

# Open Shelf

February 2006

## This month:

*Memoirs of a Geisha* Arthur Golden  
*A Certain Slant of Light* Laura Whitcomb  
*Hawksong* Amelia Atwater-Rhodes  
*Rebecca* Daphne du Maurier  
*The Great Gatsby* F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*Ayashi no Ceres: Ceres, Celestial Legend* Yu Watase  
*Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* Matthew Stover  
*The Silver Kiss* Annette Curtis Klause

## city of mesa library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

### Letter from the editor



It seems strange that a man who was ordered beaten to death with clubs and beheaded somehow became associated with love. (From what I can tell, it had something to do with bird mating.) However, it came to be so—St. Valentine is now perpetually linked with sentimental romance.

But, sometimes love isn't all rose petals, cherubs, and sp3 hybridized carbon. Sometimes, it goes wrong. Horribly, agonizingly wrong. In celebration of this fact we give you our selection of books depicting the tortuous paths of passion.

Happy Bird Mating Day!

Mary Beth Hutchinson  
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### *Memoirs of a Geisha*

Arthur Golden

Japanophile as I am, I couldn't just go see a film with such an auspicious title without first reading the book it was based on.

When Chiyo is only nine years old, she is wrenched from her family and sold to an *okiya*, or geisha house. Even as a child, she shows the promise of being a great beauty, and with her starting blue-gray eyes she'll stand out even among the glamorous geishas of the Gion district.

**Memoirs** follows her training, and the trials and triumphs as she works her way to becoming one of Japan's top geishas.

We see the love of her life continually slipping from her grasp as she is promised as *danna* (mistress) to other men, sent away to work on parachutes for the WWII effort, and even moved to America.

This is a great book with an enjoyable infusion of Japanese culture. I highly recommend it.

- Jenny Knatz

★★★★

### *A Certain Slant of Light*

Laura Whitcomb

**A Certain Slant of Light** is a book about two particular individuals (ghosts!) haunting the places of their deaths, restless from the past they've left, not knowing how they died or why they're haunting.

Helen, a 130-year-old ghost, haunts a school campus where she meets a boy who can actually see her! But, as it turns out, the boy, James, is also a ghost, possessing the body of a druggie. The two fall deeply in love, but circumstances prevent them from being together since one is a shapeless form, floating around, physically untouchable.

It's quite an interesting book to read from the ghost's point of view—an interesting perspective where a ghost will do anything to touch and be touched again, to be able to taste an apple again, to do the things she never did before she died and started haunting.

With its interesting, fluid writing, this is a good book. Read it.

- Gerald del Rosario

★★★★

### *Hawksong*

Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

Danica Shardae is an avian shape-shifter, heir to the Tuuuli Thea and the avian throne. After losing her brother, she held Gregory Cobriana, the prince of the enemy, and sung to him as he died. Now the serpiente, the race of serpent shape-shifters Danica's kind has been at war with for several millennia, want peace. However, the only way to stop the war—and the warriors to whom peace is nothing more than a child's lullaby—is to tie the two royal families together. This means that Danica must join Zane Cobriana, crown prince of the serpiente, in marriage. But trust for someone whose name has only been a curse is difficult to summon. And as the two learn about each other and dance with peace, the question remains: Can this work? Or will one of them end up killing the other and starting the war all over again?

- Patricia Langevin

★★★★★



### rating system

bad; needs work ★  
so-so ★★  
average ★★★  
good ★★★★  
excellent; perfect ★★★★★

Visit the Library's Web Site:

[www.mesalibrary.org](http://www.mesalibrary.org)  
and see the Teens page!

## Rebecca

Daphne du Maurier

You know how some books take a long time to get started? A really, *really* long time? Even though Rebecca was mostly exposition, once the action began rising, so did my interest.

First glance—older rich guy, young orphan girl. Guy's house has a name, people are mysterious—don't trust the maid! The wife has a secret—ya know, this sounds a *lot* like *Jane Eyre* to me. However, du Maurier paints a portrait of a fascinating woman with an even more fascinating death. If you have the time (and patience) to dig through the less-than-provoking start, I guarantee you'll be spellbound.

-Mandi Levendowski

★★★★

## The Great Gatsby

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The twenties were just one big bootlegging, jazz-playing, charlestoning party. With WWI over, America was gonna party like the Earth was falling into the sun. Jay Gatsby is the king of the Jazz Age: rich, suave. But Gatsby is partying with a purpose: to recapture his long-lost summer love with Daisy Buchanan. Through the eyes of Nick Carraway we follow Gatsby's pursuit and failure.

Fitzgerald earned his title of classic American novelist with this book. His writing is precise and luminous—if only he had the plot to match it. The book is more fun perhaps to analyze and debate than it is to actually read. Try it first in your English class (trust me, you'll have to eventually) and then read it again on your own. You'll be rewarded.

-Mary Beth Hutchinson

★★★★

## Ayashi no Ceres: Ceres, Celestial Legend

Yu Watase

Aya Mikage led a normal life until her sixteenth birthday, which she shares with her twin brother Aki. They are unexpectedly brought to their grandparents' house where, witnessed by many relatives they've hardly ever seen, they are shown a very disturbing sight: a decayed and ancient hand. This grotesque artifact sets off reactions in the two that will alter their lives for the very worst.

Aya finds herself sharing bodies with a fallen celestial maiden named Ceres who is hellbent on destroying the Mikage line, especially Aki, who in turn is possessed by the man simply known as the Progenitor—the man who caused Ceres' fall from grace. The Progenitor has one thing on his mind: reclaiming Ceres as his own, along with whoever's body she happens to be occupying.

Witty, dark, and delightfully sadistic, this manga will capture your attention with its intricate plot and, to be perfectly honest, its good-lookin' dudes.

-Jeungri Hori

★★★★

## Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith

Matthew Stover

It has been three years since the battle on Geonosis that launched the Clone Wars. In that time, people have died, heroes have been made, and hate has grown stronger. Among the heroes of the Republic are the Jedi knights, Obi Wan Kenobe and Anakin Skywalker, the two people to call when a mission cannot afford to fail. Naturally, when the Supreme Chancellor of the Republic is kidnapped by the evil Sith Lord Tyrannis (aka Count Dooku), who ya gonna call? And that's just the first chapter.

Anakin's secret wife, Padme, has a bit of a bomb to drop on her husband: she's pregnant and it's starting to show. Anakin begins to have nightmares—premonitions, he fears—of Padme's death in childbirth. So the ever-ambitious Jedi beings seeking a way to make sure that this dream doesn't come true.

As the prologue so aptly states, this story has already happened. It cannot be changed. We all know how it will end. But that doesn't make the book any less gripping. Read it.

-Patricia Langevin

★★★★★

## The Silver Kiss

Annette Curtis Klause

*The Silver Kiss* is another one of those fall-in-love-with-a-vampire books. I know, I feared it too—but this one was far from typical. Zoe, seventeen and depressed, meets beautiful, silver-haired Simon in the dead of night in the park near her house. Simon is attempting to avenge the death of his mother by searching for her murderer—another vampire, Simon's only living family. Unexpectedly poignant

and an easy read, this book is great, though its ending left me a little dissatisfied.

-Gerald del Rosario

★★★★

## Where's FRANK?

FRANK *Teen Literary Magazine 2005* is now on sale at all three City of Mesa Library branches for 75 cents, or read it for FREE in the library or your school media center. Teen submissions for the 2006 issue will be accepted until March 31, 2006. You can also sign up to join the teen editorial staff.

## Check

<http://mesalibrary.org/teens/frank/>  
for more information.

## What is YAAC?



The Young Adult Advisory Council (YAAC) is a group of teens from many of Mesa's junior and senior high schools. They hold meetings twice monthly to review books for this newsletter and to plan special activities. They also help the librarians in Mesa Public Library's Young Adult Room at the Main Library as volunteers and assist with programs.

If you are interested in becoming a member of YAAC, call (480) 644-2734 or stop by the Young Adult service desk and ask for an application.

Learn more at:

 [mesalibrary.org](http://mesalibrary.org)  
City of Mesa Library on the Web



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