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Professor Franklin's Annotated Bibliography of Young Adult Literature, 2017—18

John Franklin

Pittsburg State University, jfranklin@pittstate.edu

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Professor Franklin's Annotated Bibliography of
Young Adult Literature
2017—18

including notes for
212 authors & editors, 280 titles and 89, 530 pages of reading

by

John Franklin, PhD

Director, English Education

Department of English and Modern Languages

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

for recommendations:

PF = Professor Franklin; ELEM = elementary school; MS = middle school; HS = high school

A companion list of authors/editors and titles may be found in Pittsburg State University's
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credited; and, so long as any new creations are also licensed under these identical terms.

Ahmadi, Arvin. *Down and Across*. 2018. *Saaket Scott Ferdowsi lacks grit. So, he quits an internship in Philadelphia and takes a bus to DC to meet a G'town prof who has written a book. All while his parents are in Iran with family. Along the way and while there he meets a crossword puzzle of a girl, a Liberty U co-ed, a gay Southern guy and the prof. It's a bit early for a midlife crisis, but then his dad is pushy.* [320 pages]

PF: HS

Albert, Melissa. *The Hazel Wood*. 2018. *Catering to readers who want to escape their mundane existence, this novel posits the possibility of a character being stolen from an evil fairy tale, of being clueless to this fact for the longest time, of having to endure a quest to triumph and return to her adoptive mom. I think the book is misnamed; it should be called The Hinterland, after its book within a book.* [355 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Albertalli, Becky. *Leah on the Offbeat*. 2018. *Mirroring Rainbow Rowell's Fangirl this is, as Leah—self-centered, self-serving protagonist who follows a liberal agenda--would say: "A hot mess of teenage drama." The usual rites-of-passage: college, genius, mom-dram, off-the-charts musical and thespian talent begging for a movie showcase, prejudice, prom, romance. Spoiler alert: happy ending: Leah gets the girl.* [339 pages]

PF: HS

Alexander, Kwame. *Booked*. 2016. *A novel in verse about a boy hooked on soccer. Interesting characters include a rapstar turned librarian, twin thugs, divorcing parents and an African-Asian friend. There's a vocabulary conceit as the father authors a dictionary he requires his son to read. Footnotes appear.* [314 pages]

PF: MS

Alexander, Kwame. *Solo*. 2017. *Blade Morrison—adopted son of a rock star—goes from Hollywood to Ghana to find his birth mother; he learns some life lessons. Co-authors had fun with a playlist.* [457 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Allen, Thomas B. *George Washington, Spymaster*. 2004. *National Geographic account of espionage, etc. during the Revolutionary War.* [177 pages]

PF: MS

Anderson, Jodi Lynn. *Midnight at the Electric*. 2017. *Reminiscent of Echo as letters—rather than a harmonica—are interwoven through two pasts (postWWI England; Dust Bowl Kansas) and the future (Mars colonists)*. [257 pages]

PF: HS

Anderson, John David. *Granted*. 2018. *Charming—albeit ultimately overwritten: if the author is attempting to have his reader sympathize with his protagonist's frustration by s-l-o-w-i-n-g t-h-i-n-g-s d-o-w-n then he is successful; the first 80 pages, particularly are bulbous by a third—tale of magic in the modern world as seen by a wish-granting fairy on her first mission*. [323 pages]

PF: MS, though older readers may find it boring

Anderson, M. T. *Landscape with Invisible Hand*. 2017. *Interplanetary visitors disrupt Earth's economy. A dad runs away after losing his job selling cars. An adolescent artist creates lucrative programming (50s-style teen romance) that breaks down. How can you win? By giving up*. [149 pages]

PF: HS

Anderson, Natalie C. *City of Saints & Thieves*. 2017. *Refugees from war-torn Congo are protected by a wealthy white family. Everybody has secrets. The truth is enlightening. The mother is murdered (who did it?) The oldest daughter takes to the streets to plot justice. Liberation and love make this ultimately a romance. The middle third plods; otherwise, the setting (exotic) and theme (revelation) are wonderful*. [401 pages]

PF: HS

Applegate, Katherine. *Wishtree*. 2017. *An old red oak "wishtree" (Irish tradition) talks to two children in order to bring harmony to a neighborhood. The girl is Muslim; a malignant adolescent boy carves the word "LEAVE" into the tree to send a message to the girl's family. Various animals and their children get involved. The tree's owner changes her mind about cutting it down when she realizes her great-great grandmother made a wish on the tree and it came true, leading to her existence*. [211 pages]

PF: MS

Arden, Katherine. *The Bear and the Nightingale*. 2017. *Vasilisa is the much-wanted last child of a mother whose mother was a witch. Dead soon after bearing her daughter, the mother leaves her child a legacy of powerful folk magic. When her concerned father—a man of power and property and influence—remarries, Vasilisa's legacy clashes with her stepmother's devoutness. Enter an exiled priest and forest spirits, and the willful Vasilisa becomes the subject of village gossip.* [312 pages]

PF: HS

Arden, Katherine. *The Girl in the Tower*. 2018. *Second part of a trilogy, in this novel Vasilisa assumes a male identity that brings disaster to her brother the monk and sister the princess. Eventually she manages to overcome the Moscow-and-other-world intrigues.* [346 pages]

PF: HS

Armstrong, Kelley. *Missing*. 2017. *Every teenage wants to escape Reeve's End, KY, including high school student wannabe MD Winter. Among feral dogs, a drunken father, dead mom and runaway older sis she manages an escape plan. It goes bonkers when Lennon and Jude—adopted sons of Congressman Peter Bishop—show up trying to fix things. The almost last-chapter inclusion of their uncle the serial killer cheapens the book.* [375 pages]

PF: HS

Arnold, David. *Mosquitoland*. 2015. *After learning that her mother is sick in Ohio, Mim takes a thousand-mile odyssey from Mississippi that redefines herself. A very nice payoff for the "letters to Isabel" makes this not just another quest novel, but a really good quest novel.* [342 pages]

PF: HS

Arnold, David. *Kids of Appetite*. 2016. *Adolescents Victor and Madeline are interrogated in separate rooms telling buying time for the misfits who took them in to escape. I like this even more than Mosquitoland: the confused, abandoned adolescents seeking sympathetic adults resonates with the need for belonging and the need for self-esteem. The plot line works well as a "caper" and the pay-off at the Top of the Rock is sweet.* [331 pages]

PF: HS

Arnold, David. *The Strange Fascinations of Noah Hypnotik*. 2018. *The narrative framework is what you would expect of this author: very strong, with a sweet, romantic ending that relates his adolescence to his readers'. What's within the frame—alternate reality? Mind control? Bullying?—doesn't work so well for me. The "should or I shouldn't I (take a swim scholarship? Ask Sara out? Watch Breakfast at Tiffany's with sister Penelope? Believe in stability or flexibility?)" got old for me, so that I think the novel could easily lose fifty pages and be more fun.* [410 pages]

PF: HS

Asher, Jay. *Thirteen Reasons Why*. 2007. *Clay finally really listens to Hannah whose voice from beyond assigns responsibility and culpability for her suicide. An important and popular book on a crucial topic.* [288 pages]

PF: HS

Asher, Jay. *What Light*. 2016. *Truly romantic, with the world's best parents, the world's best daughter, the world's best friends, . . . I enjoyed reading this at Christmastime. The Western setting—Oregon and California—and family business—Christmas trees—add to the offbeat joy.* [251 pages]

PF: HS

Avery, Lara. *The Memory Book*. 2016. *A misfit teen suffering from a rare genetic abnormality that robs her of her memory finds that she is loved--and can love--despite a life denied. The breakdown in prose reminds me of "Flowers for Algernon" from an adolescent's perspective. The dreams of a future ring true, making the protagonist's death more powerful.* [357 pages]

PF: HS

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Drowned Cities*. 2012. *Humanity in unexpected places, fidelity where you look for it, a plot that keeps you going, fight scenes that beg to be re-read as the good guys win: Mahlia and Mouse personify "romantic dystopia." All in all, a very satisfying book.* [434 pages]

PF: HS

Balliett, Blue. *The Danger Box*. 2010. *I am such a fan of this author, who writes for smart middle-schoolers. This one is the all the more rewarding because this past summer I read Darwin's Voyage of the Beagle.* [301 pages]

PF: MS

Balliett, Blue. *Out of the Wild Night*. 2018. *Someone is ruining Nantucket's old homes, creating a façade of tradition; and, ghosts—including a boatload drowned during a freak November storm—want to save their heritage! A heart-filled—spirit-filled-story from one of my favorite authors.* [291 pages]

PF: MS

Banas, Danielle. The Supervillain and Me. 2018. *In crime-ridden Morriston, some teens are genetically predisposed to become superheroes. And some—like Abby Hamilton—seem to be predisposed to fall in love with them, even when they appear to be supervillains.* [307 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bannen, Megan. The Bird and the Blade. 2018. *In 13th century Central Asia, the slave girl Jinghua accompanies disposed Prince Khalaf—a scholar/warrior—and his father Timur, former khan—on a quest to solve the riddles of Turandokht, daughter of the Great Khan. Death or marriage await.* [401 pages]

PF: HS

Bardugo, Leigh. Shadow and Bone. 2012. *A page turner in the tradition of Suzanne Collins's Gregor the Overlander series: plot driven with enough characterization, conflict, plot twists and setting to keep you wanting more.* [356 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bardugo, Leigh. Siege and Storm. 2013. *The trilogy of Alina and Mal continues to be a satisfying page-turner. Some characters—the second prince, for example, who is also a privateer—are a hoot!* [432 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bardugo, Leigh. Ruin and Rising. 2014. *As she and Mal search for Morozova's last amplifier, Alina plays politics and realizes heretofore hidden power. A very satisfying ending to the saga!* [417 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bardugo, Leigh. Six of Crows. 2015. *Highly recommended by more than one middle school teacher, this riveting, fast-paced pager-turner of a caper tale features a crew of six outlaws plotting a dangerous heist.* [462 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bardugo, Leigh. Crooked Kingdom. 2016. *Kaz's Six of Crows's crew is at it again. Sooo good: characters are substantiated, conflict and plot are twisty and turny, relationships are resolved.* [536 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bardugo, Leigh. The Language of Thorns: Midnight Tales and Dangerous Magic. 2017. *Six (is this number inspired by Six of Crows?)wonderfully written short*

stories inspired by myth, folklore and fairy tales including some prequel to the Shadow and Bones trilogy. Lavishly illustrated [279 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bardugo, Leigh. *Wonder Woman: Warbringer*. 2017. *DC Comics goes upscale, turning to this giant in YAL to present the story of one of their superheroes. As is the case with her previous work, this novel is compelling, with great characters and a page-turning plot.* [364 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. *Killer Instinct*. 2014. *Another in a series of CSI-like adventures of FBI wizkids solving heinous crimes. This time Dean's serial-killer dad is the family member who motivates the plot. This must be fun to write.* [375 pages]

PF: HS

Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. *All In*. 2015. *Third book in the Naturals series, this one is set in Las Vegas and it's Sloane's (human data processor with photographic memory and hacker skills) turn to have a family member characterize the plot. The best one yet as the author manages her characters and plot better and better. Cassie (her pov drives the narratives) continues to search for her mother.* [376]

PF: HS

Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. *Little White Lies*. 2018. *While her mom's away on a barroom romance, Sawyer Tate's wealthy maternal grandmother Lillian drops by with a proposal: leave being a car mechanic in the backwater town in favor of making her debut with family and friends in Mim's world. Mean, vengeful girls and flaccid good-looking boys abound there, but the 18-year-old successfully navigates scandal—her mom was unwed—and crime. While this is a pretty good caper yarn, it's overwritten; there are one or two unnecessary plot twists.* [390 pages]

PF: HS

Barnhill, Kelly Regan. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*. 2016. *I found the book uneven: the first half waddled at the pace of Glerk; the second half flew by at the pace of Seven League Boots.* [386 pages]

PF: MS

Barrows, Annie. Nothing. 2017. *Charlotte writes a book. She shares it with her friend Frankie. They share their dull lives with us. We read as they mature. Stream of senselessness.* [212 pages]

PF: MS

Bartok, Mira. The Wunderling. 2017. *A fantasy with Dickensian overtones in which a one-eared fox with human characteristics finds friends, escapes an orphanage, engages in a quest and saves the world with music.* [450 pages]

PF: MS

Bayard, Louis. Lucky Strikes. 2016. *I love the Depression-era characters, community and Appalachian setting; I love how a hobo, a dog, a lawyer and Appalachian neighbors come together to overcome a businessman set to take over Brenda's Oasis by mayhem and murder.* [313 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Beasley, Cassie. Tumble & Blue. 2017. *With elements of Southern gothic (think Flannery O'Connor's misfits), contemporary dysfunctional families (think absent parents), and greed (think ante-bellum South and the American Eighties) this novel resonates with wit and wisdom.* [390 pages]

PF: MS

The Beatles. The Beatles Anthology. *John, Paul, George and Ringo reflect on their membership in the Fab Four from 1960—1970, divided into personals at the beginning then switching to chronological order. Great addition to cultural history of the Sixties. Added observations from Derek Jacob, George Martin and Neil Aspinall (?) among others.* [357 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Beatty, Robert. Serafina and the Twisted Staff. 2016. *Even better than the first Serafina book, it is a pleasure to watch the author exercise increasing mastery over his characters (shapeshifter Serafina), setting (1899; the Biltmore estate) and plot.* [370 pages]

PF: MS

Beatty, Robert. Serafina and the Splintered Heart. 2017. *In this, the third Serafina book, our heroine is rescued from a dissolution among catamount, girl and spirit to join her friends Braeden, Waysa and former enemy Rowena to save Biltmore from Uriah the sorcerer.* [355 pages]

PF: MS

Belanger, Michael. *The History of Jane Doe*. 2018. *Ray and Simon are all dull adolescents living in Burgerville, a town with a history of dullness. Enter Jane Doe to liven things up until her past catches up with her, leaving Ray to wonder why. Achronologically plotted with counseling sessions.* [273 pages]

PF: HS

Benjamin, Ali. *The Thing about Jellyfish*. 2015. *This novel exemplifies how a writer can take expository prose (the book was originally written for a science journal, which rejected the essay) and craft a narrative. There are the usual middle-school characters and problems (twelve-year-old Suzy grieves the death of her best friend), the broken family (I am curious as to why the brother is gay; a hetero couple would have worked as well for the protagonist's needs, I think), the unmet need for friendship.* [334 pages]

PF: MS

Bergstrom, Scott. *The Cruelty*. 2017. *A 21st-century Nancy Drew grows up with diversity to rid the world of arms smuggling, drug-dealing, human trafficking Eurotrash men.* [369 pages]

PF: HS

Berry, Julie. *The Passion of Dolssa*. 2016. *Historical fiction, 13th century, a "found" novel/account of the death of a woman—Dolssa—burned by the Church for preaching (relaying the words of her beloved Jhesus) without permission, for healing the sick and injured. Before her death, she escapes, is rescued and then is recaptured. Written in alternate points-of-view voices, including a woman who rescues her, a knight who loves her, a priest who pursues her, various characters, and Dolssa herself, who is—according to point of view, a mystic like Julian of Norwich, or a heretic and perhaps a witch. A remarkable effort to bring to life an overlooked period of European history: the Crusades and Inquisition go hand-in-hand, led by Dominicans. The notes at the end are very much worth reading.* [463 pages]

PF: HS

Bialik, Mayim. *Girling Up: How to Be Strong, Smart and Spectacular*. 2017. *A matter-of-fact exposition of how girls transform into young women, examining how bodies work, how girls grow, how girls learn, how they love, cope and how girls matter. I can easily see Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in this book, which I can easily see being required reading for middle-school-into-high-school (for late bloomers, like the author)* [168 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bialik, Mayim. *Boying Up: How to Be Brave, Bold and Brilliant*. 2018 *Gender equity!: a book about and for boys to balance her book about and for girls!* [196 pages]

PF: MS

Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks*. 2005. *While vacationing with their widowed father in the Berkshire Mountains, four lovable sisters, ages four through twelve, share adventures with a local boy, much to the dismay of his snobbish mother. A tale dear to the heart of us who selected our profession—teaching—in part because it provides a trade-off: income for leisure time spent with family. Echoes of Louisa May Alcott and Jane Austen while also reminiscent of Scout, Jem and Dill as four sisters ages four through twelve and their widowed father vacation in the Berkshires, having adventures with a local boy, of which his rich mother highly disapproves.* [262 pages]

PF: MS

Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street*. 2008. *Continuing tales of the Penderwick sisters who are determined to sabotage their dad's dates. Preteen emotions from the oldest sister Rosalind coincide with her dad's romantic reluctance.* [308 pages]

PF: MS

Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks at Point Mouette*. 2011. *Oldest sibling goes to New Jersey with a friend while her three sisters go to Maine with their aunt. (Dad is honeymooning in England.) Berkshire friend Jeffrey has a Dickensian moment of recognition and realization.* [295 pages]

PF: MS

Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks in Spring*. 2015. *I like the way the youngest siblings help chase away Rosalind's unsuitable suitor; and, I like the way the novel is written in ten-going-on-eleven-year-old Batty's voice: this is appropriate because—for a long sad while—she loses her ability to sing.* [339 pages]

PF: MS

Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks at Last*. 2018. *Lydia P—daughter of Ianthe—makes her first trip to Arundel, where the Penderwick saga began before her birth. A double wedding (Rosie and Skye), a new friend (Alice), families galore and adventures galore connect the past, the present and the future (Batty and Jeffrey, the musicians?). This series continues to be highly readable: a perfect respite from antisocial, dysfunctional, dreary YAL.* [294 pages]

PF: MS

Bolden, Tonya. *Crossing Ebenezer Creek*. 2017. *An enlightening illumination of a little-known episode, when a Union general pulled up a pontoon bridge abandoning newly-freed slaves to advancing Confederate soldiers*. [214 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Bouwman, H. M. *A Crack in the Sea*. 2017. *Sure to be a favorite with those readers who enjoy fantasy with the author writing to the audience as a conceit, this book mixes a young boy who can talk to fish, Vietnamese boat people and some helpful sea monsters*. [357, incl Afterword]

PF: MS

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *The War That Saved My Life*. 2015. *A club-footed girl flees London during the Blitz with her brother for the safety of the English countryside. Though it may sound cliché, this is a heartwarming story of loss leading to love, of rejection leading to acceptance*. [316 pages]

PF: MS

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *The War I Finally Won*. 2017. *The sequel, in which eleven-year-old Ada has her club foot surgically corrected, loses her mother in a London bombing raid, gains a Jewish girl as a housemate and sees class divisions reduced*. [385 pages]

PF: MS

Brashares, Ann. *The Whole Thing Together*. 2017. *A beach house housing dysfunctional families is the scene for diversity, greed, identity, infidelity and jealousy all playing parts in a morality play that has better characters than it has plot*. [293 pages]

PF: HS

Bray, Libba. *The Diviners*. 2012. *Evangeline O'Neil (Evie) is exiled from Zenith, Ohio, to Manhattan to straighten herself up after creating scandal by reading a lothario's hankie. In the Big Apple of the Jazz Age she flaps with Communists, occultists, pickpockets, Ziegfield girls, and her uncle, curator of the Museum of Creepy Crawlies. The end of the world as we know it is nigh and it's up to Evie to save the day*. [578 pages]

PF: HS

Bray, Libba. *Lair of Dreams*. 2015. *Second book in The Diviners series, Evie is a radio sensations as she "reads" objects on the air, fakes a romance with Sam, breaks Jericho's heart and flaps the night fantastic. Meanwhile, Theta's partner of convenience Henry rediscovers his dream man while new acquaintance Ling helps him walk through the dreams of the title. That they are deadly and that the dreamer from whom they emanate goes without writing. The government and maybe another suspicious organization get involved, leading to the next book. A bit flaccid; as is the case with many of these titles I think an editor could have helped tighten the novel by cutting fifty or more pages.* [613 pages]

PF: HS

Bray, Libba. *Before the Devil Breaks You*. 2017. *Third book in The Diviners series and things heat up as characters die (Mable, Sarah, Will), run away (Blind Bill, Isiah, Memphis) or face their demons (Miss Addie, Theta); ghosts eat people; and, the Man in the Stovepipe Hat (King of Crows) tries to remain in this world after travelling the breach caused by bad industrialist Jake Marlowe.* [546 pages]

PF: HS

Brokenbrough, Martha. *The Game of Love and Death*. 2015. *In 1937 Seattle white-skinned Henry and black-skinned Flora are played like chess pieces by two immortal figures, Love and Death. Interesting, absorbing speculation about the conflict between Love and Death with racial conflict serving as an extended metaphor.* [329 pages]

PF: HS

Brockenbrough, Martha. *Alexander Hamilton. Revolutionary*. 2017. *Penned by a true fan of the man, in the light of the megahit musical this is a timely release. Lots of scholarly apparati. I am curious, though, why the author refers to the subject as "Alexander."* [352 pages]

PF: HS

Burns, Ken. *A Treasury of American Presidents: Grover Cleveland, Again!* 2016. *Ken Burns's children inspired this look at the legacy of each of America's presidents. Eight-year-old Gemma loves it, as do I. Incredibly timely for this election year.* [89 pages]

PF: MS

Cajoleas, Jimmy. Goldeline. 2017. *Fairy tale meets Christian fundamentalist who falls in love with a witch, is rejected and seeks vengeance against nonconformists and outlaws, including the witch's young daughter.* [246 pages]

PF: MS

Card, Orson Scott. Ender's Game. 1977 (this edition 1991). *Earth is under attack. Enter Ender Wiggin: brilliant, ruthless, cunning, a tactical and strategic master; a child. Sent from home to learn to command star fleets, Ender battles bullies, loneliness and a system geared to save the world. How will Ender perform in the "game"? Albeit science fiction, science doesn't get in the way of this taut tale of teachers/commanders and students/soldiers. Gifted adolescents will relate to Ender.* [368 pages]

PF: HS

Cartaya, Pablo. The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora. 2017. *How do you combat an evil gentrifying developer who wants to destroy your close-knit community in the name of free goodies and profit? With family, friends and poetry. Truly romantic as deceased abuelo's package for Arturo provides guidance; I almost get the sense that all that's missing is a windmill. Spanish and Jose Marti thread through the narrative skillfully.* [236 pages]

PF: MS

Charboneau, Joelle. Need. 2015. *A marvelous idea—exploring a darker side of social media via a site that makes promises appealing to adolescents, though I think there are too many characters with points-of-view. The Kaylee character seems to me to be the voice of the author and gets a bit preachy.* [335 pages]

PF: HS

Chari, Sheela. Finding Mighty. 2017. *Wordy, formulaic look at a fascinating culture (parkour) as twelve-year-olds Myla and Peter look for his brother in New York City.* [312 pages]

PF: MS

Chesterton, G. K. The Complete Father Brown. 1987. *Old School rival to Sherlock Holmes as a detective, these 49 stories will appeal to whodunit fans as well as Edwardian Anglophiles.* [718 pages]

PF: HS

Choi, Mary H. K. *Emergency Contact*. 2018. *Alternating point-of-view, later adolescent, digital affair moves from virtual to real in hip Austin (TX, not MN) as a UT freshman wanna be writer and a community college dropout documentarian bond over baked goods, coffee, txtg and who's got the worst mom.* [391 pages]

PF: HS

Churchill, Winston S. *The Boer War (London to Ladysmith via Pretoria 1900; and, Ian Hamilton's March 1900)*. 1990. *War correspondent Churchill's letters, with tales of battle, imprisonment and escape, strategies and politics. Valuable look at Churchill's spirit and willingness to risk life and resources in the name of--and for the good of--the Empire.* [405 pages]

PF: HS, particularly History nerds

Cluess, Jessica. *A Shadow Bright and Burning (Book I in a series)*. 2016. *Human torch Henrietta Howel is called from Yorkshire to London to serve queen (Victoria) and country in the battle against the deadly Ancients: R'hlem, the Skinless Man; Tez, the Old Vulture Lady; Callax, the Child Eater; Zem, the great Serpent; Korozoth, the Shadow and Fog; Molochron, the Pale Destroyer. She takes along friend Rook, an Unclean. She trains with Magnus, Dee, Cellini, Lambe, Wolff and Lord Blackwood under Agrippa. A magician named Mickelmas also trains her (she's ½ magician and ½ sorcerer).* [404 pages]

PF: HS

Cluess, Jessica. *A Poison Dark and Drowning. (Book II in a series)*. 2017. *London is all but destroyed, the queen is in safekeeping and Henrietta discovers she's not the Chosen one. But she finds her: a witch named Maria Templeton. Rook goes over to the Ancients. Blackwood proposes marriage. R'hlem was once human; he's also Hentrietta's father.* [414 pages]

PF: HS

Colbert, Brandy. *Little & Lion*. 2017. *As a graduate student I read Zola's "The Experimental Novel." This book exemplifies the theory: mix elements (uncertainty/curiosity about sexual identity; mixed race family—Jewish and African-American; bipolar stepbrother; stalker wannabe boyfriend; various friends, classmates, coworkers and other characters) as if in a Chemistry class to see what will happen. In fact, at times the book reads like a lab report: expository rather than narrative; social scientific rather than literary.* [327 pages]

PF: HS

Cole, Henry. Another Quest for Celeste. 2018. *19th century picaresque tale of a mouse on the move, reminiscent of Ben and Me as well as Stuart Little. Celeste voyages up the Mississippi through human and animal societies from the Deep South to Indiana, where she ends up in young Abe Lincoln's pocket. She helps him learn to read, appealing to his linguistic and naturalistic intelligences. Well-illustrated with pencil drawings.* [260 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

Combs, Sarah. The Light Fantastic. 2016. *A vortex of voices (Internet IDs, former friends, English-and-other teachers, humiliated pranked-kids, parents, people on the street) that I eventually found strangely monotonic, as if individuality was smoothed-out in a high-speed blender.* [311 pages]

PF: HS

Cook, Eileen. With Malice. 2016. *Ripped from the headlines: American students abroad: Italian wannabe playboy: jealousy: death. Was it murder?* [316 pages]

PF: HS

Crowley, Cath. Words in Deep Blue. 2016. *Very interesting premise—writing in margins, underlining and sharing books in a used bookstore where teens Rachel and Henry are employed. It reminds me of books that friends and I used to pass around the country with our notes added to previous readers.'* [269 pages]

PF: HS

Curtis, Christopher Paul. 2018. The Journey of Little Charlie. *In antebellum South Carolina a newly-orphaned manchild is duped into accompanying a murderous slavecatcher to Detroit and Canada where he has a humanizing epiphany.* [234 pages]

PF: MS

Davies, Jacqueline. 2016. Nothing but Trouble. *Maggie and Lena practice hacking—in the MIT fashion practiced by Mag's dad back in the day—driving their principal crazy and the rest of smalltown Odawahaka Middle School toward unity. A modern-day Tom Sawyer, where mischief is in the DNA this book makes for a good, satisfying read.* [292 pages]

PF: MS

Davies, Kate. *The Crims*. 2017. *Cheeky, British 1st-in-a-series of adventures about a legacy of illegality as the Crim family waxes magnificent about a stolen lunch box, rendering mundane magnificent. Protagonist Imogen—note the missing letter e—tries to be normal but accepts her fate.* [291 pages]

PF: MS

Delaney, Shannon and Judith Graves, eds. *Beware the White Rabbit*. 2015. *Thirteen stories about Alice and the white rabbit of Wonderland fame. Collected in honor of the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's classic. Uneven.* [358 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Demetrious, Heather. *Bad Romance*. 2017. *Ironic title, given that this is not so much a bad romance as it is a 'revenge tragedy' as the author apparently gets even with adolescent ghosts: abusive boyfriend, abusive mother, abusive step-father, absent father. Of interest are the rockstar/suicidal boyfriend's pair friends/bandmates: a Rosencratz-and-Guildenstern duo.* [356 pages]

PF: HS

Dessen, Sarah. *Just Listen*. 2006. *Sophie is a high school bully whose boyfriend sexually assaults some of her friends, one of whom is Annabel Greene. Sophie puts her boyfriend ahead of Annabel. Annabel seeks solace with another outcast, alternative radio show DJ Owen who helps her learn about character and music.* [371 pages]

PF: HS

Dessen, Sarah. *Saint Anything*. 2015. *The protagonist Sydney—whose can-do-no-wrong brother Peyton is convicted and sent to jail—is deliciously written: savor her point-of-view as she escapes her imprisoning mom [get it?: both children are in prison: one the result of society; the other the result of family]. The nefarious, weaselly Ames reminds me of some of Shakespeare's villains: duplicitous, malevolent. As ever: well-crafted: foreshadowing pays off, no characters wasted [though several: Margaret, Spence get wasted].* [417 pages]

PF: HS

Dessen, Sarah. *Once and for All*. 2017. *Louna knows a lot about weddings—but not so much about love. Apparent ne'er-do-well Ambrose joins Louna's Wedding Planner Mother's business and falls in love with her. Because her first love was a victim of a schoolhouse shooting, she's in no mood to return his affection. Then, he proposes a bet....* [357 pages]

PF: HS

DiCamillo, Kate. Raymie Nightingale. 2016. *Three girls vie to become Little Miss Central Florida Tire. One needs the money; one needs to attract her runaway dad's attention; and, one wants to sabotage the contest. One wins. They all remain friends through death, break-ins, missing felines, good deeds, drowning and twirling lessons.* [263 pages]

PF: MS

DiCamillo, Kate. Louisiana's Way Home. 2018. *Louisiana Elefante—winner of the 1975 Little Miss Central Florida Tire contest—is swept up by Granny, leaving friends Raymie and Beverly, cat Archie and dog Buddy behind in Florida. They make it to Georgia where Louisiana learns she is a foundling, is abandoned by Granny who leaves to deal with a family curse, is taken in by the Allens who assure her that the curse is not hers and is able to trade visits with friends and pets.* [277 pages]

PF: MS

Donne, Alexa. Brightly Burning. 2018. *Jane Eyre in outer space.* [391 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Dowswell, Paul. Powder Monkey. 2005. *Written by a person who did their research, the real-life setting—British warship during the Napoleonic wars—is quite good. I am a big fan of the Horatio Hornblower series, so I enjoyed this book, which features a thirteen-year-old protagonist.* [276 pages]

PF: MS

Dumas, Firoozeh. It Ain't So Awful, Falafel. 2016. *Zomorod Yousefzadeh (American name Cindy) navigates anti-Iranian hostility in the Seventies. Excellent examples of conflict: the parents-child relationship; and, cultural as the family is the victim of hate acts in the upper-middle class California condominium community.* [370 pages]

PF: MS

Ely, Lindsay. Gunslinger Girl. 2018. *In the US after a second civil war, Serendipity Jones runs away from an abusive family with her dead mother's gifts: a pair of six-guns and a talent for shooting. She ends up as part of a theatre in Cessation, a cesspool of pleasure far West of her commune. There she plays a part in national politics, which includes assassination and other violence.* [419 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Ernshaw, Shea. *The Wicked Deep*. 2018. *Three sisters drowned in Oregon as witches show up for two hundred to drown boys. Love ends the curse. Chapters alternate between contemporary Sparrow and various people and settings from the past.* [308 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Eulberg, Elizabeth. *The Lonely Hearts Club*. 2010. *Light-hearted as a pop song, cleverly organized: you'll recognize many of the characters (Penny Lane, for example) their actions (she starts an anti-dating club) and their reactions.* [285 pages]

PF: HS

Federle, Tim. *The Great American Whatever*. 2016. *A fantasy for adolescent gay guys who want to move from Pittsburgh, PA, to Hollywood, CA.* [274 pages]

PF: HS

Finkel, Michael. *The Stranger in the Woods: The Extraordinary Story of the Last True Hermit*. 2017. *Based on the true story of Christopher Knight who disappeared into the Maine woods and lived in solitude for twenty-seven years. Particularly interesting to me are Knight's reaction to his reading: he likes Robinson Crusoe, detests National Geographic and considers Thoreau a dilettante.* [203 pages]

PF: HS

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. 1925. *On the Common Core Exemplar List, this short yet substantial story of the doomed yearning of racketeer Jay Gatsby for wealthy, beyond-his-reach Daisy Buchanan has a special place in my heart: I wrote about its production for my dissertation, focusing in the relationship between the author and his editor, Maxwell Perkins of Scribner's. I think of it as the Jazz Age's version of The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.* [180 pages]

PF: HS

Fleming, Candace. *Presenting Buffalo Bill: The Man Who Invented the Wild West*. 2016. *Generously illustrated, copiously researched as the author attempts to deconstruct the man and his self-made myth while presenting the argument that he was a feminist (look at how he treated Annie Oakley) and culturally sensitive (see his treatment of Native Americans in his show).* [230 pages]

PF: MS

Frank, Steven B. Armstrong and Charlie. 2017. *It's the Sixties. Armstrong is African-America. He has five older sisters, a one-legged father (he lost in the Korean War) and an old neighbor who teaches him life lessons. Charlie is Jewish. He is an only child whose older brother recently died, paralyzing his mother. His dad is a WWII vet. His friends are leaving Wonderland JHS because it's being integrated. His parents say he has to stay. Add this great social experiment to the usual trials and challenges written by one who lived it.* [295 pages]

PF: MS

Gardner, Whitney. You're Welcome, Universe. 2017. *Julia, a member of the deaf community who has two moms who are also Deaf, has an alter ego: "HERE," a graffiti artist who gets kicked out of one school and into another where she meets her street art match. The interior dialogue could do with some editing.* [293 pages]

PF: HS

Geiger, J. C. Wildman. 2017. *The fragmented prose can be disconcerting (this is a pun; the protagonist—eighteen-year-old Lance, whose car—an inheritance from his dad, breaks down in an out-of-the way Washington town---plays trumpet) at times; but, when it works, it is artistic. Dakota is my new favorite female character; she's got a bit of Stargirl in her.* [327 pages]

PF: HS

Gidwitz, Adam. The Inquisitor's Tale; Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog. 2016. *From small [medieval] villages to grand banquet halls, these three unlikely friends [a peasant girl a la Joan of Arc; a Jewish boy and a Saracen giant-of-a-monk] and their faithful greyhound are chased through France to a final showdown in the waves at the foot of the abbey-fortress of Mont-Saint Michel [a place to which I cycled one summer!]. In many ways the epitome of literature: erudite and entertaining! It reminds me of The Midwife's Apprentice in its realistic depiction of life for adolescents in medieval times. Plus, it includes an annotated bibliography!* [352 pages]

PF: MS

Giles, Jeff. The Edge of Everything. 2017. *Zoe, seventeen, and her brother hunker down in a cabin to weather a Montana blizzard. They are rescued by X, a Lowlands bounty hunter who claims evil men's souls. This might appeal to both genders of readers: some romance, some thrills, some superpower action, some feelings, . . .* [357 pages]

PF: HS

Glaser, Karina Yan. *The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street*. 2017. *Music hath charm to soothe the savage breast of the wicked landlord who relents, enabling this to be the first book in a series of novels about the five Vanderbeeker children, ages four to twelve, who were about to be evicted from the Harlem brownstone just after Christmas. Written with obvious love, affection and insight.* [293 pages]

PF: MS

Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. *Moving Target*. 2015. *Cassie Arroya, a student in Rome, has a Spear of Destiny—and she learns how to use it to save her dad from the Hastati, an evil secret organization. Dialogue and characterizations remind me of smart-mouth sitcom teens. This might be better as a graphic novel or a movie.* [248 pages]

PF: MS

Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. *Return Fire*. 2016. *The conclusion to Moving Target. Better written, the plot is tighter, characterization is also more substantial, perhaps because of the previous novel. I think these two are headed for a movie deal.* [214 pages]

PF: MS

Grabenstein, Chris. *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*. 2013. *Twelve-year-old Kyle stays overnight in the new town library. When he awakes he learns that he must work with his companions to solve puzzles posed by his hero—Luigi Lemoncello, gamemaker--in order to escape. Willie Wonkish.* [288 pages]

PF: MS

Grabenstein, Chris. *Mr. Lemoncello's Library Olympics*. 2016. *Book 2 in the series. Antagonists want libraries to be quiet places. Mr. L wants them to be exciting, inspirational and above censorship.* [266 pages]

PF: MS

Grabenstein, Chris. *Mr. Lemoncello's Great Library Race*. 2017. *Book 3 in the series. Inspirational message about famous folks (Emily D. Thomas E. Michael J. and Abraham L.) who failed then persevered. Evil gamemaker thieves get caught.* [272 pages]

PF: MS

Grabenstein, Chris. 2016. *Welcome to Wonderland: Home Sweet Motel. P. T. (as in Barnum?) and Gloria solve a mystery at a wacky motel: The Wonderland. Glib, shallow, like a Spring Break gimmick: oh, wait: that's the premise!* [284 pages]

PF: MS

Grande, Reyna. *The Distance between Us: A Memoir.* 2012. *Story of three Mexican siblings abandoned by parents who escape to El Otro Lado—the Other Side: the United States. Though eventually reunited with their father, the two sisters and brother are continually abandoned by their mother who was herself abandoned by her husband. The physical abandonment morphs into emotional abandonment as traditional Latino family values disintegrate. Eventually, the writer miraculously succeeds in forgiving her father for his physical abuse. This is a mighty fine book!* [322 pages]

PF: HS

Gratz, Alan. *Refugee.* 2017. *Three tales of adolescents leaving their home country (Nazi Germany; Cuba; Syria) in search of freedom from oppression. Based on real people.* [338 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Gray, Claudia. *Defy the Stars.* 2017. *The best example of plotweaving I've read since Suzanne Collins's Gregor The Outlander, a wonderful cycle of intergalactic travel; military, political and violent rebellion; mature teens standing up for what is right; love—between a 'mech' and a girl; shifting settings as Earth tries to salvage itself; Olde Timey London; technology: a rare novel that makes me want to read a series.* [501 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Green, John. *Turtles All the Way Down.* 2017. *A subject personal to the author's heart, a missing billionaire with a \$100,000 price tag on his head, good old Indianapolis for the setting, messed-up adolescents and contemporary communication blend with (s)age-old wisdom (including literary allusions, trivia and the title's mythic genesis) to create a highly-readable tale.* [286 pages]

PF: HS

Green, Shari. *Macy McMillan and the Rainbow Goddess.* 2017. *A novel-in-verse about a girl who is deaf and her attempt to remedy a widening rift between family—both old and new—and friends with the help of an elderly neighbor who bakes cookies to solve problems.* [234 pages]

PF: MS

Green, Tim & Derek Jeter. *Baseball Genius: Double Play*. 2018. *How do you cram evil coaches, evil GMs, bullies, struggling stars, an out-of-nowhere successful restaurant, an unbelievable skill bordering on magic or cheating, a missing mom and being in two places at once? You write simply, in short chapters.* [336 pages]

PF: MS, good for reluctant readers interested in baseball

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. 2003. *Recommended by Cynthia Bardelli, this first-person point-of-view novel is intriguingly entertaining as fifteen-year-old autistic Christopher references Sherlock Holmes, space physics and science, chaos theory, and other erudite bits-and-bobs of whatever is on his mind. The setting—small-town England and a bit of London—awakened the Anglophile in me.* [221 pages]

PF: HS

Halpern, Julie. *Get Well Soon*. 2007. *Recommended by Melissa Long, this is the story of the 21-day mental-health break taken by Anna in a mental health facility. Sent by her parents who were tired of her being sad all the time, Anna Bloom(s) ironically finding humanity and love and a personality.* [193 pages]

PF: HS

Hamilton, Alwyn. *Rebel of the Sands*. 2016. *Orphan Amani is a gunslinger with no prospects in town. Jin helps her escape. Beauty and the Beast meets 1001 Arabian Nights meets Lawrence of Arabia. Highly readable!* [314 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Harkrader, Lisa. *The Adventures of Beanboy*. 2012. *Illustrated by the author, so the images are “just right.” Recommended by a librarian at Piper Middle School as being popular with students, so I thought I would give it a shot. Though the first few chapters dragged, making me wince, “Oh, no: another first-novel with wooden dialogue echoing the way we think middle-schoolers speak and think.” But I persevered and I am glad that I did—the book is dense yet fluid, not unlike H2O, the comic superhero that initiates Tuck’s quest to create a sidekick. Plus, it’s set in Kansas.* [235 pages]

PF: MS

Harrington, Karen. *Mayday*. 2016. *A trivia aficionado, a singing stutterer, a retired Army drill sergeant and more grief than anyone should have to bear make for a great group of guys.* [340 pages]

PF: MS

Hartman, Rachel. Tess of the Road. 2018. *Half-sister to Seraphine, twin sister to Jeanne, Tess flees the confines of court after breaking a new brother-in-law/would-be priest's nose on Jeanne's wedding night. Her flight takes her on a picaresque quest to find one of the seven World Serpents. Along the way she finds herself. First in a series. As with so many like this, overwritten by 50 pages.* [536 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Hawkins, April. Royals. 2018. *Do not read this book if you are planning a trip to Scotland: you will make every tourist-stupid mistake known to commoners and a few known to royalty-gossip-mongers. But it's okay for the protagonist—midteen Floridian Daisy to make the errors expected of the younger sister of an engaged-to-the-prince. Why do I have the feeling this book is trying to be its YAL-gen Bridget Jones romance?* [293 pages]

PF: MS (some heavy drinking; attempted debauchery of the PG-13 kind)

Heiligman, Deborah. Vincent and Theo: The van Gogh Brothers. 2017. *A biography of a relationship: artistic, cultural and familial. The author presents her work as a gallery with walks between and among letters, paintings and studies. Often overlooked, Theo gets his just recognition. I found it often depressing—many family members suffered from depression; additionally, Theo contracted syphylis in the days before penicillin; ultimately, though, it—like Vincent's art--is enlightening.* [424 pages]

PF: HS

Henry, April. The Body in the Woods. 2014. *Formulaic, expository, fans of CSI forensic-type fiction will enjoy this narrative of teens helping Portland County Sheriff's Search and Rescue solve a murder mystery.* [263 pages]

PF: HS

Henry, April. Blood Will Tell. 2015. *Second book. More of the same as the first, this "quick read" is a modern-day fusion of the Hardy Boys with Nancy Drew. By "modern" I mean dysfunctional families, et al.* [255 pages]

PF: HS

Hoffmeister, Peter Brown. *This Is the Part Where You Laugh*. 2016. *Travis's summer to-do list includes releasing caimans into the lake. I find it hard to sympathize with a protagonist who feels little or no remorse for his actions. When his neighbors' pet cats and dogs are eaten by the caimans I actively dislike Travis. When he attacks the Seventh Day Adventist I really dislike him. If the author is trying to get me to walk a while in this character's shoes, then I say to him: "Walter Dean Myers does it better."* [329 pages]

PF: HS

Holm, Jennifer. *The Fourteenth Goldfish*. 2014. *Ellie's scientist grandfather creates a Fountain of Youth from a jellyfish, "un"ages to adolescence, moves in with Ellie and her mom, and inspires STEM awareness in his middle school granddaughter.* [190 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

Hughes, Dean. *Four-Four-Two*. 2016. *Emotional, vivid representation of an overlooked chapter of American military history, the decorated 442nd Regiment of Japanese-Americans who fought in world War II. The author says more with less, as when two sergeants question the value of sacrificing eight hundred casualties to rescue two hundred soldiers, given that the rescuers are Japanese-American and the rescued are white Americans. The scene in the Denver barbershop just about brought tears to my eyes.* [268 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Hunt, Linda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. 2015. *This book was recommended by Megan Murphy, a first-year sixth-grade Language Arts teacher at Piper Middle school. If you loved Bluefish—as I do—then you'll love this book, too. The characters are similar in problems and traits, though this novel is its own story. The problems of middle-school life are presented realistically yet sympathetically and the interior world of a gifted child with dyslexia is cause for attitude adjustment. A teacher is a sympathetic adult who offers learning and teaching strategies that we can all appreciate. Above all, in this novel there is hope.* [266 pages]

PF: MS

Jackson, Linda Williams. *Midnight without a Moon*. 2017. *It's 1955. It's Mississippi. Rose Lee just wants to leave. Emmett Till is murdered. Can Rose Lee change her mind? And Mississippi? Particularly insightful at the level of character versus character conflicts, where prejudices are expressed cruelly within families.* [308 pages]

PF: MS

Jensen, Lisa. *Beast: A Tale of Love and Revenge*. 2018. *Perhaps better titled Love, Revenge and Redemption, this fairy tale is retold from the point-of-view of Lucie, a serving girl abused by Beast's alter ego Jean Loup. Transformed into a candle stick holder/companion as Jean Loup sheds his identity in favor of the true beast, this is to Beauty and the Beast as Wicked is to The Wizard of Oz.* [337 pages]

PF: HS

Johnson, Maureen. *Truly Devious*. [Book 1/3] 2018. *Stephanie—Stevie—attends prestigious Ellingham Academy, site of a 1930s kidnapping/murder/wannabe sleuth that she is, she takes on the cold case as a class project. Alternating chronology between the 30s and today compels interest.* [416 pages]

PF: HS

Kagawa, Julie. *The Iron King*. 2010. *Meghan Chase learns that she is half-faery and that she must negotiate magic and relationships in Nevernever.* [363 pages]

PF: HS

Kagawa, Julie. *The Iron Daughter*. 2010. *Meghan continues her adventures/quest.* [359 pages]

PF: HS

Kagawa, Julie. *The Iron Queen*. 2011. *It's not enough to defeat ONE Iron King: Meghan must defeat his successor and ascend to the throne.* [358 pages]

PF: HS

Kagawa, Julie. *The Iron Knight*. 2011. *The story of Meghan's consort's quest to return to her.* [361 pages]

PF: HS

A WORD ABOUT THE IRON FEY SERIES:

THE FIRST BOOK IS ONE OF THE WORST-WRITTEN FIRST NOVELS I HAVE EVER READ. SERIOUSLY, IF I HAD TO READ THAT MEGHAN "SCREAMED" ONE MORE TIME THEN I WOULD HAVE GIVEN UP. I ALMOST DID GIVE UP ON THE SERIES, PUTTING THE SECOND ONE DOWN DURING THE FIRST PART. BUT I AM STUBBORN AND LOYAL (AN ELA TEACHER RECOMMENDED THE SERIES) SO I GAVE IT ANOTHER CHANCE. I'M GLAD I DID: THE SECOND PART OF THE SECOND BOOK IS THE TURNING POINT OF THE SERIES. STARTING HERE THE AUTHOR FINDS HER STYLE, HER VOICE. THE THIRD BOOK IS THE BEST BOOK.

Kelly, Erin Entrada. Hello, Universe. 2017. *Valencia, Kaori and Gen band together to find and rescue him Virgil who lands at the bottom of a well as a result of a bully's prank. Sweet-hearted with epic myths and supernatural elements balanced by natural and social observations.* [311 pages]

PF: MS

Kelly, Jacqueline. Skunked [Calpurnia Tate: Girl Vet series, Book 1]. 2016. *Soft-hearted Travis and a baby skunk help Cal Tate become accessible to younger readers.* [106 pages]

PF: MS

Kincaid, S. J. The Diabolic. 2016. *Chockful of plot points; getting there at the expense of characterization and theme moves it along at a rollicking pace. I would not be surprised to see a series based on Nemesi—a humanoid teenager and deadly weapon-- and her paramour, the new King of the Universe, a move which would flesh them out and focus the theme (the humanity in nonhumans; the inhumanity in humans).* [403 pages]

PF: HS

Kline, Christina Baker. Orphan Train Girl : The Young Readers' Edition of Orphan Train. 2017. *Fictionalized account of the life of a rider on an orphan train: Vivian, interviewed by a foster child Molly, in Maine.* [221 pages]

PF: MS

Konen, Leah. Love & Other Train Wrecks. 2018. *Amma from Roanoke and Noah from Hudson meet cute on a train, unaware that his ex-girlfriend Katrina is her soon-to-be stepsister. Loads of adolescent intellectualism with refs to classic film (Hitchcock), modern art (Pollock) and lit (Morrison). Trials and challenges include abandoning a train in favor of walking in a snowstorm to a small town, spending the night in a Motel 6, dysfunctional families and revealing then resolving the misunderstanding. I think thirty pages should have been cut out of the middle section in favor of adding them to the end.* [356 pages]

PF: HS

Korman, Gordon. Restart. 2017. *Middle-school bully Chase falls of a roof, lands on his head, suffers amnesia and turns into a nice guy: reliable Gordon Korman yarn.*[243 pages]

PF: MS

Landman, Tanya. *Hell and High Water*. 2015. *In mid-18th century England, Caleb a mixed-race 15-year-old boy performs punch and Judy shows with his father. When his dad is deported to the American colonies, Caleb packs up their theater and heads for the coast. Dickensian, with modern sensibilities.* [312 pages]

PF: MS/HS

LaCour, Nina. *We Are Okay*. 2017. *Marin loses her mother, discovers her sexuality and learns to despise her grandfather for giving her money instead of a childhood. When he goes missing, she runs away to college on the other side of the continent. Her friend Mabel gives her love, catches up with her, gives her more love and her parents.* [234 pages]

PF: HS

LaReau, Kara. *The Infamous Ratsos*. 2016. *When their wanna be bad deeds turn good, Louie and Ralphie fear failure in the eyes of their tough-rat dad. Although written for younger children, the issue of masculinity is a good one for middle schoolers.* [57 pages]

PF: MS

Larsen, Andrew. *The Man Who Loved Libraries: The Story of Andrew Carnegie*. N. D. *An inspiring true story about the benefits of hard work and the rewards that come from giving back to our communities. Because our local library is a Carnegie Library, I was interested in this topic.* [30 pages]

PF: ELEM

Latham, Jennifer. *Dreamland Burning*. 2017. *Reminiscent of Lois Ruby's Steal Away Home, in this one Rowan finds a skeleton that helps tell the story of the 1921 Tulsa race riot. Chapters alternate points-of-view with William.* [365 pages]

PF: HS

Lee, Mackenzie. *A Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue*. 2017. *An 18th century Grand Tour turned cultural deconstruction: short essays on The Grand Tour, epilepsy, race relations in Eighteenth-century Europe and queer culture are appended. The protagonist, his bi-racial best friend and sister are accosted by highwaymen and taken by Mediterranean pirates as they visit Paris, Marseilles, Barcelona, Venice and the Greek Isles.* [513 pages]

PF: HS

Levenseller, Tricia. *Daughter of the Pirate King*. 2017. *Alosa, the pirate king's daughter, searches for a treasure map. Setting up for a sequel, uneven in the way of so many first novels: drifts into 21st century sensibility at times as when pirates use martial arts moves when sword fighting. Snappy protagonist makes me ready to read more.* [308 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Levithan, David. *The Realm of Possibility*. 2004. *A variety of students at the same high school describe their ideas, experiences, and relationships in a series of interconnected stories. Loaned to me by an English Ed student this was one I read in an evening. Some of the familiar characters (Clara the mean girl) are hilarious; some of the unfamiliar characters (David and Jed) are revelatory to me.* [210 pages]

PF: HS

Levy, Debbie. *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark*. 2016. *Biography—with the Supreme Court Justice's approval and assistance—for children. A perceptive look at prejudice against Jews and women.* [36 pages]

PF: MS

Lewis, John. March. *Book One*. 2013. *Inspired by a 1958 comic book about Martin Luther King and the Montgomery boycott, this graphic history depicts pre-the Civil Rights South as well as the seminal events and characters of its formation and implementation. The structure is flashbacks from Congressman Lewis on the day of Barack Obama's Inauguration.* [121 pages]

PF: MS

Lin, Grace. *When the Sea Turned to Silver*. 2016. *Pinmei's grandmother has been kidnapped by the Tiger Emperor. Finding the Luminous Stone that Lights the Night will help. Another gracefully wrought tale with stories skillfully interwoven.* [366 pages]

PF: MS

Lockhart, E. *Genuine Fraud*. 2017. *Murder, stolen identity, stolen inheritance and more murder as a dangerous, violent, shady girl infiltrates a rich clique that can't believe she would do such a thing. When they call her down on it, they get their comeuppance. A satisfying twist at the end. Narrated in reverse chronological order; bookended by the present.* [262 pages]

PF: HS

Lubar, David. *Character, Driven*. 2016. *Seventeen-year-old Cliff is desperate to find a girlfriend and “come-of-age.” The narrative is winkingly self-referential, a style designed to reveal the writer’s craft, art and artists, dysfunctional families, teachers, high school and its cliques and quirks; and, to conceal the devastating truth at the heart of Cliff’s life. People—or at least characters—trump plot in this book.* [290 pages]

PF: HS

Lupica, Mike. *Lone Stars*. 2017. *Pop Warner star receiver Clay is afraid to get hit. He is afraid he’ll end up like his Coach, a former Dallas Cowboys player who is increasingly demented. I was curious about Lupica—he’s received all sorts of praise. I find his prose tepid.* [230 pages]

PF: MS

Maas, Sarah J. *Catwoman: Soulstealer*. 2018. *Guilty pleasure, this novel reads as quick as a comic book, though it presents lots of characters (Selina Kyle; her cystic fibrosis-suffering sister Maggie; Batwing, politically correct ally of Batman; League of Assassins; Harley Quin; Poison Ivy; a cameo appearance by the Joker; a street gang of female toughs called the Leopards; . . .). I’m not sure why it’s subtitled as it is.* [358 pages]

PF: MS/HS

MacDonald, Betty. *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*. 1947. *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, who lives in an upside-down house, knows how to make children behave.* [130 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

MacDonald, Betty. *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle’s Magic*. 1949. *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle can magically make a child’s bad habits disappear.* [181 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

MacDonald, Betty. *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle’s Farm*. 1954. *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle’s has moved to a farm where she and her animals cure childish bad habits.* [128 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

MacDonald, Betty. *Hello, Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*. 1957. *More of Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle’s adventures with common sense parenting advice.* [159 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

MacDonald, Betty & Anne MacDonald Canham. Happy Birthday, Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle. 2007. *Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle's cured-of-bad-behavior children plan a birthday party for you-know-who*. [193 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

After reading Ann Martin and Annie Parnell's book I followed our librarian's advice and read the originals before I met Missy, the next book annotated. While I like Missy best (she is a fresh character, closer to a contemporary reader's teacher, with a hint of romance about her; the characterizations of the house and animals—lacking in the originals—are smile-worthy; and, the older ones are dated as to technology and values: who listens to radios anymore; and, who spansks children?) I also enjoy the series. I like the Farm book second best and Happy Birthday (written by the original author's daughter) third best, I think. In the other three there is a bit too much reliance on the children's-book version of the deus ex machina as the author resorts to potions and parents—rather than wits and reverse psychology—as cures to improve behavior.

Martin, Ann M. with Annie Parnell. Missy Piggie-Wiggle and the Whatever Cure. 2016. *Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle's niece Missy takes up where her aunt left off, with advice for 21st century children and their parents. Enchanting episodes that make you want to read more! The prose is polished enough to recommend as a model for elementary and middle school writers of fiction*. [242 pages]

PF: ELEM/MS

Mass, Wendy. The Candymakers. 2010. *Candy competition among a group of twelve-year-olds leads to sweet revelations. The first section I found windy; the next one dull; the last three were quite good. As a small complaint, the way the book is printed made for an uncomfortable reading experience: the pages are too narrow for their binding*. [453 pages]

PF: MS

Mass, Wendy & Rebecca Stead. Bob. 2018. *Charming fairy tale told in two points-of-view Down Under in drought-stricken Australia as one character goes home and the other helps him find it while saving her gran's community's farms. This one grows on me; I like it more the more I think about it*. [201 pages]

PF: ELEM (a good choice for sophisticated elementary-school-age readers looking for a challenge)

Mathieu, Jennifer. Moxie. 2017. *I like the way the protagonist—sixteen-year-old Viv—uses zines and flyers (included in the text) to take on her small Texas town, where high school football is king. Great cast of characters and eye-opening dialogue about the actions taken to dehumanize high school girls. The walk-out, with its show of solidarity, is very effective, very powerful*. [326 pages]

PF: HS

McCarthy, Andrew. *Just Fly Away*. 2017. *When fifteen-year-old Lucy learns that she has an eight-year-old half-brother she questions her father. I like the parts in Maine, where she visits her grandfather on her own. To me, it seemed like a badly overreacted response that drove her to make the road trip.* [258 pages]

PF: HS

McCormick, Patricia. *The Plot to Kill Hitler: Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Spy, Unlikely Hero*. 2016. *McCormick does her usual splendid investigation, this time of a "good German" who—for religious reasons—joins a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. The morality and justification for opposition to injustice could serve as a handbook for dissent.* [143 pages]

PF: HS

McGinnis, Mindy. *The Female of the Species*. 2016. *Alex is friendless—what do you expect of someone who stalks and kills sexual predators? But, just to add conflict to the novel, she tries to have some. So, can she balance her nature with her social desire? The scenes with violence are compelling, almost overcoming the numerous holes in the plot and characterization. Still, the thesis is intriguing and the pages turn quickly.* [341 pages]

PF: HS

McManus, Karen M. *One of Us Is Lying*. 2017. *One murder; four suspects: Agatha Christie meets Bayview High School meets The Breakfast Club.* [358 pages]

PF: HS

Mebus, Scott. *Gods of Manhattan*. 2008. *Fascinating concept: a mythology of NYC. Usual "first book" blemishes: plodding exposition and dialogue as the author finds his—and his characters'—voices. I look forward to reading the next one.* [340 pages]

PF: MS

Medina, Meg. *Burn Baby Burn*. 2016.. *The matter of fact family violence [tough for me to read] as a Cuban-American boy terrifies his mother and sister is a microcosm of the social violence inflicted at the levels of gender, race and socio-economics in 1977 New York City. Still, despite Son of Sam and a blackout (a looter's dream come true!) love, hope, escape and justice prevail.* [300 pages]

PF: HS

Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne of Avonlea*. this ed. 2007; orig. 1909. *My copy is a wonderful, actual book: hard cover with well-composed artwork by Scott McKowen. I have been looking forward to reading it since Josie and I travelled to Prince Edward Island on the Little Red Schoolhouse trek of 2013, and I am rewarded by the reading experience. Visiting the setting adds richness to the tale. This tale is particularly important because it includes Anne's first teaching position. I well remember visiting the village of Avonlea on PEI and seeing the refurbished one-room schoolhouse where Lucy Maud Montgomery taught.* [239 pages]

PF: MS

Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne of the Island*. this ed 1976; orig 1915. *In this volume, Anne is much closer in age to my students (she, too, is a college student), Prince Edward Island is not nearly so prominent, and adult issues (marriage proposals; her realization that she loves Gilbert Blythe) become paramount. The story of her first publication is hilarious.* [244 pages]

PF: MS

Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne of Windy Poplars*. this ed 1998; orig 1936. *Anne has graduated and has a job as principal of Summerside High School on Prince Edward Island. Conflicts are resolved in sometimes hilarious, sometimes heartwarming, sometimes fortuitous fashion. Teachers will recognize helicopter parents, absent parents and permissive parents. Anne's letters to her fiancé Gilbert Blythe (at med school) make me miss having correspondents.* [258 pages]

PF: MS

Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne's House of Dreams*. this ed. 1987; orig 1917. *Anne becomes Mrs Dr Gilbert Blythe; the couple spend the first years of their life together in a Dream House with new friends and adventures, including the beautiful and tragic though ultimately happy Leslie; the wise yarn spinner Captain Jim; and the crone Cornelia. Though Anne becomes a mother, there are really very few children in this book; it is more about newlyweds becoming a family as well as community members.* [230 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne of Ingleside*. this ed. 1998; orig. 1939. *The same values as ever--imagination, acceptance--with Anne Shirley Blythe a maternally wise woman. Each child (boys Jem, Walter, Shirley; girls Nan, Diana and Rilla) gets a turn for a tale. The island remains an essential character.* [274 pages]

PF: HS

Moore, David Barclay. *The Stars beneath Our Feet*. 2017. *Living in the projects of Harlem is a tough life for Lolly. His brother was murdered, his parents split, some gangstas are out to get him. So, Lolly builds cities out of Legos to cope.* [288 pages]

PF: MS

Moranville, Sharelle Byars. *27 Magic Words*. 2016. *Denial (of Kobi's parents' death while sailing) leads to magic; magic eases the way to heart-breaking grief. In some ways this is a tough book to read: you don't want Kobi to suffer. In some ways this is a book about loss: Alzheimer's; death; mortality. But if you can make your way through the pain, the ending is worth it.* [197 pages]

PF: HS

Morris, Gerald. *The Squire's Tale*. 1998. *Retelling of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table, re-elevating Gawain's status above Lancelot from the perspective of a squire with faery forebears.* [209 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *The Squire, His Knight & His Lady*. 1999. *A retelling of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.* [229 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *The Savage Damsel and the Dwarf*. 2000. *More adventures from Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur, this time focusing on Gawain's favorite brother, Garehis.* [210 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *Parsifal's Page*. 2001. *"What ails, you?" restores a king; "But do you think you could teach me to make nails?" restores a son.* [229 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *The Ballad of Sir Dinadan*. 2003. *A darker tale, undershadowed by the immoral affair of Tristram and Iseult.* [242 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *The Princess, the Crone, and the Dung-Cart Knight*. 2004. *Referencing Chretien de Troyes (the French Malory), the author "resurrects" a character from Jean the woodcutter to Lancelot the knight while providing a growing sense of social consciousness. This time, it's the medieval persecution of the Jews.* [306 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *The Lioness and the Knight*. 2005. *More Troyes, with his poem "The Knight of the Lion." And, more social consciousness, with a very strong female protagonist and the rescue/release of seamstresses from the Isle of Wight who enriched their castle-owning/capitalistic overlord with their labor.* [340 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *The Quest of the Fair Unknown*. 2006. *The author takes a minor character Beaufils, places him in tales from the quest for the Holy Grail, reintroduces characters such as Gawain and Galahad from Camelot and crafts another entertaining book.* [260 pages]

PF: MS

Morris, Gerald. *The Squire's Quest*. 2009. *Another tale from Chretien de Troyes: Cliges takes Terence to Athens and Mainz to find the source of a war in the fairy world. It turns out to be Mordred, unknown son of Arthur who was seduced by Unseelie Enchantress Morgause.* [272 pages]

PF: MS

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. *The Book of Boy*. 2018. *A medieval allegorical quest with a shunned angel named Boy journeying from central France to Rome with a master named Secundus gathering relics of St. Peter.* [273 pages]

PF: MS

Murphy, Julie. *Ramona Blue*. 2017. *Another hilarious, heart-warming story from the author of Dumplin.' This time the misfit is tall, thin and lesbian. Or bisexual. Or maybe not. Again, the author writes with hope about confused adolescents on the verge of adulthood, dysfunctional families, small-town values and food. As with Dumplin,' I know the setting: Biloxi, Gulfport and the beaches along Highway 90 are represented well. The scenes in New Orleans are wonderful for those of us who have been there.* [408 pages]

PF: HS

Murphy, Julie. *Puddin'*. 2018. *Millie Michalchuk—born to be good/1st Runner Up in Dumplin's co-opted beauty pageant—rats out Callie Reyes—born to be bad*

wanna-be dance team captain, Callie takes the fall for the team's vandalism of Millie's uncle's gym. Her sentence? Alienation from the team + she has to work at the gym with Millie. Her reward? New friends Willowdean et al + she gets to work at the gym with Millie. [428 pages]

PF: HS

Nails, Jen. *One Hundred Spaghetti Strings*. 2017. *The smalltown setting (Greensboro) adds to the atmosphere; the short chapters help the novel's pace. The importance of family as inherited through cooking is a wonderful theme. Authentic recipes add to the protagonist's autobiography English project. [298 pages]*

PF: MS

Ness, Patrick. *And the Ocean Was Our Sky*. 2018. *Moby-Dick turned upside down and reinvented from Bathsheba the whale's point of view. [160 pages]*

PF: MS/HS

Norton, Preston. *Neanderthal Opens the Door to the Universe*. 2018. *The open door reveals:
an abusive father;
bullies;
burned-out teachers;
computer geniuses;
concussions;
drugs;
an enthusiastic, hypocritical Christian teen who alienates her gay brother;
a meek mother;
enough pop and classical cultural references to keep the pages turning; and,
a list from God.
Cliff Hubbard—aka Neanderthal—is my favorite BIG protagonist since Tao Jones of Whale Talk. [406 pages]*

PF: HS

Oh, Axie. *Rebel Seoul*. 2017. *This novel begs for a graphic version as it moves from plot point panel to plot point panel in a suffocating newworld of military autocracy threatened by teenage rebellion that's in the DNA. Though set in Korea (which explains its hyperbolic carpe diem attitude towards daily life) it could transport anywhere. [377 pages]*

PF: HS

Oliver, Lauren. *Replica (Gemma; Lyra)*. 2016. *Containing two intertwined yet separated—you have to turn the book upside down to read each of the narratives—stories of escaped experimental subjects, this novel, I believe,*

exceeds its grasp: the Gemma character weakens considerably towards the end in order to accommodate the plot's demands. [284 + 236 pages]

PF: ?

Ormsbee, Kathryn. *Tash Hearts Tolstoy*. 2017. *Anna Karenina meets Youtube, reimaged by graysexual Natasha Zelenka and her best Jack(ie) Harlow. The talent their crew of later adolescents brings to their project is beyond me. Short chapters mimic video episodes. If you're like me, then you will need to consult Urban Slang for deeper meaning. The author explains Tolstoy well. [367 pages]*

PF: HS

Oseman, Alice. *Radio Silence*. 2017. *Reminiscent of Rainbow Rowell's Carry On, this is a page turner for Anglophiles as a high school lesbian of Ethiopian-British (on her mother's side) [pushes hard for Cambridge. Along the way she goes to clubs, falls hard for a YouTube sensation named Radio Silence who broadcasts Universe City while facing a decision: conventional lit; or, art school? Refs to British schools (Cambridge, ie), clubs, music and a visit to London plus a really really really evil mom (not hers!) add atmosphere. [474 pages]*

PF: HS

Pastic, Stephan. *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*. 2013. *First in a series of easy-to-read books lauded by the creator of Wimpy Kid. Probably a movie to follow. Easy to put down; hard to read aloud (illustrations abound); hard to believe a kid could be this clueless, but maybe that's the joke. [294 pages]*

PF: MS

Patterson, James and Chris Grabenstein. *Word of Mouse*. 2016. *Entertaining, erudite, resourceful mouse Isaiah teaches us all new words and reinforces some very basic values about family and the difference between right and wrong. [284 pages]*

PF: MS

Patterson, James and Gabrielle Charbonnet. *Crazy House*. 2017. *Good girl Cassie fights to save her rebellious twin from death in a dysfunctional world where teens are taken and fight for survival. Short chapters make the book go faster. [351 pages]*

PF: MS/HS

Paulsen, Gary. Woodson. 1990. *If you love the way that animals can communicate with us, then you'll love this book, a loving memoir of a writer who specializes in the conflict character versus environment.* [132 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Peck, Richard. A Long Way from Chicago. 1998. *Nostalgic look back at a summer spent to rural Illinois during the Great Depression, dominated by a larger-than-life grandmother.* [148 pages]

PF: MS

Peck, Richard. A Year Down Yonder. 2000. *In 1937, fifteen-year-old Mary goes to live with her grandmother in the country, leading to understanding this larger-than-life woman.* [130 pages]

PF: MS

Peck, Richard. A Season of Gifts. 2009. *Relates the surprising gifts bestowed on twelve-year-old Bob Barnhart and his family, who have recently moved to a small Illinois town, in 1958, by their larger-than-life neighbor, Mrs. Dowdel.* [164 pages]

PF: MS

I read the “Grandma Dowdel trilogy” after turning in grades in the Fall of 2016. I wanted some relief from research papers, etc. Though reminiscent of Disney--some readers may find the three books a bit saccharine--I found it refreshing to read about good people who do good things for the right reasons in laugh-out-loud ways that maybe jerked a tear or two from me.

Peck, Richard. The Best Man. 2016. *When Archer's Uncle Paul and student teacher Mr. McLeod get married, Archer's sixth grade year becomes one he'll never forget. The story actually covers much more of Archer's life than sixth grade, and involves many more remarkable characters: Lynn(ette), Hilary, various teachers and classmates, each of whom adds to the narrative's charm. As is the case with most of Peck's work, there are some singularly hilarious episodes (Mr. McLeod's first day of school; taking back the lunchroom; the Calthorpes' Halloween party).* [232 pages]

PF: MS

Peck, Richard. On the Wings of Heroes. 2007. *A boy in Illinois remembers the home-front years of World War II, especially his two heroes—his brother in the Air Force and his father, who fought in the previous war. More memorable characters and stories from a master writer.* [148 pages]

PF: MS

Peck, Richard. *Secrets at Sea*. 2011. *An Upstairs, Downstairs sort of narrative aboard a later 19th century ocean liner, with mice standing in as servants.* [238 pages]

PF: MS

Perez, Celia C. *The First Rule of Punk*. 2017. *Twelve-year-old Maria Luisa (Malu: daughter of a record-store owner and a "SuperMexican English professor) relocates from Gainesville, FL to Chicago, IL. As the new kid at Posada Middle School she learns to be true to the first rule of punk: be yourself (no matter how diverse you may be). This would be a wonderful companion piece to The Distance between Us the memoir by Reyna Grande. The novel contains Malu's "zines."* [310 pages]

PF: MS

Pierce, Tamora. *Tempests and Slaughter: The Numair Chronicles: Book One: A Tortall Legend. Arram is more gifted than his friends at The Imperial University of Carthak: The School for Mages: the "kitchen witch" Varice and heir-to-the-throne Ozorne. Masters take notice, as do envious students. So, is a plot involving assassinations afoot? Or, is it just his imagination? Anti-slavery and PETA advocates will applaud Arram's agenda.* [455 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Ray, Michelle. *Falling for Hamlet*. 2011. *In this stunning contemporary retelling of the play from Ophelia's point of view, the author manages to be true to the Bard—you'll recognize plot and quotes—while using modern American society to make it palatable. Penned by an English teacher who is herself obviously in love with Hamlet. Interesting for the three discourse threads: talk-show, police interrogation and personal narrative. As is the case with the play itself, I find it a bit long for my attention span.* [348 pages]

PF: HS

Reck, Jared. *A Short History of the Girl Next Door*. 2017. *Matt's mom loves Tabby like a daughter. Matt comes to love her like a girlfriend. Then, though they're freshmen, she dates a senior. Then, she dies. Lots of 8th-grade angst, tempered by farts. Yeah, it's that kind of uneven.* [261 pages]

PF: MS

Reyl, Hilary. *Kids Like Us*. 2017. *Martin goes to France where his mom makes a movie while he hangs out with French schoolkids. Yes: they are provincial and cruel. But, you've got to admire an author who attempts to interweave Proust with autism with French adolescence.* [279 pages]

PF: HS

Reynolds, Jason. *Ghost*. 2016. *The first book in a series about a fast but fiery group of kids who have a shot at the Junior Olympics. Problems in the 'hood (no dads; no respect; no money) personified by the protagonist and his coach.* [180 pages]

PF: MS

Reynolds, Jason. *As Brave as You*. 2016. *Genie and Ernie spend a month in Carolina with their country grands while their parents patch up their marriage. Shooting as a rite of passage is quite dramatic, though I would have had Ernie lose an eye instead of some teeth: this would have made him closer to his blind grandfather.* [410 pages]

PF: MS

Reynolds, Jason. *Long Way Down*. 2017. *Will lives in a violent neighborhood. He vows revenge for his brother's murder. He steps into an elevator with his brother's gun. Starting with the sixth floor and continuing to the lobby, a different ghost enters at each stop, giving Will cause for reflection.* [320 pages]

PF: HS

Reynolds, Jason. *Miles Morales: Spider-Man*. 2017. *Alt version of Peter Parker, Miles is ghetto escapee via elite private school where a teacher turns out to be part of an evil racist cabal spanning centuries. Spidey takes 'em down.*[261 pages]

PF: MS (beware language!)

Richards, Natalie. *Six Months Later*. 2013. *Chloe has lost her mind—or at least part of her memory: she's fast forwarded from pollen to snow, has exceptional academic skills and is super cliquy with jocks. Plus, her best friend is now her former best friend. What? How? Why? At times—for example when Chloe goes to the library and has trouble with a slow computer—the writing becomes a bit too flaccid for a thriller.* [323 pages]

PF: HS

Riggs, Ransom. *Tales of the Peculiar*. 2016. *A welcome, wonderful companion piece to the Miss Peregrine trilogy, ostensibly collected by Millard Nullings. Though there are drawings, there are no photos.* [160 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Riggs, Ransom. *A Map of Days: The Fourth Novel of Miss Peregrine's Peculiar children*. 2018. *Jacob returns to America, tries to follow in his grandfather's footsteps, runs afoul of domestic gangs and falls out with his British family, all by way of leading up to the fifth novel*. [480 pages]

PF: HS

Riggs, Ransom and Cassandra Jean. *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children: The Graphic Novel*. 2013. *Graphic version of the tale of Jacob Portman, born a peculiar, who follows his murdered grandfather's tales to Wales where he discovers a time portal, providing an entrance to a world that he is destined to save, with a little help from his new-found friends*. [254 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Riordan, Rick. *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard: The Sword of Summer*. 2015. *Magnus is a demi-god: his dad is the Norse god of summer. He is on a quest to find his dad's sword. Successful template faithfully followed as Riordan switches to Norse gods. There is interaction with Percy Jackson, and Magnus and Annabeth are cousins*. [491 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *The Hammer of Thor*. (Book 2 of the Magnus Chase series). 2016. *Thor's hammer is missing; Magnus must find it. The adventures continue, though now family matters become more problematic as Loki manipulates his daughters as well as Magnus's uncle*. [471 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *The Ship of the Dead* (Book 3 of the Magnus Chase series). 2017. *Magnus Chase, son of Frey, bands together with hallmates from the 19th floor to thwart Loki's attempt to initiate Ragnarok, the Day of Doom. They travel in a bright yellow Viking ship*. [410 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *The Hidden Oracle* (Book I of The Trials of Apollo). 2016. *Apollo is punished by his father Zeus. He is sent to Manhattan in human, mortal form and sent on a quest. He goes to Camp Half-Blood with a ragamuffin demigod named Meg, a daughter of Demeter. The chapters begin with haiku: interesting! And, Apollo's attitude is hilarious. As usual, great references to popular culture*. [361 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *The Dark Prophecy*. (Book II of the Trials of Apollo). 2017. *The Quest moves west as Calypso, Leo and Apollo/Lester Papadopoulos arrive in Indianapolis, home of Commodus, former Roman emperor/despot and member of the Triumvirate. Conflict and connection (family and friends) continue. Haiku, too, continues as does the pop culture atmosphere, which Riordan skillfully interweaves with Roman history/mythology. As this series continues I am struck by how well he incorporates what is by now his own mythology.* [401 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *Red Pyramid*. 2010. *Riordan gets into dancing like an Egyptian with new adolescent protagonists and gods.* [516 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *The Throne of Fire*. (Book 2 of the Kane Chronicles). 2011. *Mixed-race orphans Carter and Sadie Kane continue the saga.* [447 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *The Serpent's Shadow*. (Book 3 of the Kane Chronicles). 2012. *The trilogy and the quest are completed as Sadie and Carter defeat the serpent, save the world from chaos, earn respect from Egyptian gods and find true love with Egyptian entities.* [401 pages]

PF: MS

Riordan, Rick. *The Trials of Apollo: Book Three: The Burning Maze*. 2018. *Rollickin' Rick Scooby-does our way through the next installment; well worth the read as the undone god discovers a deep deep conspiracy. The connections with prior characters keep the universe vibrant. Grover—yes—that Grover—Lester and Meg continue to be faithful companions as this time they save vegetal prizes (dryads) in California.* [431 pages]

PF: MS

Romero, Jordan (with Linda LeBlanc). *No Summit out of Sight*. 2014. *If it's possible to have your heart warmed while reading about temps double digits below zero, then this book can do it. Meant to be inspirational, the book has a tendency to become repetitive—after all, how many times can you make climbing each of eight mountains unique?* [355 pages]

PF: MS

Roux, Madeleine. *House of Furies*. 2017. *Jane Austen goes Goth in a Bronte-sque concoction conjured of the Devil (latent love interest?), servants with dark powers, bad lords and ladies deserving of gruesome death and Unworldly creatures who all meet in a 19th century boardinghouse in the wilds of rural Britain*. [404 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Rowell, Galen. *In the Throne Room of the Mountain Gods*. 1986. *Firsthand account of the 1975 American assault on K2, which fell far short of the summit. Includes histories of other climbs; spectacular photographs*. [329 pages]

PF: HS

Rundell, Karen. *The Explorer*. 2017. *Four children (three middle-school-aged; one younger brother) go down in a small plan in the Amazon jungle. They prove to be resourceful enough to live long enough to let a longtime jungle dweller, escapee from the Western world help them. I found this to be both heartwarming and spiritually uplifting as the children go through a rite of passage in a character versus environment conflict where they learn to respect family, friends and Nature*. [324 pages]

PF: MS

Sanderson, Brandon. *Alcatraz Versus the Evil Librarians*. 2007. *On his thirteenth birthday, foster child Alcatraz Smedry receives a bag of sand which is immediately stolen by the evil Librarians who are trying to take over the world, and Alcatraz is introduced to his grandfather and his own special talent, and told that he must use it to save civilization. Young wanna be writers will benefit from the self-referential nods to the novel's structure*. [308 pages]

PF: MS

Sanderson, Brandon. *Alcatraz Versus the Scrivener's Bones*. 2008. *Alcatraz continues his ADD-aided conflict with the Evil Librarians, this time fighting them in the famed Library of Alexandria. The authorial interruptions/intrusions—I've decided—are not worth the effort of reading the book. Though there are more, I may not continue the series*. [322 pages]

PF: MS

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *The Hired Girl*. 2015. *Fourteen-year-old Joan Skraggs yearns to escape rural Pennsylvania and find real life and true love in Baltimore as a*

hired girl. for real life and true love. Historically vivid, albeit wordy, the novel does a great job of delineating contrasts: country/ city; men/women; Catholics/Jews,... [387 pages]

PF: HS

Schwab, Victoria. *This Savage Song: A Monsters of Verity Novel*. 2016. *Kate Harker—only child of a wannabe dictator of a dystopian city—meets August Flynn—youngest of three Sunais, top-of-the-line monsters. In a page-turning, thrilling junkfood feast, havoc ensues, monsters and people die.* [451 pages]

PF: HS

Sheinkin, Steve. *Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team*. 2017. *An astonishing underdog sports story, a look at “the team that invented football,” while also exposing persecution and policies designed to assimilate a vanquished race into the victors’ culture. Simultaneously enheartening and heart-breaking. As I have come to expect with this author: well-researched; highly readable.* [233 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Sheinkin, Steve. *Most Dangerous : Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War*. 2015. *Usual Shienkin treatment of U.S. history, focusing on a ce ntral figure then radiating outward. This time the subject is the Vietnam war, the figure is Daniel Ellsberg and his decision to leak the Pentagon Papers, a Top Secret document commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara chronicling the history of America’s involvement in Vietnam. The study was an effort to prevent such tragedies from happening again.* [324 pages]

PF: HS

Shepherd, Megan. *Grim Lovelies*. 2018. *Transformed from owl to human, Anouk cleans and cooks in Parisian townhome. When her witch mistress is murdered, Anouk gathers four fellow beasties to prevent changing back. This means befriending goblins and battling magicians. This has “first book in a series” written all over it.* [375 pages]

PF: HS

Slater, Dashka. *The 57 Bus*. 2017. *Investigative journalist/children’s lit author’s attempt to deconstruct the events of November 4, 2013, when one teen set another teen afire. Elements include the two characters—victim and*

perpetrator—culture, family, friends, the justice system—and alternatives—and society. [293 pages]

PF: HS

Smith, Anthony. Explorers of the Amazon. 1990. *Expository narratives of nine explorers from the 16th to the 20th centuries. This book would appeal to outdoor-types.* [332 pages]

PF: HS

Smy, Pam. Thornhill. 2017. *A Gothic (derelict house, ghost, bully, isolation) graphic novel with a mystery spanning time.* [531 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Standish, Ali. The Ethan I Was Before. 2017. *Middle-schooler Ethan and his family leave Boston for coastal Georgia where his grandfather grieves and Ethan confronts his personal grief. A hurricane, a new friend, a litter of red wolves and a reconciliation later folks are ready to move on with their lives.* [342 pages]

PF: MS

Stelson, Caren. Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story. 2016. *Well-illustrated with photographs; the biographical narrative is skillfully interwoven with global and national issues, including anti-immigrant American policies, American civil rights, atrocities, atomic bomb history, classroom problems, cold war, medical issues, nonviolent protest, world war, and universal peace.* [140 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Stewart, Trenton Lee. The Secret Keepers. 2016. *A twelve-year-old boy and a magic watch that renders him invisible should make for a good story, but the narrative style is so expository, so matter-of-fact and at times so dull as to resemble watching the hour hand on a watch move from 12 to 1.* [501 pages]

PF: MS

Stiefvater, Maggie. All the Crooked Saints. 2017. *Even Cowgirls get the Blues meets One Hundred Years of Solitude in Bicho Raro, Colorado, where saints and pilgrims and pirate radio and owls and miracles assemble. The best thing I've read of hers since The Scorpio Races.* [311 pages]

PF: HS

Stuber, Barbara. *Crossing the Tracks*. 2010. *This is a wonderful tale that resonates with local color, history (1926 Missouri), family dynamics, first love, grief and subjects reminiscent of To Kill a Mockingbird. Plus, you learn that "hobo" stands for "homeward bound."* [258 pages]

PF: HS

Swanson, Matthew and Robbi Behr. *The Real McCoys*. 2017. *A mascot is missing! That's okay: elementary-school-aged wannbe detective Moxie McCoy, her new best friend, and her little brother are on the case! This husband-and-wife team has masterfully executed a partnership between linguistic and visual art: the story is embellished and enhanced by the illustrations!* [323 pages]

PF: ELEM

Sweet, Melissa. *Some Writer: The Story of E. B. White*. 2016. *Illustrated biography of the legendary author by a Caldecott Honor winner. Quite simply: charming, disarmingly erudite, sumptuously illustrated: a joy of a book.* [162 pages]

PF: MS

Tanner, Lian. *Sunker's Deep*. 2016. *This second installment of the Icebreaker trilogy features action, adventure and a world that is perhaps not so different from our own. Riveting, as was the first.* [278 pages]

PF: MS

Tanner, Lian. *Battlesong*. 2017. *The exciting conclusion to the Icebreaker trilogy. Fetchers help reunite the Cap'n with his crews, Fin with his Mam and humanity with the future. A satisfying ending to a satisfying trilogy: action-packed, suspenseful, and logical.* [293 pages]

PF: MS

Taylor, Laini. *Night of Cake & Puppets*. 2017. *Wondrous whimsical incorporation of art and artifice to echo, mimic, reflect the feeling of falling in love with a little of magic, drawings and music aiding and abetting the wannabe lovers.* [190 pages + add-ons, incl graphic lit & chapters from other novels]

PF: MS/HS

Telgemeier, Raina. *Sisters*. 2014. *Raina wants a sister, but is disappointed by hers until a family car trip from San Francisco to Colorado Springs and back illuminates their relationship. Presented in graphic form.* [199 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Thomas, Angie. *The Hate U Give*. 2017. *With this novel, mentioned by both a middle school librarian and by Sharon Draper—a wordsmith (the author is a rap artist) has crafted a powerful narrative of the motivation for choices, including choosing—or not—to do the right thing by family, by friends, by community. The title provides an acronym: THUG; the novel explains how and why decent teens become thugs and how they rise above the stereotype.* [444 pages]

PF: HS

Todd, Ilima. *Resist*. 2016. Sequel to *Remake*. *Theron meets Catcher, falls in love with Pua, finds Nine, joins the Rise (rebel forces), leads to the next book. Some of the same issues I had with the first book: plot holes, inconsistent characterization, preachy tone: family=freedom4r.* [342 pages]

PF: HS

Townsend, Jessica. *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow*. 2017. *A cursed child destined to die on her eleventh birthday is rescued and whisked away to a secret realm called Nevermoor and given the chance to compete for a place in a prestigious organization called the Wondrous Society.* [461 pages]

PF: MS

Vail, Rachel. *Well, That Was Awkward*. 2017. *Thirteen-going-on-fourteen-year-old Gracie is everyone's favorite friend. So it's no problem for her to help Sienna text snappy chatter AJ, who falls in love with her witty verbiage. Meanwhile, Emmett pines for Gracie who obviously likes AJ. Got it? Then look out for the lost turtle, the venial beautiful girl who wants AJ and the awkward Dorin, who has a heart of gold but the social sensibility of lead. The use of "screens" helps bring the dialogue to life while distancing the reader from the protagonist's family's tragedy: the death of a sister Gracie never met.* [314 pages]

PF: MS

Valente, Catherynne M. *The Glass Town Game*. 2017. *The Bronte children Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell play hookey and adventure into a world of their imagination where dangerous wordplay threatens them. To someone in love with the Brontes this might be a real treat; to nonfans, this can be easily skipped.* [530 pages]

PF: HS

Van Draanen, Wendelin. *Wild Bird*. 2017. *Wren Clemmens—middle child—is lonely at middle school, makes the wrong friends there and then in high school, destroys her familial relationships in favor of drugs, is sent to desert camp to find her way, goes on a quest, and rescues herself with the help of the right people. The bits about camping in the desert are quite good.* [311 pages]

PF: MS/HS

Vawter, Vince. *Paperboy*. 2013. *Eleven-year-old stutterer is a substitute paperboy for July in 1959 Memphis. He encounters adult situations (drunken housewife, scholarly merchant marine, prejudice against his Mam, feuding junk men, thievery).* [221 pages]

PF: MS

Walls, Jeannette. *The Glass Castle*. 2005. *Memoir by MSNBC contributor narrating family life with a drunken, wandering father and a mother “addicted to excitement.” Another inspiring tale of a semi-famous celebrity type who overcomes weird parents to make good in a world they disparage.* [288 pages]

PF: HS

Ward, Geoffrey C. and Ken Burns. *Baseball: An Illustrated History*. 1994. *The companion to Ken Burns’s magnificent PBS television series. It took me a while, but I am glad that I got around to reading this, a sheer pleasure for fans of the game.* [486 pages]

PF: HS

Webb, Walter Prescott. *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense*, 2nd ed. 1965 (1st ed. 1935). *Old-style history in the school of John Hope Franklin, voluminously researched but elegantly presented in a straight-forward narrative style that makes characters come to life. A few maps would be helpful.* [567 pages]

PF: MS/HS (this would appeal to readers who are outdoorsy, have a strong sense of justice—in having villains brought to justice—and don't mind reading violence matter-of-fact violence. This may offend some sensibilities as it was written in the mid-30s of last century.)

Weller, Sam. *The Bradbury Chronicles*. 2005. *The first-ever authorized biography of Ray Bradbury.* [332 pages]

PF: HS

Werlin, Nancy. 2017. *And Then There Were Four. Five teens with parents who want them dead. One goes down. The rest go on the run, seeking justice and vengeance. Written in alternating characters' point-of-view.* [415 pages]

PF: HS

Williams, Nicole. *Trusting You & Other Lies. 2017. So, Phoenix has to spend the summer at a family camp. And she meets Head Counselor Callum. And he's her boss. And she has trust issues with parents and him and her. But, it's a romance. So, you know: happy endings.* [290 pages]

PF: HS

Wolk, Lauren. *Wolf Hollow. 2016. Between the wars (I and II), out in the Pennsylvania countryside, Annabelle is bullied by Betty (who reminds me of Robert E. Lee Ewell from To Kill a Mockingbird), but befriended by Toby (who reminds me of Boo Radley from To Kill a Mockingbird). A bit too much portentous foreshadowing for my taste; it would serve for middle schoolers before they read To Kill a Mockingbird in high school.* [291 pages]

PF: MS

Wood, June Rae. *The Man Who Loved Clowns. 1992. Thirteen-year-old Delrita loves her uncle Punky, who has Down's syndrome. As an adolescent, though, she is sometime embarrassed by him, a reaction that causes her shame. A heart-felt work of love, based on the author's relationship with her brother. The Missouri setting—especially the bits about Silver Dollar City—are quite authentic; the transformations as characters such as Delrita and Aunt Queenie grow emotionally and mature socially are quite evident. The emotional losses are quite profound, heavily foreshadowed and inevitable.* [224 pages]
recommended by my student Lora May

PF: MS

Wynne-Jones, Tim. *The Ruinous Sweep. 2018. Ghost meets We Were Liars up in Canada, eh?* [385 pages]

PF: HS

Yoon, Nicola. *The Sun Is Also a Star. 2016. Jamaican Natasha and Korean-American Daniel meet in NYC, have adventures and take a test verifying a "scientific proof of love." Authorial intrusions/asides abound with ruminations on multiverses, histories and encyclopedic exposition. A lot of fun, this book reminds me Eleanor and Park as well as Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist!* [344 pages]

PF: HS

Zentner, Jeff. *The Serpent King*. 2016. *At first, I was reluctant to read this book. I was offput by the description of snake-handling during church services. But it turns out that those scenes are very few and easily zapped. What is left is a substantial work of teen rebellion (the son of a Pentecostal preacher and his tow friend want to escape rural Forrestville, Tennessee) at the artistic level: electronically with fantasy for the girl, a wannabe songwriter/singer for one boy and a wannabe fantasy writer for the other boy, each of whose stories is told in their voice in interwoven sections.* [369 pages]

PF: HS

Zevin, Gabrielle. *All These Things I've Done*. 2011. *Anya Balanchine is the sixteen-year-old heir apparent to a New York City crime family in a dystopian future where things we consider necessities of life (chocolate, caffeine, water, cell phones) are rationed or otherwise prohibited. Purposefully Dickensque, in a good way: the plot keeps moving, twisting and turning as it reveals more story and character.* [372 pages]

PF: HS

Zevin, Gabrielle. *Because It Is My Blood*. [2nd book in the Birthright Trilogy] 2012. *The Birthright saga continues with Book the Second as seventeen-year-old Anya hides out in 2083 Mexico learning the agriculture of chocolate.* [350 pages]

PF: HS

Zevin, Gabrielle. *In the Age of Love and Chocolate*. [3rd book in the Birthright Trilogy] 2013. *A satisfying ending to the trilogy: bad guys die; couples reunite; the future looks promising. The tone skews away from Dickens and more toward Austen in this volume.* [286 pages]

PF: HS

Zoboi, Ibi. *American Street*. 2017. *Earthquake survivor born in America enters the US where her mother is detained. Fabiola moves in with her aunt and cousins, creating the Four Bs (Brains, Beauty, Brawn & Bravery) learning that the mean streets of Detroit can give her Haitian 'hood a run for its money. Interesting for its use of Voudou as a touchstone of faith.* [324 pages]

PF: HS

TOTAL: 12/24/18: 89, 530 pages; 280 titles; 212 authors & editors