



South Carolina Young Adult Book Award Nominees 2003 - 2004

Born Blue	In the Company of Men: A Woman at the Citadel	Scribbler of Dreams	Stick Figure: A Diary of My Former Self
The Boy in the Burning House	The Land	Shades of Simon Gray	Touching Spirit Bear
Breathing Underwater	Of Sound Mind	The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants	Whale Talk
Damage	Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss, and What I Learned	Soldier X	What My Mother Doesn't Know
Double or Nothing	Razzle	Spellbound	You Don't Know Me: A Novel

Born Blue
Han Nolan
Harcourt, Inc., 2001
277 pages

SUMMARY:

Janie, who changed her name to Leshaya, was neglected by her mother and neglected and abused by her foster parents. Listening to female Blues singers with her best friend, Janie discovered within herself a deep desire and ability to sing. She hoped that singing would take her away from the terrible life in which she grew up and help her find the love and acceptance that she longed for.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Send Me Down a Miracle by Han Nolan

Dancing on the Edge by Han Nolan

The Rain Catchers by Jean Thesman

Ellen Foster by Kaye Gibbons

Angel Baker, Thief by Jeanette Eyerly

One True Friend by Joyce Hanson

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Use literary circles in English class to examine *Born Blue* and similar titles: *Dreamland*,

Ellen Foster, The Rain Catcher. Compare and contrast the lives and obstacles faced by the main characters.

Freshman Focus:

Read and discuss the efforts Leshaya made to overcome the hardships in her life. Find stories and report about the lives and struggles of celebrity singers.

Family Life:

Consider the choices and decisions Janie/Leshaya makes when she engages in unprotected sex, and the consequences she faces after learning she is pregnant. Write reports on topics such as teen pregnancy, teen abortions, what happens with girls who opt to keep their children, and the adoption process.

Psychology

Examine the effects of abuse and abandonment on the self esteem of children. Look for articles that track such children and report on what their typical behavior will be.

WEB SITES:

[A Conversation with Han Nolan](#)

[Survivors of the System Foster Children United](#)

[Free Arts for Abused Children Web Site](#)

BOOKTALK:

One cannot begin to understand what Janie's childhood was like if you haven't been there. Han Nolan depicts the unpleasantness that many of us only read about or see on television. But we know of cases similar to Janie. Her mother was a drug addict who, when Janie was four years old, one day did not pay attention to Janie who was about to drown. Janie was rescued from the water and from her mother, only to be placed in a foster home with people who were slovenly, negligent, and abusive. The silver lining of her life at that time was to connect with another child in the house, Harmon. Another positive connection was the social worker, Doris. In an unusual twist of this story, because the two positive people in her life were Black, Janie, who was white, didn't trust anyone white and wanted to be Black like Doris and Harmon. She also decided that her father who she didn't know must be Black. Later she changed her name to Leshaya, the name of Doris' daughter. Nolan has Janie's character speak with a vernacular dialect to depict her desire to be like her Black friends. As Janie and Harmon got to know one another, Harmon let her listen to his tapes of singers like Etta James and Aretha Franklin. Janie realized that she had a voice and a tremendous desire to sing. The "Blues ladies" were going to be her trip out of the miserable life she was living. As Janie faced one disappointment after another she continued to try to become a famous singer. The one thing in her life that was positive was her singing ability. She did sing with some groups but continued to make poor decisions about almost everything, including betraying her friendship with Harmon in a powerful way. In the end Janie reaches a crossroads where she finally makes at least one good choice.

Prepared by: Sheila Reynolds

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The Boy in the Burning House
Tim Wynne-Jones
Melanie Kroupa Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.
214 pages

SUMMARY:

After two years, 14-year-old Jim Hawkins is slowly recovering from his father's disappearance, until Ruth Rose, the slightly older, moody, dressed-in-black, previously institutionalized, bad-girl-stepdaughter of the town pastor, Father Fisher, tells Jim that she suspects her stepfather of murdering Jim's father.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

*Older readers might try Jordan Poteet Series: *Do Unto Others* by Jeff Abbot

Jenny Cain Series: *Confession* by Nancy Pickard

Anna Pigeon Series: *Endangered Species* by Nevada Barr

*Younger series readers might try Nancy Drew: *Power of Suggestion* by Carolyn Keene

Hardy Series: *Hard Evidence* by John T. Lescroart

Other Titles:

The Name of the Rose by Umberto Eco

Boy's Life by Robert R. McCammon

Twisted Summer by Willo Davis Roberts

Jinx by Julie Robitaille

Holes by Louis Sachar

Locked Inside by Nancy Werlin

*Reluctant readers Might Try:

Finders Keepers by Elizabeth Travis

Reef of Death by Paul Zindel and some other "pot-boilers," *Doom Stone*, *Rats*, and *Raptor*

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Social Studies Unit:

“The Demise of the Family Farm: Fiction or Fact?” Or “Family Farms in Trouble? Fiction v. Fact”

In conjunction with the novel, research magazine articles and other non-fiction sources to evaluate the decline of farming and farmers. Is it a mystery? Are family farms on the decline? Why or why not?

Do the problems the Hawkins family encounter mirror examples found in research? Are there other contributing factors?

Based on the research, predict if the Hawkinses will succeed. Back up your assumption with your research.

Enrichment: Contact local farm.

Math/Business Finance Unit:

“Farm Finance”

Learn various math concepts: area, geometry, compute crop yield and market value, percent/ratio, etc.

Learn various accounting skills and business administration skills.

Organization: students create virtual farm; order seed, fertilizer, equipment, labor, etc.

Contact local farm or farm bureau for information and set up

Science Unit:

“Farm ‘Life’” or “Botany Business” or “Agriculture”

Study various crops and growth rates and climatic influences.

Life cycle

Water cycle

Study otters (and other water-mammals) and dam building...the effect on man and man’s effect on nature/habitat

How effective is Hawkins’s scarecrow as a deterrent to otters? Students could research ethics of chemical, biological, or other means of pest control. Could these measures maintain the Hawkins farm?

Spelunking

Psychology Unit:

“Dealing with Adversity”

Discuss and research articles in conjunction with reading of novel to delve into how humans deal with adversity in life.

WEB SITES:

[Review of Novel](#)

[Interesting 5th grade\(!\) Web Site of Student-read Novels. Borrow an idea??](#)

[Link to Ten Sites Dealing with the Author and His Writings](#)

[Brief Biography and Book/Awards List](#)

[Brief Biography, Book/Aards List, and Links](#)

[Review of Novel](#)

[General Link to Past Edgar Allan Poe Award Winners](#)

[List of Edgar Award Nominees and Winners. Links to Other Awards Lists](#)

BOOKTALK:

After two years, Jim Hawkins is slowly recovering from his father's disappearance. His father's body was never found, and Jim and his mother have struggled to keep the farm that has been in the family for generations. While attempting to dismantle a beaver dam that floods parts of the farm's fields, Jim is startled by Ruth Rose, the slightly older, moody, dressed-in-black, previously institutionalized, bad-girl stepdaughter of the town pastor, Father Fisher. Although the pastor is one of Jim's father's childhood friends, Ruth Rose sets a spark to the fragile walls of Jim's recovery when she tells him that she suspects her stepfather of murdering Jim's father.

Jim doesn't know whether to believe Ruth Rose or, worse, face sifting through memories of his father and find a truth he might not be able to understand or want to know.

This novel is the Winner of the 2002 Edgar Allan Poe Award.

Tim Wynne-Jones has published 21 books for children and young adults, and has authored four novels for adults. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his

work, including the 1979 Seal First Novel Award, the Governor General's Award (1993 and 1995), The Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, and the Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children Award (1994, 1996 and 1998). In 2000 he participated in the J.K. Rowling event at Skydome.

Prepared by: Brian Glassman

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Breathing Underwater
Alex Flinn
HarperCollins Publishers, 2001
263 pages

SUMMARY:

Privileged and popular, Nick Andreas is forced by the courts to attend counseling after he is convicted of hitting his girlfriend, Caitlyn. Through the counseling sessions and the journal he must keep, Nick deals with his abusive father, his own issues with anger and violence, the consequences of his actions, and ultimately, how he must change his future.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Whale Talk by Chris Crutcher

You Don't Know Me: A Novel by David Klass

My Losing Season by Pat Conroy

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Child Abuse

Date Abuse

Anger Management

Relationships

Trust

Friendship

Teen Violence

WEB SITES:

[Alex Flinn Web Site](#)

[The Story Behind The Story: Alex Flinn on Breathing Underwater](#)

[Danger Signs in Relationships](#)

[Safe Child Program](#)

[Controlling Anger--Before It Controls You](#)

BOOKTALK:

How did he get here?

Nick really loves Caitlyn. He loves how she makes him feel. He just wants to be with her. She is the only person who knows the truth about his father's abuse. Nick loves Caitlyn! That's why he wants to know where she is and who she is with at all times. That's why he hates it when she hangs around people he doesn't know or like. That's why he

discourages her from trying or participating in anything that doesn't include him! If she would only listen to him! If only she didn't make him so angry! Life was good. How did he get here? His friends aren't speaking to him. Caitlyn has requested a restraining order to keep him away. It was just a little slap, that's all, and she provoked it! If he can only get Caitlyn back, everything will be o.k., won't it?

Prepared by: Cathy Garland

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Damage

A.M. Jenkins

HarperCollins Publishers, 2001

186 pages

SUMMARY:

Seventeen-year-old football hero Austin, trying to understand the inexplicable depression that has drained his interest in life, thinks he has found relief in a girl who seems very pretty and special.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY....

Slam by Walter Dean Myers

Whale Talk by Chris Crutcher

Breathing Underwater by Alex Flinn

The Rag and Bone Shop: A Novel by Robert Cormier

Every Time a Rainbow Dies by Rita Williams-Garcia

You Don't Know Me by David Klass

Shattering Glass by Gail Giles

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Health:

Research the feelings and effects of somebody suffering from depression

English:

Study the style of first person writing and explore imagery through Jenkins' writing.

WEB SITES:

[Depression in Teenagers](#)

[Suicide in Adolescents](#)

[A.M. Jenkins Information](#)

BOOKTALK:

Welcome to the mind of a seventeen-year-old male jock, who loves the game of football. Austin has been involved in many relationships, but finds himself lacking the will to live. Enter the beauty queen of Parkersville High school, and things are looking up for the football star, but something is still missing. Things just don't seem to fall into place. Read *Damage* to see how things end up.

Prepared by: Chris Adams

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Double or Nothing

Dennis Foon

Publisher, Publication Date:

144 pages

SUMMARY:

Kip wants to catch the buzz, so he organizes games of chance in the school cafeteria. College is securely in the future until he meets the magician, King Hewitt and his gambling spirals out of control.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Stone Cold by Pete Hautman

Of Sound Mind by Jean Ferris

No More Dead Dogs by Gordon Korman

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Psychology, Family Living, or Sociology:

Look at addiction and its influence on the lives not only of the addicted person, but others in that person's sphere.

Mathematics:

Compare the mind set of the gambler with the statistics of probability.

WEB SITES:

[Book Review](#)

[Dennis Foon Web Site](#)

[National Council on Problem Gambling, Inc.](#)

BOOKTALK:

Kip is doing well in high school. His senior year holds the promise of work, fun, and college the following year. Kip's single mother has managed to provide for him and save for his college education. He has a wonderful, posh restaurant owning uncle whose support has been present both emotionally in terms of school plays and baseball throwing, and financially, in terms of a steady job at the restaurant. Kip's girlfriend's father, King Hewitt, is a famous magician who is a compulsive gambler. Until he met King, Kip's desire for thrills was limited to gambling in the school cafeteria during lunch period. But, Kip basks in King Hewitt's attention to the exclusion of friends, family, girlfriend, and responsibility. Kip is thrilled when he is presented with opportunities to get the buzz with King Hewitt. Highlights in Kip's life are trips to the race track and gambling casinos with King Hewitt. Especially when he wins, Kip feels on top of the world. When he loses, Kip knows he just needs "one more chance" to get even. Kip begins to arrive late, sneak out, lie and "borrow" money from friends and even his mother's bank account. Read *Double or Nothing* to find out if Kip is able to control his gambling addiction and get back on life's right track!

Prepared by: Linda Bryant

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In the Company of Men: A Woman at the Citadel

Nancy Mace with Mary Jane Ross

Simon & Schuster, 2001

238 pages

SUMMARY:

This is Nancy Mace's autobiographical account of her experiences as one of the first women to attend the Citadel, South Carolina's military academy; she was the first to graduate from there. Opposition to her attendance was great, but she was determined to do her best, make herself and her family proud, and to do honor to her school.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Battle Dress by Amy Efaw

Lords of Discipline by Pat Conroy

Black Frontiersman: the Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper, first Black Graduate of West Point compiled and edited by Theodore D. Harris

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Women's Rights

Women and Gays in the Military

Coping with Learning Disabilities

WEB SITES:

[Nancy Mace](#)

[Citadel](#)

[West Point](#)

[Air Force Academy](#)

[Naval Academy](#)

BOOKTALK:

There's an old saying: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Really overused, but it works about this book. Nancy Mace had to be one tough girl to purposely put herself through the ordeal of attending and graduating from the Citadel. As one of the first women, she broke ground in many areas, and with almost continual abuse from many other cadets and outsiders. After going through some problems as a high school student, and learning to cope with Attention Deficit Disorder, Ms. Mace wanted to challenge herself by attending her father's alma mater. But how could she maintain her focus on her goals with all the furor going on about her, from the press, from the other cadets and alumni? Ms. Mace proved herself to be worthy of the corps of cadets to which she strove to belong, graduating three years after she entered the Citadel, and with honors. A truly inspiring individual.

Prepared by: Nancy Self

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The Land
Mildred D. Taylor
Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2001
375 pages

SUMMARY:

In this prequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, readers will meet the relatives of the Logan family who lived during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Paul Edward is the son of a slave and her white master. He is treated well by his white half brothers and by his father, who teaches him to read and write. However, he and his sister learn that they are part of the white family in only certain respects. Early in his life, Paul is tormented for his mixed racial heritage by a black boy, Mitchell Thomas, who later becomes his best friend. The story follows these two young men as circumstances force them to run away from home and make their way in the world. Through hard work, the kindly help of a white employer, and sheer determination, Paul logs a tract of land that will supposedly be his. After much backbreaking labor, he is cheated out of it by the white owner. The plot takes several surprising twists as Paul and Mitchell fall in love with the same young woman, and tragedy lies in wait for them. The ugliness of racial hatred and bigotry is clearly demonstrated throughout the book. It is wonderful historical fiction about a shameful part of America's past. -*School Library Journal*, August 1, 2001

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

Let the Circle Be Unbroken by Mildred D. Taylor

Tell Me a Tale: A Novel of the Old South by James McEachin

Theory of War by Joan Brady

The Mississippi Run by Paul Darcy Boles

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Social Studies:

Students research the Reconstruction era.

Guidance:

Students discuss prejudices.

WEB SITES:

[Mildred Taylor Information Web Site](#)

[Mildred Taylor Teacher Resource File](#)

BOOKTALK:

Ever since running away at the age of fourteen, Paul-Edward had one dream: to own land every bit as good as his daddy's. While growing up, Paul-Edward, son of a slave and her white master, loved and feared his father, but he loved the land unconditionally. Then, after a rash act of youthful rebellion, he leaves his family behind and vows to succeed on his own. However, for anyone Black coming of age in the 1880's in the South, this is no simple goal. This book has it all -- horse-racing, double-crossing businessmen, friendship and romance. If you enjoyed *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, you

will certainly find *The Land* to be an exciting, moving novel. Note: the language in this book may be offensive to some.

Prepared by: Angela D. Bardin

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Of Sound Mind
Jean Ferris
Farrar Straus Giroux, 2001
215 pages

SUMMARY:

Theo is the only hearing person in his family, and has had to carry more than his share of family responsibility because it is difficult for his parents to communicate in the "hearing world." A family crisis forces the entire family to rearrange their priorities and learn to rely on friends and one another in different ways.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Eight Seconds – also by Jean Ferris

Deaf Child Crossing by Marlee Matlin

Living with Hearing Loss :The Sourcebook for Deafness and Hearing Disorders by Carol Turkington and Allen Sussman

Extraordinary People with Disabilities by Deborah Kent and Kathryn A. Quinlan

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Hearing disabilities

How does a disability affect a family?

Services for the Handicapped

American Sign Language

Americans with Disabilities Act

WEB SITES:

[Gallaudet University Home Page](#)

[Americans With Disabilities Act](#)

[Author information can be found in the Biography Resource Center in DISCUS](#)

BOOKTALK:

What if you were the only person in your family who could hear? Theo is a senior in high school, the oldest child of two deaf parents, Palma and Thomas. Theo's younger brother Jeremy is also deaf. Because it is simpler for him to deal with the "hearing world," Theo has always been in charge of making things run smoothly for the family. He is at times tense and hostile about the demands placed upon him, but he's not fully aware of just how resentful his feelings are until he begins to think about going away to college. His new girlfriend, Ivy, whose father is also deaf, urges him to go wherever he wants to go, which is to a college out of town. When a family crisis forces him to reconsider his future plans and dreams, he and his entire family must consider ways of coping with their limitations and learn to adjust.

Prepared by: Nancy D. Self

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Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss and What I Learned

Judd Winick

2000

187 pages

SUMMARY:

Pedro Zamora and cartoonist Judd Winick were roommates on MTV's "The Real World: San Francisco" and became lifelong friends. This graphic-novel memoir depicts the struggle Pedro had with HIV and the AIDS virus. Millions of viewers learned about homosexuality and grew to love Pedro as he shared his life on the reality show. The book describes the final days of Pedro's life through Judd's eyes as the two bonded on the set of the television show and stayed friends until Pedro's death. This is an honest portrayal of what it is like to struggle with HIV while trying to maintain a satisfying life.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

AIDS: Why Should I Care Teens Across America Speak Out by Robert Starr

Annie on My Mind by Nancy Garden

Am I Blue?: Coming Out from the Silence by Marion Dane Bauer

Good-Bye Tomorrow by Gloria D. Miklowitz

The Tale of One Bad Rat by Bryan Talbot

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Health

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

AIDS Awareness

Graphic Novels

Friendship

WEB SITES:

[The National Pedro Zamora Project](#)

[National Youth Advocacy Coalition](#)

[Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network](#)

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

BOOKTALK:

When Pedro Zamora of MTV's The Real World succumbed to AIDS in November 1994, his death made international news. But what was it like to really know him? Even President Clinton applauded Pedro's bravery in speaking out about AIDS prevention all over the United States, but would you have been his friend? Judd Winick was! Judd was Pedro's roommate on the television show and the two became fast friends. Judd put all his apprehensions about AIDS aside when he met Pedro and stayed friends with him until the very end of Pedro's life. If you would like to know what it was like for Judd to look inside himself and get over the fear of AIDS, or what it was like to watch a true friend

struggle with the disease until the end, read *Pedro and Me, Friendship, Loss, and What I Learned* by Judd Winick.

Prepared by: Sue Anne Spears

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Razzle

Ellen Wittlinger

Simon and Schuster, 2001

247 pages

SUMMARY:

Kenyon Baker is forced to move to Cape Cod with his parents and start a new life. When he meets Razzle Penney at the dump, his life takes a turn. With his interest in photography and his newest subject, Razzle, he embarks on a journey to find true friendship and life changing experiences.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Hard Lov by Ellen Wittlinger

What My Mother Doesn't Know by Sonja Sones

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Friendship

Photography

Alcoholism

Northeast coast shoreline

Art

Genealogy

Suicide.

WEB SITES:

[Booklist Page on Razzle](#)

[Authors Among Us Page](#)

[Official Ellen Wittlinger Website](#)

[California Museum of Photography Website](#)

BOOKTALK:

“Looking back, I’d have to say my life was one long snooze until the day I met Razzle Penney at the Truro dump.” Kenyon Baker says when looking back and thinking of Razzle. Ken and his retired schoolteacher parents moved from urban Boston to a quaint summer cottage colony in Cape Cod. Ken is so upset—this move has shattered his plans of being accepted by his old friends and his plans for a photography darkroom. His parents want to restore the cottages and rent them for retirement income. Unfortunately, Ken’s dad hurts his back and Ken is forced to take on the repairs mostly by himself. That is except for the young plumber Ken’s father hires, who becomes a voice of reason as well as a trusted friend for Ken. In exchange for his hard work though, his parents let

him live in one of the cottages during the summer so he can create a darkroom for his pictures and have some privacy of his own. On a trip to the dump one day, Ken meets and befriends Razzle Penney, an odd, shorthaired girl who works at the swap shop at the dump. She is long, lanky, and sees value in some strange things, but she fascinates Ken. A natural friendship develops between them, and Ken meets her brother, grandmother, and eventually her alcoholic mother, which leads him deeper into her mysterious life. Ken also meets an elderly renter who has an interest in the arts and who helps inspire him in his photography skills. What he doesn't expect to find in Cape Cod is Harley. She's gorgeous, popular, and for some reason, she likes him. But this new found friendship plants seeds of discontent with his relationship with Razzle and causes Ken to make some poor choices. Find out what happens between Ken and Harley. Will Razzle work things out with Ken?

Read *Razzle* by Ellen Wittlinger to find out.

Prepared by: Donna E. Moyer

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Scribbler of Dreams

Mary E. Pearson

2001

223 pages

SUMMARY:

Kaitlin Malone and her sister had to transfer to the public high school. They were registered under their mother's maiden name to protect their identity. Their father had killed Robert Crutchfield and their mother felt this would make things easier for them. The Malones have been feuding with the Crutchfields for several generations and his death was a result of this conflict. Kaitlin meets a very special guy at her new school and they immediately fall in love. She has a major problem: he is Bram Crutchfield, son of Robert Crutchfield. Bram does not know that she is a Malone. Her family does not know Bram is a Crutchfield. Kaitlin's lies continue to build until they explode around her. The future of the Crutchfield/Malone feud depends on Kaitlin and Bram to either continue the conflict or to defuse it.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare,

Blood and Chocolate by Annette Curtis Klause

Romiette and Julio by Sharon Draper

West Side Story by Arthur Laurents

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Famous Fueds in history--Hatfield McCoy Feud--

Romeo and Juliet-and other star crossed lovers

West Side Story

WEB SITES:

[The Hatfields and the McCoys](#)

[Devil Anse Hatfield and the Hatfield-McCoy Feud](#)

[Mary E Pearson](#)

BOOKTALK:

Kaitlin Malone's father is in prison for killing Robert Crutchfield. The Malones and Crutchfields have been feuding for generations. This death is a result of the hatred between the two families. Now Kaitlin has to go to the public high school and use her mother's maiden name to protect her identity. She is now in Crutchfield territory. She meets a wonderful guy. They are instantly attracted to each other. Kaitlin is in love at first sight. It is too late when she finds out that he is Bram Crutchfield--son of Robert Crutchfield. She is in love and cannot bring herself to tell this wonderful person that she is a Malone and that her father killed his father. Her deception continues to build until Bram and their families catch her in her lies.

Prepared by: Judy Hall

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Shades of Simon Gray

Joyce McDonald

Delacorte Press, 2001

245 pages

SUMMARY:

Seventeen-year-old Simon lies in a coma, finding his space and time overlapping with that of a man who was lynched over 200 years ago, while a member of the cheating ring he has been helping wonders if their actions have caused the plagues assaulting their New Jersey town.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY...

Devil's Race by Avi

Johnny Mnemonic by Terry Bisson

I Met a Man Who Wasn't There by Mary Callaghan

Computer Crime : Phreaks, Spies, and Salami Slicers by Karen Judson

Life At These Speeds by Jeremy Jackson

The Hangman's Knot : A Novel by David Wiltse

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Language Arts:

Students write different endings to the Jessup Wildemere saga.

Social Studies:

Students research the lynchings of innocent men in history.

Sociology/Criminal Justice:

Students research "white collar" crimes.

Students research different acceptable use policies adopted in schools.

Students research the impact of computer related crimes.

Guidance:

Discuss with students the "do anything" attitude regarding being accepted to a top university.

WEB SITES:

[Joyce McDonald Official Web Site](#)

[Reader's Guide](#)

[When Kids Hack and Commit Computer Crimes](#)

[Review of Book](#)

[Macbeth Web Site](#)

BOOKTALK:

This is a book that has just about everything in it: a ghost story, a teenager who will do anything to be accepted by his peers, computer-hacking, and time travel. What more could you ask for? Simon Gray has helped a few of his "friends" hack into the school computer network. Simon accesses tests so that everyone can ace their exams and inflate their GPA's to gain admittance into the college of their choice. Eventually, Simon is consumed with guilt and wants out. Before Simon can turn himself in, he is involved in a serious car accident. His friends and the police wonder if Simon was trying to commit suicide by deliberately running into a tree. While Simon is in a coma, he is able to depart his body and leave the hospital. He meets a "man" who was lynched two hundred years ago. Read *Shades of Simon Gray* to see how a ghost story and a story about computer hacking can be successfully blended into a suspenseful read!

Prepared by Patty Tucker

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The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants

Ann Brashares

Delacorte Press, 2001

294 pages

SUMMARY:

For the first time in their lives, four best friends find themselves going in separate directions for the summer holidays. One goes to Greece, another to South Carolina, another to soccer camp in California, and the fourth is left home in Bethesda, Maryland. A pair of thrift shop jeans is sent from friend to friend and with the jeans comes the comfort and love that friendship can bring.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli

Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging: Confessions of Georgia Nicolson by Louise Rennison

Sloppy Firsts: Megan McCafferty by Megan McCafferty

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Family Relationships

Friendship

Self Esteem

WEB SITES:

[Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants Web Site](#)

[Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants Web Site 2](#)

[Interview with Ann Brashares](#)

[Interview with Ann Brashares 2](#)

BOOKTALK:

Imagine a pair of jeans that fits four friends equally well when one is tall (that would be Bridgett, the athlete), one is beautiful with a perfect body (that would be Lena), one is short with a J Lo rear-end (that would be Carmen), and one is perfectly average (that would be Tibby). These four girls have been friends for a lifetime. Now in the summer of their sixteenth year they are all going in different directions. The girls have a ceremony of sorts before they leave and make rules for them and the "traveling pants" that will link them together as the summer goes by. Each has quite a summer of surprise and adventure. Lena travels to Greece for a two month visit with her grandparents and she gets the pants first. Carmen goes to South Carolina to visit her Dad only to find that he is about to remarry. Bridget goes to soccer camp in California and develops a mad crush on her assistant coach. Tibby stays home to work and finds out it isn't as boring as she anticipates it will be. Read about the pants and this story of friendship.

Prepared by: Tookie Harrop

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Soldier X

Don Wulffson

Viking Press, 2001

226 pages

SUMMARY:

A common Russian infantryman finds his position overrun, and the only way to survive is to become one of the enemy until he can again reach Russian lines. He dons the uniform of a German soldier, and bluffs his way out of every situation. He finds himself in a hospital and becomes friendly with the nurses. He eventually escapes and returns to Russian lines.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY....

A Boy at War: A Novel of Pearl Harbor by Harry Mazer

Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps by Andrea Warren

The Last Mission by Harry Mazer

The Ropemaker by Peter Dickinson

Breathing Underwater by Alex Flinn

The Rag and Bone Shop: A Novel by Robert Cormier

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Social Studies:

Research what life was like in the army during World War II.

Research how the war affected the Russians.

WEB SITES:

[Soldier Narratives](#)

[Soldier Memoir](#)

BOOKTALK:

Welcome to the life of an ordinary Russian soldier who does extraordinary things, when he finds the Russian positions overrun. He plays dead and pretends to be a German soldier to escape capture and to return to the Russian lines. Fighting exhaustion, hunger, and fear he makes the trek through enemy lines to safety. Does he make it? Well, read *Soldier X* and find out for yourself.

Prepared by: Chris Adams

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Spellbound

Janet McDonald

Frances Foster Books, 2001

138 pages

SUMMARY:

Raven, a sixteen-year-old high school senior with college aspirations, finds herself a teenage mother with no prospects of pulling herself out of the projects. She doesn't even know the father's last name, and like her own mother, doesn't expect anything from him. But when her college-educated sister suggests she compete in a spelling contest for a college scholarship, Raven is tempted to try to beat the odds.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Detour for Emmy by Marilyn Reynolds

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Teen Pregnancy

Families

Friendship

Gangs

Spelling Bees

Poverty

WEB SITES:

[Booklist Information on Spellbound](#)

[Arizona State University Paper on Janet McDonald's "Project Girl"](#).

[Janet McDonald Authorized Webpage](#)

[National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Website](#)

BOOKTALK:

Raven Jefferson's life has changed suddenly and dramatically. Just last summer she earned money for graduation and her senior class ring. Now she hopes she can get a refund. Like her best friend Aisha and even her own mother, Raven finds herself a teenage mother with no support from the child's father and no prospects. In fact, Raven doesn't even know the father's last name. She met him at a party; he was handsome, polite, sweet and very convincing, and he told her he would call. That was the last time she saw him. After Smokey, named for the soul singer, is born, Raven sits around watching TV and wishing for a better life. Then Raven's older, college educated sister Dell tries to convince her that the project life is no life for Smokey or Raven. Dell and a coworker try to convince Raven to participate in a spelling contest for college scholarship money. Meanwhile Raven runs into Jesse, Smokey's father. What will he do when he learns he has a baby? Will Raven try to overcome her situation and a life of poverty by competing in the contest? What lessons does she learn from her crazy, single parent friend Aisha? Find out when you read *Spellbound* by Janet McDonald.

Prepared by: Donna E. Moyer

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Stick Figure: A Diary of My Former Self

Lori Gottlieb

Simon & Schuster, c2000

222 pages

SUMMARY:

Written in diary format, Lori tells the true story of how she became an anorexic teenager.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Life in the Fat Lane by Cherie Bennett

Wasted: A Memoir by Mayra Hornbacher

Cut by Patricia McCormick

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Diseases:

Anorexia Nervosa

Health/Personal Living:

Food and Nutrition

Language Arts:

Diary Writing

WEB SITES:

[Author's Web Site](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Empowering Books for Girls](#)

[Eating Disorders Information Network](#)

[Dads and Daughters-Raising Healthy Daughters](#)

BOOKTALK:

Did you know that mayonnaise has one hundred calories per tablespoon? Or that drinking three full glasses of water one hour before every meal will help curb your appetite? If you're eating at home, try to eat only half portions, but in a restaurant you should eat no more than a fourth of everything. A slimming breakfast is exactly 19 flakes of Product 19 cereal with only two ounces of nonfat milk. Chocolate - in any way, shape or form - is not an option. As the saying goes, "You can never be too rich or too thin." A wallflower at school and ignored at home by her self-absorbed parents, Lori decides to take control of her life by taking control of her weight. As she shrinks down to almost sixty pounds in an effort to become the "stick figure" society finds desirable, her parents and classmates finally do take notice of her - as she risks losing her life to an eating disorder.

Prepared by: Jennifer Garrett

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Touching Spirit Bear

Ben Mikaelson

Harper Trophy, 2001

240 pages

SUMMARY:

Cole Matthews is angry, defiant, and very much a bully. His anger finally erupts into violence and he beats a classmate severely. Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the Native American Circle Justice in which victim, offender, and community all work together to find a healing solution. Cole plays along and when his sentence is to be sent to a remote Alaskan island for a year, he secretly plans his escape. But an encounter with a huge legendary white bear, also called a Spirit Bear, leaves him near death. The experience forces Cole to begin to turn his life around, but first he must convince everyone else that this time he really wants to change.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

You Don't Know Me by David Klass

Breathing Underwater by Alex Finn

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

Incident at Hawk's Hill by Allan Eckert

Petey by Ben Mikaelson

Countdown by Ben Mikaelson

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Sociology:

Teen Violence, Survival

Social Studies:

Juvenile Justice System

Multiculturalism:

Native American Circle Justice

Biology:

The Kermode or "Spirit" Bear

WEB SITES:

[Ben Mikaelson's Home Page](#)

[Become a Spirit Bear Defender](#)

[Circle Peacemaking](#)

[Alaska Justice Forum, information about Circle Justice](#)

[About Circle Peacemaking Process and Related Links](#)

[Article entitled "Conservationists Seek Refuge for Elusive Spirit Bears](#)

[CNN article entitled "The Spirit Bears"](#)

[Page by the Native Law Center of Canada about Sentencing Circles](#)

[Natural Resources Defense Council: The Spirit Bear and the Great Bear Rainforest](#)

[Sawmill Valley students in British Columbia's page about Spirit Bears](#)

[The Kermode Bear page by city of Terrace, British Columbia](#)

[Native American Story entitled "Spirit Bears"](#)

[Minneapolis, MN's Circle Archives page on Restorative Justice](#)

BOOKTALK:

"Get out of my face! Go on, get!" How dare any creature defy him and not be afraid of him! Cole Matthews raised his makeshift spear to his shoulder and slowly advanced toward the massive white bear. A lifetime of hurt, a lifetime of proving himself, and a lifetime of anger all controlled him now. He had convinced everyone else he had been ready to change, yet had never meant a word. He did not know that each step he took closer to the bear brought him closer and closer to the horrifying moment that would indeed change his life forever. Ben Mikeaelson offers a clearly drawn portarait of a bullying young con man deftly playing the system in *Touching Spirit Bear*. Cole Matthews' anger unleashed at a classmate finally has landed him in the juvenile justice system facing jail time. His probation officer offers him a chance to apply for Circle Justice, a new system being used with young offenders that attempts to bring healing to all the parties involved rather than simply punishment. Willing to do anything to avoid jail, Cole pretends he wants the chance Circle Justice offers, and he is given a Native American sentence, banishment by himself for a year to a remote island off the Alaskan coast. The Indian elder who brings Cole to the island leaves him with the caution to remember that he is not the only creature there, that he is a part of a much larger circle, and that he could learn much from the animals. Once he is left alone on the island however, Cole demonstrates he has no intention of staying. But his plans didn't include the mysterious appearance of the huge white bear. Facing the Spirit Bear changes everything. Read *Touching Spirit Bear* and you, like Cole, may discover your own place within the Circle.

Prepared by: Rose Grayson

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Whale Talk
Chris Crutcher
Greenwillow Books, 2001
220 pages

SUMMARY:

High school student TJ Jones forms a very unusual swim team at school as a way to combat the prejudice that exists throughout his community.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Breathing Underwater by Alex Flinn

Damage by A. M. Jenkins

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen

You Don't Know Me by David Klass

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

(correlated websites in following section)

Life Science:

Debate the importance of studying communication practiced by species other than humans; whales, for instance.

Health:

Discuss what constitutes “physical abuse”, “emotional abuse” and “co-dependency” and determine possible ways to handle unhealthy relationships.

Sociology:

How important was the role of organized sports in different ancient cultures (Roman, Egyptian, etc.)? How important in American society today? How important in your school?

World History:

What aspect(s) of the philosophy of Taoism could have contributed to its decline as a major world religion? What aspect(s) of the philosophy of Taoism could be appealing to someone in present day America?

Physical Education:

Is T'ai Chi a beneficial form of exercise for high school students?

Language Arts:

Identify instances of bigotry of any type in *Whale Talk*. Do you think that the prejudice evidenced in TJ's community exists in your community? Keep a journal for one week noting any remarks you hear at school that point to intolerance on any level. Are you comfortable with your responses to these remarks?

WEB SITES:

Life Science:

A search on “Animal Communication” in the DISCUS InfoTrac One File database and in the Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia provided by DISCUS (remember to look at the Web Links here) will result in many good hits on the topic.

Health:

[Childhelp USA - A child abuse web site.](#)

Sociology:

[Organized Sports for Children and Preadolescents](#)

World History:

[Taoism Information Page](#)

Physical Education:

A search on “T’ai Chi” in the DISCUS Health and Wellness Resource Center database is a good starting place to research this form of exercise.

[Chris Crutcher’s Authorized Web Site](#)

BOOKTALK:

TJ Jones is smart, good looking (“like Tiger Woods on steroids), and is one of the best athletes at his high school. The problem is, he refuses to participate in the school’s athletics program. Call it a problem with authority. And since athletics is a huge deal at his school, his refusal really ticks people off. Under pressure, TJ agrees to start up a competitive swim team at school. His choice of team members is most unusual and is met with the reaction he wanted—now the powers that be are really angry! Reading this book will allow you to get into the heads of people you probably don’t usually hook up with. And you’ll enjoy it more than you can imagine. Word of caution: language and situations get graphic so mature audience is recommended.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Harrell

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What My Mother Doesn't Know

Sonya Sones

Simon and Schuster, 2001

259 pages

SUMMARY:

A typical teenage girl, Sophie tells in free verse narrative about her love life as she searches for Mr. Right, her relationship with her two best friends and the trials and tribulations of being an only child caught between a controlling mother and distant father.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares

Love and Other Four-Letter Words by Carolyn Mackler

Feeling Sorry for Celia by Jaclyn Moriarty

Razzele by Ellen Wittlinger

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:**Language Arts:**

Have students read the novel and then write a free verse poem about their love lives, friendship or their families.

Psychology:

Read the novel and have students discuss the difference between love and lust, the importance of peer support or the influence of family.

Sociology:-

Read the novel and have students research dating customs in different countries or different time periods. Students could also write about family relationships and friendship.

WEB SITES:

[Author Interviews](#)

[Author Interview](#)

[Review](#)

[Teen Issues](#)

BOOKTALK:

Meet Sophie - a typical ninth grade girl whose story reminds us that it's okay to be boy crazy, to have self doubts, to argue with your mother, and to clash with your best friends. Through her free verse narrative, Sophie explores her relationships with three boys as she searches for Mr. Right. Girls, if you want to capture the joy and surprise of falling in love with someone totally unexpected, this is the book for you. Guys, if you want to have a better understanding of teenage girls, read this book. It's a fast, funny, touching read.

Prepared by: Kathryn Thomas

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You Don't Know Me: A Novel

David Klass

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, c2001

262 pages

SUMMARY:

Fourteen-year-old John creates alternative realities in his mind as he tries to deal with his mother's abusive boyfriend, his crush on a beautiful, but shallow classmate, and other problems at school.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Breathing Underwater by Alex Finn

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen

Rats Saw God by Rob Thomas

A Child Called "It" by David Pelzer

You and Violence in Your Family by John Giacobello

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Child abuse

Self-perception

WEB SITES:

[Review](#)

[Hands of Hope Resource Center](#)

[The Worst Nightmare: Fiction About Child Abuse for Teens](#)

BOOKTALK:

Nothing in John's world is what it seems to be. John lives in a house that is not a house, he goes to a school that is not a school - a place of torture that John calls anti-school instead. From the sounds it emits, the tuba he plays in band class is actually a frog pretending to be a tuba. And if his mother could only see, she would learn that her live-in boyfriend who John calls "the man who is not my father," is physically abusing John when she is not around. Follow John's rich imagination and quirky sense of humor as he gives you the opportunity to get to know him through his struggles with Mrs. Moonface, his algebra teacher set on stranding him on Torture Island with her never-ending questions about axioms and algebraic expressions; Glory Hallelujah, the most perfect girl at school except for her gorilla-sized father and bizarre behaviors such as eating his love notes; Billy Beezer, his supposed best friend who is also vying for the lovely Glory's attentions; and Mr. Steenwilly, the band teacher who knows John's trouble with his tuba is in some way connected to something terribly wrong going on at home.

Prepared by: Jennifer Garrett

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