


Branches



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2004

Book Review Newsletter of the City of Mesa Library
Dobson Ranch Branch Young Adult Advisory Council

Letter from the Editor!



Happy New Year! A new year has begun as well as a new semester of the school year. Aside from the unhappiness of an end to winter break coming soon, this is a very good time of the year. Now is your chance to make your new year's resolution. One that I'm sure you've never made before. A resolution to read as much as possible! Well, although I'm sure that reading is not going to be your number one priority, take a look at this issue of Branches and maybe something will change your mind (if not, just pick up a book)! ☺

--Nehal Thakkar
Branches Editor

Send comments and suggestions to
filmimonkey@yahoo.com

Rating System

start a fire ★
punishment for bad children ★★
decent ★★★
I would read it again ★★★★
masterpiece ★★★★★

The Princess and the Pauper

By Kate Brian

★★★★★

Julia Johnson is different from all of the other girls she goes to school with. She doesn't arrive to school in her chauffeured limo; she rides her bike. She doesn't go home to her vine-covered mansion; she goes home to a small apartment that is inhabited by her mom and cat. And their possession of that apartment is in trouble; Julie and her mom can lose it if Julie doesn't find a way to make a lot of money fast. The answer to all of her financial problems comes in the form of Carina, the Crown Princess of Vineland. They look like identical twins, so Carina, who wishes to leave her castle, offers Julia ten thousand dollars to impersonate her for one day in order to meet her rock star pen pal at his up-coming concert. Only everything seems to go wrong. Carina is stuck on a tour bus while Julia is on a plane to Vineland, and no one knows how to fix the problem, not even Ingrid, Carina's snobby best friend. And while everyone is panicking and lies are being told far and wide, the only thing that's going right is the fact that Julia's met the man of her dreams; the only problem

is that he's Carina's fiancée, Markus, so maybe everything isn't so great after all, but when things are so twisted around, and one girl is leading another's life, anything can happen. Filled with humor, excitement, a tad bit of real life, and a dash of romance, this book is a sure thing.

Ally Schmidt

Green Rider

By Kristen Britain

★★★★★

Green Rider, by Kristen Britain, is an entertaining tale of a fantasy adventure. It all begins when Karigan G'ladheon gets into a fight at school. Since it is Karigan who must serve the time, she decides to run away and go home. On her way to her father's clan, she encounters a dying man, clad in green, with two black arrows protruding from his back. He tells Karigan that he is a green rider, a messenger of the king. As he dies, he makes her swear to carry the burden of a "life and death" message to the endangered King Zachary. He gives her all of his things, including his horse, message, supplies, and sword to aid her on the deadly road. No advice was given save to "Fly...Rider, with great speed," and to "Beware the shadow man." The last breath leaves his body.

Karigan must endure many dangers on her quest, including facing the creatures of Kanmorhan Vane, mercenaries, towns where no one likes green riders at all, and much more. However, she does have hope because the spirit of the dead rider travels with her, aiding her whenever possible. She also manages to get help occasionally, in places most seemingly impossible and unlikely. Who knows if she will ever manage to complete her mission? And if she does, will it be a happily ever after, or another deadly adventure?

I thoroughly enjoyed this fantasy book. It captured my attention and kept its hold, so I could not put the book down.

Christina Rutledge

Invisible Man

By Ralph Ellison

★★★★

Invisible Man is a timeless classic that brings forth the struggles of African Americans during the Harlem Renaissance. The main character is an unnamed, colored narrator. He begins his journey in the South as a hard-working college student. He then moves to Harlem, New York in order to earn money for school tuition. However, he is told to forget about schooling by a white man and is swept, instead, into the battle of racism. The narrator becomes a famous and popular leader of the "Brotherhood," a group of Harlem residents and reformers who work to gain support for the uprising of change. Just when he is at the peak of his achievements, his Brothers knock him down. What is intriguing about this book is that there always seems to be people trying to discourage him to succeed. Ellison's amazing description of yarns is a great part in the novel.

Through the narrator's own thoughts and eyes, the reader is able to discover his hardships. The ending is a disappointment, however, because it is really unexpected. Nevertheless, I enjoyed reading this book even though it was rather difficult at times to understand and interpret.

Linh Nguyen

A Child Called It

By Dave Pelzer

★★★★

Driven to survive the unmerciful living conditions fabricated by his own mother, Dave Pelzer struggles through everyday life. His once loving past now held nothing more than an empty future, doomed to be the family slave and spend every moment being tortured by his maniacal mother. Yet, he was learning to play her "little games." He was going to survive, somehow...

At a very young age, Dave's mother started to refer to him as "it" or "the boy." She forced him to be the family slave and to sleep in the cold, dank basement. She abused him, both mentally and physically, and she starved him for not completing the many inconceivable chores she assigned him. Since Dave grew up in the '70s, very few people were aware of child abuse and how he was a victim of it. A Child Called It is a heart-wrenching story that allows readers to see first-hand how horrible child abuse is. This book is excellent because you can feel exactly what the character is going through and the message behind it is very powerful.

Kellie Neilson

**Reading is to the mind what
exercise is to the body.**

Joseph Addison

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants

By Ann Brashares

★★★★

Carmen bought a normal pair of jeans and left them in the back of her closet. One summer, they came out of her closet and became the Traveling Pants. Four great friends (Lena, Tibby, Bridget, and Carmen) have spent almost every summer together until now. Each one is having her own adventure in a different part of the world, and the only connections they have are the letters and these pants. The Traveling Pants are shipped from one friend to another during the summer, and each has a story to tell. Lena is on a trip to Greece with her little sister and discovers herself. Tibby is staying in her "lame" hometown until one girl opens her heart. Bridget is at a soccer camp in Baja, California and discovers that you don't get everything you wish for. And Carmen is struggling to accept her father's new family. I liked how each chapter is about a different girl and her adventure. If you like a "girly" tale, I suggest reading this book

Loan Nguyen

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Teens

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