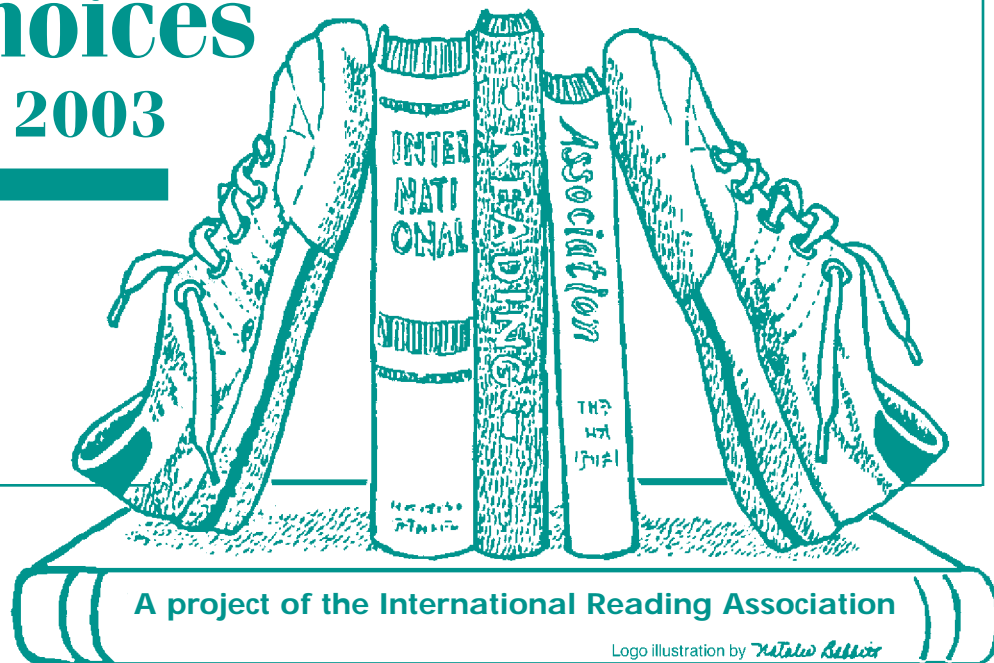


# Young Adults' Choices for 2003



The 2003 Young Adults' Choices list is the 17th that U.S. teenagers have helped create. This project began in 1986, funded by a special grant given to the International Reading Association (IRA) and supervised by the Association's Literature for Young Adults Committee.

The goals of the project are to encourage young people to read; to make teens, teachers, librarians, and parents aware of new literature for young adults; and to provide middle and secondary school students with an opportunity to voice their opinions about books being written for them.

The 30 books on this year's list are the result of voting by students in five different regions of the United States. Trade books (books other than textbooks) published in 2001 were submitted by more than 50 publishers. Each book had to have at least two positive reviews from recognized sources such as *The Horn Book*, *School Library Journal*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *Booklist*, *Language Arts*, or *Voice of Youth*

*Advocates (VOYA)*. Submitted books were read by students in grades 7–12 between September 2002 and February 2003 in selected school districts throughout the United States. More than 11,000 ballots were counted for the books submitted for this year's project. Students marked, "I liked the book," "It was okay," or "I didn't like the book." The results were announced in May at the 2003 Annual Convention of the International Reading Association in Orlando, Florida, USA.

Publishers sent the books to the five team leaders in different regions in the United States. The team leaders' responsibilities included selecting the school districts and schools in which the project would take place; making sure the books were distributed to the schools; and working with the teachers, librarians, supervisors, and principals to implement the program. They were also responsible for collecting the ballots and mailing them to the International Reading Association headquarters for the final tally.

The following schools participated in the 2003 project:

Team 1: Gretchen Hamilton (team leader): Medford, Oregon; two high schools and two middle schools; suburban/rural.

Team 2: Alice Siegel (team leader): Mt. Vernon, New York; two high schools and two middle schools; suburban.

Team 3: Barbara Rawls and Jeanne Welt (team leaders): Madison, Alabama; one high school and two middle schools; suburban.

Team 4: Stacey Cooper and Val Garton (team leaders): Columbia, Missouri; three high schools, three junior high schools, and three middle schools; urban.

Team 5: Geraldine Barnes and Kim Ford (team leaders): Memphis, Tennessee; three high schools, one junior high school, and one middle school; urban, suburban, and rural.

The participating schools represented various types of students, economic levels, cultural groups, and geographic regions. The team leaders were enthusiastic and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile and exciting project.

The committee wishes to thank Alida von Krogh Cutts and Mary Cash of the International Reading Association staff for helping to coordinate the project. Thanks are also extended to Natalie Babbitt for her logo design and to the International Reading Association for its continued support of the project. Gratitude and appreciation go to all of the students, teachers, librarians, school district administrators, and team leaders who participated in the project and made it a success.

The members of the Literature for Young Adults Committee, cochaired by Eva McGuire and Deborah Young, and the team leaders have written annotations for each title. Reviewers who wrote the annotations are identified by their initials following the review. Reviewers include Geraldine Barnes, Stacey Cooper, Kim Ford,

Misha Franks, Val Garton, Gretchen Hamilton, Barbara Rawls, Alice Siegel, Jeanne Welt, and Deborah Young.

Bibliographic data are supplied for each title including ISBN (International Standard Book Number), number of pages, and price. If a publisher has both a library and trade edition, the ISBN for the library edition is included. Publishers furnished information in May 2003, but prices are subject to change.

The annotated 2003 Young Adults' Choices list is downloadable from the International Reading Association website [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org). Single copies of offprints are available for US\$1.00 for postage and handling and a self-addressed 9" × 12" envelope from the International Reading Association, Department EG, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA, Attention YA Choices. To order bulk copies by phone with a credit card, call (in the United States and Canada only) 800-336-7323, ext. 266, or send order to Order Department, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 6021, Newark, DE 19714-6021, USA.

By special arrangement, books named on the Choices lists can be purchased at a significant discount (32% off regular retail prices) from Schoolwide, Inc. A portion of the purchase price benefits the International Reading Association. Download the Schoolwide order form on the Association website [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org). (Books are shipped from Schoolwide's New York state location. For information on shipping charges to destinations outside the United States, contact Schoolwide directly at the phone or fax numbers provided on the order form.)

**Among the Imposters.** Margaret Peterson Haddix

As a sequel to *Among the Hidden*, this book continues the riveting suspense. Luke is enrolled in a boarding school under an assumed name. Nearly paralyzed with fear, he is left to fend for himself. His life depends on how well he learns to blend in and whom he chooses to trust. GH

Simon & Schuster. 176 pp. ISBN 0-689-83904-9. US\$16.00. Paper ed., Aladdin. ISBN 0-689-83908-1. US\$4.99. CAN\$7.50.

**And Sometimes Why.** Mame Farrell

As Chris develops into a lovely young lady, she and Jack, who have been friends since first grade, must decide what kind of relationship they want to have. This romantic teen novel invites the reader into the world of inner feelings, emotions, boundaries, and friendship. GH

Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 165 pp. ISBN 0-374-32289-9. US\$16.00. CAN\$26.95.

**Anne Frank and Me.** Cherrie Bennett and Jeff Gottesfeld

Based on the award-winning play of the same name, *Anne Frank and Me* transports the reader to a time and place where the Holocaust takes on true meaning for Nicole Burns, a self-absorbed, 21st-century 10th grader. Nicole's tragic journey and meeting with Anne Frank touch her soul and transform her forever. GH

Putnam. 291 pp. ISBN 0-399-23329-6. US\$18.99. CAN\$27.99. Paper ed., Puffin. ISBN 0-689-11973-8. US\$6.99.

**Being Dead.** Vivian Vande Velde

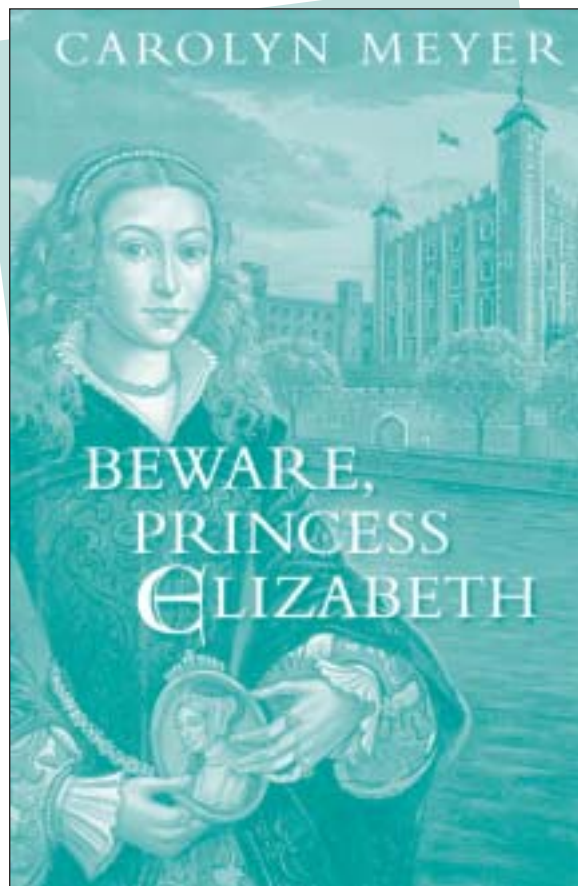
This is a book of seven chilling, well-written, and intriguing ghost stories. They will keep readers in suspense right up to the last paragraph. Stories include scary phone calls and dances and messages from the dead. GH

Harcourt. 203 pp. ISBN 0-15-216320-4. US\$17.00. Paper ed., Harcourt. ISBN 0-15-204912-6. US\$6.95.

**Belle Teal.** Ann M. Martin

This story is told in the insightful voice of the title character, Belle Teal, who rises above the hatred that pervades her school when a black student enters her fifth-grade class. Belle Teal's world consists of her Gran, whose memory is slowly fading; her mom, the hardworking breadwinner; and a colorful array of classmates who provide both fun and frustration for her. GH

Scholastic Press. 214 pp. ISBN 0-439-09823-8. US\$15.95. CAN\$22.99.



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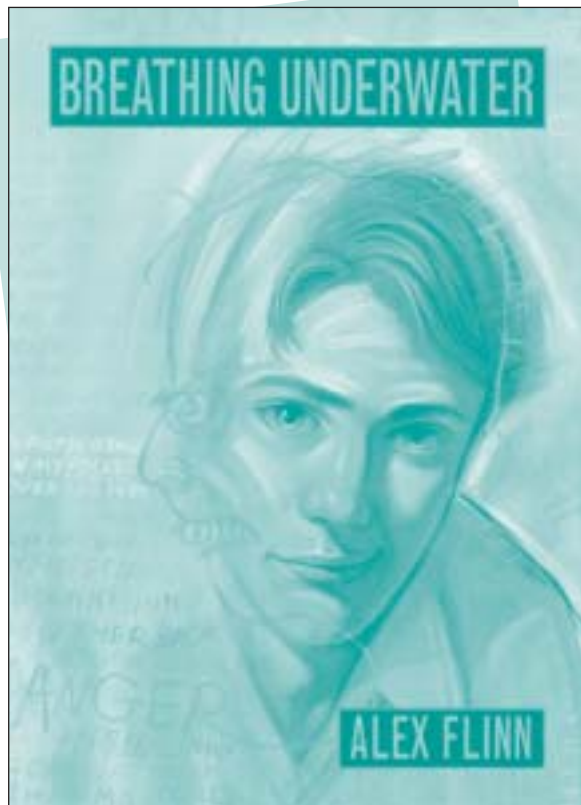
**Beware, Princess Elizabeth.** Carolyn Meyer

This historical fiction novel traces Princess Elizabeth's life from after her father's death until she becomes the queen. It is a fast-paced, well-detailed book that succeeds in giving the reader a different perspective of the life of Queen Elizabeth I, including the difficulty of living each day with the fear of execution by her enemies. AS

Harcourt. 212 pp. ISBN 0-15-202659-2. US\$17.00. Paper ed., Harcourt. ISBN 0-15-204556-2. US\$5.95.

**Born Blue.** Han Nolan

Janie Leshaya was born into a life of hardship, but she finds the courage to break away from her past and become the person she was meant to be. The themes of teens searching for



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love and security, overcoming roadblocks, and pursuing dreams pervade the novel. AS

Harcourt. 277 pp. ISBN 0-15-201916-2. US\$17.00. Paper ed., Harcourt. ISBN 0-15-204697-6. US\$6.95.

**Born in Sin.** Evelyn Coleman

An African American girl, considered at risk at one high school, is sent to an all-white urban school. At first she is angry, but soon her anger turns to something just as powerful—the will to prove her doubters wrong. This book is written in a humorous yet frank manner and contains a real message for young women. AS

Atheneum. 234 pp. ISBN 0-689-83833-6. US\$16.00. CAN\$23.50. Paper ed., Simon Pulse. ISBN 0-689-85552-4. US\$5.99.

**Breathing Underwater.** Alex Flinn

Nick Andreas, a 16-year-old rich kid and honor student, is the coolest guy around.

Everyone is jealous of him. Nick's life, however, is fake. He has never told anyone about his father's violent temper. This book about self-discovery leads Nick to learn the truth about the phrase "like father, like son." AS

HarperCollins. 263 pp. ISBN 0-06-029198-2. US\$15.99. CAN\$23.99. Paper ed., HarperTempest. ISBN 0-06-447257-4. US\$7.99.

**Darkness Before Dawn.** Sharon M. Draper

This book has all the components of a teenage soap opera. The story is told in first person by the main character, Keisha Montgomery. It details the darkest moments of Keisha's life during her junior year of high school until things turn better in her senior year. Topics in this book include recovering from the suicide of her ex-boyfriend, falling for a much older and unsuitable boyfriend who attempts to rape her, and dealing with anorexia. The book will appeal to young women who may be dealing with these teen issues. AS

Atheneum. 233 pp. ISBN 0-689-83080-7. US\$16.95. CAN\$26.50. Paper ed., Simon Pulse. ISBN 0-689-85134-0. US\$5.99.

**Girlhearts.** Norma Fox Mazer

This poignant novel revisits Sarabeth and her friends, the characters from *Silver*. Sarabeth lives with her mother, Jane, and they rely on each other and a few friends for support. When Jane unexpectedly dies, Sarabeth is taken in by her mother's friend. Her struggle to adapt to a new life mixes sadness and strength. BR

HarperCollins. 224 pp. ISBN 0-688-06866-9. US\$16.89. Paper ed., HarperTrophy. ISBN 0-380-72290-9. US\$6.99.

**Jimi Hendrix.** Rita J. Markel

This matter-of-fact biography begins with Jimi Hendrix's difficult childhood, when his only means of expressing himself was through music. Hendrix progressed from being a backup band member to being considered by many as rock's foremost electric guitarist, only to die of an overdose in 1970 at age 27. BR

Lerner. 112 pp. ISBN 0-8225-4990-5. US\$25.26. Paper ed., Lerner. ISBN 0-8225-9697-0. US\$7.95.

**The Land.** Mildred D. Taylor

This historical novel, a prequel to the Logan family saga, tells the story of Paul-Edward as he struggles to buy land in Mississippi and build a life. Paul-Edward's pain is wrenching as he deals with betrayal and brutality in the post-Reconstruction South. BR

Phyllis Fogelman. 375 pp. ISBN 0-8037-1950-7. US\$17.99. CAN\$25.99. Paper ed., Speak. ISBN 0-14-250146-8. US\$6.99.

**Lirael.** Garth Nix

In this fantasy novel, a sequel to *Sabriel*, Lirael doesn't seem to fit in with the Clayr sisterhood because she has not received the Sight. Her life converges with that of Prince Sameth as she embarks on a quest to learn about the past and the magic of the Old Kingdom. BR

HarperCollins. 487 pp. ISBN 0-06-027824-2. US\$17.89. Paper ed., HarperTrophy. ISBN 0-06-000542-4. US\$6.99.

**Parsifal's Page.** Gerald Morris

The fourth in a series, this is the story of 11-year-old Piers, who longs for the adventures of knighthood. He becomes a page for a young knight, Parsifal, and then joins the travels of Sir Gawain. Readers will recognize many characters and events from similar stories about King Arthur. BR

Houghton Mifflin. 232 pp. ISBN 0-618-05509-6. US\$15.00.

**The Rag and Bone Shop.** Robert Cormier

In his latest novel, Cormier tells the tale of 12-year-old Jason, who is wrongly accused of murdering his 7-year-old neighbor. Jason's nervous, self-doubting behavior plays into the hands of Trent, a ruthless interrogator who is under pressure from an influential senator to obtain a confession. JW

Delacorte. 160 pp. ISBN 0-385-72962-6. US\$15.95. Paper ed., Dell Laurel Leaf. ISBN 0-440-22971-5. US\$5.99.

**Rainbow Boys.** Alex Sanchez

A sensitive, sympathetic portrayal of gay teen life. Through the caring characters of Jason, Kyle, and Nelson, the difficulties of "coming out," acceptance, denial, and revelation are realistically

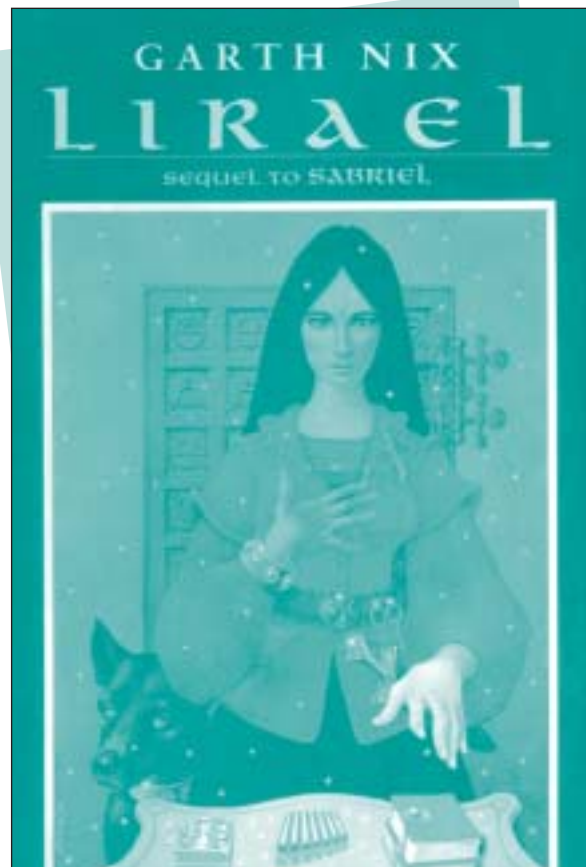
portrayed. A must read for those teens who are struggling with their sexuality and for their families who seek to understand it. Advanced. JW

Simon & Schuster. 233 pp. ISBN 0-689-84100-0. US\$17.00. CAN\$26.00. Paper ed., Simon Pulse. ISBN 0-689-85770-5. US\$7.99. CAN\$12.99.

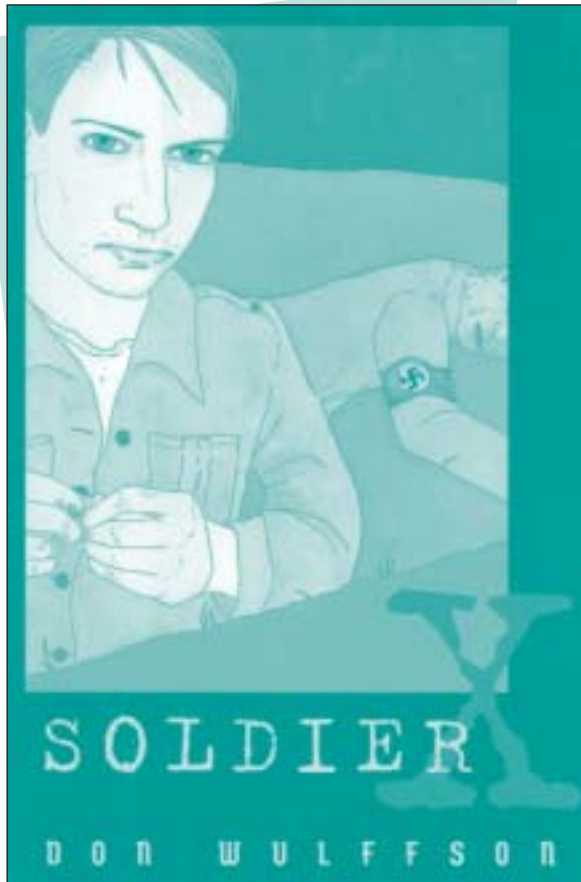
**Scribbler of Dreams.** Mary E. Pearson

This novel is a tale of money, power, deceit, and betrayal. A 100-year-old feud finally ends when Kaitlin and Bram prove that love is strong enough to put the past behind them and begin anew in this fast-moving teen romance. JW

Harcourt. 223 pp. ISBN 0-15-202320-8. US\$17.00. Paper ed., Harcourt. ISBN 0-15-204569-4. US\$5.95.



Jacket art © 2001 by Leo and Diane Dillon for *Lirael* by Garth Nix. Used by permission of HarperCollins.



*Jacket illustration © 2001 by Lara Tomlin from Soldier X by Don Wulffson. Reprinted with permission of Penguin Young Readers Group.*

**Shattered Mirror.** Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

This is a seductive novel of good and evil woven through a supernatural cast of witches and vampires. Sarah Vida's attraction to one of the most hunted vampires forces her to challenge and question everything her family respects and defends; ultimately, Sarah struggles to find a way to exist in the vampires' world. **Advanced.** JW

Delacorte. 227 pp. ISBN 0-385-32793-5. US\$9.95. CAN\$14.95. Paper ed., Dell Laurel Leaf. ISBN 0-440-22940-5. US\$5.50.

**Slave Narrative: The Journey to Freedom.**

Elaine Landau

Four testimonies by former slaves chronicle the details and horror of daily life under bondage, the risks of escape, the anguish of families being

torn apart, and the determination and sacrifices made to obtain freedom. Black-and-white photographs and lists of websites enhance and extend this reader-friendly text. JW

Franklin Watts. 96 pp. ISBN 0-531-11743-X. US\$23.50.

**Soldier X.** Don Wulffson

In 1943, 16-year-old Erik Brandt, a member of Hitler's youth program, is sent to the Russian front. Conflicting allegiances to his Russian heritage and Hitler propel Erik's choices in this brutal war setting. Survival is the key, no matter what it takes. SC

Viking. 226 pp. ISBN 0-670-88863-X. US\$15.99. Paper ed., F.

**Spellbound.** Janet McDonald

Through a lively tone and realistic dialogue, readers discover that Raven lives in the projects and plans to attend college—that is, until she gets pregnant during her senior year. Encouraged by her family, Raven continues working toward her dreams for the future as she struggles with the realities of her life. MF

Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 138 pp. ISBN 0-374-37140-7. US\$16.00. CAN\$26.95.

**Taggerung: A Tale From Redwall.** Brian Jacques

The Assistant Recorder at Redwall Abbey accurately describes this tale as "Sadness and joy, comedy and tragedy, a little mystery sprinkled throughout, [and] a good dose of rousing action" (prologue). A babe stolen at birth, a ruthless leader's delusions, a journey home, and the discovery of an Abbess provide a galloping pace. VG

Philomel. 438 pp. ISBN 0-399-23720-8. US\$23.99. Paper ed., Ace. ISBN 0-441-00968-9. US\$7.99.

**Things I Have to Tell You: Poems and Writing by Teenage Girls.** Betsy Franco

This is a collection of poems, stories, and essays written by girls 12 to 18 years of age. These honest and brazen pieces reveal the secrets that enable these girls to overcome daily obstacles in their lives. SC

Candlewick. 63 pp. ISBN 0-7636-0905-6. US\$15.99. CAN\$21.99. Paper ed., Candlewick. ISBN 0-7636-1035-6. US\$8.99. CAN\$13.99.

**This Side of Paradise.** Steven L. Layne

Mom's missing, Gram's being sent to a nursing home, Troy's being used as a punching bag, the family is moving to Paradise, and Dad has raised perfection to new levels. Jack isn't sure what all of it means, but he knows nothing in Paradise is as it should be. MF

Pelican. 215 pp. ISBN 1-58980-096-6. US\$15.99.

**True Believer.** Virginia Euwer Wolff

LaVaughn is back in this second volume of the *Make Lemonade* trilogy, and at 15 she faces big problems. Her best friends are changing, her love life is confusing, and her grades are slipping. Told in blank-verse poetry, LaVaughn's story is a celebration of hope as she learns to "rise to the occasion which is life" (p. 153). KF

Atheneum. 264 pp. ISBN 0-689-82827-6. US\$17.00.  
CAN\$25.00. Paper ed., Simon Pulse. ISBN 0-689-85288-6.  
US\$7.99.

**What My Mother Doesn't Know.** Sonya Sones

This story explores the trials and joys that 15-year-old Sophie shares on the way to finding "Mr. Right." Silliness with friends and problems with parents make this a teen romance that rings true. Sophie's happy ending will delight readers in this tale of ninth-grade first (and second) love. KF

Simon & Schuster. 259 pp. ISBN 0-689-84114-0. US\$17.00.  
CAN\$26.00. Paper ed., Simon Pulse. ISBN 0-689-85553-2.  
US\$6.99.

**When Dad Killed Mom.** Julius Lester

Caught in a life-changing, emotionally devastating situation, eighth-grade Jenna and her younger brother Jeremy must deal with life in individual ways after their mother is murdered by their father. Together they determine that the truth behind their mother's death must be revealed in the courtroom. This novel exposes a social ill that affects too many youngsters today. DY

Harcourt. 183 pp. ISBN 0-15-216305-0. US\$17.00. Paper ed., Harcourt. US\$6.95.

**Witch Child.** Celia Rees

This story unfolds through Mary's diary entries. Mary is a confessed witch who is saved from

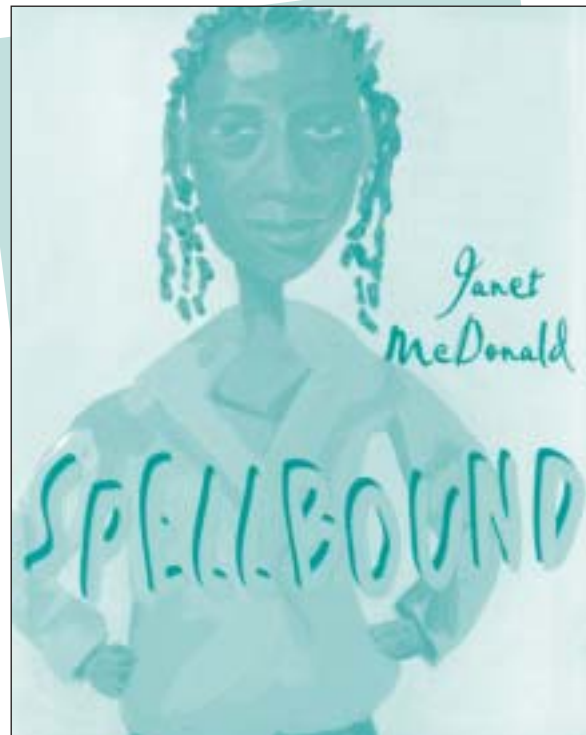
torture and death in England and sent to a Massachusetts colony where she encounters the same fears and prejudices that led to her grandmother's hanging in England. Her friendship with a Native American boy and gift for healing lead the colonists to turn against her. For the second time, she is forced to flee or face death. GB

Candlewick. 261 pp. ISBN 0-7636-1421-1. US\$15.99. Paper ed., Candlewick. ISBN 0-7636-1829-2. US\$7.99.

**You Don't Know Me.** David Klass

Many young readers can identify with the main character of this novel. John, an imaginative 14-year-old, faces universal teenage problems: being an outsider, coping with school, and seeking a dream date's favor. However, John also has to deal with a more serious problem. His mother is about to marry the live-in boyfriend who regularly abuses John. GB

Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 262 pp. ISBN 0-374-38706-0.  
US\$17.00. CAN\$27.95. Paper ed., HarperTempest. ISBN 0-06-447378-3. US\$6.99.



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Offprints of this annotated 2003 Young Adults' Choices list (publication 9107) are available from the International Reading Association. The list is available for viewing in PDF format at [www.reading.org/choices](http://www.reading.org/choices). Order bulk copies online at <http://marketplace.reading.org> or call with a credit card (in the U.S. and Canada only) 800-336-7323, ext. 266, or send order to Order Department, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 6021, Newark, DE 19714-6021, USA.

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**The International Reading Association (IRA)** is a nonprofit, professional organization of classroom teachers, reading specialists, administrators, teacher educators, reading researchers, parents, librarians, psychologists, and others interested in improving reading instruction and promoting literacy worldwide. The Association encourages the study of the reading process, research, and better teacher education. It promotes the development of reading proficiency to the limit of each person's ability and an awareness of the need for and importance of reading.



International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA  
[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)