



OHDS Literary Magazine

Spring 2011

Volume I

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Welcome to Our First Issue!

You hold in your hands the first issue of the Oakland Hebrew Day School Literary Magazine! We are proud to publish this collection of writing by fifth through eighth grade students. This Literary Magazine is a sample of the students' writing in Hebrew and English in a variety of genres. Writers are also readers, and much of the magazine is made up of reviews of books that students read throughout the year. Some of the reviews were previously published on *Bloggers' Society*, the middle school students' book review blog. As bloggers, students reviewed books they read and commented on other students' reviews.

Thank You!

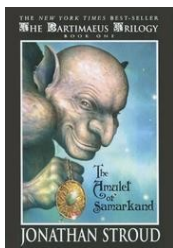
The members of the middle school Literary Magazine elective class, Polina Dorfman-Su, Tessa Zitter, Josh Zak, and Roni Greenberg (left to right, below) devoted eight Wednesday elective periods to culling through the writing of their peers, selecting pieces, and editing them in preparation for publication. They also choose the layout, fonts, and color scheme for the journal. Their creativity and eagerness to try something new helped push this project forward. Thanks also to Laurie Jagoda, Chris Ashley, Robin Gluck and Anne Branch for guiding the creation of the magazine.

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Fantasy

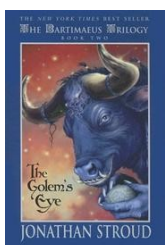


The Amulet of Samarkand, by Jonathon Stroud, is a fantasy novel set in an alternate universe in 20th century England, where magic exists and magicians are the world's leaders. But this is not the magic of the fairy tales, nor the kind of old magicians of bedtime stories. These magicians have had power for too long and continuously don't use it wisely. The magic is not of the magicians, but of those whom they summon, the "Demons" as they are called. These demons have magic but unfortunately don't want to be summoned, so they do anything in their power to get rid of the magicians who summon them. However, even though the magicians cannot harm humans with their magic, they can force the "Demons" to perform magic on humans.

One of the main themes that *The Amulet of Samarkand* demonstrates is patience and that if you wait patiently and work hard you will achieve your goal.

I thought that *The Amulet of Samarkand* was well written. I especially liked how Jonathon Stroud perceived magic and how it worked. I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a fast-paced, magical, medium-length fantasy novel.

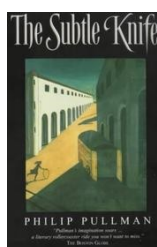
-Meka Greenwald, 7th Grade



The Golem's Eye, by Jonathan Stroud, is the sequel to *The Amulet of Samarkand*. To get the setting of the book, read Meka's review of *The Amulet of Samarkand*. After doing what he did in *The Amulet of Samarkand* (which I won't spoil), Nathaniel has been given a job in the government to stop a group of rebellious commoners (non-magicians) known as the Resistance. While trying to do this, he also has to stop an unknown being that is destroying shops in London and killing everything that tries to stop it, humans and demons alike. The book switches between three different points of view: third-person of Nathaniel, first-person of his "djinni," Bartimeaus, and third-person of Kitty, a member of the Resistance.

This book is very well written and hard to put down, even though the author doesn't make many cliff-hangers. I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys fantasy.

-Josh Zak, 7th Grade



The Subtle Knife, by Philip Pullman, takes place in a dark world where there aren't any adults because of the specters. The specters are spectral creatures that feed on consciousness, but only the consciousnesses of adults. The main characters are a young boy named Will and a young girl named Lyra. The story starts in another world with Will. Will finds a passageway into the world with the specters (Cittagazze) and gets a knife that can cut through the worlds. In Cittagazze, Will meets Lyra. Lyra has a device that she can ask questions of and it will give her the truthful answer. Her device tells her to help Will seek out his father, who has disappeared. Their journey through worlds and meet a lot of people.

"Put your mind at the very tip of the knife." This is a quote from the person who had the knife before Will is teaching him how to use it. This is important because the person who had the knife before Will is giving him a really powerful piece of information and powerful object.

I recommend this book to anyone who likes adventure and fantasy, but don't forget to read the book before it, *The Golden Compass*.

-Zev Bennett, 6th grade



Magyk, by Angie Sage, is the first book in the "Septimus Heap" series. In this story, there is a kingdom with wizards in the midst of everyone, including a huge family called the Heaps. The Heaps' seventh son, Septimus, supposedly died when he was born, but did he? At the same time that day, his father, Silas Heap, found a baby girl in the snow named Jenna. Who is she really? And what happened to Septimus the day he was born? Who is Jenna's

More Fantasy

real family? Why is everyone trying to kill the Heaps? To find out the answers to these questions, they must find out the truth. More importantly, they must stay together.

-Adira Tharan, 5th grade



In *Eragon*, by Christopher Paolini, a normal 15 year old boy named Eragon stumbles upon a dragon egg in this first book of the “Inheritance” trilogy. He and his dragon, Saphira, travel to the Varden (organization against evil). In the second book, *Eldest*, Eragon and Saphira must travel to the elven capital Ellesmera where they will train. Eragon and his elf and dwarf friends Arya and Orick travel to Ellesmera. While there, Eragon and Saphira have a short amount of time to train. Eragon is troubled by a back injury so his training is slowed down. Eragon and Saphira do not get to finish their training when they are called back to the Varden. The Varden are engaged in a battle with the empire. Will they win?

Eragon learns lots of new magic in this book. The author’s writing style is so intriguing, it is hard just for people to imagine it. This is a very well written book and I recommend it to everyone.

-Ami Stein, 6th grade



The Lost Hero is the first book in Rick Riordan’s “The Heroes of Olympus” series. This fantasy story is set in many places in the U.S. It starts when a boy named Jason wakes up on a bus going on a field trip at his school but the catch is that Jason cannot remember any of his

life before he woke up on that bus. As it turns out, he has a best friend named Leo and a girlfriend named Piper. They are sent to Camp Half-Blood, a camp for children who are half-human, half-god, where they meet Annabeth, Drew, and a whole lot of other people. Piper, Leo, and Jason are sent on a quest to save Queen Hera who is trapped. On the quest, things start to get clearer in Jason’s head.

My favorite character is Jason because he is so collected and he knows how to improvise. I would recommend this book to people who like Greek mythology and science fiction, mixed together into a modern setting. Also, I recommend it if you have read any of the Percy Jackson books and liked them, but if you haven’t, read them first to understand this book better.

-Tessa Zitter, 6th grade



Hero, by Mike Lupica, is an adventure story about a boy named Zach Harriman, set in present-day New York City. When Zach’s father dies in a mysterious plane crash, he learns secrets about his father... and himself. Suddenly, he is being stretched in so many different directions. Two people start telling him about his powers: his beloved Uncle John, and a mysterious man who seems to know more about his powers than anyone else. This struggle leaves Zach more confused than ever and wishing that his Dad was around to show him what to do. When Zach saves the life of an important political figure, he learns that the best person to trust is himself.

This book is a great read, and it teaches us to believe in ourselves. It is full of action and surprises from cover to cover. *Hero* is a captivating story that will keep you up all night reading.

-Molly Werthan, 7th Grade

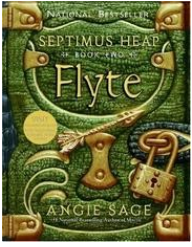


Time Cat, by Lloyd Alexander, is a story about a boy named Jason and his cat Gareth who travel through time. Wherever they go, cats are in the story. The cats are loved, used as gods or feared. Jason will never forget the nine adventures they have together.

The story is interesting because the cat can talk and travel through time. I recommend this story to people who like to read about talking animals.

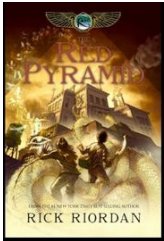
-Neva Rubenstein, 5th grade

Even More Fantasy



Flyte, by Angie Sage, is the second book in the “Septimus Heap” adventure series. It has been a year since Septimus discovered his real family, the Heaps. As apprentice to Extra Ordinary Wizard Marcia Overstand, he is learning conjurations, charms, and other magyk. Jenna is adapting to life as a Princess and Jenna is also looking forward to her midsummer visit to the dragon boat. The dragon boat is a dragon that transformed herself into a boat for her master. For some reason, Simon Septimus’s older brother gets jealous of Septimus’s apprenticeship with Marcia and gets himself a mentor. His mentor tells him to capture Jenna and he succeeds. Septimus must get her back before it is too late. If you love fantasy and adventure, then this is the book for you.

-Celia Haber, 5th grade



The Red Pyramid, by Rick Riordan, is an absolutely fabulous book. This book is about the Egyptian deities and Egyptian magicians. This book is great because it explains the way the Egyptians worshiped their gods, while still being a good book and interesting. The two

main characters are Carter and Sadie, siblings who were separated when their mother died in a terrible accident. Their mother’s parents claimed custody of Sadie and took it to court where they won the trial. Carter got to travel with their dad, who is an Egyptologist and archeologist. Carter and their father only get to visit Sadie, who lives in England, twice a year, and this Christmas is not going to be your average Christmas. A mysterious man comes and confronts their dad, saying that he “should not go through with it” and something about the “per ankh.” Their dad then has an appointment at the British Museum to look at the Rosetta Stone. On their way, they see two oddly dressed people holding long curved sticks. Once they

This book was a great read and I could not put it down.

READ IT!!!

get to the museum, their dad takes out a curved stick just like the strange people had been holding, and then he blows up the Rosetta Stone.

To find out how they defeat Set the fiery man, discover who they truly are, test their magical abilities, and revisit who their true enemy is, read the book.

I recommend this book to anybody who liked the “Percy Jackson” series or *The Lost Hero*. This book is along the same premise as both of those series but instead of Greek or Roman gods, it’s Egyptian. This book was a great read and I could not put it down.

READ IT!!!

-Roni Greenberg, 7th Grade

Please Forgive Me

To Jake, my brother

I wish I could spend more time with you
Like that time where we played card games all day
And watched movies side by side
That was a perfect day
Everything silent
No one was home
But we were having more fun and they would never know

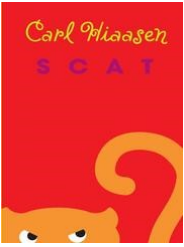
When you came home from school one day
I finally realized how old you were.
You were growing a moustache
Eyes filled with dare.

I wish I had spent more time with you
While we still could.
When you still would
Agree to be closest to me and not brother E.

And now you’re all old, please forgive me, I love you forever
You’re the best brother ever.
Maybe we will be closer when I am old too.

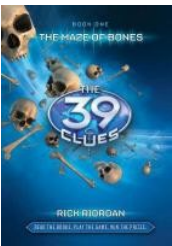
-Zoe Levin, 5th Grade

Mystery



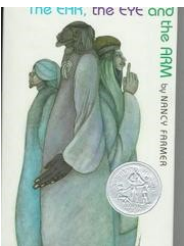
Scat, by Carl Hiaasen, is a mystery about three kids: Nick, Marta and Smoke. Their teacher, Bunny Starch, goes missing during a school field trip to Black Vine Swamp. They think Smoke, the class trouble maker, is involved. He is, but not in the way they think. This book has a bit of friendship, a bit of adventure and last, but not least, bit of love. This book takes about 3-5 days to read (depending on the reader). I recommend this book to people who love a mystery.

-Chaya Daffner, 5th grade



The Maze of Bones, by Rick Riordan, is the first book in the “39 Clues” mystery series. In this book, two orphans, Amy and Dan, are at their grandmother Grace’s funeral when Grace’s lawyer, Mr. McIntyre, announces that everyone should go into the house where they will be reading the will. They learn that their family is the most important in the whole world. They also learn that there is a contest and the winner will be the most powerful person on earth. However, winning will not come easy. Everyone in the room is given a choice, a million dollars or 1 out of the 39 clues. Which one will Amy and Dan choose? If they choose the clue, where will they go first? Read this book to find out. I think this is a good book for grades 4-6.

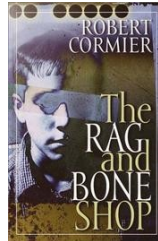
-Elie Singer, 5th grade



In **The Ear, the Eye and the Arm**, by Nancy Farmer, General Matsika’s three children are longing for adventure. Adventure is hard to get when your father never lets you out of the house. But when they finally get the chance, more than they can handle is what they find in the dangerous streets of Zimbabwe. The two Matsika parents are forced to hire the Ear, the Eye and the Arm, Zimbabwe's best (and possibly only!) detectives. The three detectives and the children face their deaths as they encounter things never

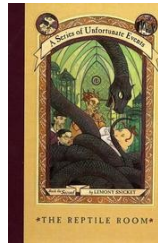
seen before. Will the two threesomes do... or die? This book is full of danger and adventure. I recommend it to people who like excitement.

-Gavriella Klein, 5th Grade



The Rag and Bone Shop, by Robert Cormier, is a story about 12 year old Jason who everyone thinks killed an 8 year old girl. People think Jason killed her because he was the last person to see her. An interrogator is hired to get a confession from Jason. Is Jason the killer? The truth is bound to come out. I thought this book was okay, but you might think differently. I recommend this book to anyone who likes murder mysteries.

-Jacob Rubenstein, 5th grade



The Reptile Room by Lemony Snicket is a book about three very rich orphans called Violet, Klaus and Sunny Baudelaire. The orphans’ parents were killed in a fire, so they need a new legal guardian. A man named Dr. Montgomery decides to adopt them. He is a genius with snakes, and one day he decides he needs an assistant. The assistant’s name is Stefano, but he is actually known as Count Olaf, a horrible man who will do anything to steal the orphans’ money. Count Olaf does some pretty horrible things to get the orphan’s money, but not all actually work.

The two main themes of this book are hope and teamwork. The orphans never give up and always worked together to prevent Count Olaf’s plans. I thought *The Reptile Room* was a really good book. The plot is unusual and sometimes I find that a good thing about a book. I like the ideas the author had and the way he put them in the book. I recommend this book to any type of reader because the book can’t really be classified in any one section. It is a mystery book, a relationship book, a survival book and a strategy book.

Read *The Reptile Room* to find out if Count Olaf gets the Baudelaire orphans’ money.

-Yehudah Tor, 7th Grade

Narrator Mix-ups

Stories can be told from a completely different point of view. Read how the tree *really* felt about the boy in *The Giving Tree* and much more, in these entertaining retellings of famous stories.

"הבית שלי זה השריון שלי", והוא הוציא לאט לאט משחק מחשב מהשריון שלו. שמחתי מאד וחיבקתי אותו. (אביגיל, כיתה ז' מערב)

-Avigayil Edelman, 7th Grade

הכבשה שבאה לארוחת ערב

The Sheep That Came to Dinner
by Steve Smallman



פעם אחת הלכתי ביער, והיה לי קר מאד. פתאום ראיתי

בית. הלכתי לבית ודפקתי על הדלת. זאב נחמד פתח את הדלת. הוא לקח אותי לשבת ליד האש. הייתי רעבה, והוא נתן לי גזר. אחר כך התחלתי לשהק. הזאב הרים אותי וזרק אותי באוויר, אפילו הפך אותי עד שהפסקתי לשהק. אחר כך הוא שם אותי על הכתף שלו וישנתי. כשקמתי נתתי לו נשיקה. הוא נתן לי בגדים וביקש ממני ללכת. היה קר מאד בחוץ וחושך, לכן חזרתי לבית של הזאב. הוא לא היה שם. נכנסתי לבד וישבתי ליד האש. אחרי כמה דקות זאבי בא והוא אמר לי שהוא לא אוכל אותי, אלא אוכל איתי ארוחת ערב. ישבנו לשולחן ואכלנו מרק ירקות. זאבי בביק הוא באמת זאב נחמד. (שמואל ג. כיתה ז' מזרח)

-Sam Gessow, 7th Grade

מר חוטם

Mr. Nosey by Roger Hargreaves



השם שלי מר חוטם, ואני אוהב לרגל אחרי כל האנשים. אני מציץ בחלונות של השכנים שלי ומקשיב לאנשים

שמדברים. אני ירוק ויש לי אף גדול מאד. יום אחד הלכתי לבית של אמא ואבא שלי. כשנכנסתי הם הפסיקו לדבר. כיוון שאני סקרן וצריך לדעת כל מה שהאנשים עושים או מדברים, הלכתי למשרד של אמא שלי, אחרי שההורים שלי הלכו לישון, שם ראיתי נייר על השולחן. קראתי אותו: "בואו ליום הולדת של בני, זו הפתעה! לא לגלות". מאז למדתי שאני לא רוצה לדעת יותר מדי מה אנשים עושים או מדברים. (אליענה, כיתה ז' מזרח)

-Eliana Carasso, 7th Grade

המתנה של הצב

The Gift of the Turtle

by Sigal Adler



שלום, אני מת על היום הזה!!! אתם בטח שואלים למה. כי זה יום ההולדת שלי. אמרתי ליועץ שלי לכתוב הזמנה לכל החיות לבוא לארמון שלי. כולם באו עם מתנות יפות. הצב אפילו אמר לי שהוא עזב את הבית יומיים לפני המסיבה כדי לחגוג איתי. המסיבה הייתה נהדרת. כולם הביאו לי מתנות יפות. רק הצב בא אלי וביקש סליחה "שכחתי את המתנה שלי בבית". כעסתי מאד עליו וצעקתי. אחרי שנרגעתי, הצב אמר בקול שקט.

More Mix-ups

לא רצה לשחק, הוא רצה כסף. נתתי לו את התפוחים שלי למכור והייתי שמח. הילד הלך ולא שב הרבה זמן. יום אחד אחרי הרבה זמן הוא שב. הוא לא רצה לשחק. הוא רצה בית. אז נתתי לו את הענפים שלי לבנות בית, והייתי שמח. אחרי הרבה זמן הוא בא שוב. הפעם הוא רצה סירה. נתתי לו את הגזע שלי והייתי שמח. אחרי הרבה זמן הוא בא שוב לא היה לי מה לתת לו, והוא לא רצה כבר כלום רק לשבת ולנוח עלי. הייתי שמח. (אלי ש. כיתה ז' מזרח).

-Sarah Engel, 7th Grade

This Is Just to Say

To my family, from Milo

I'm sorry I ate the blueberry pie you were saving for our company.
(But not really)

I'm sorry I got blue paw prints on the white table cloth.
(But not really)

I'm sorry I stole the steak off the barbecue and hid it...somewhere.
(But not really)

I'm sorry for all the accidents I've had on the rug.
(But not really)

I'm sorry I died while you were away on vacation and I didn't get to say goodbye to you.
(Really)

-Jordan Carey, 5th Grade

בייגלה

Pretzel by Margaret Rey



יום אחד כלב תחש ארוך ארוך ארוך עבר ברחוב שלי. שמעתי שקוראים לו בייגלה, כי הוא כל כך ארוך. הוא התאהב בי כשהוא ראה אותי, אבל איך אני יכולה לאהוב כלב תחש שכל כך ארוך? כל יום הוא נתן לי מתנות טובות. פעם הוא נתן לי עצם ואפילו ביקש ממני להתחתן איתו. בוודאי שאני לא הסכמתי. יום אחד בייגלה נתן לי כדור יפה שהוא קיבל ליום ההולדת שלו. אהבתי את הכדור ושיחקתי בו הרבה, אבל יום אחד הכדור התגלגל לבור וגם אני התגלגלתי עם הכדור לבור ונפלתי. הבור היה כל כך עמוק, ואני לא ידעתי אם אני אחייה. בכיתי הרבה מאד. פתאום ראיתי את הפנים של בייגלה למעלה. הוא הוציא אותי מהבור, כי הוא כל כך ארוך. אז הבנתי שאני בעצם אוהבת את בייגלה הרבה!!! ולא רק בגלל שהוא כל כך ארוך. התחתנו!!! ויש לנו היום חמישה גורי כלב תחש שלומדים בבית ספר.
(עליזה ז. כיתה ז' מערב)

-Ali Zak, 7th Grade

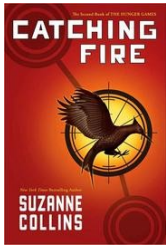
העץ הנדיב

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein



יום אחד ילד קטן בא ליער שלי. זה היה נראה שהוא אוהב לשחק עם אילנות. ואז ראיתי שהוא בא אלי. כל כך שמחתי. הוא שיחק עם העלים שלי והענפים שלי, והייתי מאד שמח. הילד בא כל יום לשחק איתי. אבל הילד גדל והוא לא בא הרבה זמן. אחרי ימים רבים ראיתי אותו שוב. הוא

Other Worlds



Catching Fire, by Suzanne Collins, is the second book in the “Hunger Games” series. After being in the Hunger Games, a horrible, barbaric game in which you fight to the death, once, Katniss encounters the problem of the Quarter Quell. The Quarter Quell occurs every 25 years. In it, the regular Hunger Games continue, but with a special twist. This time, the twist is that the tributes (the people who go in the Hunger Games) are chosen from the remaining pool of victors (the people who won the Hunger Games). Only one boy and one girl may enter from every district. Katniss was the only girl victor from her district, which could only mean one thing: she

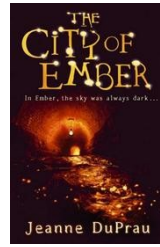
Did they choose this twist purposefully? Who was she going to protect, herself, or Peeta?

was going back into the Hunger Games. After a major session of screaming and kicking, Katniss is picked up to go to the Games. Even with the comfort of her fake “loved one,” Peeta, Katniss still can’t put her mind to it. Did they choose this twist purposefully? Who was she going to protect, herself, or Peeta? After a while and a little talking with their mentor, Haymitch, they decide that Peeta will live, meaning Katniss will have to die, which she was completely OK with, of course. After entering the Hunger Games, Katniss is quick to ally with a man from District 4, Finnick Odair. Finnick saves Peeta’s life during several encounters, earning Katniss’s trust. During the time they spend in the arena they make several discoveries about the arena, as well as about loyalty, cleverness, and of course, friendship.

I recommend this book to people who enjoy action-filled adventure stories with a little unexpected twist at the end.

-Anna Schacker, 6th grade

The City of Ember, by Jeanne DuPrau, is a book about a girl named Lina Mayfleet, a boy named Doon Harrow, and Lina’s little sister. In the beginning, Lina and Doon are assigned jobs. Lina becomes a pipe worker, which is not what she wanted.



She wanted to be a messenger, because she likes to run around the whole city. Doon at that time got to be a messenger, but he wanted to be in the pipe works instead of being messenger, so he traded with Lina.

The book is basically about an underground city that can’t see the sun, so instead they have many, many lights on the top, which is kind of a ceiling. The lights work by a huge generator that is in the underground, which is by the pipe works, so if needed, Doon could work there to fix something. In the book, Lina, Doon, and Lina’s little sister work through all these dangers, secrets, and hiding to get out of this underground world. In the city of Ember, whoever is trying to get out of there is punished, or even killed. Happily, they were able to come out with each other’s help.

I recommend this book to anyone, especially to people who love adventures. I really enjoyed this book because it was very interesting, and it made me want to keep on reading it until I finished the whole book.

-Polina Dorfman-Su, 6th grade



Scott Westerfeld’s novel *Pretties*, a sequel to the book *Uglies*, continues Tally’s journey through life. In *Uglies*, at the age of sixteen every person undergoes an operation which boosts their immune system while giving them “pretty” faces. They are also given brain lesions which make them peaceful and compliant; these lesions also make it hard to forget the times before the age of sixteen. The times before the operation, the children are considered ugly. Because of this, they are even called “Uglies.” In Scott Westerfeld’s sequel, the main character, Tally, has undergone the operation and is now considered “pretty.” Now she supposedly has everything she’s ever wanted, or does she?

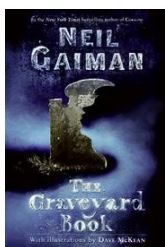
Pretties is a science fiction novel set sometime in the future. This book tells about life after our civilization is destroyed from the author’s perspec-

Other Worlds

tive. *Pretties* is written to show the reader that life as a “pretty” may not be as it seems. The author describes how, in a culture of being pretty, some people may try to escape.

As I read *Pretties*, I wasn’t able to stop, and as I read on, it became even more and more interesting and gripping. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and would recommend it for people thirteen and up.

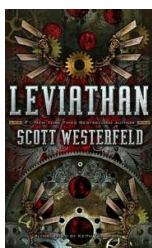
-Shira Tikofsky, 8th Grade



The Graveyard Book, by Neil Gaiman, is a well-written masterpiece. It is about a boy whose family is murdered. He, a toddler, walked himself to the graveyard where a kindly childless ghost, Mrs. Owens finds and adopts him. The boy is named Nobody Owens. (Bod for short.) He is alive yet can do many of the things that the dead can do. His childhood wanderings include a trip to the cave of the Indigo Man and a near death experience on the outskirts of Ghulheim. Bod also dances the Macabre, a dance that the living and the dead dance together.

I would recommend this book to people who like half-dead fantasy with pretty good climaxes.

-Liberty Shubert, 6th grade



Leviathan, by Scott Westerfeld, is a steam-punk novel set in World War I. There are two main characters, Aleksander Ferdinand and Deryn Sharp. Alek, the prince of Austria-Hungary, has just been notified that his parents have been killed. On the run, he is hunted by Germans who want to capture him. Just when he and his crew reach safety in the Alps of Switzerland, a British blimp falls near them, just attacked by the Germans as well.

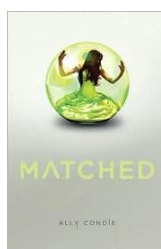
Deryn is a common girl living in Britain who joins the Air Service. Once they pick up a very important doctor, the ship she is working on, the *Leviathan*, is headed to Constantinople. On the way there, they are intercepted by Germans. With their wounded airship, they fall into the Alps of Switzer-

land.

Alek and Deryn meet in the Alps and become good friends. Of course, Alek thinks Deryn is actually Dylan, a boy. They go on many adventures together while running away from the Germans and trying to stop the war.

I recommend this book to anyone who likes adventure, history, and fiction all in one book.

-Zeppora Zangwill, 7th Grade



Matched, by Ally Condie, is about a dystopian “utopia” called the Society, in which all the important decisions of your life are made for you. The book starts out with the main character, seventeen year old Cassia Reyes, on her way to the “Match Banquet,” which is where the very important decision of who she will marry, which was made by someone else, is told to her. It turns out that she is Matched with Xander, her neighbor, classmate, and very close friend. They are both very happy, and all is well... until Cassia puts her DataCard for Xander into the port. When she does, a picture of him appears on the screen like it is supposed to. Suddenly, the screen changes to a picture of another boy, also from her street, and also her classmate. This boy’s name is Ky. Cassia had known Ky for several years, ever since he moved to her town, but she had never really noticed him until then. After this, she finds that she and Ky were put in the same hiking group. They go through many difficult decisions, and their relationship becomes closer. Finally, near the end of the book, Ky is taken away to fight a war. Later, Cassia finds out that their entire relationship was orchestrated, and that Ky’s picture was actually meant to show up on the port. Although Ky really did love her, they would never have fallen in love if the DataCard hadn’t shown his face and gotten her thinking more about him. At the very end of the book, she sets off on a journey to find Ky.

-Sol Zitter, 7th Grade

Judaic Fiction

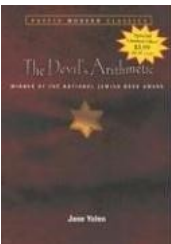


The Book Thief is a novel by Markus Zusak set in the time of World War II. This story is told from the Angel of Death's point of view. The book begins with a scene on a train where a mother, a brother, and a sister are traveling. During their travels, the boy dies and they stop at the next stop to bury their brother. At the cemetery, the sister, Liesel, steals her first book, *The Gravedigger's Handbook*. This is the beginning of Liesel's book stealing. She steals books throughout the story, trying to save them from the Nazi book burning. The Angel of Death watches her. When the Angel is not watching her, he is taking the souls of the dead.

I think this book was overall a very interesting book. The author does a very good job of describing the scenes and gives a very good picture of Germany during the war. I think he could have done better with the plot, because there wasn't really a problem in the story.

This quote comes from a part of a book in which Liesel has nightmares about her family: "Immediately her brother was next to her. He whispered for her to stop, but he, too, was dead, and not worth listening to. He died in a train. They buried him in the snow." I think this was a main point in the story because it represents the hardships. There are many hardships in the story.

-Colman Adams, 6th grade



The Devil's Arithmetic, by Jane Yolen, is a very interesting book. It is about a girl named Hannah who goes to a seder, and when she opens the door for Eliyahu Hanavi, something happens: she goes back in time to the Holocaust.

Hannah makes some friends there, but it is still torture. After a while, Hannah's friend Rivka has to die in an oven. But right before Rivka goes in the oven, Hannah snatches the kerchief off Rivka's head and tells her to run away. Right then Hannah goes forward in time and back to the seder. But all of this just happened in seconds. Nobody

knew that Hannah went back in time and experienced the Holocaust for quite a while.

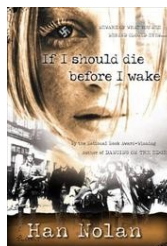
This book is special because it has three genres, so it is a book for everyone. This is one of my favorite Holocaust books.

-Daniel Atias, 7th Grade



Behind the Bedroom Wall, by Laura Williams, is a book that takes place during the Holocaust. Korina Rehme, a German girl, is a busy member of Jungmadel. Jungmadel is a group where German children get together and share their beliefs about Hitler. Korina has always thought her parents were loyal Germans, but she soon finds out the truth. It starts to get dangerous and it is hard to tell whom to trust. This book is excellent. It has a little of everything. There are many nail biting moments when no one knows what is coming next. I recommend this book to grades 3-6. It is a quick read but still very exciting.

-Mira Kittner, 5th Grade



If I Should Die Before I Wake, by Han Nolan, is the story of Hilary, a neo-Nazi, who gets into a serious motorcycle accident. While Hilary is drifting back and forth between dying and living, she is seeing visions of another girl's life. It is the life of Chana, a girl in the Holocaust. Hilary sees Chana's father being shot by Nazis and not long afterward her family is sent to the Lodz Ghetto. While in the ghetto, Chana's older brother gets word that the Nazis are coming to take the Jews to concentration camps. Chana's little sister is sent to live with a different family in hopes that she will survive.

I thought this book was a very good Holocaust story. It also showed you that not all hatred for Jews has gone away.

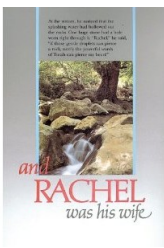
When Hilary awakens from her coma, she sees a woman watching over her and she realizes that that woman is Chana's little sister who had been sent

Judaic Fiction

away during the Holocaust. At first, Hilary is reluctant to tell people what she has seen because she feels that no one will believe her. But being a neo-Nazi makes her story more powerful. Hilary is changed by this experience and becomes a speaker for Jewish rights.

I thought this book was a very good Holocaust story. It also showed you that not all hatred for Jews has gone away.

-Irene Partsuf, 5th grade



And Rachel Was His Wife, by Marsi Tabak, is a historical fiction novel set in Israel under Roman rule. It is written as a journal following the life of a girl, Leah, and her friend, Rachel, who eventually becomes the wife of the famous Rabbi Akiva. The book begins with their life as teenagers and goes through their weddings, ending when Rachel is dead and Leah is an old woman. The story of Rachel and Akiva is very inspirational and has been told many times throughout the ages.

Rachel was the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Israel, Kalba Savua. Despite her father's discouragement, Rachel fell in love with Akiva, a poor, ignorant shepherd who was over forty years old. The problem was, though, that Rachel wanted a learned husband, but Akiva did not want to learn. He believed that the sages were wasting time with their endless arguments and study. One day, while Akiva was walking along a stream, he saw a rock that had a hole worn through it at the bottom of a waterfall. He asked a nearby farmer, "How did a hole get worn through this rock?" The farmer answered that it was worn by the drops of water from the waterfall. Akiva ran to Rachel and said, "If gentle drops of water can pierce this rock, then surely the great words of the Torah can pierce my heart." And so they were married.

"If gentle drops of water can pierce this rock, then surely the great words of the Torah can pierce my heart."

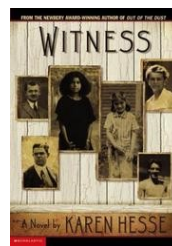
Before reading the book, I was expecting *And Rachel Was His Wife* to be a boring Judaic Studies book, as some are, but it was a **very** good book and I even read it again after I finished it to get more details. I recommend it to anybody who enjoys historical fiction or Jewish history. It is also good background for studying historical events that happened at the time. I would also like to note that this is Morah Bethany's favorite book. The book also includes many references to stories from the Mishnah and Talmud, as well as many famous rabbinical sages.

-Louis Teitelbaum, 7th Grade



Sheltering Rebecca, by Mary Baylis-White, is about two girls named Rebecca and Lily. Rebecca and Lily are very different people. Rebecca doesn't know English and is shy. She was sent to New York from the Holocaust. Lily is a very outgoing, the best behaved and the best at English in her class. The day Rebecca arrives at school; their teacher sits her down next to Lily's desk. The teacher says to Lily, "You are going to be responsible for Rebecca. She doesn't know much English and she is shy and very sad. I'm trusting you to take care of her." After weeks and years, Rebecca knows English. Lily and Rebecca become best friends and they tell each other secrets. What secrets? Read the book to find out. I recommend this book to people who love finding out secrets and telling them.

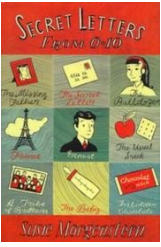
-Maytal Bach, 5th Grade



Witness, by Karen Hesse, is about a community in Vermont in 1924. The Ku Klux Klan moves in to the town. This is not good for the main characters, Leanora a 12-year-old African American girl and Esther, a 6-year-old Jewish girl. I recommend this book to 5th-8th grade. This is a fast but meaningful read.

-Sara Carasso, 5th Grade

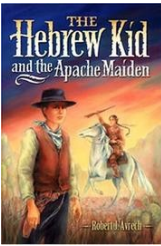
Judaic Fiction



In *Secret Letters From 0 to 10*, by Susie Morgenstern, Ernest, a 10-year-old boy in a humdrum, colorless life, doesn't know what to do with himself. Every day is the same. Then one day, a ray of sunshine finds Ernest's dull gray life. The new girl, Victoria, full of life and excitement, asks Ernest to carry her books for her. The next thing Ernest knows, his life is full of happiness. Each day is different, more exciting than the last. Now Ernest begins to realize that life can hold love, hope, friendship, and adventure.

This book is good for everyone. It has a whole different variety of things: fun, adventure, love, learning, and especially peace. Recommended for everyone – fantastic!

-Hannah Lyon, 5th Grade



In *The Hebrew Kid and the Apache Maiden*, Robert J. Avrech pinned me and never let go. His characters really seemed to represent myself to me. One of the reasons why is that we both live in far out places. He is traveling with his family in the Arizona desert on his father's long search for the Lamed Vavniks. For me, I live in Berkeley, about the most far out place you can get. *The Hebrew Kid and the Apache Maiden* is a suspenseful love story about many cultures coming together.

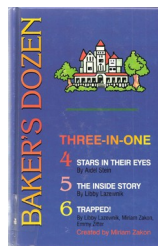
The main character is Ariel, a studious boy who hopes to take after his father, a rabbi. On the family's journey, they run into an Indian chief and his young sister, Lozen. They are extremely fierce warriors known to stop at nothing. When Ariel's dad heals the successor to the chief, Ariel becomes great friends with Lozen. Between Talmud at midnight and their success in war, they become bonded with each other and become familiar with each other's ways. The family builds unique relationships with Christians, cowboys, and Native Ameri-

In *The Hebrew Kid and the Apache Maiden*, Robert J. Avrech pinned me and never let go.

cans, getting different ends of the spectrum.

I think that Avrech's main point is that no matter who you meet, you still have to treat everyone from every background with respect, even if you have no similar beliefs. My connection to the character Ariel made me wonder if I learned the same mitzvah of Dan L'chaf Z'chut as he did. And I hope that by reading this book, other people's awareness will be raised, too.

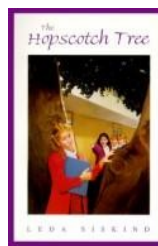
-Yonim Schweig, 6th grade



In *Stars in Their Eyes*, part of the "Bakers Dozen" series by Aidel Stein, there are many events happening. Two of the children from the Baker Family, Moishe and Chezky, are going from house to house trying to sell raffle tickets. The oldest son has the chicken pox

and spreads it to his little sister. The quadruplets are on a mission to go to the famous singer Avi Shosham's concert but the tickets are all sold out. Fortunately, the quadruplets are in luck. Ivy, a new girl in their class, is cousins with Avi Shosham and the girls decide to be friends with her to get the tickets. Meanwhile, Moishy rejoins his choir and, to his surprise, they are performing with Avi Shoshim, so all the family members get free tickets. The quadruplets go to Ivy and explain everything. They had mixed feeling about their actions and they apologize. I recommend this story to people who like busy books.

-Hodayah Miller, 5th grade



In *The Hopscotch Tree*, by Leda Siskind, Edith Gold is the only Jewish ten-year-old girl in her class. Edith is having a hard time fitting in at her new school. Every day after school, Edith gets bullied by Zandra Kott. Edith always hangs around the hopscotch tree, in her head asking the tree what to do. When Edith finds out a secret about Zandra, she wonders what she should do. This is a very short read – about 2 nights.

-Daniella Engel, 5th Grade

Confession of a Closet Catholic, by Sarah Littman, is about a girl named Justine. She is confused about her religion, “Judaism.” Part of her family is religious, but the rest are not. She is confused about which direction to choose, so she takes after her best friend and becomes Catholic. She starts to become a “closet Catholic” by doing things like making confessions in her closet with a teddy bear. She is very into religion, but when she brings up Judaism, her parents tell her not to be “too Jewish.” Her grandmother tells her to do what is right. What will she do?

This book is realistic fiction, which means it could happen in real life. I recommend this book to 4th – 6th graders.

-Naomi Moskowitz, 5th Grade



In **The Doll with the Yellow Star**, by Yona Zeldis McDonough, Claudine is forced to leave Paris because war is breaking out in France. She has to get used to being without her family. All she has is the doll her parents got her for her eighth birthday. However,

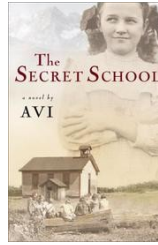
things that are lost are not lost forever.

I would recommend this book to people who like to read stories about the Holocaust – I thought that this book was amazing!

-Dora Greenwall, 5th Grade



A Fifth Grade Favorite



In **The Secret School**, by Avi, a girl named Ida Bidson wants to be a teacher when she grows up, but she has to finish eighth grade to go to high school and learn to teach. She is only fourteen when her teacher’s mom gets sick and her teacher has to go and take care of her.

Ida needs to take the test to go to high school, so she and the others decide to form a secret school and make Ida the teacher. All eight students in the little school agree to keep their “Secret School” a secret.

This story teaches people to believe in their dreams. Never give up on what you want to do!

This story took about two to three nights to read. This book is recommended for anyone in fifth grade.

-Bayla Jaffe, 5th Grade

I Am

I am caring and loving
I wonder if homeless people have food to eat
I hear people crying
I see homeless with no shoes on their feet
I want them to be loved and cared for
I am caring and loving

I pretend to be rich so I can give homeless people a lot of money
I feel that people care
I touch their cooled hand
I worry where they will sleep
I cry for them

I am caring and loving
I understand what I need to do to help them
I say, “Hey Dad, I need some money for that guy.”
I dream they will all have a place to sleep
I try to give money
I hope they get off the street
I am loving and caring

-Benyamin Helwani, 5th Grade

Sonnets

The Seventh Grade English classes wrote sonnets about S. E. Hinton's 1965 novel about conflict between gangs and society kids, *The Outsiders*. The sonnets are specifically modeled after William Shakespeare's Sonnet XVIII, which begins, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

Greasers and Soc's

Three brothers one short, one middle, one tall,
They attempt to avoid those that are curt.
In the same group, just being friends to all,
Protecting each other from getting hurt.

Darry and Soda go to work all day,
They work to get money for clothes and food.
Pony needs to learn and go all the way,
Not always in a very happy mood.

The Greasers are heroic and save lives,
They rumble with Soc's, who are so mean.
Greasers and Soc's, playing with sharp knives,
This is the sad life of a greaser teen.

Protecting Ponyboy and his friends from fighting,
When the fight is really so exciting

-Coby Stein

Sonnet

Ponyboy wasn't so very big and brave,
He worked so hard, yet still he had to pray.
His life was mysterious, it was a cave,
He was surrounded by things that wouldn't stay.

His brothers were tough, still they loved him
much,
He had his gang, they were brothers of strength.
They fought together and all that and such,
It's all he had, his parents were at length.

One day they killed a Soc, that changed them for
good;
They ran over the hill to hide a'way.
They saved kids in a burning house that stood,
They became heroes, and that did stay.

He was a good boy, and very glad,
In the end it did not turn out sad.

-Eva Adana

Wrong Side of the Tracks

Soc's and Greasers, they hate each other,
The wrong side of the tracks they think they're on,
Even though they're much like one another,
Both always trying to pull a con.

Darry is Ponyboy's oldest brother,
He wants to be a Soc, he hates Greasers.
I bet Soc's want to be the other,
Even though Greasers are lazy sleepers.

Maybe the middle is the place to be,
Nobody to fight with, so no battles;
No arguing, no fighting, you will see,
No one talking 'bout those normal tattles.

I'd be a Greaser, if I had to choose;
They fight for what they want, no way to lose.

-Hannah Elkins

Ponyboy and Johnny

Pony and Johnny were like brothers,
They had each other's backs, no matter what.
People look at them and think, "Just Greasers,"
But really, they are more complex than that.

They both have been mistreated by the world,
They always get made fun of, or worse, jumped.
Deep inside, their hearts are very unfurled,
But also, deep inside them, they feel dumped.

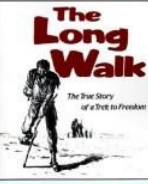
S. E. Hinton wrote this book at a time,
When people like Pony were mistreated;
Although they committed a bit of crime,
Inside their hearts, lots of love existed.

We don't know what comes next for Ponyboy;
All we can do is hope it will be a joy.

-Yehudah Tor

This Really Happened

Slavomir Rawicz



The Long Walk, by Slavomir Rawicz, is a memoir about his hardships in Russia and how he survived and escaped from one of the harshest Soviet prison camps. *The Long Walk* is set in the year 1941, in Moscow and Yakutsk, Russia. Slavomir Rawicz, the main character, is sent to

prison and wrongly accused of spying because he speaks Russian and lives near the Poland-Russia border. He is sent to many prisons and interrogated, but he never admits that he spied because he didn't. He is finally sentenced to 25 years in a Soviet labor camp. Then, with much deliberation and planning, he and some fellow prisoners escape the prison camp and take a long walk to freedom with many hardships along the way.

The Long Walk is a tale of hardships, adventure, and extreme survival.

The Long Walk is a tale of hardships, adventure, and extreme survival. I enjoyed it greatly, but it's hard to believe that it's true because of all the hardships along his journey to freedom. It also talks about historical Russia and the hardships and unfairness of that time, 1941.

In the foreword to the Polish edition of *The Long Walk*, Slavomir Rawicz wrote, "I hope *The Long Walk* will remain as a memorial to all those who live and die for freedom, and for all those who for many reasons could not speak for themselves. I had to tell my story as a warning to the living, and as a moral judgment for the greater good."

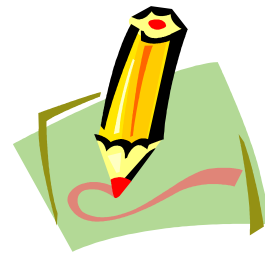
-Avi London-Wynne, 7th Grade



The Wave, by Todd Strasser, is a true story that happened in California in 1969. It is about a young history teacher who teaches the 12th grade in his school. When the class is studying World War II, they don't understand how it happened, how nobody tried to stop the Nazis. The teacher wanted to show the class how it worked and why nobody tried to stop the Nazis, so he created a

group called "The Wave." The group was about equality and how everybody is equal. Their motto was, "Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community, and Strength Through Action." Pretty soon the experiment gets out of control. Only two people in the school recognize what The Wave is. How will they stop it?

- Itamar Twito, 7th Grade



I Am

I am thoughtful and musical.
I wonder what it will feel like
when I am in the grave.
I hear the smooth way of the song.
I see the ways of the notes.
I want to make my friends laugh.
I am thoughtful and musical.

I pretend to be a rock star, head of the show.
I feel happy when my friends laugh.
I touch the musical notes.
I worry that I will lose my friends.
I cry when I get hurt.
I am thoughtful and musical.

I understand the way of the music.
I say, "Let's make peace."
I dream for everyone to be friends.
I try to solve situations.
I hope there will be no more war.
I am thoughtful and musical.

-Mya Elkins, 5th Grade

Making Decisions

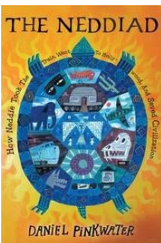


Where the Red Fern Grows, by Wilson Rawls, is an adventure story set in the Cherokee country and in the Ozarks during the 1950s. The main character in the book is Billy. At the beginning of the book, Billy is 10 years old. He has a lot of adventures and he hunts all over. At the end of the book, his dogs pass on and he decides not to get new dogs.

In *Where the Red Fern Grows*, Wilson Rawls is pressing in the fact that you should spend time with your dogs. He does an excellent job telling the story about a boy wanting dogs and then the bonding between dogs and owner. I think that if there were more people like Billy, there would be fewer dogs in animal shelters and pounds.

I think this book is great for children and adults. I recommend this book to anyone who likes adventure books.

-Aron Gellman, 7th Grade



I read *The Neddiad*, by Daniel Pinkwater, and I really liked it. It is about an 11 year old boy named Neddie, from Chicago. It takes place in the 1950's. The story starts off with Neddie telling his father that he wants to move to Los Angeles because of a restaurant shaped like a hat that he saw in a magazine. Then his dad tells him that they will move there, and their wild adventure begins. They ride a train to LA, but when they get off for a rest stop in Santa Fe, the train leaves without Neddie. A random Navaho shaman named Melvin gives him a valuable Indian turtle relic that is supposed to save the world from complete annihilation, but no one knows how. With the help of Seamus Finn and Yggdrasil Birninbaum, they get on the right track to saving civilization as we know it.

I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a nice humor-filled adventure.

-Ethan Rubinson, 7th Grade

That was Then, This is Now, by S.E. Hinton, is a



dramatic novel set in 1971. It's about two teenagers named Bryon and Mark. They have been as close as brothers for as long as they can remember; now things are changing. Bryon is growing up and thinking seriously about who he wants to be. Mark still just lives for the thrill of the moment. The two are growing apart – but holding on – until Bryon has to face a terrible decision, one that will change both of their lives forever.

The main theme of this book is making decisions. In the book there are many important decisions Bryon has to make, some are very influential. The story shows us that before we rush into doing something, we have to think about it.

I liked *That was Then This is Now* because it was so dramatic that I couldn't stop reading it. I enjoyed it because I liked to think what I would do if I were in their situation. I recommend the book to people who like intense and sad stories.

-Itamar Twito, 7th Grade

Tuck Everlasting, by Natalie Babbitt, is a fiction story set in the late 1880's that portrays real people who are faced with a very difficult situation. The Tucks, who accidentally stumble upon a spring in a wood, drink from it. This spring has the ability to give eternal life. The Tucks don't realize at first what they drank, but as time goes by they soon become aware

that they are not aging and that they don't seem to get hurt or harmed in any way. They travel around quietly and do things in secret as not to draw too much attention to themselves. Winnie Foster, a young girl, stumbles upon Jesse Tuck, the youngest son in the family, drinking from the spring and asks for some. The Tucks then kidnap her because she found out the secret of the magic spring, and the Tucks don't want her to tell anybody about it. At first, Winnie is scared. Then, she grows very fond of the Tucks. The Tuck family and Winnie are faced with a villain who tries to steal the secret of eternal



Making Decisions

life for himself.

I believe that Natalie Babbitt was trying to show that eternal life may not always be a good thing. Even though it may be something that one desires, it is a curse. *Tuck Everlasting* was inspirational; all that this poor family wanted was to be normal, to live like everybody and to complete the circle of life: be born, grow up, have a family, experience the greatness of life and then die. Unfortunately for the Tucks, this was not an option.

I recommend *Tuck Everlasting* to anyone who wishes to read a fun and adventurous book. This book was a very quick read that I really enjoyed and I hope you will too!

-Miriam Applbaum, 8th Grade

This Is Just To Say #1

I have stolen ten dollars that were in your purse
And which you were probably saving for dinner
supplies.

Forgive me, I really wanted that speedy remote
control car which I use a lot.

Too bad I accidentally hit it into the wall and
made a loud noise.

I'm still looking through the trash for pieces.

-Hodi Miller, 5th Grade

Sally's Life

(Vignette in the voice of Esperanza from *The House on Mango Street*)

Sally the Egyptian, the one that all the boys like. The one with the black hair, the oily skin. The one I admire. I want to be just like you some day. Why, Sally, why did you do it? Why did you marry? Why did you marry the marshmallow salesman?

Was it for love? No, it was not. Was it because of your father? He tried to keep you away from your friends. He beat you with a belt. His belt. Then he would break down and weep. I think you're telling the truth. I think so. I found out, Sally. You lied to me. I thought we could be the best of friends. Why did you lie to me? Why did you leave me at the clown's?

You lied to me, you said it would be romantic, but it was horrible. His sour-smelling breath was very scary.

I remember his frightening voice ringing in my head, "I love you, Spanish girl." Maybe, just maybe, you could come live with me. No, that would be too much. I feel bad for you. Living in solitude. You can't visit anyone, and no one can visit you when your husband is selling marshmallows.

What happened to the young, carefree Egyptian I knew? Remember the time at the pick up truck. I tried to help you. I tried to get your keys back. Back when I found you. You embarrassed me. I was just trying to help you get your keys back, it's almost like you wanted to kiss them.

When I told Tito's mother, all she said was, "What do you want me to do, call the cops?"

All you said was, "Go home, Esperanza, go to your dwelling place."

Why didn't you let me help you, Sally?

-Yakov Helwani, 7th Grade

Play Ball!

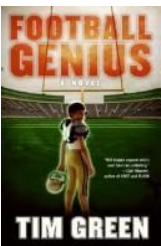


Thank You, Jackie Robinson, by Barbara Cohen, is about a 12 year old Jewish boy named Sam and a 60 year old black man named Davy who becomes his best friend. Sam is lonely living in New Jersey with his widowed mother and three sisters in an inn that she owns.

Davy, who is the new cook at the inn, is also lonely since he had to leave Brooklyn for health reasons. They don't have much in common except that they love the Brooklyn Dodgers. Sam and Davy like to talk about the Dodgers, especially Jackie Robinson, the first black man to play in the major leagues. Davy knows that Sam had never seen a baseball game in person so he decides to change that. I liked this story because it shows that you can be friends with someone no matter their age, race or religion and because it is full of baseball. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who likes baseball stories and the relationship between Jews and Blacks.

I liked this story because it shows that you can be friends with someone no matter their age, race or religion and because it is full of baseball.

-Shmuel Edelman, 5th Grade



Football Genius, by Tim Green, is about a boy named Troy. Troy's mom gets a job on the Atlanta Falcons in public relations. Troy figures out that he has a special ability to read the offense and know the play even before it happens. Once, his mom brings him to the game. The Atlanta Falcons are losing; he runs onto the field and yells at the coach what the play is, but they send him away without paying attention to what he said. Then Troy and his friends figure out a way to use his special ability to help the Falcons win their games. At one point in the story he says, "I want to do something, I want to be something. I thought this was my chance." There is a player on the Atlanta Falcons named Seth Holloway. They come up with the idea of using Troy's mother to signal Seth what the play

is and what he should do. When they start using Troy's ability to see the play, the team starts winning.

I really like this book because it has to do with sports and the author actually played in the NFL. It was interesting to read because you were always rooting for the underdog. Also it is one of those books where you don't know what's going to happen next. I really liked this book. I recommend this book to everyone who likes sports and rooting for the underdog.

-Ethan Seder, 6th grade



The Big Field is one of the diamonds in Mike Lupica's series. It takes place in humid modern day Florida. The book starts off with a boy named Hutch playing in one of the games on the way to the state finals. Hutch is a very hard-working player, spending every second of free time trying to improve his game. Hutch is a gifted player, and tries to be the best he can although there are some hurdles to that goal. One of the hurdles is his teammate Darryl. The reason Darryl is considered a hurdle is that Darryl's goal is to be the best player on the team, and he recognizes Hutch's talents so he tries to get the best of Hutch every once in a while. The other hurdle is Hutch's dad. Hutch's dad doesn't really pay attention to Hutch's baseball career; this is a huge factor because Hutch's dad was a fantastic baseball player himself. This neglect by Hutch's dad goes all the way to his state championship, where Hutch sees his dad in one of the most important situations of his life. Hutch's dad gives him a signal to do something very uncalled for to win the game. What did Hutch's dad tell him, and will the signal help Hutch's team win the champion-

Play Ball!

ship?

I really liked this book not only because it was about baseball, but because of the father son relationship. This was a big part of this book. I would recommend this book to all Mike Lupica fans, sports readers, and people looking for an entertaining book.

-Jordan Marcus, 6th grade

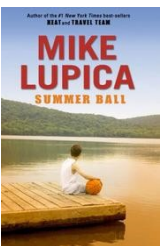


Going for the Record, by Julie Swanson, is a novel set in the present day. Eighteen year old Leah (Weez, as her father calls her) makes the regional team in soccer, when she finds out that her father has cancer and that he will die in three months. She has to choose between being at her father's side and going to the Olympic soccer team.

The themes in this book include hope, difficult choices and friendship. The message that the author was trying to convey was that even though bad things do and will happen, good things will happen, too.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Going for the Record*. The plot was realistic enough, and almost tear-jerking at times. I recommend this book for people who like to get absorbed into books they read.

-Bessie Zolno, 7th Grade



Summer Ball, by Mike Lupica, is a book about a young, small kid named Danny going to a basketball camp in the summer. He goes to the camp and starts to meet new people, some he likes and some he is even scared of. At the camp, they play basketball games every day.

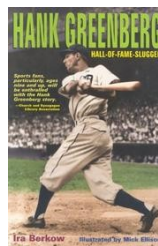
The day that Danny is told what team he is on, he ends up being on the team that had this kid, Rasheed, who is amazing at basketball. Danny has always hated Rasheed, until one day in camp when he is getting bullied by the meanest kid there. Rasheed sticks up for him and beats the kid up. So Danny becomes great friends with Rasheed from then on, and together they make it to the championship and play

against the team that the bully is on.

One of the main themes of this story is hope because Danny, while he was small and got bullied and had a horrible coach, still kept trying his hardest and playing his hardest, until the work finally started to pay off.

I thought this book was very good because it had a lot of exciting cliff hangers, the story had a very good plot, and it had a lot of great characters. I would recommend this book to readers who love to read exciting and dramatic sports novels.

-David Taragin, 6th grade

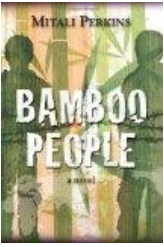


From a small Jewish home in the Bronx to the Hall of Fame, this is the story of Hank Greenberg. **Hank Greenberg**, by Ira Berkow, tells all about Hank's powerful will to become a famous baseball player. He withstood all the insults about his religion and became a legend in baseball. He had 331 home runs in the major leagues. Hank varied; he had some great seasons and some seasons that were not as great. He was so strong about his religion that he did not play on Yom Kippur, even though it came during the World Series. Hank was selected to the Hall of Fame in 1956. This book is an extraordinary story about a Jewish baseball legend. I recommend it to other kids and adults who like baseball.

-Eli Zadik, 5th Grade

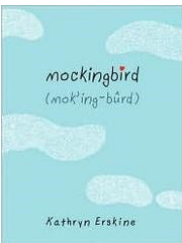


Overcoming Challenges



Bamboo People, by Mitali Perkins, is a really good book about two boys from Burma on opposite sides of an internal conflict. Chiko is from the city of Yangon, and his father is a prisoner of the government, therefore he learns not to trust the Burmese. Tu Reh is a Karenri tribesman who is a refugee in Thailand. The story begins with Chiko getting tricked into entering the army. When he goes on his first mission, he accidentally steps on a bomb. While he is unconscious, Tu Reh, and his “peh,” which means father in Karenni, find him. The peh made a promise to help on a Karenni mission, so he leaves Tu Reh to make the choice either to leave Chiko out for the animals, shoot the boy or take him to the healer’s hut. Tu Reh decides to save Chiko. Eventually Chiko is healed and returns to Yangoon. This story is about how Chiko gets back home and how Tu Reh overcomes his prejudices.

-Joe Shapiro, 6th grade



Mockingbird, by Kathryn Erskine, is about a ten year old girl, Caitlin, who has experienced many deaths in her life. Her mom died at a young age and her brother, Devon was killed during a shooting at school.

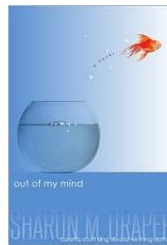
Emotionally, this is way too much for such a young girl to endure, especially if the girl has autism. The only living human remaining in Caitlin’s family is her father. Caitlin can see through her father’s fake smile and tell he is depressed about his life. She tries to fix this by finding closure for him. Her counselor, Ms. Brooke, tries to guide Caitlin through these horrifying experiences by finding friends for her. Caitlin attempts to make friends with her fifth grade classmates during their recess, but they reject her because of her condition. Ms. Brooke soon sees this, so she pulls Caitlin out of class to go make friendships within the

Emotionally, this is way too much for such a young girl to endure, especially if the girl has autism.

younger grades during their recess. Caitlin soon befriends a first grader, Michal, whose Mom died in the shooting at school, just like her brother Devon.

Do Caitlin and her father find closure in the end? Does Caitlin and Michal’s friendship continue? Do the fifth graders continue rejecting Caitlin? Read *Mockingbird* to answer these questions.

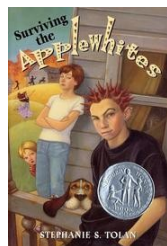
-Ariel Cohen, 8th Grade



Out of My Mind, by Sharon Draper, is a book about an 11 year-old girl named Melody who has a sickness. She cannot walk, talk, or write; she can only move her thumbs. Since birth, Melody’s parents have been told by doctors that she wasn’t capable of learning, but they were wrong. When Melody starts going to school with regular kids, she has no way of communicating. Later that school year, her photographic memory starts to play a part. There is a competition for the smartest kids at her school. Just in time, she gets a machine that can talk for her at the touch of a key on a keyboard!

In this story, Melody will face the challenges of being different. For her, silence has never been so loud. I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a good book and a touching story.

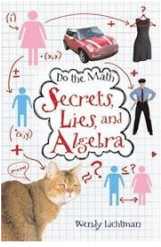
-Eliana Carasso, 7th Grade



Surviving the Applewhites, by Stephanie Tolan, is the story of Jake Semple, a boy who has been kicked out of many schools in Rhode Island. Jake comes from Rhode Island to the Applewhite farm where he meet E.D., one of the Applewhite children. The Applewhites home school their children on their farm. E.D. is grossed out by Jake’s smoking and swearing. Jakes thinks, “If the rest of the Applewhites are like her, I should be out in a day or so...” But boy, is he wrong. I recommend this book to people who like realistic fiction and social workers.

-Aharon Akiva Dardik, 5th grade

Realistic Fiction



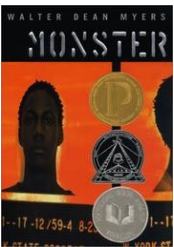
Do the Math: Secrets, Lies, and Algebra, by Wendy Lichtman, is a book about a girl named Tess. Her mother works with a man named Rob whose wife, Nina, dies. When Rob finds Nina dead, she is in the car in the garage; she died from inhaling carbon dioxide.

Tess's mother is very suspicious of Rob because he says weird things to her the morning he finds Nina. Tess thinks that Rob killed Nina, and because she is upset that her mother wasn't telling the police, she tells her two best friends, Miranda and Sammy, which her mother tells her not to do. She also tells one of her teachers, who has a friend who could investigate the situation. Throughout the book, the three girls try to find ways to figure out whether Rob is a murderer, many other exciting things happen, and you really feel like you are part of the story.

[This book] taught me a lot about friendship and to always keep your word.

I really enjoyed reading this book. I could never put the book down because at the end of every chapter you wanted to know what happened next. It also taught me a lot about friendship and to always keep your word. I recommend this book to people who want an interesting but at the same time fun book!

-Avigayil Edelman, 7th Grade



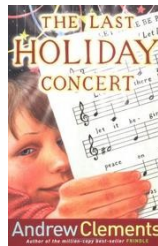
Monster, by Walter Dean Myers, is a novel about crime and honesty. Steve Harmon is a sixteen year-old black boy who lives in a poor neighborhood in New York. Steve has a relatively normal life. He has parents who love him and a brother who he gets along with

well. He is friends with tough people who get into trouble a lot. Some of these people include James King, Richard Evans and Osvaldo Cruz. One day, these boys decide to rob a liquor store along with Steve, but they didn't realize the kind of trouble they'd get themselves into. After the long and hard trials these boys face, some will be innocent and some will be guilty.

Monster is about honesty because it explains how you can assure yourself that you didn't do something when you really did and vice versa. The book is also about crime because it shows how you can get yourself in trouble by being associated with criminals.

In my opinion, *Monster* is a great book that teaches things very clearly. The book is written in the style of a play, which is an intriguing feature. Walter Dean Myers has a very interesting, exciting writing style, which makes the book enjoyable to read.

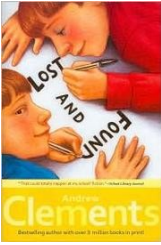
-Eli Shannon, 7th Grade



The Last Holiday Concert, by Andrew Clements, is the story of the sixth grade chorus class at Palmer Intermediate School. The class misbehaves, so the chorus teacher gives up on them and tells them that the holiday concert is up to them, so they have to direct it themselves. The students must figure out how to make it work. Hart, the main character, is the most popular boy in the sixth grade, so no one is surprised when he is elected to take the place of the teacher. He has no idea how to make the concert work out. This book is great for children who enjoy reading about planning for events.

-Maayan Ziv, 5th grade

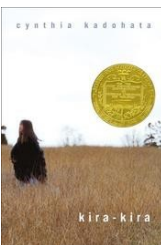
Great Reads



Lost and Found, by Andrew Clements, is about identical twins named Ray and Jay. They are always moving from school to school because of their parents' jobs. This year they are in the sixth grade. The new school that they attend is in Clifton, Ohio. On the first day of school Ray is sick, so for the first time Jay goes alone. The school day begins like any other normal day, until the teacher takes attendance in homeroom. Once she finishes calling the names, Jay realizes something shocking: his brother Ray is not on the list. Jay considers telling the teacher. In the end he decides that this is actually an opportunity -- an opportunity to be an individual, not one of "the twins" and not "Ray's twin brother". When he comes home he proposes an idea to Ray. What if they took turns going to school each day? Everything is going smoothly until they begin to make different friends and have different crushes. It's a book about family, and the twins discover new things about themselves and their own siblings.

I really enjoyed reading this because the author makes you want to know what will happen. I also learned a little about what it's like to have a twin, and that it's important to be an individual. I especially like the fact that it's so realistic. There is a part about a girl promising not to tell a secret, yet somehow by the end of the day everybody knows. I recommended this book to people who like realistic fiction about everyday students.

-Maddy Leibovitch, 7th Grade



Kira-Kira means "glistening" in Japanese. This is Katie's first word, which her older sister Lynn taught her. Katie and Lynn have been inseparable since Katie's birth. Katie and Lynn are used to rural living, where they stare at the stars every night, and run in the fields every day, until their father changes jobs and they move to Atlanta, Georgia. The two girls are not used to city living when they arrive. Everything is strange and new; they are in a new and unknown territory. Even

through Lynn's teenage catastrophes, the two sisters remain close. Lynn begins to spend more time with the adults or her friends instead of Katie, until one day Lynn falls ill. Immediately the girls realize how much they need each other, and how much they mean to each other. They realize how important their relationship is. Their previous ties grow tighter and tighter until they break.

Cynthia Kadohata's novel taught me the importance of how you treat a sibling. As an older sibling, it taught me to treat my sister with respect and as an equal. Lynn and Katie are inseparable at the beginning of the story until they slowly drift apart. When Lynn becomes sick, they realize how much they need each other. They acknowledge that they have taken advantage of each other, and that all they want now is to be together.

I recommend this book to someone who is interested in Japanese-Americans, American culture, sibling relations, or bitter endings.

- Orli Ziv, 8th Grade



Stargirl, by Jerry Spinelli, tells the story of a young girl who is intriguingly different. Some call her weird, some call her different, and some can't find words to describe her. She has a pet rat and a ukulele. On anyone's birthday she serenades them with "Happy Birthday" in the lunchroom. She gives cards to strangers for any event. And she attends many funerals and parties uninvited. Leo doesn't believe that she is real, but slowly, as she enchants the school, he notices her in a more profound way. As she becomes extraordinarily popular in her prairie girl dresses and sunflower bag, he falls in love with her and her enchanted places, and one day she loves him, too. But as with most things in life, her popularity lasts a matter of weeks before people start to shun her for cheering for the other team in basketball and just for being different. Leo, by being her boyfriend, goes from being a popular

Some call her weird,
some call her different,
and some can't find
words to describe her.

More Great Reads

junior in high school to an invisible boy, except to Stargirl, to whom he becomes more visible than ever. Leo hates this; he begs and begs Stargirl to be “normal.” So, she does. She shows up at school wearing jeans and T-Shirts, and her name is now what she was named at birth, Susan. But as Leo learns, being “normal” isn’t always a good thing.

This book had many lessons; one of the many I learned was to be yourself. Even though none of her fellow juniors may have appreciated it, Stargirl was one of the most compassionate and caring girls living in their city of Mica, Arizona. Being considered normal is all subjective; it's just blending in with the crowd. But as Stargirl teaches us, sometimes it's ok to be your unique self and cheer for the other team.

-Sarah Engel, 7th Grade

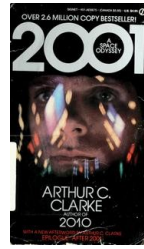


Crows and Cards, by Joseph Helgeson, is about a young boy named Zebulon (everybody calls him Zeb) who needs to learn a trade. Every trade that his father suggests has one problem or another. Zeb is scared of slivers, water, and fire. Finally Zeb’s dad suggests that he go off

to St. Louis, where his Great Uncle Seth lives, and become a tanner’s apprentice. On the way there he meets a guy who everybody calls Chilly. Chilly is a professional cheater and gambler. He is what some people call a card shark. Zeb becomes his apprentice and learns all the little secrets of gambling. Zeb helps Chilly and his gang in their everyday cheating and soon becomes quite good himself.

This is one of the best books I have ever read for many reasons. First of all, I really like stories in which there are teachers and apprentices. Second of all, I can really relate to the moves in card sleight-of-hand, like the deck switch, the second deal, and the bottom deal. Third of all, it is written extremely well, and that is always good. I recommend this to anybody who likes reading, likes fiction, and is ready for a great book.

-Eliyahu Quastler, 6th grade



2001: A Space Odyssey, by Arthur C. Clarke, is a science fiction book that takes place in 2001. Scientists discover a sun-activated device that was buried 3 million years beforehand, proving that there is intelligent alien life out there. A ship called the *Discovery I* is sent to Saturn with a crew of two people, David Bowman and Frank Poole. There is also an artificially intelligent computer called HAL. The trouble starts when HAL begins to malfunction.

I think the main theme of this book is solitude. When the *Discovery I* is farther from Earth than any other manned spaceship has ever been, naturally the crew feels very alone. HAL also feels alone because he’s the only artificial intelligence aboard.

Although this book’s beginning is hard to understand, it remains the best book I’ve ever read. With this book, Arthur C. Clarke achieved what every author wants to achieve – to make the reader think. This book is great for everyone who likes science fiction, adventure, or just a really good book.

-Max Berk-Wakeman, 6th grade

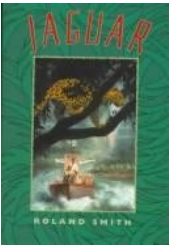


Johnny Tremain, by Esther Forbes, is about a silversmith’s apprentice during the preface to the Revolutionary War. He burns his hand during an accident, immobilizing his thumb. This tragic event forces him to find a new trade and a new set of friends. Johnny is incapable of doing skilled labor, but the Sons of Liberty help him out. Later he meets a boy, Rab, who works at a print shop. Rab is an active Son of Liberty. Rab gives him a job delivering papers on a horse. Johnny also makes extra money delivering letters for the British soldiers. Johnny participates in the Boston Tea Party and eventually in the fighting itself.

Johnny Tremain is an entertaining read and I learned a lot about the Sons of Liberty and the Revolutionary War.

-Sam Gessow, 7th Grade

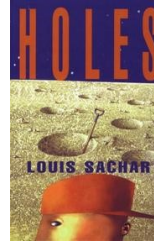
Have You Read These?



Jaguar is a novel by Roland Smith. After Jake Lansa spends a year with his father in Kenya, he is upset when he is left behind to live at his grandfather's retirement home while his father "Doc" goes off to Brazil to start up a jaguar preserve. When Jake finally gets a chance to visit, he hopes to convince his father to let him stay in the Amazon instead of getting sent back to Poughkeepsie, New York. After a violent accident kills the expedition leader, Doc has no choice but to let Jake come along if the jaguar preserve is going to be created. But more danger seems to come as they hire a suspicious boat driver. Jake is now a member of the team.

I liked this book because it was full of events, and had lots of cliffhangers which made you want to turn every page from cover to cover! I recommend this book for people who are Roland Smith fans; he also has many other books so if you liked this book there are a lot more to read. This was a great book and I hope you have fun reading it.

-Hanna Marcus, 6th grade



Holes, by Louis Sachar, is an adventure novel set in modern-day Texas. It follows the life of Stanley Yelnats, who is always in the wrong place at the wrong time. He is sent to a juvenile delinquent center in the middle of a Texas desert where he digs holes all day. While digging one day, Stanley uncovers an inscribed lipstick container which leads to a buried treasure involving outlaws, onions and his "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather."

One of the main themes of this story is destiny. Throughout the book, Stanley keeps talking about how he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, but later he discovers that everything happens for a reason.

This is one of my favorite, if not my favorite, books. I especially enjoyed the way the author juggled the relationship between Stanley and the other characters, while keeping the plot intriguing with a one-hundred-ten year mystery. I would recommend this book to people who like mystery and suspense novels.

-Eli Teitelman, 7th Grade

Watermelon-oops

To my mom and my sister

I heard my sister Ariella say,
"Ooh, fresh watermelon. Yummy."

I crept into the kitchen
like a silent, small spider.

I felt like I was doing something wrong,
but I kept up my pace towards the kitchen.

I ran towards the fridge --
it looked as if it were glowing.

I opened the fridge and saw the fridge door
and I saw the watermelon cut up in a container.

I took one piece but
I just had to take another and another

Suddenly, I looked at the container
and it was empty

I felt so bad
Sorry,
Sophia

-Sophia Brodie-Weisberg, 5th Grade