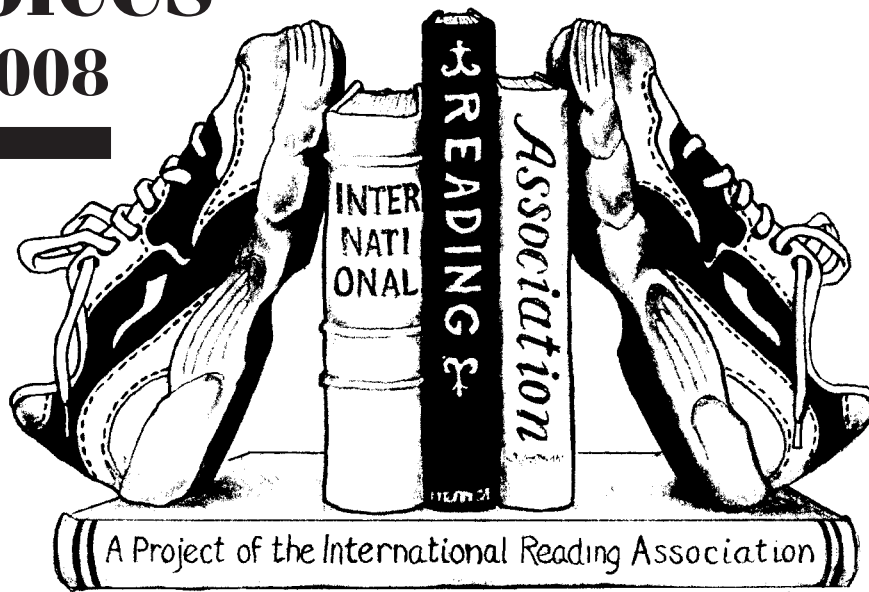


# Young Adults' Choices

## for 2008



Logo illustration by *Natalie Bellon*

The 2008 Young Adults' Choices list is the 22nd 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 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 the 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 2006 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 2007 and February 2008 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 2008 Annual Convention of the International Reading Association in Atlanta, Georgia.

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 keeping track of the ballots, counting them, and reporting them to the International Reading Association headquarters for the final tally.

The following schools participated in the 2008 project:

- Team 1: Bonnie Purcell and Kristen D. Taylor (team leaders), Utah; Aimee Rogers (trainee), Arizona
- Team 2: Jane Gross (team leader), Massachusetts; Kathleen A. Sears (trainee), Maryland
- Team 3: Karen Rubin (team leader), Florida
- Team 4: Stephanie A. Burdic and Elizabeth A. Olson (team leaders); Kelly Stern (trainee), Iowa
- Team 5: Maxine Levy (team leader), Tennessee

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 project was directed this year by members of the Literature for Young Adults Committee and its chair, Gretchen C. Hamilton, Oregon.

Bibliographic data are supplied for each title, along with number of pages and price. Publishers furnished information in May 2008, but prices are subject to change.

The annotated 2008 Young Adults' Choices list is downloadable from the International Reading Association's website, [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org).

### 15 Minutes

Steve Young.

*Young's protagonist is a likeable, uncoordinated, seemingly hopeless middle schooler who endures the ridicule of a conventional group of surly, hostile, "popular" jocks. Tardiness, awkwardness, and Milton, the jock*

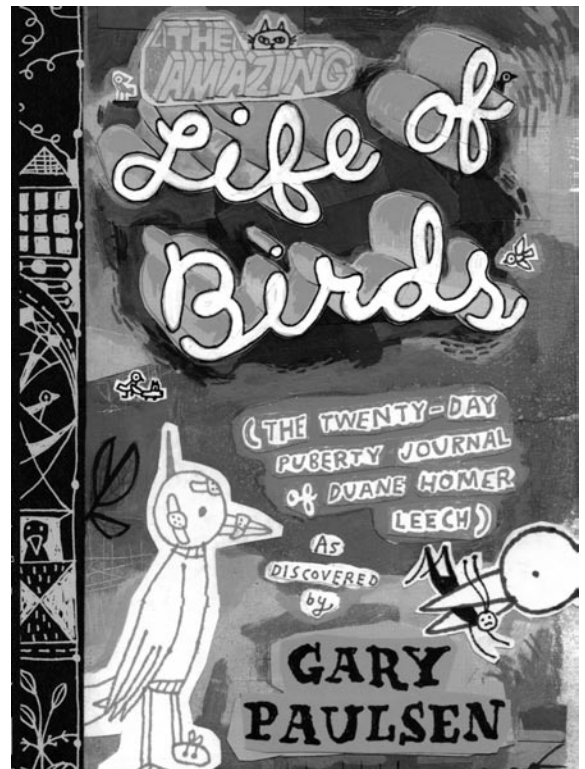
*who gives him a swirly on a regular basis, plague Casey. Finding his grandfather's watch/time machine gives him "do-over" opportunities to gain favor with the football team and cheerleaders. The reader chuckles as Casey tells his amusing story of friendship, bullying, popularity, and mistakes. Eventually, he learns lessons of which his grandfather would be proud. Though the plot is predictable, the witty narration is humorously sharp and enjoyable. (BP)*

HarperCollins. 176 pp. US\$15.99.

### The Amazing Life of Birds: The Twenty-Day Puberty Journal of Duane Homer Leech

Gary Paulsen.

*Duane Homer Leech is keeping a puberty journal. Maybe it will somehow help as he attempts to maneuver through the seemingly absurd changes occurring in his body and mind. Awkward clumsiness, zits, social ineptness, and embarrassing thoughts turn a well-adjusted boy into a freakishly graceless teen. Noticing a baby bird*



The Amazing Life of Birds: The Twenty-Day Puberty Journal of Duane Homer Leech by Gary Paulsen, published by Wendy Lamb Books, an imprint of Random House Children's Books.

outside his window, he watches as the bird grows from helpless to birdhood. As he equates the bird's humiliation and struggles with his own, he finally determines that if the bird can make it, so can he! Boys will relate to this humorous tale of the uncomfortable ascension into manhood. (BP)

Wendy Lamb. 96 pp. US\$13.95.

### **A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl**

Tanya Lee Stone.

This title is as deceptive as the egocentric senior jock in the story who makes his way through girls like a bee pollinating a field of wildflowers. Three girls, each naive in her own way, fall victim to his deceiving charms. His motivation is merely sexual at the expense of "whoever." He callously uses girls, then discards them at will. Hormones rage and self-control wanes as each girl succumbs to his wiles at the price of her self-respect. Each girl mistakes sex for love. Written in poetic prose, this book is a warning to girls about guys who are total users. Mature readers. (BP)

Wendy Lamb. 240 pp. US\$14.95.

### **Being Bindy**

Alyssa Brugman.

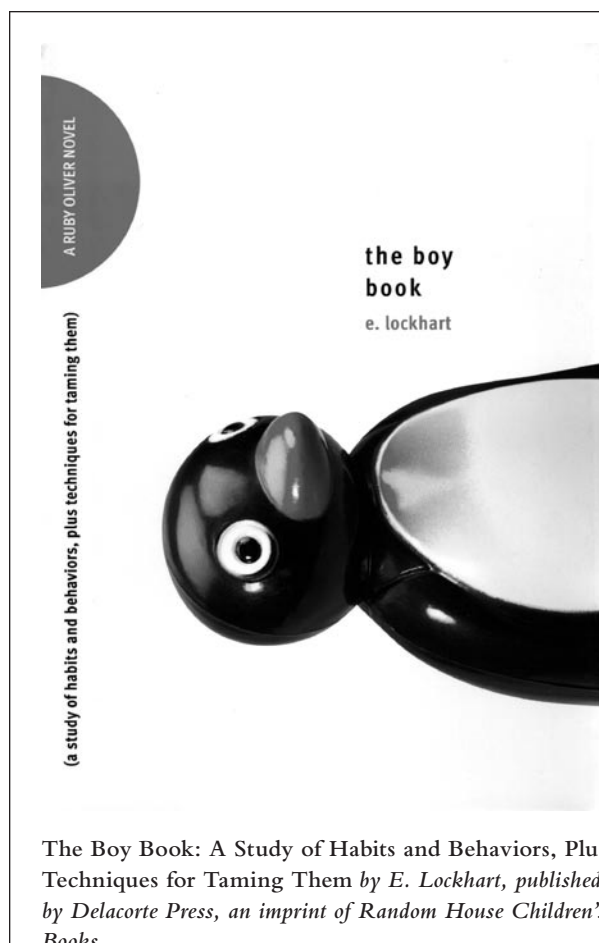
This funny, coming-of-age novel from Australia reassures young readers that even after the worst day of your life, things can get better. Teens will recognize many of Bindy's problems including losing a best friend, divorce, parental dating, and the idea of blended families. Bindy is left out and bullied, but she does have support from her father, her brother, and two new friends. There is humiliation and embarrassment here, but Bindy finds the strength to make tough decisions. Teens will like this story about being true to yourself. (KDT)

Delacorte Books for Young Readers. 208 pp. US\$17.99.

### **The Boy Book: A Study of Habits and Behaviors, Plus Techniques for Taming Them**

E. Lockhart.

Readers who like sequels will line up for this continuation of the story in *The Boyfriend List* and of its main character, Ruby. It has all of the ingredients for a good read—funny, believable dialogue; good description; and situations common to teens like peer pressure and relationship breakups. There are many excerpts from the



The Boy Book: A Study of Habits and Behaviors, Plus Techniques for Taming Them by E. Lockhart, published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books.

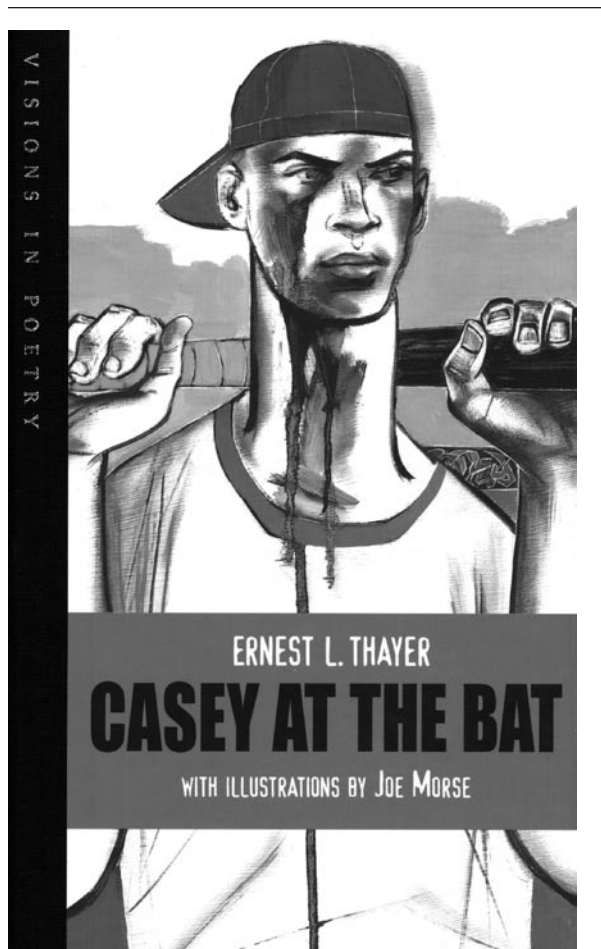
journal, *The Boy Book: A Study of Habits and Behaviors, Plus Techniques for Taming Them*, written by Ruby and her friends in years past. This story of self-discovery shows teens how to cope with the pressures and problems of teen life today. Mature readers. (KDT)

Delacorte Books for Young Readers. 224 pp. US\$15.95.

### **The Boy in the Striped Pajamas**

John Boyne.

Readers will remember this story long after the book is finished. In the early 1940s in Nazi Germany, 9-year-old Bruno moves from Berlin to a place in Poland called "Out-With" after a visit from the "Fury." Bruno can see a high wire fence and hundreds of people wearing striped pajamas. Like most boys, Bruno is curious and more than anything he wants a friend. So does a boy in the striped pajamas. What happens next in this Holocaust tale is heart-stopping and unforgettable.



Selection from *Casey at the Bat* by Ernest L. Thayer and illustrated by Joe Morse. Reprinted by permission of Kids Can Press Ltd., Toronto. Text copyright 2006 Ernest L. Thayer. Illustrations copyright 2006 Joe Morse.

*Students will want to talk about this story. Mature readers. (KDT)*

David Fickling. 224 pp. US\$15.95.

### **Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888**

Ernest L. Thayer. Ill. Joe Morse.

*Thayer's classic poem, "Casey at the Bat," is accompanied by striking oil and acrylic illustrations. Reinterpreted in an inner-city context, the text as illustrated by Morse imagines the events of the poem played out by and for a multicultural cast surrounded by the artistic graffiti and buildings of the city. This pairing results in a new reading of the poem, which will undoubtedly appeal to young and old alike. (AR)*

Kids Can. 48 pp. US\$16.95.

### **Everlost**

Neal Shusterman.

*Allie and Nick are ripped out of the world of the living and into the world of Everlost, a place for souls who didn't get to where they were going. Although they can witness the world of the living, they can no longer be a part of it and must quickly learn the rules of Everlost. It is a magical place, but it is also home to terrible monsters, like the McGill, and to those who want to keep the secrets of Everlost hidden. Everlost provides Allie and Nick opportunities to change who they were and to leave lasting impressions. (AR)*

Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. 320 pp. US\$16.95.

### **Fly on the Wall: How One Girl Saw Everything**

E. Lockhart.

*Gretchen Yee is a talented artist who perceives herself as someone who doesn't quite fit in at the elite Manhattan High School for the Arts. She struggles to be normal around her ex-boyfriend and her current crush, all the while dealing with the news of her parents' divorce. Gretchen's off-hand comment about a desire to be a fly on the wall in the boy's locker room becomes a reality. Her fly's perspective provides her with a greater understanding of the male physique but more important gives her realistic insight into the lives and thoughts of boys. (AR)*

Delacorte Books for Young Readers. 192 pp. US\$15.95.

### **Hell Phone**

William Sleator.

*Nick, a 17-year-old honor student, has finally saved enough money to purchase a used cell phone so he can call his girlfriend in the evening. The phone, however, has other plans for Nick's spare time, capturing him immediately with its incessant, wretched ringing and luring him into its supernatural world of horror, torture, despair, and murder. This mystery, a real thriller, will surely make its readers think twice before saying hello. Mature readers. (JG)*

Amulet. 240 pp. US\$16.95.

### **Hormone Jungle: Coming of Age in Middle School**

Brod Bagert.

*When Christina Curtis pens a poem of protest about boys and tapes it onto a classroom door, she sparks a*

poetry war among her classmates. With the help of a teacher, these students begin an online poetry forum to capture their precious, fleeting middle school moments. Poems about zits, immaturity, revenge, and kissing reveal the fears, hopes, dreams, and struggles that characterize the universal world of adolescence. Christina's personal story of friendship and love, embedded in this "scrapbook," celebrates the sustaining value of poetry and offers testimony to its nurturing, enriching, and enduring power. (JG)

Maupin House. 132 pp. US\$23.95.

### **The Intruders**

E.E. Richardson.

When Cassie's mom decides to move into an old, battered house with her fiancé and his two sons, Cassie is not happy about merging their two families. Her brother thinks it is cool and is looking forward to it until the children begin to suspect this is no ordinary house. Frightening dreams, bloody hallucinations, incessant chanting, and ghoulish apparitions convince the children to stage a séance to meet their tormentor face to face. The suspense rises into an explosive crescendo as the four children unite to unravel the mystery deeply shrouded in this old house. This shared experience assures Cassie that having a new family may not be so bad after all. (JG)

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

### **It's a Mall World After All**

Janette Rallison.

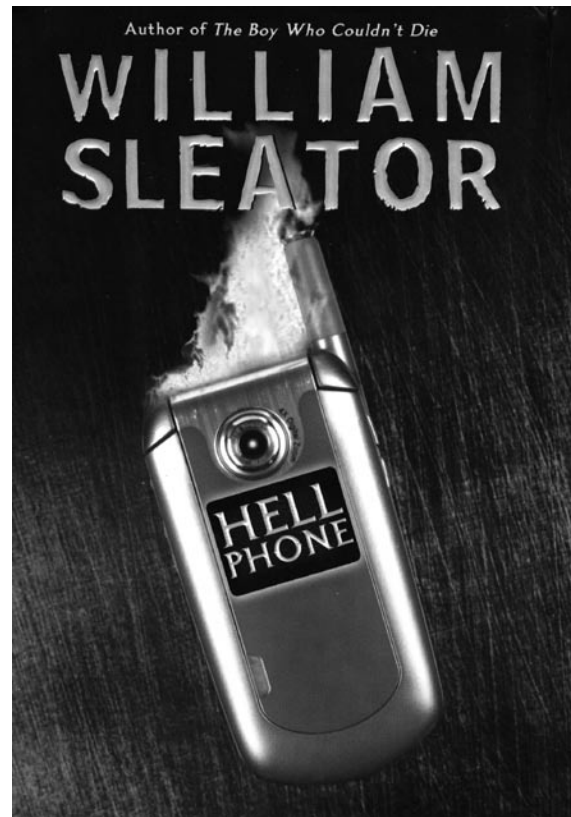
This story is a light romance with a feisty, intelligent heroine who has a penchant for social justice. Charlotte meets Colton. Their best friends are dating, but there's no chance for these two. Charlotte has a rule: no dating boys from her school. Charlotte annoys Colton. She accidentally pushes him into a pool, sets the National Honor Society Dance on fire, and makes him dress as Santa Claus distributing gifts to needy children. Rules are made to be broken, and Charlotte eventually dates Colton. Tongue in cheek, light but not fluffy; Charlotte pines for justice and gets her man. (KS)

Walker Books for Young Readers. 240 pp. US\$16.95.

### **Lush**

Natasha Friend.

Living with an alcoholic parent is especially tough on Samantha, who can't believe even her best friends will



Hell Phone by William Sleator (Amulet Books).

understand. With nowhere else to turn, Sam sends notes through a library book to a random girl who she hopes can advise her. When an older boy asks her to a party, Sam lies to her friends and sneaks out to meet him. Things only get worse as she deals with the consequences and discovers that her fellow note writer is not whom she thinks. Through confronting her parents and reconciling with her friends, Sam gains a deeper understanding of herself. (KS)

Scholastic. 192 pp. US\$16.99.

### **Maximum Ride: School's Out—Forever**

James Patterson.

This page-turner keeps the reader in suspense and laughter. Six unique kids are on the run, and their leader, Max, is supposed to save the world. The only problem is she doesn't know what she's supposed to save the world from! As Max struggles to protect her "family," she doesn't know whom to trust. This fantasy has

*a little bit of everything and is sure to satisfy all readers.*  
(EAO)

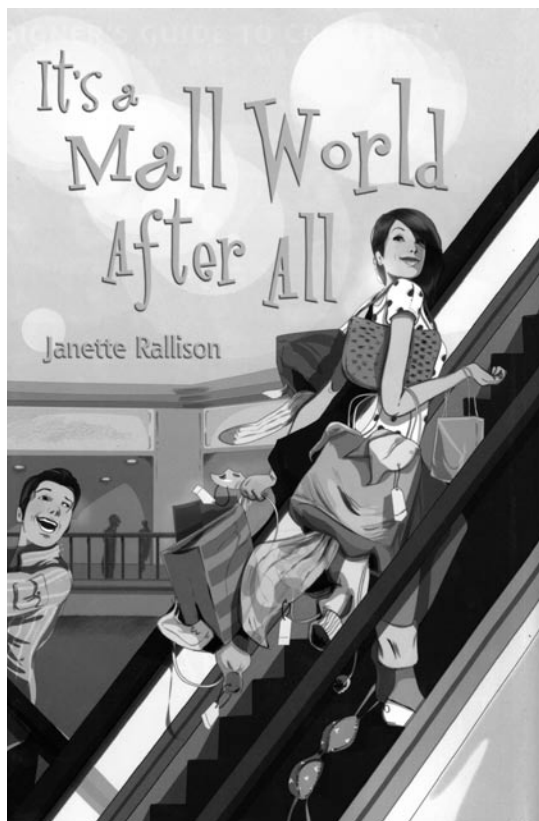
Little, Brown Young Readers. 416 pp. US\$16.99.

### **Maybe**

Brent Runyon.

*Here's an offering of realistic fiction with mature themes for older readers. A high school boy must come to terms with a family tragedy while he tries to fit in at a new school, make friends, and deal with his developing sexuality. The main character, Brian, is portrayed sympathetically and the story is told from his point of view. Throughout the book, Brian alludes to his brother, apparently deceased, but the details of his death are only slowly revealed. Readers are taken with Brian as he allows himself to begin to grieve. Caution: This book contains graphic language and scenes of sexual activity.*  
(KS)

Knopf Books for Young Readers. 208 pp. US\$16.95.



Copyright 2006 Walker Books for Young Readers.

### **Mismatch**

Lensey Namioka.

*Star-crossed lovers? This relevant story addresses issues of assimilation into American society, examining the cultural differences between Japanese and Chinese Americans. Sue, a viola player in the school orchestra, and Andy, a violinist, attempt a romantic relationship in spite of their parents' bigoted viewpoints. As the characters get to know each other, their mutual understanding blossoms, and they come to terms with their own cultural and personal identities. This is a must-read book for all diverse students who populate modern classrooms.*  
(KR)

Delacorte Books for Young Readers. 224 pp. US\$15.95.

### **My Lost and Found Life**

Melodie Bowsher.

*This is an appealing contemporary novel narrated by Ashley, a high school senior, who has to deal with the accusation that her mother is an embezzler. Her materialistic world crumbles, and she is faced with the reality of self-preservation for which she is not prepared! A wonderful coming-of-age novel that is a fast read for teenagers.*  
(KR)

Bloomsbury USA Children's Books. 350 pp. US\$16.95.

### **New Moon**

Stephenie Meyer.

*In a heart-stopping and suspenseful story, Isabella Swan, through a thrilling romance with a vampire, Edward Cullen, finds herself halfway around the world on a dicey mission to save the most important person in her life. Readers of all ages will be enthralled by the fast-paced sequel to Stephenie Meyer's award-winning novel Twilight. With a clear and riveting plot line, readers will be kept on high anticipation as they travel through the streets of Europe in this eloquent text. Experience the tale of vampire love and "undying" friendship in this much-loved series.*  
(KR)

Little, Brown Young Readers. 608 pp. US\$19.99.

### **Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist**

Rachel Cohn and David Levithan.

*Nick has been dumped and now needs to look like he has recovered and moved on in life. This is where Norah comes in. Moving from pretend girlfriend to a friend who shares a love of music, the evolution of their relationship*

is told in the alternating voices of Nick (the dumped) and Norah (the rescuer). The time span covers just one night, and while spiced with profanity and descriptions of long, sensual kissing scenes, most high schoolers will appreciate the authentic dialogue and romantic situations. (SAB)

Knopf Books for Young Readers. 192 pp. US\$16.95.

### Painting Caitlyn

Kimberly Joy Peters.

Caitlyn's relationship with romantic and gorgeous Tyler is marred by his jealous and controlling behavior. At first gratified by Tyler's attentions, Caitlyn begins to lose her sense of identity. Tyler keeps pushing Caitlyn emotionally and physically until she compromises her academics, art, friends, and even her sexuality. Caitlyn eventually sees the relationship with clarity and breaks free from the jealousy and abuse that entangled her. As she comes out of the darkness of Tyler's shadow, Caitlyn finds love, true friendship, and her own spirit. This captivating story features a realistic situation to which many teens can easily relate. (SAB)

Lobster. 192 pp. US\$9.95.

### Pieces of Georgia

Jen Bryant.

Georgia is having trouble coping with the death of her mother. She has difficulty communicating with her hard-working father, is a loner, and struggles with school situations. Georgia learns to express her heart and grief in a journal as she imagines thoughts of her mother. Through a teacher's encouragement, Georgia hones her artistic talent and gains confidence. She also finds unexpected difficulties and joys in a friendship with an overachieving friend. Finally, Georgia comes to understand the depth of her father's love and understanding. Beautifully written, this book conveys a story of self-acceptance, sorrow, and recovery. (SAB)

Knopf Books for Young Readers. 176 pp. US\$15.95.

### Pretty Little Liars

Sara Shepard.

Secrets. Everyone has them. Four high school juniors share one they thought was safe. Suddenly, they start receiving messages that shake them to the core from someone who goes by "A." Is it their friend Alison who disappeared when they were in seventh grade? One by



New Moon by Stephenie Meyer. Used by permission of Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

one, we learn about the girls and their secrets. The mystery will keep readers engaged. The dialogue is sprinkled with profanity and many references to drinking. (EAO)

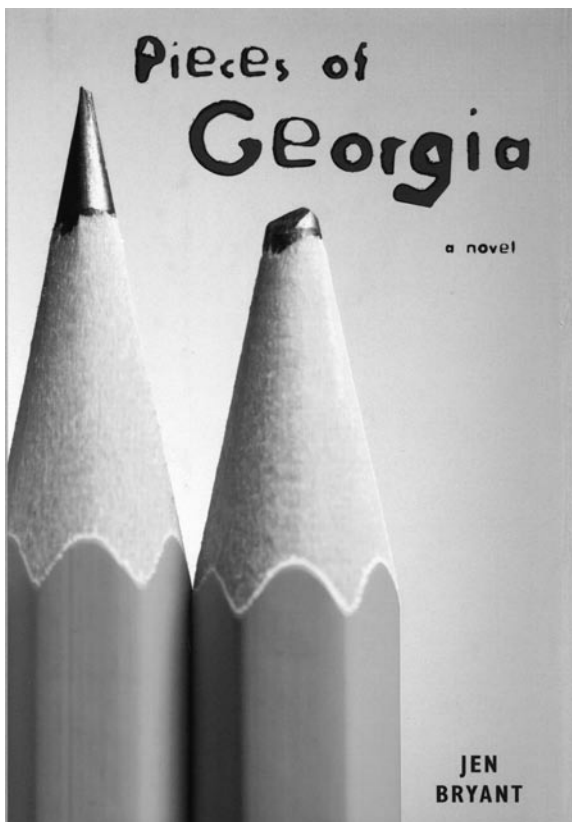
HarperTeen. 304 pp. US\$16.99.

### Returnable Girl

Pamela Lowell.

This fictional account of a 13-year-old girl in foster care is a gripping story of a teenage girl longing to belong. Ronnie has been "returned" since she was abandoned by her mother at the age of 11. When she's finally found a home where she can settle in, her mother reappears. Written in Ronnie's voice in journal format, this book deals with many sensitive issues, such as sex, depression, and bullying, with which young readers will identify. It is a story of hope. (EAO)

Marshall Cavendish Children's Books. 229 pp. US\$16.99.



*Pieces of Georgia* by Jen Bryant, published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books.

### Small Steps

Louis Sachar.

*In this sequel to Holes, after being released from Camp Green Lake, Theodore "Armpit" Johnson is committed to taking small steps. He is working diligently in summer school, saving his money, and staying out of trouble. He still digs holes, but this time he is getting paid for it as an employee of a landscaping business. So when his friend X-Ray, also a former Green Lake inmate, approaches him with a scheme to double his summer pay in two weeks, Armpit reluctantly funds the venture, bringing him unexpected danger, surprises, and an unlikely new friend. (KS)*

Delacorte Books for Young Readers. 272 pp. US\$16.95.

### Specials

Scott Westerfeld.

*In this sequel to Pretties, Tally has barely begun her new life as a Cutter in Special Circumstances when*

*a visit to Zane has her questioning her loyalty to the Specials. She feels responsible for the brain injury he suffered from taking nanos meant for her, and although the Specials are responsible for finding the New Smoke, Tally risks her life and defies her orders to protect Zane as he and his friends make their way to the New Smoke. Once again, Tally finds a way to follow her conscience for the greater good. (KS)*

Simon Pulse. 384 pp. US\$15.95.

### The Sword of Anton

Gene Del Vecchio.

*Megani Del must save her world of Trinity from Zorca, an evil wizard. Megani is the only daughter of Jason Del, who defeated pure evil in the first book of this series, The Pearl of Anton. With her father recently dead, Megani uses her powers to successfully defend a village from an invasion of creatures called Gorgans. But this was just a test, and soon all life in Trinity is at risk. With the help of dwarf and elf warriors, a young frontiersman, and others, Megani battles Gorgons, Devil Rays, and wizards as she questions her own courage and purpose. (KS)*

Pelican. 248 pp. US\$16.95.

### What Happened to Cass McBride?

Gail Giles.

*Cass, Kyle, and Ben, the three main characters, have great voices as they retell the story of what led up to Cass's disappearance and live burial. It would be a regular crime novel, but the time and setting shifts keep the readers interested to the very last page. Each character, including Cass, struggles to understand why she was picked. The drama and trauma of high school is cleverly included in the point of view of each character. Claustrophobic readers may have difficulty reading the precise description of Cass's entombment. (ML)*

Little, Brown Young Readers. 224 pp. US\$16.99.

### Wolfcry

Amelia Atwater-Rhodes.

*This book filled with danger, romance, and intrigue is a must for teens and young adults. The author takes a step outside the box as she describes a relationship between two young women. The fourth book in the Kiesha'ra series is a roller coaster ride from beginning to*

*end that will keep readers madly flipping the pages until the unexpected conclusion. (ML)*

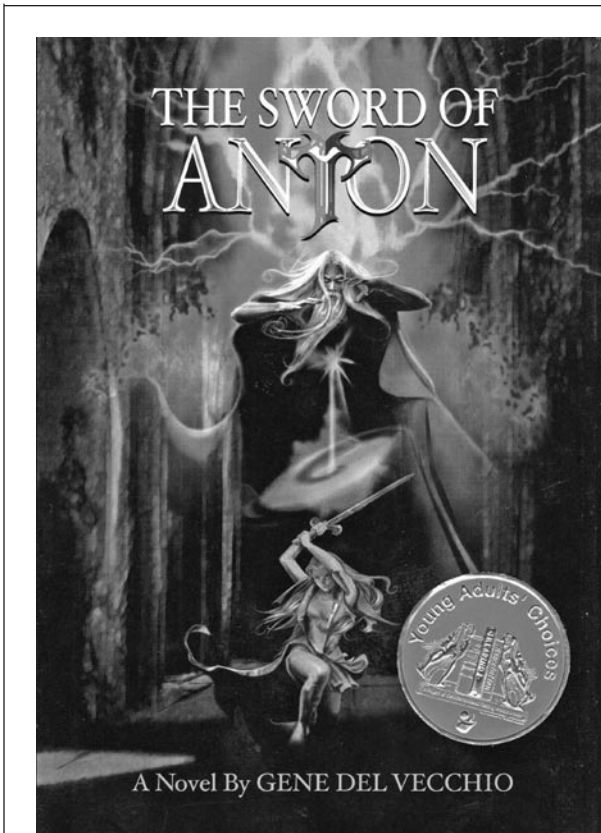
Delacorte Books for Young Readers. 208 pp. US\$14.95.

**You, Maybe: The Profound Asymmetry of Love in High School**

Rachel Vail.

*High school angst is captured perfectly in this story of haughty girls, the senior “hottie,” and the A, B, and C cliques. Josie wants to fit in, and when an A-group senior starts to pursue her, there is doubt but no resistance. As she falls in love, she gives up her identity to fit in. Every reader will know Josie and the pain of first love. The memories of the girls who didn’t fit in and were taunted and teased will come flashing back. (ML)*

HarperTeen. 224 pp. US\$15.99.



The Sword of Anton by Gene Del Vecchio. Cover design by Aundrea Hernandez. Used by permission of Pelican Publishing Company.