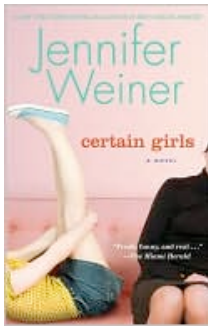


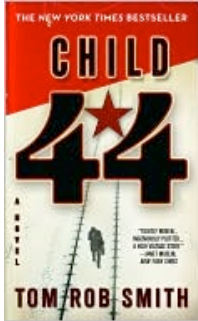
New Fiction September 2010



Certain Girls

By Jennifer Weiner

Following the story collection *The Guy Not Taken*, Weiner turns in a hilarious sequel to her 2001 bestselling first novel, *Good in Bed*, revisiting the memorable and feisty Candace "Cannie" Shapiro. Flashing forward 13 years, the novel follows Cannie as she navigates the adolescent rebellion of her about-to-be bat mitzvah daughter, Joy, and juggles her writing career; her relationship with her physician husband, Peter Krushelevansky; her ongoing weight struggles; and the occasional impasse with Joy's biological father, Bruce Guberman. Joy, whose premature birth resulted in her wearing hearing aids, has her own amusing take on her mother's overinvolvement in her life as the novel, with some contrivance, alternates perspectives. As her bat mitzvah approaches, Joy tries to make contact with her long absent maternal grandfather and seeks more time with Bruce. In addition, unbeknownst to Joy, Peter has expressed a desire to have a baby with Cannie, which means looking for a surrogate mother. Throughout, Weiner offers her signature snappy observations: ("good looks function as a get-out-of-everything-free card") and spot-on insights into human nature, with a few twists thrown in for good measure. She expends some energy getting readers up to speed on *Good*, but readers already involved with Cannie will enjoy this, despite Joy's equally strong voice. (*Publishers Weekly*)

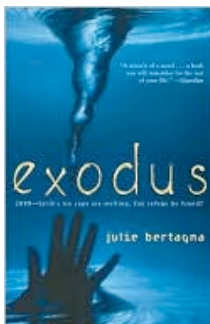


Child 44

By Tom Rob Smith

Dennis Boutsikaris expertly conveys the fear and paranoia that permeates Smith's outstanding debut novel of murder in 1950s Stalinist Russia. Leo Demidov, decorated hero of WWII and an officer in Moscow's MGB (a forerunner of the KGB), refuses to denounce his wife as an enemy spy. He is subsequently demoted, disgraced and dispatched, along with his wife, to a backwater factory. A brutal murder with the same characteristics as one Leo was once forced to cover up convinces him that a serial killer is stalking Russian children. Using Russian accents to their full advantage, Boutsikaris infuses his characters' dialogue with a deep sense of downtrodden melancholia. His staid, deliberate reading captures the soul-numbing oppressiveness of life under a totalitarian regime, as well as one man's desperate fight against it in order to do what's right.

(Publishers Weekly)

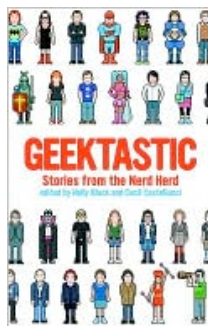


Exodus

By Julie Bertagna

Already a critical and popular success in the UK, where it was printed in 2002, this sweeping, futuristic fantasy envisions a ravaged earth, submerged almost entirely in water after a century of global warming-induced ice melt and storms. After her tiny island

is consumed by the sea, 15-year-old Mara, aided by an antique Web-surfing device, guides her community to a towering city across the ocean. Her family is killed during the dangerous passage, and on arrival in glittering New Mungo, Mara and the islanders join a floating camp of desperate refugees who are barred from the heavily walled civilization. Realizing that survival for herself and the others depends on finding help behind the wall, Mara begins a monumental, nightmarish quest through layers of increasingly affluent, developed societies. Bertagna creates wholly imagined, extraordinarily vivid worlds, whether she's depicting the rich, earthy subsistence of the Treenesters or the eerily glossy, empty glamour of high-tech Noospace, where Mara delves into an exciting 3-D Internet and, despite the artificial environment, finds true friendship, help, and love. Astonishing in its scope and exhilarating in both its action and its philosophical inquiry, this accomplished first novel in a proposed trilogy will, like the works of Philip Pullman and J. K. Rowling, attract a wide age-range of readers. (*Booklist*)

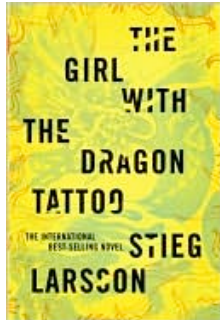


Geektastic: Stories from the Nerd Herd

Edited by Holly Black and Cecil Castellucci

From Trekkers to science geeks, Buffy fanatics to Dungeon Masters, nerds of all persuasions are sure to find themselves in the pages of this anthology. It contains fun reads such as Black and Castellucci's "Once You're a Jedi, You're a Jedi All the Way" in which a Klingon wakes with a Jedi in her hotel room while at a sci-fi convention, and Tracy Lynn's "One of Us," in which a cheerleader enlists the school nerds to teach her the basics of geekdom so she can impress her Trekker boyfriend. The collection also includes more profound fare such as Kelly Link's moving and masterful "Secret Identity" about a 15-year-old girl who has pretended to be her 32-year-old sister on

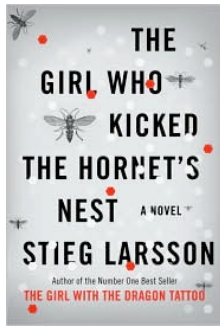
an online RPG. She must face the consequences of her lies when she arranges to meet the man with whom she has developed a relationship. Also included are stories by YA lit greats such as John Green, Libba Bray, Scott Westerfeld, and M. T. Anderson. Each story is followed by a comic-book-style illustration offering information or advice such as "What Your Instrument Says About You" and "How to Look Cool and Not Drool in Front of Your Favorite Author." Simultaneously addressing the isolation and loneliness that geeks can feel as well as the sense of camaraderie and community that can be found when one embraces a world or ideology in which he or she can completely invest, *Geektastic* is a completely dorky and utterly worthwhile read. (*School Library Journal*)



Girl With the Dragon Tattoo

By Stieg Larsson

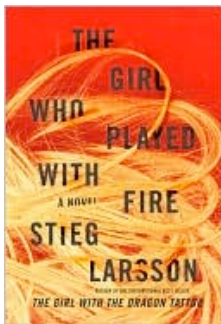
With its rich characterizations and intriguing plot, the first book of the late Stieg Larsson's completed trilogy, involving disgraced Swedish journalist-publisher Mikael Blomkvist and the eponymous, pierced and tattooed, emotionally troubled young hacker-investigator Lisbeth Salander, clearly deserves the acclaim it's received overseas. Martin Wenner's almost indifferent, British-accented narration would seem an odd choice for a novel filled with passion, sex and violence, but as the oddly coupled Blomkvist and Salander probe the four-decade-old disappearance of Harriet Vanger, heiress to one of Sweden's wealthiest clans, the objective approach actually accentuates the extreme behavior of both and the strange subjects of their investigation. Wenner's calm, controlled manner aids the listener in keeping track of the numerous members of the Vanger family, a task that the printed book simplifies with a reference page. (*Publisher's Weekly*)



Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest

By Stieg Larsson

The exhilarating conclusion to bestseller Larsson's Millennium trilogy (after *The Girl Who Played with Fire*) finds Lisbeth Salander, the brilliant computer hacker who was shot in the head in the final pages of *Fire*, alive, though still the prime suspect in three murders in Stockholm. While she convalesces under armed guard, journalist Mikael Blomkvist works to unravel the decades-old coverup surrounding the man who shot Salander: her father, Alexander Zalachenko, a Soviet intelligence defector and longtime secret asset to Säpo, Sweden's security police. Estranged throughout *Fire*, Blomkvist and Salander communicate primarily online, but their lack of physical interaction in no way diminishes the intensity of their unconventional relationship. Though Larsson (1954-2004) tends toward narrative excess, his was an undeniably powerful voice in crime fiction that will be sorely missed. (*Publishers Weekly*)

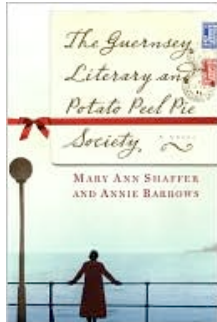


Girl Who Played with Fire

By Stieg Larsson

Fans of intelligent page-turners will be more than satisfied by Larsson's second thriller, even though it falls short of the high standard set by its predecessor, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*,

which introduced crusading journalist Mikael Blomkvist and punk hacker savant Lisbeth Salander. A few weeks before Dag Svensson, a freelance journalist, plans to publish a story that exposes important people involved in Sweden's sex trafficking business based on research conducted by his girlfriend, Mia Johansson, a criminologist and gender studies scholar, the couple are shot to death in their Stockholm apartment. Salander, who has a history of violent tendencies, becomes the prime suspect after the police find her fingerprints on the murder weapon. While Blomkvist strives to clear Salander of the crime, some far-fetched twists help ensure her survival. Powerful prose and intriguing lead characters will carry most readers along. (*Publishers Weekly*)



Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

By Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

Winding up her book tour promoting her collection of lighthearted wartime newspaper columns, Juliet Ashton casts about for a more serious project. Opportunity comes in the form of a letter she receives from Mr. Dawsey Adams, who happens to possess a book that Julia once owned. Adams is a member of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society—no ordinary book club. Rather, it was formed as a ruse and became a way for people to get together without raising the suspicions of Guernsey's Nazi occupiers. Written in the form of letters (a lost art), this novel by an aunt-and-niece team has loads of charm, especially as long as Juliet is still in London corresponding with the society members. Some of the air goes out of the book when she gets to Guernsey; the humorous tone doesn't quite mesh with what the islanders suffered. But readers should enjoy this literary soufflé for the most part, and

curiosity about the German occupation of the British Channel Islands will be piqued. (*Booklist*)



Ice Song

By Kirsten Imani Kasai

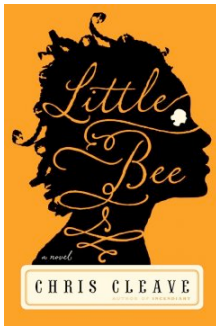
Somewhere, somewhen, human DNA mutates radically. Some humans, called somatics, develop wings, fur, or other physical traits of animals. Others, like Soryk/Sorykah, are "traders," humans with the ability to shift back and forth, physically and emotionally, between sexes. Objects of curiosity and scorn, somatics and traders hide their mutations to blend into "normal" human society. Far in the wilderness, however, lives a researcher obsessed with finding a way to reverse the mutations, and he has the money and the power to pursue his goal ruthlessly. When he kidnaps Sorykah's twin infants, who are also traders, to use in one of his brutal vivisectionist experiments, she sets out to rescue them and to destroy him and his laboratory. The journey takes Sorykah/Soryk from barren ice fields to an underground city of somatics, and on to a pleasure palace beyond the sea. To succeed in rescuing the children, Sorykah and Soryk must learn to live as a single person rather than as two individuals inhabiting the same body. Told in a quiet, sometimes almost dreamlike style reminiscent of fairy tales (though at times disturbing ones), *Ice Song* will appeal to teens interested in questions of identity and difference. (*School Library Journal*)



Inside Out Girl

By Tish Cohen

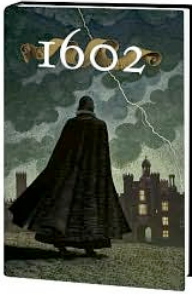
This compelling, insightful story is surprisingly lighthearted in spite of several heavy themes. Rachel Berman is raising her 14-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son by herself, after a divorce. She's also working hard to keep her father's magazine, *Perfect Parent*, financially afloat. Len Bean, an attorney, is raising his 10-year-old special-needs daughter alone; his wife was killed in a traffic accident when their daughter was five. The three children attend the same school, where Olivia Bean is known as "Inside Out Girl" because of her strange dress and overreadiness to hug, not to mention her love of data about rats. Soon after Rachel and Len meet, and then begin dating, Len discovers that he has a fatal brain tumor; finding a home for Olivia after his eventual death coincides with Rachel's longing to know what became of the daughter she bore as a teen and surrendered for adoption. Meanwhile, Rachel's daughter is struggling with her passionate crush on the girl next door. Characters are complete, credible, and engaging. Olivia and her nonverbal learning disorder are presented cogently and without stereotyping either her personality or the responses that she draws from kids and adults. This is a romance novel worthy of readers' time. (*School Library Journal*)



Little Bee

By Chris Cleave

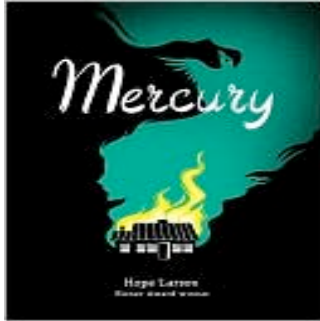
Book clubs in search of the next *Kite Runner* need look no further than this astonishing, flawless novel about what happens when ordinary, mundane Western lives are thrown into stark contrast against the terrifying realities of war-torn Africa. Their marriage in crisis, Andrew and Sarah O'Rourke impulsively accept a junket to a Nigerian beach resort as a last-ditch attempt to reconcile. When machete-wielding soldiers appear out of the jungle and force them to determine the fate of two African girls, everyone's lives are irrevocably shattered. Two years later in a London suburb, one of the girls, now a refugee, reconnects with Sarah. Together they face wrenching tests of a friendship forged under extreme duress. Best-selling author Cleave (*Incendiary*) effortlessly moves between alternating viewpoints with lucid, poignant prose and the occasional lighter note. A tension-filled dramatic ending and plenty of moral dilemmas add up to a satisfying, emotional read. Highly recommended for all libraries and book clubs. (*Library Journal*)



Marvel 1602

By Neil Gaiman, Andy Kubert, and Richard Isanove

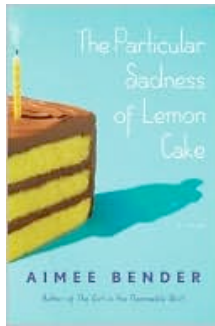
The always inventive Gaiman has concocted an unlikely—but fantastically successful—superhero comic that transfers Marvel's classic characters to the Elizabethan period. Nick Fury is still a lethal government operative, but now he's an adviser to Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty is equally reliant on magician and doctor Stephen Strange. X-Men mentor Charles Xavier still shepherds a band of mutant teens, only now he's called Carlos Javier, and the mutants are known, and mistrusted, as "witchbreed." Carlos's mysterious nemesis has taken on a new job: grand inquisitor of the Spanish Inquisition. Peter Parker (here "Parquah") is still a confused but well-meaning teenager who has yet to be bitten by a radioactive spider. Placed in a period landscape (rendered in rich, painterly panels by illustrator Kubert and digital painter Richard Isanove), these familiar characters must grapple with the issues of the day, chief among them the machinations of the evil King James of Scotland. And, in classic superhero style, they must save the world. The improbable combination works remarkably well, as the superheroes' strange abilities adapt to Elizabethan culture. This glorious adventure is peppered with Scott McKowen's gorgeous, moody cover-art woodcuts. (Oct.) Forecast: Gaiman's dedicated following will flock to this; script pages and detailed notes and sketches in the back make it an even more attractive package. (*Publishers Weekly*)



Mercury

By Hope Larson

Larson (*Chiggers*, 2008) won an Eisner Award for Special Recognition in 2007 and is establishing an oeuvre of thoughtful, girl-centric graphic novels that often feature touches of unobtrusive fantasy, lending a dreamy quality that helps characterize her distinctive storytelling style. *Mercury* tells two tales: one of Josey, who lives in a small Canadian town in 1859; and the other of her descendant, Tara, who has returned to the same town in 2009, a year after her house burned to the ground. Tenth-grader Tara's burgeoning relationships and her difficulty reacclimating to her old school will be more identifiable than Josey's forbidden courtship with itinerant prospector Asa, but the use of two time lines delineates the different eras' outlooks on family and romance, which brings some immutable human truths into high relief. The gentle dose of magic realism doesn't feel incongruous and underscores the powerful ways in which past touches present. The insights unfold leisurely, but patient readers will find themselves deeply invested. Comparisons to Craig Thompson's *Blankets* (2003) wouldn't be inappropriate, but Larson continues to perfect her own unique style and offers something the graphic format is sadly short on: a coming-of-age story for girls. (*Booklist*)



Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake

By Aimee Bender

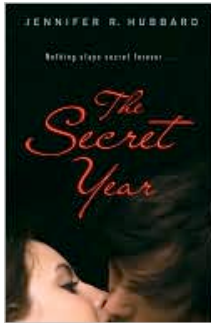
Eating the cake her mother has prepared for her ninth birthday, Rose Edelstein discovers she has a gift: she can taste her mother's emotions in the food she prepares. Soon, every bite Rose takes is filled with feelings—not just her mother's but those of other people as well—and what might have been a gift becomes a burden and then, perhaps, a curse. Because this is a novel rooted in family, Rose will learn that she is not the only Edelstein with a peculiar gift or burden. How she and others learn to cope—or not, as the case may be—is the small, sad story Rose shares. Bender's earlier work has often been described as surrealistic; however, this novel seems more informed by a kind of magical realism that struggles with transformation and sometimes—fleetingly—succeeds, as in the case of the novel's vividly realized Los Angeles setting. But the effect soon fades, and the reader is left only with a lingering feeling of emptiness and the realization that sadness tastes a lot like bitterness. (*Booklist*)



Sarah's Key

By Tatiana de Rosnay

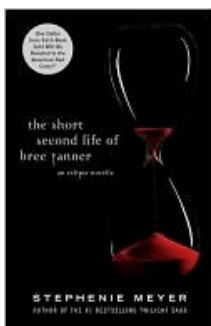
De Rosnay's U.S. debut fictionalizes the 1942 Paris roundups and deportations, in which thousands of Jewish families were arrested, held at the Vélodrome d'Hiver outside the city, then transported to Auschwitz. Forty-five-year-old Julia Jarmond, American by birth, moved to Paris when she was 20 and is married to the arrogant, unfaithful Bertrand Tézac, with whom she has an 11-year-old daughter. Julia writes for an American magazine and her editor assigns her to cover the 60th anniversary of the Vél' d'Hiv' roundups. Julia soon learns that the apartment she and Bertrand plan to move into was acquired by Bertrand's family when its Jewish occupants were dispossessed and deported 60 years before. She resolves to find out what happened to the former occupants: Wladyslaw and Rywka Starzynski, parents of 10-year-old Sarah and four-year-old Michel. The more Julia discovers—especially about Sarah, the only member of the Starzynski family to survive—the more she uncovers about Bertrand's family, about France and, finally, herself. Already translated into 15 languages, the novel is De Rosnay's 10th (but her first written in English, her first language). It beautifully conveys Julia's conflicting loyalties, and makes Sarah's trials so riveting, her innocence so absorbing, that the book is hard to put down. (*Publishers Weekly*)



Secret Year

By Jennifer R. Hubbard

For a year, 16-year-old working-class boy Colton Morrissey met rich girl Julia Vernon, his schoolmate and girlfriend of a member of the local gentry, on a regular and frequent basis. No one knew of their romance until the night Julia was killed in a car accident (in which Colt was uninvolved). Hubbard sensitively shows the year before the accident and the year following—as Colt comes to terms both with Julia’s death and the need to share the secret of their romance. Julia is revived through a diary she kept and which her brother gives to Colt. His friends, including would-be lovers and guys who can’t see past class lines, and parents are fully human; his mostly offstage older brother joins the action long enough to help Colt understand why the worst secrets are those we keep from ourselves. With this debut novel, Hubbard has crafted a fine addition to the pantheon of YA literature. (*Booklist*)



Short Second Life of Bree Tanner

By Stephenie Meyer

Bree Tanner, who first appeared briefly as a newborn vampire in Meyer’s *Eclipse* (2007), is the star of this slim partner to the megamillion-selling *Twilight* series. A self-described “vampire nerd,” Bree recounts her adventures as she roams Seattle fulfilling her

thirst for blood (and Meyer fans' thirst for more books). In a passionate introduction, Meyer reiterates what *Eclipse* readers already know: Bree has few nights left on Earth. As she joins her red-eyed coven in battle against yellow-eyed adversaries that, while foreign to Bree, will be instantly recognizable to millions of human readers, she finds her first (kissable) friend and discovers a truth about daylight. Formatted as one long, breathless chapter, this novella includes the same casual language and elements of suspense and romance found in the *Twilight* quartet, and interlocking characters and dialogue fit it easily into Bree and Bella's scene in *Eclipse*. While *Twilight* fans will appreciate the story as an expansion of Bella's world, this rapid read also stands satisfyingly alone.
(Booklist)

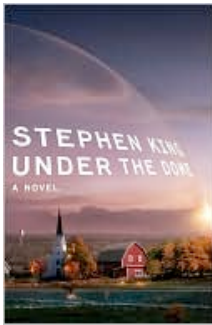


Spider-Man Noir

Writers David Hine with Fabrice Sapolsky, Art Carmine Di Giandomenico

Superheroes in re-imagined worlds don't necessarily have a proud tradition. For every smashing success (Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns*, 1986; Mark Waid's *Kingdom Come*, 1996), there are many silly, commercially driven failures. Hine, who has been in the business since 1980 with popular characters such as the X-Men and the Teen Titans, and his collaborator, Sapolsky, score a resounding success here. The first of Marvel's new Noir line, which places familiar heroes into pulp-inspired 1930s narratives, throws young Peter Parker into a world of gangster-run streets and crusading newspapermen, as the young man steps into the role of a fearsome vigilante in the tradition of the Shadow. Even as the story spins familiar characters and motivations in a slightly different direction and melds the pulp sensibility with an accurate and detailed

historical depiction, Di Giandomenico's art displays a fluid depth and is drenched in shadow, creating an atmosphere entirely appropriate to noir. Along with a surprising complexity in supporting characters like Aunt May and Ben Urich (here a heroin addict) comes a moral shading that will offer older readers something to chew on, though rest assured that the heroic themes of integrity, courage, redemption, and idealism come through loud and clear. Features fun, illuminating bonus materials, too. (*Booklist*)



Under the Dome
By Stephen King

On an October Friday night during what would be Obama's second term, a clutch of local toughs, unfortunately led by the son of the town boss, gang up on Iraq War vet Dale Barbara, lately short-order cook at the Sweetbriar Rose. So he's hoofing it out of town the next bright morning. An old groundhog galumphs along the highway, and a small plane buzzes overhead. Suddenly, the animal's in two bleeding pieces, and the Seneca V's explosively colliding with nothing Barbie (as friends call him) can see. A barrier, initially invisible, has fallen precisely on the boundaries of Chester's Mill, Maine, and penetrated deep into the ground. It keeps all but wisps of air and trickles of water out, but everyone and everything in. The week accounted for by the succeeding 1,000-plus pages doesn't go well at all. Indeed, it culminates in an actual holocaust because of the machinations of the aforementioned town boss—pious, covert sociopath Big Jim Rennie, who sees in Chester's Mill's involuntary quarantine an opening for covering the tracks of his meth-making business and blaming any attendant violence on Barbie. King keeps a huge cast very busy in his third-biggest novel ever, but most of its members are flimsily realized. However, his explanation for the dome

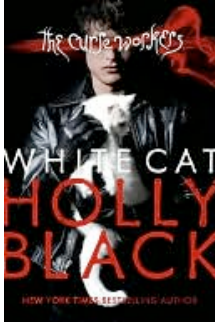
has a prestigious pedigree (Shakespeare's King Lear), and his way with mayhem remains nonpareil. (*Booklist*)



What the World Will Look Like When All the Water Leaves Us

By Laura van den Berg

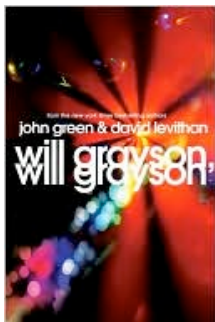
Lonely, abandoned, and adrift young women undertake missions esoteric, ludicrous, and risky in van den Berg's exceptional debut. As compelling as her characters and their predicaments are, it's van den Berg's startling insights into the alliance between the human psyche and the mysteries of nature in a time of environmental mayhem that give these short stories their glimmering power. Jean, an aspiring and desperate young actor, plays Bigfoot in a renegade recreational park. Shelby tries to care for her increasingly bizarre little brother after their famous scientist parents die in the Amazon while searching for the "sasquatch of Brazil." Botanist Emily searches for a rare wildflower in Inverness. Catherine is in the Congo where war, AIDS, and floods conjure up the lake monster mokele mbembe. A man searches for the mishegenabeg, the legendary giant serpent of the Great Lakes. A teenager dreams of becoming a long-distance swimmer as her scientist mother comes undone while studying the doomed lemurs in Madagascar's pillaged forests. Van den Berg summons monsters born of awe, fear, and guilt, while her burdened but determined characters struggle in a sea of need and indifference. Stunning, desolate, and unforgettable. (*Booklist*)



White Cat (The Curse Workers, Book One)

By Holly Black

Cassel remembers killing his best friend, Lila, three years ago. Now he finds himself on the edge of his dorm roof and doesn't know how he got there. As it turns out, nothing is what he thinks it is. Cassel knows his family are curse workers, a small minority around the world who can change luck, emotions, or even transform things and people into something entirely different. Because curse working is illegal, many are con men or mobsters, and members of Cassel's family happen to be both. He, however, is the one born without any powers. Or is he? The first book in the *Curse Workers* series starts out with spine-tingling terror, and information is initially dispensed so sparingly, readers will be hooked. But then things get muddled, especially which curse workers can do what . . . and why. Despite the confusions, Cassel is an appealing hero, and kids will read to the end just to sort out events. In the final chapter, Cassel's mother returns from prison. That should make the next book fun. (*Booklist*)



Will Grayson, Will Grayson

By John Green & David Levithan

Will Grayson's best friend since fifth grade, nicknamed Tiny Cooper, is bigger than life in terms of his physical stature and his personality—the "world's largest person who is really, really gay."

Tiny, while seeking the boy of his dreams, has been through the trauma of myriad short-lived romantic relationships and Will has supported him each time his heart is broken. Now, Tiny decides it's Will's turn. At first, Will resents Tiny's matchmaking efforts, but then an amazing coincidence that stems from it brings a new person into their lives. It's another teen named Will Grayson, who is sad and depressed, and captures Tiny's heart. While these and other relationships are connecting, intersecting, and eventually changing, Tiny writes and produces an autobiographical high school musical extravaganza that is really about life. On the night it premieres, everything comes full circle and further validates the presence of the Will Graysons. Based on the premises that "love is tied to truth" and "being friends, that's just something you are," this powerful, thought-provoking, funny, moving, and unique plot is irresistible. Told in alternating chapters from each Will Grayson's point of view (one in lower case, effectively individualizing identities), complete with honest language, interesting characters, and a heartfelt, gritty edge, this quirky yet down-to-earth collaboration by two master YA storytellers will keep readers turning pages. (*School Library Journal*)