fantasy “written for 9-12 year olds” (publisher’s website); however, there is a dark side making it more appropriate for older readers.

Following his mother’s death, ten year old Zac is sent to live with his aunties. They appear to be kindly old ladies. After the others leave, the aunties begin dehumanizing Zac by calling him “Boy” and mistreating him.

From his window, Zac sees Sky Porter, owner of the General Store, welcome each day with the blue umbrella on his arm. The aunties dislike Sky immensely, but he is a ray of sunshine to Zac. One day, Sky shows him the secret of the umbrella.

The aunties take him to meet their father, Dada, who pressures Zac to steal Sky’s umbrella. Zac gets a job at the general store. Each day he comes home without Sky’s umbrella, the aunties beat him with their cane. Zac must ask for another beating, even as he is being given one. The verbal abuse and physical violence he endures is uncomfortable to read.

Seeing how Dada, an evil magician, mistreats his grown daughters, Zac has some compassion for them, recognizing that Dada is bent on others’ destruction. Zac also befriends other children trapped in Dada’s web. Together the children manage eventually to overcome Dada.

When Zac discovers Sky’s powers over the weather, he wonders why Sky caused the lightning that killed his mother. Sky may be the only one who can help Zac, but can he trust Sky?

Job 35 is quoted: “Do you send the lightning bolts on their way?” This is the main theme: Who is in charge of everything? Like Job, we wrestle with the concept of a
loving God who allows bad things to happen, especially a parent’s death and child abuse.

Although challenging sometimes to read, *The Blue Umbrella* shows us that God is always in control and He is always with us, even in the worst of circumstances.

Recommended with caution for middle and high school teens, and adults.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

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LUCY SERIES


PAP: 9780310714507, $5.99
Fic 245 p.: ill.; 22 cm.


PAP: 9780310714514, $5.99
Fic 220 p.: ill.; 22 cm.


PAP: 9780310714521, $5.99
Fic 192 p.: ill.; 22 cm.


The Lucy series introduces us to Lucy, an eleven-year-old tomboy who would rather play soccer than go to school. Her mother has been killed and her father blinded in the war in Iraq. Aunt Karen uses devious methods to try and force Lucy to move in with her. Lucy’s best friend, J.J., is trying to cope with an abusive father.

In *Lucy Doesn’t Wear Pink*, Lucy’s dad hires a nanny. She doesn’t want a babysitter. She doesn’t care about reading the Bible or being friends with girls. She is thrilled when made captain of a soccer team.

In *Lucy Out of Bounds*, Lucy is constantly teased about her and J.J. She wants to try out for the Olympic Development Program but has to prove to her father she is mature enough.

In *Lucy’s “Perfect” Summer*, Lucy is excited about a soccer day camp, but not about being home schooled. She stands up to a bully at the camp with the help of her friends.

In *Lucy Finds Her Way*, Lucy misses her dad who is gone for six weeks. Aunt Karen is driving her crazy. Bullies are picking on J.J., and she doesn’t want him to end up in foster care. She faces a tough decision about the Olympic Development Program.

Nancy Rue does a good job of showing how young girls can deal with the challenges they face today by studying famous women in the Bible. Lucy writes lists in a book that belonged to her mother about the things she wants to change and things that upset her. The lists become prayers.

Pre-teen girls struggling with puberty, fitting in with peers, teasing and bullying, and resenting parents will like the books. The stories are smoothly and evenly paced. The interactions between the four cats Lucy owns and some of the characters add some humorous moments. The author does not overuse similes and metaphors for descriptive detail. The chapters are short and the dialogue informal. The Lucy series is a good choice for readers in grades five through seven.

*Dianne Woodman*

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In her new series, Kim Vogel Sawyer features a teen that lives with her widowed dad in a small Mennonite community. She is given the chance to attend public school in town. She struggles to maintain her faith as she interacts with teens raised in a secular world.

In *Katy’s New World*, Katy receives approval to attend a school where she encounters friends and perspectives very different from her own. She deals with old friends who don’t understand her choices and new ones who don’t understand her worldview. At the same time, her dad explores a relationship with a widow, which threatens Katy’s world.

In *Katy’s Debate*, things fall apart at home, just as she is feeling settled in her new school. Her dad courts a woman Katy refuses to accept. Tensions rise as she schemes to break up the relationship. Pressures also build at school as she joins the debate team and starts to have feelings for a boy she knows her dad will never accept.

Both books are contemporary realistic fiction; they emphasize character development over plot. The dialogue/narrative is descriptive and flows well. In book 1, Katy creates her own world, a blend of two cultures. In book 2, she wants to be neoteric—open to modern thinking. This helps her overcome her resistance to her father’s relationship as well as open the doors to new experiences for her.

Teens can relate to Katy as she explores her new world at the public high school, and tries to fit in without compromising her personal values. Although many teens may not understand the standards of a Mennonite community, they can relate to being an outsider and trying to fit in. *Katy’s Debate* also includes discussion questions for the reader to consider. These help the reader connect Katy’s challenges with their own.

Recommended for middle school and teen collections, especially for girls ages 10-16.

Carol R. Gehringer
Award Honor Book; Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year; USBBY-CBC Outstanding International Book. While it is an award winner, there are several issues of which to be aware. Profanity, including the use of the Lord's name, is prevalent throughout the book. Drinking and the presence of a liquor cabinet also occur in the book, as does spouse abuse, divorce, and remarriage. There are also references to magazines with pictures of women in black underwear.

Jane Mouttet

LIB: 9781598450996, $31.93
B or 972/.02092 112 p.: col. ill., maps; 25 cm.
MS HS Rating: 4


LIB: 9781598451269, $31.93
B or 973.1/3092 112 p.: chiefly col. ill., col. maps; 25 cm.
MS HS Rating: 5

Both of these titles are geared to grades 6 to 9, though its careful conveying of multiple views contributing to the controversial discussion will likely be helpful to some secondary students in sifting through the issues. Both works include color photos and illustrations that articulate aspects of the story as it develops.

A glossary and index make it easy to locate specific topics.

Cortés: Conquering the Powerful Aztec Empire does an admirable job of introducing history and some of the issues relates to Cortés' life and to the Aztec Empire. Carl R. Green makes it clear that both sides in this conflict had their good and bad motivations. While this story has its controversial turns, the chapter notes provide a clear route as to why comments are made and enable further research on various issues. What gives the book particular merit is the presentation of events in a complete enough narrative to share the story without getting lost or having students bogged down in the details.

The story concentrates on two central characters, Cortés and Montezuma. A closing chapter also gives important insight into how Spain's colonial legacy troubles some in Latin America.

Leif Ericksson: Viking Explorer of the New World, a carefully written narrative, notes that Eriksson holds a place among other world-famous explorers. The context is that first came the American Indians, then the Scandinavians about the year 1000, and, finally Christopher Columbus in 1492.

Cheryl L. DeFries focuses upon Ericksson as opening a new land rich with resources for the Vikings to explore. Discussed is Ericksson's life before his voyage, growing up in Iceland, living in Greenland, and his first voyage. His journey to the New World is important as it was the first known meeting between Europeans and the American Indians. However, nothing further came of this contact and North America remained closed to Europeans until the voyages of Columbus.

Leroy Hommerding


HBB: 9781426303982, $19.95
B or 818/.309 64 p.: ill., map; 29 cm.
MS Rating: 5

Nevermore conveys a narrative of one of America's Romantic writers that makes him a person one can relate to. The subtitle describes the intriguing story well: a photobiography of Edgar Allan Poe.

The narrative lends itself for reading by middle schoolers, as well as a story that reads
well in a group setting. This gripping story is sure to introduce readers to Poe's works as well as entice some to explore more in depth. The illustrations along with chronology and lists of quote sources, internet sites and historical sites provide much for further review.

Particularly encouraging is the place of family in Poe’s life without any effort on the part of Karen E. Lange to gloss over his or their failings or shortcomings. This title makes an excellent addition to public library and school literature collections for middle schoolers as well as a title for older youth who need a quick, enticing introduction in order to get oriented for further reading. Even adults will delight in how much one learns about Poe in 64 pages.

Leroy Hommerding
PAP: 9780310717874, $9.99
Fic 218 p.; 22 cm.

PAP: 9780310717867, $9.99
Fic 218 p.; 22 cm.

Prolific adult author Melody Carlson presents a new contemporary young adult fiction series focusing on two sisters and reality TV. Paige and Erin Forrester are offered their own TV show, but they are as different as night and day. Erin prefers to be behind the camera, while Paige likes to be the center of attention. Both of them must work together to keep their TV project going.

In addition to their personality differences, Erin is a Christian while Paige is not. Erin struggles with some of the things they are asked to do for the show, while Paige isn’t bothered by it. These differences cause tension as Erin puts her college plans on hold to help her sister launch her career using this opportunity of a lifetime: their own teen fashion TV show.

In Premiere, the sisters have a guest appearance on a teen reality show and discover that things are not always what they seem to be, especially on TV. The line between acting and reality gets blurred, relationships are affected, and valuable lessons are learned.

In Catwalk, the Forrester sisters take their TV show to New York for Fashion Week where they learn that success has its challenges. Paige’s newfound fame goes to her head while Erin tries to be taken seriously.

In Catwalk, a few of the characters from her recent Carter House Girls series make an appearance. Fans of that series should also enjoy this one. These books also include discussion questions that can be used in a group setting or by an individual reader.

These books focus more on character than plot development, as is the nature of series fiction. Carlson, a talented storyteller, knows how to write for teens and does it well.

Recommended for middle and high school libraries and teen collections, especially for girls ages 13-16 who liked the Carter House Girls series.

Carol R. Gehringer

PAP: 9780310719335, $9.99
Fic 222 p.; 22 cm.
HS Rating: 2

Sixteen year old Shaley O’Connor is delighted that her parents will finally marry after years of being apart. Unfortunately, a madman kidnaps Shaley moments before the wedding ceremony begins. He doesn’t want a ransom for Shaley, despite her mother being famous rock star Rayne O’Connor. He’s kidnapped Shaley to make her his bride.

Adult suspense novelist Brandilyn Collins has once again teamed with daughter Amberly for Final Touch, the third and last book in their Rayne Tour series, and Collins' trademark style of having multiple viewpoint characters is used here. This time, however, half the chapters are narrated by Shaley, while half are third
person scenes of Shaley's family, friends, the FBI, and the SWAT team as they rush to find Shaley.

Since this is a suspense novel, little detail is spent on characterisation, but ultimately that harms the story. Readers unfamiliar with the previous books will not know who Shaley and her parents are, or get to know them enough before the kidnapper strikes to care about their fates. Brittany, Shaley's best friend and a main character in most of the non-Shaley scenes, is wooden and underdeveloped. Also, the FBI/SWAT team/Shaley's family scenes stop the action cold. Pages are spent on everyone worrying about Shaley or criticizing themselves for letting her get kidnapped. Knowing every move they're making to save Shaley adds little to the tension; knowing that every move Shaley makes to save herself is lame and ineffective adds even less.

That the kidnapper is a wacko Christian cultist intending to force Shaley into a sexual relationship (after performing his own marriage ceremony) may repel some readers. Technical problems like multiple ways of referring to the FBI agent (“Al,” then “Agent Scarrow,” then “Al” again, with no reasons for the switch) make Final Touch seem sloppily written.

Rosemarie DiCristo


PAP: 9780802499738, $12.99


PAP: 9780802487742, $13.99

Cathy Gohlke has written an award-winning and well-researched Civil War series for young adults. These books give wonderful insight into the realities of war and slavery. Both of her books are recent award winners, winning the 2007 and 2009 Christy (Young Adult) awards.

William Henry Is a Very Fine Name follows a 13-year old white boy in the pre-Civil War South as he deals with his father's involvement in the Underground Railroad and his mother's distaste for abolition. Robert witnesses the terrible effects of slavery in the life of his best friend, William Henry, a young black boy. Robert finds himself at a crossroads of choosing whether to support his father's or his mother's sentiments.

I Have Seen Him in the Watchfires continues Robert's story. His father is fighting for the Union while Robert faces challenge after challenge: his mother is ill; his cousin asks for his help, and his wounded Confederate uncle is in a Union prison. Robert becomes unwittingly entangled in a prison escape plot, is left for dead, and faces charges as a spy. All of these test his integrity, endurance, and faith.

These books are rich in character and plot development. Robert grows from a boy of 13 into a young man of 17. He faces life-changing decisions and their consequences within his family relationships. As he matures and witnesses the violence imposed on the slaves, Robert must decide how he truly feels about slavery and what he is willing
to sacrifice to speak up for those beliefs.

The events in these books are compelling and not sugar-coated. Sexual immorality, female slaves being violated by white masters, and violence are talked about by the main characters. While handled tactfully and treated as evil, parents may want to give it only to mature readers or preview the book first.

Recommended for all high school libraries and teen collections.

Carol R. Gehringer


PAP: 9781585365432, $9.95
Fic 216 p.; 23 cm.
HS Rating: 4

Diet-challenged Jimmy is full of hope as he starts high school in The Fat Boy Chronicles. His family has moved and he’s entering a new district where nobody knows him or his old nicknames. His sister promises him high school is a lot better than middle school. At least he will make new friends and have someone to sit with at lunch.

School is disappointing, more like middle school on steroids. Dressing out for phys ed is a nightmare gauntlet of the bullies. Humiliating Jimmy appears to be the jocks’ new sport which spills over into the classroom.

His new friend and bus mate is a fatter kid with more problems than Jimmy has. Jimmy’s parents are concerned that he will cave to peer pressure, while he ponders how that could apply to him since he doesn’t fit in anywhere, with the possible exception of youth group where acceptance is compulsory.

Authors Diane Lang and Michael Buchanan turn the pages of Jimmy’s life with journal-style commentaries he writes in response to an English assignment. The entries chronicle the events and thoughts of a just turned fifteen-year-old boy who faces daily challenges that would fell most adults. The cruelty of bullying, the indifference of those in authority, and the dawning decision that he needs to change his behavior are presented with simple authenticity.

Buchanan and Lang allow Jimmy’s story to unfold with humor and grace, seasoned with faith. They portray the parents as supportive and sympathetic, although they are only vaguely aware of the emotional hurdles an obese teen confronts. Problems of dysfunctional families, cutting, vandalism, and depression viewed through Jimmy’s eyes help him understand that others have problems worse than his. Based on a true story, this book would be a great addition to any library, whether or not obesity is at issue.

Deborah H. Rabern


PAP: 9781595543578, $12.99
Fic 270 p.; 21 cm.
 HS (Adult) Rating: 5

Cindy Martinusen-Coloma writes an inspiring book (2010 Christy, Young Adult finalist) that clearly delivers these messages: “never judge your self-worth by outward appearances” and “life can change in an instant; it’s up to
you on how you respond.”

Ellie is popular, and perfect; at least that is how she appears. She senses something is missing but can’t identify it. Then in one moment, everything changes. It is only then that she starts to understand herself and discover what is really important.

*Beautiful* has both engaging characters and an entertaining plot. Though *Beautiful* appears to be about 17-year-old Ellie, it is really about sisters who appear to be opposites: beautiful Ellie and invisible Megan. The book draws in the reader as one gets to know the sisters. Both must face the core of who they are and who they want to be, as a result of a tragic accident.

Ellie struggles in her faith in God. This may cause the reader to reflect on how they might respond in the same circumstances.

The reader will not find “they all lived happily ever after.” *Beautiful* is one girl’s journey to redefine herself after tragedy strikes. She struggles through physical pain, emotional distress, and self-pity in this contemporary fiction. She confronts her deepest fears as a result of facing the physical effects of an accident.

There is minimal bad language (“she cursed”); the actual words are not written. A few teens drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and smoke pot, though Ellie does not do this.

Highly recommended for all high school libraries and young adult collections.

*Carol R. Gehringer*

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PAP: 9781400073849, $13.99

Fic 284 p. : ill., maps ; 23 cm.


PAP: 9781400073870, $13.99

Fic xi, 331 p. : ill., maps ; 23 cm.

Andrew Peterson is a singer/songwriter and a natural storyteller, both in print and on stage. He is also an author of the young adult fantasy series, The Wingfeather Saga.

*On The Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness* states “Adventure” on its title page. This sums up the first book. Janner, Tink, and Leeli Igiby and their trusty dog, Nugget, are fleeing the vicious Fangs of Dang who seek the lost jewels of Anniera. They face peril and meet odd creatures like toothy cows along the way.

The saga of the Igiby children is continued in *North! or Be Eaten*. The siblings find the lost jewels. Now they flee north to the safety of the Ice Prairies where the Fangs of Dang cannot follow them. However, other dangers await them: the monsters of Glipwood, the Stranders of East Bend, the dreaded Fork Factory, and even worse, their own jealousy and the bitterness between themselves. Janner and his siblings must learn that the love of a family is more important than anything else.

Quirky characters, original songs and poems, hand-drawn maps, imaginative footnotes,
and short chapters make this book fun and appealing to avid readers and more reluctant readers alike. They will be drawn in by toothy cows, sea dragons, fascinating lore, suspense, and more in this epic adventure of three siblings in search of lost treasure.

*North! or Be Eaten* won the 2010 Christy Award (Young Adult) and has been nominated for the 2010 Clive Staples Award (a new Christian award for speculative fiction/science fiction). *On The Edge Of The Dark Sea Of Darkness* was nominated for the 2009 Christy Award (Young Adult).

Recommended for young adult collections.

*Carol R. Gehringer*
LIB: 9780313338984, $299.95
909 3 v. : ill. ; 29 cm.

HS Rating: *5

Daily Life through World History in Primary Documents is a three volume set of primary source documents depicting daily life in several different countries and cultures. The first volume covers the ancient world, the second volume spans the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and the third volume covers the modern world. Each volume begins with a chronology of selected events for the time period covered, including all the cultures in one timeline. That is followed by a historical overview of the time period. The first volume divides the overview by culture, including ancient Sumeria, China, India, Egypt, Israel, Greece, and Rome. The second and third volumes do not divide the overviews by culture.

The primary source documents in each volume are divided into domestic, economic, intellectual, material, political, recreational, and religious life. Each entry includes an explanation of what the document is, followed by the excerpt of the original document and ending with the source information. The entire documents are not included in the books, but rather excerpts that pertain to the subject covered. The excerpts vary in length from a few paragraphs to several pages. There are a few small black and white photos and drawings spread throughout the volumes that complement the entries. Each volume has a detailed table of contents showing the main document headings, sub-headings, and titles of the documents. There is also an extensive glossary of individuals and terms, an appendix containing the biographies of the document authors, as well as a bibliography and index.

These volumes are an excellent supplement to any history curriculum. They contain a variety of religious views and cultural perspectives on history that are fascinating and informative. Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, is well represented, as are other world religions.

These volumes are specifically geared toward a young adult audience, but I believe younger children would also benefit from some of the information presented, particularly with topics such as games and sports, travel, clothing, homes, etc. I highly recommend them as an excellent educational resource.

Amy Simon


PAP: 9781434700612, $12.99
261/.58 187 p. ; 21 cm.

HS Rating: 5

Escaping the Vampire uses the Twilight series as a touchstone for comparing the
spiritual differences between darkness and light. It focuses on the longing for a champion like Edward, and points out where the good-guy vampire deviates from the true Immortal Hero.

Star-crossed lovers are a prevalent literary theme, and nothing is more appealing to a young woman than leashing a mysterious Romeo. Edward's supreme devotion and self-sacrificial protection toward Bella enraptures her. His intensity and the inherent danger of their relationship captivate her. She would prefer death to separation.

Kimberly Powers compares Edward to Jesus, the One True Hero with scriptural references given for the attributes of Christ. She shows us that Satan is the ultimate vampire who offers deception disguised as truth until his poison paralyzes us. Entrapment is his modus operandi, while Christ offers the gifts of freedom, protection, and everlasting love.

This book is a wonderful resource for teen girls, their mothers, and those who mentor them. The writing is lively, using the Twilight theme in a non-judgmental way. True anecdotes are interspersed throughout the sections. Sprinkled within each chapter are “Just Breathe” moments that challenge the reader to pause and reflect.

The text is made interesting with font variations, bold subheadings, pullouts and sidebars, along with scripture quotes in poetic format. Some notebook pages with Twilight quotes and a tear-out list page add interest to the layout. The book divides into three parts: Illusion Shattered, Soul Redeemed, and Mystery Embraced, with eleven compelling chapters.

A strong redemptive message builds throughout the narrative, emphasizing the only true hero is the Immortal One who is ever-accepting, never rejecting. The author acknowledges the difficulties inherent in changing a mindset and lifestyle, but holds hope high to illuminate the way. She presents a clear-cut choice of light, love and rescue from evil.

Deborah H. Rabern


Linda Jacobs Altman has compiled first-hand accounts that describe the destruction of Germany’s youth in Shattered Youth in Nazi Germany. Margaret Shannon’s contributing research provides insight and depth. The book emphasizes how Adolf Hitler attained power through fear and propaganda by backing up his ideas with violence to convince and coerce people to his mindset. One of his weapons of coercion was reaching the youth of Germany. His targets were not only Jewish children, but those of mixed heritage, especially those of African descent. He turned friends and classmates against one another and gathered his juvenile Aryan troops into the Hitler Youth movement. A resource of valuable perception when researching the Holocaust.

Complete with memoir excerpts, photos, and
illustrations, Altman’s resource book gives readers a neutral, yet focused look into how Hitler affected the heart of Germany by decisively attacking its youth. The interviews and illustrative material create a comprehensive portrayal of how the Holocaust affected both Jews and non-Jews. Divided into seven chapters the book traces the beginning of the Holocaust movement to the end of the war. Considering the book comes in under 130 pages, it is full of resources. There are first-hand accounts, photos, and illustrations, along with a timeline, chapter notes, glossary, and further research recommendations. Students ranging from ten and older will find this a valuable resource when exploring the complexities of the Holocaust.

Pam Webb


PAP: 9780802439727, $9.99
248/.833 90 p. : ill. ; 14 x 16 cm.

HS (INT MS) Rating: 5
Secret Keeper: The Delicate

Power of Modesty is a tiny, little book and a quick read. However, it is one all girls should read—young and old. In Secret Keeper: the Delicate Power of Modesty, Dannah Gresh talks about a topic that frightens some young women: modesty. She shows girls Scriptures from the Bible that prove that woman is a masterpiece from God’s creation. With that title of “masterpiece” also comes great power, the power over man. We as women have a power over men that can conquer nations and start wars. Yes, modesty has a lot to do with the clothes we wear, but it is also a state of mind and an inner beauty that man cannot attain.

Gresh shows girls that immodesty is a sin, even unknowingly being immodest. She gives examples of girls that we all know as being flirty and maybe even a little trampy, that no one really likes. The guys may give her attention, but it isn’t the kind of attention she thinks she wants and she is definitely not the kind of girl a guy wants to marry. The insights into the mind of a man are at times humorous, but so true and enlightening. She shows readers how a woman’s body is a gift from God to be shared with only one man—her husband.

This is definitely a book that all girls should read and maybe the moms, too. Modesty is an issue that all women must deal with.

Ruth O’Neil
**THOUGH WATERS ROAR**


PAP: 9780764204968, $13.99

Fic 430 p.; 22 cm.

Adult (HS) Rating: 4

Lynn Austin covers several eras of history in her recent novel *Though Waters Roar*. Harriet, in jail for breaking prohibition, remembers the stories of her Grandma Bebe as well as scenes from her own life. Grandma Bebe spent time in jail for trying to shut down saloons. Great Grandma Hannah was involved in the Anti-Slavery Movement and the Underground Railroad. The main story of the book is the life of Grandma Bebe. She was born in 1848 at the time of the Woman's Rights Convention. As a preschooler she helped her mother hide and transport slaves. Her brother was injured in the Civil War. She went to the hospital to help in his recovery and met her future husband. Horatio came from a privileged family. He spent more time in the saloons than in the office. Bebe was looked down upon by his mother because she was raised on a farm. Because she ended up running Horatio’s family business, her mother-in-law raised their only daughter, Harriet’s mother, to be the socialite Bebe never was. Harriet is more like her grandmother than her mother. In fact, she really does not understand her mother.

Austin uses a post-modern style to tell the various stories with flashbacks, an often-used literary device. This style may make it difficult for some to follow each of the story lines. The book is well-written and the flashbacks are used effectively. The reader may become frustrated along with Harriet at the seeming slowness with which Grandma Bebe’s stories proceed at times. But there is always a purpose in the slowness—Grandma Bebe wants to share other details which are important to the story as a whole. Readers will learn more about the human side of historical events at the end of the 19th Century and beginning of the 20th Century and see how events of one’s life can lead to certain activities. High school students may also enjoy this book, especially while studying this period of history.

*Jane Mouttet*

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**BREATHE**


PAP: 9781434767080, $14.99

Fic 400 p.; 21 cm.

In this historical fiction series, author Lisa Bergren tells an engaging story of 3 siblings sent to Colorado by their father in the 1880s. In *Breathe*, the oldest sister is deathly ill from consumption, a disease that killed four younger siblings. Odessa is joined by Moira and Dominic. While being nursed in a local sanatorium, Odessa witnesses the murder of a patient. When he wills his silver mine to another patient and leaves the clues to mine’s location in a poem to Odessa, both are in
Moira is living with Odessa, and tries to recover after being severely burned in a fire. Both Moira and Dominic come to terms with the past—and present—in order to face their future and understand how much God loves them.

One is reminded of the prodigal son (and daughter) in these books. Moira and Dominic wander far from God and make poor choices, costing them their inheritances. All of us have been prodigals at one point; the overwhelming theme that God lavishes his love on us, even while we are prodigals, runs through these books without being preachy.

There is excellent character and plot development. Bergren is an expert storyteller, blending descriptive narrative with a winning storyline. The books include an interview with the author and group discussion questions.

Recommended for teen and adult collections.

Carol R. Gehringer


LCCN 2009053281.

HBB: 9780310321996, $19.99
PAP: 9780310250661, $14.99
Fic 334 p.; 22 cm.

Adult (HS) Rating: 5

Written by prolific author Terri Blackstock, Predator is a spine-chilling, edge-of-your-seat roller coaster ride for the reader—one that may cause the reader perhaps to rethink their own safety in online communities and on the Internet.

Krista's 14 year old sister was murdered by an online predator who found her on GrapeVyne, an online social community similar to Facebook and MySpace. This makes her question God's justice and protection. When the police fail to come up with answers to satisfy her, Krista sets herself up as bait on GrapeVyne.

Ryan created the social network GrapeVyne in college and it has grown into a billion-dollar corporation. But he never envisioned it becoming a stalking ground for online predators. But one of them lives in his town, killing two girls and attacking a third.

He joins forces with Krista, and they set out to stop the killer. Quickly the tables are...
turned and they become the prey in this intricate and suspenseful plot. The killer is a surprise to everyone, including the reader, keeping the reader on the edge of his seat as the plot unfolds. There are plenty of plot twists and plenty of intense suspense to make Predator an excellent choice for readers in tenth grade and up. Although

By uploading a person’s entire brain into software form, scientists plan to provide a kind of “eternal life” to everyone, through software brain transplants. When the human body wears out, the brain’s memories can simply be uploaded to a new brain and put into a new, nanite-created body. However, there is one unexpected—and important—consequence these scientists refuse to acknowledge: the loss of the soul and its connection with God as a result of this brain transplant.

Gregory’s novel is both intriguing, and chilling, as what he presents is based on cutting edge science that is not that far off. Parade magazine recently had an article describing the first virtual reality game to be released this holiday season, by Microsoft. The world Gregory’s novel describes seems absolutely plausible. Gregory also provides an excellent social and cultural critique, demonstrating why Christianity may very well disappear in America. His story also reminds readers, however, that God is in control, and He will use whatever means necessary to draw people to Himself, even in a society without churches.

Readers should be aware that Gregory’s novel does contain the use of the Lord’s name in vain one time (from a non-believer), and a couple of crude slang words. For those seeking more information on the science behind the novel, Gregory includes a list of resources he used to write his book.

Sherri Beeler
written mainly for adults, many teens will enjoy it as well. The author has included well-written and thought-provoking discussion questions for the reader. Parents might want to read and discuss this book and its implications with their teens. It could also be a good choice for teen discussion groups. Highly recommended for parents and teens.

Carol R. Gehringer

Disaster status / Candace Calvert. Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2010. LCCN 2009024498.

PAP: 9781414325446, $12.99

Fic vii. 340 p.; 21 cm.

Adult (HS) Rating: 4

Fire-fighter Scott McKenna finds himself attracted to feisty ER charge nurse Erin Quinn, despite her independent nature and the fact that she doesn’t always do things “by the book.” But his heart is heavy with guilt over his nephew’s probable loss of a leg from a car accident—one Scott believes he could have prevented. Scott plans to pursue a career elsewhere so he can start life anew, so he sees no point in starting a relationship with Erin that will end up being long-distance.

Erin is distrustful of men because of the lifetime of broken promises and fickleness of her father. She endears herself to Scott, however, and, deciding she can trust him, takes the leap into a relationship, even though she’s a believer and Scott is no longer talking to God. But when Scott fails Erin, just like her father always did, Erin is devastated, and cuts off the relationship. It takes an attempted kidnapping of Scott’s nephew to bring Scott to his knees before the Lord, and for him to reconcile with Erin.

Candace Calvert’s Disaster Status is the second book in her Mercy Hospital series, but may be read on its own. While the novel is a good read, the basic storyline seems very similar to the first book in the series: two wounded and distrustful people thrown together unexpectedly get off on the wrong foot, eventually overcome their differences, fall in love, have a terrible misunderstanding, but then patch things up, and everything is healed and restored. Although some readers may questions Erin’s unequally yoked romance, the novel sends a strong message that while humans will always fail and let people down, God is faithful and will never disappoint us.

Sherri Beeler


PAP: 9781400073092, $13.99

Fic 336 p.; 21 cm.

Adult Rating: 3

Police Chief Jonah Westfall battles external and internal conflicts in Indivisible by veteran author Kristen Heitzmann. Jonah finds himself immersed in the bizarre investigation of mutilated animals in the tourist town of Redford, Colorado. He also must deal with rising drug infiltration while contending with his on-going conflict with Tia, whose past intersects with his present concerns. Mixed in all this is his resolve to mend his wavering dedication to sobriety and trying to mend the hurts of bruised and broken relationships.

Heitzmann, adept at exploring the emotions of isolation,
takes her talent to another level in her newest offering. She is able to mix in the realistic aspects of a how some struggle with their faith and how relationships do not run smooth, and how there are no quick fixes in life. At times the plot seems lifted from an episode of *Lost* with its quirky characters and story twists and shifts, yet Heitzmann's ability to capture the depth of human pain is intriguing. The animal mutilation aspect seems a bit dark and strange, and the resolution is not totally satisfactory; however, the book is a page turner and the light, adept touch in exploring the pain of unresolved personal conflict comes through well, as it does in her previous novels *Secrets* and *Echoes.*

Pam Webb


PAP: 9781601422057, $13.99
Fic 336 p.; 21 cm.
Adult Rating: 2

“Susan” is a victim of a brutal carjacking and due to her injuries becomes amnesiac. Vicki Hinze explores faith and suspense in *Forget Me Not.* Susan ends up at the Crossroads Crisis Center, and it seems she is identical in likeness to the slain wife of the center’s owner, Ben. Thinking she is a scam artist, he treats her roughly at first. But as further attempts on her life and other attacks and murders happen, Ben begins to put aside his initial feelings. Who is this Susan and why was she wearing his wife’s cross necklace? This and other intrigues make for a complex read to uncover Susan’s lost memory.

The basic plot involves a heroine who finds herself in a life threatening situation while having to contend with an abrasive male antagonist—not too original in scope. This being the author’s first inspirational suspense novel it is understandable that the intriguing storyline is jumbled with an almost over the top faith message. While this could be overlooked, the complicated and intriguing plot is also stricken by unrealistic and even contrived characters, situations, and dialogue. Those searching for faith-based suspense or mystery will be advised to enjoy Teri Blackstock and Dee Henderson’s novels; however, if interested in a new author then *Forget Me Not* could be considered, if not for the plot then for the recurring message of faith that is unshakeable, even in the most trying circumstances.

Pam Webb


PAP: 9780764207075, $14.99
Fic 442 p.; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 5

Julie Klassen writes a tale of mystery and romance, which includes a gothic influence (brooding hero, sweet heroine), and shows her love of *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Austen.* Klassen’s *Silent Governess* won the 2010 Christy award for historical fiction.

Olivia Keene arrives home to find a man strangling her mother. Hitting him over the head, Olivia thinks she has murdered him. Her mother encourages her to flee and seek a position at a nearby school. So Olivia leaves without knowing the identity of the man, and whether she has killed the man or not.
On her way, Olivia finds herself caught up in a dangerous adventure. She accidentally overhears a conversation between the Earl and his son, Lord Bradley. If Olivia repeats what she heard, Bradley will lose everything. So Bradley insists that she accept a position as his new governess and pretend to be mute, so she cannot spread his secret. As he gets to know her, Bradley finds himself drawn to her and realizes that Miss Keene has her own secret to hide.

Klassen infuses her Regency-era story with tidbits about expectations and life as a 19th century governess. Her story easily transports the reader back in time. The reader is so engaged by her richly-drawn characters and intriguing plot, one doesn’t notice the length of the book. Christian elements are tastefully and carefully woven into the plot. Klassen also includes discussion questions for the individual or book club reader. Silent Governess appeals to the general reader as well as historical fiction lovers.

Recommended for all high school and public libraries.


PAP: 9780764204333, $14.99
Fic 398 p.; 22 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 4

Siri Mitchell provides a fascinating look at Victorian America in She Walks in Beauty. In New York in the late 1800's life for wealthy young girls is full of promise, but first these cosseted ladies must become players of the social game called The Debut. However, Clara is not interested or desirous of going the gauntlet of endless balls, dinners, and events; she must though, for it is expected for the simple reason of her need to secure the heir to the De Vries fortune, since her family's failing wealth and standing depends upon it. The complication is that her dearest friend Lizzie is also being groomed for the same ambition. Will friendship win out over the prize of secured wealth? Clara will become a reluctant player of Society's Game, but she will play according to her own rules.

Mitchell provides an informed, well-researched behind-the-scenes of the New York's Gilded Age. The title stems from Byron's famous poem "She Walks in Beauty," and is a veneer for what all young debutantes like Clara Carter must endure. Mitchell emphasizes that while these young women walk in beauty, they do so at a great price: wearing a corset. The corset is predominantly featured throughout the story, symbolizing how women were slave to fashion, even to the point of ill health, and even their death. In fact, it is alluded that Clara's mother died from wearing too tight a corset and some detail is given to her mother's condition. Clara's concern of her corset takes precedence over her concern of the city's lamentable immigrant situation, and this becomes somewhat of a tagged on plot feature, as is her concern for her relationship with God. Yet both are indicatives of the times—young women were sheltered from the horrors of poverty and church served as a means to show off the fashions. The book's latter half is definitely stronger, as Clara begins to shed societal conventions. Clara takes on aspects of Jo from Little Women when she sheds her corset and steps more boldly towards her heart's

PAP: 9780764206092, $13.99
Fic 367 p. : geneal. table ; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 4

A Measure of Mercy by Lauraine Snelling, is the first of her new series Home to Blessing. Fans of earlier series will enjoy finding familiar characters in a new chapter of their lives. However if you have not read her previous series, you may feel somewhat lost in the first few chapters.

The setting is Blessing, North Dakota, at the turn of the twentieth century. Astrid Bjorklund, the central character, is a young woman pursuing medical training. The story deals with a variety of topics and emotions ranging from loyalty and love, to faith and duty.

The book is an enjoyable read and a wealth of insight into times gone by. As an historical novel it does an excellent job of portraying life in a small town. One gets a greater appreciation for what life was like for the first settlers in the Northern mid-west. It is also interesting to see how things we take for granted like telephones, farm machinery, and medical discoveries resulted in major changes in the lives of people at that time. Much detail is given to the structure and functioning of a small town community. The description of medical practice and training of that time are a real eye opener.

Several storylines are presented and woven together as the author touches a number of topics that will appeal to young adults as well as adults. As the book progresses, the individual storylines are so engaging that you want to keep reading to see how it will all turn out. However don’t expect a final resolution. As with most first books in a series it leaves you hanging as well as sets the stage for the subsequent books in the series.

If you are already a Lauraine Snelling fan I’m sure you will enjoy this first book in her new series. However, if you have never read anything by this author, you might want to first read one of her other series about Blessing so you can enjoy this one more.

Gail Whitney


PAP: 9780764202025, $14.99
Fic 319 p. ; 22 cm.
Adult HS Rating: 5

The story of those who live in Blessing along the Red River continues in Rebecca’s Reward. The book is part of the Daughters of Blessing series which follows the Red River books. In this book, Snelling takes a closer look at the life of Rebecca Baard. It has been a while since her parents died, but she still misses them. She has a dream of opening a soda shop in Blessing, but money is tight and Gus, the brother she lives with, frowns on her dreaming. A chance comes to visit her cousin Penny in Bismarck and Rebecca decides to go and learn about how they run the soda shop there. While in Bismarck she receives the attention of a sophisticated young man, though when she returns home to Blessing she finds that the love she longs

convictions rather than society’s expectations.

Pam Webb
Blaze of Glory, by Major Jeff Struecker and Alton Gansky, is a great military thriller informed by Struecker’s years of active duty in the United States Army, and Gansky’s experience in suspense and mystery writing. Sergeant Eric Moyer and his special ops team are sent to Italy to capture a man who appears to be behind a sudden rise in female suicide bombings in major cities around the world. The team is able to stop a bombing at the G-20, a gathering of a group of presidents and leaders from economically powerful countries. The team’s journey then leads them to Mexico, where they uncover the real mastermind behind the bombings, and rescue the hostage parents of the female bomber whose bomb they disarmed in Italy.

Blaze of Glory is an exciting, action-packed read and makes no apology for what the military does and stands for. However, Struecker and Gansky provide a well-balanced view by introducing myriad themes into this novel—not only providing a realistic look at combat, but also the emotional toll killing takes on any soldier. The novel takes a look at what it means to be a committed soldier and the only Christian on the team, provides a stark look at the effects of PTSD in a soldier’s life, addresses the challenge of being in the military and maintaining a normal family life, and demonstrates the high level of danger and serious injury soldiers face. Violence is unavoidable in a story like this, but it is not graphically rendered, considering the context.

Sherri Beeler


PAP: 9781400073962, $13.99
Fic 341 p.; 21 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 4

New Yorker Cara Moore, down on her luck, poverty stricken, and stalked by an old boyfriend, finds herself in an Amish community, looking for answers to the mystery of her past. Cara has no idea of the entirety of the baggage she carries. Nor is she aware that the People themselves are fearful she will act as her mother did, a long ago
runaway from their community. Cara’s tight jeans and short tops don’t help, along with her bold attitude, but one man, Ephraim Mast, dares to fill the command he believes he has received concerning Cara: “Be me to her.” Following that commandment may threaten his entire way of life.

Ephraim risks his own budding romance and his job, knowing that he will soon be shunned for not turning this young woman and her daughter away. Yet he will not, cannot, since he feels so strongly that God is leading him in this direction. This is a powerful book about two worlds colliding and the need for truth to be revealed.

Fans of Amish fiction will love the story that Cindy Woodsmall has created. It is particularly well written and gives a clear cut picture of a man intending to do God’s will despite what others in his community think or say.

The book includes a glossary of Pennsylvania Dutch words and phrases and a descriptive list of the main characters.

Ceil Carey
Storylines: your map to understanding the Bible / Andy Croft and Mike Pilavachi. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009.

PAP: 9781434764751, $12.99
220/.07 207 p.; 21 cm.
Adult (HS) Rating: 4

Storylines: Your Map to Understanding the Bible by Andy Croft and Mike Pilavachi is a book that points the reader to the similar storylines between the Old and the New Testament. These may be things that the reader already knows, but the way the authors connect the dots between the storylines opens up a whole new world of biblical understanding.

The book follows the storylines of Jesus, the covenant, God’s presence, the Kingdom, salvation, and worship. Each chapter ends with what the authors call a “paperchase,” which is a very short recap of the chapter along with Scripture verses to back up their theories and encourage the reader to look up on his own time. There are also discussion questions at the end of each chapter suitable for personal devotions or Bible study discussions.

The authors have an enjoyable writing style and throw in just enough humor to make you smile, but yet not be sacrilegious or disrespectful.


HBB: 9781414301273, $25.99
248.8/45 xi, 285 p.; 24 cm.
Adult Rating: *5

Bringing Up Girls is the companion book to Bringing Up Boys written by Dr. James Dobson five years ago. Bringing Up Girls is a must-read for all parents of females. Raising a girl in today’s culture is quite difficult given the worldly, sexual behavior and advertisement in the media. Today’s girls are in more danger of becoming sexually promiscuous, having eating disorders, being bullied or becoming the bully, using drugs and pornography, displaying bodily destructive behavior, receiving sexually transmitted diseases, committing suicide, etc. However, statistics show that involved parents can make a difference, especially during the years of puberty. Several chapters focus on the father’s role in raising his princess. Dobson says, “A daughter’s sense of self-worth and confidence is linked directly to her relationship with her dad.” Dobson shares his views on moms in the workplace, teaching manners, dating, virginity, regulating the Internet, as well as a host of other topics.

Bringing Up Girls is a needed tool for parents, teachers, and other caregivers. Dobson presents scientifically what happens to a girl’s body at birth and puberty that sets her apart from boys, not just physically, but emotionally. Through interviews, quotes, and scripts from his radio program, he presents real cases of young women and their thoughts especially regarding their fathers and staying sexually pure. Although this is not a step-by-step guide, this is an eye awakener to the facts and statistics of our American culture and includes advice and tips along with Scripture to help parents make wise decisions as they bring their daughters to adulthood.

Tina M. Cho
of the Bible. While it is almost impossible to cover all of the different storylines throughout the Bible, the reader is encouraged to study on their own and find different threads of storylines for themselves.

There are two appendices in the back of the book entitled “The Bible in 20 Pages” and “The What, Why and How of the Bible.” Although most of the book is doctrinally appropriate for many different denominations, they state in the second appendix that the apocrypha is not a canonized part of the Bible. This does not change any of the meanings of any of the storylines they write about.

Ruth O'Neil


PAP: 9780890515792, $14.99
231.7/652 v. <1-3> : ill., maps; 23 cm.
Adult Rating: 4

The New Answers Book 3 is a collection of articles based on 38 questions on creation, evolution, and the Bible and answered by 26 scientists and professors. Many Christians want to know how to defend their faith, especially creation versus evolution. This book gives scientific facts alongside biblical support to explain concepts clearly. The subjects covered are creation, evolution, Noah and the Ark, global warming, abortion, cloning and stem cells, planned parenthood, the Grand Canyon, Mt. St. Helens, the existence of God, bacteria, unicorns, slavery, and viruses. Understanding the nitty-gritty details of God’s miraculous works confirms our faith in Almighty God. Further, we can be in awe of how God set up this universe.

The New Answers Book 3 is not a book for pleasure reading and relaxation, but rather to find out information on defending our faith. Ken Ham has chosen appropriate questions for this generation. Each article includes photographs or diagrams and sheds background on the debate and then presents how Christians should view each topic. Some articles are heavier in scientific information than others and might be difficult to understand. This book would be great for high school students and teachers and college students and professors who need to defend creation. It would also be a perfect read for skeptics of the Bible. The last chapter ends by explaining God’s plan of salvation.

Tina M. Cho


PAP: 9780764207495, $13.99
248.8/45 190 p.; 22 cm.
Adult Rating: 4

What Your Son Isn’t Telling You reveals the “secret world of teen boys.” Through e-mails, letters, and their experiences as youth workers and teen magazine editors, Mr. Ross and Ms. Shellenberger reveal teens’ struggles. Boys battle bullying, lust, and anger as their hormones throw a wild party. Parents, especially mothers, cringe at their sons’ coping techniques, but this book highlights how adults can help teenagers. Boundaries, Christ-like role models, and active listening are key. Parents should provide affirmation and unconditional love as they pray with their sons and point them to Scripture. Boys
should participate in diverse activities so they can discover their strengths and build their self-esteem. Above all, parents should never give up. According to the authors, “... boys are like boomerangs. Despite the angry outbursts and clashes you encounter almost daily, those countless moments you’re invested in your son—nurturing him, teaching him right from wrong, and preparing him for life—ultimately will pay off.” This is an eye-opening resource for mothers and female youth workers. It also addresses how dads can help their sons, although the information will be no surprise as they have already survived their teen years. Although the subject matter is heavy, the book is divided into short chapters with key points in bold. It’s clear and practical, and the writing flows well. The quotes from boys themselves provide insight and a springboard into many of the topics. The authors share pertinent Scripture passages and verses to

* You were born for this : 7 keys to a life of predictable miracles / Bruce Wilkinson ; with David Kopp. Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2009. LCCN 2009028443.

HBB: 9781601421821, $22.99 234/.13 viii, 228 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult Rating: *5

The book You Were Born for This by Bruce Wilkinson is an incredible motivational encouragement that can revitalize your walk with God. It is different from most spiritual self-help books because the focus is not on self, but on becoming aware of the needs of others. From that focal point, he shares how God can use you to meet those needs. His premise is that God wants to use you as a tool in His miracle working activities.

Although there are many who may be skeptical of God’s miracle working power in today’s world, by the end of the book you will not be counted among them. Even if you do believe in miracles, you may not feel like God desires to use you as His delivery tool. By the time you finish the book you are bound to feel differently about that as well.

I confess I have not been a big fan of some of Bruce Wilkinson previous works, so I approached this book with some uncertainty. The jacket and inside book cover blurbs did little to reassure my predisposition. However I didn’t have to read very before needing to repent of having prejudged the book.

Bruce Wilkinson clearly presents and illustrates a series of keys that will unlock God’s ability to use you as a miracle delivery person. It is down to earth. It is simple to follow and simple to apply. In fact it is one of the most practical tools I have seen in a long time. I know it to be true and workable, not only from his testimony, but from my own experience.

This book is an excellent motivational teaching for anyone who too wants to be used of God in a powerful way in order to be a miracle to someone else. If you take it to heart and use the keys that he provides, you will find that not only does God desire to use you, but that He will.

Gail Whitney
address specific issues. They also advise getting professional help with problems like depression or addiction.

Rebecca Velez
**PROFESSIONAL TITLES**

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**Professionals**

**Rating:** 4

**An inspiration for teachers and librarians to collaborate,** *Picture That!* is a reference/lesson idea resource which focuses on utilizing picture books in 4th–12th grade classrooms. The book is designed to be useful as a working reference tool with room in the margins to make notes, multiple indices and connections to other resources. The introductory chapter introduces the purpose of the book, how to select appropriate picture books, and cites specific classroom examples of situations in which teachers have successfully used picture books with older students to build background knowledge, teach through example and integrate literature with content areas. Subsequent chapters focus on 62 different picture books beginning with an idea to use right away, bibliographic information, an annotation, curriculum subject links, background information, extension ideas, and additional books to explore.

Overall, McElmeel has created a valuable resource for teachers, delving into high quality, sophisticated picture books which stimulate the imagination, respect for other cultures and points of view, as well as scientific inquiry. The extension ideas are particularly valuable as they inspire higher-level thinking and provide a spark to promote in-depth discovery about a variety of curriculum-related topics. Some of the picture books referenced are not quick reads, but will take more than an hour to read aloud; page numbers and reading or interest level would be valuable additions to the bibliographic information. In addition, the table of contents could be made more effective if it were organized, not by picture book author, but rather categorized by general subject or key curriculum unit. Nonetheless, *Picture That!* is a ready reference to extend the curriculum, creating extensions beyond the textbook to stimulate student inquiry and open opportunities for differentiated instruction.

*Laura Morrow and Kristine Wildner*

**Gifted biographies, gifted readers!**

**Rating:** 3

**Addressing the needs of younger advanced learners,** *Gifted Biographies, Gifted Readers!* is a comprehensive compilation of summaries of recent picture book biographies and higher-level thinking questions. Beginning with a discussion on the value of biographies for gifted students, the first chapter shows how different skills can be honed by evaluating the biography as storytelling, and specific examples related to productive and critical thinking skills and problem solving. The bulk of this resource consists of high quality biography summaries and more complex thinking questions organized by general category—heroes, leaders, inventors/explorers, authors, musicians/dancers,
artists, and athletes. Concluding with reader response and research reporting models, the book provides a number of outlines and completed examples based on the books mentioned earlier. These examples include a story format, book report, songbook, numerous poetry activities, proverbs, associative thinking, and a cumulative tale.

As Nancy Polette suggests, gifted readers may see characteristics in themselves within many of the subjects of the suggested biographies—looking at the world differently from others, abstract thinking, creative and inventive power, the ability to complete work independently, etc. Teachers can use the model to encourage productive decision making and critical thinking skills to create assignments for advanced individuals or groups of children to differentiate learning in the classroom. However, although the models are evident, the teacher will need to take the time to customize the assignment for each book; the assignments are not practical for teachers to use right out of this resource. Moreover, many of the writing extensions, heavily concentrated on formula-type poetry, may be better suited for students who struggle rather than those who excel. Overall, the book is an excellent resource for selecting a variety of picture book biographies and sharing them with a class or individual, but the writing assignments are lacking in organization and format.

Lisa Eyssautier and Kristine Wildner
INDEX

Adams, Savannah Joy 11
Ada’s house novel ; 1 46
Aedyn chronicles ; 1 15
Alexis and the Sacramento surprise 13
Allred, Scott 21
Altman, Linda Jacobs 37
The Anne Frank case : Simon Wiesenthal’s search for the truth 21
Au, Kayee 11
Austin, Lynn N. 39
Bailey’s Peoria problem 13
Barr, Shari 13
Beautiful : truth’s found when beauty’s lost 33
Because I am your daddy 9
The Berenstain Bears discover God’s creation 5
The Berenstain Bears do their best 5
The Berenstain Bears hurry to help 5
The Berenstain Bears learn to share 5
Berenstain, Jan 5
Berenstain, Michael 5
Berenstain, Stan 5
Bergren, Lisa Tawn 39
Blackaby, Susan 16
Blackstock, Terri 40
Blaze of glory 46
The blue umbrella 25
Breathe : a novel of Colorado 39
Bringing up girls 48
Brown, Mary Calhoun 23
Brumbaugh, Renae 13
Buchanan, Michael 33
Calvert, Candice 42
Camp Club girls ; 1-6 13
Cannell, Jon 19
Carlblom, Linda McQuinn 13
Carlson, Melody 31
Carlstrom, Nancy White 6
The case of the purloined professor 14
Catwalk 31
Chosen ones 15
Claim : a novel of Colorado 39
Collins, Amberly 31
Collins, Brandilyn 31
Cortés : conquering the powerful Aztec empire 29
Cowdrey, Richard 6
Cox, Judy 14
Cran, Carol 6
Croft, Andy 48
Crossroads crisis center ; 1 43
Daily life through world history in primary documents 36
Daughters of Blessing ; 4 45
DeFries, Cheryl L. 29
Derby, Sally 23
Dewdney, Anna 7
Disaster status 42
Dobson, James C. 48
Ellis, Julie 16
Escaping the vampire : desperate for the immortal hero 36
Falvey, David 17
Farnsworth, Bill 21
The fat boy chronicles : inspired by a true story 33
Final touch 31
Fischer, Jean 13
Forget me not : a novel 43
Fuller, Kathleen 24
The Galapagos Islands 18
Gansky, Alton 46
George, Jean Craighead, 17
Gifted biographies, gifted readers! : higher order thinking with picture book biographies 52
A giraffe goes to Paris 19
Gohike, Cathy 32
Gorton, Julia 8
The Great Barrier Reef 18
Great explorers of the world 29
The Great Lakes 18
Green, Carl R. 29
Gregory, David 41
Gresh, Dannah 38
Grisham, John 24
Hall, Marcellus 9
Ham, Ken 49
The handkerchief quilt 6
Hanna, Janice 13
Harris, John 19
Heinrichs, Ann 18
Heitzmann, Kristen 42
Henkes, Kevin 7
Hest, Amy 8
Hinze, Vicki 43
Hip-pocket papa 19
Hogan, Jamie 16
Holmes, Mary Tavener 19
Home to Blessing ; 1 45
The homeward trilogy 39
The hope of refuge : a novel 46
How to get rich on the Oregon trail : my adventures among cows, crooks & heroes on the road to fame and fortune : writing journal of--Master William Reed : Portland, Oregon 1852 21
How to talk to your dog 17
I have seen him in the watchfires 32
Indivisible : a novel 42
Jeram, Anita 8
Just like Mama 8
Just like you 8
Kajikawa, Kimiko 11
Kate’s Philadelphia frenzy 13
Katy Lambright series ; 1, 2 26
Katy’s debate 26
Katy’s new world 26
Klassen, Julie 43
Konrad, Marla Stewart 8
Kopp, David 50
Kras, Sara Louise 18
Kummer, Patricia K. 18
Kyle’s island 23
Lang, Diane 33
Lange, Karen E. 29
The last Christian : a novel 41
Leif Ericksson : Viking explorer of the New World 29
Letters to a soldier 17
The lion & the mouse 12
Little Chick 8
Llama Llama misses mama 7
Lucy doesn't wear pink 26
Lucy finds her way 26
Lucy novel ; 1-4 26
Lucy out of bounds 26
Lucy's "perfect" summer 26
Markle, Sandra 19
Marks, Alan 19
Martinusen-Coloma, Cindy 33
Mason, Mike 25
Math adventure 16
McElmeel, Sharon L. 52
McGrath, Alister E. 15
McKenzie's Montana mystery 13
A measure of mercy 45
Mercy Hospital ; 2 42
Mitchell, Siri 44
Morris, Lawrence 36
My garden 7
Mysteries of Middlefield series ; 1 24
Mystery at Discovery Lake 13
Nature's wonders 18
Nest, nook & cranny 16
Nevermore : a photobiography of Edgar Allan Poe 29
The new answers book 3 49
Newman, Lesléa 8
The night before Columbus sailed on the sea 11
The night before Francis sang a new song 11
The night before Jesus fed five thousand men 11
The night before Noah rode on the ark 11
The night before series 11
The Nile 18
North or be eaten : wild escapes, a desperate journey, and the ghastly Fangs of Dang 34
North, Sherry 9
Ocean soup : tide-pool poems 22
Odell, Carol 20
Olson, Tod 21
On the edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness : adventure, peril, lost jewels, and the fearsome toothy cows of Skree 34
On the runway ; 1, 2 31
Once upon a time in the kitchen : recipes and tales from classic children's stories 20
Palmer, Gary 6
Peacock, Phyllis Hornung 16
A penguin story 9
Penland, Timothy 11
Peterson, Andrew 34
Peterson, Mary 22
Picture that! from Mendel to Normandy : picture books and ideas, curriculum and connections--for 'tweens and teens 52
Pilavachi, Mike 48
Pinkney, Jerry 12
Polette, Nancy 52
Portis, Antoinette 9
Powers, Kimberly 36
Predator 40
Premiere 31
Prequel to I have seen him in the watchfires 32
Proch, Gregory 21
Pythagoras and the ratios : a math adventure 16
Ramsey, Mary Alice 11
Rayne Tour ; 3 31
Rayyan, Omar 14
Rebecca's reward 45
Rex Zero, king of nothing 27
Rodgers, Erica 13
Ross, Michael 49
Rubin, Susan Goldman 21
Rue, Nancy N. 26
The Sahara 18
Sawyer, Kim Vogel 26
Secret keeper : the delicate power of modesty 38
Sequel to William Henry is a fine name 32
Shattered youth in Nazi Germany : primary sources from the Holocaust 37
She walks in beauty 44
Shellenberger, Susie 49
The silent governess 43
Sing : a novel of Colorado 39
Snelling, Lauraine 45
Storylines : your map to understanding the Bible 48
Struecker, Jeff 46
A summer secret 24
Swinburne, Stephen R. 22
Sydney's D.C. discovery 13
The tails of Frederick and Ishbu 14
Theodore Boone : kid lawyer 24
There are no words 23
This is the day 6
Though waters roar 39
True night before Christmas 11
True night before Easter 11
True stories of teens in the Holocaust 37
Truesdell, Sue 17
Tsunami! 11
Wang, Lin 8
What your son isn't telling you : unlocking the secret world of teen boys 49
Wilkinson, Bruce 50
William Henry is a fine name 32
Wingfeather saga ; 2 34
Wingfeather saga ; 1 34
Woodsmall, Cindy 46
Wynne-Jones, Tim 27
You were born for this : 7 keys to a life of predictable miracles 50
Young, Ed 11