

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Volume 8 Number 5

January 2012

Fiction

Hugs from Pearl

Written and illus. by: Paul Schmid

Harper, 2011

ISBN: 9780061804342

Curriculum: Hugs; Porcupines; Problem solving

Pearl is so sweet, always shares, and LOVES to give hugs. The problem is, Pearl is a porcupine, so her hugs hurt. This is a softly illustrated book with a sweet and simple story about problem solving.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



making sticky rice balls with a lucky coin in one, watching the dragon parade. Maomao finds the lucky coin in her rice ball and gives it to Papa when he leaves, so he can hide it again next year.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elem.

Snowy Valentine

By: David Petersen

Harper, 2011

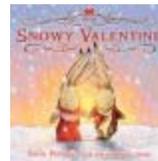
ISBN: 9780061463785

Curriculum: Valentine's Day; Rabbits; Forest animals

Dressed in his dapper three piece suite and scarf, Jasper Bunny sets out to find the perfect Valentine's Day gift for his wife Lilly. He visits other animals in the valley; barely escaping with his life from Teagan Fox. While trudging home cold and wet, cardinal calls down to him from his treetop perch, "From where I sit, ...you have given Lilly a wonderful gift already."

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier

Edison Elem.



A New Year's Reunion

By: Yu Li-Qiong

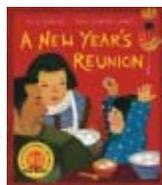
Illus. by: Zhu Cheng-Liang

Candlewick, 2011

ISBN: 9780763658816

Curriculum: Family life in China; Chinese New Year

The New Year holiday brings Maomao's father home from his far away job. The family prepares for the New Year in all the traditional ways: getting a haircut,



Pirate Boy

By: Eve Bunting

Illus. By: Julie Forten-



Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

berry

Holiday House, 2011

ISBN: 9780823423217

Curriculum: Pirates; Imagination; Parent Child Relationships

Danny's imagination wanders away to what it would be like to be a pirate. Although his adventure is tempting, he seeks the security in knowing that if the life of a pirate is not what he hoped, his mom would be there to save him. Her reassurance that she would rescue him through her own creative means reminds him how brave his mom is daily.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton

South H.S.

Spanish!

Demasiados globos

By: Catherine Matthias

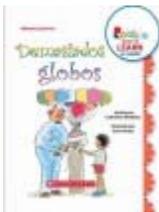
Illus. by: Gene Sharp

Children's Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780531261248

Curriculum: Zoo animals; Counting; Colors; Balloons

A little girl goes to the zoo buying balloons for all the animals she sees - four green balloons for the four crocodiles, six white balloons for the six polar bears, and so on - until she realizes she has bought too many and floats away! Followed by a variety of simple activities for families to do together supporting basic literacy and math skills, the books in the *Rookie Ready to Learn en español* series can be enjoyable and helpful both at school and at home.



Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich

CMS Community School



Many of these books will work in middle school, too.!

The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

Fiction

The Last Musketeer

Written and illus by: Stuart Gibbs

Harper, 2011

ISBN:

9780805087161

Curriculum: Time travel; Louis XIII; French history; Friends

Greg Rich's family travels to the Louvre in Paris to sell the family heirlooms despite his grandfather's warnings to never take them to France. During the transaction it is discovered that the stone in his mother's necklace is actually one-half of a stone that induces time travel. When the manager of the museum grabs the stone, the manager, Greg and his parents are transported back in time to the



reign of Louis XIII. Greg's parents are imprisoned and Greg befriends boys that will ultimately become the Three Musketeers. Together they must find a way to get Greg's parents out of prison.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA

The Masterwork of a Painting Elephant

By: Michelle Cuevas

Illus. by: Ed Young

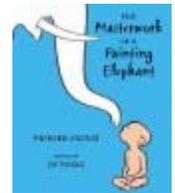
RR Donnelley & Sons, 2011

ISBN:

9780374348540

Curriculum: Orphans, Elephants, Artists, Voyages & Travels, Love

This is a delightfully imaginative story that recounts the adventures of Pigeon Jones, a boy abandoned by his parents at birth, who is adopted and raised by an artistic Indian elephant named Birch - formerly of the circus. Pigeon spends his entire childhood (including attending the fifth grade where he meets his true love "Darling Clementine") on Birch's safe, warm back. When Pigeon turns ten, he convinces Birch to go to Paris (during a school vacation) to find the elephant's long-lost love (an acrobat named Dahlia), and to claim his position as a noteworthy artist. At the same time, Pigeon never gives up on his wish to find his birth parents, whom he believes to be circus performers. Many humorous and curious adventures ensue as they follow their quests, until it's time to find their way back home, and Pigeon realizes he must grow up and put his



own two feet on the ground. Reminiscent of "The Little Prince", with airy sketches by Young, this tale will leave readers of all ages feeling the joys of love, caring, and what it means to be a family.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner M.S.

Wonkenstein

Written and illus. by:
Obert Skye

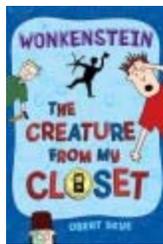
Henry Holt, 2011

ISBN:
9780805092684

Curriculum: Monsters; Books; Relationships

Rob Burnside is a 12 year old boy with relationship problems and a very messy closet. To his astonishment, a combination of Willy Wonka and Frankenstein's monster emerges from the closet one day; now Rob has to keep him a secret until he can find out what "Wonkenstein" is up to. And what he's up to is helping Rob straighten out his life! Similar to the "Wimpy Kid" in illustrations, this is a funny and imaginative story with familiar situations students will enjoy.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



Mo Wren, Lost and Found

By: Tricia
Springstubb

Baszer + Bray, 2011

ISBN:
9780061990397

Curriculum: Moving - household;



Family life; Restaurants; Neighborhoods

This sequel to *What Happened on Fox Street* finds Mo in a new school and unfamiliar neighborhood trying to support her widowed father's efforts to open a sports bar. Mo's warmth continues to charm in this moving story. Though built on hard truths and real life situations readers will find their hearts warmed by this admirable character.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

Pearl Verses the World

By: Sally Murphy

Illus. by: Heather
Potter

Candlewick Press,
2009

ISBN: 9780763648213

Curriculum: Loneliness; Family life; Grandmothers; Schools; Poetry; Death

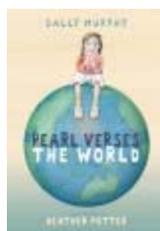
"Wherever I am no one sees me...I am a group of one", writes Pearl. Feeling isolated and misunderstood at school, Pearl longs for the end of the day when she can fly to the comfort of home. The free verse form and appealing illustrations cover a lot of emotional territory. Young readers will find solace and encouragement in Pearl's spunky individuality.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

Big Nate: On a Roll

Written and illus. by: Lincoln
Peirce



Harpe, 2011

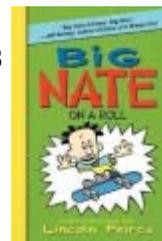
ISBN: 9780061944383

Curriculum: School; Contests; Scouts

Nate just has a way of getting into trouble: trouble at school; trouble at home; trouble at scouts. Big Nate is back in his third book. Part text and part cartoon strip, Nates's story unfolds in rapid-fire action. Fans of the *Whimpy Kid* books will love these books also.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

Kepner M.S



Nonfiction

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

By: Elizabeth Thomas

Child's World, 2012

ISBN:
9781609731762

Curriculum: Recycling; Environmentalism; Activism; Global warming; Landfills

This eco-friendly title encourages readers to keep the world beautiful and clean by reducing, reusing, and recycling. Some tips include taking shorter showers, turning off lights when not in use, riding a bike or walking, and precycling (buying only recyclable items). Profiles of successful proactive children are spotlighted. All reviewed titles in the *Go Green!* series provide a terrific introduction to 2nd-4th graders looking to improve the world through their actions.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

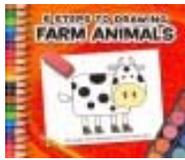
JFK H.S.



5 Steps to Drawing: Farm Animals

The Children's
World, 2012

ISBN:
9781609731991



Curriculum: How-to-draw; Farm animals

One in a series, *5 Steps to Drawing*, this book teaches readers all about different farm animals and how to draw them. It is well laid out with simple-to-follow directions, and includes many facts about various farm animals.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni

For the Birds: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson

By: Peggy Thomas

Illus. by: Laura
Jacques



Calkins Creek, 2011

ISBN: 9781590787649

Curriculum: Peterson, Roger Tory; Birds; Ornithologists

Beautiful full-page illustrations accompany the story of ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson's development as an artist, learning and recording each bird's special "uniform" or marking. He overcomes educational obstacles, publishes his first field guide at age twenty-six, and in later life struggles to protect birds from deadly chemicals and habitat destruction. Students who are interested in the environment and the beauty of birds would enjoy this biography.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

Many of these books will
work in high school, too.!

Fiction

Nursery Rhyme Comics

Intro by: Leonard S.
Marcus

Illus. by: Patrick
McDonnell... et al.

First Second, 2011

ISBN: 9781596436008

Curriculum: Nursery rhymes; Cartoons and comics

50 nursery rhymes, many well-known and some more obscure, are delightfully illustrated by top comic artists and illustrators in this compilation. Each of the 50 rhymes has its own distinctive look and influence of the artist to which it was assigned.

Readers of all ages (adults included) will be drawn to the wide variety of illustrations and perspectives taken by the artists. What a treat to have them breathe new life, excitement, and meaning into the messages these rhymes have offered for centuries!

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich
CMS Community School



Ravenwood

Written by: Andrew
Peters

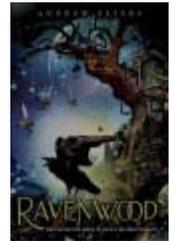
Chicken House, 2011

ISBN:
9780545305501

Curriculum: Fantasy; Trees; Society; Intrigue; Family

Arborem is a city in the trees. This society has learned to build and exist in the treetops, because the ground has deadly gasses that kill. Fourteen year old Ark has the worst job. He is a plumber that unclogs the toilets. One day, he overhears a plot to kill the king while cleaning out a pipe. His adventure starts and he must use his wits to not only survive, but to save his home. He finds out that his mother is Corwenna, the Raven Queen, and he has powers he didn't know he had. Will it be enough to save the city?

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Supernaturally

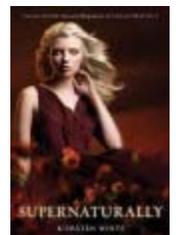
Written by: Kiersten
White

HarperTeen, 2011

ISBN:
9780061985867

Curriculum: Supernatural; Teen life; Fairies; Prophecies

This is the second book in the *Paranormalcy* series. Evie has escaped from the paranormal agency she was with in book one, but finds the normal life a little more dull than she expected. When approached to help the IPCA for a couple of missions, she reluctantly agrees. This



causes problems with her boyfriend, Lend, as well as the handsome Fairy that tried to steal her heart before. Evie's missions don't turn out as planned and she discovers a prophecy about herself that puts her in danger. She must figure out who she really is and find the best way to solve her dilemma.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

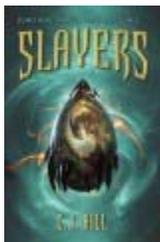
Slayers

By: C.J. Hill

Fiewel & Friends,
2011

ISBN:

9780312614140



Curriculum: Fantasy; Adventure; Dragons

Dragons are not a myth. They are real, and a secret society has a collection of dormant eggs ready to hatch as part of their plan to take over the country. Fortunately, a group of teens have grown up to be Dragon Slayers. Genetically linked to the dragons, this handful of young adults must train and discover their secret powers before it is too late and the dragons are set loose on the Capitol. First in a series, this breathtaking adventure will keep middle and high schoolers enthralled.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola

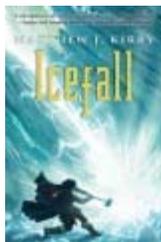
CEC Middle College

Icefall

By: Matthew J. Kirby

Scholastic Press,
2011

ISBN:



9780545274241

Curriculum: Winter; Ice; Self-confidence; Storytelling; Fantasy

To protect his heir from enemies, a Viking King sends his children, Harald, Asa, and Solveig, to winter in an ice-locked fortress hidden in a fjord. With the King's fiercest warriors to protect them, the children's safety seems assured until acts of treachery bring the realization that a traitor hides among them. To pass the long days and as a distraction to the possibility of starvation, Solveig begins learning the art of storytelling from the King's poet.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.

Body of Water

Written and illus by:

Sarah Dooley

Feiwel and Friends,
2011

ISBN:

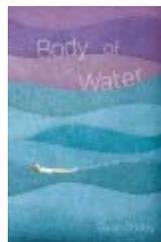
9780062048387

Curriculum: Homelessness; Wiccans; Family life; Arson; Camping

Twelve-year-old Ember Goforth-Shook has had her world turned upside down. Her family home burns down and she lost her dog in the fire. Nobody reaches out to help their family because they do not go to church. The family is Wiccan. While they do not hide this fact they are very quiet about it. Ember suspects that her best friend, Anson, started the fire because of the family's religious beliefs. Ember is trying to work through her feelings with everything that has happened.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA



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From ETLs:

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Antonio Nicotera

Sweet Venom

By: Tera Lynn Childs

Katherine Tegen, 2011



ISBN: 9780062001818

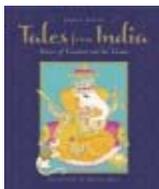
Curriculum: Mythology; Monsters; Sisters

Grace has just moved to San Francisco: new school, new start. Imagine her dismay when she starts to see monsters from ancient Greek myths; monsters that no one else can see. More shocking than the monsters is the girl who comes to fight them, a girl who looks just like her.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Tales from India: Stories of Creation and the Cosmos



By: Jamila Gavin

Illus. by: Amanda Hall

Templar, 2011

ISBN: 9780763655648

Curriculum: Multicultural Storytelling; Mythology; India

Rich, authentic storytelling, eye-popping detailed illustrations and cultural influence abound in stories of creation, good vs. evil, and the religious roots of Hindu belief. Readers will delight in learning the origins of *Avatar*, *Ganesh*, *Krishna* and other Indian deities; tie-ins and parallels to multicul-

tural mythology are a natural fit. Though recommended for grades 6-8, this book is a must-have for any internationally-minded library!

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy
Henry World School



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Variant

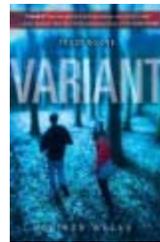
By: Robinson Wells

HarperTeen, 2011

ISBN: 9780062026088

Curriculum: Private schools; Foster care; Dystopia

Having survived though several foster families, Benson, 17, is happily accepted by the Maxwell Academy. When he arrives, his dreams are dashed. The campus is surrounded in razor wire, there are no adults, and competing gangs have conflicting opinions as to how to handle their



bizarre situation. The mystery increases as shocking discoveries unfold. HS students will be drawn in by the unexpected twists and revelations. Adding to the canon of dystopian fiction, *Variant's* cliff-hanger conclusion leaves room for an anticipated sequel.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

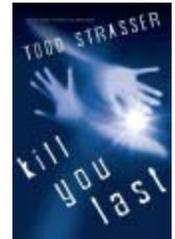
Kill You Last

By: Todd Strasser

Egmont, 2011

ISBN: 9781606840245

Curriculum: Family life; Missing persons; Crime investigation



Shelby's father, a fashion photographer, is under investigation for three missing teenage girls. Shelby can't believe his involvement. She begins her own hunt for the truth, but as answers get closer, she begins to receive threatening text messages. The evidence and scandals she discovers along the way change her life in unimaginable ways and lead to an incredibly shocking conclusion. This quick, engaging mystery will appeal to reluctant high school students looking for a strong female protagonist.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

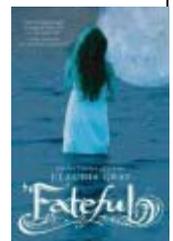
Fateful

By: Claudia Gray

Harper, 2011

ISBN 9780062006202

Curriculum: Titanic; Social class division;



Werewolves

For those who can't get enough of supernatural romance set in an historic venue - the *RMS Titanic*, this story is a sure sell! Tess Davies, servant to the flailing and failing Lisle family in England, has only to make the trip to America with the indomitable Lady Regina, her browbeaten daughter and arrogant son before she can escape to a new life and opportunity. The writing is on the wall when, the evening before embarking on the fated *Titanic*, Tess is accosted by a mysterious "gang" of gentlemen and a vicious wolf. Miraculously appearing out of nowhere, handsome, wealthy, and ever-so-charming Alec Marlowe comes to her rescue.

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy
Henry World School

Girl of Fire and Thorns

By: Rae Carson
GreenWillow Books,
2011
ISBN:
9780062026484



Curriculum: Fantasy; Adventure; Magic; Strong female protagonist; Coming of age

The second-born and overweight, Elisa's self-doubt overshadows the fact that she is the Chosen One. In her navel rests the Godstone, and there are others who would kill her to harness its power. Married off to a prince who does not love her, she is soon kidnapped by nomads and told of her true destiny to save the nation. Will Elisa be able to help the people, or will she die in her efforts?

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

The Berlin Boxing Club

By: Robert Sharenow
HarperTeen, 2011
ISBN: 9780061579684
Curriculum: Berlin; Germany; Boxing; Historical Fiction



As non-practicing Jews, Karl's family is mortified by the pre-war beating that Karl receives from three Hitler's Youth members. His father's acquaintance Max Schmeling, world title boxer and prime example of a strong German culture, takes Karl under his wing teaching him the importance of fight over flight. Little does Karl know, he will need to use these same skills to protect his family from the Nazis and question the alliance he has with his mentor.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.

So Silver Bright

By Lisa Mantchev
Feiwel and Friends,
2011
ISBN: 9780312380984



Curriculum: Theater; Magic; Actors and actresses; Fairies; Interpersonal relations

In this third and final installment of the series, beginning where *Perchance to Dream* left off, Beatrice Shakespeare Smith continues her quest to reunite her family. She travels with her loyal performing troupe to seek out her father. But

just when everything seems to be falling into place, instead everything goes terribly wrong. Beatrice's father has disappeared and Beatrice is summoned to perform before the Queen. With the Sea Goddess Sedna bent on revenge and torn between the two men she loves, Beatrice desperately needs the boon that will be granted by the Queen should her performance please.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

 * If you can *
 * look into the *
 * seeds of *
 * time, and *
 * say which *
 * grain will *
 * grow and *
 * which will *
 * not, speak *
 * then unto *
 * me. *
 * William *
 * Shakespeare *
