

Caterer, Claire M.

The Key & the Flame

2013. 480pp. \$17.99 hc. Margaret K. McElderry Books (Simon & Schuster). 978-1-4424-5741-6. Grades 5-8

When Holly Shepherd's family moves to England, a mysterious elderly neighbor gives her an antique key that opens doorways to other worlds. Holly uses the key to take her younger brother and their friend Everett back in time, where she discovers a realm of tyrannical kings, chivalrous knights, and a population of mythical creatures who recognize her as an Adept, long believed extinct. After the boys are captured by an ill-tempered prince, Holly is befriended by a wizard, a centaur, and a black cat who help her rescue the boys and make it safely back home. But Holly promises to return, since she alone can destroy the evil being who has driven the kingdom's creatures to near extinction. Filled with swordfights, spells, and an endearing cast of creatures, Holly's journey makes for a rousing adventure. Chronicles of Narnia fans will rally around this debut fantasy novel and ask for the forthcoming sequel. **Jenny MacKay, Children's Author, Sparks, Nevada** [Editor's Note: Available in e-book format.]

RECOMMENDED

Crossan, Sarah

The Weight of Water

2013. 234pp. \$15.99 hc. Bloomsbury Children's Books. 978-1-59990-967-7. Grade 5 & Up

Twelve-year-old Kasienka and her mother have emigrated from Poland to England to look for her father. She is not accepted because she is new and different, and she is relentlessly bullied by Claire, the classic mean girl. Eventually, Kasienka finds her father and learns he has another family. The only thing that gives her any peace is her budding romance and swimming. She finds her solace and acceptance in the water, which gives her the courage and strength to finally confront her tormentor and find her place. This is a novel in verse with an easy flow that allows the reader to completely experience Kasienka's feelings as she navigates the world of the bullied and unaccepted. Crossan's excellent word choice and exact phrasing allow the reader to fall effortlessly into Kasienka's world and rally behind her as she learns how to be true to herself. Glossary. **Kelly M. Hoppe, Librarian, Palo Duro High School, Amarillo, Texas**

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Ellis, Leanne Statland

The Ugly One

2013. 256pp. \$16.99 hc. Clarion Books. 978-0-547-64023-5. Grades 5-8

This richly descriptive tale set in an Inca village weaves oral folklore with the tale of Micay, a young girl living in a village during a time of severe drought. Micay has a horrible scar that causes her to hide from the rest of the village and earns her the nickname Ugly One. As the story unfolds, Micay realizes she must put her faith in the spirits to uncover the

truth about her past and discover her destiny. This story captures Inca traditions in an engaging young adult debut novel. **Elizabeth A. Burns, Ph.D. Student: Curriculum and Instruction, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia** [Editor's Note: Available in e-book format.]

RECOMMENDED

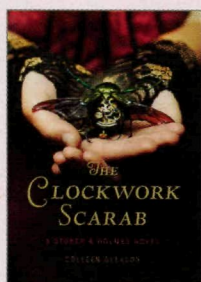
Farrant, Natasha

After Iris

2013. 272pp. \$16.99 hc. Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin Young Readers Group). 978-0-803-73982-6. Grades 5-8

Blue Gadsby's twin sister Iris died three years earlier and her parents and three other siblings have yet to recover from the loss. The story is told through the lens of Blue's video camera. Her parents travel for their current jobs and so the raising of the children falls to their Bosnian au pair, Zoran, who cannot always manage situations. The book is written in both a diary format and Blue's video format. It works in that readers are given the perspective of Blue, a young girl who is learning to live without her twin and is trying to figure out her family dynamics. This is a sweet book that will appeal to young tweens. There are several British words that may be unfamiliar to readers but won't detract from the story. **Karen Scott, Librarian, Thompson Middle School, Alabaster, Alabama**

RECOMMENDED



Gleason, Colleen

The Clockwork Scarab: A Stoker & Holmes Novel

2013. 356pp. \$17.99 hc. Chronicle Books. 978-1-4521-1070-7. Grades 6-9

In 1891 two feisty, independent girls are introduced to each

other and to a world of intrigue. Alvermina Holmes, Sherlock's niece, is analytical, intellectual, and socially naïve; Evaline Stoker, Bram's sister, is fierce, strong, and socially connected. They are invited to assist in solving the mystery surrounding the murders of fashionable young women. Working across multiple levels of a wonderfully atmospheric and delightfully steampunk London, they are helped, impeded, and fascinated by a variety of appealing young men. When they uncover the existence of the secret Society of Sekhmet and its leader, the Ankh, the suspense and action build, and they are placed in grave danger. The first book in a proposed series and Gleason's debut young adult novel, this is a captivating, amusing crossover tale sure to appeal to a variety of readers. **Marney Welmers, Librarian, Tortolita Middle Schhol, Tucson, Arizona**

RECOMMENDED

Golden, Laura

Every Day After

2013. 224pp. \$15.99 hc. Delacorte Press (Random House). 978-0-385-74326-6. Grades 6-8

Laura Golden's first novel for young readers is a depiction of the Depression in Bittersweet, Alabama. Lizzie Hawkins' family is going through difficult times—her father has deserted the family after losing his job and her mother's grief has left her unresponsive. Lizzie is faced with being evicted from her home, taking care of her mother, and being sent to an orphanage. To add to her frustration, Lizzie's classmate, Erin, is determined to beat her for class top honors. When Lizzie learns of Erin's past she realizes the reason behind Erin's behavior. The author has shown a realistic picture of the time period and the struggle for survival. Lizzie's mother's proverbs are quoted within the novel. Each chapter title is from the 1916 publication of *Curiosities in Proverbs* which would be a great introduction to the study of proverbs. Readers will feel compassion and also enjoy the cleverly written slang expressions used throughout the novel. **Jo Drudge, Educational Reviewer, Rome City, Indiana** [Editor's Note: Available in e-book format.]

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Grindstaff, Kit

The Flame in the Mist

2013. 464pp. \$16.99 hc. Delacorte Press (Random House). 978-0-385-74290-0. Grades 5-8

In Kit Grindstaff's first novel, Jemma Solvay has been kidnapped and raised by the evil Agromond family, whose plan is to rob her of her powers once she turns 13. She is the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy that predicts the coming of the Fire Child, who will be able to overthrow the horrid curse that has caused the land of Argglavia to be shrouded in a gray mist. Jemma has a week from the time she turns 13 for her estranged parents to initiate her; this will allow her powers to emerge. To guide her escape Jemma has two telepathic rats, a stone, a set of crystals, and a couple of clandestine characters whose mission is to train, protect, and guide her. Shrouded in secrets that are slowly revealed, fans of both mystery and fantasy will enjoy this book which is set in a magical and dark England of long ago. **Sabrina Carnesi, Crittenden Middle School, Newport News, Virginia** [Editor's Note: Available in e-book format.]

RECOMMENDED

Holyoke, Polly

The Neptune Project

2013. 352pp. \$16.99 hc. Disney-Hyperion. 978-1-4231-5756-4. Grades 6-8

This book plunges young readers into intense action and mystifying science fiction tinged with dystopian themes. The government has forced people to move inland and labor in work camps. Gillian conducts a science experiment with her teenage daughter Nere that genetically changes Nere's body to live and breathe underwater. Youth all over the country have

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