

## NOVELS OF 2004-2005

Compiled by Peggy M. Johnsen

Aiken, Joan. *The Witch of Clatteringshaws*. Delacorte Press. Jan. 2005. ISBN 03385732260.

Another new adventure in the Wolves Chronicles allows our heroine, Dido Twite, to once again use her clever wit and abilities to lead us through the twists and turns of Aiken's odd and sinister plots. Lots of fun. This author always gives us a very 'British' story full of magic, evil villains, and unquestionable friendship and loyalty. Grades 5-8. *Midwinter Nightingale* is the prequel.

Allende, Isabel. *Forest of the Pygmies*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 5/10/05. ISBN 0-06-076197-0.

This is the final installment of Allende's trilogy that involves Alexander Cold, his grandmother Kate, and Nadia Santos. Their adventures began with *Kingdom of the Golden Dragon* in which the two young characters received their animal totems and power, Jaguar and Eagle. The next book, *City of the Beasts*, continued the weaving of magical realism and mysticism with contemporary politics and issues. Once again, Allende has provided a vivid and realistic story that educates us to the unusual political issues of third world countries. And as in her adult literature, these novels abound in the classic battles of good and evil along with man's need for magic and mysticism. Ages: 10 and up. Excellent for middle schoolers.

Avi. *Poppy's Return*. HarperCollins. July, 2005. ISBN 0060000139.

Avi returns with another Poppy adventure (this is the fifth) in which we are invited into the wonderful world of Dimwood Forest with deer mouse Poppy, her rambunctious son, Ragweek Jr, Ereth, the porcupine and Poppy's best friend, and new woodland characters. Funny, adventurous, tender, and completely believable! You can always count on Avi's wonderful plots and characters. Ages: 8-11.

Baskin, Nora Raleigh. *Basketball (or something like it)*. Harpercollins. 2005, ISBN 0060596104.

This is a great story that tells the pressures of middle-school-age student athletes that deal with parents, that either expect them to be the star of the team, or else believe that they should not play sports. The book begins with a newspaper article of an underdog high school basketball team that has unexpectedly made the semifinals of the state tournament. The article continues on page 161, at the conclusion of the novel. In-between, the reader is flashed-back to the sixth grade year of the basketball players and we follow the unfolding of this year through sixth graders' Nathan, Jeremy, and Anabel. Each tells their point of view and story in alternating chapters. The voices of the young people and their parents are quite accurate. This is definitely a must-read for middle school-ers. There is a wonderful twist at the end of the article. Ages: 5-8.

Bell, Hilari. *The Wizard Test*. Harpercollins. 2005. ISBN 0060599405.

Hilari Bell truly writes a great story, as her previous novels, *The Goblin Wood* and *A Matter of Profit*, attest. Once again she gives the reader wonderfully realistic characters that are struggling to find their place in their world of knights, warriors, intrigue, suspense, and battle. Dayven only wants to be a great warrior, but fears that he has inherited wizard magic from his grandmother and if this is true, he will be separated from his closest friends for life. Ages 10-14.

Besson, Luc. *Arthur and the Minimoys*. HarperCollins. May , 2005. ISBN 0060596244.

Ten-year-old Arthur lives with his grandmother in a gently rolling valley, as his parents are off in the city doing their "important" business. Arthur's grandfather has been missing for several years and the family home is about to be snatched up by the notorious Davido, who owned anything of importance in the near-by town. Clever Arthur discovers the existence of the underground city of inch-high Minimoys in the backyard. He enters their world to save their lives and perhaps the life of his missing Grandfather. Besson ends this adventure with the unsettling "lead-in" to the next book. Ages: 8-10.

Brooks, Geraldine. *March*. Penguin Putnam Inc. March 2005. ISBN 0670033359.

This is definitely a young adult and adult novel. Brooks has taken the character of the absent father, Mr. March, from Louisa May Alcott's classic, *Little Women*, and follows him as he goes off to the Civil War, leaving his wife and daughters. The historical framework is beautifully written and accurate. We read of the intellectuals of Concord, the life of antebellum South, the moral complexity of war, the barbarism and racism of both the Confederates and the North, and the test of marriage during war time. High school women will find much to ponder in reading this as a complement to *Little Women*. High School and Adult

Bruchac, Joseph. *The Dark Pond*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 7/27/04. ISBN 0-06-052995-4.

We've enjoyed Bruchac's picture books of Native American myths and tales and now he brings a great read in novel form. Armin Katchatorian, single child of activist lawyer parents (mother is Indian, father is Armenian) is sent to the North Mountains School in order to help him with his anger and social problems. Armie has always been able to *feel* .... Feel what other people and animals are thinking and needing. We discover that he has a way with birds; we are led to believe that he can talk to them. In fact, he seems at ease in the wild forest around the school. That is until he stumbles across the dark pond and realizes that something in it is calling him..... calling him to eat him. This story is a wonderful read. I suppose some would feel it is a perfect "scary" story; but it is more than that. It is the story of a boy, becoming a young man who learns to listen to his talents and use them to save another human being and the animals that live around the pond. Age: 10 and up. Great for middle-schoolers.

Burns, Laura J. and Melinda Metz. *Wright & Wong Mystery: The Case of the Prank that Stank. Razor Bill*, Penguin Young Readers Group. May 2005. ISBN

This is another delightful encounter with B. Orville Wright and Agatha Wong, as middle school best friends and engaging detectives. This time, Agatha Wong desperately wants to climb the "social-ladder" at John Q. Adams Middle school and so agrees to offer Orville's genius mind to assist the "in-crowd" of students with the yearly prank against their school's arch rivals, Placid Middle School. The mascots of these two schools are outrageously funny: The Placid Shark and Trixie the Bottomless Lake Monster. Also, we are drawn into the warm and supportive friendship between Agatha and Orville. Orville has the condition, Asperger's syndrome, and Agatha's Chinese family is HUGE and totally into the business of selling Trixi, the lake monster, to tourists with gift shop, underwater viewing restaurant, and boat rides. Grades 6-7.

Cadnum, Michael. *The Dragon Throne*. Viking. May, 2005. ISBN 0670036315.

This is the third book in which we continue the adventures of Edmund and Hubert during Middle Ages and The Crusades. (*The Book of the Lion and The Leopard Sword*). There is no doubt that Cadnum is meticulous in his historical research and presents the realistic violence of this age and The Crusades. In the review of this book, it was said that Cadnum "explores the call war has on young people and the terrible paradox .... those caring, responsible individuals can engage in acts of brutality." Readers from grade 7 and up will enjoy the strong development of characters and the swift action of the plot.

Carbone, Elisa. *Last Dance on Holladay Street*. RandomHouse. March 2005. ISBN 0375828966.

This is an extraordinary theme of family, freedom, and courage during 1878 in the far west of Denver, Colorado. Thirteen-year-old Eva Wilkins was adopted as an infant by a black couple, Mama Kate and Daddy Walter, when a young prostitute, Sadie Lewis, gives her away. After the sudden deaths of both her adoptive parents, Eva sets out for Denver to find her mother, not realizing that she is a prostitute and white. The realistic conditions of the "house of ill repute" are delicately presented along with the conditions of the women who work there. Eva's ability to extricate herself from these conditions, along with earning the money to release her mother and step sister are fairly realistic. Ages 13 and up.

Creech, Sharon. *Heartbeat*. Joanna Cotler Books, HarperCollins Pub. March 2004. ISBN 0-06-054023-0.

Once again Sharon Creech has a winner! This is about the rhythm in twelve-year-old Annie's life: the rhythm of her love of running barefoot; the rhythm of waiting for the birth of a new brother or sister; the

rhythm of listening and learning from her beloved grandfather; the rhythm of her changing relationship with her best friend for ever, Max; and the rhythm of her artistic representation of the apple that she paints 100 times. It is the beautiful story of the rhythm of coming of age. Grades 5-8.

Cumyn, Alan. *After Sylvia*. Groundwood Books. 2004. ISBN 0888996128.

Owen misses his friend, Sylvia, greatly as the first day of school begins. This is a delightfully funny book full of normal experience of being a member of a class with "mates" that make life difficult, funny, rewarding, and challenging. Cumyn weaves the typical events of school into a charming and touching story. Owen also belongs to a crazy and loving family that includes a jokester father, firm mother, and two brothers who think up as many outlandish things to do as Owen. This could be a wonderful read-a-loud book for fourth or fifth grade.

Cunningham, Laura Shaine. *The Midnight Diary of Zoya Blume*. HarperCollins. 2005. ISBN 0060722592.

This is a tender story of family and the secrets that families keep. Zola is consumed by constant nightmares and we are privy to her fears and strength to take the leap into truth and coming of age. This is a heartfelt story that twists and turns. Ages: 10-12.

Delaney, Joseph. *The Last Apprentice, Revenge of the Witch*. Greenwillow Books. Sept. 2005. ISBN 0060766190.

Thomas Ward is a twelve-year-old boy who is apprenticed to the local Spook by the insistence of his mother. The role of the Spook is greatly needed in this land of witches, boggarts, ghosts, and all manner morphing, sucking things. There have been many apprentices before Tom, but none have succeeded in becoming the new Spook and have met with horrific ends. Tom not only learns that he has a knack for this trade, but learns to trust himself and others. This is Delaney's first novel and I suspect the first in a series of books featuring Tom Ward, the Spook. Ages: 11-15.

Deuker, Carl. *Runner*. Houghton Mifflin. May 2005. ISBN 0618542981.

Deuker is a northwest writer that consistently writes in the true voices of young people, especially boys. This is a timely novel that asks the reader to address the questions of terrorism, poverty, the fairness of who joins the armed services, and can a young man who is involved in all these issues break from his socio/economic cultural of poverty into new possibilities of the "middle class" culture. This is a fast read, full of authentic circumstances and realistic consequences and would provide outstanding material for social discussions. Young Adult

Erdrich, Louise. *The Game of Silence*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 7/5/05. ISBN 0-06-029790-5.

This is the sequel to *The Birchbark House*, in which Omakayas and her family experience the ousting of the Ojibwe from their home land as the white men (chimookomanug) invade further west. Beautifully told, and historically correct, we are swept away with the emotions and acceptance of these proud and strong peoples. As Ardrich brought understanding to the adult literature of her people's history and treatment of the white's culture, so has she done for the younger reader in these novels. I hope that she continues the story of Omakayas as she travels from her island home into new and dangerous territory. The title refers to the game that children played when the adults needed to discuss important issues and needed the children to be quiet. As the novel ends, the game is for serious as they paddle into their enemy's homeland, ousted from their own homeland. Grades: 4-8.

Feinstein, John. *Last Shot. A Final Four Mystery*. Alfred A. Knopf. Feb. 2005. ISBN 0375831681.

Feinstein is a prolific writer of sports books and is often a guest commentator on Public radio. This is a truly great, fast paced mystery filled with real life sports people and conditions that will delight the adolescent reader. Two thirteen-year-old students have won the writing contest sponsored by the U.S. Basketball Writer's Association and their prize is to cover the final four, March Madness basketball tournament. Steven Thomas and Susan Anderson team together to stop the fixing of the last game in which

big money and danger lies. Great yarn! A must read for middle school readers who love the game of basketball and a great mystery.

Flanagan, John. *The Ranger's Apprentice: Book One: The Ruins of Gorlan*. Philomel Books: Penguin Young Readers Group. June 2005. ISBN 0399244549.

Fifteen-year-old Will has been chosen on the Choosing Day to be an apprentice to the Rangers, of whom he has always been frightened of in the past what with their dark cloaks and shadowy ways. Will soon realizes that the Rangers are the protectors of the kingdom and soon he is involved in the highly trained skills of combat, surveillance, and secrecy. The exiled Morgarath, Lord of the Mountains of Rain and Night, is gathering his forces, both human and non-human, to attack. This first novel presents vividly the characters through an initial encounter with Morgarath's creatures of destruction. The events move quickly and provides for-shadowing of the great battle that is threatening the very existence of the kingdom. The first book ends with the kingdom mustering the special talents of its people to meet the great battle that is to come and Will acknowledging his Ranger abilities and commitments. Ages 12-16.

Geisert, Bonnie. *Lessons*. Houghton Mifflin. April 2005. ISBN 061847899X.

This novel takes place in South Dakota farm land in the 1950's and presents the unresolved tragedy and strict religious beliefs of what happens to a new born child's soul who died before baptism. It is fairly well written, but seemed somewhat uneven in the development of the story and resolution. Ages 8-12. I'm really not recommending this book.

Goldschmidt, Judy. *The Secret Blog of Raisin Rodriguez*. Penguin Group. April 2005. ISBN 1595140182.

What a delightful format for allowing the reader to know Raisin and all her middle school antics and foibles that plague any middle-schooler. Judy Goldschmidt definitely puts a refreshingly modern spin on the classic issues of puberty and the quest for junior high's Holy Grail ... fitting in. Ages: 11-14.

Gonzalez, Julie. *Wings*. Delacorte Press. April, 2005. ISBN 0385732279.

This novel is told from the alternating points of view of two brothers, Ben and Ian Delaney. Ben has a steadfast belief that someday he will fly... he will sprout wings and really begin his life. The novel covers Ben's life from birth to seventeen, when he finally achieves his destiny and truly becomes Icarus. This is a lyrical, haunting story about the bonds of family, the worry and grief that family experiences, and the power of faith in one's destiny in life. It can be read as an allegory or as a fantasy. Recommended for YA>

Gray, Luli. *Falcon and the Carousel of Time*. Houghton Mifflin. April, 2005. ISBN 0618449-8950.

Once again, Luli Gray transports readers into a world both foreign and familiar, where dragons meet in Central Park and young girls find that they have the power to change their futures, and their pasts. Gray has written several of these books that blend characters between the stories. Best for girls, ages 9-13.

Ingold, Jeanette. *Hitch*. Harcourt. June 2005. ISBN 0152047476.

This is truly an excellent realistic, historical fiction piece that draws the reader into the human tragedies, heartbreaks, and successes of the Great Depression and the workings of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). We follow the first year of seventeen-year-old Moss Trawnley when he joins the CCC in Montana. The value of hard work, about caring for others, and about taking responsibility for one's own future is deftly told through Moss's experiences. Ages 12 and up.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Kra-kira*. Antheneum Books for Young Readers. 2004. ISBN 0689856393.

This is the Newbery Award winner for 2005. This novel chronicles the close friendship between two Japanese-American sisters growing up in rural Georgia during the late 1950's and the despair felt when one sister becomes terminally ill. Most of the novel deals with the subtle and not-so subtle prejudices of the 1950's and the economic conditions of the Japanese-American workers in the poultry farms. The historical time is extremely well presented with great detail as to the social and economic conditions in rural Georgia.

I wish there had been more "story" that dealt with the family interactions after the death of the older sister, as then it could be used as a novel for a death & dying theme ( this theme consistently deals with the learnings of how to live with the death of a loved one). The writing is strong, provocative, and appropriate for middle schoolers and up.

Lawrence, Michael. *A Crack in the Line*. Greenwillow Books, HarperCollins Pub. August 2004. ISBN 060724781.

This is a well written thriller about a boy and a girl who are the same person, but not quite, and who are living the same life, but not quite. Sixteen-year-old Alaric and sixteen-year-old Naia share the same room, house, village, but they have never met. A wonderful premise for a story: two people who share the same life, however different versions. This should be lots of fun for science fiction folks who wonder about the nature of identity, time, space, and the cracks that can appear in a lifeline. Grades 8 and up.

Lawrence, Iain. *The Convicts*. Delacorte Press. April 2005. ISBN 038573087.

I have really liked and appreciated all of Lawrence's novels ( *B for Buster*, *The Lightkeeper's Daughter {YA}*, *Lord of the Nutcracker Men*, *Ghost Boy {YA}*, and *The High Seas Trilogy: The Wreckers, The Smugglers, The Buccaneers*). He is meticulous in his research for these historical fiction and they are fine reading for middle graders. This novel deals with the horrendous practice during the early 1800's of sentencing young boys (age 6-13) to imprisonment on ships anchored in the harbors in Britain. The conditions were dreadful. Nearly 400 were housed in a hull about the same length and width of two tennis courts laid end to end. Sickness spread quickly among boys not properly fed. The strong ones preyed on the weak, and the weak just withered away. This is the story of Tom Tin who is convicted of a murder that he did not commit and his experience in one of these hulls. Iain Lawrence always gives us a powerful and detailed look into little known historical conditions. Middle school readers.

Lowry, Lois. *Gooney Bird and the Room Mother*. Houghton Mifflin. April, 2005. ISBN 061853230.

What a wonderful, delightful, warm, creative, crazy story that every second grader through fourth will love. Lowry has done it again. She so deftly captures the realism of a classroom and all its delights! The power of learning and USING new vocabulary is woven through the story. Our heroine, Gooney Gird Greene, is full of spunk, common sense, and love. This is a must read aloud book for every classroom this next year! Ages: 7-11.

Lynch, Chris. *The Gravediggers Cottage*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 2004. ISBN 0066239419.

Interesting novel that involves the "mystery" of a family of three moving into an old cottage in a small seaside village. The villagers believe that who ever lives in the house is connected to death as their new home is known as the gravedigger's cottage. The family moves through growth in understanding each other and healing the loss of the mother/wife. Grades 7 and up.

Lynch, Chris. *Me, Dead Dad, & Alcatraz*. HarperCollins. 9/05. ISBN 0060597097.

Elvin Bishop is a young adolescent that is over weight, fatherless, and stuck in his life. Along comes his supposedly dead uncle who exposes him to life: glam tuba, hellfire-hot food, gym membership, and taking the first scary steps toward trust and relationships. Even though his Uncle Alex leaves at end of this novel, Elvin has gained the courage and strength to take control of his own life. This is definitely a great novel for adolescent boys. Ages: 13 and up.

Lyon, Steve. *The Gift Moves*. Houghton Mifflin. 2004. ISBN 2003012293.

This first novel by the author is a terrific science fiction yarn. This is a future time when once a year on Midsummer Day the year turns: it is the day you take everything you have and throw it in a huge fire so that you will be empty, ready to be filled by the new year. This is a reaction to the times when people collected and accumulated so many things that houses were filled with items. Path Down the Mountain is a young girl, a gifted weaver, who is ready to apprentice to the most gifted of weavers. Path learns through

her friendship with Bird Speaks to release her personal story and a 'gift' that she never has thrown into the yearly fire. She learns and understands the gift of being empty. The phrases, "The gift moves" and "It moves" weaves throughout the novel. This is a haunting, poignant story full of truth and celebration. Grades 6-9.

Paulsen, Gary. *Brian's Hunt*. Random House: Wendy Lamb Books. 2004. ISBN 0385746474.

Paulsen has re-entered the world of Brian again and returned to his love of writing stories about the wilderness with one of his favorite characters. The plot takes place within a week's journey north into Canada, following the chain of lakes that move away from "south", which represents all that he can not handle anymore, civilization, noise, clutter, etc. As he paddles in his canoe, we discover that he has left the cities, with permission from his parents and his high school. He will read and learn on his own in the wilderness and be tested by the school when he is ready. As Brian camps alone on a lake, he finds a badly wounded dog and begins a driven need to find out why this tamed dog is so injured. We feel sharply Brian's unease, fear, and belief in his instincts as he discovers the terrible tragedy behind the dog's injuries and the resulting hunt for the attacker. Ages: 10 and up.

Paulsen, Gary. *The Time Hackers*. Random House, Wendy Lamb Books. Jan 2005. ISBN 0385746598.

This is a wonderful science fiction yarn about time travel and ultimate gamesters that any middle school boy would love. Two seventh graders, Dorso and Frank, stumble on to an ultimate game that could destroy the present and they are in danger themselves of being lost in the past. This is a short read, full of great characters and a wonderful premise. Paulsen gives us another book for the reluctant and not so reluctant male reader. Ages 10 and up.

Paver, Michelle. *The Chronicles of Ancient Darkness, Wolf Brother*. HarperCollins. 2005. ISBN 0060728256.

The first book in the trilogy is a winner! The second, *Spirit Walker*, will be out in the winter of 2006. I have already bought this for my favorite fifth grader and we await the next together! We are introduced to our hero, Torak, as he flees for his life from the demon bear that has rendered his father a dying man. We travel with Torak as he learns his role in saving the peoples of the many clans of the land and as he becomes aware of his special skills. Paver has given the reader a very believable setting, cast of characters, and a plot that contains all the hero-tale components. The story moves quickly and with lots of adventure, suspense, and mystical elements. Ages 10 and up.

Pinkwater, Daniel. *The Artsy Smartsy Club*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 5/10/05 ISBN 0-06-053558-X.

Another story about the wonderful Hoboken characters: Loretta Fischetti, Bruno Ugg, Henrietta, the giant chicken, and our narrator, Ivan Itch, who prefers being called Nick, unfolds in the middle of summer. Pinkwater's quote at the preface of the book informs us of the theme: learning to become an artist by truly seeing and observing the world around us. "I believe it is impossible to make sense of life in this world except through art." This is a fast, delightful story that quickly sweeps the reader into the world of art as our characters learn to become artist. Wonderful read aloud for grades third and fourth, and great reading for students above. Grades: 3-6.

Rees, Douglas. *Smoking Mirror*. Watson-Guptill. February, 2005. ISBN 0823048632.

This is one of the titles from the *Art Encounters* series that brings the work of famous artists to life through stories that reflect the individual paintings featured in the novels. The purpose of these novels is to introduce young readers to the style, techniques, and influences of great painters, such as Gauguin, Georgia O'Keefe, Frida Kahlo, and Jan van Eyck. *Smoking Mirrors* tells a story of revenge that Joe Sloan, the protagonist, seeks in Tahiti. Joe (Totefa) finds an unlikely new ally in the French artist Paul Gauguin and he finds himself as a model for Gauguin's paintings. The book also includes a timeline of Gauguin's life, an explanation of how the non-fiction and fiction pieces fit together in this novel. The title of the novel names the god of loss and change. Middle school and up.

Rinaldi, Ann. *Mutiny's Daughter*. . HarperCollins Children's Books. 2004. ISBN 0060296399.

Ann Rinaldi consistently researches the historical period well for her novels. She weaves a believable and realistic story taking the premise that Fletcher Christian lived, married and fathered several children in Pitcairn after the mutiny of April 1789 against the HMS *Bounty* and then asks and answers the question, What if Fletcher Christian brought his five-year-old daughter Mary with him to England back to his mother? The complexity of Mary's life as she grows in compounded by the fact the uncle pretends to be her father to protect both Mary and her father. The reader is privy to this information, not Mary. Adventure and intrigue is prevalent in the story. A great read! Grades 4-7.

Rinaldi, Ann. *Brooklyn Rose*. Harcourt. Jan 2005. ISBN 0152051171.

Rinaldi consistently writes historically accurate fiction filled with characters that we care about and plots that make us think. Writing in diary form, the author beautifully unfolds the story of a fifteen-year-old Rose Frampton who leaves the island plantation of South Carolina to become the wife of a wealthy Yankee in Brooklyn, New York. We are privy to Rose's growth from a frightened, insecure child as she journeys to become a loving and giving woman. Ages 10 and up.

Scieszka, Jon. Ed. *Guys Write for Guys Read*. Viking. April 2005. ISBN 0670060275 (pb.).

This is an outstanding, eclectic collection of eighty-eight pieces of work from a variety of writers and illustrators that tell their story about being a guy. This collection is the result of Scieszka's request from these artists to donate something that would help boys be interested in reading and that would connect boys with things that they would want to read. Scieszka then used the money from these donations and began a Web site called, guysread.com. It is a great interactive web site and this book of the actual collected pieces is wonderful. You will find stories, memories, comic strips, poems, and drawings created when they were kids; advice, schemes, jokes, and dreams..... all short! Ages : 12 and up.

Spinner, Stephanie: *Quicksilver*. Random House. April 2005. ISBN 0375926380.

This is Spinner's second novel (*Quiver*) that addresses the Greek myths and their Gods in delightful story. *Quicksilver* is a wonderful novel that allows the reader to experience Hermes (also known as Mercury, Wayfinder, and Prince of Thieves) adventures as Zeus' messenger in the myths of Medusa, Kore, Pandora's Box, Legend of Troy and more. Hermes tells his role in these myths in first person. These two novels would be a wonderful addition to middle school/high school unit on mythology. Ages: 13 and up.

Watts, Leander. *Ten Thousand Charms*. Houghton Mifflin. May 2005. ISBN 0618448977.

Wow, this is a fairy tale with quite a sinister flavor. Roddy is dirt poor. He has no family to speak of and been sold off like a slave to labor endlessly at making rope in cruel Mr. Queed's factory. Then there "is a king without a kingdom" ... Ivars. His three daughters have no last name. The king and his daughters have left their homeland, Schatzburg, and moved to the very same frontier valley of The New World where Roddy works as a rope maker. Enter Scalander, who commands the crows and evil spirits and skulks in primeval forests. Roddy must stop Scalander from forcing Ivar's daughter, Thea, to marry him and be lost to all humans forever. Sacrifice, cleverness, and love make the impossible probable. The novel ends with hints of a sequel. This is the third novel in gothic tradition for young adults. Young adult.

Stone, Jeff. *The Five Ancestors #1, Tiger*. Random House. March 2005. ISBN 0375830715.

This is the first of five books that will tell the different tales of the five youngest monks from the 17<sup>th</sup> century China, who are charged by their Buddhist grandmaster of Cangzhen Temple to search out the secrets of their pasts. If they are successful, they will be able to avenge their fallen brothers and retrieve the temple's secret scrolls. Each of these five pupils is a master of a different kung fu style: Fu, the Tiger; Long, the dragon; Malao, the Monkey; Seh, the snake; and Hok, the crane. Ying, their "lost" brother who fled the temple earlier, has the skill of the Eagle has returned to lead the massacre on the temple. The young

monks are 12 and 13 years of age, so young readers of this age will enjoy their adventures. The writing is somewhat stilted, but the story is impelling. Readers will look for the next in the series with anticipation.

Voigt, Cynthia. *Angus and Sadie*. HarperCollins Children's Books. 5/3/05. ISBN 0-06-04-74583-5.

This animal story is quite direct, telling the story of two border collies from the same litter. Each has its own strengths and differences. These are explored within the family of a small farm. This book would be best from ages 8-10.

Whelan, Gloria. *Listening for Lions*. HarperCollins. July 2005. ISBN 0060581743.

Whelan is a master in writing wonderful historical and realistic fiction for young adolescents. This is a compelling story of thirteen-year-old Rachel Sheridan who is left an orphan after influenza takes the lives of her missionary parents in British East Africa in 1919. Cruel neighbors, who have lost their own daughter to influenza, contrive to involve Rachel in a plot for wealth and deceit. Rachel is transported from her beloved Africa to London where she is soon entangled in the nefarious plot of these greedy and joyless people, in an attempt to pass her off as their daughter to the rich, dying grandfather. The plot and resolution provides ample opportunity for the irrepressible spirit and extraordinary wit of Rachel to prevail and foil the plan. Grades 5 and up.

Yen Mah, Adeline. *Chinese Cinderella and the Secret Dragon Society*. HarperCollins. 2004. ISBN 0060567341.

This novel is a fantasy based on a true incident that took place in China during World War II. After the April 18, 1942, bombing of four Japanese cities, one of the planes, the *Ruptured Duck*, crashed into the sea near the island of Nan Tian, and were assisted by the Chinese people. On May 15, 1942, a bloodbath began by the Japanese on the Chinese people; Japanese troops (148,000) were sent into Zhejiang Province and over 250,000 Chinese civilians were killed. Anthrax spores as well as fleas infected with bubonic plague were dropped on the populace by Japanese planes. This is the fictional story of four children who, with their extraordinary skills of *kung fu*, assisted the downed pilots to escape. This author writes with honesty and accuracy in knowledge of *kung fu*, however, it is full of wonderful magical, fairy tale qualities too. This should be a delightfully adventurous read for ages 10-13.