

YRCA 2012 Book Talks

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Junior Division Nominees:

Happenstance Found by P.W. Catanese

Picture this! A boy awakens in a dark cave. As he lies there, he tries to remember how he got there. He draws a blank... quick what's his name? He does not know. Where did he come from? Draws another blank. This could be a problem.

Lucky for him he meets Lord Umber. Together they realize that Hap, short for Happenstance, has some powerful gifts and has an important role to play to save the world.

Hap is chased by a menacing figure and no, I am not going to tell you what or who it is, you will have to read the book to see if Hap's friends can keep him alive so that he can fulfill his destiny.

Happenstance can't remember who he is. He can't remember being born, he can't remember growing up, he can't even remember his own name. His first memory is of waking up in a cold, dark cave and being found by a group of adventurers: Oates, a big brute of man who can only tell the truth, Sophie, a shy archer, and their friendly but mysterious leader, Lord Umber.

Happenstance joins their group and they discover many interesting things about him over the course of their journey: he can see in the dark, he can leap hundreds of feet in the air, he knows every language ever spoken. Lord Umber is ecstatic to have found someone as interesting as Happenstance and wants to help Hap find out who or what he is. Unfortunately, someone else also has an interest in Happenstance and his interest is much more personal and deadly...

If you are looking for a clever fantasy, with plenty of action, mystery and magic then you have found the right book. What a crazy, random happenstance!

Watching Jimmy by Nancy Hartry

Imagine seeing something terrible happen and not being able to tell anyone about it because telling might put you in danger. Imagine having to see the person that could harm you every single Thursday.

Carolyn's best friend and neighbor, Jimmy, suffers from brain damage after falling from a swing. However, Carolyn knows the truth. Jimmy did not fall from a swing. Jimmy's Uncle Ted is lying.

Now, not only has her friend Jimmy changed forever, but Carolyn must watch out for Jimmy by keeping him well-behaved, in clean diapers and safe from Uncle Ted - who continues to come around.

Watching Jimmy by Nancy Hartry is a fast-paced book that keeps you on the edge of your seat following clever and brave Carolyn.

Carolyn knows a terrible secret. She knows what really happened to her best friend Jimmy.

Jimmy's "Uncle Ted said Jimmy bumped his head falling off the swing. He said that Jimmy just seemed to let go of the chains when he reached the highest arc, and he fell, *thunk*, to the ground and lay still. Uncle Ted got out of his car and ran over to Jimmy. He said he talked to him. 'Jimmy. Jimmy, wake up!' He said he slapped Jimmy's face. He jiggled him. When Jimmy didn't wake up, Uncle Ted carried him to the car and placed him gently on the backseat of his Thunderbird convertible. He didn't even stop to open the door. The last part is true. The getting out of the car, the talking, the jiggling, the slapping, the carrying, and even the laying down. The first part is not. Jimmy never fell off the swing."

Read *Watching Jimmy* to find out the truth.

YRCA 2012 Junior Division Nominees

Scat by Carl Hiaasen

(mention author's other book/movie: Hoot and book: Flush)

Have any of you ever had a substitute teacher named Dr. Wendell Waxmo?

Are you sure? You would probably remember him.

Neon yellow bowtie? *(make shape of bowtie with hands)*

Tuxedo? *(gesture with hands to indicate full length tuxedo)*

Voice like this? *(use a squeaky, brittle voice)*

Nick and Marta thought that they had it bad with strict Mrs. Starch for Biology but now she's disappeared into the Black Vine Swamp and they are stuck with legendary wacko-Wendell Waxmo.

He believes that the proper way to teach--no, the ONLY way to teach is to focus, focus, focus *(slap hands together)* on one page and one page only. Mondays are page 117, Fridays are always page 263 and if you don't know the answer... he just might make you sing!

Waxmo's definitely weird but not as weird as some of the things that are happening in Collier County, Florida. Duane Scrod Jr. ("Smoke" to his classmates) is missing too and even the police can't find this convicted pyromaniac and pencil-

eater. Does he have anything to do with that blood-curdling scream emanating from the swamp?

Maybe you'll be able to figure it all out when you read *Scat* by Carl Hiaasen.

“Marta looked as if she might throw up again. The last time that had happened, Mrs. Starch had barely waited until the floor was mopped before instructing Marta to write a paper listing five major muscles used in the act of regurgitation. Nick and the other students had been blown away. What kind of teacher would punish a kid for puking?”

Mrs. Bunny Starch that’s who! Only the most feared biology teacher ever! She was last seen during a field trip to Black Vine Swamp. The school's headmaster and the police seem to have accepted the sketchy, unsigned note explaining that her absence is due to a "family emergency." SHE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A FAMILY!! No one seems to think anything is wrong. But still, Nick and Marta don't buy it. Something weird is definitely going on. And they are going to find out what.

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate by Jacqueline Kelly

How would you like it if some ADULT was able to decide your future for you? If that adult decided that when you were old enough, you were going to stay at home and do the cooking and the cleaning and tend the garden and sew and mend and take care of the kids, and do NOTHING but be the unpaid “maid” for everyone?

Well, in the year 1899, Calpurnia Tate has no choice in the matter. Calpurnia is an 11 year old girl who discovers that this will be her life, for the REST OF HER LIFE, and she absolutely hates it.

She finds herself spending a lot of time with her mysterious Grandfather, roaming the countryside looking for – well – anything and everything, and she becomes so interested in the world around her, and finding answers to how, what, why etc.? ...that she realizes that a life of “drudgery and housework” are not for her. Calpurnia desperately wants to be scientist, but how is she supposed to change her future? Will she forever be doomed to being a “housewife”?

Can her Grandfather help, and if not, will she be able to defy her family? Or will she have to settle into an unbearable life of cooking and cleaning?

Does this kind of life sound like fun? Can you hardly wait for your parents to decide what your future will be, without any input from you?

Find out how Calpurnia deals with all the changes and discoveries in this, her 11th year.

My name is Calpurnia Tate, also known as Callie Vee, age 11¾, I'm practically twelve.

My Granddaddy is a naturalist and a maker of fine liquor from Pecans.

In the summer of 1899, I also became a Naturalist, when we spent long hours walking around our large property making extremely detailed notes of everything we saw, from birds to bugs.

I also became a helper of a maker of fine liquor from pecans, where I recorded the date and description of every batch of Pecan Liquor my Granddaddy distilled.

Actually I only tasted ONE batch:

"Pardon me," Granddaddy said, turning to me, "I forgot to offer you some. Do you care to try it and tell me what you think?"

He handed me a tiny measure, a thimbleful. I sniffed it cautiously. It smelled strongly of pecans and faintly of something else, rather like kerosene. I think he had forgotten that I was just a practically-twelve-year-old.

I pinched my nose and threw the stuff down my throat. Now, let me tell you, there is a reason why they call it fire-water. I exploded into the world's worst coughing fit as the stuff burned a hole in my gullet. I felt like I'd spontaneously

combusted. I think I may have fallen to the ground, but I don't really remember because I was coughing so hard. I do remember Granddaddy setting me on the arm of his chair and thumping me on the back for several minutes until I could breathe again.

He studied me. "Are you all right? I suppose you haven't learned to hold your liquor yet."

This was a fun book to read, of what life would have been like if you lived 120 years ago.

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin

Next to the Jade River and the Fruitless mountain, Minli and her parents live in their poor village. Working during the day in the rice fields and at night listening to stories told to her by her father, Minli dreams of a better life. After listening to her fathers' various stories, Minli decides to seek out the old man of the moon and ask how her family can change their fortune. With the help of a flightless dragon, a goldfish, an orphan, and others, will Minli find her way to the old man of the moon and get their fortune changed? Or will she return home empty handed?

Minli, a young Chinese girl, lives on Fruitless Mountain a place as barren and poor as the name suggests. She lives with her Mother, a sad and disappointed woman, and her father, an optimistic man who loves to tell folktales which explain why things on Earth are the way they are.

With the magic of folktales in her mind, Minli spends her precious money on a magical goldfish who instructs her to set off on an adventure to change the fortunes of her family and all the people of Fruitless Mountain. As you can imagine, Minli encounters many unique people and features along her way - a dragon, talking lions, princes and peasants. Minli recalls many tales her father has told her and hears many more from her new friends. The tales give her clues that help her along her journey.

Will Minli be successful? Will she change the fortune of her village? What about the parents she leaves behind? Is listening to a goldfish a good idea?

When the Cherry Blossoms Fell by Jennifer Maruno

How many of you love reading big fat books? How many of you would rather read a skinny book?

Well I'm going to tell you about a slim volume that's a great read. This is a book that makes you WONDER. It makes you wonder "Am I friendly when a new kid starts school?"

It makes you wonder "Am I a bully?" and "What would I do if I was bullied?"

It makes you wonder "How brave am I?"

It makes you wonder "How would I feel if one day the government said I could no longer own a camera, radio, a car, a boat." *(aside)* "Today that would be a computer, cellphone and video games."

It makes you wonder "How would I feel if I couldn't shop in certain stores, go to school or even the library? OH NO!"

Read "When the Cherry Blossoms Fell" and you will meet Michiko, a nine year old whose father has been taken away and the rest of the family has been forced to move from their home in Vancouver to an old cabin in the woods. How will she handle all these changes?

How would YOU?

Meet nine year old Michiko Minagawa. (*show cover*) The year is 1942 and as fears increase, all Japanese-Canadians are ordered to move to internment camps in the interior of British Columbia. As Michiko's Aunt Sadie says, they have moved to the "Land of No". There are no paved roads, no streetlights and no streetcars. The house in which they are to live is dirty and drafty. Along with relocation, Michiko must face local prejudice and jibes, the worst winter in forty years and maybe even her first Christmas without her father!

11 Birthdays by Wendy Mass

"My first thought when I turn off my alarm is how happy I am that my birthday is over and done with. My second thought is *why is my alarm going off on a Saturday?*"

Except that it isn't. It's Amanda's birthday again. And so is the day after that. And the day after that.

Reliving your birthday over and over sounds like a great day, but what if it was one of the worst days of your 11 year old life?!

After Amanda Ellerby and Leo Fitzpatrick were accidentally double-booked for their respective first birthday parties, the kids were inseparable.

Ten years later, Amanda is absolutely dreading her eleventh birthday party, the first that she will spend without her ex-friend, Leo, and she has to re-live the birthday over and over again.

Why does Amanda have to re-live her birthday? Is Amanda the only one stuck in this terrible time loop? What will she do to escape her birthday nightmare?

READ *11 BIRTHDAYS* TO FIND OUT!

Born on the same day, in the same hospital, Amanda and Leo have shared ten birthday parties, but last year something happened that tore their friendship apart. What will their eleventh birthday be like?

The day of Amanda's eleventh birthday starts off when she wakes up and scares herself silly by running into a balloon figure that her parents placed in her room during the night. She then has to take the bus to school because her mother is running late, forgets her lunch, and has a pop-quiz that she is not ready for. Thinking that her day couldn't get any worse she arrives home to find that her mother has lost her job because of a mix up. To top off Amanda's worst birthday ever, she has to wear a scratchy costume to her party; a party that no one is going to come to because Leo is holding his own, much bigger, much better party at his house – and Amanda is not invited.

What could be worse than having a birthday where everything goes wrong? Amanda finds out the answer to that question when she wakes up the next morning and discovers that she is living the same horrible day over and over again; complete with balloon figures and lost jobs. The only thing that makes Amanda feel better is when she realizes that Leo is the only other person who is reliving their eleventh birthday. They have to work together to get their lives back on track, but how?

Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow by James Rollins

Jake and his sister, Kady, are invited to London, England to attend a gallery opening at the British Museum, of artifacts found by their parents who went missing three years earlier. While there, Jake and Kady are transported to the city of Calypsos, a place where people from different times of Earth's history live. Mayans, ancient Romans, and Vikings, amongst others, live peacefully together. Yet there is a threat not only to this community but to Jake and Kady. The Skull King wants the siblings, dead or alive, and will do anything to get them.

Jake Ransom isn't like every other student his age. He's so smart that he skipped a grade, he spends his free time digging up shellfish fossils, and his parents mysteriously disappeared in Mexico on an archaeological dig at the Mountain of Bones. Even though it's been three years since they vanished, Jake still wonders what happened to them. When he gets the chance to visit an exhibit of artifacts unearthed by his parents in London, Jake decides to go to look for clues about their disappearance. What he doesn't know is that the trip to London is the beginning of an adventure to another world... a world where ancient civilizations have gathered... and where the evil Skull King has plans for Jake...

Three Cups of Tea by Sarah L. Thomson

In 1993, Greg Mortensen tried to climb one of the tallest mountains in the world. The climb failed and Greg somehow tragically became lost by himself in the vast mountains of Pakistan.

Lost, starving and desperate, he finally wandered into a poor, deprived village where the generous people nursed him back to health.

Greg was extremely thankful to the kind people and promised to come back and help them build a school for the children of the village.

Greg kept his promise and went back. But because Americans like Greg Mortensen are often feared and hated in that region of the world, he endured many death threats and at one point he was even kidnapped.

But all this was worth it to Greg because he was determined to make a positive change for the impoverished children of Pakistan.

Over a time period of 10 years, Greg built more than sixty schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Three Cups of Tea! An unforgettable, inspiring true story of how one man changed the world one school at a time!

With the first cup of tea you are a stranger.

With the second...a friend.

With the third cup of tea, you are family.

When mountain climber Greg Mortenson became lost while returning from an expedition he was assisted by the people of the Pakistani village of Korphe. Although poor they were very kind and generous to the lost stranger who had wandered into their village.

Greg was amazed to find that the village had no school, and the children had to learn outside using sticks and mud to write their lessons. Greg promised to return to Korphe to build the children a proper place to learn. He kept his promise to complete the school despite the many difficulties that he had to overcome and it turned out that was just the beginning of Greg's adventures.

What started as a single promise turned into a movement to build dozens of schools across Pakistan and Afghanistan and a lifelong commitment to building literacy and peace, one child at a time.

Intermediate Division Nominees:

Skeleton Creek by Patrick Carman

For anyone who enjoys a scary story, *Skeleton Creek* by Patrick Carman may be the book for you.

Although Ryan is hurt and tired, he keeps writing in his journal:

It all started when my friend Sarah asked a simple question: "Why would you call a town Skeleton Creek? Sounds like a town that doesn't want people to visit. What are they hiding?"

Our search into the past leads us to the dredge, which is a creepy old abandoned machine in the woods used to mine gold.

I felt the presence of someone or something as soon as Sarah and I walked in. We were snooping around, discovering clues and that's when the accident happened. Now I'm stuck in a cast and forbidden from seeing Sarah.

As I am writing the evidence in this journal, Sarah is still out there, collecting it on her video camera. She started a website with passwords to watch her haunting videos because you can't get one story without the other.

Read the book, watch the videos and try to uncover the mystery behind *Skeleton Creek*.

This book talk is to be read with the text mounted on the back of an 8.5 X 11 version on these photos from the book. They can be copied from Google images skeleton creek.

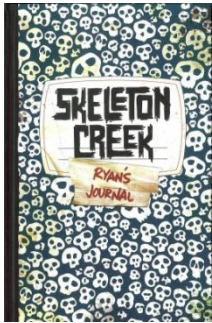


Have you ever stumbled onto something so scary you can't believe it's real?

Ryan did... and it almost cost him his life.



The accident leaves Ryan housebound and forbidden to see his best friend Sarah. Their investigation takes two tracks. Read Ryan's journal entries and follow online as Sarah uses her mad video skills to unearth evidence to solve this chilling mystery.



Together... they discover the truth.

Welcome to Skeleton Creek

Read it... Watch it... Live it.

The Maze Runner by James Dashner

The first thing I remember was getting hauled out of the Box.
My mind had been wiped clean.
I remembered nothing, except my name.

Thomas.

I was the new kid. The Greenie. The first Greenbean since
Nick was killed.

And this was the Glade.

The Glade was divided into four sections:

The Gardens, the Blood House, the Homestead, and the
Deadheads.

We lived in the Glade. All of us shanks did. We survived. We
had to.

Because out there was the Maze. Surrounding us. On all
sides. Miles and miles of endless, shifting Maze. With walls as
tall as skyscrapers. A Maze filled with Grievors: Monsters
with saw-blade arms, half-machine – a sick mix of poisonous
spikes and slimy flesh. The Grievors patrolled the Maze. And
no one could solve the Maze. There was no way out.

It's crazy. I don't know why, but I've been here before.
All of this is... familiar, somehow. The Glade, the other shanks,
even the Maze.

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I know I'm going to be a Maze Runner. Don't ask me how. I just know.

In two years, no one has solved the Maze.

But I will.

Mazes are fun. Don't you love that that sense of accomplishment you get when you solve a maze? Sure, you might have to start over a couple of times. You might take a wrong turn here or there but you always have your eraser to fix those mistakes. Maybe, if you are really sneaky, you start at the end of the puzzle and work your way to the beginning. Those are the fun kind of mazes.

The maze in James Dashner's *Maze Runner* is not a fun maze. It's the kind of maze that has moving walls. It's the kind of maze that you don't want to ever, ever be stuck in at night. It's the kind of maze that can kill you. Thomas is sure that he can find a way out of the maze, he is sure that he knows something about his mysterious place that the other boys don't... if only he could remember more than just his first name.

Princess of the Midnight Ball by Jessica George

Hello, and welcome to the six o'clock news. I'm Hans Werner.

We begin tonight with news on the war front. With the hostilities with Analousia coming to an end, Westfalen's troops are slowly making their way home.

And they are returning to uncertain times, especially concerning our twelve princesses. Once again, a recent suitor for one of our princesses has been reported dead after being trampled by a horse. This brings a total of seven foreign princes who have passed away in freak accidents after visiting with the royal family, with hopes of obtaining a princess's hand in marriage.

Also, rumours abound about the princess's nighttime activities. Bizarre talk about worn out dancing shoes, mysterious attackers, and dark curses lain on our princesses by the legendary King Under the Mountain continue to spread. Even some of the King's gardeners, led by a young former soldier named Galen, are moving to action.

How will all this be resolved? No one knows!

Princess Rose and her eleven sisters must go dancing every night. That's right – MUST. The Princesses are under the evil spell of the King Under Stone and, in time, must marry his twelve sons.

The girls are weary of dancing. Any Prince summoned to attempt to stop the Princesses is unsuccessful and soon killed one way or another.

Can Galen, a commoner, a gardener, free the exhausted Princesses?

Are you reminded, perhaps, of a story you heard long ago when you were very young?

Read *Princess of the Midnight Ball* for the answers.

The Reformed Vampire Support Group by Catherine Jinks

It sucks to be a vampire. First, everyone knows how to kill you. Second, you can't sleep in your own bed. Third, between dawn and dusk it's lights out. One minute you are awake, next minute blackout. I don't even get to dream. I have no idea what happens every day after the sun comes up.

Casimir fanged me. It's all his fault. He's the one to blame. He is the cause of our problems. He's the one that got us in this mess killed by a slayer he met over the internet. Bother! Now we have to clean up the ashes and find out who done it.

Who are we you ask? Why The Reformed Vampire Support Group is who. Church for me is every Tuesday 9:30 pm and I meet the same dull, boring, whimpering people there every week. Sanford, Horace, George, Gladys, Bridget, Dave (he's kinda cute) and I'm Nina. We are all vampires. We don't change into bats. We don't have super human strength. We can't even stand bright light. We still look the same and have the same problems we had when we got fanged. Actually we are rather weak, sickly, and suffer from headaches most of the time. Except for my mum and Father Ramon, we never make contact with real people. Too many problems, too many dangers, or at least that is what Sanford wants us to think.

So here we are. The clues are a stake, a silver bullet, and what we know about Casimir. Unlike the rest of us he was never

discreet. And even though Sanford said so, none of us ever believed he was reformed. Not much to go on I admit, but we got a slayer to stop. We've got to explain. We don't fang people.

I know you're thinking that *vampires are meant to be so glamorous and powerful, but I'm here to inform you that being a vampire is nothing like that. Not one bit. On the contrary, it's like being stuck indoors with the flu watching daytime television, forever and ever. (5)*

Vampires attend regular support group meetings to make sure they don't slip up and start biting people. The only thing dangerous about them is how much they complain.

Nina, a 15 year-old vampire since 1973, is still living at home with her mother and dreading the eternity ahead. With the exception of Dave, a dreamy rocker type who makes her unlife worth living, Nina's just bored, bored, bored.

But when a vampire is murdered this motley group of pathetic losers is ready to drag their undead bodies from darkened basements and into a world that's suddenly out to get them.

Peace, Love, and Baby Ducks by Lauren Myracle

A summer spent volunteering at a wilderness retreat changes Carly's opinion of the wealth and privilege she has grown up with.

Carly wants to be *real*, and she's always counted on her little sister, Anna, to love her and support her—and tell her how right she is. But when Anna turns "hot" over the course of a single summer, everything goes weird. Suddenly Anna's swimming in the deep end with the big girls—while Carly watches, hurt, from the kiddie pool. And of course there are boys involved, complicating things as boys always do.

Everyone I know is so fake. They spend their days between the salon, the yacht club, and their back yard pools. Nobody understands what the real world is like and what it means to work for something. Or what it means to be different.

I learned all about it when I spent my summer planting trees. It gave me a chance to appreciate nature and learn about some really cool old music. It gave me the chance to be myself rather than a private school clone.

It was awesome to come home with this new perspective...but nobody seems to understand. Plus, I have to say, it is *not* awesome to come home to find out your baby sister is suddenly the hottest girl around.

Listen, all I wanted to do was be completely different while still fitting in and still being popular. Is that too much to ask?

Find out how Carly's attempts at being "real" effect her friends, her relationship with her sister Anna, and her hair in Peace, Love and Baby Ducks.

The Hunchback Assignments by Arthur Slade

Modo is an orphan. He was purchased by Mr. Socrates as an infant and raised in isolation. Modos childhood is spent being schooled in many subjects including combat. But his most difficult lesson is the first time he sees himself in the mirror. He suspects he is ugly, but is still shocked to see the hideous deformities twisting his face and body. All is not lost however; Modo has a very special talent, the ability to briefly transform his distorted appearance into whomever he wishes.

At 14, he is finally allowed to go outside for the first time. Mr. Socrates then promptly abandons him in the streets of downtown London. Modo has no money, no map and no clue how to live in this new world. He will need to use all of his training, his wits and his physical talents to survive this final test.

Modo does find his way. He even meets Octavia, a beautiful and resourceful girl. Together they try to unravel the monstrous plans of Dr. Hyde before he destroys all of London. But, as they save each others lives, Modo hides his true appearance. Can they save London? Can he reveal his true face to Octavia?

“Two eyes, one larger than the other, goggled up at him in fright. Above them was a tinge of red hair set on a rough-hewn, pockmarked skull. The gentleman flinched; he had been expecting something ugly but this was beyond his imagining. A true wretch of a creature crouched in the cage, pressing its back against the sides.” *(optional)*

Hideously disfigured, but with strange shape shifting abilities, Modo is bought from a travelling road show when he is just a year old and raised by Mr. Socrates who is part of a secret organization in late Victorian England. Kept hidden in a house for 13 years, Modo is trained in both the ways of combat as well as how to control his shifting abilities; for he is to become...a secret agent! But what exactly *is* Mr. Socrates planning for Modo and *who* is part of this secret clockwork guild that Modo is being groomed to fight?

Leviathan by Scott Westerfeld

The year is 1914 and Archduke Ferdinand and his wife have just been assassinated and Europe is on the brink of war. But put away your history books. *Leviathan* is a novel of alternate history. The Germans and Austrians, the Clankers, have giant robots and the French, English, and Russians, the Darwinists, use genetically engineered airwhales. Who will triumph?

Alex, son of the Archduke is in hiding. Deryn, disguised as a boy, is hiding a secret. One is a Clanker and one is a Darwinist. Together their worlds collide, taking them on a fantastical around the world adventure.

The amazing illustrations help create their way through the steampunk world of machines and fabricated beasts.

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Close your eyes and imagine an enormous hydrogen-filled whale-like creatures floating through the sky. Imagine lizards that can imitate any voice and relay messages and huge, deadly machines that walk on two legs. These are the tools of war in Scott Westerfeld's novel, *Leviathan*.

It is the eve of WWI and a young Hapsburg prince named Alek is unaware that his life is about to drastically change. The Germans have been itching to start a war and the assassination of the Archduke has given them the opportunity. To avoid capture, Alek flees his Austrian homeland in a Cynklop Stormwalker with a few loyal men that are entrusted with his safety. Meanwhile, on the other side of Europe is Deryn, a young woman who so desperately wants to serve in Britain's air force that she disguises herself as a boy and signs up to fly in the whale-ship Leviathan. When Leviathan crashes near the prince's hideout, Alek and Deryn's lives cross paths and they must work together to survive.

Clankers versus Darwinists. Machines versus fabricated beasties. Germany and Austria versus England, France, and Russia. Barking spiders! Leviathan presents an alternate history at the dawning of World War One. The year is 1914, and two youths, Aleksander, son of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who is forced to flee his home and hide his identity after his father and mother are assassinated; and Deryn, a spirited girl who disguises herself as a boy in order to join the British air force, are on a collision course that will change both their lives. Loyalties are tested as Alek and Deryn must work together, while keeping their secrets from those around them, if they are to survive. In a fantastic world of steampunk war machines and genetically engineered creatures designed as living vessels, both sides are determined to prove their superiority. Can the gigantic hydrogen breathing airships of the Darwinists defend against the Clanker's areoplanes and six-legged walkers? And what of the plot behind the archduke's death? Will the destinies of Alek and Deryn, as well as the fate of the nations be found aboard the flying whale-ship, Leviathan? Discover yourself in this first book of a trilogy by Scott Westerfeld.

Thirteenth Child by Patricia Wrede

Everybody knows that a seventh son is lucky and that the seventh son of a seventh son is a natural born magician! Everybody knows that a thirteenth child is unlucky! And what if you're a thirteenth child like Eff and your twin brother Lan is a double seven! Eff's parents don't pay much attention to what everybody says, but mean Uncle Earn does. So for everything that goes bad, Eff is to blame.

The family decides to move to Mill City in the Wild West, where nobody knows that Eff is a thirteenth child. The city needs great magicians to keep magical creatures, such as steam dragons, woolly rhinoceros and mammoths at a safe distance. Eff's father and Lan are much needed to help out with a terrible destructive grub infestation. Will Eff be able to help them when they are in great danger?

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about the number thirteen? It's an extremely unlucky number, of course, which should be avoided at all costs. So now imagine what being the thirteenth child might mean. Imagine being that child living in the early pioneering days of the old west and couple that with magic, a highly superstitious and mean-spirited uncle, a brilliant magic teacher, dragons and mammoths and presto you have the book *Thirteenth Child* by Patricia C. Wrede. In this book Eff is the thirteenth child in a family of magicians destined to move to the edge of the border lands where a magical barrier is the only thing that protects them from the wild magical beasts of the Great Plains. Will being the thirteenth child bring about certain disaster in the border lands? Is Eff truly doomed to be unlucky her whole life or will she prove that the number thirteen isn't such a wretched number after all?

Senior Division Nominees:

The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie by C. Alan Bradley

Flavia De Luce's life is pretty normal. She is content to continue her days thwarting the torments of her older sisters with poisons she discovers in her chemistry lab. Everything changes with a bird, a murder, and a postage stamp. Now Flavia is a chemist turned sleuth as she tries to uncover the truth and clear her father's name.

On the day that 11 year old Flavia de Luce poisoned her sister's lipstick with poison ivy, everything seemed normal. Her older sisters were harassing her, their father was more or less ignoring them, and Mrs. Mullet had one of her pus-like custard pies cooling on the window. When Mrs. Mullet let out a sudden shriek at the back door, everyone was surprised to see a dead black bird lying on the doorstep. A stamp was impaled on its bill and Flavia's father quickly slid the stamp into one of his waistcoat pockets.

Flavia is puzzled by this and gets more so when she overhears a mid-night argument in her father's study. When she wakes up that morning to some noise in the garden, she runs down and stumbles upon a man dying in the cucumbers!

Now Flavia is taking on this mystery, and the police. What is the meaning of the dead bird with the stamp? Who was arguing with her father in the middle of the night? Who was the mysterious man murdered in the cucumbers? And, the greatest mystery of all: Who would actually take a piece of Mrs. Mullet's pus-like custard pie?

Going Bovine by Libba Bray

Call him crazy, but Cameron hopes dying from Mad Cow Disease could hook him up with the girls in the romance department.

[Read pbk pg 86] *"I confess that most of the dying fantasy involved watching every girl who'd ever dissed me throwing herself on my coffin, sobbing over my early demise and confessing that she'd always wanted me. Problem is, I won't be around to sample the GOODS. I'll be turning into a SPONGE HEAD. This is the sort of stuff I think about with the few brain cells I've got left."*

Taking the strange advice of a loopy punk angel, Cameron escapes the confines of the hospital with his death-obsessed dwarf roommate on a mission to save himself and save the universe. All they have to do is find the mysterious Dr. X. Together they join up with a talking yard gnome and embark on the wackiest road trip of their lives.

Hi, I'm Cameron. You probably don't know me for anything other than being a disappointment. I work at Buddha Burger, which doesn't up my popularity very much either. Well, I did work there until my oh-so-perfect co-worker got me fired. Zero is my favourite number. As in zero expectations and zero disappointments. My perfect twin sister doesn't help my situation much; my mom doesn't bother with me and my dad just turns his back. Literally. After a lecture of course. So anyway, I start tripping out, having these visions of fire people chasing me and whatnot, and everyone at school thinks I'm even more of a freak. My drug counsellor says to stay off drugs; then my psychiatrist puts me on them. Great system. I wind up in the hospital where they tell me my brain is a sponge. And not the good kind that they say kids have, the mad-cow-disease going-to-die-soon kind. Guess I'm going bovine. So when a punk-rock angel shows up in my hospital room and asks me to go on this mission to help Dr. X with the Dark Energy and save the world, what am I supposed to do? Say no?

Along for the Ride by Sarah Dessen

Life is like riding a bike. Auden comes to this realization one summer after high school while visiting her father and stepmother in a small beach town. Just like balancing yourself on a bike, Auden learns to bring balance into her uptight life. One night she meets Eli, a fellow insomniac. Together they venture through the night, on a quest to engage Auden in simple life experiences she's missed out on. She learns there's more to life than what's written in a text book. It's about the unexpected twists, turns and jumps which will, in the end, make all of life's experiences worth the ride. If she ever happens to fall, she learns that she'll need to get back up and continue to go *along for the ride*.

Can't sleep at night? Neither can Auden West. Ever since her parents' divorce she's been a complete night owl. Her nocturnal study habits have made her a top student and landed her a spot at one of the best universities in the country. But the summer before college, Auden begins to realize that maybe there's some non-academic stuff she's missed out on. Somehow, Auden's managed to grow up without hanging out with friends, going to her prom or even learning how to ride a bike. On a whim, she decides to spend the summer by the ocean with her father's new family. While her new baby sister's endless crying doesn't help Auden's insomnia, it does drive her out of the house. Alone in a new town, Auden meets Eli, a local boy who has reasons of his own that keep him up at night. Though unlikely friends, Eli helps Auden with her quest to make up for lost experiences, and both of them learn about what it really means to have a second chance at something.

Hush, Hush by Becca Fitzpatrick

Hush, Hush is the story of Nora Grey, an average high school student going about her business as usual -- until her Biology teacher rearranges the class seating placing her next to the dangerous-looking new kid, Patch Cipriano. Nora gets a weird feeling from Patch, and things just keep going from bad to worse as Nora becomes convinced that she is being stalked, and may even be the target of murderous intentions. Add to the list Nora's strange feelings about the Archangel ride at the amusement park and her constant near death experiences, and well, Nora's life is becoming anything but average. Fans of *Twilight* will really enjoy *Hush, Hush*.

...god spared no the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment...

-2 Peter 2:4

Nora Grey is about to find out that she has a shadowy connection to a centuries old feud and she will soon find herself in the middle of an ancient battle that could be deadly.

The world as she knew it changed the minute she walked into biology and met a mysterious stranger named Patch. Although he makes her feel unsettled, Nora is inexplicably drawn to his darkly romantic nature. It seems like Patch's eyes can see into her soul, but he is also hiding a dark secret. When Nora uncovers the truth, it will blur the line between what she knew to be real and what she thought was just fantasy. With every turn of the page, Nora is left wondering who she can trust.

How does Patch already know so much about Nora's life? Does he have something to do with the guy who's following her? Is he behind the terrifying visions she thinks she's been having? Is Patch worth losing her life over?

Find out in *Hush, Hush* By Becca Fitzpatrick

Witch & Wizard by James Patterson

“Clearly, this is not a good day for us Allgoods.

In fact, as the countdown ticker flashes on the giant video screens at either end of the stadium, it’s looking like this will be our *last* day.

...

Directly behind his Oneness is a huge N.O. banner – THE NEW ORDER.

And then the crowd begins to chant, almost sing, ‘The One Who Is The One! The One Who Is The One!’

Imperiously, The One raises his hand, and his hooded lackeys on the stage push us forward, at least as far as the ropes around our necks will allow.

I see my brother, Whit, handsome and brave, looking down at the platform mechanism. Calculating if there’s any way to jam it, some means of keeping it from unlatching and dropping us to our neck-snapping deaths. Wondering if there’s a last-minute way out of this.

...

But I’m getting ahead of myself. I’m supposed to be providing an *introduction* here, not the details of our public *execution*. So let’s go back a bit....”

Witch and Wizard pages 4-5

The newly elected government, the New Order, are hunting Whit and Wisty but they’re not sure why. Join them as they run for their lives, search for their parents, discover their magical heritage, and lead a teenage rebellion.

“Imagine another world...
One similar to your own.
A parallel universe, where life is
Still full of friends and loves,
School and sports, church and family.

But then: everything changes.

Overnight.

Because people aren't paying attention,
Something important is taken away from society.
Books, movies and music. Freedom and justice.
And respect for the incredible creative power of kids.
It can all disappear in a flash...”

This is what happens to Whit and Wisty Allgood, a brother and sister, who in the middle of the night are taken away to jail only to be accused of being a *Witch & Wizard*.

Our story begins when Whisty Allgood and her brother Whit are both taken prisoner by the New Order police. Both are taken from their home in the middle of the night without any explanation and sent to a Reformatory for rehabilitation. Their crime as they soon discover is that they are accused of being witches (or in Whit's case he is accused of being a warlock). Neither can believe what's actually happening to them. The whole thing seems like an unreal nightmare from which neither can awaken. However, just when everything seems almost hopeless, Whit has a dream. And in Whit's dream he is visited by his girlfriend, Celia, who hasn't been seen by anyone, as she simply vanished one day.

Whit's dream is going to change everything for both of them because his dream isn't actually just a dream. He soon discovers that through dreaming he is able to perceive other dimensions and sub-dimensions. This is because Whit's girlfriend finally confesses to him that she has been murdered by the New Order and that now her spirit inhabits a murky underworld called Shadowland.

And so within this horrible nightmare they find themselves in, Whit and Whisty may have discovered a way out of their dire predicament, although it may rest entirely upon this strange, new dreamworld where bizarre entities exist. But maybe it's this strange dreamworld that can save them!

But that's not all. Whisty for some inexplicable reason is able to spontaneously burst into flames! What's going on here? It seems both Whit and Whisty are exhibiting strange and even supernatural powers. Could it be that they are in fact witches after all?

But even if they are, what are they guilty of? What crimes have they committed? And why didn't their parents tell them that they were different?

Although Whit and Whisty certainly do seem to have supernatural powers, and which the New Order is obviously aware of and fearful of, the real source of their power does not come from the supernatural world but from the natural world. It originates from ordinary life and relationships, and from Whit's and Whisty's ability to face difficult, even impossible situations with courage, compassion, and hopefulness, in spite of their overwhelming feelings of despair and hopelessness. And so it's their concern for others in the face of insurmountable odds that will ultimately determine who they really are, as being either good or bad, and not whether they are witches.

And so, as a point of discussion, you might ask yourself what's worse: A bad person or a good witch? What makes a bad person a bad person? What makes a good person a good person? What if you were afraid to do the right thing? Would it make you a bad person?

As Whisty so poignantly observes when she's reflecting on what her teacher said to her about the secret to happiness, "She said it was all about seeing life as half full instead of half empty, no matter what happen[s] to you....But [she asks herself] what about when it's .000001full?"

[pause]

That seems pretty bleak. What about when that happens? What do you do then?

Lockdown by Alexander Smith

“Beneath Heaven is Hell. Beneath Hell is Furnace.” Furnace Penitentiary, that is. After the Summer of Slaughter, the government had to find a way to punish young offenders. The solution came in the form of Furnace, the world’s most secure prison, buried a mile beneath the earth’s surface. One way in, no way out.

Convicted of a murder he didn’t commit, sentenced to life without parole, Alex Sawyer knows he has two choices: find a way out, or resign himself to a death behind bars, at the bottom of the world.

Soon Alex discovers that the prison is a place of pure evil. Creatures in gas masks walk the corridors at night, goliaths in black suits drag screaming inmates into the shadows and deformed beasts howl from the tunnels below. Behind it all is the mysterious, all-powerful warden, a man as cruel and as dangerous as the devil himself.

Despite the hopelessness of the situation, Alex forces himself to stay positive. When he feels fresh air from a caved-in tunnel while on chipping duty and hears what he thinks could be water running, Alex and his friends, Donovan, Zee and Toby plot their impossible escape.

“ ‘I’m ready,’ I said. Taking one last look at Zee and Toby, I leaned over the edge and let the cold air embrace me. There

was nothing but death behind me, and probably nothing but death ahead, but at least this way I would be free.

And smiling at the thought, I jumped.”

Will this be the ultimate escape and the answer to their prayers or the beginning of something worse?

Furnace Penitentiary: An underground hellhole. A place of pure evil with walls soaked in blood. Murderous gangs and vicious guards rule the darkness and horrific creatures steal people away in the dead of night. And it's also the world's most secure prison for young offenders, buried a mile beneath the earth's surface. There's one way in and no way out. Once you're here, you're here until you die, and for most of the inmates that doesn't take long. Convicted of a murder he didn't commit, sentenced to life without parole, 'new fish' Alex Sawyer knows he has two choices: find a way out, or resign himself to a death behind bars, in the darkness at the bottom of the world.

Only in Furnace, death is the least of his worries. Soon Alex discovers that the prison is a place of pure evil, where creatures in gas masks stalk the corridors at night and where giants in black suits drag screaming inmates into the shadows. Behind it all lurks the mysterious, all-powerful warden, a man as cruel and as dangerous as the devil himself, whose unthinkable acts have consequences that stretch far beyond the walls of the prison.

Together with a bunch of inmates - some innocent kids who have been framed, others cold-blooded killers - Alex plans the prison break to end all prison breaks. But as he starts to uncover the truth about Furnace's deeper, darker purpose, Alex's actions grow ever more dangerous, and he must risk

everything to expose this nightmare that's hidden from the eyes of the world.

Shiver by Maggie Stiefvater

When Grace was a young child she was attacked by wolves but survived. Since then, she has been inexplicably drawn to the wolf with the yellow eyes.

When Sam's wolf pack attacked the small child he fended them off. Since then, he has been captivated by the beautiful child named Grace.

Grace realizes there is something peculiar about these wolves, something eerily human about them. After a tragic wolf attack, hunters pursue and shoot the wolves behind her house. At her back door she finds a blood soaked teenage boy with familiar yellow eyes.

In human form, Sam and Grace are inseparable. But this is Sam's last year turning human during the warm summer months. Once his skin feels the bitter cold of winter he will be gone forever. Grace can't let him disappear now that she has found him but how will she keep the winter from biting his skin and causing his final change?

If you loved *Twilight* and long for another gripping supernatural teen love story, then read *Shiver* by Maggie Stiefvater.

One winter, when Grace is a little girl, she is dragged from her backyard swing by a pack of starving wolves. Mysteriously, she survives -- through the intervention of a yellow-eyed wolf. Each winter, the wolf pack returns to haunt the forest behind her house, and Grace spends years waiting, and watching, and trying to befriend the yellow-eyed wolf, her wolf.

Then one day, everything changes. Grace finds her wolf at the back door, shot and bloodied . . . and in human form.

Shiver, isn't your ordinary werewolf book. There are no crazed half-man/half-wolf hybrids or silver bullets, just real humans that turn into real wolves, and one day, never turn back.

Shiver is the first in a trilogy about the Wolves of Mercy Falls. It is followed by *Linger* and *Forever*.

Optional: [On the author's website, Maggie Stiefvater declares that she writes books about werewolves and kissing. So if you like werewolves, (or reading about werewolves), and if you like kissing, (or reading about kissing), this book is for you!]

The Monstrumologist by Rick Yancey

Anthropophagi- Man eaters, cannibals, described as headless creatures or monsters with faces embedded in their torso.

This is the shorter dictionary version of an anthropophagi and the prime interest in the novel *The Monstrumologist*.

Monstrumologist – a hunter of monsters. Anthropophagi to be specific.

There is no real dictionary definition of monstrumologist but that's what one does.

Horror - A painful emotion of fear, dread, and abhorrence; a shuddering with terror and detestation; the feeling inspired by something frightful and shocking.

This is also a shortened definition of the word. If horror is what you long for, *The Monstrumologist* will fill your craving.

These three words, (anthropophagi, monstrumologist and horror) are essential ingredients in the story of *The Monstrumologist* by Rick Yancey.

What are Anthropophagi, where did they come from, why are they here, and more importantly, how can they be stopped?

A warning for veteran horror lovers – must enjoy gruesome, gagging descriptions, sickly white flesh and sharp carnivorous teeth.

The reader must be a lover of headless monsters, rapid heartbeat after awakening as a result of vivid nightmares, and daydreams full of blood and gore.

Ever considered becoming a monstrumologist? Here's your chance to witness it through the eyes of an apprentice!

“Though it lacked a head, the Anthropophagus was not missing a mouth. Or teeth. The orifice was shaped like a shark’s, and the teeth were equally sharklike: triangular, serrated, and milky white, arranged in rows that marched towards the front of the mouth from the inner, unseen cavity of its throat. The mouth itself lay just below the enormous muscular chest, in the region between the pectorals and the groin. It had no nose that I could see, though it had not been blind in its life: Its eyes (of which I confess I had seen only one) were located on the shoulders, lidless and completely black.”

When a young writer reads this entry in the journals of a deceased William James Henry, a man said to have been born in 1876 that died at the age of one hundred and thirty, he is completely pulled into the story of young Will Henry – apprentice to a monstremologist by the name of Dr. Pellinore Warthrop who studies and hunts life forms considered to be the products of myths and legends. Together, the young Will Henry and the good Doctor must find a way to help rid New England of the Anthropophagus plague, a plague that others do not even believe exists.