



under THE COVER



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Book reviews by teens. For teens. Pass it on.

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You're looking at the second issue of **UNDER the COVER**. This issue features more book reviews written by 7th and 8th grade students at Old Orchard Junior High School. These students were chosen by their teachers to read and write about new books for young readers. Some of the books haven't even been published yet! This special "sneak peek" was provided by Skokie Public Library and several book publishers. Why? So that students could give their peers a heads-up about what's new in fiction for junior high and young adult readers. If the books aren't on the shelf at school or Skokie Public Library, be on the lookout...they'll probably show up soon!

UNDER the COVER is also available on the Web at www.skokielibrary.info/direct/underthecover.asp.



The Breakup Bible

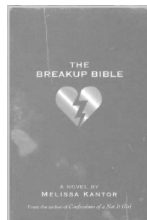
by Melissa Kantor

Reviewed by Rikki A.

Probably every girl will meet someone in their life and think they are the most perfect couple ever. Well, that's what happened to Jennifer with Max, but

that wasn't exactly the case in the book called *The Breakup Bible* by Melissa Kantor. Everything was going well, until he dumped her. At first Jennifer didn't know what to do, so her grandma gave her a book called *The Breakup Bible*. That was supposed to help the break up, but the book only made it worse.

This book is realistic fiction, and in my opinion, it is for girls who are between 12 and 16 years old. I really enjoyed reading this book because I love books that deal



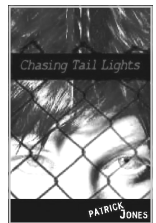
Chasing Tail Lights

by Patrick Jones

Reviewed by Bobby P.

Chasing Tail Lights by Patrick Jones is the story about a girl named Christy. She has a brother in jail, and another one who is always out doing drugs or drinking alcohol. She also has an alcoholic mother who doesn't care about anything and never helps out. Christy is struggling in school, and she is selling drugs to try to make enough money to help support her needs. When Christy was little, her father, a former truck driver, would tell her that, when he was lost, he would follow the tail lights of a car and they would always lead him to where he needed to be. Now Christy is searching for some way out of the many problems in her life. Will she be able to do it?

Chasing Tail Lights is a book that can be enjoyed by all junior high or high school students, because they will have some of her problems or will know someone who does. Patrick Jones described situations in Christy's life so well that I could actually put myself in her shoes. The book did start slowly, but after reading about 50 pages, it was hard



to put down. If you like realistic fiction, *Chasing Tail Lights* is the book for you! (Adult Fiction-Teen JON)



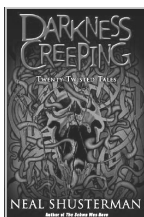
Darkness Creeping

by Neal Shusterman

Reviewed by Danielle M.

The book *Darkness Creeping* by Neal Shusterman is one of the best books of short stories I have ever read. It was a page turner, and I was never able to put the book down until someone made me do it. All of the short stories have no connection to each other. One of the stories is about a girl, Marla, who is very popular and goes on a time machine. Another story is about a boy who died and became a spirit. He took over a famous baseball player's body and fought to keep it. Then there is a story about a boy who chases an ice cream truck, finally catches it, and gets a huge surprise.

But a bit of advice to the people who might want to read this book: It can get very scary. Some of the stories that I read kept me up all night. They scared the living daylight out of me. It might do the same to you, so be careful! This book is a great book for junior high and high school students. It has a lot of suspense. But Neal Shusterman does like to leave you hanging at the end of a short story with many questions remaining unanswered. Sometimes I was very aggravated by that, but the book was still terrific. If you do read it, make sure to keep your lights on when you sleep. (Junior High Fiction SHU)



A Dog Called Grk

by Joshua Doder

Reviewed by Kristine Marie E.

When Tim discovers a small dog outside his London home, he knows he shouldn't pet it or, frankly, even talk to it. Both his mother and father loathe dogs. Their primary concern in life is how to obtain more money. But Tim, won over by the animal's "beady black eyes" and "perky little tail," makes contact and in turn begins a quest for its owners. Tim's search sends him across the continent in search of the Raffifis, the family of the former ambassador of Stanislavia. His adventure is more than he bargained for, however, as he faces an evil dictator, makes a daring escape by helicopter, liberates accused traitors from a high-security prison, and sneaks over the border with new-found friends.

With a style like Lemony Snicket, Joshua Doder has hit the mark with *A Dog Called Grk*. The short chapters and the staccato style of the author's writing keep



the plot moving at a rapid pace. The novel does portray true evil, including brutal deaths, but it is balanced with humor and the undying bravery of its child characters. However, I think it would have been better if Joshua Doder could use descriptions that would really captivate and appeal to the reader. Except for that, there's nothing else that I think should make the book better. The book is so amazing that the adventures of Tim and Grk will give readers a good reason to sit and read an entertaining book! And if you enjoyed the book, read the sequel— *A Dog Called Grk* is just the first book of the Grk collection. (Youth Fiction DOD)



Feels Like Home

by E.E. Charlton-Trujillo

Reviewed by Emma W.

Feels Like Home by E.E. Charlton-Trujillo was astounding! I would recommend this book to all teenage girls because the writer really captured the emotions of a confused teenager.

The main character, Michelle, or "Mickey," had never experienced a functional relationship. Her mother abandoned her and left seven-year-old Mickey and her twelve-year-old brother Danny to be raised by their alcoholic father. Her brother left town after the death of his best friend at age 17, and she was utterly ignored by everyone at her school. After her father was killed in a tragic car accident many years later, the only person left to care for her was Danny. The book is all about Mickey finding out who she really is and trying to rebuild the relationship with her brother that once was unbreakable.

Feels Like Home was a fast read. I found myself awake at all hours of the night unable to pry the book away from my hands. At times I felt like crying because I felt so sorry for Mickey, and at times I felt like yelling at her for refusing to believe in Danny's ability to change for the better. Now I can only hope that E.E. Charlton-Trujillo and other authors can create more books that are as good as *Feels Like Home*. (Junior High Fiction CHA)



The Fire Thief

by Terry Deary

Reviewed by Paul R.

The Fire Thief by Terry Deary is one of the most hilarious books I've ever read! You will like the unexpected twist in the tale and the many funny characters and events throughout.

The book is about an ancient Greek Titan named Prometheus who stole fire from the Gods and gave it to the mortals to use. Zeus, Prometheus's cousin, visited to

make him explain why he gave fire to the worthless mortals. Prometheus stated that mortals could also be heroes, but Zeus disagreed. Then Zeus challenged Prometheus to go to the future and find a mortal who was a hero, and Prometheus accepted. Then read this fantastic book!



I was impressed by how the author began every chapter with a short recap of the previous chapter. I also liked the vulture illustration near each chapter title because it made me happy to see pictures after reading tons of words. It would have been better, however, if the vulture was in different poses in those pictures.

Going from Ancient Greece to the present and then back to Ancient Greece again, helped build the suspense. People who are ten years old and older who like funny stories and twisted tales, will enjoy *The Fire Thief* as much as I did and won't want it to end. (Junior High Fiction DEA)



Holdup

by Terri Fields

Reviewed by Harsh P.

Holdup by Terri Fields is an amazing book! In it, Dylan has a plan to rob Burger Heaven. He gets Joe involved in the robbery, but Joe only helps Derrick

because he wants to borrow his car for a date. As the police surround Burger Heaven, who will get out alive? Will the robbers stick together? Will they get caught?

Holdup is a book for people above the age of 11 who like action and suspense. It is a book that will make you feel like you are part of the story. Since the problem begins in the middle of the book, you need to keep reading before it really gets moving. From then on, it is definitely not boring. *Holdup* is a great book for people who love an unpredictable ending! (Junior High Fiction FIE)



If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period

by Gennifer Choldenko

Reviewed by Kajal T.

If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period by Gennifer Choldenko is a very interesting book.

The plot is really a big puzzle that the reader needs to put together. If you like to figure things out without the author telling you every detail, this is the book for you!

On the first day of school after summer break, Kirsten meets a new boy, Walker. Later in the book they become really good friends. Then Kirsten finds out that her good friend Walker is also her half-brother. How will Kirsten and Walker deal with this?



How will it affect the lives of their parents and other friends?

Gennifer Choldenko makes the characters and the situation so real that I felt they could happen to anyone. If you like books that have to do with deciding who you should be friends with, you will really like this book!

(Youth Jr. High Fiction CHO)



Jinx

by Meg Cabot

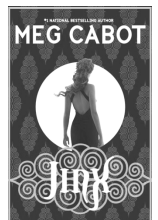
Reviewed by Rosemary L.

Readers who love mystery or who like to try something new, will love *Jinx* by Meg Cabot. It is a book that normally I wouldn't enjoy, but, with a cliff hanger at the end of every chapter, I didn't want to stop reading!

The story is about Jean Honeychurch, whom many call Jinx. She is a witch and that causes her problems in her town of Hancock, Iowa, so her parents send her to New York City to live with her aunt and uncle. But her cousin Tory thinks she is a witch and attempts to do spells that aren't good to Jean and other people. Jean needs to find a way to stop Tory before she goes too far. She has many obstacles that she has to overcome as her life is becoming more and more complicated. But hey, being a witch isn't all it is cracked up to be.

Jinx has detailed descriptions, so the reader can picture what is happening while reading. At times it does get confusing, but is definitely worth reading. This mystery will keep you turning the pages, and you will hate when it is over. Even people who don't like mysteries should pick it up.

(Junior High Fiction CAB and Adult Fiction-Teen CAB)



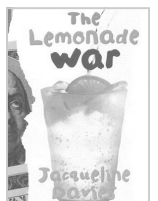
The Lemonade War

by Jacqueline Davies

Reviewed by Amanda G.

Jacqueline Davies wrote *The Lemonade War* based on what she saw her son and daughter go through when they were growing up. This book is about a 2nd grader named Jessie who is skipping a grade and going into 4th grade. Jessie is so excited, but her older brother Evan is not, because the letter from the school said that they would be in the same class. Evan is now embarrassed by his little sister and starts to ignore her. Their great friendship is falling apart and, whenever Jessie tries to fix it, she just makes it worse. Their arguing causes a lemonade war. Evan and Jessie will see who can make the most money by selling lemonade for one week.

This book really captures the beautiful bond between



brother and sister. It's filled with humor, math, and marketing tips, so math lovers will enjoy it. I mostly recommend this book for 4th and 5th graders. I think they would enjoy a book like this more than junior high school kids. (Youth Fiction DAV)



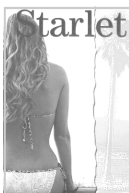
The Posse (Starlet)

by Randi Reisfeld

Reviewed by Saud A.

Editor's note: At the time of Saud's review, this book was titled *The Posse*. It was changed to *Starlet* upon the book's release in 2007.

The Posse by Randi Reisfeld, is about a 17-year-old named Jacey Chandliss who wins Generation Next: America's Top Young Actress. She goes to Hollywood, and movie directors start offering her roles in their movies. She has a new agent and her friends come along from Michigan with her. She's under a lot of pressure, from her boyfriend back home, the media, and the paparazzi. But can she take the pressure or will she go back home to Michigan and give up her dreams?



What I liked about this book is that it tells the reader about the life of a celebrity because all the kids think it's easy, when for the stars themselves it's not. What I didn't like about this book was that there wasn't a real point to it except that it was explaining about a Hollywood star. I would recommend this book for kids around the age of 13 to 16 who have always wanted to be a movie star. This is also good for people who like suspense in the story because this has characters who are very dumb and do things like crashing cars that could ruin Jacey's image in Hollywood. (Junior High Fiction REI)



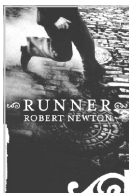
Runner

by Robert Newton

Reviewed by Mona M.

"You learnt quickly how to survive in the slums. You learnt how to read people. It was in their walk, their clothes, and their eyes. Especially the eyes."

Charlie Feehan is a teenage boy in the early 1900s who struggles to survive in the slums of Melbourne. His father has just died, and now he is the head of the house. When a job offer with the mobster Squizzy Taylor comes his way, he decides it is his duty to stop his schooling and make some money for the family. Charlie realizes his life is in danger when his friend gets hurt, and he doesn't know what to do. Charlie has to deal with his mothers "condition," his important upcoming race, and his crush. He has to choose his path in life, and he has to do it fast.



Robert Newton has written a great novel! The beginning of *Runner* was splendid! It had a lot of description and drew me in very quickly. The story was very mysterious, I never quite knew what was going to happen next. I really liked how the author used an accent when a character spoke throughout the story, it helped me get into the book more. I also enjoyed the light humor in the story. The story started to lose my attention around the middle. I felt as if the novel had too many things going on at once, and I couldn't focus on just one. I did not know what the author wanted me to be thinking about the most. I also wasn't too happy about how the author ended the relationship between Squizzy and Charlie. In the end though, I think all teens will enjoy this book. (Junior High Fiction NEW)

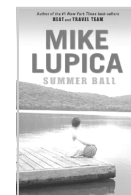


Summer Ball

by Mike Lupica

Reviewed by Marti P.

In *Summer Ball*, Danny Walker, the son of the famous Richie Walker, and his friend went to Camp Right Way, but Danny got off to a rough start. On the way, he got into a big fight with one of his best friends, Tess. Then, when he got to the basketball camp, Danny wasn't put in a cabin with his friends or with his age group. Also Danny was stuck with a coach that he thought didn't like him and who seemed to favor another player. What else could go wrong? Will Danny be able to last through the whole summer?



Summer Ball was so good that I had to read the books that came before it when I finished this book. Mike Lupica made the book so interesting to read that I didn't want to put it down. He included many real-life situations that the reader also might experience. I loved how Mike Lupica wrote things in the book that I, a basketball player, could relate to. *Summer Ball* is good for anyone who loves to play sports and wishes that dreams could come true. (Youth Fiction LUP)

Old Orchard Junior High School

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UNDER the COVER: BOOK REVIEWS by TEENS

Old Orchard Junior High School project leadership: Sylvia Accardi, Librarian/Media Center Director; Judy Martin, retired Reading teacher. Skokie Public Library project leadership: Linda Sawyer, Youth Services Programming Coordinator; Ruth Sinker, Youth Services Technology Coordinator



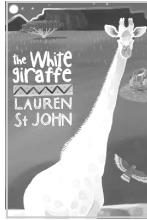
The White Giraffe

by Lauren St. John

Reviewed by Aphrodite L.

If you like a book that's very fast moving and that has a little mystery in it, *The White Giraffe* is definitely your type of book.

The White Giraffe is about an ordinary Brit from England, named Martine, who never really fit in. But when Martine's 11th birthday came, her parents died. Somehow some mysterious things seemed to click. The day her parents died, Martine instantly had to move to South Africa with her grandmother, whom her mother had never even mentioned. How could Martine move to a place she had never even heard of, or live with someone she hadn't known existed? As long as Martine could remember she didn't even have a grandmother. But what Martine doesn't know is that there is an adventure waiting to happen, and that a White Giraffe is waiting to be saved!



I liked this book a lot and would definitely recommend it to many people. It was very fast moving and had a lot of action in it. Martine is a typical girl just like us, and I connected to her emotions and her thoughts. I especially liked the book, because there was a mystery locked in the story, and the book made me want to read more each and every time. (Youth Fiction STJ)



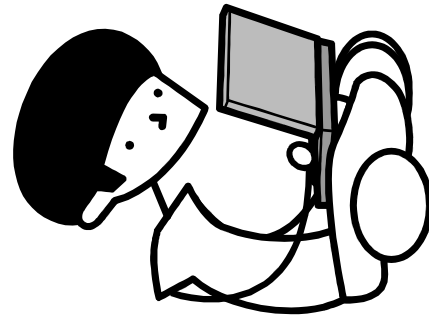
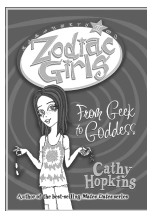
Zodiac Girls: From Geek to Goddess

by Cathy Hopkins

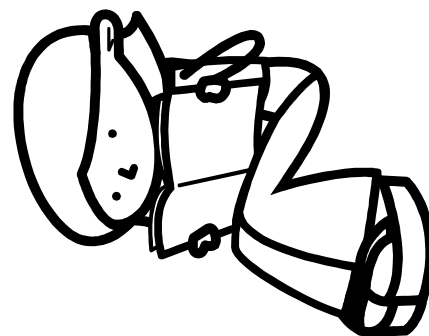
Reviewed by Mahak L.

Gemma Whiting is a Gemini. She has a perfect life until her parents send her to boarding school. When Gemma gets there she is stuck with a shy, mousy roommate and the school bully is out to get her. Her life looks horrible until she is chosen to be the month's zodiac girl. This means Gemma will get personal guidance from the planets themselves! Will the planets help her with her problems or change her life forever?

This is a great book. It's part of a series, but it doesn't matter which book you read first because they are all different stories. The author gives enough detail and information so you can easily picture what is happening. Some of the problems Gemma faces are problems we face in our everyday lives. At the end I learned that you should show who you really are for people to like you. This is a book for readers who like a little bit of suspense with humor. I also recommend this book to teens who are interested in horoscopes. (Youth Series Paperback ZODIAC GIRLS)



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