

# Open Shelf

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## mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

### letter from the editor



The holidays are well over and we are back in school. We return to the constant drudgery for one more semester. Our teachers take perfectly good novels and pick them apart until we fall to our knees begging them to stop. Enjoy your reading! Read a book and don't ask why the author wrote it. Just enjoy the story!

**Leon Eubanks**  
open shelf Editor

Send comments and suggestions to  
YaacEditor@hotmail.com



### rating system

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

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### The Subtle Knife

By Philip Pullman

The problem with fantasy novels is that it is absolutely impossible to explain the plot of one without sounding like a complete freak. Bear with me, I am going to try. In the second book of Philip Pullman's **His Dark Materials** trilogy, we meet Will, who has stumbled from our world into the parallel universe of Cittàgazze, where the streets are populated by roaming bands of preteens and adults are strangely absent. He is alone until a strange girl bursts out of a closet and attacks him. This girl is Lyra, whom you will remember from **The Golden Compass**, and she is bent on avenging the death of her best friend. The two band together and subsequently manage to get themselves in plenty of trouble.

What separates **The Subtle Knife** from the rest of the fantasy that clutters the shelves of the library is the incredible quality of Philip Pullman's writing. It is descriptive, imaginative, and altogether extraordinary. If you are looking for something unusual to read, read the **His Dark Materials** series.

—Erin Hutchinson ★★★★★

### The Amber Spyglass

By Philip Pullman

**The Amber Spyglass** starts with Will and Lyra separated. The two angels Will met in **The Subtle Knife** help him find Lyra,

### This month:

*The Subtle Knife* by Philip Pullman

*The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman

*The Gilded Chain* by Dave Duncan

*The Gnome's Engine* by Teresa Edgerton

*Skin* by Roald Dahl

*Spindle's End* by Robin McKinley

*Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card

*Dreamland* by Sarah Dessen

*In the Hand of the Goddess* by Tamora Pierce

who is held captive by Mrs. Coulter. When Will rescues Lyra they open a doorway into the world so they can talk to Roger and Will's father. They must somehow stop Dust, the very thing that keeps the worlds working, from being destroyed. The plot is excellent and the characters are incredibly realistic. The book sounds controversial but is actually really good.

—Andrew Martin ★★★★★

### The Gilded Chain

By Dave Duncan

**The Gilded Chain** is the first book in **The King's Blades** series. The background is that rebellious boys are sent to Ironhall, where they are trained to be the best swordsmen in the world. When they graduate, they are either bound to the King or someone the King selects. They are then called Blades. What the binding does is make the Blade do anything to keep his ward safe.

This book follows the life of a Blade named Durendal. It is a very good story and I would recommend it to anyone who likes books about swordplay and adventure.

—Jason Yan ★★★★★

### The Gnome's Engine

By Teresa Edgerton

The Half-Fairie Dutchess is an evil, vengeful lady who's hunting down Sera and Elsie Vorder, and tearing up half the conti-

ment so she can enact her revenge. What she doesn't know is that Sera and Elsie have moved to another continent with the help of Jedadiah and changed their names. This is where the story picks up. Jedadiah works for the Glassmakers Guild with a gnome called Mr. Jonas. They discover how to read a map they stole from the Dutchess, which gives them directions as to where a lost civilization, a significantly advanced one, was drowned in the sea and they look for a machine that can raise it. As part of their disguise, Sera and Jedadiah pretend to be brother and sister, the Thorns, and Elsie a friend of the family. Jedadiah and Mr. Jonas decide to raise the island to get the information from the lost people. Mr. Jonas does it for the joy of it but Jedadiah wants the fame and fortune, so he proposes to Elsie. Problems arise when they leave for Hobb's Church, a port town, and a spy sees them and reports to the Dutchess, who brings with her everything and everybody they ran away from.

This book has specters, undead wizards, duels between gentlemen, trolls who eat their brides, animated clay golems, assassins, true love, and twists everywhere. This is for anyone who's into series, although you should read **Goblin Moon** first.  
—Elizabeth Steimle ★★★★★

## Skin

By Roald Dahl

Remember when you were young and relished the Roald Dahl classics? I know you've read **Matilda**, **The BFG**, and **The Witches**. I myself used to figure I had read everything by the great author. Used to. Then I found **Skin** and locked myself away until I finished it. I emerged with wide eyes and a gaping mouth. This collection of short stories is shocking, astounding, and hysterical. Although not the same as his former works, any Roald Dahl fans will enjoy **Skin**. Admit it, who wouldn't like a woman who bashed her husband's head in with a leg of lamb and then fed the evidence to the police?

—Janel Torkington ★★★★★

## Spindle's End

By Robin McKinley

This is a Sleeping Beauty story. It takes place in a big country filled with fairies. When the king and queen have their baby they decided that they would only invite 21 fairies. At the princess' name day, the bad fairy, Pernicia, showed up of course. But she wasn't there because she hadn't been invited, she was there because she had a grudge against a past queen. There was a young apprentice fairy named Katriona in the crowd. After the bad fairy cursed the princess, saying she'd prick her finger on a spindle and sleep forever, Katriona took the princess home in secret to protect her. She named her Briar Rose, Rosie for short. Instead of burning all the spinning wheels in the country, the king makes the proclamation that all the painted ends of spinning wheels should be broken off. So, the spinning wheels have a spindle 'end' instead of a 'point.' Rosie grows up talking to animals and making friends in the town she grew up in. It's a really good book and the end is great!

—Starr Whitwood ★★★★★

## Ender's Game

By Orson Scott Card

**Ender's Game** is a complicated book. You can't read it in one sitting. It follows the life of young Andrew Wiggins, who everyone calls Ender. He is a government-commissioned genius. His purpose is to fight the Buggers. They have been defeated once, but they're back again. He is to go to Battle School, and from there progresses far. You have to really concentrate with this book. It has great descriptions, but you need to concentrate to fully understand it. If you like sci-fi, you should read this book.

—Tom Alonge ★★★★★

## Dreamland

By Sarah Dessen

Caitlyn has always been second. She always follows in her sister's footsteps. But

when her sister runs away the morning of Caitlyn's birthday, the household falls apart. Caitlyn's mother is lost, and she never pays attention to Caitlyn. So when Caitlyn meets Rogerson Biscoe, she feels like he is the only one who cares. His dad hits him, and Caitlyn is swept away with the after effect. She is caught in the trap. Her friends never see her anymore, and no one knows her horrible secret. This book was really good.

—Andrea Alonge ★★★★★

## In the Hand of the Goddess

By Tamora Pierce

This is the second book in the **Song of the Lioness** series. This takes place when Alanna is fifteen. Alanna is a girl who wants to be a knight, so she switches places with her twin brother and pretends to be a boy. At this point Alanna is a squire looking forward to becoming a knight when she turns 18. This book goes through her thoughts whether or not to tell her friends she's a girl, but then something happens and she doesn't have a choice!

—Lora Eubanks ★★★★★

# Harry Potter

## Tri-Wizard Tournament

**Saturday, March 10**  
**2-4 p.m.**

Now that you've read the books, what kind of wizard do you think you'd make? Here's your chance to find out! Compete against your fellow wizards for a veritable treasure chest of magnificent prizes. Bring your courage, your knowledge, and your skill (magic wands are optional) and let the games begin!

For ages 10-18. Registration is required and begins on Tuesday, February 20



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