

Young Adults' Choices for 2007



Logo illustration by *Natalie Bellor*

The 2007 Young Adults' Choices list is the 21st that U.S. teenagers (grades 7–12) 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 2005 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 2006 and February 2007 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 OK," or "I didn't like the book." The results were announced in May at the 2007 Annual Convention of the International Reading Association in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Publishers sent the books to the five team leaders in different regions of the United States. The team leaders' and trainees' responsibilities included selecting the school districts and schools in which the project would take place; making sure the books were distributed to the schools; working with the teachers, librarians, supervisors, and principals to implement the program; and writing the annotations. 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 2007 project:

Team 1: Bonnie Purcell and Kristen D. Taylor (team leader); Blanding, Utah, and Helper, Utah; six high schools, two junior high schools, and one middle school; rural.

Team 2: Jane Gross (team leader); Attleboro, Massachusetts; one high school and three middle schools; urban.

Team 3: Mary F. Long (team leader); Plano, Texas; five high schools and five middle schools; suburban. Karen Rubin (trainee); Cape Coral, Florida; three high schools and four middle schools; urban, suburban, and rural.

Team 4: Stephanie A. Burdic and Elizabeth Olson (team leaders); Omaha, Nebraska; two high schools and three middle schools; suburban and urban.

Team 5: Barbara A. Sears (team leader); Clifton, Virginia; one high school and two middle schools; suburban. Maxine Levy (trainee); Chattanooga, Tennessee; three high schools and three middle schools; 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.

Members of the Literature for Young Adults Committee, cochaired by Cathy L. Denman and Gretchen C. Hamilton, have written annotations for each title. Their initials indicate annotations written by individual committee members. Reviewers include Bonnie Purcell, Kristen D. Taylor, Jane Gross, Mary F. Long, Karen Rubin, Stephanie A. Burdic, Elizabeth Olson, Barbara A. Sears, Sherryl K. Shannon, Ann A. Pinion, and Maxine Levy.

Annotations include the publisher, number of pages, and price. Publishers furnished information in May 2007 but prices are subject to change.

The annotated 2007 Young Adults' Choices list is downloadable from the International Reading Association website www.reading.org. Single copies of offprints are available for US\$1.00 for postage and handling and a self-addressed 9" x 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 U.S. and Canada only) 1-800-336-READ or send order to Order Department, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA, or fax to 302-731-1057.

13 Little Blue Envelopes. Maureen Johnson.

Aunt Peg was an artist, a free spirit, who left New York City to paint and travel in Europe until her untimely death. Now, 17-year-old Ginny is reliving her adventure, one envelope at a time, according to the rules and instructions that Aunt Peg mysteriously left for her. Alone, carrying only a backpack, Ginny follows Peg's footsteps to addresses in London, Rome, Paris, and throughout Europe, hoping to better understand her eccentric aunt. Instead, this magnificent journey leads Ginny to a better understanding and appreciation of herself. JG

HarperTeen. 336 pp. US\$16.99.

Absolutely, Positively Not... David LaRochelle.

Steven, a likable teenager, has two dark secrets: he likes square dancing with his mother, and he might be gay. Following advice from a library book, he moves to the hockey player's table for lunch, hangs posters of bikini-clad women above his bed, and dates every girl he can. Finally, he shares this secret with his best friend Rachel, who had previously made that judgment. She and her parents congratulate Steven for finally figuring it out. This book uses stereotypical character development with an easy, almost flippant resolution to give an unfair oversimplification to a very complicated, individual issue. BP

Arthur A. Levine Books. 224 pp. US\$16.95.

Autobiography of My Dead Brother. Walter Dean Myers.

The heartbreaking story of 15-year-old Jesse and his honorary blood brother, Rise, begins with the powerful black-and-white drawings by Caldecott Honor artist Christopher Myers on this book's jacket. The poetic voice of the story forces readers to take a realistic but often painful look at the violence and hopelessness of a neighborhood and of a friendship in today's world. The comic strip adds insight to Rise and to the conflicts that face these two unforgettable friends. **Advanced.** KDT

Amistad. 224 pp. US\$15.99.

Black and White. Paul Volponi.

Best friends Marcus Brown "Black" and Eddie Russo "White" are the high school's star basketball players, and it seems they have bright futures ahead of them. But Black and White make a bad mistake when they try to get money to pay for their senior dues. Robbery seemed the easiest option until something went very wrong. This book contains strong language. ML

Viking Juvenile. 192 pp. US\$15.99.

Bloodline. Kate Cary.

Written in diary style, the horrors of trench warfare in World War I provide a perfect backdrop for Quincey Harker—a man with a terrible,

bloodthirsty secret. John Shaw is initially awed by Harker, but he soon finds disillusionment and disgust. After Shaw is wounded in battle, Harker follows him home. Shaw's nightmares turn to reality when Harker ingratiates himself romantically to Shaw's sister, Lily. As their lives intertwine, an old destiny and a perilous journey lead them to a horrific world of ghastly cravings and night wanderings. SAB

Razorbill. 336 pp. US\$16.99.

Candy. Kevin Brooks.

The main character of the book, Joe, is an upstanding young man who leads an uncomplicated life. That is, until he meets Candy—a girl with a very complicated life. Throw in a kidnapping and a murder and you have a suspenseful story. This is not your typical romantic teenage story but it is thought provoking and worthwhile. ML

The Chicken House. 368 pp. US\$16.95.

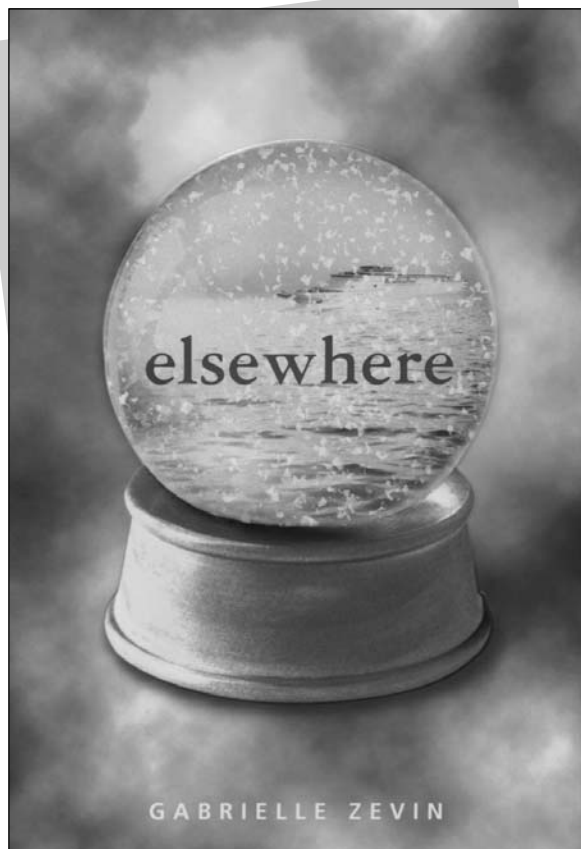
Code Orange. Caroline B. Cooney.

Mitty Blake is an underachieving but capable student attending a private high school in New York City. He is enrolled in an advanced biology course and is assigned a report in which he has to examine an infectious disease. While doing his research, Mitty discovers an old smallpox scab in a medical journal. As he frantically searches the Internet to find out more about smallpox, he accidentally alerts a terrorist group to his situation. The terrorists want to use Mitty as a "weapon" against the people of New York City. *Code Orange* is full of suspense and deals with the very timely issue of terrorism. BAS

Delacorte Books for Young Readers. 208 pp. US\$15.95.

Crackback. John Coy.

For Miles and his father, football has been center stage. As an upperclassman, however, Miles discovers that he can't please everyone. Miles refuses to take steroids even though his teammates do, and a few missteps on the field find him on the bench. The second-string players have a lot to teach Miles, and he discovers there's a whole lot more to life than football. This lesson comes at a price, but it is well worth it. This is an enormously



From Elsewhere. © 2005 by Gabrielle Zevin. Used with permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

appealing story for student athletes who are called upon to make difficult choices. SKS

Scholastic. 208 pp. US\$16.99.

The Diary of Ma Yan: The Struggles and Hopes of a Chinese Schoolgirl. Ma Yan.

Ma Yan chronicles her desire to receive an education and escape a brutal life of poverty. Through her diary, Ma Yan describes her family's hardships, including hunger and separation, in the quest to build a brighter future. Ma Yan's strong voice shines through this work with a heartfelt sense of responsibility, clarity of purpose, and love of family. SAB

HarperCollins. 176 pp. US\$15.99.

Dread Locks. Neal Shusterman.

Parker Baer's rich but boring life is turned upside down when mysterious, secretive Tara

moves next door. Tara's stunning hair and insistence on wearing sunglasses are only the first clues to her true, frightening identity. As his family and friends develop oddly gross quirks and drift into gray stagnation, Parker suspects Tara's menace. Parker's courage is put to the ultimate test when he confronts true, frightening power. Fans of horror and suspense will thrive on the blending of fairy tale and myth in this cautionary tale. SAB

Dutton Juvenile. 176 pp. US\$15.99.

Elsewhere. Gabrielle Zevin.

Nearly 16 years old, Liz Hall finds herself traveling to "Elsewhere"—the place where you go when you die. After realizing the fact that she is truly dead by looking back to Earth and reviewing the details of what caused her premature death, her own funeral, and watching how life moves on without her, Liz has to adjust to what has happened to her as well as adjust to life in Elsewhere. This is a thought-provoking tale of what might be. MFL

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 288 pp. US\$16.00.

Fade to Black. Alex Flinn.

Alex Crusan, an HIV-positive student, has been brutally attacked and is in the hospital. Initially, it seems that the attacker must be Clinton Cole, who has verbally threatened him. But perceptions can be deceiving and the obviousness of Clinton as the attacker is thrown into dispute. Daria, a student with Down's Syndrome, is an eyewitness and must overcome her hesitancy to tell what she knows. Through the crisis, both Alex and Clinton face reality with honesty and a heightened level of maturity. SKS

HarperTeen. 192 pp. US\$16.99.

Fame, Glory, and Other Things on My To Do List. Janette Rallison.

Jessica knows her life goals: move to Hollywood and become a brilliant actress, drive a luxury sports car, and have lots of "hot" boyfriends. She did not plan to fall for Jordan, the new guy in her New Mexico hometown, or to have her starring role in the high school play go

awry on opening night. There's lots of high school drama in this book to enjoy. ML

Scholastic. 186 pp. US\$16.95.

Heavy Metal and You. Christopher Krovatin.

Samuel Markus, a New York City high school student, is passionate about heavy metal music. Since the age of 13, he has been a devotee of its history, culture, and style. When he begins to date Melissa, he learns that relationships require compromise, but how much? Sam struggles with this question throughout the book until he finally realizes that simply caring about someone may not be enough to sustain a relationship. This book is recommended for mature readers. JG

Push. 192 pp. US\$16.95.

Hold Me Tight. Lorie Ann Grover.

Written in free verse, this is the achingly perceptive story of a child whose comfortable, safe, and secure world is suddenly tested. Tormented by anguish, fear, and self-doubt, 10-year-old Essie begins her story on the day her father walks out on her family and then learns, that same week, that a classmate has been abducted. Still another ugly incident forces Essie to examine these devastating betrayals. Slowly, she begins to heal through the compassion of others and ultimately celebrates the power of the human spirit. JG

Margaret K. McElderry. 352 pp. US\$16.95.

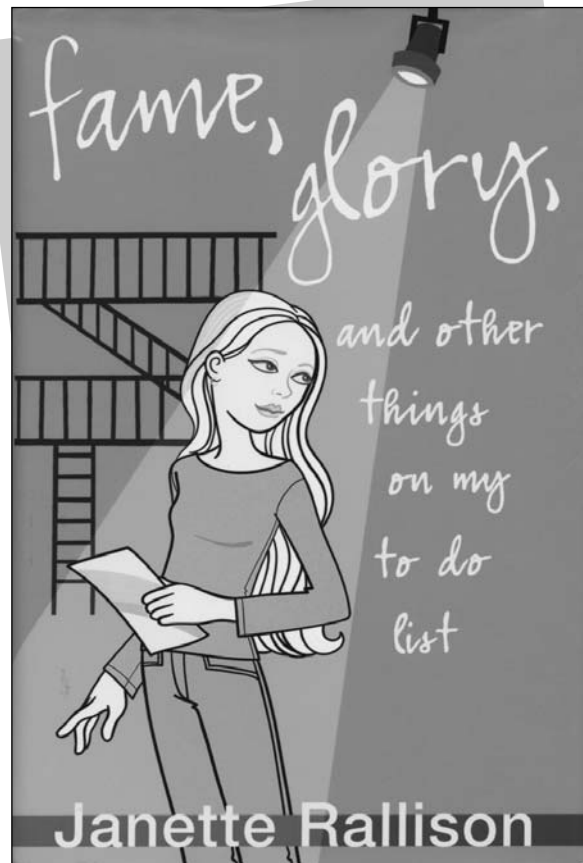
If We Kiss. Rachel Vail.

Charlie (Charlotte) and her best friend Tess share all secrets until Charlie inadvertently gets involved with Kevin, the boy that Tess thinks she loves. To make things worse, Charlie's mother gets engaged to Kevin's father and they must spend all holiday together. How can Charlie share all her secrets with Tess without ending their friendship? Tess has kissed a boy and Charlie has not (at least to Tess's knowledge). When it finally happens, she cannot share her experience with anyone. AAP

HarperTeen. 272 pp. US\$15.99.

Inkspell. Cornelia Funke.

Although a year has passed, not a day goes by without Meggie thinking of *Inkheart*—the



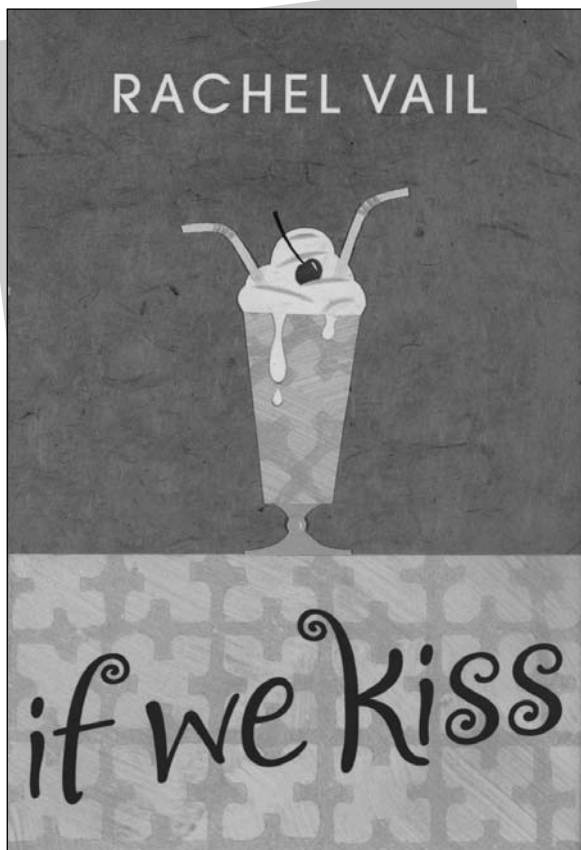
From Fame, Glory, and Other Things on My To Do List. 2007 © by Janette Rallison. Reprinted by permission of Walker Books for Young Readers.

book whose characters became real. But for Dustfinger, the fire-eater brought into being from words, the need to return to the tale has become desperate. When he finds a crooked storyteller with the ability to read him back, Dustfinger leaves behind his young apprentice, Farid, and plunges into the medieval world of his past. Distraught, Farid goes in search of Meggie, and before long both of them are caught inside the book, too. But the story is threatening to evolve in ways neither of them could ever have imagined.

The Chicken House. 635 pp. US\$19.99.

Invisible. Pete Hautman.

As a loner, 17-year-old Douglas MacArthur Hanson knows rejection, friendlessness, and all the other difficulties that go with being seen as



Jacket art by Mary Lynn Blasutta from *If We Kiss* by Rachel Vail. © 2005 by HarperCollins and used with their permission.

different. Dougie appears to deal with these difficulties by obsessively building an extremely detailed model railroad town in his basement. His frequent chats with his friend, Andy, and his conversations with his psychiatrist provide a thought-provoking window into mental illness and its affects on those around him. MFL

Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. 160 pp. US\$15.95.

Kringle. Tony Abbott.

Is it possible that the commercialized fantasy figure many know as Kringle could be a hero of great proportions? From the story of his birth and of his family to tales of great adventures battling goblins and other evil foes, the version of Santa Claus in this story will certainly change readers' perceptions of the legendary figure. MFL Scholastic. 304 pp. US\$14.99.

Looking for Alaska. John Green.

Miles doesn't have many friends at his old school, so he convinces his parents to let him start over and attend Culver Creek Preparatory. He becomes captivated by his new friends who spend as much energy on sex, smoking, drinking, and joking around as they do on reading, learning, and searching for life's meaning. A powerful and unforgettable read. SKS

Dutton Juvenile. 160 pp. US\$15.99.

Lucky T. Kate Brian.

Carrie's almost perfect life crumbles when her lucky T-shirt is donated to charity. In a desperate attempt to recover the shirt, Carrie arranges a trip to India. As Carrie confronts another culture and begins to understand the needs of others, she begins to see her truly fortunate life in perspective. Fans of teen romance will relish Carrie's adventurous spirit. SAB

Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. 304 pp. US\$14.95.

Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment. James Patterson.

Maximum Ride is the series title and also the name of the 14-year-old protagonist known as Max in this science fiction tale that is based on characters from Patterson's adult book, *When the Wind Blows*. Max is the leader of a genetically engineered group of orphans who have the ability to fly and who each have their own unique set of special talents. The youngest member of the group, Angel, is kidnapped by the "Erasers" in order to return her to the scientists at "the school." It is up to Max and the others to save Angel at all costs. MFL

Little, Brown. 432 pp. US\$16.99.

Pretties. Scott Westerfeld.

Teen readers who line up to read *Pretties*, the sequel to *Uglies*, will not be disappointed in this action-packed sequel about Tally Youngblood. Tally so thoroughly enjoys the mindless life of a Pretty that she almost forgets the real reason she underwent the surgery to become a Pretty until a message is delivered to her

from New Smoke. Tally must ultimately save her new boyfriend, Zane, and she must also decide if the price of being a Pretty is too high. This book will leave readers anxious for the final volume of the trilogy. KDT

Simon Pulse. 384 pp. US\$7.99.

Prom. Laurie Halse Anderson.

Not really interested in school activities (especially the prom), Ashley finds herself roped into helping her best friend plan and organize the dance after the faculty advisor steals the money that has been collected for the event. Along the way, and in the excitement of making the prom happen, this high school senior realizes what is truly important in her own life. **Advanced.** KR

Viking Juvenile. 224 pp. US\$16.99.

Ready or Not. Meg Cabot.

This is an energetic follow-up to *All-American Girl* in which Samantha saved the U.S. president's life and began dating the "first son." Now, Samantha is 16 years old and the themes in this story are more grown up. Teen sexuality, examination of protection, and embarrassment about premarital sex are handled in a sensitive manner. Cabot uses humor to discuss young-adult issues throughout the book. BAS

HarperTeen. 256 pp. \$16.99.

Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie. David Lubar.

Honor student Scott Hudson knew freshman year would be exciting but nothing prepared him for the challenges of coping with unscrupulous seniors, surviving ever-changing friendships, and pursuing that special girl. When he learns that his mom is pregnant, he begins a diary to offer wise and witty high school advice to his future sibling. As he humorously chronicles the lessons learned from his misadventures, he unwittingly discovers that the most valuable lessons in life don't come from books at all. JG

Dutton Juvenile. 160 pp. US\$16.99.

Something About America. Maria Testa.

This poignant story, told in simple verse, is about an eighth grader who fled to the United



From *Kringle* by Tony Abbott. Jacket art by Greg Call © 2005. Used with permission of Scholastic Press.

States with her parents to escape from war-torn Kosova eight years earlier. The tale chronicles her parents' struggle of fear and hope and the promise of starting over against the pain of lost dreams and a ravaged homeland. It is not until the family faces a sudden challenge to their American dream that they actually embrace the true meaning of living in America. JG

Candlewick. 96 pp. US\$14.99.

Surviving Antarctica: Reality TV 2083. Andrea White.

Four teenagers embark on a reality-television quest for the South Pole, tracing Captain Robert Scott's ill-fated journey in 1912. Chosen for their special abilities, the teenagers face dangers that test them at their deepest levels. But Steve, a teenage employee at the Department

of Entertainment, faces an even greater challenge as he struggles to reveal the sinister truth behind the expedition. Historical facts, survival adventure, and ethical dilemmas collide in this unforgettable brave world of the future. SAB

Eos. 336 pp. US\$16.99.

Twilight. Stephenie Meyer.

Isabella Swan moves to the Forks in Washington State to live with her father. At school she meets tall, sexy, and gorgeous Edward. Isabella is totally captivated by Edward but finds his mysterious ways are masking a dark secret. Despite the danger that surrounds them, their love blossoms. This riveting tale sparkles until the very end. SKS

Little, Brown Young Readers. 512 pp. US\$17.99.

You Are SO Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah!

Fiona Rosenbloom.

This is a humorous, sometimes hilarious, account of Stacy Adelaide Friedman's attempt to perform three mitzvahs, or good deeds, before officially embarking on adulthood at her Bat Mitzvah. The story details her misguided efforts to accomplish these seemingly impossible tasks as she is beset with fickle friendships, a nerdy brother, divorcing parents, unrequited love, and an ugly dress. Stacy stumbles through the agonies and triumphs of being 13 to finally realize the true meaning of adulthood. JG

Hyperion. 208 pp. US\$15.99.