



Abdel-Fattah, Randa. *Does My Head Look Big in This*. Orchard Books, 2007. 360p. 0439919479 \$16.99

* **BAYA Hot Pick.** Part way through Grade 11, Amal Mohamed Nasrullah Abdel-Hakim, an Australian-Palestinian, decides to wear the hijab full-time. This is not something expected of students at McCleans Preparatory School and Amal is aware that there might be difficulties. Her parents show concern and counsel caution, but they support her. Amal tells her story with insight and humor. With the support of her friends, Amal participates enthusiastically in those activities compatible with her beliefs. Although she has explained to Adam that they can be friends, but her faith prevents dating or getting physically close, at party he wants to kiss her, and that puts a strain on their friendship for a bit. While many of Amal's concerns are those of any teenager, some are directly related to the Muslim community. She resents the assumption that she can speak for the Muslim community, or that she knows what the Bali terrorists believe. She is also concerned about her friend Leila whose mother thinks a good marriage is more important than education. As in all teen novels most issues are satisfactorily resolved, but there is some depth to this story as Amal must examine her beliefs in relation to the world around her. A particular strength of this title is the support and understanding shown by Amal's parents, even though she thinks there are times when they are beyond embarrassing.
- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Recommendations:

- * Titles suitable for YA
- M Mature, ages 16-20
- Y For younger teens, 11-14
- H/L High interest/low vocabulary books
- B/A Borrow from Adult
- R Rejected (no review)

Guidelines for reviews:
baya.org/guidelines.html

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Twisted*. Viking, 2007. 250p. 0670061018 \$16.99

M The tale of nobody Tyler, whose rebellious prank on the high school campus leads to a dramatic series of events that rock his world. The court-ordered custodial work he does transforms him into a muscular hunk, and he finds his crush Bethany attracted to him to the point of straying across popular/unpopular clique lines. A rivalry with her brother, Chip; a drunken party that ends badly; and a father both stressed and uncaring all push Tyler nearly to the breaking point. The author (known best for *Speak*) skillfully recreates scenarios familiar to many teenagers, including the drama involved in the cafeteria seating arrangements and the love-hate relationships in families as growing teenagers change the dynamic. The dialog and characters are realistic and the action propels the story forward; this is a book that avid teen readers will get through quickly and recommend to their friends. The first-person narration from Tyler's point of view makes the book accessible for boys who are reluctant readers as well.
- Vivian Jaquette, Alameda County Library

Antieau, Kim. *Broken Moon*. Simon & Schuster, 2007. 183p. 1416917675 \$15.99

* In this short, but powerful novel of contemporary Pakistan, Nadira writes to her younger brother Umar telling the sad story of their family's downfall. An older brother was accused of rape, and Nadira was the victim of the family's revenge, scarring her face and body; after her father died, the family was dependent on cruel Uncle Rubel. When Umar is missing, Nadira is determined to find him. She learns that small boys are often kidnapped or sold to be taken to the Gulf States to be used (and often abused) as camel jockeys. Having no success, she makes the dangerous decision to disguise herself as boy so she can be taken to the camel camps and search of Umar. The descriptions of life in the camps are horrific, but Nadira, as Ali Akbar, forms the boys with her into a team to protect them against older boys. The

hopeful ending is perhaps unrealistic, but satisfying within the context of the story. An author's note detailing some facts about these child camel jockey's would have been a welcome addition. This joins titles such *Sold* by Patricia McCormick (Hyperion, 2006); *Fattening Hut* by Pat Lowery Collins (Houghton Mifflin, 2003); and *Homeless Bird* by Gloria Whelan (Harper Collins, 2000) about young women struggling to survive despite the obstacles placed by a traditional culture.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Blakeney, Faith, Justina Blakeney, and Ellen Schultz. *99 Ways to Cut, Sew & Deck Out Your Denim*. Potter Craft (Spiral Bound), 2007. 224p. 978-0307351708. \$19.95.

* This book will have great appeal to the crafty teen. There really are 99 different things this book shows you how to do with jeans. Sometimes there are additional materials required and frequently the projects take more than one pair of jeans, but the instructions are always clear and concise about what's needed. Each of the projects has a person's name, which gives the book a personal feel. (For example, I tried Project #2: Lawanda—Jeans with Appliqués. This is a great thing to do with jeans that are too short anyway—creating cuffs from funky fabric.) Drawings/A photo of the finished project and drawings of how to use/cut up your jeans are given for every project. The directions are concise and easy to understand. I think teens will appreciate how there are not a lot of sewing instructions in the preliminary pages of the book. Instead key words are highlighted in the directions and referenced in a glossary at the back. That way, you only need to learn what you have to know for the project you are creating. I think the best thing about this book is the diversity and volume of the projects—not only things to wear, but things like a bathroom rug and a cd holder for the car. There's an anything goes approach that may inspire independent project creativity. Great addition for a library with crafty teens or librarians wanting inexpensive ideas for craft programming. (Most projects require sewing, though not all require a sewing machine.)

- Sarah Spindle, Ygnacio Valley Library

Block, Francesca Lia. *Psyche in a dress*. HarperCollins, 2006. 116p. 0-06-076372-8. \$15.99

M BAYA Hot Pick. Block's first novel in verse mixes multiple Greek myths with contemporary Los Angeles most successfully. The transformation of Psyche from a young girl dominated by her film director father to the grown woman who raises a daughter and rediscovers her first lover (Cupid) is beautifully done, twining together all sorts of characters (Demeter, Persephone, Aphrodite, Hades, Orpheus). Those familiar with Greek myths will obviously get more from the beautifully entwined stories than those who aren't, but as always, Block's lyrical voice is like no other. Like Orpheus, she creates a seductive spell that pulls the reader into another world, easily suspending disbelief and seeking meaning in both classical and contemporary stories. Sex and the "f" word limit the audience somewhat- but those seeking gratuitous thrills won't find them here- just real poetry and depth.

- Debbie Carton, Berkeley Public Library

Bowers, Laura. *Beauty Shop for Rent... fully equipped, inquire within*. Harcourt, 2007. 328p. 9780152057640 \$17.00

* **BAYA Hot Pick.** Highly, and enthusiastically, recommended for all teen collections. Ever since her mother abandoned Abbey at her great-grandmothers, Abbey has been determined to avoid her mother's mistakes: she will be a millionaire by the age of 35 and she will not get pregnant at 16, even if this means she has little social life. She helps at Granny Po's beauty shop and carefully saves all her money. Life for her, Granny Po, and the regular customers, the Gray Widows, changes when the shop is finally rented by energetic Gena. To further increase the upheaval in her life, Abbey's mother makes a re-appearance and Abbey buys into her dream of the two of them finally having a home of their own. When the inevitable disappointment comes, Granny Po, Gena, and the Gray Widows are there. Briskly told, this tale of intergenerational support among women has the reader pulling for Abbey all the way. Fans of Sue Monk Kidd's *Secret Life of Bees* will also enjoy this. Thoroughly delightful, this is recommended as a BAYA pick.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Carter, Ally. *I'd Tell You I Love You But Then I'd Have to Kill You*. Hyperion, 2006. 284p. 1423100034 \$15.99

* Cammie Morgan has a lot of typical teen concerns – she's got too much homework, she's got an obnoxious new roommate., and she doesn't know what to think of the cute new teacher. But Cammie is not your typical sophomore – she's a spy. Or at least a spy-in-training. Cammie is a student at The Gallagher Academy, a prestigious, super-secret, spy school for girls. And no one is supposed to know her secret, even the cute boy from town that Cammie met and can't stop thinking about...Lighthearted and fun, this is a boy-meets-girl story with the added wrinkle of Cammie's double life. The descriptions of the activities (both in the classroom and out!) of the Gallagher Girls are clever, and Cammie is a likable heroine. Cammie's concerns about her friends, family, her boyfriend and school are universal even as her situation is exaggerated by her special circumstances. Likely to be enjoyed by girls who like Meg Cabot's *Princess Diaries* books.

- Marie Richardson, Mountain View Public Library

Foyt, Victoria. *Virtual Life of Lexie Diamond*. Harper Tempest, 2007. 310p. 0060825634 \$16.99

Y Lexie has some problems relating to people and the real world, which she calls 'the Bubble'. For Lexie, reality resides in Ajna-Mac, her faithful Mac computer. Her mother urges her to become more involved in school activities but Lexie resists. When her mother is suddenly killed in a car accident, Lexie takes even more refuge in the online world. A mysterious software program allows her mother to appear and tell Lexie that she has been murdered. From the start Lexie has disliked Jane, her father's new girlfriend. Lexie's outsider status, and consequent view of 'the Bubble' as phony, will hit home with some teen readers. A first-novel, this is not as compelling as it might be, and the mystery of who killed Lexie's mom takes a while to get going; an additional purchase, but an author worth watching.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Freymann-Weyr, Garret. *Stay with me*. Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 308p. 0-618-60571-1. \$16.00

M Freymann-Weyr's latest in dysfunctional families features 16 year old Leila and her two 30-something half-sisters. Leila is desperately searching for whatever drove half-sister Rebecca to commit suicide. In the wake of that act, Leila's parents go to Poland to recover, leaving her with her other, more distant half-sister Clare. Leila meanwhile falls in love with a 31 year old and continues to struggle with the dyslexia that makes school so difficult for her. This is a character-driven novel, propelled by small tender actions and unspoken feelings. Nothing is simple; in this extended/blended family, love is hard to voice and demonstrate. Freymann-Weyr, as always, excels in portraying beautifully complex relationships. There's a little sex, but what makes this title more appropriate for older readers is the subtlety and sophistication of emotions and circumstances.

- Debbie Carton, Berkeley Public Library

Geras, Adele. *Happy endings*. Harcourt, c1986, pbk. 2006. 182p. 0-15-205773-0. \$6.95

* Geras is known for her Edgerton Hall retellings of fairy tales (*Watching the roses, The Tower Room*), but here lets her considerable knowledge and experience of theatre drive a satisfying romance set in a teen production of Chekhov's "Three Sisters" (?!). Once the knowledgeable reader gets past the idea of a teen production of Chekhov, there's a lot to enjoy in this detailed examination of how a production moves from casting to performance, and the inevitable romances that occur among cast and crew. 16 year old Mel Herbert (who plays Natasha) narrates and dishes on believably likeable and egomaniacal fellow thespians, including conniving Dinah, who steals the director away from the set designer. There's a necessarily limited audience for a story about such a sophisticated and mature work of theatre, but teen theatre junkies will relish NOT being talked down to, and may well start looking at Chekhov, if they haven't already.

- Debbie Carton, Berkeley Public Library

Gratz, Alan. *Something Rotten; A Horatio Wilkes Mystery*. Dial, 2007. 207p. 9780803732162 \$16.99

* When Horatio arrives to spend the summer with his friend Hamilton Prince, he is shown a video

of Prince senior where he claims he is being poisoned. Prince senior has died and Hamilton's mother, Trudy has married Claude, her former brother-in-law. Hamilton asks Horatio to help him catch his father's murderer. Teens familiar with the play will spot the Hamlet references. Added to the mix is a possible pollution violation by Elsinore Paper and a takeover bid from Ford N. Branff. Even those not familiar with Hamlet will want to know 'who done it' and Horatio's wise cracks will keep them reading. Light and undemanding mystery fare would be a fun adjunct to a Shakespeare class (along with Lisa Fiedler's 'Romeo's Ex' and 'Dating Hamlet').

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Hill, Kirkpatrick. **Do Not Pass Go**. Simon & Schuster, 2007. 229p. 1416914005 \$15.99

Y Deet is the only organized one in his family. He sometimes despairs of his parents and their happy-go-lucky approach, but for all that they are loving and supportive parents. His dad takes a second job to help the family's finances. Then the terrifying phone call comes; he was stopped for a burned out headlight and the police found some drugs he was taking to stay awake. Deet's image of jail is frightening, built on what he has seen on TV and the movies. He is also ashamed to go to school because he thinks the other kids will tease him. After his mom goes back to work, Deet is the only one who can visit Dad. He finds that the jail, although not pleasant, is not horrific either and that many of the people in jail are just ordinary people who made some bad choices. He also learns that he is not the only one at school with a relative in jail, and once he lets himself open up a bit, he finds support in his community. Deet is a mature middle-schooler, and is made more so by his experience. Set in Fairbanks, Alaska, the jail scenes may not be quite the same as in more urban areas, but this will be a useful title for young readers having to cope with a similar situation.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Hoobler, Dorothy & Thomas. **A Samurai Never Feels Death**. Philomel, 2007. 198p. 9780399246098. \$14.99

* Good historical fiction from award winning authors. Fans of this series set in Tokugawa Japan will welcome the return of Seikei, now sixteen. Seikei, adopted son of legendary Judge Ooka, gets the chance to return to Osaka, the city of his birth, to investigate a smuggling operation. Both Seikei's brother and sister don't seem that happy to see him. Mysterious late-night shipments to the tea house his brother runs makes Seikei suspicious. His brother takes him to see a Bunraku puppet show where 2 gruesome murders take place. Seikei's investigation of the murders reveals a complex crime scheme involving gangsters, the theatre and merchants. This is a fast paced mystery full of suspense that will keep the interest of even reluctant readers. The cultural and historical details about the Bunraku theatre tradition and the different perspectives of the merchant, samurai, artist and criminal classes during this period in Japanese history are outstanding.

- Elsie Tep, Contra Costa County Library

Hopkins, Ellen. **Impulse**. Simon & Schuster, 2007. 666p. 1416903569 \$16.99

* In her trademark style of interrelated poems, the author tells of three young people in a psychiatric hospital for suicidal teens. Their stories and outcomes are different but all are moving. However, by focusing on three main characters, this doesn't have quite the impact of the earlier Crank. At the beginning it can be difficult to differentiate the voices, but they become more distinct. Teens however are often fascinated by suicide and will be drawn to this. The small format coupled with the longer text, makes this an uncomfortable volume to hold (it is nearly 2.5" thick).

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Kaywell, Joan F., Ed. **Dear Author: Letters of Hope: Top Young Adult Authors Respond to Kids' Toughest Issues**. Penguin Group, 2007. 272p. 0399237054 \$14.99

* Authors such as Laurie Halse Anderson, Joan Bauer, and Chris Crutcher respond to young people's letters about how the writers' works have touched them. Many of these teens and preteens have experienced challenges beyond their years, including alcoholic and imprisoned parents, peer suicides, teen parenthood, coming out, and more typical problems such as rifts in friendships, teasing and

discrimination. The author letters are uniformly sympathetic, and teens with similar problems may be relieved to find others who've been through the same things. The book is organized alphabetically by author name rather than by subject, which may be helpful for readers with favorite writers but less useful for those who seeking support on specific issues in their lives. With all the books cited here, librarians may find the book a good resource for reader's advisory questions on topics such as those mentioned above. While it deals with some intense issues, the text is never gratuitous or sensational, and the overall tone is hopeful.

- Vivian Jaquette, Alameda County Library

Kikuta, Michiyo. **Mamotte! Lollipop #1**. Del Rey, 2007. 224p. 034549623X \$10.95

* Graphic novel. This one is great fun! Nina swallows a small white 'candy' on top of a cake, and suddenly two gorgeous guys drop out of the sky. They are wizards, preparing for their exam, and in order to pass, they must find the Crystal Pearl, which Nina has just swallowed. Now they must protect her as two other teams of aspiring wizards are also looking for the Crystal Pearl. One team tries some cross dressing to as to be able to follow Nina everywhere, but her two wizards are a match for all comers. Lots of great costumes, including some vaguely Edwardian ones, and a great deal of humor give this wide teen girl appeal. Publisher's rating is T Ages 13+ and there is a hot springs scene with sketchy (what does this mean?) nudity.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Klaus, Ian. Elvis is **Titanic; Classroom Tales from the Other Iraq**. Knopf, 2007. 240p. 978-0-307-26456-5 \$24.00

B/A The author recounts his experiences teaching US History and English to university students in Iraqi Kurdistan in 2005. His students are eager to learn but in some cases have had little exposure to Americans. Klaus teaches not with rote exercises, but by engaging his students in discussion of issues in American history and literature, including issues such as slavery. His students do not always agree with his point of view, and this makes for some very interesting reading. These discussions would also make for good talking points in US classrooms. Although descriptions of his students are brief, they are lively and add a lot of interest. When the author's picture is in the news, and his students learn that he is Chelsea Clinton's boyfriend, security concerns dictate that he leave Kurdistan before the second semester. Mature teens, especially those considering teaching as a career, will be interested in this.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Luadzars, Darcy. **Virgin Sex for Guys**. 300p. 978-1-57826-230-4 **Virgin Sex for Girls** 285p. 978-1-57826-229-8 Hatherleigh Press, 2006. \$13.95

* Despite the titles, this pair of books is not part of an abstinence only program. Virgin Sex (that is sex for the first time) should be a positive experience, not dirty, bad, or painful. The author is a sex therapist who sees many patients come to her complaining that they 'hate sex'. She feels sex should be 'playful, fun, and a magical connection between two people,' and has written these non-judgmental guides for teens showing a safe and healthy approach to sex. Her emphasis is on knowledge: knowing what is involved and knowing oneself. She has a short quiz to determine if one is ready for sex, and how to avoid sex if one is not ready. These books are thorough, and readable, with many true stories of teens and their sexual concerns and experiences. Topics covered include same sex experiences, emotional aspects of sex, STDs, safe sex, birth control, and sexual abuse and rape. While some sections are the same in each book, there are distinct chapters in each for guys or girls. For guys, there is a chapter on how to treat a girl right. Each book has an index, resource list of hotlines and websites, and a bibliography. The covers are appealing and resemble magazine covers featuring the contents: "Guys and Lies: how to know if a guy really likes you" or "Relationships and Dating: how to treat a girl right". These will be valuable additions to any YA collection.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County

Marsden, John. **While I Live (The Ellie Chronicles)**. Scholastic, 2007 299p. 0439783186 \$16.99

* Following on the Tomorrow series, this follows Ellie after the war. Australia is occupied by the enemy. In a dramatic start to the story, Ellie arrives home to find her parents have been slaughtered by the enemy. She is now has responsibility for the farm, which is in serious financial difficulty. Her financial advisor wants her to sell, but Ellie is determined to hang on to the farm. She also hears rumors of a resistance group, and suspects that her old friend Homer is involved. Very readable and engrossing sequel to the earlier titles, this has plenty of action, but also brings in more about Ellie's struggle to handle adult problems such as finances, responsibility for young Gavin, and stocking the farm. Expect additional titles in the series as they are released here.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Mills, Pat and Joe Colquhoun (illus.) **Charley's War; 2 June 1916 – 1 August 1916**. Titan Books, 2004. 112p. 9781840236279 \$19.95

* Graphic novel. This compilation from the 1970's comic **Battle**, is a gripping and moving depiction of the Battle of the Somme. Charley, 16, lies about his age in order to join up. This volume follows the lead up to the Battle of the Somme as Charley learns to become a soldier and earns respect from his mates for his courage and pig-headedness. Story and black/white illustrations work together in this harrowing account. As a counterpoint to Charley's war we see letters he sends home assuring his family that everything is fine, and the letters they send him. A strip commentary by the author helps separate fact from fiction, and the background, and many of the incidents are indeed fact. An article on the Battle of the Somme adds historical perspective to the war. This is highly recommended for all readers, not just graphic novel fans or war aficionados. The story continues in Charley's War; 1 August – 17 1916 and Charley's War; 17 October 1916 – 21 February 1917.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Moriarty, Jaclyn. **Murder of Bindy Mackenzie**. Arthur A Levine Books, 2006. 494p. 0439740517 \$16.99

* The cover shows the word Life crossed out, and Murder written in its place. This is another tale about Ashbury High from Australian author Jaclyn Moriarty. Bindy had a small walk on role in **The Year of Secret Assignments**. Bindy always does everything perfectly, and is proud of this, but, these are not qualities which endear her to her classmates. Bindy is not at all pleased to find that she must take part in a new Friendship and Development (FAD) Project. She considers it a waste of time, and increasingly is suspicious of the teacher's motives. Most of the story is told through Bindy's notes, memos, and philosophical musings. The reader is a good way into the novel before the possibility of murder shows up and changes this from a typical school story into a suspense story. Readers of Moriarty's earlier titles will welcome this one, yet it can be read alone.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. **Dairy Queen**. Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 275p. 0618683070 \$16.00

* 15-year-old DJ has always helped on her family's dairy farm in Wisconsin and never really thought much about it. She's had to do a lot more since her dad got hurt and her two older brothers left home, and she's not thrilled about it, but she doesn't say anything. Nobody in her family talks much. It's only after she offers to help train an obnoxious local football player that DJ takes a long look at her life from an outsider's perspective and starts to think about what she might want to change, like talking to her brothers again, telling her dad what she really thinks, and playing football herself. And then there's that football player, who isn't as obnoxious as he seemed...Murdock's debut is a thoughtful, measured coming of age novel filled with farm life, football, and family. DJ is a charming narrator – self-deprecating but not negative, a nice contrast to the recent slew of spoiled rich girl heroines in YA fiction. Unaccustomed to contemplation, DJ's realizations are sometimes slow in coming – the reader will figure out long before DJ that there's more than training happening between the football player and her. The supporting characters are complex and well drawn, and the story is engaging. Even though this novel is set in the Midwest, DJ's struggles are universal and will appeal to readers in all locales.

- Marie Richardson, Mountain View Public Library

Peach-Pit. **Shugo Chara! Vol. 1**. Del Rey, 2007 208p. 0345497457 \$10.95

* Graphic novel. Outwardly, Amu has it all. Everyone admires her style, her clothes, and even her writer mother and photographer father, but Amu is very shy, and does not have a high opinion of herself. One day she finds 3 eggs, which turn out to be Guardian Characters, who can help Amu change to the person she is meant to be. Now Amu is approached by an elite group at school, the shadowy Guardians because of her 3 eggs (one is the usual number). A lot of the story is involved in setting up the basic background, but young teen girls will enjoy reading about Amu's daily confusions, and abrupt changes. Publisher's rating is T Ages 13+ but this particular volume is appropriate for even younger readers; Amu is in grade 4.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Rimmer, Ian and Jimmy Hansen. **Wallace & Gromit; Catch of the Day**, Titan Books, 2002. 48p 978-1840234954 \$12.95

Y All ages will have fun with impetus Wallace and his long-suffering dog Gromit, but middle schoolers will be particularly tickled by the pickles they get into. Wallace is distraught when his fish and chip shop is closed, so he invents an automated fish and chip cooker that is doomed to failure. He then sets out to catch his own fish and enters a fishing competition where unlikely as it may seem, his elaborate Tubmarine invention actually helps save the day (with a lot of help from Gromit of course!) Not an essential purchase, but great fun for the whole family.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Shepard, Sara. **Flawless**. HarperTeen, 2007. 330p. 9780060887339 \$16.99

* This is the second of the Pretty Little Liars series and although there is enough of a recap to follow the story, it would probably be easier to keep the characters straight if one had read the first volume. The group that was involved in the 'Jenna thing' has drifted apart, only to come together for Alison's memorial service. Her body was found buried in her backyard three years after she went missing. Spencer, Hanna, Aria, and Emily have all been getting messages from 'A' threatening to reveal secrets. Alison had been the prime suspect, but now she is dead. Who else knows all their secrets? Each girl is also dealing with other problems: eating disorders, boyfriends, family breakups, sexual identity, etc as well as trying to keep secrets and find out the identity of 'A'. Rosewood is one of those seemingly perfect towns, that hides lots of dark secrets. Popularity may be due more to marketing (and brand-name dropping) than quality, but if the first Pretty Little Liars is popular in your library, get this one. Number 3, Perfect, is due Sept. 2007, and Number 4 (the conclusion?) Unbelievable is due March 2008.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Snicket, Lemony. **Horseradish; Bitter Truths You Can't Avoid**. HarperCollins, 2007. 168p. 978-0-06-124006-5 \$12.99

* Pithy observations in Lemony Snicket's trademark cynical style. Divided into sections such as Home, Family, Travel, etc, the section for School contains this observation: Most schools have a system of loud bells, which startle the students and teachers at regular intervals and remind them that time is passing even more slowly than it seems. Hardly an essential purchase, but more of a gift item for Snicket fans, nonetheless, if this is on a browsing shelf students and adults will have a giggle or two.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Velez, Ivan and Mark McVeigh, ed. **Dead High Yearbook**. Dutton, 2007. 80p. 9780525477839 \$18.99

* Graphic Novel. The padded cover gives the appearance of a high school yearbook, but this is from a high school of the dead. The framework is of yearbook staffers getting stories for the yearbook. Ivan Velez does the framework story, and various authors and artists are responsible for the other 8 tales. Although there are some differences in style, the variations are not glaring and several inventive deaths of students are shown in these full-color stories. Many of the stories have twists that may be familiar to fans of old horror and sci-fi but may be new to many of today's readers. A selfish girl asks her boyfriend for an expensive purebred puppy for her birthday, and he finds a cute little dog, little realizing it is a demonic Chihuahua; in another story a studious girl is determined to pass her test, even though she

loses her head on the way to school. Over the top blood and gore that is more humorous than scary, this will appeal to fans of camp B horror movies.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Westerfeld, Scott. *Last Days*, Razorbill, 2007. 289p. 978-1-59514-128-6 \$8.99

* Westerfeld returns to the collapsing future introduced in *Peeps*, but for the most part follows different characters. This can be read alone, but some references may initially be confusing. Chapters are named for different (real) groups and are alternately told from the perspective of different teens. An unlikely group comes together to form a band. Moz is a guitarist who has been working on a all-consuming riff, but he needs direction; Zahler is his friend who often feels inferior; Pearl is the talented and wealthy musician Moz meets by chance; Minerva is Pearl's friend and incredible singer who is recovering from the vampire virus; and Alana Ray is a paint bucket drummer from the streets. Together their music has a strange power to wake up the beast hiding beneath the surface. Part vampire fiction and part science fiction, this book has strong appeal for Westerfeld fans, and those who like thought-provoking future fiction.

- Teri Titus, San Mateo County Library

Westerfeld, Scott. *Midnighters #3 – Blue Noon*. HarperCollins, 2005. 378p. 0060519576 \$15.99

* This third volume in the *Midnighters* series continues the story of the five teenagers in Bixby who are the only humans who can function in the secret hour, that 25th hour of the day when all human activity stops and the darklings come out. Only now the secret hour is happening during daytime, and unless the midnighters can stop it the darklings will be able to hunt the humans who are trapped in the frozen time. *Blue Noon* continues the path set in the 2nd volume of the series, going still further into the lore and history of the midnighters, and taking us further into the idiosyncrasies of the five midnighters. Rex struggles to maintain his human nature after being partially merged with a darkling, Jonathan secretly wants the midnight hour to last forever so he can fly whenever he wants to, and the others have similar personal demons. There are more struggles between the midnighters compared to previous volumes, and more history. The story occasionally gets bogged down in midnighter mumbo-jumbo, which even then doesn't always explain things sufficiently. Still, it is an action-packed story that will surely appeal to fans of the first two volumes.

- Marie Richardson, Mountain View Public Library

REJECTS

Spragins, Ellyn ed. *What I Know Now: Letters to My Younger Self*. Broadway, 2007. 183p. 0767917898. 17.95.

No appeal for teens and very boring reading.

- Elsie Tep, Contra Costa County Library