



# The Review Crew

## What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

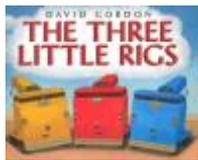
Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Review Crew Volume 2 No. 1  
October 2005

**Who are we?**

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

### Fiction



#### The Three Little Rigs

Written & Illus. by: David Gordon

HarperCollins Publisher, 2005  
ISBN: 0-06-058119-0

*Curriculum: Trucks; Brothers*

The latest version of the charming tale of the three little pigs features machines. The illustrations are light and airy while the little rigs are building, but dark and sinister when the wrecking ball comes to visit. Two garages are completely smashed and it is only when the brothers learn teamwork that the big, bad wrecking ball and his friends (mean magnet and cruel cutter) are defeated. A welcome addition to the many versions of the classic fairy-tale.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster K-8



#### Big Surprise in the Bug Tank

By: Ruth Horowitz  
Illustrated by: Joan Holub

Dial Books for Young Readers, 2005  
ISBN: 0803728743

*Curriculum: Science; Insects; Pets; Problem Solving*

Two boys have a hilarious time dealing with their pet cockroach overpopulation problem in this easy chapter book. It takes several tries, but in the end, of course, the solution comes from the library. A fun book to introduce the third grade science unit on animal reproduction and growth.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham  
Valdez Elem.

#### Mystery of Eatum Hall



By: John Kelly and Kathy Tincknell

Illustrated by: John Kelly

Candlewick, 2004  
ISBN: 0763625949

*Curriculum: Humor; Mysteries*

At Eatum Hall, Glenda and Horace Pork-Fowler spend the weekend gobbling goodies oblivious to abundant clues that they are the intended feast for a com-

[Continued on p. 4](#)

# The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

## Fiction



### Gentle's Holler

By: Kerry Madden

Viking, 2005.

ISBN: 0670059986

*Curriculum: Family life*

Twelve-year-old Livy Two and her eight siblings must make due with very little in the North Carolina woods. Livy's voice rings true as she relates the family's struggles and joys. Readers are rewarded with a sensitive story full of drama and hope played out in the lives of well-drawn characters.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Smedley



### Angus and Sadie

By: Cynthia Voigt

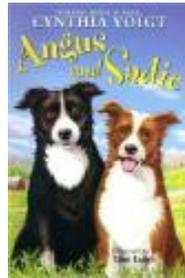
Illustrated by: Tom Leigh

HarperCollins Publishers, 2005

ISBN: 0060745835

*Curriculum: Border collies; Dogs*

A memorable, emotionally honest story of two siblings, Angus and Sadie, who are mostly border collie, and who are adopted from the local animal shelter. "Angus is black and white and strong while Sadie is reddish brown and white and small." Throughout the story, they are constantly learning how to adjust to farm life: herding sheep, co-existing with cows and cats, competitions in obedience class, going to



the trials, and picking the right room for the baby. In the end, Angus and Sadie become best friends and learn to appreciate the differences in each other.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster K-8

### The Case of the Falling Sky (Hank the Cowdog)

By: John R. Erickson

Illustrated by: Gerald L. Holmes

Viking, 2005

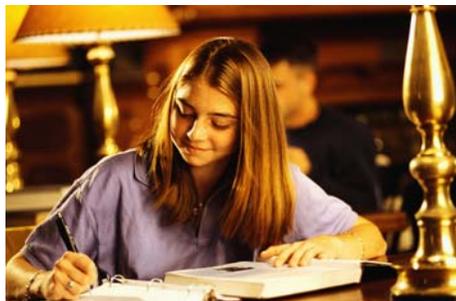
ISBN: 0670059994

*Curriculum: Mystery, Dogs, Ranch Life*

Hank the Cow Dog is back again to



[Continued on p. 3](#)



## Fiction



### Ingledove

By: Marly Youmans

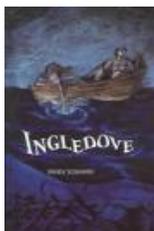
Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005

ISBN: 0374335990

*Curriculum: Magic,*

*Mountain Life, Brothers and Sisters*

Ingledove and her brother, Lang make a journey to visit their mother's grave in the land of Adan-



## Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

tis. While there, Lang becomes bewitched by the woman/monster Malia and is dying. In order to save him, Ingledove finds the Master of Witchmasters to help her defeat the evil and save her brother.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Hill Middle School

### Wolf Brother

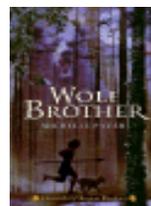
By: Michelle Paver

HarperCollins Publisher, 2004

ISBN: 0060728264

*Curriculum: Magic;*

*Wolves; Prehistoric Peoples*



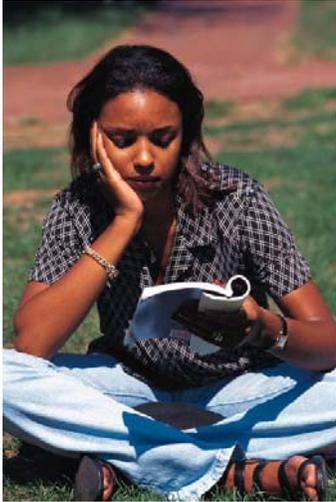
When Torak's father is killed by a demon possessed bear, he promised to go to the Mountain of the World Spirit to defeat the evil threatening his world. Helped by his guide, a young wolf cub, he encounters the Raven clan and finds both enemy and friend there. Renn helps him to find the artifacts to take to the mountain and ultimately defeat the evil.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Hill Middle School

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# Young Adults Deserve the Best!

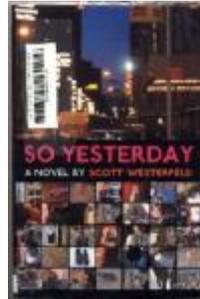


## So Yesterday

By: Scott Westerfield  
Razorbill Publishing, 2004.  
ISBN:159514000X

*Curriculum: Consumerism; Market research; Missing persons; Mystery*

The Innovators, the Trend-setters, Early Adopters, Consumers, and the Laggards are the major players in seventeen-year-old Hunter's world. Westerfeld has pulled together a witty and revealing critique of the consumer culture that often goes un-



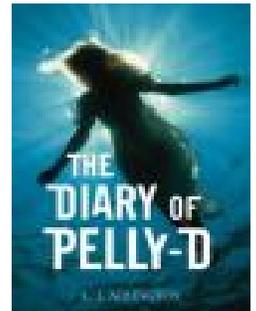
questioned by teens. The characters are strong and likeable and the mystery will captivate readers.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer

Grant Middle School

## The Diary of Pelly D

By: L.J. Adlington  
Greenwillow Books, 2005



ISBN:0060766166

*Curriculum: Science Fiction; Diaries; Ethnic Cleansing*

Working class laborer, Toni V unearths Pelly D's diary. He struggles to read the girl's inner thoughts as her world collapses and his own system of beliefs is challenged. At times as much a metaphor for England circa 1940 as it is an original tale. Toni V's narrative is the more enjoyable to read of the two, possessing vibrancy while exposing the moral bankruptcy of the "winning side" in war. There are enough modern day parallels in the story to keep middle schoolers engaged, while the fantasy/adventure elements will appeal to lower level high school students.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer  
(Roland)

Grant Middle School

## Coming Next Month

Reviews of  
Spanish Language  
Books

Grade 3-5 Readers, continued from p. 2

save the sky from falling. As a result of his efforts to stop the sky from falling on the ranch, Hank gets in trouble again with Sally May and comes down with a severe case of the hiccups, yet he still saves the ranch. This continues to be a great series for the early reader. Now with 45 books, Hank's adventures provide non-stop fun for readers of all ages.

Reviewed by: Pat White  
(formerly) Ashley Elem.

*Curriculum: Jewish Americans, Biography*

*In the Promised Land* puts a unique spin on the typical biography. Author Doreen Rappaport provides a single episode or event from the life of an important Jewish American. While this format works to tell a story, it does little to provide the younger reader with a broad understanding of the subject. The book profiles 13 pivotal characters from Jonas Salk and Ruth Bader Ginsberg to Steven Spielberg. Each story includes handsome watercolor drawings.

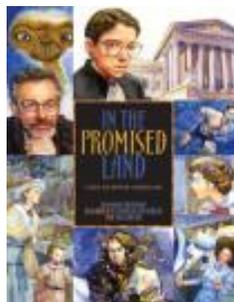
Reviewed by: Pat White  
(formerly) Ashley Elem.

# Nonfiction



## In The Promised Land- Lives of Jewish Americans

By: Doreen Rappaport  
Illustrated by: Cornelius Van Wright  
HarperCollins, 2005  
ISBN: 0060593954



pany of wolves. Students will appreciate the humor in detailed illustrations and wonder at the dumb luck of this unlikely duo as they escape the jaws of fate.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Smedley Elementary

### Do your ABC's, Little Brown Bear

By: Jonathan London

Illustrated by:  
Margie Moore

Dutton Children's  
Books, 2005

ISBN:  
0525473602

*Curriculum: Bears-Fiction; ABC Stories*

As Little Brown Bear and his Father frolic through the meadows and forests of Bear Valley, he acts out an idea or activity for each letter of the alphabet. From dancing in the meadow to climbing a fence to flying a kite to racing to the pond – until it is time to go home in the rain. Youngsters will enjoy looking for animals, insects, birds, or amphibians, on appropriate pages, as they devour those pages seeking out the next adventure.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster K-8

### Ella the Elegant Elephant:

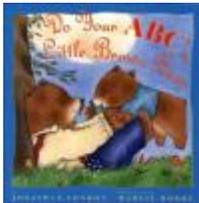
By: Carmela D'Amico.

Illustrated by: Steven D'Amico.

Arthur A. Levine  
Books, 2004.

ISBN: 0439627923

*Curriculum: Bullying; Fitting in*



While unpacking after moving to a new town, Ella discovers a present from her grandmother in a large hatbox. It's a lucky hat, just what Ella needs to feel confident on her first day in a new school. It isn't long before her newfound confidence is squashed by Belinda the bully. Will grandmother's lucky hat come to Ella's rescue?

Reviewed by: Robin Jones  
Columbine Elementary

### Jungle Gym Jitters:

By: Chuck Richards.

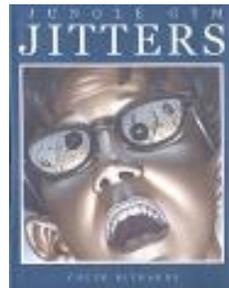
Walker and Company, 2004.

ISBN:  
0802789315

*Curriculum:  
Rhyming text;  
Courage*

Poor Jerry's worst nightmare is realized when his father builds the most intimidating jungle gym in town. This outrageous jungle gym gives Jerry the jitters and he refuses to participate, that is until he is forced to by a terrible mishap on the jungle gym. The illustrations are a cross between Chris Van Allsburg's detailed pencil drawings and the complex content of Martin Hanford's *Where's Waldo*. Children will spend hours just combing through the pictures after they read the entertaining story.

Reviewed by: Robin Jones  
Columbine Elementary



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### Prince Across the Water

By: Jane Yolen and Robert Harris  
Philomel Books, 2004  
I SBN: 0399238972



*Curriculum: Historical Fiction, Scotland, Battle of Culloden*

Set in the time of the Jacobite Rebellion, young Duncan MacDonald learns some difficult lessons about war. When his father goes to join Prince Charlie to fight, his head is filled with romantic stories about bravery in battle. Duncan and Ewan decide to leave home to help fight the war. They eventually join in the Battle of Culloden and find out that war is a nightmare, not a dream.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Hill Middle School

### The Wizard Test

By: Hilari Bell  
Harper Collins, 2005  
I SBN: 0060599413



*Curriculum: Fantasy Fiction, Magic, Wizards*

The last thing that young Dayven wanted to do was to pass the wizard test. He wanted to join his cousin as a Guardian of the realm. Lord Enar decided that Dayven could spy on the wizards. When he is assigned to Reddick, a rogue wizard, he learns that things are not as they seem. He learns much about magic and about friendship even in difficult times.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Hill Middle School

### Scorpia

By: Anthony Horowitz  
Philomel Books, 2005  
I SBN: 039924151-5  
*Curriculum: Spies-Fiction; Terrorism-Fiction*

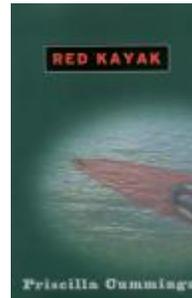


Readers will relish not only the action, the well crafted setting, but also the well defined characters. In the previous episode, fourteen-year-old, Alex Rider was told, "Go to Venice. Find Scorpia. And you will find your destiny." In Venice, Alex spots a silver scorpion decorating a motorboat, on the Grand Canal, and realizes he has his first clue. He chases after the boat until he comes to the Widow's Palace and learns about Scorpia. Many adventures take place until he learns about 'Invisible Sword' which is a diabolical plot to murder thousands of English school children.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster K-8

### Red Kayak

By: Priscilla Cummings  
Dutton Children's Books, 2004



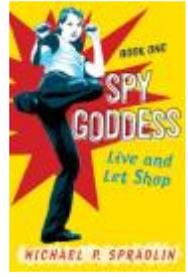
I SBN: 0525473173  
*Curriculum: Fiction, Conduct of life, Death, Friendship*

This is one of the best-written and most compelling books I have read in a very long time. I highly recommend this book to both middle and high school students. The issues of friendship and doing the right thing in the face of incredible odds are powerfully presented.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner Middle School

### Live and Let Shop

By: Michael P. Spradlin  
HarperCollins, 2005  
I SBN: 006059408X



*Curriculum: Fiction, Juvenile Delinquency, Boarding School*

Rachael Buchanan is not really a delinquent. Well, maybe she is, but she would never have been caught if it weren't for the attack of giggles that made it impossible for her to run when the cops pulled her friends and her over in a stolen car. This is book one of a new series entitled Spy Goddess. I think this book will appeal to reluctant girl readers.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner Middle School

## **The Review Crew 2005-2006**

### Books will be reviewed by:

Andrea Antico, Westerly Creek Elem

Danette Baltzer, Grant MS

Irene Bell, Bryant-Webster K-8

Laurie Bell, Brown Elem.

Steve Bowley, Beach Court Elem.

Karen Burns, Hill MS

Carol Chapman, Morey MS

Chris Coble, Kepner MS

Penny Cunningham, Valdez Elem.

Janet Damon, Oakland Elem.

Jennifer Fakolt, Mitchell Elem.

Beth Kenny, CEC Middle College

Marilyn Martin, Park Hill K-8

Cheryl Sage, Cheltenham Elem.

Ana Silva, Valdez Elem.