

Open Shelf

February
2003

mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor



Well, hopefully everyone's new year is off to a great start by now, and you're getting settled into your new routines. In between wolfing down Valentine's candy (or Single's Awareness Day candy, depending on your viewpoint), and breaking every last one of those New Year's resolutions, I hope that you find time for some of this month's reviews. They're exceptionally good this month, and they deal with almost all of the different genres of literature. Have fun!

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Jason Yan
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rating system

bad ★
so-so ★★
good ★★★
excellent ★★★★★

Visit the Library's NEW Web Site:
www.mesalibrary.org
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The Blood of Ten Chiefs, Elfquest, Blood of Ten Chiefs series, Volume One

By Richard Pini, et al

Elfquest readers! Listen up! If you haven't read this one yet, it is hitting the jackpot! This book is a collection of short stories about Cutter's ancestors. The way it is written is very interesting. Longreach, the tribe's storyteller and memory keeper, is reminded of stories about each chief because of similar circumstances within the tribe. The book starts at Timmora Yellow-Eyes, and goes all the way through to Bearclaw. Most of the stories are long, but the one about Mantricker is fairly short. It's unusual in that it's not a graphic novel, but it's worth reading. Like I said, this is an **Elfquest** jackpot! Read It!!

—Deidre Oberpriller ★★★★★

Brave New World

By Aldous Huxley

This is not just your typical old "future" book. This is the *first* future book, written by a man a very long time ago. Basically it shows the future as a negative Utopia with people taking drugs at the first sign of trouble or confusion, and embryos manufactured to be smart, stupid or somewhere

This month:

The Blood of Ten Chiefs, Elfquest, Blood of Ten Chiefs series, Volume One by Richard Pini, et al
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt
The Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth George Speare
Getting Near to Baby by Audrey Coulombis
Drowning Anna by Sue Mayfield
Mostly Harmless by Douglas Adams
Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton
Goddess of Yesterday by Caroline B. Cooney

in between. They are all happy and content (and totally stoned) throughout their lives until...

Eventually, someone finds out that everything is corrupt. Doesn't it seem like there's always a person like that in these kinds of books? That happens, of course, and then... Well, what do *you* think? Read it to find out.

—Alyssa Rattedge ★★★★★

Tuck Everlasting

By Natalie Babbitt

Yeah, I know. **Tuck Everlasting** is like a fourth-grade-level book, but I read it anyway, and it was an incredibly sweet story. Winnie Foster, daughter of the richest family in Treegap, meets Jesse Tuck in the woods owned by her family, and after being "kidnapped" by him and his mother and brother, finds out that he and his family are immortal. When they run into trouble, the Tucks are forced to leave their home near Treegap. Jesse gives Winnie a vial of the spring water that made his family immortal, telling her to drink it when she turns seventeen, so they can get married and live together forever. However, Winnie decides she doesn't want to be immortal and gives her water to a toad. Despite the seemingly sad ending, it is a really good story, and I would recommend it to anyone.

—Heather Pearce ★★★★★

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

By Elizabeth George Speare

The *Witch of Blackbird Pond* is about a girl named Kit who sails from Barbados to New England to live with her Aunt Rachel, Uncle Matthew, and two cousins, Judith and Mercy, after the death of her grandfather. On the trip to her new home, she meets Nat Eaton, the ship captain's son, and as she struggles to settle into the new, more conservative environment, she also meets a Quaker named Hannah, who lives in a small cottage near Blackbird Pond. Through Hannah, Kit keeps in touch with Nat and, although their similar personalities cause continual clashes and arguments, the two eventually fall in love. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* is not just a romance novel, however. It is full of excitement and suspense, twists and turns, and the plot rises and falls with the passage of each chapter. Every turn of the page will leave you begging for more.

—Heather Pearce ★★★★★

Getting Near to Baby

By Audrey Coulombis

Getting Near to Baby wasn't the best written book, and it was sort of juvenile and old-fashioned, but overall, it was a very touching story. It's about a girl named Willa Jo whose baby sister (conveniently called Baby) dies. Her mother starts painting all day and all night long, and she, Willa Jo, and Willa Jo's "Little Sister" neglect all their responsibilities until Aunt Patty, the mother's older sister, comes to take Willa Jo and Little Sister until their mom is feeling better.

Getting Near to Baby tells about the children's adjustment to living with their aunt. At first, it is very difficult, and they don't get along at all. However, it has a very sweet, happy ending.

—Heather Pearce ★★★★★

Drowning Anna

By Sue Mayfield

Anna is funny, nice, and pretty. But when she moves to a new town and starts school, she is made the victim of vicious insults and bullying. It rips her apart, and her final choice is terrifying. This is incredibly good, because everyone who has ever been ridiculed or called a freak can sympathize with Anna. Buy a copy, "borrow" one, take it from a friend—just get one and read it!

—Andrea Alonge ★★★★★

Mostly Harmless

By Douglas Adams

A great ending to a great series. *Mostly Harmless* was excellent, with the introduction of new characters and the return of the villains from the first book. The characters are just as crazy and fun as in the first four books. It continues the story of the horrible events of Arthur Dent, hitchhiker of the galaxy, getting around by donating his DNA everywhere. This actually results in the birth of his daughter, which leads to the end of earth (again). It's great, so read it.

—Remy Albillar ★★★★★

Cry, the Beloved Country

By Alan Paton

Cry, the Beloved Country follows the journeys of two fathers – one a rich white farmer, one a poor black priest – to Johannesburg in search of their sons. The priest does not know where his son is, and thus must go on a physical search through the streets of Johannesburg. The farmer's son has been killed by a black man; the farmer must therefore search what he has left behind to find his son spiritually. The revelation that the son of the priest killed the son of the farmer, and the following events illustrate effectively the themes of hope and restoration. Read it!

—Kevin Teeling ★★★★★

Goddess of Yesterday

By Caroline B. Cooney

Anaxandra is never able to settle down. Whether she's being taken hostage by Greek pirates or having her home burned to the ground, her life is never easy. Forced to take the identity of an Aegean princess, her life takes a drastic turn when she is taken, along with Helen of Sparta, to Troy. There, her life is made miserable by Helen and the Trojans.

Caroline B. Cooney's writing is perfectly matched to the story and anyone interested in Greek history should read this great book.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson ★★★★★



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.

Check out the

teens

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 *mesalibrary.org*
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