

Best Teen Reads - 2005



Sharron L. McElmeel

mcelmeel@mcelmeel.com -- <http://www.mcelmeel.com>

- Alexander, Alma. *The Secrets of Jin-Shei*. HarperCollins. (0060563419) Science fantasy; 512 pgs.
A mythical Chinese realm where mothers pass to daughters the secret language of jin-shei. Friendships form across all classes because of the language and those friendships will change the fate of their world. A04 HS-Adult
- Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane: A Novel*. Scribner. (0743243307) fiction; 384 pgs.
Nazneen, born in a Bangladeshi village and transported to London at age eighteen to enter into an arranged marriage. HS-Adult *
- Anderson, Janet S. *The Last Treasure*. Dutton. (0525469192) fiction; 256 pgs
Since his death in 1881, the spirit of John Matthew Smith, once a wealthy patriarch, has been taking an annual walk around the Square of homes he built for his large family. He had hidden three treasures, two of which were found in times of need now it is time for the youngest relatives to find the third. (ALA Best Book – 2004; Nominee for Edgar YA Mystery Award –2004) MS
- Balliett, Blue. *Chasing Vermeer*. Brett Helquist, illustrator. Scholastic. (0439372941) fiction; 272 pgs.
When unexplained occurrences begin to happen, Petra Andalee and Calder Pillary know it will be up to them to solve the puzzle that is unfolding. Knowledge about the artist Vermeer takes center stage in this puzzle filled mystery novel. A04 MS
<http://www.scholastic.com/titles/chasingvermeer>
- Bowler, Tim. *Firmament*. Simon & Schuster, McElderry Books. (0689861613) fiction; 320pg
The death of fourteen-year-old Luke's father gives him a lot to cope with – and when his new gang of "friends" begin to make demands he must figure out how to deal with the bullies, a lonely old woman, a blind young girl, his mother's romantic involvement, and his own musical talent. A04 MS
- Brooks, Kevin. *Kissing the Rain*. Scholastic/The Chicken House. (043957742X) fiction; 336 pgs.
Moo Nelson often visits the bridge to get some peace and quiet – he is able to get away from the verbal abuse he suffers daily. But one day the peace and tranquility of his bridge is disturbed – disturbed by what he witnesses from his high above the expressway vantage point. (Starred *Booklist*) A04 MS-HS

- Bruchac, Joseph. *Hidden Roots*. Scholastic Press. (0439353580) fiction; 208 pgs.
Eleven-year-old Sonny – a shy boy – faces his father's rage every day. His fragile mother is loving but not able to protect him. It is Sonny's Uncle Louis and a supportive librarian who help Sonny gain the confidence to face the family's hidden secrets and the truth about his Native-American roots. Upstate NY 1950s. A04 MS
- Cameron, Ann. *Colibrí*. Farrar/Frances Foster Books. (0374315191) fiction; 240 pgs.
A suspenseful story set in Guatemala and steeped in cultural details and traditions. Twelve-year-old Tzunún Chumil learns that her "uncle" had kidnapped her years earlier and now she is determined to escape his clutches. (S JL Best Books 2004) MS
- Carbone, Elisa. *Last Dance on Holladay Street*. Knopf/Random House. (0375828966 trd); 0375928960 lib) fiction; 208 pgs
Historical novel set in 1878 in Colorado. Thirteen-year-old Eva seeks her birth mother and finds out the city and her mother are not what she imagined. A05 MS
- Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shorts*. Putnam. (0399238611) fiction. 228 pgs.
Set in 1935 when guards lived on Alcatraz Island with their families. Moose Flannagan's dad is one of those prison guards. Moose's sister, Natalie, is autistic and must attend a special school but the whole family deals with her care. 04 MS
- Crowe, Chris. *Getting Away With Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case*. Penguin Putnam/Phyllis Fogelman Books. (0803728042) non-fiction; 128 pgs. The murder of a 14-year-old black boy from Chicago touches off the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. (ALA Best Book – 2004; S JL Best Books 2004) MS-HS
- Crutcher, Chris. *King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-Advised Autobiography*. HarperCollins/Greenwillow Press (0060502495; 0060502509 lib) non-fiction; 272 pgs.
The autobiography of Margaret A. Edwards award-winning author Chris Crutcher. (ALA Best Book – 2004). MS HS
- Crutcher, Chis. *The Sledding Hill*. Harper Collins, 2005. Billy Bartholomew is not about to let a death come between his and Eddie's friendship. They will still be there for one another.
- Deuker, Carl. *Runner*. Houghton Mifflin (0618542981) fiction.
Living with his alcoholic father on a broken-down sailboat on Puget Sound has been hard on seventeen-year-old Chance Taylor, but when his love of running leads to a high-paying job, he quickly learns that the money is not worth the risk. A05 MS HS
- Fradin, Dennis Brindell and Judith Bloom Fradin. *Fight On! Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration*. Houghton Mifflin Company/Clarion Books. (0618133496) biography; 192 pgs
In the late 80s Terrell conducted a successful campaign to integrate D.C. restaurants and movie theaters. (ALA Best Book – 2004) MS
- Freedman, Russell. *In Defense of Liberty: The Story of America's Bill of Rights*. Holiday House. (0823415856) non-fiction; 196 pgs.
Focuses on the Bill of Rights – the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791 and the changes over the years. (ALA Best Book – 2004; S LJ Best Books 2004) MS-HS-Adult

Freedman, Russell. *Voice That Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights*. Clarion. (0618159762) non-fiction; 128 pgs.

When the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refused to allow Anderson to sing in Constitution Hall, Eleanor Roosevelt, the nation's First Lady brought her to the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and she sang for an audience of 75,000 people and for a national radio audience. A significant event in the civil rights movement.

Team with Pam Munoz Ryan's and Brian Selznick's stunningly beautiful 40 page picture book, *When Marian Sang*. (Scholastic Press, 2002) 04. MS. NEWBERY HONOR BOOK 2005; Robert F. Siebert Award 2005

Frey, James. *A Million Little Pieces*. Nan A. Talese. (0385507755) non-fiction; 400 pgs.

Frey's high school and college years are a blur of alcohol and drugs, culminating in a full-fledged crack addiction at age 23. A memoir of the author's experience in an addiction rehab program (Hazelden). An intense account of descent from a dark marathon of drug abuse. HS-Adult

Frost, Helen. *Keesha's House*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux/Frances Foster Books. (0374340641) fiction; 138 pgs.

Joe's aunt took him in as a youth and now he does the same for a variety of kids with their own problems. (ALA Best Book – 2004; Michael A. Printz Honor 2004) MS HS

Glancy, Diane. *Stone Heart: A Novel of Sacajawea*. OverlookPress. (158567365X) non-fiction; 225 pgs.

Contrasts between the Lewis and Clark's actual journals and the young Shoshone woman's own records reveal the inherent clash of cultures in this vast new land. (OSBCB, History- 2004) MS-HS

Going, K. L. *Fat Kid Rules the World*. Penguin Putnam/G.P.Putnam's Sons. (0399239901) fiction; 187 pgs.

Seventeen-year-old Troy is rescued from a near-suicide attempt by a chance encounter. (ALA Best Book – 2004; Michael A. Printz Honor 2004; SLJ Best Books 2004) MS-HS

Goodman, Alison. *Singing the Dogstar Blues*. Penguin Putnam/Viking (0670036102) fiction; 208 pgs.

Seventeen-year-old Joss consoles herself with her blues music as she faces problems as a partner of the first alien to study time travel at the Center for Neo-Historical Studies. (ALA Best Book – 2004; SLJ Best Books 2004)

Gorman, Carol. *A Midsummers Night's Dork*. HarperCollins (0060507187) fiction; 224 pgs.

Jerry Flack is back. This time his class has decided to create an Elizabethan Festival to raise money and fit with their reading of Shakespeare's classic. An honest portrayal of preteen socialization. A04 MS

Gorman, Carol. *Stumptown Kid*. Peachtree Press, 2005. A sports mystery. Race relations, Negro League Baseball.



- Gutman, Dan. *Abner & Me: a Baseball Card Adventure*. HarperCollins (0060534435; 0060534443 lib) fiction.
With his ability to travel through time using baseball cards and photographs, thirteen-year-old Joe and his mother go back to 1863 to ask Abner Doubleday whether he invented baseball, but instead find themselves in the middle of the Battle of Gettysburg. A05 MS
- Hampton, Wilborn. *September 11, 2001: Attack on New York City*. Candlewick Press. (0763619493) non-fiction; 145 pgs.
The destruction of the World Trade Center told through survivors, firemen, and others who were involved. (ALA Best Book – 2004) MS-HS
- Hansen, Drew D. *The Dream: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Speech That Inspired a Nation*. HarperCollins. (0060084766) non-fiction; 304 pgs.
Insight into King's life and his dream. Those interested in the moral issues tied to the civil rights struggle will enjoy Hansen's analysis. (OSBCB, History- 2004) MS-HS
- Heat-Moon, William Least. *Columbus in the Americas*. John Wiley & Sons. (0471211893) non-fiction, 172 pgs.
Was Columbus a visionary and daring explorer, or a ruthless conquistador with dreams of riches and glory? (OSBCB, History- 2004) HS-Adult
- Hoffman, Nina Kiriki. *A Stir of Bones*. Penguin Putnam/Viking. (0670035513) fiction; 208 pgs.
Susan is hiding a perfectly horrible secret and to face it she finds she needs the help of a ghost and a haunted house. (ALA Best Book – 2004) MS-HS
- Kurtz, Jane. *The Feverbird's Claw*. Greenwillow. (0060008202) fiction; 304 pgs.
An elaborate fantasy world filled with danger, beauty, and conflict. A04 MS
- Lowry, Lois. *Messenger*. Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books. (0618404414) fiction; 176 pgs.
Matty, who has lived in Village with the blind Seer is looking forward to receiving his true name, which he hopes will be Messenger. But the story is really that of utopia gone wrong and focuses on Mattie who must save his world.
- Lyon, George Ella. *Sonny's House of Spies*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. (0689851685) fiction; 304 pgs.--Set in a small Alabama town in 1947-1956. When Sonny's father packs up and leaves the family's situation changes immensely. This is a coming-of-age novel with references to family, religion, racial prejudice and homosexuality. A04 MS HS
- Mackler, Carolyn. *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things*. Candlewick Press. (0763619582) fiction; 256 pgs. --Fifteen-year-old Virginia deals with her weight and several obstacles as she learns to be on her own for the first time. (ALA Best Book – 2004; Michael A. Printz Honor 2004) MS-HS
- McKissack, Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack. *Days of Jubilee: The End of Slavery in the United States*. Illustrated by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon. Scholastic. (059010764X) non-fiction; 144 pgs. -- There was not just one day that freed all slaves – from the end of the Revolution when many African-Americans who had served with the patriot army to the Emancipation Proclamation there were many days for various slaves or slave groups. Days of Jubilee when they became free. MS HS
CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD 2004

Morrison, Toni. *Remember: The Journey to School Integration*. (061839740X) fiction; 80 pgs.

Filled with archival photographs depicting historical events surrounding school desegregation integrate with a fictional account of the dialogue and emotions of the children who lived during the era of "separate but equal" schooling. A04 MS CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD 2005

Moses, Shelia P. *The Legend of Buddy Bush*. (0689858396) fiction. 224 pgs.

Set in 1947, Uncle Buddy returns home to North Carolina. Uncle Buddy doesn't pay enough attention to the protocol of the times and ends up in jail for a crime against a white woman. Pattie Mae's life is destined to change. A04 MS HS CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD 2005

Murphy, Jim. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*. Houghton Mifflin Company/Clarion. (0395776082) non-fiction; 192 pgs.

Thousands of lives in Philadelphia were lost in the disastrous epidemic of 1793 – a tribute to the African-American community who saved many lives. (ALA Best Book – 2004; SLJ Best Books 2004; Newbery Honor - 2004) MS HS

Murphy, Jim. *Inside the Alamo*. Random House, Inc./Delacorte Press (0385325746; 0385900929 lib) non-fiction; 121 pgs.

Recounts the battle in February 1836 when Santa Anna led to Mexican Army to reclaim the Alamo for Mexico. (ALA Best Book – 2004) MS HS

Myers, Walter Dean. *Here in Harlem: Poems in Many Voices*. Holiday, 2004.–

Borrowing from both the classical tradition and the rhythms of jazz and blues, this dazzling collection illuminates the many faces of Harlem, past and present. A 2005 Best Book for Young Adults (YALSA).

Nelson, Marilyn. *Fortune's Bones: The Manumission Requiem*. Front Street,

2004. —Using a piercing cycle of poetry, Nelson introduces readers to Fortune, a slave whose death frees him but also enslaves him for 200 years--first as an anatomical specimen and later as a museum display. A 2005 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book.

Nelson, Marilyn. *A Wreath for Emmett Till*. Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

Parker, Jeff. *The Interman*. Octopus. (0972555307) graphic novel, fiction; 128 pgs. Van Meach is the Interman. His secret project for the government makes him a valuable employee and a dangerous employee. (ALA Best Book – 2004) HS-Adult



AUTHOR NOTE: Gary Paulsen has written many adventure stories. *Guts: The True Stories Behind Hatchet and the Brian Books* (Delacorte, 2001; 0385326505 \$16.95; 0440407125 pap. \$5.95) recounts all of Paulsen's actual experiences and some of the real adventures behind those that Paulsen writes about. He's run the Iditarod twice (and was planning a third run despite heart problems in the late 1980s and early 1990s). Other "real adventures" fill his life and his books.

- Paulsen, Gary. *The Quilt*. Random House Children's Books/ Wendy Lamb Books. (0385729502) non-fiction; 128 pgs.
Set in 1944 a six-year-old boy goes to live with his grandmother Alida in a small town close to the Canadian border. He learns about life and death – and hears stories of his family as the women come together to work on a quilt and to help support his cousin Kristina as she give birth. A04 MS - HS
- Peck, Richard. *The River Between Us*. Penguin Putnam/Dial. (0803727356) fiction; 164 pgs.
A family's involvement in the Civil War as told in 1916 to Howard Leland Hutchings. (ALA Best Book – 2004) MS – HS
- Rector, Anne Elizabeth with Kathleen Krull. *Anne Elizabeth's Diary: A Young Artist's True Story*. Megan Tigley/Little Brown. (0316072044) biography; 64 pgs.
The diary of a twelve-year-old girl living in New York City in 1912, with sidebars describing the author/illustrator's life and family and significant events of the year and the city. A04 MS
- Rees, Celia. *Pirates!* Bloomsbury/Bloomsbury Children. (1582348162) fiction; 342 pgs. In the 1720s, a wealthy merchant's daughter and a Jamaican slave become pirates. (ALA Best Book – 2004) MS
- Roach, Mary. *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. (0393050939) non-fiction; 224 pgs.
A respectful and poignant look at how scientists utilize every precious element of the human body. (ALA Best Book – 2004; OSBCB, science – 2004; SLJ Adult Books for HS 2004) HS-Adult
- Robinson, Sharon. *Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America*. Scholastic Press. (0439425921) non-fiction; 64 pgs.
The only daughter of the man who broke the color barrier in major league baseball tells of his hard-won victories in baseball, business, politics, and civil rights. (Starred – *Booklist*, February 2004) MS
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Mary Grandpre, illustrator. Scholastic, Inc. (043935806X, 0439567610 lib) fiction; 870 pgs.
Harry Potter is haunted by dreams that foreshadow a terrifying secret. This volume approaches Harry's coming-of-age. (ALA Best Book – 2004) MS-HS-Adult
- Schmidt, Gary D. *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*. Clarion (0618439293) historical fiction; 224 pgs.
The elders in Phippsburg, Maine frown upon the minister's son's friendship with Lizzie a resident of the island they want to destroy. The island settled years ago by African-American (former or escaped slaves) is slated to be destroyed to make way for the town's planned tourist village. NEWBERY HONOR AWARD 2005; PRINTZ HONOR AWARD 2005
- Werlin, Nancy. *Double Helix*. Dial Books. (0803726066) fiction; 252 pgs.
His parents have a secret Eli can sense it but only when eighteen-year-old Eli goes to work for a Nobel Prize-winning genetic scientist does Eli found out the shocking secret. A04 MS-HS