

# **Green Mountain Book Award**

## **Handbook**

### **2014-2015**



**Compiled by  
the Green Mountain Book Award Committee**

State of Vermont  
Department of Libraries  
**109 State Street**  
**Montpelier, VT 05609-0601**  
<http://libraries.vermont.gov/libraries/gmba>

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# INTRODUCTION

The Green Mountain Book Award is the student-selected award for Vermonters in grades 9-12. In 2005 it joined the other two Vermont child-selected book awards, the Red Clover Award, a picture book award for children in Kindergarten-grade 4, and the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award, a book award for students in grades 4-8.

## **Mission statement**

The goal of the award is to select a list of books of good literary quality that:

- Engages high school students.
- Represents a variety of genres, formats and viewpoints.
- May include books written both for young people and adults.
- Reflects the interests of high school students.

## **Criteria for choosing books**

To be eligible for the Green Mountain Book Award list, a book must:

- Have been published in the last 3 years
- Have received two favorable reviews in professionally recognized review sources (if possible)

In addition, there may be only one book by an author on any given list.

## **Timetable**

Voting for the winner of the Green Mountain Book Award is in May. The committee recommends that in order to be eligible to vote, a student should read at least three books on the masterlist. The new list is selected and put on both the Department of Libraries website <http://libraries.vermont.gov/libraries/gmba> and the GMBA website <https://sites.google.com/site/greenmountainbookaward/>.

## **Book Sets**

The Department of Libraries has multiple copies of each book on the masterlist, and will send them out on interlibrary loan. Please contact Linda Willis-Pendo at [linda.willis-pendo@state.vt.us](mailto:linda.willis-pendo@state.vt.us) to reserve or borrow them.

## **Materials available**

There are bookmarks that list the nominees for the 2014-2015 award, spine labels and posters. If you would like any of these items, please contact Aidan Sammis at the Department of Libraries: 828-2721; email: [aidan.sammis@state.vt.us](mailto:aidan.sammis@state.vt.us).

## **Website**

There is a GMBA website created and maintained by Sue Monmaney, librarian at Montpelier High School: <https://sites.google.com/site/greenmountainbookaward/>. This website is for students, teachers and librarians. In addition, materials can be found at the Department of Libraries website: <http://libraries.vermont.gov/libraries/gmba>

This year's committee consisted of: Erikka Adams, Lake Region Union High School, Orleans; Marilee Attley, Brattleboro Union High School; Luci Bailey, student, Northfield High School; Rebecca Cook, Poultney Public Library; Erin Egan, student, Essex Junction; Maria Harris, Enosburgh Public Library; Jory Hearst, Green Mountain Union High School; Peter Langella, Champlain Valley Union High School; Sue Monmaney, Montpelier High School; MacKenzie Ross, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum; Matthew Swinson; Kat Redniss, Chair; and Grace Greene, Youth Services Consultant, Department of Libraries, Liaison to Committee.

## **Winners of the Green Mountain Book Award**

2013 - Veronica Roth. *Divergent*. HarperCollins, 2011.

2012 - Patrick Ness. *The Knife of Never Letting Go*. Candlewick, 2008.

2011 - Kristin Cashore. *Graceling*. Harcourt, 2008.

2010 - Neal Shusterman. *Unwind*. S & S, 2007.

2009 - Ellen Hopkins. *Crank*. SimonPulse, 2004.

2008 - John Green. *Looking for Alaska*. Dutton, 2005.

2007 - Jodi Picoult. *My Sister's Keeper*. S & S, 2004.

2006 - Angela Johnson. *The First Part Last*. S & S, 2003.

## Green Mountain Book Award Master List 2014-2015

This is the tenth year of the Green Mountain Book Award, a reader's choice award for students in grades 9-12. Co-sponsored by the Vermont Department of Libraries and the Vermont School Library Association, this program is designed to introduce to high school students some excellent books for their pleasure reading.

These books, to be read during the 2014-2015 school year, comprise the master list for the award to be made in 2015. Voting forms will be made available to all Vermont schools and public libraries in the spring so that young adults can vote for their favorite book. The master list titles have been selected to satisfy the reading interests of teens in grades 9-12, and include both adult and young adult books. All books on the list were first published in 2011-2013.

Black, Holly. *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*. Little, 2014. \$10.00. ISBN 978-0316213097 (pap.); Little, 2013. \$19.00. ISBN 978-0316213103.

When seventeen-year-old Tana wakes up following a party in the aftermath of a violent vampire attack, she travels to Coldtown, a quarantined Massachusetts city full of vampires, with her ex-boyfriend and a mysterious vampire boy in tow.

Cline, Ernest. *Ready Player One*. Broadway, 2012. \$14.00. ISBN 978-0307887443 (pap.); Crown, 2011. \$25.00. ISBN 978-0307887436.

In the year 2044, Wade Watts, like the rest of humanity, chooses to escape reality and spends his waking hours in the limitless, utopian virtual world of the OASIS, but when Wade stumbles upon the first of the fiendish puzzles set up by OASIS creator James Halliday he finds he must compete with thousands of others – including those willing to commit murder – in order to claim a prize of massive fortune.

Cronn-Mills, Kirstin. *Beautiful Music for Ugly Children*. Flux, 2012. \$9.99. ISBN 978-0738732510 (pap.).

Gabe has always identified as a boy, but he was born with a girl's body. With his new public access radio show gaining in popularity, Gabe struggles with romance, friendships, and parents – all while trying to come out as transgendered. An audition for a station in Minneapolis looks like his ticket to a better life in the big city. But his entire future is threatened when several violent guys find out Gabe, the popular DJ, is also Elizabeth from school.

Harden, Blaine. *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*. Penguin, 2013. \$15.00. ISBN 978-0143122913 (pap.); Viking, 2012. \$26.95. ISBN 978-0670023325.

Chronicles the life of Dong-hyuk Shin, who was raised in a political prison camp in North Korea, and describes the inhuman conditions inside, his harrowing escape from the camp and the country, and his efforts to raise awareness of the camps to others.

- Kraus, Daniel. ***Rotters***. Ember, 2012. \$10.99. ISBN 978-0385738583 (pap.); Delacorte, 2011. \$16.99. ISBN 978-0385738576.  
Sixteen-year-old Joey's life takes a very strange turn when his mother's tragic death forces him to move from Chicago to rural Iowa with the father he has never known who is the town pariah.
- LaFevers, Robin. ***Grave Mercy***. Houghton, 2013. \$9.99. ISBN 978-0544022492 (pap.); Houghton, 2012. \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-547-62834-9.  
Seventeen-year-old Ismae avoids an arranged marriage by making a place for herself at the convent of St. Martin, where she learns of her unique gifts and must determine whether she will be trained as an assassin and serve as a handmaiden to Death.
- Levithan, David. ***Every Day***. Ember, 2013. \$9.99. ISBN 978-0307931894 (pap.); Knopf, 2012. \$17.99. ISBN 978-0307931887.  
Every morning, A wakes in a different person's body, in a different person's life, learning over the years to never get too attached, until A wakes up in the body of Justin and falls in love with Justin's girlfriend, Rhiannon.
- Martinez, A. Lee. ***Emperor Mollusk versus The Sinister Brain***. Orbit, 2013. \$13.99. ISBN 978-0316093538 (pap.); Orbit, 2012. \$19.99. ISBN 978-0316093521.  
Emperor Mollusk, ex-warlord of Earth, comes out of retirement to save the planet from the sinister brain's control.
- McNeil, Gretchen. ***Ten***. Balzer + Bray, 2013. \$9.99. ISBN 978-0062118790 (pap.); Balzer + Bray, 2012. \$17.99. ISBN 978-0062118783.  
Ten teens head to a house party at a remote island mansion off the Washington coast only for them to be picked off by a killer one by one.
- Mignola, Mike. ***Joe Golem and the Drowning City***. St. Martin's, 2013. \$17.99. ISBN 978-1250020826 (pap.); St. Martin's, 2012. \$25.99. ISBN 9780312644734.  
In the Drowning City (what Lower Manhattan became after earthquakes and a rising sea level left most of it submerged underwater) fourteen-year-old Molly McHugh's employer, the psychic medium Felix Orlov, is abducted after a séance goes wrong, and Molly befriends Simon Hodge, a Victorian detective who's kept himself alive with magic and steampunk mechanics, and his sidekick, the mysterious Joe Golem.
- Padian, Maria. ***Out of Nowhere***. Knopf, 2013. \$16.99. ISBN 978-0375865800.  
Performing community service for pulling a stupid prank against a rival high school, soccer star Tom tutors a Somali refugee with soccer dreams of his own.
- Rowell, Rainbow. ***Eleanor & Park***. Orion, 2013. \$13.00. ISBN 978-1409120544 (pap.); St. Martin's, 2013. \$18.99. ISBN 978-1250012579.  
Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits – smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try.

Salerni, Dianne K. *The Caged Graves*. Houghton, 2014. \$8.99. ISBN 978-0544336223 (pap.); Clarion, 2013. \$16.99. ISBN 978-0547868530.

Returning to her hometown of Catawissa, Pennsylvania, in 1867 to marry a man she has never met, seventeen-year-old Verity Boone gets caught up in the mystery surrounding the graves of her mother and aunt and a dangerous hunt for Revolutionary-era gold.

Wynne-Jones, Tim. *Blink and Caution*. Candlewick, 2012. \$8.99. ISBN 978-0763656973 (pap.).

Blink, hoping to steal some breakfast, is forced to go on the run after stumbling upon the fake kidnapping of a CEO and recovering the man's cell phone, and he meets up with Caution, a girl trying to ditch her drug-dealing boyfriend, who identifies Blink as a mark until he tugs at her heart strings.

Yancey, Rick. *The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave*. Putnam, 2013. \$18.99. ISBN 978-0399162411.

Cassie Sullivan, the survivor of an alien invasion, must rescue her young brother from the enemy with help from a boy who may be one of them.



## How to Apply for the Committee

The Green Mountain Book Award Committee consists of 10 adult volunteers, two teen members and the Youth Services Consultant from the Vermont Department of Libraries. Adult committee members serve for three years, with an option of a second term. Teens serve one year at a time, with the possibility of renewal. When there is an opening we advertise it through listservs and newsletters. We look for people who work with high school students and are passionate about books. School librarians, public librarians, teachers and community members are all urged to apply.

We have two openings for adults for the 2014-2015 year. To apply, submit a letter of interest, a resume and two reviews, one positive and one negative of any books of your choice.

All application materials should be sent by June 1, 2014 to:

Grace Greene  
Youth Services Consultant  
Vermont Dept. of Libraries  
109 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05609  
[grace.greene@state.vt.us](mailto:grace.greene@state.vt.us)

## Guidelines for writing reviews

1. Book reviews should be between 200 and 1,000 words in length.
2. Each review should include a brief descriptive summary and an assessment of appeal to high school students.
3. Reviews should touch on the quality of the following features:

### For Nonfiction:

- Authority and responsibility of the author
- Organization
- Writing style
- Illustrations
- Design
- Documentation of sources

### For Poetry:

- Sound (rhyme, meter)
- Imagery
- Ideas

### For Fiction:

- Plot
- Integration of background material
- Pacing
- Mood
- Characterization
- Point of view
- Setting
- Writing style
- Theme

## Book Suggestion for the Green Mountain Book Award

Snail mail or email by October 1, 2014 to:

Rebecca Cook  
Library Director  
Poultney Public Library  
205 Main St. STE 1  
Poultney, VT 05764  
(802) 287-5556  
[ppl5556@yahoo.com](mailto:ppl5556@yahoo.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade (if a student) \_\_\_\_\_

School or library \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher and date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

*To be eligible for consideration by the Green Mountain Book Award Committee for the 2015-2016 Masterlist, the book must have been first published in 2012-2014, and must be of interest to students in grades 9-12. Both adult and young adult books are eligible, and the authors can be of any nationality. It is no longer a requirement that a book be available in paperback.*

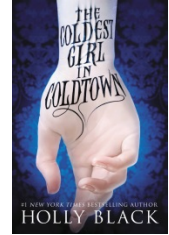
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Do not include plot summaries, but please tell the committee why you think this book belongs on the GMBA list. Use as much space as you need.

**This book should be on the list because:**

# THE COLDEST GIRL IN COLDTOWN

## by Holly Black



**Genre:** Horror, Supernatural, Fantasy, Paranormal, Dystopian, Romance

**Themes:** Science, Relationships, Media, Death, Post-Apocalypse

**Author information:** Holly Black was born in New Jersey in 1971. She studied at The College of New Jersey and Rutgers University, and she once considered becoming a librarian. She wrote and edited over 25 books for children and teens, and she also wrote for *d8*, a magazine about the culture of role-playing games that briefly ran in 1995 and 1996. Her works have been honored by the Mythopoeic Award, the Eisner Award, the Andre Norton Award, and the Newbery Honor. She currently lives in Massachusetts and claims to have a secret library.

**Plot summary:** Tana wakes up from a party, only to learn that all of her friends have died at the hands, or rather fangs, of vampires. The only other survivors are her ex-boyfriend, Aiden, a chained-up vampire who goes by the name of Gavriel, and a group of vampires that are a threat to all three of them. Due to Aiden's infection via vampire bite and Tana's possible infection from a vampire scratch, Tana, Aiden, and Gavriel soon take off on a road trip to Coldtown, one of many quarantined cities populated by vampires and humans who wish to become vampires. At first Tana merely stays because she believes she is infected. However, when she discovers that Gavriel is putting himself in danger with the local vampire celebrity, Lucien, she knows that she must play a more active role in Coldtown events.

**Booktalk:** You wake up from a raging party alone in a house, except it isn't empty. Rather, everyone is dead and covered in blood. Well, except for your stupid ex-boyfriend, a vampire who is chained up next to him, and a group of vampires that are bent on destruction. Hence, the dead bodies. Tana rescues her ex-boyfriend, Aiden, and the chained-up vampire, Gavriel, from the blood-thirsty group, and they head to the quarantined Coldtown, where they are immersed in the dangerous parties of the local vampire celebrity: Lucien. Who just so happens to be Gavriel's worst enemy.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *English*

Each of the chapters begins with a short quotation about death from famous poets, writers, and philosophers. Write a paragraph about how one of the quotes relates to the corresponding chapter. Is the quote from a larger piece of work, such as a poem or novel? If so, how does the larger work relate to the chapter or *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* as a whole?

#### *Science*

Research an infectious disease of your choice. How is it caught – from animals, humans, plants, fungi, or other microorganisms? What are the symptoms? Can it be treated or cured? Is it prevalent in certain parts of the world? Has there been a recent widespread outbreak?

## Art

Bill Story risks his life by videorecording the transformation of Midnight turning into a zombie. Create a piece of work that represents what you think this transformation would look like.

### Discussion questions:

- When Tana was younger, her mom was infected, and Tana’s dad’s plan was to keep the mom in the basement until the infection passed. What happened instead? If you were Tana, what would you have done? If you were Tana’s dad, what would you have done? Can you understand why each of them acted the way they did?
- In chapter 14, Midnight writes a post titled “The Ten Most Important Things to Bring to Coldtown.” Do you completely agree with her list, or would you change anything?
- Social media and streaming reality shows play a large role in turning Lucien into a huge celebrity, sharing information about the party-gone-wrong, and making Coldtown THE place to party. How would the story differ if the Internet didn’t exist?
- Who do you think is Tana’s most important ally in Coldtown? Or should she not trust anyone to help her?
- Tana didn’t use her marker on herself. If you were in Coldtown and potentially infected, how would you use your marker?

### If you loved this, you'll like:

Butler, Octavia. *Fledgling*. Grand Central Publishing, 2005.

Gaiman, Neil. *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. William Morrow Books, 2013.

Hill, Joe. *Locke & Key* (series). IDW Publishing, 2008.

King, Stephen. *Cell*. Pocket Star, 2006.

Quinn, Kate Karyus. *Another Little Piece*. HarperTeen, 2013.

### Other books by this author:

*The Poison Eaters and Other Stories*. Big Mouth House, 2010.

*Doll Bones*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2013.

#### Curse Workers series

*White Cat*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2010.

*Red Glove*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2011.

*Black Heart*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2012.

#### Modern Faerie Tales series

*Tithe*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2002.

*Valiant*. Simon Pulse, 2005.

*Ironsides*. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2007.

**Additional resources:**

Author's website: <http://www.blackholly.com/>

Author's Twitter: <https://twitter.com/hollyblack>

Author's Tumblr: <http://hollyblack.tumblr.com/>

How I Wrote *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* (the novel):

<http://hollyblack.tumblr.com/post/37446711369/how-i-wrote-the-coldest-girl-in-coldtown-the-novel>

Interview with author: <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/interviews/article/58984-q-a-with-holly-black.html>

Vampires: Folklore, Fantasy and Fact: <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/vampires-folklore-fantasy-and-fact-michael-molina>

# READY PLAYER ONE

by Ernest Cline



**Genre:** Science Fiction, Dystopia

**Themes:** Hero's Journey, Friendship, Love, Gaming

**Author information:** Ernest Cline's primary occupation has always been "geeking out." He's worked a series of eclectic jobs (fish-gutter, video store clerk, tech support), but throughout these jobs, he's always been extremely interested in vintage video games. He's helped with film scripts, and also performed slam poetry. *Ready Player One* was his first novel. Ernie currently lives in Austin, Texas.

**Plot or book summary:** The United States in 2044 is an ugly place. Wade Watts lives in the "stacks" (stacked up trailers), and desperately wants to find the "egg" hidden in the OASIS that could win him billions of dollars and transform his life. OASIS is the virtual reality that most humans use constantly. It's been five years since the challenge has been laid out to find the "egg," and no one has found anything. Finding the "egg" requires a huge amount of '80s pop culture and gaming knowledge. Wade has studied and studied, but to no avail. Then he solves the first puzzle and his whole life transforms, thrusting him into stardom and a quest that he cannot complete alone.

**Booktalk:** The year is 2044. The real world is nasty, and 18-year-old Wade Watts spends all of his time in the OASIS, the worldwide virtual reality system. Five years earlier, a competition was laid out to solve a series of puzzles hidden within the OASIS, and Wade is desperate to be the first. However, no one has even solved the first puzzle yet. And then, Wade does. Using his vast knowledge of '80s video games and pop culture, he unravels the first part and becomes an instant celebrity. His position is dangerous, though, because millions are vying for the billions of dollars attached to finding the "egg" at the end of the puzzles. Can Wade fend off the competition? Or does he actually need their help? Reading this book is like being inside of a video game, in an awesome, addicting way.

## Curriculum tie-ins:

### *Computer Programming*

Learn basic gaming code, in order to learn how a programmer could hide an "egg" inside of a game.

Have a competition with Atari games, and other video-game classics. Then do the same with 2-3 of the most popular video games now (*Minecraft*, *Call of Duty*, *Legend of Zelda* as possibilities) in your classroom. Discuss how gaming/programming has changed in the last 30 years.

Write a text where hidden within the words is a code that leads to the equivalent of an "egg" – a hidden message/prize within the text. For example, this code could be in the errors in the text, spelling out a hidden message.

**Discussion questions:**

- Is Wade Watts the hero in this book? If so, what makes him a hero?
- What does Wade learn is ultimately the most important thing in life? How is Wade transformed by the end of the novel?
- What writing techniques does Ernest Cline use to keep the reader flipping pages in this novel?
- What makes this vision of the future dystopian?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

Brooks, Max. *World War Z*. Crown, 2006.

Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*. Tor Books, 1985.

Dashner, James. *The Eye of the Minds* (The Mortality Doctrine #1) Delacorte, 2013.

Morgenstern, Erin. *The Night Circus*. Doubleday, 2011.

Ness, Patrick. *The Knife of Never Letting Go*. Walker, 2008.

**Other books by this author:**

*The Importance of Being Ernest*. Write Bloody Publishing, 2013.

*Armada*. Crown, coming in 2015.

**Additional resources:**

Author website: [www.ernestcline.com](http://www.ernestcline.com)

<http://readyplayerone.com/>

# BEAUTIFUL MUSIC FOR UGLY CHILDREN

by Kirstin Cronn-Mills



**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Themes:** GLBTQ, Friendship

**Author information:** Kirstin Cronn-Mills grew up in Nebraska. She learned to read when she was three and started writing poems in the sixth grade. She still writes poems, but now she focuses on young adult novels. Kirstin now lives in Minnesota with her son, Shae, and her husband, Dan. She writes a lot, reads as much as she can, and teaches at a two-year college (she won the Minnesota State College Student Association 2009 Instructor of the Year award).

**Plot summary:** Gabe was born as Elizabeth (Liz), although he’s always identified as a boy. Up to this point only his parents and his best friend, Paige, knew about his gender identification. Gabe’s new job as a DJ with his own public access radio show gives him the opportunity to further explore life as a guy – what he calls his B side: “not heard as often, but just as good.” Gabe’s fan base is growing until something happens and he is recognized as Liz. Word quickly gets out and he must learn to deal with the full range of reactions from others, from endless loyalty to violence.

**Booktalk:** Hey everyone, most folks know me by my A side, which is pretty good – just like the hit songs that everybody knows. Guess what? I’ve got a B side too, and I think it’s even better. Do you have a B side? Some part of you that only you and maybe one or two other people know about? I say, let those B sides play! If you like your B side, chances are that others will too!

## Curriculum tie-ins:

### *Sociology*

Gender fluidity, stereotypes, biases: Gabe deals with a lot of preconceived ideas about being transgender. How do gender and sexual identity define a person? Create a public service announcement (PSA) for a local radio or cable station.

### *Communication and Social Media*

Explore ways that different communication and social media platforms are or can be used to inform and educate. Set up a blog or create an account on a social media platform, and use this to promote awareness of an important issue in your school or community. If you were to have a public radio persona, how would you present yourself? What topics would you want to address? Create and share a series of short podcasts in your new persona.

### *Current Events*

What are issues related to the GLBTQ community or gender or sexual identity that you’ve noticed in the news? If you haven’t noticed any news stories, do some research. Create a presentation to share with other students, schools, or the greater community. Consider starting or becoming a member of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club in your school.



How are GLBTQ issues dealt with in your community: local, state, national, and international? Do you need to be concerned with how things are dealt with in a place outside your immediate world? Why or why not? Write a letter to the editor.

**Discussion questions:**

- How did exploring his B side on his radio show help or hinder Gabe’s transition?
- Gabe grew up in a small town in the Midwest. How do you think his experiences would be the same or different if they happened in your town?
- How could you see Paige and Gabe’s relationship playing out differently, and why?
- How is Gabe’s situation relevant to the life of any teen?
- Fast forward Gabe’s life 10 years. What will he be doing, and where?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

Katcher, Brian. *Almost Perfect*. Delacorte, 2010.  
King, A. S. *Ask the Passengers*. Little, Brown, 2013.  
Kluger, Steve. *My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins, and Fenway Park*. Speak, 2009.  
Levithan, David. *Every Day*. Ember, 2013. (on this year’s GMBA list)  
Levithan, David. *Two Boys Kissing*. Electric Monkey, 2014.  
Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. Simon & Schuster, 2014.

**Other books by this author:**

*Collapse!: The Science of Structural Engineering Failures*. Headline Science, 2009.  
*The Sky Always Hears Me: And the Hills Don't Mind*. Llewellyn Publications, 2009.  
*Transgender Lives*. Twenty-First Century Book, 2015.

**Additional resources:**

Author’s website: <http://kirstincronn-mills.com/>

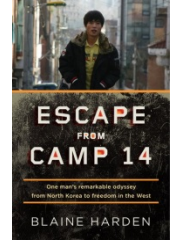
*Beautiful Music* was one of a number of books featured in this great article on Advocate.com: “Books for Young LGBT Folks and Anyone Who Wants to Understand Them.” <http://www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/books/2013/01/31/books-young-lgbt-folks-and-anyone-who-wants-understand-them>

*ALA News*: “‘Beautiful Music for Ugly Children’ and ‘Fat Angie’ win 2014 Stonewall Children’s and Young Adult Literature Award.” <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2014/01/beautiful-music-ugly-children-and-fat-angie-win-2014-stonewall-children-s-and>

Outright Vermont: <http://www.outrightvt.org/>

# ESCAPE FROM CAMP 14

## by Blaine Harden



**Genre:** Nonfiction

**Themes:** Oppression, Survival, Triumph of the Human Spirit

**Author information:** Blaine Harden is an author and journalist. He has won several awards for his journalism, including the Ernie Pyle Award (for his war coverage of Sarajevo), the American Society of Newspaper Editors Award for Non-deadline Writing (stories about Africa), and the Livingston Award for International Reporting (stories about Africa). Harden lives in Seattle, Washington with his wife and their two children.

**Plot summary:** In a story that intertwines both narrative and journalistic styles, Blaine Harden shares Shin Dong-Hyuk's harrowing tale of escape from a North Korean internment camp. Shin was born inside Camp 14, formally Kaechon Gulag Number 14, and along with his mother and brother was expected to live and die there. With the help of Harden, Shin's tale of survival in the unlikeliest of places, and of his even more death-defying escape, brings to light one of the most critical human rights problems of our time.

**Booktalk:** Imagine this – it's cold, you're on a mountain. It's you against thousands of others in a prison camp. You need food. You need shoes. You are forced to work. One day you snitch to the guards on another prisoner to get their food. That prisoner gets beaten. That prisoner dies. That prisoner was your brother. All in the name of survival. You're still going to die in Camp 14.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *Social Studies*

Research how other internment camps have come about. Why were they set up? How were they closed?

#### *English*

Many people for whom English is not their first language use someone else to assist them in writing books or articles. How does this affect the story?

The story has two styles - narrative and journalistic. What effect would writing in one style or the other have on the overall story?

How well do you relate to Shin? Why?

#### *Media Literacy*

Create a Google Earth journey showing Shin's travels, accompanied with brief voice overs describing the locations and what he was doing there.

Create a Prezi to educate other students at your school about Human Rights, North Korea, and what your school/students can do about it.

### Discussion questions:

- What did you know about North Korea before you read this book? Where did you learn that information? After reading the book, how did your understanding change?
- There is a lot of violence in this book. How crucial is it to the story? Is the violence exaggerated? Why or why not? In comparison to recent movies or books you've encountered with violence, how did the violence affect you?
- What are the different cultures Shin encounters and how do they affect him?
- Blaine Harden wrote this story of Shin's life. He included a lot of journalistic facts to validate Shin's story. Do you feel like these facts were well researched and true? Why or why not?

### If you liked this, you'll love:

Demick, Barbara. *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. Spiegel & Grau, 2009.  
Hunter, Zach. *Generation Change: Roll Up Your Sleeves and Change the World*. Zondervan, 2013.

Johnson, Adam. *The Orphan Master's Son*. Random House, 2012.

Kang, Hyok. *This is Paradise!: My North Korean Childhood*. Little, Brown, 2007.

Lewis, Barbara. *The Teen Guide to Global Action: How to Connect with Others (Near and Far) to Create Social Change*. Free Spirit, 2007.

### Other books by this author:

*Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent*. W. W. Norton, 1990.

*A River Lost: The Life and Death of the Columbia*. W. W. Norton, 1996.

### Additional resources:

Author's website: <http://www.blaineharden.com/>

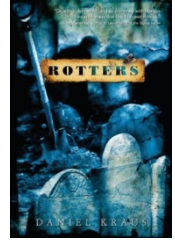
Interactive Prezi on Human Rights work in North Korea: [http://prezi.com/2xht6uh5d6pr/hrnk-activities-commission-of-inquiry-timeline/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/2xht6uh5d6pr/hrnk-activities-commission-of-inquiry-timeline/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)

Article on the state of North Korea: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/north-koreas-crimes-against-humanity-have-no-parallel-today/2014/02/19/dafec350-99a7-11e3-b88d-f36c07223d88\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/north-koreas-crimes-against-humanity-have-no-parallel-today/2014/02/19/dafec350-99a7-11e3-b88d-f36c07223d88_story.html)

Article about a UN report claiming human rights abuses in North Korea (may not be suitable for all age levels, but these are visual representations of North Korean prison camps, only recently rendered by another escaped prisoner): <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21596999-un-report-accuses-north-korea-unspeakable-human-rights-abuses-and-hints-chinas-complicity>

# ROTTERS

## by Daniel Kraus



**Genre:** Fiction, Horror, Coming of Age

**Themes:** Morality, Family, High School Issues

**Author information:** Daniel Kraus is a Chicago-based writer, editor, and filmmaker. His debut novel, *The Monster Variations*, was selected for the New York Public Library's "100 Best Stuff for Teens." Fangoria called his Bram Stoker-finalist, Odyssey Award-winning second novel, *Rotters*, "a new horror classic." And *Scowler* was a Library Guild selection and also a winner of the Odyssey Award.

**Plot summary:** Grave-robbing. What kind of monster would do such a thing? It's true that Leonardo da Vinci did it, Shakespeare wrote about it, and the resurrection men of nineteenth-century Scotland practically made it into an art. But none of this matters to Joey Crouch, a sixteen-year-old straight-A student living in Chicago with his single mom. Everything changes when Joey's mother dies in a tragic accident and he is sent to rural Iowa to live with the father he has never known, a strange, solitary man with unimaginable secrets. At first, Joey's father wants nothing to do with him, but once father and son come to terms with each other, Joey's life takes a turn both macabre and exhilarating.

**Booktalk:** If your mother died, how far would you go to have a relationship with the father you've never met? Would you move to another state? Would you go to a new school? Try to meet a few new friends? Would you stow away in the back of your father's truck and help him rob graves? No? Maybe? Well, Joey Crouch would. Joey Crouch *does*.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *History and Social Studies*

The resurrection men of the nineteenth-century are praised throughout *Rotters* as indispensable to the Scientific Revolution. Research the basics of their role in medical experiments and daily life and try to think about any group or groups who exist in the shadows or fringes of today's society that are equally necessary, or not. Make a comparison chart or timeline.

#### *Art*

Polaroid photographs play a large part in Kraus's plot. Create your own book of Polaroids, highlighting or remembering something you're passionate about.

#### *Creative Writing*

*Rotters* is written in first-person past tense. Try writing a scene from the novel in a different tense like first-person present, second, or third-person past. Reflect on how the different tenses and perspectives change the feel of the scene.

### **Discussion questions:**

- How does Iowa differ as a setting from Joey's hometown of Chicago, and how does this contribute to the turn Joey's life takes?
- What did you know about grave robbing before reading this book? Now, how do you feel about the practice and its history?
- How does the use of the word *Rotters* change throughout the novel as different characters say it? What do you think a *Rotter* is?
- What do you think Joey Crouch's future will be like? What evidence from the text supports your opinion?

### **If you loved this, you'll like:**

Gaiman, Neil. *The Graveyard Book*. HarperCollins, 2008.  
Lyga, Barry. *I Hunt Killers*. Little, Brown, 2012.  
Oppel, Kenneth. *This Dark Endeavor*. Simon & Schuster, 2011.  
Salomon, Peter Adam. *Henry Franks*. Flux, 2012.  
Smith, Alexander Gordon. *Lockdown*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009.  
Yancey, Rick. *The Monstrumologist*. Simon & Schuster, 2009.

### **Other books by this author:**

*The Monster Variations*. Delacorte, 2009.  
*Scowler*. Delacorte, 2013.

### **Additional resources:**

Author's website: <http://www.danielkraus.com/books/rotters/>

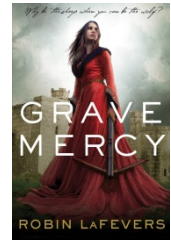
Cory Doctorow's review at BoingBoing.net: <http://boingboing.net/2011/06/15/rotters-ya-horror-no.html>

Official book trailer: <http://www.goodreads.com/videos/13583-rotters---book-trailer>

Article by James Poskett about Resurrection Men:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2012/oct/19/doctors-dissection-resurrection-men-museum-london>

# GRAVE MERCY

## by Robin LaFevers



**Genre:** Fantasy, Historical Fiction, Romance

**Themes:** Courts and Courtiers, Death, Gods, Love, Middle Ages, War

**Author information:** Robin LaFevers grew up in Los Angeles and lives in Southern California with her husband and two sons. She has written 13 books for middle grades (ages 9-12), with series focusing on Egypt, mythical beasts, and magic, as well as *Grave Mercy* and two other books in the His Fair Assassin series for teens. *Grave Mercy* took LaFevers five or six years to write, and she describes it as a “strange, bizarre idea.”

**Plot summary:** Ismae bears Death’s mark, a horrible scar that indicates Mortain, patron saint of death, is her father. When her wedding night exposes her scar and results in a terrible beating, Ismae is whisked away to the Convent of Saint Mortain, where she is trained to serve as one of Death’s handmaidens – an assassin, searching for Death’s mark to guide her hand. When she is assigned to serve as the mistress to Duval, one of the late duke’s bastard sons, and to uncover a plot against the beloved Duchess of Brittany, she must decide for herself who to trust, how to serve Death... and who to love.

**Booktalk:** Several daggers, a large anlace, a small dirk, a thin stiletto, a needle-like stylet, two garrotes – one hidden in a fancy bracelet – and a small crossbow, as well as several poisons. If you wear Death’s mark, you’ll want to steer clear of Ismae and Death’s other handmaidens, because they are trained to kill.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *Science*

The novel frequently makes reference to potions and herbal medicine. Research medicine in the Late Middle Ages, and write an essay answering the following question: If you could go back to this time period, what is the one most important piece of advice you would give a doctor?

#### *Religion/Mythology*

Look at the stories of the old saints, such as the tale of Mortain and Amourna on page 366. Choose a saint and compare and contrast his or her story to those of their Greek counterparts. (For example, compare Mortain to Hades.)

#### *Religion*

Write a comparative essay on the perception and treatment of death in two of the world’s major religions.

#### *History/Geography*

Create an illustrated timeline showing the history of the region of Brittany.

### *Social Studies*

Research arranged marriages in the past and present. Write two short essays: one in support of arranged marriage, and one against it.

### *History*

The duchess in the story is only twelve years old. Choose a historical figure that achieved great things at a young age. Prepare and perform a monologue as that historical figure, using costumes or props to add authenticity to your performance.

### **Discussion questions:**

- Why do you think the author titled the book *Grave Mercy*?
- On pages 430-431, Ismae and Madame Hivern discuss women's lack of choices in life. Do you think any of the points they discuss hold true today?
- As we near the end of the book, Ismae begins to make decisions that go against the convent's wishes. How has she changed since the beginning of the book? What personality traits did she have from the start that contributed to her decisions?
- On page 524, Ismae reflects on "the sense of unending possibilities (she) had when in the presence of Death." Do you equate death with possibility?
- On page 536, Crunard states that trading Anne's life for that of his son "seemed a fair trade." What would you trade for the life of a family member?

### **If you loved this, you'll like:**

Carson, Rae. *Girl of Fire and Thorns*. Greenwillow Books, 2012.  
Hartman, Rachel. *Seraphina*. Random House, 2012.  
LaFevers, Robin. *Dark Triumph*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013.  
LaFevers, Robin. *Mortal Heart*. Houghton Mifflin, 2014.  
Shepherd, Megan. *The Madman's Daughter*. Balzer + Bray, 2013.  
Stiefvater, Maggie. *The Raven Boys*. Scholastic, 2012.  
Yovanoff, Brenna. *The Space Between*. Razorbill, 2011.  
Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. Knopf, 2006.

### **Other books by this author:**

His Fair Assassin series (Teen)  
*Dark Triumph*. Houghton Mifflin, 2013.  
*Mortal Heart*. Houghton Mifflin, 2014.

Nathaniel Fludd, Beastologist series (Middle Grades)  
*Flight of the Phoenix*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.  
*The Basilisk's Lair*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.  
*The Wyverns' Treasure*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.  
*The Unicorn's Treasure*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.

Theodosia Series (Middle Grades)

*The Serpents of Chaos*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007.

*The Staff of Osiris*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008.

*The Eyes of Horus*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

*The Last Pharaoh*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011.

Lowthar's Blade Series (Middle Grades)

*The True Blade of Power*. Dutton Juvenile, 2005.

*The Forging of the Blade*. Puffin, 2006.

*The Secrets of Grim Wood*. Puffin, 2006.

*The Falconmaster*. Dutton Juvenile, 2003.

*Werewolf Rising*. Dutton Juvenile, 2006.

**Additional resources:**

Author interview: <http://bethrevis.blogspot.com/2012/05/interview-week-robin-lafevers-author-of.html>

*Grave Mercy* book trailer: <http://www.robinlafevers.com/2012/01/31/grave-mercy-trailer/>

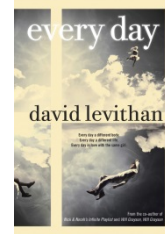
Robin LaFev's playlist for *Dark Triumph*: <http://shelf-life.ew.com/2013/02/04/robin-lafevers-dark-triumph-trailer-playlist-interview-exclusive/>

Robin LaFev's website for middle grades: <http://www.rllafevers.com/Home.html>

Robin LaFev's website for teens: <http://www.robinlafevers.com/> (includes blog, history information, and a section on "The World of His Fair Assassin," including some pictures)



## EVERY DAY by David Levithan



**Genres:** Magical Realism, Romance, Existential

**Themes:** Identity, Empathy, Self-Exploration, Love, Loss, Existence, Relationships, Respect and Responsibility, Families, Gender and Sexuality

**Author information:** “The factual approach (born ’72, Brown ’94, first book ’03) seems a bit dry, while the emotional landscape (happy childhood, happy adolescence – give or take a few poems – and happy adulthood so far) sounds horribly well-adjusted. The only addiction I’ve ever had was a brief spiral into the arms of diet Dr Pepper, unless you count *My So-Called Life* episodes as a drug. I am evangelical in my musical beliefs,” (<http://davidlevithan.com/about/>). David Levithan is a prolific and insightful author and editor. His books and collaborations frequently center on identity and relationships, and he has been one of the most prominent authors representing GLBTQ identity in the YA genre. He is the founding editor of PUSH, an imprint of Scholastic. “PUSH is about discovering the voices of here and now. It is about telling stories that feel real even if they’re not. These are authors who get what life can be like. The pain. The joy. Vulnerability and the twisted roots of identity. Self-destruction and the strange journeys we take toward recovery. Our promise is to keep finding new voices to ring out the complicated truth of today.” (<http://www.thisispush.com/>)

**Plot summary:** A wakes up every day in a different body, goes through the motion of that person’s day, experiences their life, their conflicts, their family, friends, sadness, hurt, joy, and love. A tries to leave no trace, no impact, out of respect and from fear of what that might do to a person. A has developed a way to survive this bizarrely unique life. And this is fine, until A meets Rhiannon when A wakes up as her boyfriend, Justin. A cannot shake the want, the need for permanence, for a second day, for a lifetime with this one person. But A’s existence is enigmatic, and trying to stay proves dangerous and forces A to break the rules A’s been so good about following, causing ripples A never could have anticipated. An exploration of existence and empathy and the ways we affect each person we come in contact with, *Every Day* is a brilliantly tragic and eerily beautiful love story grounded in hope.

**Booktalk:** “Every person is a possibility...the only way to keep going is to see every person as a possibility.” Meet A, a stoner metal head. Meet A, the mean girl you dread in the hall. Meet A, a homeschooled virgin terrified of his mother. Meet A, the debonair boy who used to be a girl. Meet A, the suicidal girl you pretend not to see because you don’t know how to help. Meet A, A is you, A is me, A is your best friend, and your worst enemy. You’ve met A many times, and you’ve also never met A. Because A is everyone, and A is no one. And that’s ok, because tomorrow morning, A will be gone. But now, because of *her*, A wants to do the impossible...stay.

**Curriculum tie-ins:**

*English*

A and Alexander Lin are both fascinated by quotes and utilize them to communicate to

people with whom they cross paths. Create a quote journal, recording meaningful quotes from books, songs, everyday life, etc. Or, like Alexander, decorate a classroom with inspiring quotes, which can be used as writing prompts or discussion starters.

Pair students up and have them spend a week sporadically observing a peer, exploring what it would be like to live life as that person. Students can create their own questions about routines and family traditions and then conduct an interview. Have the matched pairs creatively present each other and share their observations and moments of learning.

### *History*

A's presence is explained by zealots as demonic possession. Have each student explore a case in history of supposed demonic possession, or other instance explained by the occult (Salem Witch Trials, for example). Students could present their cases creatively, either as the accused or as the accuser. (This could also be done as a debate with pairs or groups on either side, trying to prove that this was in fact, a possession, or that the occurrence can easily be explained by other factors.)

### *Sociology/Health/Ethics*

Have each student do a good deed for someone else, with nothing in return except that the recipient does a good deed for someone else and so on. Have students track their "pay it forward" progress, and see what an impact doing something positive can have. Alternately, this could be a school-wide activity, where there is no need to track others' good deeds, just your own. Scatter drop boxes around school with blank index cards and have students jot down when they do a kind deed for someone. At the end, create a wall filled with positivity by taping up all of the good deeds.

### **Discussion questions:**

- Of all the people A takes over for a day, whose life do you think A makes the biggest impact on? Why do you think this?
- How do you feel about the way A and Rhiannon handle Kelsea Cook's day when they discover she wants to kill herself? What would you have done if put in the same situation?
- What do you imagine happens to A at the close of the book? How do you think Rhiannon moves forward with her life?
- Do you think humans can be truly empathetic? A actually walks in other people's shoes and experiences their lives, and even so, A cannot know everything about how they're feeling. How can we attempt to be more empathetic to those around us? How does empathy play a role in this book? When is A empathetic? When is Rhiannon? When is Nathan?
- A seems to relate to Vic in a way that A doesn't relate to other characters, because Vic exists in the "blur." How are people's identities portrayed by the author as parts of a spectrum versus categories in a box? Which characters have more fluid identities? Which have more static, immovable identities?
- Why do you think A chooses Alexander Lin to, in essence, take A's place?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

Asher, Jay. *13 Reasons Why*. Razorbill, 2007.  
Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. MTV Books/Pocket Books, 1999.  
Green, John. *Looking for Alaska*. Dutton, 2005.  
Rowell, Rainbow. *Eleanor & Park*. St Martin's Griffin, 2013. (on this year's GMBA list)  
Tharp, Tim. *The Spectacular Now*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2008.  
Zevin, Gabrielle. *Elsewhere*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Some of the books A suggests in *Every Day*:

Anderson, M. T. *Feed*. Candlewick Press, 2002.  
Castellucci, Cecil. *First Day on Earth*. Scholastic Press, 2011.  
Nelson, Blake. *Destroy All Cars*. Scholastic Press, 2009.  
Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2006.

Rhiannon's pick for A:

Johnson, Crockett. *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. Harper and Brothers, 1955.

**Other books by this author:**

*Boy Meets Boy*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2003.  
*The Realm of Possibility*. Borzoi / Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.  
*Naomi and Ely's No Kiss List*. (with Rachel Cohn) Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2006.  
*Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*. (with Rachel Cohn) Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2006.  
*How They Met and Other Stories*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2008.  
*Wide Awake*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2010.  
*Dash and Lily's Book of Dares*. (with Rachel Cohn) Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2011.  
*The Lover's Dictionary*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.  
*Will Grayson, Will Grayson*. Dutton Juvenile, 2011.  
*Two Boys Kissing*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2013.

**Additional resources:**

Author website: <http://davidlevithan.com/>

Author's Lover's Dictionary Twitter Page: <https://twitter.com/loversdiction>

Author's Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/David-Levithan/139042149485971>

Push Imprint of Scholastic Page: <http://www.thisispush.com/>

The Empathy Library: <http://empathylibrary.com/>

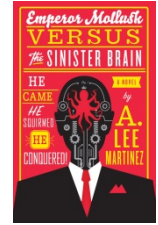
The Empathy Library is a digital treasure house designed to share inspiring books and films to spark a global empathy revolution.

Humans of New York: <http://www.humansofnewyork.com/>

A glimpse into the lives of various people in New York City that has inspired many other “Humans of…” sites. Just like A, we get a tidbit of each subject’s life. Beautiful, impactful, and easy to devour, this site spurs curiosity, explores identity, and expands our perspectives and understanding of others.

# EMPEROR MOLLUSK VERSUS THE SINISTER BRAIN

## by A. Lee Martinez



**Genre:** Science Fiction, Humor

**Themes:** Aliens, Friendship, Politics, Technology of the Future

**Author information:** A. Lee Martinez likes to keep himself shrouded in mystery. In the beginning of his career, he refused to publish pictures of himself, and even today his humor covers an unwillingness to share about himself. We do know that he was born in El Paso, Texas, and that he began writing when he was eighteen, simply because he didn't have any other plans for his life. When asked what he would do if he found he only had 24 hours to live, Martinez responded that he would spend time with friends and family, eat a meatball sub, and watch the movie *Krull* one last time.

**Plot summary:** Emperor Mollusk, evil genius and former warlord, lives a pleasant life on Terra, retired from conquering. But when Venusian warrior Zala turns up, claiming to be sent to protect Mollusk from a major threat against him, the two aliens and Mollusk's beloved giant centipede, Snarg, find themselves on a journey full of strange creatures, mysterious clues, and danger. Lots of danger. Emperor Mollusk must use his genius to get them out of some extremely sticky situations, and ultimately to defeat the creature behind it all: The Sinister Brain.

**Booktalk:** What would you do if a sinister, disembodied brain were out to get you? Well, if you're anything like Emperor Mollusk, you would walk straight into his traps, facing danger and double-crossers at every turn, never knowing what to expect or whom to trust. Why would you do that, you might ask. Why not try to defeat the Sinister Brain from afar, safe and sound, away from his evil maneuvers? Well, when you're an alien cephalopod and an evil genius yourself – possibly the *most* evil and *most* genius in the universe, I might add – a jaunt through certain death and universal destruction just might be... well... *fun*.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *Writing*

Imagine Emperor Mollusk as a child. Write a short story that shows an interaction between young Mollusk and his parents.

Write a procedural essay describing how to take over a planet.

#### *History*

Research and present a report on a historical tyrant. Pay particular attention to his or her methods of conquering and maintaining control over the masses.

Emperor Mollusk takes a trip to the Everlasting Dynasty, a fictional ancient civilization that has survived to the present. Create an illustrated timeline of fallen civilizations throughout history.

## Art

Design your own exo. Be sure to include and explain any special features.

## Science/Biology

Read *Emperor Mollusk versus The Sinister Brain* to stimulate imagination during a unit on the phylum Mollusca. Complete the unit with the dissection of a squid.

## Discussion questions:

- How does Mollusk's relationship with Zala change throughout the story? Compare their first interaction on page 14 to their final conversation in Chapter 26.
- Do you think Kreegah is a plausible character? How would a completely uncivilized person react to today's society?
- Compare Emperor Mollusk to the Sinister Brain. What personality traits do they share? What separates them from one another?
- Why is Mollusk so partial to Terra?
- On page 272, Emperor Mollusk tells Zala that he had no choice but to remove her brain. Do you think this is true? How did you feel about his decision to remove it?
- Were you surprised by who was behind the Sinister Brain's plot? How did the author foreshadow the ending?

## If you loved this, you'll like:

Adams, Douglas. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Del Rey, 1995.

Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*. Signet Classics, 1996.

Pierson, DC. *The Boy Who Couldn't Sleep and Never Had To*. Vintage, 2010.

Reid, Rob. *Year Zero*. Del Rey, 2013.

Saunders, George. *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*. Riverhead Trade, 2005.

Scalzi, John. *Redshirts*. Tor Books, 2013.

Vaughn, Carrie. *After the Golden Age*. Tor Fantasy, 2012.

## Other books by this author:

*Gil's All Fright Diner*. Tor Books, 2006.

*In the Company of Ogres*. Tor Books, 2007.

*A Nameless Witch*. Tor Books, 2008.

*Too Many Curses*. Tor Books, 2008.

*The Automatic Detective*. Tor Books, 2009.

*Monster*. Orbit, 2010.

*Divine Misfortune*. Orbit, 2011.

*Chasing the Moon*. Orbit, 2012.

*Helen and Troy's Epic Road Quest*. Orbit, 2013.

Martinez has also written several short stories, most of which can be found on his official website, <http://www.aleemartinez.com/>.

**Additional resources:**

A. Lee Martinez's official website: <http://www.aleemartinez.com/>

Miller, Geoffrey. *Why We Haven't Met Any Aliens*. Available online at [http://seedmagazine.com/content/article/why\\_we\\_havent\\_met\\_any.aliens/](http://seedmagazine.com/content/article/why_we_havent_met_any.aliens/)

Mumfrey, W. H. *The Alien Invasion Survival Handbook*. HOW Books, 2009.

NOVA. *Carl Sagan on Alien Abduction*. Available online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/space/sagan-alien-abduction.html>

Oceanic Research Group: The Wonders of the Seas: Mollusks: <http://www.oceanicresearch.org/education/wonders/mollusk.html>

Orbit Books: Interview with A. Lee Martinez: <https://www.orbitbooks.net/interview/a-lee-martinez-2/>

# TEN

by Gretchen McNeil



**Genre:** Mystery/Horror

**Themes:** Isolation, Revenge, Popularity, Social Cliques, Bullying

**Author information:** As well as being an author of four books, Gretchen McNeil is an opera singer, writer and clown. Gretchen is a former coloratura soprano, the voice of Mary on G4's *Code Monkeys*, and she currently sings with the LA-based circus troupe Cirque Berzerk. She is also an active member of The Enchanted Inkpot blog, and a founding member of the vlog YA Rebels.

**Book summary:** Ten teens gather on exclusive Henry Island for a three day house party with no adults. Before long, though, a raging storm closes in leaving the teens with no way to contact the outside world or escape the island. Soon the party takes a dark turn. As the teens begin to be murdered one by one they quickly turn on each other.

## **Booktalk:**

Shhhh!

Don't spread the word! Three-day weekend. House party.

White Rock House on Henry Island.

You do not want to miss it.

Best friends Meg and Minnie each have their own reasons for wanting to be at the exclusive house party, which involves their school's most eligible bachelor, T. J. Fletcher. They look forward to three days of boys, bonding, and luxury. But what starts out as fun turns dark and twisted after a sinister message is discovered: Vengeance is mine. Soon after, people start dying and the teens are cut off from the rest of the world. No electricity, no phones, no internet, and a ferry that isn't scheduled to return for three days. The deaths become more violent and the teens begin to turn on each other. Can Meg unmask the murderer in their midst before it is too late?

## **Curriculum tie-ins:**

### *English*

The novel is based on the Agatha Christie classic *And Then There Were None*. Have students read both titles to compare and contrast them. What are the differences in writing styles? Christie's book was published in 1939, McNeil's in 2012. What changes were necessary to modernize the story? What was, or could have been, left the same? How did the modern setting and teen protagonists affect the suspense in *Ten* in comparison to *And Then There Were None*?

### *History/Sociology*

*Ten* is based on the mystery *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie. The Christie book was first published in the UK under the title *Ten Little Niggers*. The first American publication was titled *Ten Little Indians*. Are the three different titles a reflection of societal changes or censorship? Why was the term Nigger used in the UK, but not



America? *And Then There Were None* was published 75 years ago; what words used in modern society do you think will be considered taboo 75 years from now?

### **Discussion questions:**

- Meg and Minnie are supposed to be best friends, but already seem to be arguing on the ferry. Is this a realistic “best friend” relationship? Would the outcome have been different for their characters if they stuck together? How?
- Meg was not friends with the majority of the people invited to the party. Is it in character for Meg to attend a three day house party with people who were not her friends? If you were Meg, would you go?
- Minnie’s character is revealed to be bi-polar. Is that necessary to the story? How would it change the story if she were not?
- Would the story have been more or less suspenseful if it was told in the first person?

### **If you loved this, you’ll like:**

Asher, Jay. *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Razorbill, 2007.  
Christie, Agatha. *And Then There Were None*. Collins, 1939.  
Duncan, Lois. *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. Little Brown, 1973.  
Henry, April. *The Night She Disappeared*. Henry Holt and Co., 2012.  
Pike, Christopher. *Chain Letter*. Avon, 1986.

### **Other books by this author:**

*Possess*. Balzer + Bray, 2011.  
*3:59*. Balzer + Bray, 2013.  
*Get Even*. Balzer + Bray, coming September 2014.

### **Additional resources:**

Gretchen McNeil is a founding member of the vlog group YA Rebels, a group of nine YA authors, agents, and book lovers talking honestly about everything related to Young Adult. YA Rebels YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/YARebels/featured>

YA Rebels Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/yarebels>

Gretchen McNeil is an active member of The Enchanted Inkpot, a group blog of YA and middle grade fantasy writers: <http://enchantedinkpot.blogspot.com/>

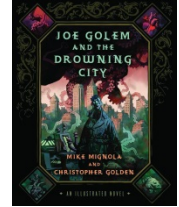
Gretchen McNeil is a singer with Cirque Berzerk. Visit their website at: <http://www.cirqueberzerk.com/>

Visit Gretchen’s website at: <http://www.gretchenmcneil.com/#>

Visit Gretchen’s blog at: <http://gretchenmcneil.blogspot.com/>

# JOE GOLEM AND THE DROWNING CITY

## by Mike Mignola and Christopher Golden



**Genre:** Science Fiction, Fantasy, Alternate History, Steampunk, Horror

**Themes:** Coming of Age, Heroism, Humanity, Good vs. Evil

**Author information:** Born September 16, 1960, Mike Mignola is an American comic book artist and writer who created the comic book series *Hellboy* for Dark Horse Comics. He has worked for animation projects such as *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* and the adaptation of his one shot comic book, *The Amazing Screw-On Head*. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike\\_Mignola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Mignola))

Christopher Golden (born July 15, 1967) is an American author of horror, fantasy, and suspense novels for adults, teens, and young readers. In addition to novels, Golden has also written comic books and video games and co-written the online animated series *Ghosts of Albion* with actress/writer/director Amber Benson. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher\\_Golden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Golden))

**Plot summary:** After a series of earthquakes, Manhattan has been partially submerged underwater. Those who still live there are the poor, the destitute and those too proud to give up their homes. Among them is a young girl named Molly McHugh and her friend and former employer Felix Orlov. Once a great magician, Felix now ekes out a living as a medium, and contacts the dead to offer solace to those who need it. When one of his séances goes awry, Felix is captured by a mysterious group and Molly must run for her life. With the help of Joe Golem, a man made of stone and clay, Molly must uncover the mystery of Felix's disappearance and the truth underneath the Drowned City.

**Booktalk:** It's cold and dark under the water. In that water, things lurk. Dark things, made of tentacles and magic. They will pull you down. Down into the deep forever black. One thing can stop them. A hand. A hand made of stone. The hand belongs to an arm that belongs to a body. The body of a man who isn't. The body of a golem who would crush those things in the darkness.

### Curriculum connections:

#### *English*

Examine the connections between 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century horror writers (Poe, Lovecraft, etc.) and modern takes on their works.

Trace the development of modern sequential art (graphic novels) and how this differs from traditional novels and picture stories.

#### *Religion/Folklore*

Examine connections between past representations of folklore, legends, and myths and modern interpretations.

Research the Golem folktale. There are many retellings including the picture book,

*Golem*, by David Wisniewski (Clarion, 1996) and the longer version *The Golem*, by Barbara Rogasky (Holiday House, 1996). What are the similarities and differences between the Golem of Jewish folklore and Joe Golem?

Examine the importance of folklore and legends in past cultures and how these stories are similar to modern ones (superheroes/pulp heroes).

**Discussion questions:**

- Does Joe have actual desire, or is he merely a tool? Does this impact any nobility his actions might have?
- Why don't the people of the city just leave? What would your response be if your hometown were suddenly struck with disaster?
- Why is an identity so important to Joe? What would having an identity afford him?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

Lovecraft, H.P. *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*. Penguin, 1999.

Mignola, Mike. *Hellboy Vol. 1: Seeds of Destruction*. Dark Horse, 2003.

Mignola, Mike. *The Amazing Screw-On Head*. Dark Horse, 2010.

**Other books by this author:**

Mignola, Mike. *The Amazing Screw-On Head*. Dark Horse, 2010.

Mignola, Mike. B.P.R.D. series

Mignola, Mike. Hellboy series

Golden, Christopher. *Cemetery Girl*. InkLit, 2014.

Golden, Christopher. *King of Hell*. Simon & Schuster, 2014.

Golden, Christopher. *Snowblind*. St. Martin's, 2014.

**Additional resources:**

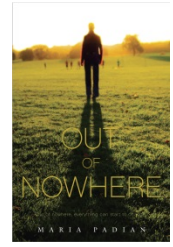
Mike Mignola's website: <http://www.artofmikemignola.com/>

Christopher Golden's website: <http://www.christophergolden.com/>

Primer on the works of H.P Lovecraft: <http://io9.com/5391563/lovecraft-101-get-to-know-the-master-of-scifi-horror>

# OUT OF NOWHERE

## By Maria Padian



**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Themes:** Immigration, Refugee Populations, Cultural Differences, Religious Diversity, Small Town Life, Soccer

**Author information:** A graduate of Middlebury College, Maria Padian worked as a news reporter, congressional aide, press secretary, radio essayist, and freelance writer before beginning her career as a novelist. Her first book, *Brett McCarthy: Work in Progress*, was selected by the American Library Association as one of the Best Books for Young Adults in 2009. She lives with her family in Brunswick, ME, where she is currently at work on a new novel.

**Plot summary:** Tom Bouchard hasn't thought much about the recent influx of Somali refugees into his small Maine community. Sure, he's seen them in the high school hallways with that deer-in-the-headlights look and he's heard his uncle complain about how they drain the town's resources, but really he hasn't paid much attention. Until, that is, the day he passes a soccer ball back to his Somali teammate and magic happens. For the first time ever, Tom and his teammates give their biggest soccer rivals a real game. Tom realizes that with the Somalis on his team, his school has a real chance at the championships. All he has to do is get the Somalis and his teammates on the same page, which turns out to be much harder than he could ever imagine.

**Booktalk:** Soccer star Tom Bouchard is desperate to win a championship for his high school team. When Somali immigrant Saeed comes out of nowhere to help the team beat their biggest rivals, Tom knows he's got to make this boy a starter on the team. What he doesn't see coming is the collision of cultures that will follow.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *Sociology*

Interview a recent immigrant about his or her experiences coming to this country.

#### *Social Studies/Geography*

Research recent immigration trends in your town and locate the countries of origin on a world map.

#### *Religion*

Research differences in rituals and practices between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. How might these cause misunderstanding or friction?

### Discussion questions:

- “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” How does this saying pertain to some of the actions Tom takes with his Somali friends?

- As Tom says in the book, "You gotta wonder who the genius was that came up with the plan to put a bunch of Africans in Maine, the coldest, whitest state in America." What are some of the conflicts that arise in this situation and what might be done to ease those tensions?
- How do the actions of Tom, his uncle, Saeed, Myla, and Cherisse reflect their underlying cultural values and beliefs?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

Budhos, Marina. *Ask Me No Questions* Atheneum, 2007.

Peet, Mal. *Keeper*. Candlewick, 2007.

St. John, Warren. *Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference*. Spiegel & Grau, 2009.

Smith, Andrew. *Winger*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2013.

Stewart, Elizabeth. *Blue Gold*. Annick Press, 2014.

Stratton, Allan. *Borderline*. Harper Teen, 2012.

**Other books by this author:**

*Brett McCarthy: Work in Progress*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2009.

*Jersey Tomatoes Are the Best*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2011.

**Additional resources:**

Maria Padian's website: <http://www.mariapadian.com/>

Discussion guide for *Out of Nowhere* and *Outcasts United*:

[http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/OutcastsUnited\\_OutofNowhere\\_EG\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/OutcastsUnited_OutofNowhere_EG_WEB.pdf)

# ELEANOR & PARK

## by Rainbow Rowell



**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Themes:** First Love, Family Issues, Bullying, Comics, Music, Coming of Age

**Author information:** Rainbow Rowell writes books. Sometimes she writes about adults (*Attachments* and *Landline*). Sometimes she writes about teenagers (*Eleanor & Park* and *Fangirl*). But she always writes about people who talk a lot. And people who feel like they're screwing up. And people who fall in love. When she's not writing, Rainbow is reading comic books, planning Disney World trips, and arguing about things that don't really matter in the big scheme of things. She lives in Nebraska with her husband and two sons.

**Plot summary:** Set over the course of one school year in 1986 and featuring two beautifully distinct point of view characters, *Eleanor & Park* is the story of Eleanor, the insecure new girl in town, and Park, the quiet Asian-American kid with a seemingly perfect family. When Park first sees Eleanor on the bus and tells her to take the open seat next to him, neither of them know that a few shared comics and mix-tapes will create a bond that grows and grows until they are both undeniably in love. But when Eleanor's family life becomes too much to handle, the bond that she's formed with Park gets tested to the limit, as does the power of first love.

**Booktalk:** Have you ever met someone that you've just connected with? Who has so much in common with you and nothing in common with you at the same time? Someone who frustrates you more than anyone you know, and yet you can't stop thinking about them for more than a couple of seconds? That's what it's like when Eleanor meets Park.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *Social Studies*

Research the politics and daily life of middle-America in the 1980's to get a better sense of what Eleanor's and Park's world is like. Now place them into today's society at your own school. What about their story would stay the same? What would be different, and why?

#### *Art and Music*

Music plays a large role in the lives of both Eleanor and Park. Pick a scene or chapter from the book and create a playlist to go with it. Next, create a playlist for a moment in your own life, and then reflect on and explain your choices.

#### *English and Social Studies*

Read *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. Use the dialogue and descriptions from *Eleanor & Park* as the basis for your discussion and analysis.

### **Discussion questions:**

- Think about the music in the novel. How does it serve as a symbol for each character's mood?
- How do the relationships Eleanor and Park have with each of their parents shape the way they interact with each other?
- What type of descriptive language do Eleanor and Park use to describe themselves and each other, and how does it change when the narration switches?
- Why do you think Rainbow Rowell chose to set the book in the 1980's and how, if at all, would the story be different in the present day?
- What actions by secondary characters create the world that Eleanor and Park exist in?

### **If you loved this, you'll like:**

Barson, K.A. *45 Pounds (More or Less)*. Viking, 2013.  
Forman, Gayle. *Just One Day*. Penguin, 2013.  
Green, John. *Looking for Alaska*. Dutton, 2005.  
King, A.S. *Please Ignore Vera Dietz*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.  
Smith, Andrew. *Winger*. Simon and Schuster, 2013.  
Whaley, John Corey. *Where Things Come Back*. Atheneum, 2011.

### **Other books by this author:**

*Attachments*. Dutton, 2009.  
*Fangirl*. St. Martin's Press, 2013.  
*Landline*. St. Martin's Press, coming July 2014.

### **Additional resources:**

Author's website: <http://rainbowrowell.com/blog/book/eleanor-park/>

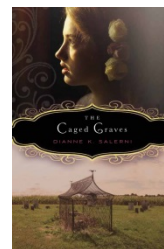
John Green's review from The New York Times:  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/books/review/eleanor-park-by-rainbow-rowell.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/books/review/eleanor-park-by-rainbow-rowell.html?_r=0)

Official book trailer: <http://www.goodreads.com/videos/40006-eleanor-park-by-rainbow-rowell-book-trailer-4>

Playlists and videos of music from the book: <http://rainbowrowell.com/blog/2013/03/eleanor-park-all-the-playlists-all-the-music/>

# THE CAGED GRAVES

by Dianne K. Salerni



**Genre:** Historical Fiction

**Themes:** Mystery, Adventure, Action, Romance

**Author information:** Dianne K. Salerni is a fourth- and fifth-grade teacher in Chester County, Pennsylvania, where she lives with her husband and two daughters. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Delaware and a Master's in Language Arts Education from the University of Pennsylvania. Salerni first discovered the real-life caged graves in Catawissa, Pennsylvania, in January of 2010.

**Plot or book summary:** In 1867, after returning to Catawissa, Pennsylvania, the town of her birth, to marry a man she has never met, 17-year-old Verity Boone makes an unpleasant discovery: the graves of her mother and aunt are located in mysterious cages, and no one will give her an explanation. With the help of her fiancé and a young doctor also newly arrived to Catawissa, Verity decides to investigate, digging (metaphorically) into the town's past and uncovering secrets about the graves, witchcraft, and buried Revolutionary War gold.

**Booktalk:** "In Catawissa, the dead don't always stay where you put them." Not exactly the answer Verity wants to hear when she asks about the odd cages surrounding the graves of her mother and aunt. Verity enlists the help of her fiancé and a young doctor in her quest to uncover the truth behind the graves, rumors of buried treasure, and the whispers of witchcraft that seem to link the two.

## Curriculum tie-ins:

### *History*

Research post-Civil War life in small towns impacted by the conflict. How was life different from before the war? How did it differ from North to South? Did the author accurately depict this life?

### *Creative Writing*

The author wrote this story to explain some real caged graves she found outside a cemetery in Catawissa. Try writing your own story to explain their existence.

## Discussion questions:

- How does Verity respond to the criticism she receives for investigating the circumstances surrounding her mother's death? Why do you think she continues rather than just giving up and accepting the explanations given to her?
- How does the setting affect the plot? How would the story have been different if it took place in a city or in a more remote location?



- The townspeople of Catawissa look down upon the Clayton family for having strange beliefs. Do you know any person or group that is judged for having different beliefs from the rest of the community? How do you feel about this?
- Nate's and Verity's courtship is comprised entirely of written correspondence. In spite of this, Verity still agrees to become engaged without having ever met Nate in person. Could this type of relationship happen today?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

Bradley, Alan. *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie*. Delacorte Press, 2009.  
 Pope, Elizabeth Marie. *The Sherwood Ring*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958.  
 Updale, Eleanor. *Montmorency: Thief, Liar, Gentleman?* Scholastic, 2003.

**Other books by this author:**

*We Hear the Dead*. Sourcebooks Fire, 2010.  
*The Eighth Day*. HarperCollins, 2014.

**Additional resources:**

Author's website: <http://www.highspiritsbook.com/>

Author's blog: <http://diannesalerni.blogspot.com/p/the-caged-graves.html>

A conversation with the author on radio show *Literary New England*:  
<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/literarynewengland/2013/07/23/susan-rebecca-dianne-salerni-janet-groth-royce-prouty>

Discussion questions:  
<http://www.highspiritsbook.com/Discussion%20Questions%20for%20The%20Caged%20Graves.pdf>

## BLINK AND CAUTION by Tim Wynne-Jones



**Genre:** Mystery, Thriller, Adventure, Crime

**Themes:** Homelessness, Corporate Politics, Domestic and Sexual Abuse, Relationships

**Author information:** Tim Wynne-Jones was born near Liverpool, UK, in 1948 and immigrated to Canada in 1952, where he was raised in British Columbia and Ontario. He currently lives in Perth, Ontario, and is a faculty member at the Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier. Before writing over 30 books for children, teens, and adults, Tim was a member of a rock band in Toronto and a cover band in Waterloo. His books have won multiple awards, including the Governor General's Award, Edgar Award of the Mystery Writers of America, and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award.

**Plot summary:** Blink (Brent Conboy) lives on the streets and has to scrounge for food every day, but one day is different from the rest: he witnesses a staged kidnapping of a prominent Toronto CEO. Meanwhile, Caution (Kitty Pettigrew) lives with her abusive boyfriend Merlin, whom she just realizes made a sex tape of her without her knowing about it. Brent pursues the mystery of the staged kidnapping that is now all over the news, and Kitty runs away from Merlin, only to narrowly escape him with every move she makes. Their fates collide at a Toronto train station, where Brent confesses everything he saw and Kitty decides to join him. The two pursue the mystery to the very end, which involves staking out a house by the bay, getting past dangerous bodyguards, and escaping from the house. However, perhaps more important than solving this mystery is whether Brent and Kitty can forgive themselves for their own secret crimes.

**Booktalk:** Blink needs to eat. He needs to eat now. He's snuck into a hotel, and hopefully someone has left something edible outside of their doors, but he ends up witnessing more than just his stolen breakfast. The reporters on TV say there's been a kidnapping of a major CEO, but it didn't look like a kidnapping to Blink. Meanwhile, Caution must escape from her boyfriend named Merlin, but it's harder than she thinks when it appears that he can trace her every move. Colliding at a Toronto train station, Blink and Caution must trust each other with their secrets in order to solve the kidnapping mystery and move forward with their fragile lives.

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *Sociology*

Throughout the story, Brent and Kitty are homeless teens, meaning neither of them has a safe and/or reliable place to live. Research information about homelessness in the United States, specifically how it affects children and teens. What national and local organizations and resources are available to help homeless teens?

#### *English*

Brent's chapters are told in second-person narrative, which is used less often than first-person or third-person. How does this change how you relate to and perceive Brent?

Rewrite one of Brent's chapters as if it were told from first-person or third-person point of view. How does this change the story?

### **Discussion questions:**

- Blink's real name is Brent Conboy, and Caution's real name is Kitty Pettigrew. What do their nicknames mean? Do you think their nicknames fit them?
- In noir fiction, the detective mystery isn't told from the point of view of the detective, but from the victim, suspect, or perpetrator. Why is it important that the story is told from Brent's and Kitty's points of view? How are their POVs similar and how are they different?
- In Chapter 19, we learn exactly what happened in Kitty's past. Is she to blame, or is she too hard on herself? In the afterword, the author claims, "Whatever anyone might try to tell you about how it's people who kill people, not guns, they're wrong." What do you think about that statement?
- When do Brent and Kitty start trusting each other, and why do they trust each other? If you were in either of their shoes, do you think you'd be as trusting as they are?
- What do you imagine for Brent's and Kitty's futures?

### **If you loved this, you'll like:**

Blundell, Judy. *What I Saw and How I Lied*. Scholastic, 2008.

Leavitt, Martine. *My Book of Life By Angel*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.

McMann, Lisa. *Dead to You*. Simon Pulse, 2010.

Myracle, Lauren. *Shine*. Amulet Books, 2011.

Whaley, John Corey. *Where Things Come Back*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2011.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Beneath a Meth Moon*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2011.

### **Other books by this author:**

*The Maestro*. Greenwood Books, 1995.

*The Boy in the Burning House*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

*A Thief in the House of Memory*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

*The Uninvited*. Candlewick Press, 2009.

### **Additional resources:**

Author's website: <http://www.timwynne-jones.com/>

Interview with author: [http://bookpage.com/interviews/8255-tim-wynne-jones#.U02NrKKt\\_Gg](http://bookpage.com/interviews/8255-tim-wynne-jones#.U02NrKKt_Gg)

Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Fiction acceptance speech:

<http://www.hbook.com/2011/12/news/boston-globe-horn-book-awards/blink-caution-acceptance-speech/#>

National Coalition for the Homeless: Homeless Youth Factsheet:  
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/youth.html>

Online mystery game: <http://noir.playsleuth.com/>

# THE 5<sup>TH</sup> WAVE

## By Rick Yancey



**Genre:** Science Fiction, Dystopia

**Themes:** Trust, Truth, Coming-Of-Age, Family Bonds, Mystery, Aliens

**Author info:** Rick Yancey was born in Miami, Florida on a Sunday and his parents came to adopt him three days later. His legal name is John Richard, but everyone calls him Rick after the judge who oversaw his adoption. He lived in central Florida, and grew up with a love for reading, constantly re-reading his favorites, *Sherlock Holmes* and *Lord of the Rings*. His father bought 200 acres of land deep in central Florida. From that land grew the Yancey Family Farm, where Rick lived, worked and daydreamed. Rick is the author of thirteen novels and a personal memoir, and now lives in central Florida with his wife and three sons. Learn more about him at his website <http://rickyancey.com/>.

**Book Summary:** Aliens dubbed “The Others” have come. Methodically, they have almost destroyed the human race. There have been four waves of attacks on earth to annihilate the human species, drastically bringing down the seven billion population to a few hundred thousand. There is only one rule left: trust nobody. Cassie knows this rule well as she tries to find her little brother. Until she meets the mysterious Even Walker, who could be her key to saving Sammy – but who has secrets of his own. Other people have been affected by this alien invasion as well. And with the multiple perspectives, this story delves into the importance of family, trust, and what The Others have in store for the human race during the fifth wave.

**Book talk:** 1<sup>st</sup> wave, lights out. 2<sup>nd</sup> wave, surf’s up. 3<sup>rd</sup> wave, pestilence. 4<sup>th</sup> wave, silencer. Four different attacks. Four different ways to lead to our death. The ways that they have tried to destroy us. The Others. Aliens from another world that have come to kill us all and take the Earth as their own. Slowly they have broken down the bonds of humanity to the point that trust is no longer an option. But will humanity give up so easily?

### Curriculum tie-ins:

#### *Sociology*

How important is trust in the relationships that are presented in the book? If the only rule left is that you can’t trust anyone, how has that affected the social structure of the relationships in the book?

#### *Health*

What could be the effects of a traumatic event on a person’s state of mental health? Research some ways that traumatic events and extreme stress affect people’s overall health.

### Discussion questions:

- If you were in Cassie's situation after The Others arrived, would you be able to trust anyone?
- Will the inability to trust one another make survival easier for people, or will it make it easier for The Others to destroy them?
- What would you be willing to do to save a loved one? Would you risk your life in order to save them?
- The Others decisively attack the humans by breaking them apart and picking off the weak. What might make this not a good plan? What could The Others *not* understand about the human race?
- How did *The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave* show that there is more to life than surviving? What more is there? What is the most important thing to you in life?

### If you loved this book, you'll like:

Black, Holly. *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2013. (on this year's GMBA list)

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic, 2010.

Roth, Veronica. *Divergent*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2012. (the 2013 GMBA winner)

### Other books by this author:

*A Burning in Homeland*. Simon & Schuster, 2003.

*Confessions of a Tax Collector: One Man's Tour of Duty Inside the IRS*. Harper Perennial, 2004.

Alfred Kropp Trilogy:

*The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp*. Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2005.

*The Seal of Solomon*. Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2007.

*The Thirteenth Skull*. Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2008.

The Monstrumologist series:

*The Monstrumologist*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2009.

*The Curse of the Wendigo*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2010.

*The Isle of Blood*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2011.

*The Final Descent*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2013.

### Additional resources:

Author's website: <http://www.rickyancey.com/>

Sociology information: <http://www.asanet.org/about/sociology.cfm>

Baker & Taylor Question Guide: <http://www.baker-taylor.com/PDFs/5th-Wave-Discussion-Guide.pdf>

Book information: <http://www.studymode.com/5th-wave-notes/plot-summary/>

# Green Mountain Book Award

## Checklist, 2014-2015

Check the boxes as you read the books. You **MUST** read at least three titles on this list to vote.

- Black, Holly
- Cline, Ernest
- Cronn-Mills, Kirstin
- Harden, Blaine
  
- Kraus, Daniel
- LaFevers, Robin
- Levithan, David
- Martinez, A. Lee
- McNeil, Gretchen
- Mignola, Mike
- Padian, Maria
- Rowell, Rainbow
- Salerni, Dianne K.
- Wynne-Jones, Tim
- Yancey, Rick

*The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*

*Ready Player One*

*Beautiful Music for Ugly Children*

*Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*

*Rotters*

*Grave Mercy*

*Every Day*

*Emperor Mollusk versus The Sinister Brain*

*Ten*

*Joe Golem and the Drowning City*

*Out of Nowhere*

*Eleanor & Park*

*The Caged Graves*

*Blink and Caution*

*The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave*