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The Amaranth Enchantment

Julie Berry
Bloomsbury, 2009
308 pages

SUMMARY:

Orphaned at age five, Lucinda, now fifteen, stands with courage against the man who took everything from her, aided by a thief, a clever goat, and a mysterious woman called the Witch of Amaranth, while the prince she knew as a child prepares to marry, unaware that he, too, is in danger.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

A Curse Dark as Gold by Elizabeth Bunce
Beauty by Robin McKinley
Rose Daughter by Robin McKinley

WEBSITES:

Julie Berry Books, www.julieberrybooks.com, Julie Berry's Homepage includes a biography, news, and a link to the author's blog.

Amaranth, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amaranth_\(color\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amaranth_(color)) This Wikipedia page has a lot of information on the Amaranth plant, including its place in history, music, literature and mythology.

BOOKTALK:

Lucinda, born into riches, knew an idyllic childhood. When her parents die, she is taken in by her uncle and his hateful wife. She is working in her uncle's goldsmith shop when a beautiful, mysterious woman named Beryl enters and requests a setting for an enormous, precious stone. Lucinda feels some type of connection to the woman but doesn't know why. She later finds out that Beryl is known as the Amaranth Witch. When Lucinda's uncle dies and her aunt kicks her out, Lucinda wanders the street accompanied by a stray goat until she unconsciously makes her way to her childhood home, knocks on the door and is face to face with Beryl, the Amaranth Witch. As this Fantasy unfolds Lucinda is plunged into intrigue and mystery that will bring her love, heartache and answers to questions that have beleaguered her since the mysterious death of her parents.

Prepared by:

Julie Mise
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Beneath My Mother's Feet

Amjed Qamar
Atheneum, 2008
198 pages

SUMMARY:

When her father is injured, fourteen-year-old Nazia is pulled away from school, her friends, and her preparations for an arranged marriage, to help her mother clean houses in a wealthy part of Karachi, Pakistan, where she finally rebels against the destiny that is planned for her.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis
Iqbal by Francesco D'Adamo; Ann Leonori
Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind by Suzanne Fisher Staples

WEBSITES:

Author's homepage - <http://www.amjedqamar.com/>

Book Summary and reading group guide
http://books.simonandschuster.com/Beneath-My-Mother's-Feet/Amjed-Qamar/9781416947288/reading_group_guide

Interview with author
<http://www.mitaliblog.com/2008/10/beneath-my-mothers-feet-interview-with.html>

BOOKTALK:

Nazia doesn't mind when her friends tease and call her a good beti, a dutiful daughter. Growing up in a working-class family in Karachi, Pakistan, Nazia knows that obedience is the least she can give to her mother, who has spent years saving and preparing for her dowry. But every daughter must grow up, and for fourteen-year-old Nazia that day arrives suddenly when her father gets into an accident at work, and her family finds themselves without money for rent or food. They and all their belongings are thrown into the street. Luckily, her mother finds work as a maid and is able to talk her employer into letting her daughter and small son move into a humble shack on the property with her— but they must also work.

Being the beti that she is, Nazia drops out of school to help her mother clean houses, all the while wondering when she managed to lose control of her life that had been full of friends and school. Working as a maid is a shameful obligation that could be detrimental to her future — after all; no one wants a housekeeper for a daughter-in-law. This lowly job and the theft of her

dowry jeopardize Nazia's impending arranged marriage to her much-older cousin. Nazia struggles to support her family, facing life as a servant or as an unwilling wife. Against her mother's advice, Nazia befriends and assists another servant trying to escape his situation. As she discovers her own inner resolve, can she find a way to help her family without sacrificing herself?

Prepared by:

Susan Henley

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Brooklyn Bridge: A Novel

Karen Hesse

Feiwel and Friends, 2008

229 pages

SUMMARY

In 1903 Joseph Michtom is fourteen, living in Brooklyn, NY. His life changes when his immigrant parents invent the teddy bear. He narrates the story, filled with drama, a ghost story, and adventure.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY . . .

King of Mulberry Street by Donna Jo Napoli

Maggie's Door by Patricia Reilly Giff by Patricia Reilly Giff

Water Street by Patricia Reilly Giff

The Rose Horse by Deborah Lee Rose

WEBSITES

Author's Website

<http://us.macmillan.com/author/karenhesse>

Interview with Karen Hesse

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-hesse-karen.asp>

Center for Jewish History

<http://www.endex.com/gf/buildings/bbridge/bbridge.html>

Ellis Island

<http://www.ellisland.org>

History of the teddy bear

http://inventors.about.com/od/tstartinventions/a/Teddy_Bear.htm

Images of Brooklyn Bridge

<http://www.nyc-architecture.com/BRI/BRI001-BrooklynBridge.htm>

BOOKTALK

Joseph Michtom is fourteen years old, living in Brooklyn NY in 1903. He is the son of Jewish immigrants from Russia and is the first in his family to be born in America. His parents left behind a difficult life in Russia, looking for success in America. Their success? Inventing the teddy bear.

His parents have made their apartment a factory of sorts for the teddy bear. Joe dreams of going to Coney Island, a place filled with rides and food, but instead his parents need his help making the teddy bear.

Read Karen Hesse's *Brooklyn Bridge: A Novel*, to learn about the significance of the Brooklyn Bridge to the story: past and present, misfortune and success.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Halberstadt

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Chains

Laire Halse Anderson
Simon & Schuster, 2008
186 pages

Summary:

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel who was promised her freedom on the death of her Rhode Island mistress, wages her own fight --for freedom. She and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate, become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who are staunch Loyalists amid the brewing American Revolution. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. Isabel hopes to trade the secrets of her household for freedom for her and her sister, and gets caught up in the intrigue with devastating results.

If you liked this book, try...

- *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper
- *Taking Liberty: the Story of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave* by Ann Rinaldi
- *Elijah of Buxton* by Christopher Paul Curtis

Curriculum Connections (see websites below)

- Language Arts--Vocabulary, First Person Narratives, Rewrite parts of the story from a different point of view, Write a letter to the Locktons giving reasons Ruth and her sister should be freed
- Social Studies— Research the Slavery during the Revolutionary War

Web Sites:

- <http://www.writerlady.com/> Information on the author, a listing of her books, and background on Chains.
- <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse/ListSome.php?category=African%20American%20History>. African American history from the American Memory Collections at the Library of Congress.
- http://www.kidinfo.com/American_History/American_Revolution.html. Reference list of web sites on the American Revolution.
- <http://www.si.umich.edu/spies/index-methods.html>. Information on spy techniques of the American Revolution.
- <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/african-americans-in-the-american-revolution.html>. Describes the various roles Blacks played in the American Revolution.

Booktalk:

Isabel, a teenage slave, and her five-year-old sister, Ruth, are sold to Loyalists who live in New York during 1776. The girls' mother and previous owner have died. The Locktons are not nice owners, especially Mrs. Lockton, who is more worried about appearances than she is about people. Isabel is quickly recruited by the Rebels through a slave named Curzon. He tells her that the quickest way to freedom is through helping the Rebels, and so Isabel agrees to help the Rebels in spite of the danger that she faces when spying on the Locktons. She is more concerned about finding freedom for her sister, Ruth, who suffers from seizures, and herself—getting away from Mrs. Lockton as quickly as possible—than in which side is correct, the Rebels or the Loyalists. As the story goes on, the reader is exposed to the Revolutionary War and how the people in New York City were affected by the fighting. Laurie Halse Anderson also makes a point in *Chains* to show that slaves were not respected by the British or the Americans; and no matter what slaves did for either side, they always seemed to be at a disadvantage. You will learn much about the Revolutionary War and the part slaves played in the war through Isabel's eyes.

Prepared by:

Susan Adams

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Chasing Lincoln's Killer

James L. Swanson
Scholastic Press, 2009
194 pages

SUMMARY:

This book recounts the twelve-day pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth, covering the chase through Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, with a discussion of Abraham Lincoln as a father, husband, and friend that examines the impact of his death on those close to him.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

An Acquaintance with Darkness, Ann Rinaldi

Good Brother, Bad Brother: the Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth, James Giblin

The Lincolns: a Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary, Candace Fleming

Mr. Lincoln's High-tech War: How the North used the Telegraph, Railroads, Surveillance Balloons, Iron-clads, High-powered Weapons, and More to Win the Civil War, Thomas B. Allen & Roger MacBride Allen

WEBSITES:

Chasing Lincoln's Killer, <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/book.jsp?id=1303455>, This is Scholastic's teacher link for the book. It contains an audio excerpt, a video interview with James Swanson, and even a "Wanted" poster.

Manhunt: Chasing Lincoln's Killer, http://www.newseum.org/exhibits_th/manhunt/, this is a wonderful website that includes on-line maps and videos. Contains a map of Washington with all major locations surrounding the assassination and a video explaining how newspapers handled their coverage of the hunt for John Wilkes Booth.

BOOKTALK:

If you are a history buff, you will love *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by James Swanson. The author is an expert on the life of Abraham Lincoln. This book delves into the life and times of the infamous actor, John Wilkes Booth. It takes you into the mind of the egotistical Booth and his plots to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln. The first plot failed, but with the assistance of six other conspirators, his second attempt was tragically successful. You will learn about all of the conspirators from Lewis Powell to Mary Surratt, the first woman executed by the U.S. Government. You'll also meet famous characters like Dr. Samuel Mudd. When he allowed Booth and David Herold to stay at his farmhouse did he know who they were and what they had done? You be the judge! This book will take you on a chase through Post-Civil War America, while you learn about one of the grimmest chapters of our countries history.

Prepared by:

Julie Mise

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The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod: Ninth Grade Slays

Heather Brewer

Dutton Children's Books, 2008

278 pages

SUMMARY:

While half-vampire Vlad, his best friend Henry, and Henry's cousin Joss make their way through their freshman year at Bathory High, a hired vampire slayer seeks to destroy Vlad.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod: Tenth Grade Bleeds, Heather Brewer

Suck it Up, Brian Meehl

Vampire High, Douglas Rees

WEBSITES:

Heather Brewer

<http://www.heatherbrewer.com/>

Find out about upcoming Vladimir Tod books and information about the author, Heather Brewer.

BOOKTALK:

Homework, classes, playing video games, drinking blood, and trying not to be killed by a vampire slayer is a normal day in any 9th grader's life, right? For Vladimir Tod, this is just another day in his half human/half vampire life. Vlad is thrilled about starting his freshman year of high school and even makes new friends. When he hears about a vampire slayer in town that is hunting him in order to kill him, his year takes a slight detour. Obviously, his life is more important than studying for his science test, right?

Prepared by:

Tiffany Rickey

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Flygirl
Sherri Smith
Penguin Group, 2009
256 pages

SUMMARY

A young African-American yearns to fly for her country during WWII as a WASP.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Child Out of Place by Patricia Wall

Black Heroes of the American Revolution by Burke Davis

Black Eagles: African-Americans in Aviation by James Haskins

Bessie Coleman: First Black Woman Pilot by Connie Plantz

WEBSITES:

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=29208>

http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Air_Power/Women/AP31.htm

<http://www.historynet.com/americas-first-women-aviators.htm>

http://ww2history.suite101.com/article.cfm/women_aviators_in_world_war_ii

http://ww2history.suite101.com/article.cfm/african_americans_and_women_in_wwii

BOOKTALK

Flygirl begins in December of 1941, in Slidell, Louisiana, when Ida Mae, the narrator of the story, is eighteen. She and her friend Jolene clean for the Wilsons, a white family, and as they clean, they daydream. Jolene dreams of being a singer, though she doesn't have the voice for it. Ida Mae's heart's desire is to become a pilot, something she already is in every regard but one.

When Ida Mae was a young girl, her father taught her to fly in his "Jenny" crop duster. Ida Mae later prepared hard for her pilot's test, and performed beautifully when she took it. But her instructor, a white man who'd passed other black pilots at Tuskegee, told Ida Mae, "You can fly, no doubt about it. But no woman's gonna get a license out of me. Go home, Miss Jones. You've failed."

Now Ida Mae dreams of going to Chicago's Coffey School of Aeronautics to obtain her license, and she is saving up to finance the trip. But when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, her dream is shelved. Ida's brother, who is studying to become a doctor, enlists in the army. Before shipping out, Thomas asks Ida Mae to look after her widowed mother, her young brother Abel, and her grandfather, and Ida promises that she will.

A year and a half pass. Thomas is stationed in the South Pacific, where the war is going badly. Black families like the Joneses and white ones like the Wilsons ration sugar, coffee, and other staples. Jolene donates her silk stockings to the army parachute program. "Jenny," the Joneses' crop duster, remains in the barn collecting dust, since fuel is also rationed.

One day, Abel brings home a newspaper clipping from school. It is an article about the Women's Air force Service Pilots program, which will train women to fly military planes within America's borders, freeing more male pilots to fight in combat. The instant Ida Mae reads about the WASP program, she desperately wants to be a part of it. Here is a way to realize her dream of flying,

and to make a real difference in the war effort, to help Thomas in a more meaningful way than rationing sugar and stockings.

Jolene punctures Ida Mae's ballooning hopes by telling her the program is almost certainly for white women only. For a brief moment, Ida Mae, whose skin is light enough that she could pass for white, considers pretending to be white in order to be able to fly for the military. It doesn't take her long to realize that such an action is fraught with danger, though, and she tries to give up her dream.

But then Abel points out a picture of a Chinese American pilot who is a member of the WASP, and Ida begins to hope again. With Jolene's help, Ida Mae forges a pilot's license, applies to the program and is granted an interview. Just before that interview begins, she sees a black woman being refused entry to the program due her skin color alone. When the interviewer assumes that Ida Mae is white, Ida nearly backs out, but her dream of flying overcomes her fears, and she decides that she if she is accepted, she will join the training program for the WASP.

And so begins Ida Mae's life as a military trainee pilot in Sweetwater, Texas, a life that is both thrilling and frightening. Even as Ida makes friends with fellow WASP aspirants Patsy Kake, who was part of a barnstorming show, and Lily Lowenstein, a sheltered and wealthy Jewish girl, she wonders whether these women would remain her friends if they knew that she is not white.

The training program is arduous — two out of every three girls wash out — but even more than the long hours of training; it is her deception that takes a toll on Ida, and her worry for her brother Thomas's safety. Lily and Patsy's friendship is a godsend, but in becoming part of their world, is Ida creating a gulf between herself and her childhood friend Jolene?

There is also a civilian instructor in the program, Walt Jenkins, who is clearly attracted to Ida and interested in her. Ida's heart flutters whenever Walt is near. But Walt is white, and he does not know that Ida is black. How can she allow her attraction for him to show without misleading him? And even if she told him the truth, would a future with him mean leaving her family behind?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ELA: Study biographies of women and African-Americans who served during WWII

Social Studies: Research aviators and the role that planes and the Air Force played during the war; research women and African-Americans and their role during WWII; research America's view of gender and race and whether that changed during the war.

Science: What inventions helped the war effort? What inventions resulted from the war? Who developed the atomic bomb, how did that impact the war, our world?

Prepared by:

Susan Henley

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The Hunger Games

Suzanne Collins

Scholastic, Inc., 2008

374 pages

SUMMARY:

In the country of Panem – formerly known as North America – 12 districts reside. Each year, everyone between the ages of 12 and 18 must participate in a draw. The names of one boy and one girl from each district are drawn, and those children must participate in the Hunger Games.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY.....

Catching Fire by Suzanne Collins

Graceling by Kristin Cashore

Dream Hunter by Elizabeth Knox

New World by Gillian Cross

Invitation to the Game by Monica Hughes

WEBSITES:

Suzanne Collins homepage

http://www.suzannecollinsbooks.com/the_hunger_games_69765.htm

Teaching resources for Hunger Games from Scholastic

<http://bookwizard.scholastic.com/tbw/viewWorkDetail.do?workId=1275204&>

Teen Reads brief Bio and interview

<http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-collins-suzanne.asp>

BOOKTALK:

The Hunger Games takes place in the future. North America has been destroyed and thirteen districts have come in existence out of the city Panem. At one point all of the districts rebelled against the Capitol and the 13th district was destroyed. To remind the districts that they have no power over the Capitol, they hold The Hunger Games every year. A boy and a girl from every district will be chosen to participate in this horrible competition. There is a "festival" called The Reaping where the tributes will be drawn from a bowl. Every girl and boy, from age 12-18 have to put their name in the drawing. If you are 12, one slip of paper with your name on it goes into the bowl, 13, two, 14, three.....and so on. You can, however put your name in more times for tesserae. One extra name= 1 year of tesserae (grain and oil for one person.) Once all the tributes have been chosen, all 24 kids will be put in an arena and will fight to the death. The last one alive is the victor of the Hunger games.

The Hunger Games shows how survival instincts affect human nature. It is a book that I did not want to put down once. I would highly recommend this book to students in middle school. A sequel *Catching Fire* is already in print and a third book will come out August 24, 2010.

Prepared by: Sidney Harper

The Juvie Three

Gordon Korman

Hyperion, 2008

256 pages

SUMMARY: Douglas Healy lived through his own hard times, and now he is determined to give some hope to a trio of troubled teens. He has worked hard to cut through the red tape and bureaucratic nonsense to open a small halfway house for three lost boys. Gecko, Terence, and Arjay have committed a variety of crimes, from driving a stolen getaway car to murder, and society says they are beyond hope. The efforts of Douglas Healy have given the three a last chance.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Paper Towns by John Green

Right Behind You by Gail Giles

Deadline by Chris Crutcher

WEBSITES:

Gordon Korman, www.gordonkorman.com Author web site

BOOKTALK:

Gecko Fosse drove his brother's getaway car.

Terence Florian ran with one of the most notorious gangs in Chicago.

Arjay Moran killed someone.

All three boys are serving time in juvenile detention centers until they get a second chance at life in the form of Douglas Healy. A former juvenile delinquent himself, Healy is running an experimental halfway house in New York City where he wants to make a difference in the lives of kids like Gecko, Terence, and Arjay.

Things are going well, until one night Healy falls from a fire escape and is accidentally knocked unconscious while trying to break up a scuffle among the boys. Terrified of the consequences, they drop him off at a hospital emergency room and leave. But when Healy awakes, he has total amnesia. Afraid of being sent back to Juvie, the guys hatch a crazy scheme to continue on as if the group leader never left. They go to school, do their community service, attend therapy, and act like model citizens until Healy's memory returns and he can come home to them. Their biggest obstacle is a state appointed social worker who watches their every move waiting for a chance to bust them again.

Do they turn their lives around or do they make a U – turn to Juvie? Read Gordon Korman's *The Juvie Three* to find out.

Prepared by:

Diane Geddings

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Lay-ups and Long Shots

Joseph Bruchac
Darby Creek, 2008
112 pages

Summary:

These accessible and engaging stories cover a wide range of sports, from basketball to surfing to BMX riding. The protagonists are not star players. Instead, they are the second- or third-stringers who love their particular sport so much that they are willing to be less than perfect.

If you liked this book, try...

- *Toby Wheeler, Eighth-Grade Bench Warmer* by Thatcher Heldring
- *Dairy Queen: a novel* by Catherine Murdock
- *Winning Season; Fast company* by Rich Wallace
- *The Brooklyn Nine* by Alan Gratz
- *Summer Ball* by Mike Lupica

Web Sites

- <http://www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/aifolder/aipages/aib/bruchac1.html>
Information on the author.
- <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-junior-varsity.htm>. Good discussion of second string athletes – term and application.
- http://dcsportsbox.com/main/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1638&Itemid=64. The story of one unsung sports hero.
- <http://media.www.muhlenbergweekly.com/media/storage/paper300/news/2009/12/10/Sports/Basketball.Mules.Honored.As.unsung.Heroes-3849579.shtml>. Another unsung hero of sports.

Booktalk

Sometimes in life, success is a long shot, and other times it's as easy as a lay up! This action-packed anthology of nine short stories depicts the obstacles and hurdles that all athletes must overcome to achieve success in a sport. Readers will feel Joseph Bruchac's angst when the coach tells him that he's not cut out to play on his high school basketball team, as well as his sense of triumph when he sinks several shots in a row at home, taking the small victory as a sign that his grandfather will not succumb to poor health. David Lubar introduces Tyler, whose pursuit of the Ping-Pong championship trophy becomes so all-consuming that he learns an important lesson about the price of self-reliance. With tales of basketball, football, soccer, running, surfing, BMX racing, and even ping-pong, you are sure to find a story that will inspire the athlete within yourself. Whether you are an athlete or a benchwarmer, you will be cheering for more!

Curriculum Connections:

- **Language Arts**--Vocabulary, First Person Narratives, Rewrite parts of the story from a different point of view, Write a story about a sports episode of your own.
- **Social Studies**— Research the lives of some sports figures that had to work hard to succeed.
- **Science** -- Study the body systems used in various sports activities.
- **Math** – Calculate the trajectory, rate of speed, etc. of balls being used in a game.

Prepared by:

Susan Adams

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Magic Thief
Prineas, Sarah
HarperCollins, 2008
419 pages

SUMMARY:

A young thief enters a life of magic and adventure after stealing from Nevery Flinglas, a wizard who has returned from exile to reverse the troubling decline of magic in Wellmet City.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Last Apprentice series, Joseph Delaney

Septimus Heap series, Angie Sage

Lost (second book in the *Magic Thief* series), Sarah Prineas

WEBSITES:

Magic Thief webpage

www.harpercollinschildrens.com/kids/gamesandcontests/features/magichief/

Info on author, Wellmet, and games

Sarah Prineas' webpage

www.sarah-prineas.com/

Info on the author, news, and a blog

BOOKTALK:

Conn should have dropped dead the day he picked Nevery's pocket and stole the wizard's locus magicalicus, a stone used to focus magic and work spells. But for some reason he did not.

Astonished and intrigued, Nevery agrees to take Conn on as his apprentice, on the condition that the boy find a locus stone of his own within a month. But with his wizard lessons and attempts to help Nevery discover who — or what — is stealing the city of Wellmet's dwindling supply of magic, time is running out for Conn to find his stone.

Prepared by:

Michele Bates

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Palace Of Mirrors
Margaret Peterson Haddix
Simon & Schuster Books, 2008
297 pages

SUMMARY:

Cecilia knows that she is not just another peasant girl; she is actually the true princess, in hiding until the evil forces that killed her parents are vanquished. A commoner named Desmia is on the throne as a decoy. As she gets older, Cecilia finds it harder to study statesmanship and palace protocol secretly at night and then pretend that she has nothing on her mind other than scrubbing the gruel stains out of her best apron by day. Cecilia knows that it is time to take charge. Along with her best friend, Harper, she flees to the capital city, determined to reclaim her throne and face the danger head on.

When Harper and Cecilia reach the famed Palace of Mirrors, they discover complications with getting Desmia off the throne. Desmia believes a completely different story about her being a princess.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY.....

Just Ella Margaret Peterson Haddix
Princess Diaries Meg Cabot
Double Identity Margaret Peterson Haddix
Among the Hidden Margaret Peterson Haddix
Air Head Meg Cabot

WEBSITES:

Margaret Peterson Haddix's website with resources <http://www.haddixbooks.com/home.html>
Study guide for Among the Hidden - <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-among-the-hidden/>

BOOKTALK:

Cecilia knows that somewhere in the world she has a tiara in a little box. It is not safe for her to wear it or to even tell anyone about it or who she is. However, she knows who she is and has always known that she is a princess-in-hiding. It is hard to pretend to be a peasant girl during the day and study statesmanship and palace protocol secretly at night. I know I must hide until the evil people that killed my parents can be overcome. There is a commoner named Desmia on the throne, pretending to be the real princess. Finally, I just can't wait any longer. I talk my best friend Harper into fleeing to the capital city and I am determined to reclaim my throne no matter how dangerous it will be.

When we get to the city and the famed Palace of Mirrors, I discover that Desmia believes a completely different version of the story and this can really cause danger and problems for me and Harper.

If you want to know if I solve my problems and regain my throne, you will have to read "*Palace of Mirrors*" by Margaret Peterson Haddix.

Prepared by:

Linda Estridge
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Peeled
By Joan Bauer
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2008
247 pages

SUMMARY:

Hildy and Zach, reporters for “The Core”, the school newspaper, find themselves pitted against the local newspaper and land developers when a ghost moves into the old Ludlow place.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY . . .

Adam Canfield of the Slash—Michael Winerip

Anywhere but here—Adele Dueck

Scat or Hoot—Carl Hiaasen

Backwater—Joan Bauer

WEBSITES;

Teaching guide

www.joanbauer.com/guides/peeled.pdf

FAQ

www.joanbauer.com/jbfaq.html

BOOKTALK;

How can a group of students stop the tide of fear caused by reports of ghosts and murder in the abandoned Ludlow House in the small town of Banessville? Hildy and Zach use the school newspaper to challenge the local newspaper's coverage of events. When the city's newspaper editor pressures the school to stifle the school paper, Hildy and Zach go “underground” with the help of a restaurant owner and a former newsman. Will they be able to stop developers from tearing down the orchards for a theme park, to determine who or what murdered the stranger on the old Ludlow place, and to unmask the ghost?

Read *Peeled* by Joan Bauer.

Prepared by:

Linda Rosenlieb

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Return to Sender
Julia Alvaraz
Alfred A. Knopf, 2009
327 pages

SUMMARY:

After his family hires migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure, eleven-year-old Tyler befriends the oldest daughter, but when he discovers they may not be in the country legally, he realizes that real friendship knows no borders.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Cloud Chamber, by Joyce Maynard

North of Everything, by Craig Crist-Evans

The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child, by Francisco Jimenez

Migrant Youth : Falling Between the Cracks, by Joyce Libal

WEBSITES:

Julia Alvarez website, <http://www.juliaalvarez.com/> Official website for the author.

Migrant Workers' Children Savor Summer School, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8630313/>
This is an MSNBC story about migrant children going to school.

BOOKTALK:

The future of Tyler's family's Vermont farm is in jeopardy when his father is injured, so it would seem that the arrival of Mari's family, migrant workers from Mexico, is the answer to a prayer. Tyler should appreciate that his farm can continue to operate, but he is worried that Mari's family is here illegally, and he wants to feel that his family is doing the right thing. Tyler and Mari form a close friendship, even while he misses his grandfather who recently passed away, and Mari misses her mother, who has vanished on a trip back to Mexico. Author Julia Alvarez alternates between the two main characters' voices as she builds a story of hope, combining the struggles of an American farm family with the dreams and problems migrant workers must deal with.

Prepared by:

Nancy Self

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Savvy
By Ingrid Law
Dial Books for young readers, 2008.
342 pages

SUMMARY:

The Beaumont family has a secret. Each has a special savvy that manifests itself on his or her thirteenth birthday. Grandpa moves mountains, Fish creates wind storms, Rocket controls electricity, Momma is perfect and Mibs is on the eve of discovering hers. While waiting for the big day, the family receives scary news that Poppa has been in a terrible accident and is in a coma. Mibs hopes her savvy will save her father and sneaks aboard a salesman's bus headed towards the hospital---only, it heads the opposite direction. In the course of her journey, she learns more about herself, her savvy, and other people who might also have secrets to keep.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY:

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate—Jacqueline Kelly
Heroes of the valley—Jonathan Stroud
Waiting for Normal—Leslie Connor
Hunger Games—Suzanne Collins
Thirteenth child—Patricia C. Wrede

WEBSITES:

Teaching guide

www.tracievaughnzimmer.com/savvy_by_ingrid_law.htm

Author website

web.mac.com/ingridlaw/Site/Home.html

Discussion guide

www.walden.com/images/uploads/resource/Savvy_Discussion-Guide_-_Updated_-_4-09.pdf

DISCUS, Books and Authors

BOOKTALK:

Hi! I'm called Mibs by 'most everyone. It's easier than saying Mississippi. I come from a family with special talents, or savvy, as we call it. My brother Fish is able to create a storm and Rocket, my oldest brother, thinks it's funny to make my hair stand on end with his electrical savvy. My birthday is today and I hope my savvy will help save Poppa who is in a coma in Salina Hope Hospital. I skipped the party at church and snuck aboard a Bible salesman's bus that should have been headed for Salina, but it's off on some other course. Somehow Fish, Will and Bobbi ended up on the bus and we are driving the wrong direction! We're all over the news! I'm beginning to think my savvy isn't what I thought it was. What's with all these people and their secrets! I can't think! How am I going to save my Poppa?

Prepared by:

Linda Rosenlieb

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Scat
Carl Hiaasen
Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2009
371 pages

SUMMARY:

Mrs. Starch may be the most loathed teacher in Truman School, but now she is missing and Nick and Marta set out to solve the mystery. This is a great teen thriller, involving a rare panther, a couple of inept detectives, a class bully, and a tree-hugging millionaire.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Flush by Carl Hiaasen

Lawn Boy by Gary Paulsen

The Willoughbys by Lois Lowry

WEBSITES:

Author's official website - www.carlhiaasen.com

This site gives a biography, interesting facts, books and awards and other info for this author.

Environmental websites for kids

<http://www.nrdc.org/reference/kids.asp>

This site gives a listing of fun, creative and informative websites for kids.

Kidinfo - www.kidinfo.com/Science/Endangered_animals.html

This site gives links to many sites with info about endangered animals.

BOOKTALK:

What do you get when you mix an endangered Florida panther, a very unpopular science teacher, a crooked oil company, some bumbling detectives and two teenage investigators? You get Carl Hiaasen's latest adventure, Scat.

All the students at Truman School fear Mrs. Starch, the mean and strict biology teacher. But when a fire breaks out on a school outing to Black Vine Swamp and she disappears, Nick Waters and his friend Marta think maybe a troubled kid Duane Scrod is to blame. Duane's nickname "Smoke" came from his reputation for setting fires on public property, and he and Mrs. Starch have already had a run-in. Nick and Marta are even more concerned when a few days later they see Duane with a mysterious man driving Mrs. Starch's car. Is Duane responsible for Mrs. Starch's disappearance? Did he set the fire? There is a lot more to Duane, the fire and Mrs. Starch than anyone realizes.

This story promises to keep you glued to the book, wondering how everything finally fits together. Carl Hiaasen has delivered another perfect mystery as well as an environmental adventure for young readers.

Prepared by:

Jean Strickland

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Shift
by Jennifer Bradbury
Atheneum 2008
256 pages

SUMMARY:

Although they come from very different backgrounds, Chris and Win have been best friends since elementary school. They decide to take a cross-country bicycle trip the summer after they graduate from high school. Tension develops between the friends during the trip and they begin to get on each others nerves. One day when Chris stops to repair a flat Win just takes off. Chris has no idea where Win has gone and completes the trip by himself. When he gets back home he has to try to explain Win's whereabouts to their families and the authorities. This is a problem for Chris because he's not really sure what happened or where his friend is, or even if Win is still his friend.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Morrelli's Game by Patricia Lee Gauch
Silent to the Bone by E.L. Konigsburg
Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes by Chris Crutcher
Summer on Wheels by Gary Soto
Zigzag by Ellen Wittinger

WEBSITES:

Bike Commuters, <http://www.bikecommuters.com/> bicycling information and gear.
Crazy Guy on a Bike, <http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/?o=rzyi> bike touring information.
Cynsations, <http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/2008/07/author-interview-jennifer-bradbury-on.html> (July 10, 2008), Cynthia Leitch Smith, interview with author.
Jennifer Bradbury Hope Page, <http://www.jennifer-bradbury.com> (March 3, 2009)
Shelf Elf Read, Write, Rave, (December 15, 2008), <http://shelfelf.wordpress.com/> interview with author.
Slayground, <http://slayground.livejournal.com/> (May 22, 20008),interview with author and review of Shift.

BOOKTALK:

What are your plans for the summer after you graduate from high school? Will you be like most teens and spend your summer working at a boring minimum wage job? Or will you be more adventurous and plan to do something exciting? Chris Collins and his best friend Win decided to take a cross-country trek on bicycle beginning early the day after graduation. The guys loaded their gear onto their bicycles and left Hurricane, West Virginia for a summer filled with fun and excitement. Their plan was to ride their bikes all the way to Seattle, Washington to visit Win's uncle.

Over the years, Chris had always put up with Win's wild stories and crazy antics, but during the trip this begins to cause a shift in their relationship. One thing that is really annoying Chris is how Win has this uncanny way of not paying his share of the expenses even though his family is

very wealthy...and Chris' isn't. One day Chris accidentally discovers that Win has hidden thousands of dollars in his pannier and this really ticks Chris off. After this incident the guys begin to leave noticeable distance between themselves while they are biking. In Montana, Win ditches Chris when he stops to repair a flat tire. Chris finishes the trek solo. When Win doesn't contact anyone to let them know his whereabouts, people begin to question Chris about what really happened on the trip. Win's domineering and powerful dad even gets the FBI involved in questioning Chris. How will Chris explain his friend's disappearance? What happens when best friends grow apart? Who really left whom behind? These questions can only be answered by reading "Shift" by Jennifer Bradbury.

Prepared by:

Cathy Hesselink

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Smiles to Go
Jerry Spinelli
Joanna Cotler Books, 2008
248 pages

SUMMARY:

Will Tuppence's life has always been ruled by science and common sense but in ninth grade, shaken up by the discovery that protons decay, he begins to see the entire world differently and gains new perspective on his relationships with his little sister and two closest friends.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Gregor the Overlander series, by Suzanne Collins

Getting Air, by Dan Gutman

Knots in My Yo-Yo String: the Autobiography of a Kid, by Jerry Spinelli

WEBSITES:

Ezine article "Fun Facts about Skateboarding," <http://ezinearticles.com/?Fun-Facts-About-Skateboarding&id=2223195> This has a hodgepodge of trivia about the sport.

Jerry Spinelli's website, http://www.jerryspinelli.com/newbery_001.htm
Official website for this Newbery award winner.

BOOKTALK:

Will Tuppence likes to feel in control; he loves chess & astronomy. In ninth grade, he begins to feel that he's lost control: of his feelings for Mi-Su, of his out of control kid-sister, of his chances of winning the chess tournament which matters so much. And then there's the issue of proton decay, which concerns him because he's such a science geek. Oh, and then there's Dead Man's Hill, with its enormous slope, which he's too chicken to try with the Black Viper, his skateboard. Legend has it that his friend BT has already made it down Dead Man's Hill – he's also already kissed Mi-Su, which is driving Will crazy. If only he could be more in control! When a skateboard accident on Dead Man's Hill brings really important issues into focus, can Will figure out how to go forward? Read Jerry Spinelli's *Smiles to Go*.

Prepared by:

Nancy Self

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Stolen
Vivian Vande Velde
Marshal Cavendish Corp, 2008
158 pages

SUMMARY:

The same day that the villagers of Thornstowe finally hunt down a witch with a reputation for stealing children, a 12 year old appears in the woods with no memory of her past. Is there a connection between “Isabelle”, the girl who does not know who she is and the girl the witch stole six years ago?. Everyone wonders if the girl with no memory could be Isabelle. Isabelle parents are certain that the mysterious girl is their long lost daughter. Her older sister, Honey, is skeptical. She believes this Isabelle is an imposter. Among the twist and turns of the story, Isabelle’s true identity is revealed and her life is increasingly in danger. This is a tale of greed, jealousy and insidious evil that will haunt you to the end.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY.....

Witch Dreams Vivian Vande Velde
Which Witch Iva Ibbotson
The Witches Roald Dahl
Ella Enchanted Gail Carson Levine
Heir Apparent Vivian Vande Velde
Stolen Children Peg Kehret

WEBSITES:

Vivian Vande Velde’s website with many resources for her books -

<http://www.vivianvandevelde.com/>

Booknotes by author Melissa Wiley - <http://melissawiley.com/blog/2009/03/08/booknotes-stolen/>

BOOKTALK:

The first thing I remember is walking through the woods and hearing dogs coming after me. I ran and climbed a tree but the dogs got to me anyway. The hunter took me home to his wife to patch me up where the dogs had bitten me on the legs. Then they told me the story about the villages burning the old witch’s house because they thought she had stolen another baby. Twelve years before I appeared, another baby was stolen and now the baby sister of the first stolen child has also been taken. I don’t know my name or where I came from but everyone seems to think I am Isabelle, the girl who was stolen twelve years ago by the witch. My “parents” come and claim me but it is not easy to fit back into a family you don’t remember. My older sister, Honey, seems to be the only one who thinks I am an imposter. I must search for some kind of connection to my old life but is there anything left of the old “Isabelle” in me. If you can’t remember who you are, are you really you? It seems the closer I get to the answer of who I am, the more dangerous it gets for me. If you want to know what happens to me and my family and find out if I ever regain my memory then read: *Stolen* by Vivian Vande Velde

Prepared by:

Linda Estridge
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The White Gates
Bonnie Ramthun
Random House 2008
242 pages
HL790L

SUMMARY:

When his mother becomes the doctor in Snow Park, Colorado, twelve-year-old Tor learns of a curse placed on the town's doctors many years ago by an eccentric Ute woman, but suspects that a modern-day villain is hiding behind that curse.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Cover-up / John Feinstein
Absolute pressure / Sigmund Brouwer
Slam dunk / Kate Jaimet.
Crackback / John Coy
Boost / by Kathy Mackel

WEBSITES:

Bonnie Ramthun's home page has a teacher's guide available.
<http://www.bonniearamthun.com/Site/Home.html>
Informative article on blood doping - http://whyfiles.org/090doping_sport/3.html
United States Anti-Doping Agency USADA - <http://www.usada.org/about/>
Snowboarding in the Olympics - <http://library.thinkquest.org/J002862/Snow.htm>

BOOKTALK:

Read exert beginning 3rd full paragraph on page 180. "Tor felt a burst of triumph...."

When Torin Sinclair's mom gets a job as the town doctor in Snow Park, Colorado, Tor can't wait to learn to snowboard. But on Tor's first night there, a member of the high school snowboarding team dies. "It's the curse," everyone whispers. Tor's new friends Drake and Raine explain that there's an old Native American curse on the doctors of the town. Snow Park can never get a doctor to stay. Tor and his friends must piece together a mystery involving an old mine, a Ute curse, the entire snowboarding team--who just might be blood doping in order to win competitions-- and an attempt to save the wild river otters of Colorado. But to complete the puzzle, will Tor have to ride the deadly White Gates? And how will he survive the avalanche that follows.

Prepared by:

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