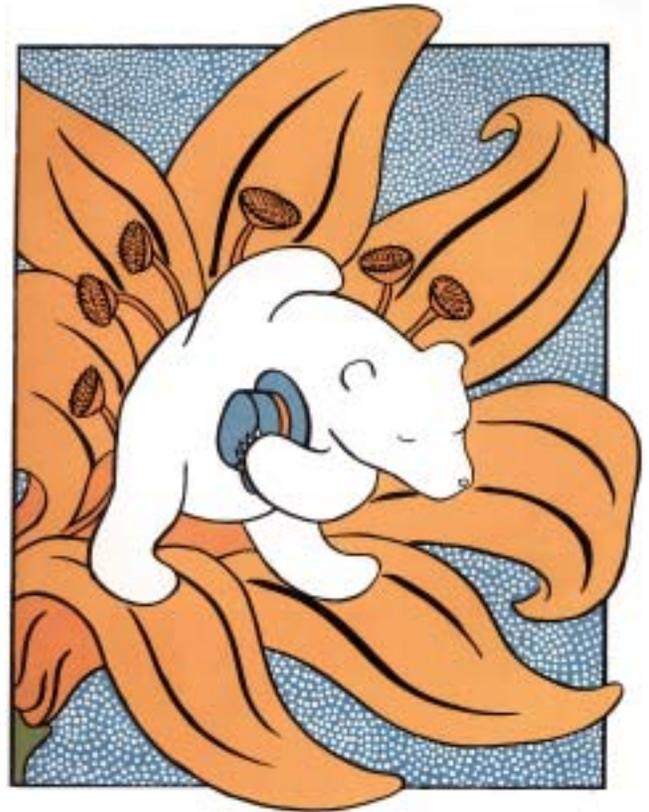


Association of Children's Librarians
of Northern California

Distinguished Books



2008

Association of Children's Librarians
of Northern California
P. O. Box 12471
Berkeley, CA 94712

Notes

Association of Children's Librarians
of Northern California
Distinguished Books
2008



Titles have been selected from those reviewed in BayViews for their outstanding literary merit, high quality of illustration and design, and contribution to a child's understanding of the world.

Contents

Distinguished Books reviewed by ACL:

Non-fiction

Biography

Graphic Novels

Fiction

Readers

Picture Books

Professional

**ACL DISTINGUISHED BOOKS
2008**

Copyright © 2008
by the Association of Children’s Librarians of Northern California.
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced
or transmitted in any form without the permission of ACL.

**Association of Children’s Librarians
of Northern California**

P. O. Box 12471, Berkeley, CA 94712

www.bayviews.org

ACL has been serving librarians, teachers, and booksellers in Northern California since the 1930s. Members meet monthly to review books for young people and discuss related issues. ACL’s book review journal, *BayViews*, is published 11 times a year.

Membership in ACL offers:

- subscription to *BayViews*, which prints reviews of more than 1,800 new books each year
- annual annotated *Distinguished Books* list
- opportunity to review and discuss current children’s books
- special bibliographies
- notices of job opportunities
- opportunity to discuss current issues in library service to children
- discounted attendance at the annual Performers’ Showcase
- discounted attendance at the annual Institute
- professional development and networking opportunities

Meetings are held from 9 a.m. to noon on the second Friday of each month, excluding the month of the annual Institute, at an area library. Check the website for meeting locations. In the Spring,, ACL sponsors an Institute about library service to children and topics of interest to librarians and teachers.

I would like to become a member of ACL

- Standard rate \$50** **Retirees \$40**
 Student rate \$20

Make check payable to *Association of Children’s Librarians*

Name _____

Library _____

Address _____

Please mail to: *ACL Membership*, P. O. Box 12471, Berkeley, CA 94712

Acknowledgements

Books are designated as “distinguished” through a process of nomination, discussion, and voting by members of the Association of Children’s Librarians.

Grade designations in the annotations are approximate.
ACL gratefully acknowledges use of illustrations from:

Reprinted with the permission of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division from *Monkey and Me* by Emily Gravett. Copyright © 2008 Emily Gravett.

Reprinted with the permission of Schwarz & Wade Books, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House, Inc. New York from *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things* by Lenore Look, illustrated by LeUyen Pham. Text copyright © 2008 by Lenore Look. Illustrations copyright © 2008 by LeUyen Pham.

From *The Wave* © 2008 by Suzy Lee. Used with permission of Chronicle Books, San Francisco.

From *I Love My New Toy!* by Mo Willems. Text and illustrations copyright © 2008 by Mo Willems. Reprint by permission of Hyperion Books for Children. All rights reserved.

Cover and title page: Reprinted from *Wonder Bear* by Tao Nyeu with permission of Dial Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group. Copyright © 2008 by Tao Nyeu.

The Distinguished Books Committee for 2008 was chaired by:
Claire Sue, Benicia Public Library
Eric Barbus, San Francisco Public Library

ACL Distinguished Books (2008) is published by the Association of Children’s Librarians of Northern California. Members of ACL receive a free copy. Additional copies are available for \$5 each (including postage). Make checks payable to the Association of Children’s Librarians and send order to:

ACL Distinguished Books, P. O. Box 12471, Berkeley, CA 94712.

Non-Fiction

Anderson, Laurie Halse

Independent Dames: What You Never Knew About the Women and Girls of the American Revolution

Illus. by Matt Faulkner

Simon & Schuster, 2008 \$16.99 Grades 4-7

Over a hundred women who played roles in the Revolutionary War are brought to light in this superbly researched volume. Detailed illustrations, cartoon bubble asides, and a large picture book format make the information very entertaining.

Campbell, Sarah C.

Wolfsnail—A Backyard Predator

Photographs by Sarah C. and Richard P. Campbell

Boyd’s Mills, 2008 \$16.95 Grades K-5

Simple and clear but intriguing sentences grace a non-fiction book about the carnivorous Rosy Wolfsnail. Amazing photographs and fascinating text provide exemplary science writing for the youngest readers. Winner of a 2009 ALA Theodore Seuss Geisel Honor Award.

Fradin, Judy and Dennis

Droughts: Witness to Disaster

Hurricanes: Witness to Disaster

Tsunamis: Witness to Disaster

National Geographic, 2007/2008 \$16.95 Grades 3-8

The weaving together of eyewitness accounts of recent disasters with clear scientific explanations makes this series useful for both reports and browsing. The wealth of color photos, diagrams, and maps will draw in even reluctant readers.

Frost, Helen

Monarch and Milkweed

Illus. by Leonid Gore

Simon & Schuster, 2008 \$17.99 Grades Pre-2

Enhanced with dappled, textured illustrations, this exquisite and awe-inspiring picture book weaves together the interconnected life cycles of the monarch butterfly and the milkweed plant.

Greenwood, Mark

The Donkey of Gallipoli

Illus. by Frane Lessac

Candlewick, 2008

\$16.99

Grades 3-5

In a twist of fate, two boyhood friends, who gave donkey rides to vacationers, meet in Turkey during World War I as Jack's donkey, Duffy, helps save his wounded friend. Jack Simpson and Duffy saved many other lives in this true story of courage.

Nelson, Kadir

We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball

Illus. by the author

Hyperion, 2008

\$18.99

Grades 5-10

A tour de force by Kadir Nelson who provides both the elegant writing and the stunning paintings for a history of the Negro Baseball League told in 9 innings. Interesting portraits of many players are accented with anecdotes and facts galore.

Nelson, Scott Reynolds with Marc Aronson

Ain't Nothing But a Man: My Quest to Find the Real John Henry

National Geographic, 2008

\$18.95

Grades 5-7

Adapted from his adult book on the same topic (*Steel Drivin' Man: The Untold Story of an American Legend*, 2006), Nelson searches for the truth behind the folk song legend John Henry. Period photos and other illustrative material bring the text to life.

Rappaport, Doreen

Lady Liberty: A Biography

Illus. by Matt Tavares

Candlewick, 2008

\$17.99

Grades 3-6

Accompanied by majestic illustrations of "Lady Liberty," famous and ordinary historical figures describe their roles in the creation, installation, and dedication of the Statue of Liberty.

Schulman, Janet

Pale Male: Citizen Hawk of New York City

Illus. by Meilo So

Knopf, 2008

\$16.99/\$19.99

Grades 4-6

Author and illustrator share with readers the biography of red-tailed hawk, Pale Male, and his family, in a lively and accurate story that avoids anthropomorphism. So's vibrant watercolors and Schulman's lively words should make readers friends of these symbolic hawks.

Swanson, Susan

A House in the Night

Illus. by Beth Krommes

Houghton, 2008

\$17.00

Grades Pre-2

In a cumulative story inspired by a nursery rhyme, the reassuring text reminds the listener that bedtime can be a comforting time. The dramatically dark illustrations, done on scratchboard, feature luminous points of white and yellow light. Awarded the Caldecott Medal for Krommes' illustrations.

Swanson, Susan Marie

To Be Like the Sun

Illus. by Margaret Chodos-Irvine

Harcourt, 2008

\$16.00

Grades Pre-1

The familiar story of a sunflower's growth from seed to flower and again to seed is pitched perfectly to a young audience through Swanson's engaging free verse and Chodos-Irvine's astounding block-print illustrations.

Yi, Hu Yong

Good Morning China

Illus. by the author

Roaring Brook, 2007

\$16.95

Grades Pre-1

"Seven o'clock in the morning," begins this captivating ode to an array of early morning activities in a Chinese park. The simple text is matched by the richly-colored, stylized, and life-like illustrations.

Professional

Marcus, Leonard

Golden Legacy: How Golden Books Won Children's Hearts, Changed Publishing Forever, and Became an American Icon

Random, 2007

\$40.00

Prof

This delightful and comprehensive history of Little Golden Books combines a smooth, well-researched narrative with a wealth of photos and other illustrative material in a coffee table-style book that celebrates these iconic children's books.



Rohmann, Eric

A Kitten Tale

Illus. by the author
Knopf, 2008

\$15.99

Grades Pre-K

While one adventurous kitten is looking forward to the coming winter, three others are wary of the wet and cold. These scaredy-cats' fears are assuaged, however, after seeing the bold kitten having fun in the first winter snow.

Rumford, James

Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad

Illus. by the author

Roaring Brook, 2008

\$17.95

Grades 3-6

Growing up in contemporary Baghdad, Ali loves soccer, dancing, loud music, and the flow of calligraphy from his pen, even as he struggles, in the midst of war, to write "Salam," the word for peace.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro

Dog and Bear: Two's Company

Illus. by the author

Roaring Brook, 2008

\$12.95

Grades Pre-2

Dog and Bear are back again as engaging as ever. In three short stories, Seeger deals with running away, sickness, and birthdays. The illustrations add to the warmth and intimacy of the book.

Seeger, Laura Vaccaro

One Boy

Illus. by author

Roaring Brook, 2008

\$14.95

Grades Pre-1

Ms. Seeger combines learning numbers with word recognition and uses her signature die cuts in this picture book.

Shulevitz, Uri

How I Learned Geography

Illus. by the author

Farrar, 2008

\$16.95

Grades K-5

In this autobiographical tale, a young boy living in a small house in the desert envisions himself in colorful and wondrous places around the world when his father brings home a map instead of food for his hungry family.

Winters, Kay

Colonial Voices: Hear Them Speak

Illus. by Larry Day

Penguin, 2008

\$17.99

Grades 3-6

Ethan runs through Boston the day before the Boston Tea Party delivering the message that there will be a meeting at South Church that night. Each of the tradesmen he visits has a story to tell.

Biography

Bryant, Jen

A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams

Illus. by Melissa Sweet

Eerdmans, 2008

\$17.00

Grades 2-5

An engaging picture book biography and Caldecott Honor that will introduce children to the doctor poet Williams, this also includes several of his poems on the endpapers and within the text.

Fleischman, Sid

The Trouble Begins at 8: A Life of Mark Twain

in the Wild, Wild West

HarperCollins, 2008

\$19.89

Grades 5-9

Written with tongue firmly in cheek, Fleischman's biography of Mark Twain when he was Samuel Clemens, is a rollicking visit with this beloved author during his childhood and young adult years.

Fleming, Candace

The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary

Schwartz & Wade, 2008

\$24.99

Grades 5-Adult

A "scrapbook" format gives a fresh look to a biography of Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd. Told in alternating chapters, the lives of Abraham and Mary come alive with primary source materials including photographs and anecdotes.

Halfmann, Janet

Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story

Illus. by Duane Smith

Lee & Low, 2008

\$17.95

Grades 3-6

Slave Robert Smalls commandeers a Confederate supply ship and pilots himself, his family, and 12 other slaves through perilous waters to freedom in a suspenseful true account.

Scieszka, Jon

Knucklehead

Viking, 2008

\$16.99

Grades 3-6

The hilarious memoir of the noted author is filled with family photos and toy advertisements. Not just nostalgic, kids can relate to the pranks, rough housing, and general mayhem a houseful of six boys can perpetrate on their loving but exasperated parents.

Graphic Novels

Holm, Jennifer

Babymouse: Volume 7: Skater Girl

Illus. by Matthew Holm

Random, 2007

\$12.99

Grades 3-6

Babymouse plans on becoming a competitive figure-skater until the demands of a draconian coach and an overwhelming training schedule force her to reconsider. The clever little mouse's wry thoughts, grandiose dreams, and wacky sensibilities keep readers amused.



Fiction

Almond, David

My Dad's a Birdman

Illus. by Polly Dunbar

Candlewick, 2008

\$15.99

Grades 2-5

Following her mother's death, Lizzie spends time helping her father prepare for the Great Human Bird Competition. While he's assembled a costume and started eating worms, it is Lizzie who is the voice of reason.

Anderson, Laurie Halse

Chains: Seeds of America

Simon & Schuster, 2008

\$16.99

Grades 5-10

Isabel, a 13-year-old slave girl, faces difficult choices and an uncertain future as she weighs the price of freedom. Set in New York during the American Revolution, this well-researched novel features compelling characters and well-paced action.

Kelley, Marty

Twelve Terrible Things

Illus. by the author

Tricycle, 2008

\$15.99

Grades 1-4

Readers are warned at the beginning of this humorous book they are going to see some terrible things. From a first-person perspective, realistic illustrations show situations that range from unpleasant to downright awful.

Kohara, Kazuno

Ghosts in the House!

Illus. by the author

Roaring Brook, 2008

\$12.95

Grades Pre-1

A young girl catches all of the ghosts in a house, washes them, and then repurposes them into drapes, bedsheets, and the like. Simple black block prints and translucent white ghosts on a solid orange background complement this amusing ghost story.



Lee, Suzy

Wave

Illus. by the author

Chronicle, 2008

\$15.99

Grades Pre-3

Simple and stunning, with a masterful use of the book gutter, this wordless tale rendered in black, white, gray, and blue shows a day at the beach where a little girl gets acquainted with the ocean.

Nakagawa, Chihiro

Who Made This Cake?

Illus. by Junji Koyose

Front Street/Boyd's Mills, 2008

\$16.95

Grades Tod-Pre

Following a mother's telephone order, dozens of workers use a variety of construction vehicles to build a cake for a child's birthday.

Nyeu, Tao

Wonder Bear

Illus. by the author

Dial, 2008

\$17.99

Grades Pre-2

Seeds sown by a young boy and girl erupt into a flourishing vine from whose blooms appear a top-hatted bear that releases a buoyant extravaganza of activity and creatures. Wordless, vibrant, and psychedelic.

Gravett, Emily

Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears

Illus. by the author

Simon & Schuster, 2008 \$17.99 Grades K-3

This is a cleverly designed scrapbook, of sorts, chronicling the things that a mouse fears, told with newspaper articles, a map, "photos," flaps, sketches, and nibbled pages.

Gravett, Emily

Monkey and Me

Illus. by the author

Simon & Schuster, 2008 \$15.99 Grades Pre-K

A young girl bounces with her stuffed monkey across double-paged spreads imitating the motions of an animal that the reader is encouraged to guess before the page turns.

Hayes, Sarah

Dog Day

Illus. by Hannah Broadway

Farrar, 2008 \$16.95 Grades Pre-3

Watch Riff. Watch the children. Watch the teacher. Whoops—Riff *IS* the teacher for one glorious day. As the class watches the teacher, each child imitates what Riff does: Riff wags his tail, the children wag their bottoms; Riff barks, the children bark. What a good dog-human romp.

Hines, Anna Grossnickle

I, 2, Buckle My Shoe

Illus. by the author

Harcourt, 2008 \$16.00 Grades Tod-Pre

The traditional rhyme receives a lively treatment here. Hines's clever needlework and vibrant color are used to display stitched numbers, the appropriate number of buttons, and panels showing the activities that end each rhyme.

Hopkinson, Deborah

Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek: A Tall, Thin Tale

(Introducing His Forgotten Frontier Friend)

Illus. by John Hendrix

Schwartz & Wade, 2008 \$16.99 Grades 3-5

Only a friend's swift thinking saves the future president from drowning when he falls into a creek. The story deftly raises the question of where fact ends and tall tale begins through a seamless blend of narrative, author asides, and watercolor drawings.

Anderson, M. T.

The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor

to the Nation: Volume II, The Kingdom on the Waves

Candlewick, 2008 \$22.99 Grades 8-Adult

Octavian Nothing's travels and travails continue as he seeks his freedom in the Royal Ethiopian Regiment. Octavian's story, along with the tales of his comrades, is complex and will resonate with the reader.

Appelt, Kathi.

The Underneath

Illus. by David Small

Atheneum, 2008 \$16.99 Grades 5-9

Set in the bayou and following its meandering way, *The Underneath* tells a story of imprisonment, both physical and mental, and how the characters, young, old, damaged and innocent, are released. The story, full of magic and myth, is also full of cruelty and venom.

Baker, Deirdre

Becca at Sea

Groundwood, 2007 \$16.95 Grades 4-6

Becca dreads spending time alone with Gran at her rustic cabin but soon finds adventures aplenty, like a kiss from a seal and skinny-dipping in the luminescent sea.

Balliett, Blue

The Calder Game

Illus. by Brett Helquist

Scholastic, 2008 \$17.99 Grades 4-8

After Calder disappears while visiting England with his father, Calder's friends Petra and Tommy fly over to help to find him. Sculptures by Calder's namesake, shadowy photographers, and a small English town add to the mystery.

Collins, Suzanne

The Hunger Games

Scholastic, 2008 \$17.99 Grades 8-12

In a chilling and plausible dystopian world, all teens are possible candidates for "the Hunger Games," a contest in which 24, chosen by lottery, will compete, but only one will survive.

Cowley, Joy

Chicken Feathers

Illus. by David Elliot

Philomel/Putnam, 2008 \$15.99 Grades 3-5

In a funny, tender transitional story, Josh confides in his pet chicken, Semolina, a sassy hen with a weakness for beer, who warns him of a fox who steals their eggs and wants to kill her.

Dowd, Siobhan

The London Eye Mystery

Fickling/Random, 2008 \$15.99 Grades 5-8

When his cousin Salim mysteriously disappears, Ted's "differently wired" brain sorts through the baffling pieces of the puzzle and solves the mystery in a story that will keep readers guessing.

Fern, Tracey E.

Buffalo Music

Illus. by Lauren Castillo

Clarion, 2008 \$16.00 Grades K-4

Molly loves the "music" of the buffalo, but soon hunters come and buffalo music is gone. Then Molly is given some orphaned calves that she cares for and coaxes a few onto a train to Yellowstone.

Gaiman, Neil

The Graveyard Book

Illus. by Dave McKean

HarperCollins, 2008 \$17.99 Grades 4-9

After an off-screen macabre opening, Gaiman writes a peon to family, community, and love. Orphan Nobody Owen toddles into the local cemetery where he is embraced and raised by its intriguing crew of dead inhabitants.

Green, John

Paper Towns

Dutton/Penguin, 2008 \$17.99 Grades 8-12

Quentin ("Q") is visited in the middle of the night by uber-popular Margo Roth Spiegelman who enlists him to help her pull off some pranks. The next day Margo disappears, and Q follows clues in an effort to find her.

Brannen, Sarah S.

Uncle Bobby's Wedding

Illus. by the author

Putnam, 2008 \$15.99 Grades K-3

Chloe is worried about losing the attention of her favorite uncle, who is about to be married. Although it will be clear to adults that Uncle Bobby is marrying another man, young children will identify with Chloe. The hamsters dressed as humans are portrayed sweetly in the watercolor illustrations, and the message of accepting gay marriage is timely, yet subtly accomplished.

Browne, Anthony

Little Beauty

Illus. by the author

Candlewick, 2008 \$16.99 Grades K-1

Expressively done in pencil and watercolor, a gorilla in the zoo who knows sign language lets his keepers know that he is sad and is thus given a kitten as a friend. Stunning and subtly layered.

Cate, Annette LeBlanc

The Magic Rabbit

Illus. by the author

Candlewick, 2007 \$15.99 Grades Pre-1

Street magician Ray and his bunny assistant are the best of friends. One day Bunny is lost in the big city and Ray must find him in a whimsical tale of sudden loss and joyful rediscovery.

Fox, Mem

Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes

Illus. by Helen Oxenbury

Harcourt, 2008 \$16.00 Grades Tod-Pre

Fox's very short, sweet rhyme accompanies Oxenbury's happy, chubby babies of a variety of ethnicities and without gender references, making for a book with wide appeal. Perfect for baby storytimes.

Frazee, Marla

A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever

Illus. by the author

Harcourt, 2008 \$16.00 Grades K-3

Grandparents Bill and Pam devise a well-planned nature week for their young grandson Eamon and his friend James. While Bill tries to interest the boys in the outdoors or a museum exhibit, the boys, in the end, discover nature on their own terms.

Wong, Janet S.

Minn and Jake's Almost Terrible Summer

Illus. by Geneviève Côté,

Frances Foster/Farrar, 2008

\$15.00

Grades 3-5

In this free-verse, early chapter book, we hear the story of Jake, who is half-Korean and half-German, and his best friend, Minn. Various misunderstandings ensue between the two friends when Jake visits the Korean side of his family in L.A.

Woodson, Jacqueline

After Tupac and D Foster

Putnam, 2008

\$15.99

Grades 5-8

Three adolescent girls growing up in Queens, NY, bond through the rap music of their idol, Tupac Shakur. Issues of racism, homophobia, and injustice are sensitively raised in this thoughtful coming-of-age story.

Readers

Willems, Mo

Are You Ready to Play Outside?

I Love My New Toy

Illus. by the author

Hyperion, 2008

\$8.99

Grades K-2

Two new entries in this series of very easy readers are as refreshingly humorous as ever. Gerald the Elephant and Piggie the Pig play, exhibiting common childhood friendship challenges, while the book design combines dialogue balloons with Willems' pastel cartoons set on white backgrounds.



Picture Books

Amato, Mary

The Chicken of the Family

Illus. by Delphine Durand

Putnam

\$16.99

Grades Pre-3

After her older sisters persuade her that she is a chicken, Henrietta finds joy and companionship among the hens. She then turns the tables on her sisters in a witty, delightful way.

Headley, Justina Chen

Girl Overboard

Little, 2008

\$16.99

Grades 8-Adult

After aspiring snowboarder Syrah injures her knee, she struggles to gain recognition and respect from her high achieving, emotionally absent family. Teens will enjoy this coming-of-age story.

Hooper, Mary

Newes of the Dead

Roaring Brook, 2008

\$16.95

Grades 8-12

Based on a true story, Anne, a servant girl, is hanged for killing her newborn baby and then wakes up on the doctor's table just before scholars begin dissecting her body. Historical information of Cromwell's England is gracefully woven into the dramatic story that blends the macabre with romance.

Horvath, Polly

My One Hundred Adventures

Schwartz & Wade, 2008

\$16.99

Grades 4-8

Over the course of a summer on the beach, Jane throws bibles out of a hijacked hot-air balloon, babysits out of guilt, and watches her mother interact with three different men, one of whom is likely her father.

Lawrence, Iain

The Castaways

Delacorte, 2007

\$15.99

Grades 5-12

Tom Tin and his convict mates board a deserted ship and rescue some unsavory sailors who plot to kill Tom and sell his friends into slavery. All ends well as Tom sails the ship to England.

Lockhart, E.

The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks: A Novel

Hyperion, 2008

\$16.99

Grades 9-12

Frankie is frustrated that her boyfriend refuses to tell her anything about his secrets. Her subversive infiltration of his exclusive school society, The Loyal Order of the Basset Hound, shows her progression from wallflower to mastermind.

Look, Lenore

Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls and Other Scary Things

Illus. by LeUyen Pham

Schwartz & Wade, 2008 \$15.99 Grades 2-4

Alvin Ho would like to be a superhero, but his fears keep getting in the way. Chinese-American Alvin deals with a chicken pox outbreak, taking piano lessons from a witch-like teacher, and suffering through a session with a psychotherapist.



McDaniel, Lurlene

Prey

Delacorte, 2008 \$10.99 Grades 8-Adult

McDaniel's cautionary tale about a student-teacher affair is told in three distinct voices. The student-teacher relationship is more ambiguous than in many other books: in the end, who is the prey?

McKinley, Robin

Chalice

Putnam, 2008 \$18.99 Grades 5-12

McKinley once again has created an engaging, surprising, and oddly realistic fantasy world, Woodland, with a heroine to match in Mirasol.

Myers, Walter Dean

What They Found: Love on 145th Street

Wendy Lamb/Random, 2007 \$15.99 Grades 8-12

Myers returns to 145th Street in this new collection of short stories to explore variations on the theme of love from teenagers to older adults with humor, compassion, and great understanding.

Pfeffer, Susan Beth

The Dead and the Gone

Harcourt, 2008 \$17.00 Grades 6-12

Seventeen-year-old Alex and his two sisters are forced to live alone through the ensuing devastation in New York after a meteor has hit the moon, knocking it out of its normal orbit.

Scott, Elizabeth

Living Dead Girl

Simon Pulse, 2008 \$16.99 Grades 10-12

Alice, a "living dead girl" who has been abducted and abused, becomes complicit in her captor's plot to steal another young girl. Scott's economy of language makes this harrowing tale compelling.

Sedgwick, Marcus

My Swordhand Is Singing

Wendy Lamb/Random, 2007 \$15.99 Grades 6-8

In a 17th century Eastern European village, Peter, son of woodcutter Tomas, joins forces with a gypsy girl to stop the Shadow Queen's murders and re-animations. Can Tomas and what is in his strange box fend her off?

Stewart, Trenton Lee

The Mysterious Benedict Society

Illus. by Carson Ellis

Little, 2007 \$16.99 Grades 6-8

Four children work together to save the world in this over-the-top adventure. Clever wordplay, quirky characters, and a fast-paced plot make this certain to hold the interest of readers.

Urban, Linda

A Crooked Kind of Perfect

Harcourt, 2007 \$16.00 Grades 4-7

Zoe longs to play the piano but is given an organ by her well-meaning, but clueless and agoraphobic, stay-at-home dad. Helped by her friend Wheeler, Zoe enters a talent show hoping to get the attention of her workaholic mom.

Warner, Sally

It's Only Temporary

Illus. by the author

Viking, 2008 \$15.99 Grades 4-6

After her brother's car accident, 12-year-old Skye is sent to live with her grandmother in New Mexico. Her drawings, diary notes, and e-mail messages enliven the text in this compelling story of love, loyalty, and forgiveness.

Wiles, Deborah

The Aurora County All-Stars

Harcourt, 2007 \$16.00 Grades 4-7

With her distinctive Southern voice, Wiles brings to life House Jackson, pitcher for the local youth baseball team who is recovering from a broken arm. Weaving bits of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* into the exciting plot and featuring quirky characters, this novel of one summer vacation is unique and memorable.