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May 2002

mesa public library young adult advisory council book review newsletter

letter from the editor



This is it—May. Depending on what time of the month you're reading this, you may already be out of school and into either the world of summer jobs or summer recreation. If you're one of the lucky few, you've found a balance between the two. Then you have money to do stuff and time to do it in.

Now, it's traditional in the May issue to say something about reading in an air-conditioned room. I've decided to rebel. This summer, go outside with your book! You may find that the delirium produced by heatstroke adds a little something special to your favorite novel.

Leon Eubanks
open shelf Editor

Send comments and suggestions to tiepilot777@hotmail.com



rating system

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

Visit the Library's NEW Web Site:
www.mesalibrary.org
and see the **Teens** page!

A Grief Observed

By C.S. Lewis

If you paid the slightest amount of attention to the *Chronicles of Narnia*, you know that the last things C.S. Lewis is concerned about are lions, witches, and wardrobes. The bulk of Lewis' work is concerned with the search for truth. A former atheist, Lewis eventually turned to Christianity to answer his questions.

Now, C.S. Lewis was an old curmudgeon when it came to women. He was the type of guy who thought romance was just not his style. Later in his life, this devoted bachelor was shocked to find himself in love with an old intellectual friend of his. Unfortunately, soon after Lewis' marriage to Helen, she was diagnosed with cancer. *A Grief Observed* is Lewis' journey through the spiritual maelstrom that ensues after her death.

This book is so good on so many levels. To read *A Grief Observed* is to plunge into Lewis' personal hell and witness his attempts to reconstruct his life and faith. As usual, the writing is excellent and Lewis' philosophy is fascinating. This book is short enough to read in one sitting, but the ideas will linger in your mind long after you have put it down.

—Erin Hutchinson ★★★★★

This month:

- A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis
- Numbering All the Bones* by Ann Rinaldi
- Love that Dog* by Sharen Creech
- Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein
- Briar Rose* by Jane Yolen
- Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman
- Elf Quest* by Wendy Pini
- Bless the Beasts and Children* by Glendon Swarthout
- Indigo* by Alice Hoffman

Numbering All the Bones

By Ann Rinaldi

I think *Numbering All the Bones* was written well. It needed more details but it kept my attention. The basic plot was about Evlinda, a slave who tries to get her freedom. She ends up facing her cruel owners and her younger brother is sold off. After that, she gets a chance to escape. It was obvious the ending was going to turn out good. Otherwise, it was okay.

—Heenal Patel ★★

Love that Dog

By Sharen Creech

This book is about a boy. When you're reading the book, it's like his journal. In the beginning, he starts off saying how he can't write poetry. Then later his teacher gives him an assignment to write a poem. He gives it a try and he talks about a car driving through the night really fast. Then again he's given another assignment to write more poems. In the next poem he tells how the car is blue. After he's given more assignments, he tells more about himself and more about his yellow dog. Also during the book he shows different types and styles of how to write poetry, which he learned at school. The book was really good. It's not much print, so it would be easy for little kids to read, but hard for them to understand. It would be good for 8-14 year olds.

—Ashley Egan ★★★★★

Stranger in a Strange Land

By Robert Heinlein

Imagine our present time, thought up in the 1960s. This book is like that; Heinlein wrote about the future, which actually does resemble today.

The basic plot is, through a series of unfortunate incidents, the man who basically owns Mars and half the United States comes back to Earth. The government of the Federation wants him to join them because his parents were members of it and also because they want Mars. However, he doesn't know much about Earth or its customs. Another man attempts to find out the truth but gets kidnapped by the UK, and his girlfriend saves the Martian man instead.

It sounds complicated but it's really not. I loved this book and would recommend it to anyone that likes science fiction.

—Alyssa Ratledge ★★☆☆

Briar Rose

By Jane Yolen

Becca has always been enchanted by her grandmother's story of "Briar Rose." When her grandmother dies, she makes Becca promise to find out the truth about her past. So, the fairy tale of the sleeping beauty and the horrific tale of the Holocaust are entwined in an unforgettable story. It's a really great book, and if you have any interest in stories of the Holocaust, or love for fairy tales, you'll want to read this book.

—Jenny Knatz ★★☆☆

Lord of the Flies

By William Golding

While the world is blowing itself up, a planeload of boys crashes on a deserted island. The boys have to choose whether to stay with civilization and follow Ralph, or turn into savages and follow Jack. I know this book is a classic but I really disliked it. The writing style is awesome, however it

cannot save the story. If you have the sudden urge to read a classic and you see *Lord of the Flies* on the shelf, slowly back away and look elsewhere for intellectual stimulation.

—Mary Beth Hutchinson ★★

(Editor's note: The editor strongly disagrees and thinks the book deserves 4 stars.)

Neverwhere

By Neil Gaiman

A man helps out a girl named Door and the next day, no one can see him. Therefore, he is forced to go meet the Rat-Speakers and attempts to find the Angel Islington, all the while being pursued by two immortal hit men. Can we say, "surrealism?"

This is one of those books I started out reading carefully, then was completely immersed and poured through it as fast as possible to find the conclusion. Then of course, I had to go back and re-enjoy all the details that actually make the conclusion interesting. I recommend it to anyone who likes a good trip into a fantasy world where you're always confused.

—Janet Torkington ★★☆☆

Elf Quest

By Wendy Pini

After getting burned out of their home and tricked by the Trolls, Cutter's tribe of forest-dwelling elves must make a decision; try to turn back to the home they know or keep going directly through a desert. This is one of my favorite books. All the characters are well defined, and it is an awesome story.

—Starr Whitwood ★★☆☆

Bless the Beasts and Children

By Glendon Swarthout

Bless the Beasts and Children is quite an interesting book. It follows the adventure of six misfits at a boys' camp near

Prescott and their attempts to free a herd of buffalo. There's more than meets the eye: flashbacks and hidden foreshadowing create character development and a certain mood. Glendon Swarthout is extremely good with detail. This book is definitely of great quality, but it's not for everyone.

—Joe Tuccillo ★★☆☆

Indigo

By Alice Hoffman

There are two boys who are half-merman. They live in a town where everyone is scared of water. They run away, and when the town floods, the boys come back and save them all. This book was short but it was pretty good. It might only take you fifteen minutes!

—Andrea Alonge ★★☆☆



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.

