

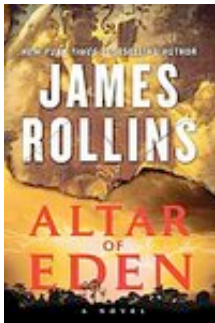
New Fiction February 2010



All Unquiet Things

By Anna Jarzab

With smooth assurance, Jarzab transforms what could have been a formulaic story of boarding-school students behaving badly into a fresh, compelling tale. Part mystery, part character study, the story hooks readers immediately, propelling them through a serpentine path of secrets and lies. Seventeen-year-old Neily found the body of his ex-girlfriend, Carly, on the Empire Creek bridge. A year later, Carly's uncle is imprisoned for the crime, but neither Neily nor the victim's cousin, Audrey, is convinced that he is the murderer. Forming an often-acrimonious partnership, the two teens narrate the chapters in alternating voices as they follow the clues to a nail-biting conclusion and discover the truth not only about the murder but also about themselves. The characters are distinct and memorable, but it is Neily who stands out with a pitch-perfect, sarcastic voice and a personality that surges from the pages of this promising debut. (*Booklist*)

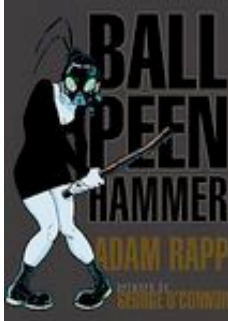


Altar of Eden

By James Rollins

Bestseller Rollins (*Subterranean*) explores the genetic engineering theme popularized by *Jurassic Park*, if less imaginatively than, say, Warren Fahy did in his 2009 debut, *Fragment*, in this solid stand-alone thriller. During the looting of the Baghdad zoo in the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, 12-year-old Makeen and his younger brother observe two men, one dressed in a khaki military uniform and the other in a dark suit, remove a large metal briefcase

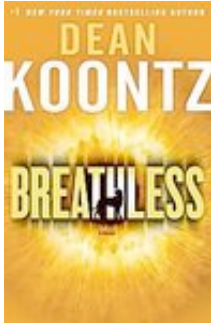
containing embryos from a secret facility at the zoo. About five years later, a U.S. Border Patrol helicopter lands at the New Orleans Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species to take Dr. Lorna Polk, a postgraduate resident, out over the Mississippi Delta to an abandoned trawler. In the boat Polk sees cages filled with bizarre creatures like Siamese twin capuchin monkeys and oversized vampire bats. The science mostly takes a backseat to generic suspense scenes of animal attacks, gunfights, and abduction. (Publishers Weekly)



Ball Peen Hammer

By Adam Rapp, artwork by George O'Connor

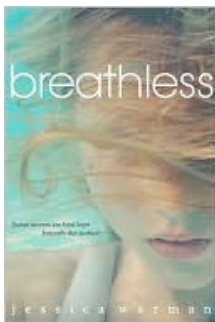
Rapp and O'Connor tell the story of four people trying to survive in a society suffering from environmental, biological, and political disease. Aaron, an idealistic novelist trying to capture in words the reason for his society's collapse, holes up in a basement with Welton, who is slowly dying of a strange plague. Meanwhile Exley, a young woman who once had a brief encounter with Welton, befriends a boy named Horlick. All four characters are ensnared by the government to work in a gruesome program involving the eponymous hammer, while Exley and Welton desperately search for one another, never realizing that they are on different floors of the same building. The authors have clearly come to the graphic form with an understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Rather than trying to tell a novel's worth of story with excess narration and dialogue, they allow large passages to unfold entirely in images. The unresolved ending is Rapp's hallmark, and this book reads as a statement about the uncertain future, allowing the novel to hit home with the taut force of a good short story. (*School Library Journal*)



Breathless

By Dean Koontz

Bestseller Koontz (*Relentless*) delivers a hard-to-classify stand-alone set near the Rocky Mountains that will appeal more to fans of his Odd Thomas books than those partial to his Hitchcockian thrillers. While out for a walk, reclusive Grady Adams and his wolfhound, Merlin, spot two white furry animals “as large as midsize dogs” and “as quick and limber as cats” that aren't like anything previously known to science. The sudden arrival of these mysterious creatures out of the blue appears to be linked to several other baffling phenomena. Meanwhile, a sadist, Henry Rouvroy, tracks down his identical twin, James, and kills him and James's wife in order to assume his brother's identity. After the murders, Rouvroy is unsettled by evidence that the dead have not stayed dead. Koontz's cryptic dedication to Aesop (“twenty-six centuries late and with apologies for the length”) may hold the key to what's going on, but readers are likely to find the moral of this peculiar tale, if there is one, obscure. (*Publishers Weekly*)

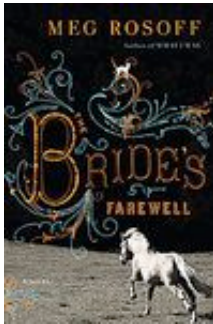


Breathless

By Jessica Warman

Katie, 15, is most herself when she is in the water, swimming faster and better all the time. Things were so much simpler when the Kitrells were poor—her family seemed closer. Now that they are financially comfortable, their relationships have deteriorated. Katie's parents become more and more wrapped up in one another, and Katie feels excluded. She is still close to her older brother, Will, who is schizophrenic, and when his behavior becomes more erratic and extreme, she

becomes concerned and frightened. Their father, now successful in his psychiatric practice, seems unable to maintain any warm relationships with his children, and sends Katie away to boarding school. There she is accepted by the most popular girls and attracts the attention of gorgeous Drew, captain of the swim team. Katie is also intrigued by her strangely withdrawn roommate and works on building her trust. Eventually, too much drinking, smoking, and worrying about her family take their toll on her swimming performance. When her brother's illness spirals out of control again, Katie faces serious personal losses and challenges that have no simple solutions. Warman treats Will's schizophrenia with stark honesty as seen through his sister's eyes. Similar to Jessica Lee Anderson's *Border Crossing* (Milkweed, 2009), this novel provides an important look at an extremely difficult illness and its effects on a family. (*School Library Journal*)



Bride's Farewell

By Meg Rosoff

In rural 1850s England, a horse-mad young woman flees home on her wedding day. Fearful that her fiancé's promise of "a house full of children" will translate into a future of drudgery, Pell plans to visit the Salisbury Horse Fair. Her mute little brother insists on accompanying her, but when he and her horse disappear at the fair—along with the man for whom she's spent the day working and who still owes her money—Pell's vision of her future is drastically altered. The twists and turns along her new path bring her into contact with a wide variety of people, from the Gypsy family that helps her on her way to Dogman, to a taciturn poacher who becomes her savior. Rosoff's simple yet descriptive language paints a clear picture of a world both bleak and beautiful. Like the setting, the characters are many faceted. Nobody, including Pell, is entirely good or evil. Readers will appreciate her journey, both the external search for her brother and a place in the world for herself, and the internal pursuit of balance between familial responsibilities and personal satisfaction. Teens will relate to Pell's internal conflict and refusal to settle onto the path life seems intent to force upon her. Rosoff's first adult title is as finally crafted as her Printz Award-winning *How I Live Now* (Random, 2004). (*School Library Journal*)



Brothers Story

By Katherine Sturtevant

Kit longs to rise in the world but to do so would mean leaving his Essex village for London Town and abandoning his twin brother, Christy, who is “simple” and cannot care for himself. Yet the terrible privations of the Great Frost of 1683–84, the coldest winter in England’s history, may leave the increasingly desperate 15-year-old no choice. In giving us Kit’s story, with its echoes of the Biblical tale of Joseph and his brothers, Sturtevant has done a breathtakingly good job of recreating not only the earthy sense of Restoration England—its sights, smells, sounds, lusts and longings—but its ethos, as well. Her readers discover, dramatically, not only how Kit and his colorful contemporaries feel but also how they think—about themselves, their stations, their society, their moral behavior and responsibilities, and, yes, their God. There are no easy answers to the difficult questions that confront and sometimes torment Kit, nor is it an easy world in which this character can reflect, “At first it was nearly a satisfaction to me to be suffering again, as the poor are born to do.” Sturtevant’s book is not only a stunning story but a challenging and deeply satisfying work of social conscience. (*Booklist*)

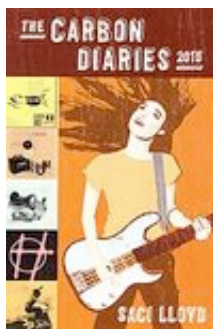


By Blood We Live

Edited by John Joseph Adams

While the simultaneously published *Vampire Archives* culls from nearly two centuries’ worth of bloodcurdling (and draining) fiction, this collection consists entirely of ASL stories, in that all were written After *Salem’s Lot* (1975), which brought vampires back in fashion. Appropriately, the oldest story in this survey,

given pride of place in a horror collection—dead last—is Stephen King’s “One for the Road,” the first sequel to his breakthrough novel; its flayingly repulsive final image typifies the freshness of his early work. Plenty in the first rank of those famous for working with vampires—Anne Rice, L. A. Banks, Kelley Armstrong, Brian Lumley, Tanith Lee, David Wellington—are represented here, alongside all manner of fantasy, sf, alt-history, YA, and even thriller reliables: Neil Gaiman, Jane Yolen, Tad Williams, Kevin J. Anderson, Harry Turtledove, Eric Van Lustbader, and their ilk. All kinds of concepts are on view, too. Anderson’s entry stars Bela Lugosi during the making of the movie *Dracula*. Michael A. Burstein’s “Lifeblood” is an allegory of Jewish assimilation. For its size and variety, consider this the contemporary vampire anthology. (*Booklist*)



Carbon Diaries 2015

By Saci Lloyd

Laura Brown's diary of 2015 charts the first year of carbon rationing in Great Britain. The global climate has declined so precipitously that the country has made the unilateral decision to cut its carbon emissions by 60 percent. Everyone is issued a card that tracks their allowable use of carbon for the year. This limits utility usage, travel, and purchase of anything that has been transported over a distance, including food. Laura has to cope with limits to hygiene, cell phone use, and practice time with her band and listen to lectures on reducing energy consumption. Her father's job as Head of Travel and Tourism at a local college is eliminated. Freezing weather is followed by hot drought and flooding to finish off the year. Her family initially reacts badly to the strains—her parents fight, her dad starts drinking but then tries his hand at home agriculture, her mom joins the Women Moving Forward club, and her sister, Kim, disappears for days at a time and almost dies when a cholera epidemic hits the city. The book refers to itself as an eco-thriller but it doesn't present the usual over-the-top characters and hardly believable events of so many books in that genre. It works so well because of all the normal craziness of life that has nothing to do with the environmental disaster. The family crisis, the colorful supportive neighbors, the crush on the cute boy next door, and the triumphs of Laura's band lend the story verisimilitude

that will give it appeal far beyond the usual thriller for doom-and-gloom junkies.
(*School Library Journal*)



Child Thief

By Brom

The first adult novel by award-winning illustrator Brom is perhaps best described by author Christopher Golden: "Brom has always been an artist who gave us nightmares fully realized, but with *The Child Thief*, he paints in words a wonderfully nasty Peter Pan reboot that stands on its own as a dark twisted adventure." This haunting retelling of James Barrie's fairyland story is rendered through the eyes of Nick, a 14-year-old orphan lured into Peter's adolescent brigade. A wickedly poetic retake on a classical magical tale (*Editorial Reviews, Barnesandnoble.com*)



Ender's Game: Battle School

Creative Director and Executive Director Orson Scott Card

Marvel begins its serial adaptation of Card's epoch-defining science-fiction neo-classic in this first volume, which takes six-year-old prodigy Ender from his home, where he is the target of his brother's relentless psychological torment, and through the grueling Battle School, where he is trained as Earth's potential savior against a shadowy force of aliens. Yost skillfully captures the intense moral complexity of Card's original by delineating both Ender's iron resolution and his struggle with his own tortured psyche. Ferry's art is an ideal complement, supporting the nuance with articulate facial expressions that hint at the depth beneath Ender's placid surface, though the gravity-defying action is never short-

changed. This first installment is tied up neatly with Ender's triumph over his psychological burden, while the machinations of the surprisingly sympathetic military puppet-masters assure interest in future volumes. Ultimately, this graphic novel's power is an ode to the success of the original work, and even though this will easily capture the imagination of the initiated, all readers should be steered toward Card's novels as well. (*Booklist*)



A Family Secret (Anne Frank House, in cooperation with the Resistance Museum of Friesland)

By Eric Heuvel

While searching his grandmother's attic for likely items to sell at a yard sale, Jeroen finds a photo album that brings back hard memories for his grandmother, Helena. Helena tells Jeroen for the first time about her experiences during the German occupation of the Netherlands during the Second World War, and mourns the loss of her Jewish best friend, Esther. Helena believes that her own father, a policeman and Nazi sympathizer, delivered Esther to the Nazis and that she died in a concentration camp. But after hearing her story, Jeroen makes a discovery and Helena realizes that her father kept an important secret from her. (*From the Publisher, Barnesandnoble.com*)

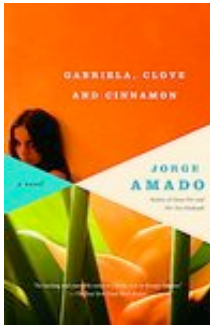


Fire

By Kristen Cashore

This prequel to *Graceling* (2008) introduces Fire, a monster-woman with the fundamental elements of her kind: a breathtaking beauty that inspires nearly irresistible sexual attraction and the dual powers of reading thoughts and

bending another's will to her purposes. Though her father used his monster powers to control the kingdom for his own evil purposes, Fire struggles to use hers only for good. Her growing regard for the king, his brothers, and his sister leads to some uncomfortable dilemmas and decisions as well as, eventually, the revelation of old secrets. Drawn in to tip the delicate balance of forces struggling over the realm, she begins to trust herself to act on behalf of the royal family, though in doing so she violates a long-held principle that has held her considerable powers in check. Like its predecessor, this novel focuses on a young woman who thinks for herself, wields considerable powers, and acts courageously. While the two stories take place in adjoining lands and one character appears in both books, readers can enjoy this novel without having read *Graceling*. And enjoy it they will, with its vivid storytelling, strongly realized alternate world, well-drawn characters, convincing fantasy elements, gripping adventure scenes, and memorable love story. (*Booklist*)



Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon

By Jorge Amado, Translated from the Portuguese by James L. Taylor and William L. Grossman

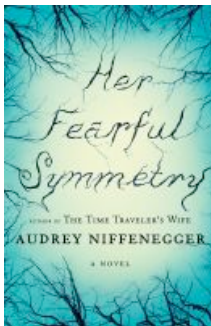
One bright spring day in 1925, Gabriela arrives from the poverty-stricken backwoods of Brazil to the lively seaside port of Ilheus amid a flock of filthy migrant workers. Though wearing rags and covered in dirt, she attracts the attention of Nacib, a cafe owner, who is in desperate need of a new cook. So dire is his situation that he hires the disheveled girl. The savvy young woman quickly proves to be an excellent chef and —once well-scrubbed and decently dressed— an eye-catching beauty. Nacib quickly finds himself the owner of the most prosperous business in town—and the employer of its most sought-after woman. (*Synopsis, Barnesandnoble.com*)



Good Girl's Guide to Getting Kidnapped

By Yxta Maya Murray

The pace never slows in this gripping novel that begins when 15-year-old Michelle blasts past her competition at a regional track meet. What even her best friend, Kiki, doesn't know is that Mish is running just as hard from her past, when she was known as Princess P, the daughter of a leader in one of South L.A.'s toughest gangs. While her family is in jail, Michelle has turned her life around with the help of a great, if neurotic, foster dad. Then the gang resurfaces and kidnaps Kiki and Michelle. In her powerful narrative, Michelle slides into gangsta mode, explaining jargon and gang behaviors to Kiki, and uninitiated readers, without distracting from the story. The characters are all developed and memorable, especially Michelle and Kiki, who almost hurtle from the pages, and the sense of place is vivid. Even as the cinematic action and violence races along, readers will never lose track of the story's driving question—can Michelle ever leave her past behind?—as they race to the ambiguous conclusion. (*Booklist*)



Her Fearful Symmetry

By Audrey Niffenegger

Following her breakout bestseller, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Audrey Niffenegger returns with *Her Fearful Symmetry*, a haunting tale about the complications of love, identity, and sibling rivalry. The novel opens with the death of Elspeth Noblin, who bequeaths her London flat and its contents to the twin daughters of her estranged twin sister back in Chicago. These 20-year-old dilettantes, Julie and Valentina, move to London, eager to try on a new experience like one of their obsessively matched outfits. Historic Highgate Cemetery, which borders Elspeth's

home, serves as an inspired setting as the twins become entwined in the lives of their neighbors: Elspeth's former lover, Robert; Martin, an agoraphobic crossword-puzzle creator; and the ethereal Elspeth herself, struggling to adjust to the afterlife. Niffenegger brings these quirky, troubled characters to marvelous life, but readers may need their own supernatural suspension of disbelief as the story winds to its twisty conclusion. (*Amazon.com Review*)



Hidden Empire

By Orson Scott Card

In the near future, political scientist Averell Torrent has become President of the United States following a devastating civil war prompted by runaway technology and a polarization of conservatives and liberals. Only one man, Capt. Bartholomew Coleman, knows Torrent's true agenda and must find a way to prove it to the public before his enemies silence him. The award-winning author of *Ender's Game* and its sequels excels at cautionary fiction. Card folds his empathic and compassionate views on politics and the human condition into compelling storytelling and believable characters, and this results in a fast-paced, well-crafted sf thriller—the sequel to Card's best-selling *Empire*. (*Library Journal*)



Hold Still

By Nina LaCour

After losing her best friend, Ingrid, to suicide, Caitlin is completely immobilized. Unable to function, and refusing to visit a therapist, she begins the long journey to wellness alone. During this year of heart-wrenching, raw emotion, Caitlin finds Ingrid's journal, which not only reveals her descent into irreversible depression,

but also serves as Caitlin's vehicle for renewed hope in the future. The book is written with honesty, revealing one's pain after the loss of a loved one. Caitlin learns, with the help of new friends and her parents, that there is life after Ingrid. *(School Library Journal)*



How to Say Goodbye in Robot

By Natalie Standiford

Because of her father's academic career, Beatrice Szabo's family has moved multiple times, most recently from Ithaca, NY, to Baltimore. In order to protect herself from the emotional fallout caused by the constant moves and her parents' troubled relationship, she has invented a cold, emotionless persona for herself called Robot Girl. When she begins her senior year at a small private school, she enters a class where the students have known one another since kindergarten. She finds herself drawn to outcast Jonas Tate, aka Ghost Boy, who introduces her to the Night Light show, a local late-night radio show. They form an intense friendship, complicated by Jonas's obsession with his mentally disabled twin brother, whom his father had told him died in an automobile accident years before. When Jonas discovers that Matthew is actually alive and in a local institution, events gradually spiral out of control as Jonas plots to liberate him. Beatrice begins to realize that her deep love and friendship for Jonas cannot help him overcome all of his emotional difficulties. This is an honest and complex depiction of a meaningful platonic friendship and doesn't gloss over troubling issues. The minor characters, particularly the talk-show regulars, are quirky and depicted with sly humor. Teens will identify with the intense emotions of Beatrice and Jonas, the reasons they are drawn to each other, and the ups and downs of their relationship. An outstanding choice for a book discussion group. *(School Library Journal)*



Hush, Hush

By Becca Fitzpatrick

It all starts when Nora finds herself becoming intrigued by the mysterious senior transfer student, Patch. There's something incredibly alluring about the darkly handsome stranger and something incredibly . . . creepy, too. Is that his voice that starts invading Nora's thoughts? And is he the one who starts stalking our smoky-eyed heroine? And what's up with the inverted V-shaped scar on his back? Why, it almost looks as if wings have been ripped away. Omigod, could he possibly be . . .? First-novelist Fitzpatrick spares no contrivance in her sometimes uneven but always eerie novel of supernatural suspense, which finds its inspiration in the apocryphal Book of Enoch and the legends of the Nephilim, the progeny of fallen angels and human women. Horror and romance fans who are weary of the werewolf (and vampire) next door will welcome this new take on the heart of darkness. And enough loose ends remain at novel's end to suggest a sequel is surely in the works. (*Booklist*)



Initiation

By Susan Fine

Mauricio Londoño, the child of immigrant parents, didn't know what he was getting into when he entered the hallowed halls of St. Stephen's, the premier all-boys school in New York City, as a freshman. Though shy and uncertain in the classroom, he's befriended by nerdy Alexander and wealthy, brilliant Henry, who help him navigate his new, confusing environs. But it's Zimmer, the guy who comes into class alternately hungover and decked out in bling, who confuses Mauricio the most. Seemingly despised by everyone at school, Zimmer's

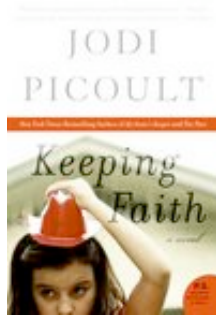
FaceSpace friend list nevertheless numbers in the hundreds and includes the very people who hate him. It's when a case of cyberbullying meets the moneyed that things get messy, and Mauricio finds himself caught in the middle, struggling to understand whom to trust. A more literary counterpart to Cecily von Ziegesar's "Gossip Girl" series (Little, Brown), *Initiation* pays careful attention to the greater spectrum of students attending prestigious prep schools without playing to stereotypes. A supporting cast of female characters adds depth to the story; there's Henry's beautiful twin sister who piques Mauricio's interest in spite of their differences and a tough but inspiring English teacher. With a pitch-perfect teenage voice, alternating between poignant realizations and descriptions of bodily functions, Fine has crafted a book that has wide appeal for both genders. (*School Library Journal*)



Jude

By Kate Morgenroth

In her YA debut, adult thriller writer Morgenroth tells the compelling story of Jude, 15, who is caught in a world of murder, drugs, and cover-ups that reaches into his Connecticut home and high school. The action is fast as Jude confronts the worst and best in himself, and the story reveals surprising secrets about people Jude thinks he can trust. Sworn to silence by the killer of his violent, drug-dealing dad, Jude moves into the wealthy home of the mother he has never known, and he switches to an elite private school. His mother is up for reelection as district attorney, and to save her reputation, he pleads guilty to a drug crime he didn't commit. He spends the next five years in prison, where he suffers constant abuse. Always he struggles to avoid being like his dad, and he longs for recognition from the mother who treats him like a stranger. There's a minimum of cursing and obscenity, but the dialogue still sounds pitch-perfect, and the intricacies of betrayal and discovery continue to the end of the novel. Readers will be caught by the thrilling mystery as well as Jude's fear, shame, anger, and search for home. (*Booklist*)



Keeping Faith

By Jodi Picoult

Picoult blends elements of psychology and spirituality into a mesmerizing morality play, where conventional notions of faith and honesty are put to the test by a seemingly impossible series of extraordinary events. After emotionally fragile Mariah White discovers her husband in an affair, she lapses into depression. Confused by both her mother's inertia and her parents' impending divorce, seven-year-old Faith White begins receiving mysterious visitations from a woman she refers to as her "guard." In addition to obsessing about her imaginary friend, the religiously unschooled Faith also begins spouting passages from the Bible and healing the seriously ill. Rousing herself from the brink of mental collapse, Mariah brings her daughter to see so-called experts, including a psychologist, a rabbi, and a priest. When the media jump on the bandwagon, Mariah and Faith are besieged by an alternately awe-struck and angry host of believers and nonbelievers. As her life spins out of control, Mariah must fight public opinion, the legal system, and her outraged ex-husband in order to retain custody of Faith. *(Booklist)*



Last Night in Twisted River

By John Irving

... A trio of tragic events (though the prize for most hell-shocking goes to the third) exiles widower and camp cook Dominic Baciagalupo and his son Danny from a mid-century logging outpost called Twisted River. They leave behind the Bunyan-esque lumberjack Ketchum--a gruff, eccentric, dyed-in-the-wool Yankee--who remains their sole connection to the past. What's next neither father nor son

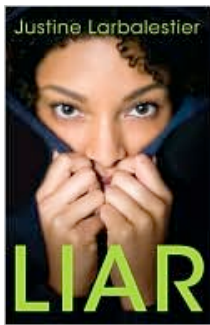
knows: their rootless existence moves swiftly in and out of New England, tied ostensibly to jobs for Dominic and schools for Danny, but it seems one foot is always back in those New Hampshire woods. Theirs is a restless, richly observed journey, crowned by a reckoning no one could predict. Few writers can match John Irving's knack for *denouement*, and in *Last Night in Twisted River*, his extraordinary ending is made all the more powerful by a story that feasts on language, life, and love. (*Amazon.com Review*)



Last Night I Sang to the Monster

By Benjamin Alire Sáenz

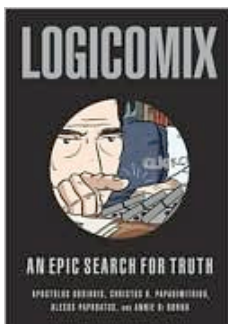
At 18, Zach can only remember little pieces of his past life. This is partly due to the alcohol abuse that has landed him in a rehab facility. But it is, in larger part, due to something so terrible having happened to him that he has repressed his memories of it. In the process it has become like a monster inside him, so frightful he can't expel it by himself. Fortunately he finds two caring adults—his therapist, Adam, and his roommate (and fellow alcoholic), Rafael—who struggle to help him with the work of remembering and recovering. Some readers may be put off by the slow pace of Sáenz's story, and the author's language and sensibility sometimes veer dangerously close to bathos. But there is never a question of either Sáenz's own extraordinary capacity for caring and compassion or the authenticity of the experiences he records in this heartfelt account of healing and hope. (*Booklist*)



Liar

By Justine Larbalestier

Micah Wilkins is a senior at a New York City private school, an extraordinarily talented runner, and a compulsive liar. She's masqueraded as a boy, invented family members, and hidden her relationship with handsome fellow student Zach Rubin. When Zach dies under mysterious and horrific circumstances, Micah's history of lying brings her under suspicion. Larbalestier creates and sustains a marvelous tension, as readers ponder what part of Micah's narrative is true. "Before" and "After" entries call to mind Green's *Looking for Alaska* (2005), and like that titular character, Micah is wonderfully complex, both irritating and immensely likable. A supernatural element is well supported by Micah's obsession with genetics; she frequently cites facts learned in school to try to understand what is going on inside her. Larbalestier effortlessly and realistically shows the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of Micah's world (she is African American), something teens of color will appreciate. The unresolved ending will certainly provoke discussion, sending readers back to the text for a closer rereading. (*Booklist*)

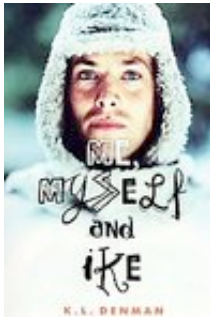


Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth

By Apostolos Doxiadis and Christos H. Papadimitriou

An ambitious full-color exploration of the life and ideas of philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell, the book meticulously interconnects Russell's life, the timelessness of his ideas and the process of creating the book. While a comic about the quest for the foundations of mathematics may seem arduous, it

is engrossing on many levels; the story moves, despite heavy philosophical and technical information, as the images, dialogue and narration play off each other. Russell's story is framed within a speech he gave on the brink of America's entry into WWII, in which he expounds his life and philosophical journey. Russell's story is also framed by the creators working in Greece, as they discuss and mold his life into a narrative structure. One of the most prominent themes is the conflict and symbiosis between madness and logic. The fear of madness haunts Russell because of childhood trauma, as he neurotically pushes himself toward what he conceives of as its opposite, a system for certainty. Inventive, with both subtle and overt narrative techniques, the comic form organizes the complex ideas into a simpler system, combining to form a smart and engaging journey through the ambiguity of truth. (*Publishers Weekly*)



Me, Myself, and Ike

By K.L. Denman

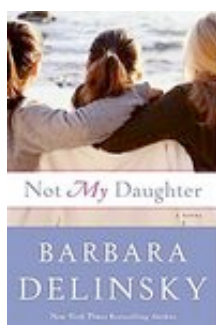
Kit, 17, is a troubled youth who is being led astray by his friend Ike. Just the previous year, he had a circle of friends, a wonderful girlfriend, and a place on the basketball team. Now he hangs out more and more with Ike, coerced into thinking that he should hike to the top of a mountain in Strathcona Park, British Columbia, and bury himself in the snow in order to preserve his body, to be found hundreds if not thousands of years in the future. At times, Kit seems to resent the fact that Ike will not be sacrificing himself while he is encouraging Kit to commit suicide. In the meantime, Kit's parents know something is wrong, but just don't know what has happened to their once easygoing, affable son. Readers will eventually recognize that Ike is not real, but a hallucination caused by the onset of schizophrenia. While the story is about a young man with a mental illness, it is also a well-told, readable mystery, brimming with suspense. An author's note giving details about schizophrenia adds an additional level of clarity to the novel's ending. (*School Library Journal*)



Nanny Returns

By Emma McLaughlin and Nicola Kraus

Nan revisits 721 Park, home of the moneyed but morally bankrupt Xs, and the boy she guiltily left behind in their inept care in this smart and sassy sequel to *The Nanny Diaries*. And though Nan has grown up a bit, married “Harvard Hottie” Ryan and traveled the world, the plight of the rich and stupid continues, as does Nan’s new crusade to save former charge Grayer and his younger brother Stilton, renovate a crumbling East Harlem mansion and stick it out at a soulless Manhattan private school. Outcomes are deeply uncertain, though Nan is nothing if not a natural-born cheerleader: “I know what I’m worth. Because I care for these kids, I do, right down to my toes,” she says of her young charges in and out of school. There’s still one fear, however—whether she’ll ever be able to make the leap from nanny to mommy. McLaughlin and Kraus leave no dry eyes as they once again wield a razor-sharp wit that cuts down the most uppity mortals even as it lifts up their vulnerable children. You could safely bet your first born that this’ll be another smash hit. (*Publishers Weekly*)

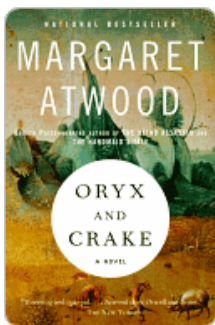


Not My Daughter

By Barbara Delinsky

Mother-daughter bonding, knitting and a ripped-from-the-headlines plot from Delinsky (*While My Sister Sleeps*, 2009, etc.). Three high-school seniors form a pact to become pregnant. Sound familiar? But Lily, Mary Kate and Jess are the top girls, academically, athletically and socially, in the Maine coastal village of Zaganack. Boasting old roots and rigid values, this company town for an upscale retailer is scandalized. Most of the scandal comes from the fact that Lily's mother

Susan is the high-school principal. The old men on the school board are outraged at the example the three girls have set, and all fingers are pointing in Susan's direction. Not only is she a bit of a progressive-she's established a medical clinic at the school and prefers counseling to punishment-Susan too was pregnant and unmarried at 17. When Lily was a baby, Susan bonded with fellow new mothers Kate (Mary Kate's mom) and Sunny (tightly wound parent of Jess); the women have been best friends ever since, and all three are devastated by their daughter's incomprehensible decision. At PC Wool, a division of the posh retailer that they created and run together, they spend Saturdays dyeing yarn and trying to figure out why their girls traded in bright futures for teenage motherhood. While Susan fights for her job, she revisits her painful past (her own parents shamed and disowned her) and begins to connect more deeply with Lily's father Rick, a globetrotting journalist who may be ready to stay home. Problems arise with the health of Lily's baby, the involvement of the babies' fathers and the stability of PC Wools, but by novel's end, everything is so neatly and happily resolved that readers may wonder what the fuss was about. Delinsky has a knack for exploring the battlefields of contemporary life, and this emotionally intelligent, though formulaic, new novel offers her fans what they want-high drama and romantic realism. (*Kirkus Reviews*)



Oryx and Crake

By Margaret Atwood

Surely Atwood deserved a respite after *The Blind Assassin* (2000) won the Booker Prize, but the muse had more to say, hence this hijack-intense speculative novel, sister to one of Atwood's most indelible works, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

Jimmy is struggling to stay alive on a wreckage-littered Earth besieged by a brutal sun and overrun with smart and vicious test-tube-bred predators. Now calling himself Snowman (as in Abominable), he's preparing for an arduous scavenger expedition back to the formerly high-tech compound in which he lived and worked until the bioengineering industry ran amok and a catastrophic event put an end to civilization. Snowman is desperately lonely, but he isn't actually alone since he serves as guru for a strangely passive tribe unaware of the lost world of computers, bullet trains, Web porn, gene-splicing, and the plagues that Snowman

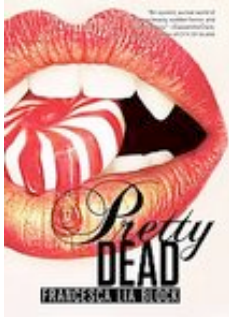
so vividly and regretfully recalls. As Snowman remembers his friend, Crake, an emotionally remote genius, as well as the love of Snowman's life, an enigmatic survivor of childhood sexual abuse called Oryx, Atwood conjures a grim, all-too-plausible future in order to consider the possibly devastating consequences of our present ill-advised biotech pursuits. Rigorous in its chilling insights and riveting in its fast-paced "what if" dramatization, Atwood's superb novel is as brilliantly provocative as it is profoundly engaging. *(Booklist)*



Peter & Max: A Fables Novel

By Bill Willingham, Illustrations by Steve Leialoha

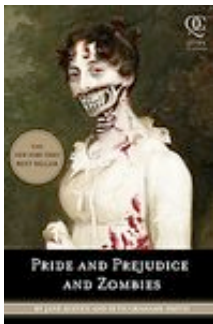
Willingham's "Fables," a comic book series that brings characters from myths, folk stories, and tall tales into the present day, steps into the world of prose with a charming stand-alone fantasy novel. The story begins in modern Fabletown, a magical village hidden in New York City where many of the immortal Fables now live. Peter Piper—the same Peter who picked a peck of pickled peppers and challenged the great wolf—is warned that his evil brother Max, aka the Pied Piper, has been causing problems out in the world. Peter heads for Hamelin, Germany, to challenge him and put a stop to his dark ways for good. A series of flashbacks then take things back to medieval times and set the stage for the final conflict. Fantasy readers new to "Fables" will get a nice taste of Willingham's rich and satisfying world while fans of the comics will find themselves treated to cameo appearances by popular characters like Bigby (aka the Big Bad Wolf), the Beast, and Peter's wife, Bo Peep. Leialoha's black-and-white drawings smartly enhance the fairy-tale feel of the story. Those willing to dig past the slow start required to explain the extensive background of the author's inventive world will find an action-packed adventure built around two absolutely captivating characters. *(School Library Journal)*



Pretty Dead

By Francesca Lia Block

Charlotte Emerson is tall and beautiful, and lives by herself in a gorgeous mansion. She's also a vampire. Before she turned, she was a bright young woman with an idyllic life. Then her beloved twin died, and his death so devastated her that she had to find a way to dull the pain. Thus, she became a vampire, a decision that has haunted her for nearly 100 years. Now she is faced with another tragic loss: that of her best friend, Emily, to an apparent suicide. Lost and lonelier than before, she seeks comfort and solace in Emily's boyfriend, Jared. At first, he is bitter and angry with her, but she opens up to him, telling him about her past, and they eventually fall in love. But there is one secret that she keeps from him: she suspects that she may, somehow, be turning into a human again. When Charlotte's maker, William, returns to taunt her, Charlotte is forced to face a horrific mistake from her past that may cost her everything. In *Pretty Dead*, Block takes what has up to now been the norm among vampire novels for teens and attempts to turn it on its head. This is a startlingly original work that drives a stake deep into the heart of typical vampire stories, revealing the deep loneliness and utter lack of romance in eternal life. (*School Library Journal*)



Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: The Classic Regency Romance—Now With Ultraviolet Zombie Mayhem

By Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith

This may be the most wacky by-product of the busy Jane Austen fan-fiction industry—at least among the spin-offs and pastiches that have made it into print. In what's described as an “expanded edition” of *Pride and Prejudice*, 85 percent

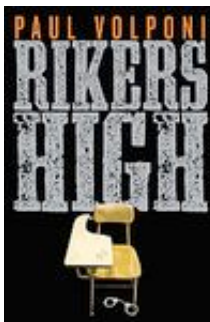
of the original text has been preserved but fused with “ultraviolet zombie mayhem.” For more than 50 years, we learn, England has been overrun by zombies, prompting people like the Bennets to send their daughters away to China for training in the art of deadly combat, and prompting others, like Lady Catherine de Bourgh, to employ armies of ninjas. Added to the familiar plot turns that bring Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy together is the fact that both are highly skilled killers, gleefully slaying zombies on the way to their happy ending. Is nothing sacred? Well, no, and mash-ups using literary classics that are freely available on the Web may become a whole new genre. What’s next? *Wuthering Heights* and *Werewolves*? (*Booklist*)



Push

By Sapphire

An electrifying first novel that shocks by its language, its circumstances, and its brutal honesty, *Push* recounts a young black street-girl's horrendous and redemptive journey through a Harlem inferno. For Precious Jones, 16 and pregnant with her father's child, miraculous hope appears and the world begins to open up for her when a courageous, determined teacher bullies, cajoles, and inspires her to learn to read, to define her own feelings and set them down in a diary. (*From the Publisher, Barnesandnoble.com*)



Rikers High

By Paul Volponi

Recasting his specialty-press debut novel, *Rikers* (2002), for a younger audience, Volponi tracks a juvenile offender’s final 17 days in the New York correctional

facility. Though arrested just for telling an undercover cop where to buy weed, Martin has spent five months at Rikers waiting for his case to come up. The experience has made him a canny observer of the prison ecosystem, good at keeping his head down and steering clear of gangs, extortion schemes, brutal correction officers, and other hazards . . . mostly. The author draws authentic situations and characters from his six years of teaching at Rikers, and though his scary cautionary tale is less harrowing than Adam Rapp's *Buffalo Tree* (1997) or Walter Dean Myers' *Monster* (1999), it is nevertheless an absorbing portrait of life in stir. In the end, Martin walks out on plea-bargained probation, bearing both inner and outer scars. Rare is the reader who won't find his narrative sobering. (*Booklist*)



Shadow of the Leopard

By Henning Mankell, translated from the Swedish by Anna Paterson

Mankell, the acclaimed mystery writer for both youth and adults, once again draws on true events in Mozambique in this haunting, contemporary story of violence and courage. In *Secrets in the Fire* (2003), Sofia, 9, lost both of her legs in a land-mine explosion that killed her sister. Now, 10 years later, she has three children with her husband, Armando, who works in a nearby town and can only visit Sofia in their village on the weekends. After Sofia discovers that Armando is involved with another woman, she throws him out, and he breaks down, leaves his job, and, in desperation, becomes a thief, a choice that leads to a horrifying, violent climax. Mankell writes without sentimentality in a clear, matter-of-fact style, and it is the frank, vivid details of Sofia's struggle that will stay with readers: how she dreams of having electricity in her home; walks miles on her crutches; cares for her children, including the baby on her back; takes off her legs every night before bed; and confronts her husband about his infidelity. Is she responsible for what happens to him? This isn't a detective story, like many of the author's best-known works, but the drama of betrayal is riveting and will draw many of Mankell's high-school and adult fans. (*Booklist*)



Shiver

By Maggie Stiefvater

Grace, 17, loves the peace and tranquility of the woods behind her home. It is here during the cold winter months that she gets to see her wolf—the one with the yellow eyes. Grace is sure that he saved her from an attack by other wolves when she was nine. Over the ensuing years he has returned each season, watching her with those haunting eyes as if longing for something to happen. When a teen is killed by wolves, a hunting party decides to retaliate. Grace races through the woods and discovers a wounded boy shivering on her back porch. One look at his yellow eyes and she knows that this is her wolf in human form. Fate has finally brought Sam and Grace together, and as their love grows and intensifies, so does the reality of what awaits them. It is only a matter of time before the winter cold changes him back into a wolf, and this time he might stay that way forever. Told from alternating points of view, the narrative takes a classic Romeo & Juliet plot and transforms it into a paranormal romance that is beautiful and moving. Readers will easily identify with the strong, dynamic characters. The mythology surrounding the wolf pack is clever and so well written that it seems perfectly normal for the creatures to exist in today's world. A must-have that will give Bella and Edward a run for their money. (*School Library Journal*)

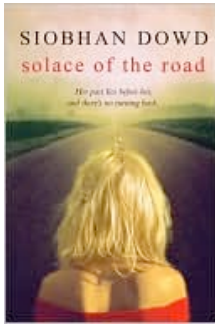


Small Kingdoms

By Anastasia Hobbet

Hobbet's compelling novel is set in Kuwait between the Gulf Wars, with the country poised for the next wave of unexpected terror while coming to grips with

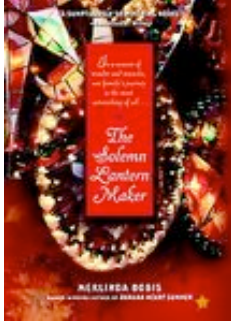
the last: "He'd expected to see some scars of the war. But there was nothing that spoke of the violence, not even a tank posed as a public memorial." Hobbet's disparate protagonists come from different classes, countries and faiths: devoutly Muslim, wealthy Mufeeda; her young Indian cook, Emmanuella; California doctor Theo; Theo's Arabic teacher, Hanaan (a Palestinian); and timid American housewife Kit (also Mufeeda's neighbor). Each character is, to varying degrees, a misfit in a society beset by violence and ancient practices. When news of murdered maids begins circulating, several characters undertake a precarious plan to save a maid in danger, a dangerous mission with the potential to change all their lives permanently. Hobbet's extensive knowledge of Kuwait's people, customs and political landscape combine to make an immersive, authentic novel about Middle East life. (*Publishers Weekly*)



Solace of the Road

By Siobhan Dowd

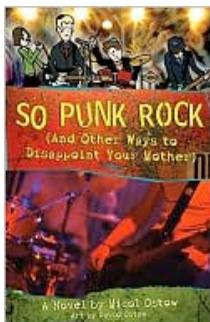
Holly Hogan, 14, lives in a facility for troubled youth in England. Her dream is to return to Ireland, her birthplace, and reunite with her mother. When she is placed in a foster home, the dream resurfaces as she finds and tries on the woman's blond wig. Suddenly, Holly is gone and in walks Solace, a devil-may-care older version of herself, with "slim-slam hips" and the world at her feet. The name Solace comes from a winning horse Holly supposedly chose when her mother bet on horses. As Solace, the teen sets off on the road to ruin as she begins a runaway journey. All the while, her faded memories turn all too gritty as she remembers the true behavior and treatment she received at her mother's hands. She meets a variety of strangers, some kinder than others. And she does indeed make it to Ireland almost at the cost of her life. Through her alter-ego, Holly rediscovers herself and embraces the promise of a better life than the one she has been dealt. Written with dialect of both the English and Irish, the story has some words or phrases that may be unfamiliar to some readers. However, there is nothing to detract from the emotional power of this beautiful novel. Readers will keenly feel Holly's hurt, rage, confusion, sorrow, humor, and hunger for a sense of home, a sense of peace. (*School Library Journal*)



Solemn Lantern Maker

By Merlinda Bobis

When an investigative journalist is shot dead on the streets of Manila, two slum kids, Noland, 10, and Elvis, 12, rescue an American visitor, Cate Burns, injured in the shootout and hide her in the shack where Noland lives with his mother. Will the killers come for Cate? It is the week before Christmas and stars are everywhere, as Noland runs from car to car peddling his star paper lanterns to tourists from the nearby five-star hotel. Elvis works as a prostitute, supervised by his “uncle,” with his cell-phone, Walkman, and gold crucifix. In spare, present-tense vignettes, told from multiple viewpoints, Filipino writer Bobis sets the personal story of loyalty, courage, and love against the corruption of the powerful. Was the journalist murdered for exposing a senator? How is the U.S. involved? Just on the edge of magical realism, the stirring drama is rooted in family and in post-9/11 politics as suspense builds to the very end. Noland is mute: why? Fans of the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* (based on the novel *Q & A*, by Vikas Swarup) are the natural audience for this one. (*Booklist*)

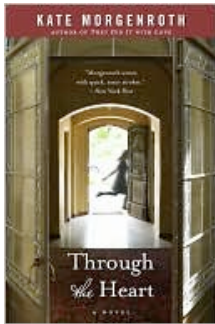


So Punk Rock (And Other Ways to Disappoint Your Mother)

By Micol Ostow, Art by David Ostow

Sixteen-year-old Ari Abramson has a Plan: form a band, get famous, and get Sari Horowitz to finally notice him. Unfortunately, his parents have a different plan: study constantly, earn a perfect score on the SAT, and get accepted to Brandeis. Though Ari finds his classmates superficial and unsympathetic, he strives single-mindedly to gain their acceptance and admiration. He mocks frontman Jonas's shallowness and vanity; however, as he comes closer to achieving his goal, he

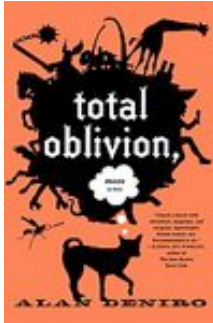
becomes more shallow and vain himself. Scholarly and conscientious drummer Yossi, and Reena, the cool and perceptive chanteuse, are foils to Ari's ambivalence and willful ignorance. As Ari's band, The Tribe, gets more popular, things don't exactly work out according to The Plan. Ultimately, the teen is forced to face the truth about who he is and what he really wants. Set in the suburbs of New Jersey, Ostow's bildungsroman is also a witty study of Jewish day-school culture. Ari's breezy narration includes using nouns and adjectives as verbs (Jonas "obviouses," Ben "brats") to humorous effect. It's also peppered with Jewish vocabulary, which is defined in the illustrated glossary. Ari's black-and-white "doodles," some of which are in graphic-novel form, are some of the funniest parts of the book. The Tribe is living the rock-and-roll lifestyle, so there is some adult language and underage drinking. Readers will be engaged by Ari's droll account of his struggle to achieve indie rock stardom and his subsequent disillusionment. (*School Library Journal*)



Through the Heart

By Kate Morgenroth

Morgenroth (*They Did It with Love*) gracefully tells a love story, tragedy, and mystery from three very different perspectives: Nora's, Timothy's, and the findings of a police report. Nora is a young woman taking care of her ailing mother in her Kansas hometown, working in a knockoff Starbucks coffee shop, living a shadow of a life as her mother goes through treatment for leukemia. Timothy is a moneyed New Yorker, existing in a cold life of privilege and prestige. When a chance encounter between the two starts an unlikely relationship, facets of their personalities and their family relationships are slowly uncovered, revealing surprises for everyone involved. The crafting here is more literary fiction than popular mystery, but fans of both will be captivated by this haunting tale. With character studies, a deep love story, challenging yet wildly differing filial duties, and a murder mystery, the only disappointment is that this beautifully gripping novel ends. (*Library Journal*)



Total Oblivion, More or Less

By Alan Deniro

For 16-year-old Macy, the whole world has gone crazy, quite literally. Barbarians from antiquity have invaded America, while bizarre plagues and impossibly shifting landscapes ravage her Minnesota homeland. Together with her parents, sister, brother, and a possibly evil dog, Macy sets out down the Mississippi on an adventure that takes her into the smoldering ruins of St. Louis, aboard a wooden submarine that's bigger on the inside than outside, and finally into the stone-skyscraper capital of Nueva Roma. All the while she dodges oil-men turned slavers, plague-instigating wasps, an albino bounty hunter, and, perhaps most dangerous of all, her scheming younger brother. DeNiro (who flaunted a knack for offhand sf oddness in *Skinny Dipping in the Lake of the Dead*, 2006) makes sure never to do anything as dull as explaining what the heck is going on—we simply accept that the world has become a surreal, historical landscape come to life and move on. He drops in so many tantalizingly inspired touches—the new (old?) empire considers Post-it notes a precious natural resource—that leaving his inside-out America at the end is almost painful. There aren't many writers who take weirdness as seriously as DeNiro does, and fewer still who can extract so much grounded emotion, gut-dropping humor, and rousing adventure from it. A dizzying display of often brilliant, always strange, and definitely unique storytelling. (*Booklist*)



Vast Fields of Ordinary

By Nick Burd

It's Dade's last summer at home before college and things are looking bleak: his parents' marriage is disintegrating; his father has a girlfriend; his mother is self-medicating with pills and booze; his sorta boyfriend, Pablo, refuses to acknowledge the nature of their "friendship"; the local media are obsessed with the mysterious disappearance of an autistic little girl; and Dade himself is feeling pretty lost and invisible, too. But then he meets the dangerous yet fascinating (and unapologetically gay) Alex, and things take a turn for the better . . . for a while. Burd's first novel has some of the trappings of the traditional coming-out-while-coming-of-age story, and his ending seems more willful than artful. Also, some readers may find the subplot about a missing girl more distracting than symbolically resonant. That said, Burd is a terrific writer with a special gift for creating teenage characters who are vital, plausible, and always engaging (even when they're being mean and menacing). His take on the complications in Dade's life is sophisticated and thoughtful, especially on the ambiguities of that "relationship" with Pablo, while his limning of the growing friendship with Alex is deeply satisfying, never striking a discordant emotional note. Clearly, Burd is a new talent to watch. (*Booklist*)